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Making Jazz Space: Clubs and Creative Practice in California, Chile, and Siberia

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Ethnomusicology

by

Alex Warner Rodriguez

2018

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Making Jazz Space: Clubs and Creative Practice in California, Chile, and Siberia

by

Alex Warner Rodriguez

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor Steven J. Loza, Chair

Drawing from anthropological fieldwork in three jazz clubs, this dissertation explores the global scale of contemporary jazz practice through an examination of the communities that sustain them in Los Angeles, California; Santiago, Chile; and Novosibirsk, Siberia. These spaces, which bear striking similarities to one another both in terms of architectural aesthetics and community practices despite the vast distance between them, are investigated as instantiations of jazz space informed by logics of jazz listening, and as sites of jazz practice—a process that I call jazz anthropology. It argues that to understand why jazz practices continue to manifest anywhere, we must understand what they mean to people elsewhere—that is, beyond the music’s geographical centers of production on the U.S. East Coast. By attending to these peripheries, we can hear the music as a manifestation of jazz consciousness, as tendrils of black radical modes of thinking transposed to far-flung geographies—even ones that very few black people inhabit. To situate these practices in a longer genealogical timespan, the dissertation also includes brief historical

sketches of jazz practice in each of the three locations in 1917, 1959, and 1990, demonstrating the long local histories that inform the music in each locale. Each subsequent chapter focuses on a different club, as well as a distinctive aspect of global jazz world-making. Taken together, they tell a story of how people around the world share a sense of meaning and emplacement in ideas of Jazz as a universal signifier.

The dissertation of Alex Warner Rodriguez is approved

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2018

*To the brilliant creative people who touched my life while I prepared this project,
but passed on before it could be completed:*

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Ed Berger

Ornette Coleman

Lawrence Gushee

Charlie Haden

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James Louis “J.J.” Johnson

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*It is my humble aspiration that the following pages may honor your lineages
and be of benefit to the many people to follow in them*

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And lastly, to every single jazz musician on this planet: thank you for your music.

Vita

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- 2011 “*Birds of Fire: Jazz, Rock, Funk and the Creation of Fusion.*” Review, *Ethnomusicology Review* 16:465.
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Introduction

Nowhere: Now, Here

The legendary New Orleans jazz reedman Sidney Bechet begins his 1960 autobiography *Treat It Gentle* by telling the story of his family's journey to freedom from slavery in the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation. He recalls how his father talked about the music first and foremost, which marked a profound affective shift that merits quoting at length:

But mostly there was this big change: a different feeling had got started.

Go down Moses,
Way down in Egypt land;
Tell old Pharaoh,
Let my people go. . . .

It was years they'd been singing that. And suddenly there was a different way of singing it. You could feel a new way of happiness in the lines. All that waiting, all that time when that song was far-off music, waiting music, suffering music; and all at once it was there, it had arrived. It was joy music now. It was Free Day . . . Emancipation.

And New Orleans just bust wide open. A real time was had. They heard the music, and the music told them about it. They heard that music from bands marching up and down the streets and they knew what music it was. It was laughing out loud up and down all the streets, laughing like two people just finding out about each other . . . like something that had found a short-cut after travelling through all the distance there was. That music, it wasn't spirituals or blues or ragtime, but everything all at once, each one putting something over on the other. That one day the music had progressed all the way up to the point where it is today, all the way up from what it had been in the beginning to the place where it could be itself.

Maybe that's not easy to understand. White people, they don't have the memory that needs to understand it. But that's what the music is . . . a lost thing finding itself. It's like a man with no place of his own. He wanders the world and he's a stranger wherever he is; he's a stranger right in the place where he was born. But then something happens to him and he finds a place, his place. He stands in front of it and he crosses the door, going inside. That's where the music was that day—it was taking him through the door; he was coming home.

This dissertation traces the sounds, lives, and practices of jazz lovers around the world: a group of people who, I argue, can trace our predicament to the above circumstances—and to the

music described in this passage. As Martin Luther King, Jr. put it in his program notes for the 1964 Berlin Jazz Festival:

Now, Jazz is exported to the world. For in the particular struggle of the Negro in America there is something akin to the universal struggle of modern man. Everybody has the Blues. Everybody longs for meaning. Everybody needs to love and be loved. Everybody needs to clap hands and be happy. Everybody longs for Faith. In music, especially this broad category called Jazz, there is a stepping stone toward all of these.¹

Strangers wherever we are, finding our places over 150 years since Bechet's story took place, we grapple with its sonic and affective traces because something has happened to us, too—we have crossed the door, going inside.

As evidenced by the first-person plural pronouns in the preceding paragraph, I count myself among this group of jazz lovers to whom Jazz has been exported. In the twenty years since my own transformative encounters with these sonic traces, I have been fortunate to bear witness to this music unfolding in many different places through my work as a jazz trombonist, radio DJ, historian, teacher, listener, and anthropologist. Most recently, this has taken the form of fieldwork at three jazz clubs in Los Angeles, California; Santiago, Chile; and Novosibirsk, Siberia. However tempting it may be to situate myself within a colorblind discourse as one of Great Black Music's many grateful recipients around the world, the truths of this universal struggle are meaningless without understanding their roots in—and ongoing relevance to—the particularities of the black liberation project.² Engaging in this work as a light-skinned man with a U.S. passport, I am one of those people singled out by Bechet as not having the memory that needs to understand the music's importance as a site of creative struggle—a struggle against the

¹ David Demsey and Bruce Jackson (2011) trace the origins of the quote to page 3 of the festival's program book—King was unable to attend the festival.

² In her 2007 book *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa*, Ingrid Monson offers a useful overview of how colorblind discourse itself has its roots in white modernist jazz listeners' attempts to reconcile their enthusiasm for the music with their position within the racist social order of Jim Crow America.

circumstances that made him a stranger right in the place where he was born. I agree with Cecil Taylor that I must confront what he calls “the black methodology that creates this music” (Quoted in Levin 1971). I also agree with King that the legacy of the emancipatory affective potentials unleashed in the wake of the U.S. Civil War, which later came to be indexed by the word “jazz,” resonates today on a global scale.³

Drawing from this experience, I examine how jazz spaces form a global network that affords the reproduction of particular modes of listening and practice. Thanks to their long history and wide circulation, these practices offer a privileged site for analyzing both sediments and renegotiations of transnationalism and globalization. Musical improvisation, a process of engaging with the present moment in relation to sound, space, and society, is a generative force that creates and connects these spaces. Jazz clubs—also university music programs, coffee shops, musician apartments, rehearsal spaces, concert halls, music festivals, recording studios, urban sidewalks, and subway stations—are sites where jazzistas do this work. Each space hosts a unique historical ecology of state policies, capitalist development, cultural forces, and musical creativity. These distinct historical threads are also woven together as jazz spaces are connected through transnational processes. Meanwhile, jazz aficionados—well versed in the art of improvisation—bring their skills to bear in surprising new formations as musicians, entrepreneurs, promoters, teachers, and curators. By taking these three distant jazz clubs as my focus of study, I aim to articulate something like a “view from nowhere” that can say something meaningful about jazz life as it is lived anywhere. It is also a view from now, here: the year 2018 in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.—the same place where jazz sounds first made their way through my ears in the late 1990s—where I have returned to synthesize these experiences.

³ I situate my own subjectivity in relationship to jazz practice in greater detail in this dissertation’s first interlude, “Fade In: Portland to Los Angeles.”

The starting point for this research is a hypothesis, which can be stated as follows: By engaging in research that is mindful of *jazz space*, attuned to the practice of *jazz listening*, and grounded in accounts of lived human experience, ethnomusicologists can offer a crucial intervention in 21st century *jazz practice*. I refer to the investigation of this hypothesis across geographical and cultural difference as *jazz anthropology*.

Using the Word “Jazz”

The point of commonality between these concepts, of course, is the word “jazz.” It first appeared in print in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1912 to describe a baseball pitcher’s curveball and has since stood as a signifier for a vast abundance of objects and ideas. This point is illustrated perhaps most dramatically by Mark Laver in his 2014 book *Jazz Sells*, which addresses the ways in which it has been used in advertising. After enumerating a bizarre and wide-ranging list of products bearing the name “jazz,” Laver concludes,

If jazz can simultaneously be a seasoned potato, a diet cola, an in-ear thermometer, and a super yacht, if it can cost anywhere from US\$1 to £300 million, its core meaning is exceptionally elusive, if it has any singular core meaning at all. (2)

In his 2005 essay “Core and Boundaries,” jazz historian Scott Deveaux delves into the ways in which this core meaning is maintained in the face of this absurdly variegated evidence. He demonstrates how the history of Jazz has been written by *drawing boundaries*, leaving out many practices along the way. Those boundaries have defined a set of dichotomies, with the core meaning of Jazz lying on one side and not the other: art, not commerce; black, not white; male, not female; and North American, not European, African, or of any other geographical provenance. Writing in a similar vein, John Szwed designates the musical practices that fall outside of these boundaries with quotation marks—as “jazz”—in his 2000 book *Jazz 101*.

But Deveaux also argues that contemporary listeners—not to mention a staggering diversity of musical practices drawing on jazz histories—lie mostly outside of those boundaries; to reach them, we must also engage with peripheries. This engagement is the focus of David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark’s 2012 edited collection *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries*, which interrogates various axes along which musical practices are considered to be Jazz—or not. This dissertation, of course, concerns itself deeply with this interplay between inside and outside—core, boundary, and periphery—especially in terms of geography and nationality, but also race, class, and gender. The practices of musical performance and listening that take place on a given night in Santiago or Novosibirsk may fall well outside of these boundaries in terms of geography, while falling squarely within them in terms of class, gender, and musical taste.

My use of the term “jazz” throughout this dissertation references this core-boundary-periphery dynamic by referring to the constellation of core meanings as a proper noun—Jazz—as in, “The Jazz Tradition,” which Deveaux (1991) has shown to have gained traction at a specific historical moment for specific reasons. I make this typographical gesture without irony—in fact, I have been inspired to do so by a cherished mentor, James Newton, who uses the capital letter out of respect for the art form that stands as a marker of African Americans’ accomplishment in the face of the pernicious omnipresence of antiblackness. It is also consistent with Martin Luther King, Jr.’s usage in the previously quoted excerpt. The wider set of uses for the word—what Szwed calls “jazz” or jazz-in-quotes—will be referenced without capitalization or quotation marks, but almost always as a noun modifier rather than as a subject noun: thus jazz space, jazz listening, and jazz practice. In this formation, Jazz Studies is not only “Studying Jazz” (Jackson 2012:3) or *Knowing Jazz* (Prouty 2012) but also jazz studies, a complex interdisciplinary

network of scholarly practices that resonate with one another, each related genealogically to the wider use of the term “jazz.”

In this sense, I am following Sherrie Tucker’s (2005) suggestion that jazz scholars study a “subjectless subject,” that we dive into the deep end of the word’s ambiguity to pursue what Ann Cacuollos identifies as “conceptual and linguistic discomfort [as] an emancipatory alternative” (2000:97) to an object-oriented, core-focused approach. It follows Elsa Barkley Brown’s call “to recognize not only differences but also the relational nature of those differences” (1992:298), highlighting the relational nature of the core-boundary-periphery dynamic as it relates to Jazz/jazz studies: Jazz refers to the core, jazz to the periphery, and the slash mark to the boundary—one does not exist without the others. Although it can be useful to occasionally bracket out some part of this formulation for analytical purposes, I agree with Deveaux that “It’s time to acknowledge that the history of global jazz cannot be reduced to a single story, no matter how ‘American’ the century in which it developed may have been” (2005:24). Or as Fred Moten puts it, “The trip has an uncountable number of points of embarkation, none of which is originary, and is made on a railroad both aleatory and underground” (2003:33). In this dissertation, I pursue this subjectless subject through jazz fieldwork, a mode of critical listening in jazz space that turns its attention to the commitment I have made to learning alongside a geographically diverse set of jazz compatriots.

Methodological Considerations

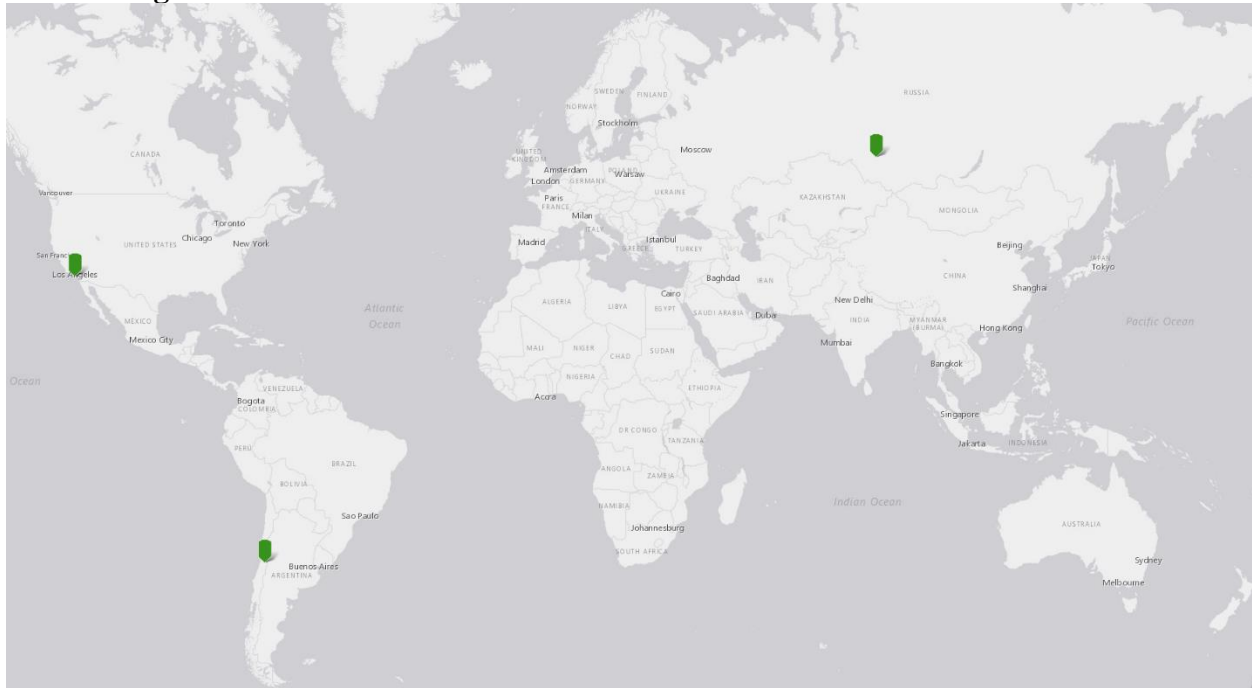


Fig. 0.1: Locations of fieldwork sites

The fieldwork that informs this dissertation has taken place at three specific sites: the jazz clubs bluewhale in Los Angeles, Thelonious in Santiago, and Truba in Novosibirsk. To better understand the social relationships that sustain these practices, I have conducted interviews and engaged in informal conversation with key individuals involved in sustaining the spaces, such as club owners, musicians, and regular patrons. Listening to these people's histories of listening and putting them into conversation with one another is my way of tapping into the polyrhythms of the ethnographic jazz present.

The research took place in three main phases, one focused on each jazz club, each with a different contour due to the differences in my relationship to each place. The first phase, at bluewhale in Los Angeles, began in April 2012 and continued through August 2015. This longitudinal study was made possible by the fact that I lived in Los Angeles during this time; I attend events there regularly and followed changes in the scene. The second phase, at Thelonious, Lugar de Jazz in Santiago, Chile, took place from September 2015-May 2016, and

involved a more intensive fieldwork approach in which I was active full-time as a part of the community that sustains the club there.⁴ The third phase of fieldwork took place from October-November 2016. Unlike the previous two fieldwork sites, I had no prior relationship to the community in Novosibirsk, and thus this brief fieldwork stint serves a slightly different function than the other two. My experience at Truba tested and expanded upon parallels that emerged from the work that I had previously done in Santiago and Los Angeles about the nature of the jazz world, based upon the surprises that greeted me in Novosibirsk. The goal of this fieldwork triangulation is to seek insight into the forces that connect these three places, the cultural continuities that underpin their similarities, and the signal differences that characterize each one.

By defining my research approach as jazz anthropology, I am drawing on a model proposed by Steven Feld in his 2012 book *Jazz Cosmopolitanism In Accra*. Feld writes, “Listening to histories of listening is my way to shift attention to acoustemology, to sound as a way of knowing such worlds, and particularly to the presence of intervocality, to intersubjective vocal copresence, to the everyday immediacy and power of stories” (2012:7). This echoes Deveaux’s comment that there is no one story of jazz—and yet at the same time, the Story of Jazz, first articulated in print by Marshall Stearns in 1956 in a book bearing that title, maintains a strong and often unequal copresence alongside other narratives.⁵ This practice of meta-listening bears many resemblances to the Malinowskian ideal of anthropological participant-observation fieldwork. However, following Brian Moeran (2007), I would argue that resembles the inversion of that idea: “observant participation.” Anna Tsing (2015) calls her similar approach to fieldwork “arts of noticing,” a term that I prefer for its de-emphasis on the visual mode of perception.

⁴ I also made a preliminary visit to the club in August 2013, which is discussed in the second interlude, “Crossfade: Los Angeles to Santiago.”

⁵ See Dave Wilson (2015) for a detailed account of how this dynamic has played out recently in Skopje, Macedonia.

Following Tim Ingold's (2017) definition of anthropology writ large, I define jazz anthropology as "a generous, open-ended, comparative, and yet critical inquiry into the conditions and possibilities of jazz life in the one world we all inhabit." This also dovetails with the argument put forth by Bruno Latour in his 2004 book *Politics of Nature*: "To participate in the development of political institutions adapted to the exploration of the common world and the 'same earth,'" he writes, "Anthropology must become experimental" (47). Jazz anthropology can be thought of as an effort at experimentation along these lines, based on participatory listening and the arts of noticing in jazz space.

In the preface to the second edition of an earlier work, his seminal 1982 ethnography *Sound and Sentiment*, Feld writes,

An ethnography is a report of a unique experience. It is about the dialogue of sensibilities implicated in encountering a people and place. The work and the writer are then specifically accountable not just to the interpretive preoccupations of scholarly readers, but to that people and place, and to the need for incisive honesty in their depiction. That depiction situates ethnography as an account of a specific yet indefinite encounter, something at once empirically brutal and interpretively subtle. This dynamic creates numerous ironic mysteries for an author, and no less for the people who are trying to figure out what the author is up to. But in the end an ethnographer's accountability for depiction is more than an accountability for representation; it is an accountability to other human beings whose lives, desires, and sensitivities are no less complicated than his or her own.⁶ (1990: xxxix)

Certainly, this fieldwork has been a unique experience. My report of this unique experience, however, is complicated by the fact that it does not address any singular "people" nor "place"; a person who spends their time in one of these clubs likely speaks a different language than their counterparts at the others, and most likely is not even aware of the others' existence.

Nonetheless, I intend to show that these three clubs *share* a sense of emplacement, despite these obvious differences, in jazz space. Anchored in places such as jazz clubs, festivals, and

⁶ Two later editions of this monograph were published in 1990 and 2012.

educational institutions, jazz space affords ways of being in the world through sound that resonate across vast geographies—an acoustemology of global scale.

I participate in the formation of this global acoustemology with full awareness of the fact that—despite very significant differences and positionalities within the global order of racist, patriarchal capitalism—our connectedness stems from the appeal of Jazz as a universal signifier. In her 2004 book *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Scale*, Anna Tsing encourages us to think of universals “not as truths or lies but as sticky engagements” (6), positing that they are brought into being in the world through a process she calls “friction: the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” (4). My engagement with jazz lovers around the world has indeed been a sticky one; in this dissertation, I aim to honor that process without reducing it to what Kofi Agawu would rightly criticize as “a package of difference stories” (2003:158). Although the three fieldwork sites were chosen in part for their maximally different geography—the three sites are nearly 19,000 kilometers apart from one another, about half the length of the Earth’s circumference—this project, like Tsing’s, focuses more on the friction of interconnection *across* difference. As such, this fieldwork could be characterized as what Sherry Ortner calls “‘studying sideways,’ that is, studying people—like scientists, journalists, and Hollywood filmmakers—who in many ways are really not much different from anthropologists and our fellow academics more generally” (2010:213). This is doubly true in my case—not only do I share similar class position as most of my interlocutors, but also musical training and taste. By attending to these “not-much-differences,” I aim to better understand how interconnection happens across other differences such as race, language, and geography.

This project is also, necessarily, multi-sited ethnography in the sense outlined by George Marcus in his 1998 book *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. While situating multi-sited

ethnography within anthropological fieldwork practice, Marcus argues that “the circumstantial commitments that arise in the mobility of multi-sited fieldwork provide a kind of psychological substitute for the reassuring sense of ‘being there’” and that this can “preserve . . . an essential link with the traditional practice of participant observation, single-site ethnography in the peripatetic, translative mapping of brave new worlds” (99). Although I certainly consider this work to be linked genealogically with the anthropological tradition of participant observation, my experience of “being there” at these three jazz clubs was not a psychological substitute for a “thereness” privileged by geography, the category of which the classic anthropological “village ethnography” is the ideal type. Rather, it was precisely the uncannily similar sense of “being there” *in all three places* that makes them part of a shared spatial imaginary: what I am calling jazz space. The circumstantial commitments that have arisen throughout the process—what I call jazz practice—are precisely what make this shared emplacement possible despite the clubs’ widely dispersed geography. Rather than doing what Marcus would call “following the thing” (1998:90) of Jazz, I have sought out jazz space and diligently made traces of what I have found there—another kind of peripatetic, translative mapping, to be sure.

Still, it is the people who are the main concern of this dissertation. Riffing on Feld’s formulation of ethnography, which considers ethnography as “the dialogue of sensibilities implicated in encountering *a people and place*,” what follows is a report on the dialogue of sensibilities implicated in encountering *people in jazz space*. In particular, it documents traces of that which has taken place over five years of fieldwork in California, Chile, and Siberia—with a few other stops along the way. In order to frame this report, I draw on the work of an eclectic group of thinkers that includes scholars in anthropology, black studies, ethnomusicology, geography, and sociology—as well as jazz musicians themselves.

My use of this phrase, “people in jazz space,” is inspired by a 1964 Duke Ellington interview, in which the esteemed bandleader discusses his suite *My People*, composed for the “Century of Negro Progress” exhibition in Chicago the year before. Rather than take the interviewer’s cue to talk about the African American people, he answered the question coyly, addressing his membership in a variety of *other* groups:

Let’s see. My people. Now which of my people? I’m in several groups. I’m in the group of piano players. I’m in the group of the listeners. I’m in the group of people who have general appreciation of music. I’m in the group of those who aspire to be dilettantes. I’m in the group of those who attempt to produce something fit for the plateau. I’m in the group of . . . oh yeah, those who appreciate Beaujolais. And of course I’ve had such a strong influence by the music of the people. THE people. That’s the better word. THE people rather than MY people. Because THE people are MY people.⁷

In fieldwork research at these three clubs, many of the people with whom I came into contact shared Ellington’s group membership as listeners, music appreciators, aspirational dilettantes, and seekers of excellence; a handful were also pianists and wine aficionados. However, only a few shared his positionality as black. And yet, it is precisely these people’s shared celebration of black music that affords the conditions for black agency in these places—all of which exist on the geographical fringes of what Paul Gilroy (1993) has called the Black Atlantic.

In his 2013 essay “Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh),” Fred Moten describes celebration as a crucial alternative to Afro-pessimist nihilism:

Our aim, even in the face of the brutally imposed conditions of black life, is cause for celebration. This is not because celebration is supposed to make us feel good or make us feel better, though there would be nothing wrong with that. It is, rather, because the cause for celebration turns out to be the condition of possibility of black thought, which animates the black operations that will produce the absolute overturning, the absolute turning of this motherfucker out. Celebration is the essence of black thought, the animation of black operations, which are, in the first instance, our undercommon, underground, submarine sociality. (742)

⁷ This quote is excerpted from an interview with Byng Whittaker, CBC-TV, September 2, 1964.

I am deeply grateful to have been able to bear witness to this “submarine sociality,” practiced in various forms by people from Santiago to Siberia. Thinking about Jazz as a trace of blackness in global circulation—one with emancipatory potential for humanity as a whole—allows for a deeper acknowledgment of the importance and power of black cultural practices in this challenging historical moment. The music described at this chapter’s outset, part of what Amiri Baraka (1968:205) calls the Changing Same of Black Music, channels an alternative: the wisdom of celebration in the wake of these destructive contradictions. Tracing Jazz backwards (through history) and sideways (through ethnography) has been my way of endeavoring to connect meaningfully with that wisdom. This approach is informed by what I understand to have been the intentions of many jazz musicians themselves—such as Ellington, Louis Armstrong, John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman. These musicians and countless others rooted their practice in their lived experiences of injustice as African Americans while also articulating a broader, universal aspiration toward human liberation on a planetary scale.

Square, Circle, Triangle ■ • ▲

Before I turn to this, however, it is important to situate the trio of concepts with which I opened this chapter: jazz space, jazz listening, and jazz practice. This is modeled after the tripartite approach of spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre in his 1974 book *The Production of Space*. In his 1996 book *Thirdspace*, political geographer Edward Soja expands upon Lefebvre’s framework for theorizing spatiality, characterizing Lefebvre’s tendency to organize his concepts in threes as a “trialectics of spatiality” (53). After reading Soja’s interpretation of Lefebvre, I noticed that many other instances of this thought-pattern occur in various strains of thought, such as Catholic Christianity, modern architecture, and, of course, ethnomusicology—as elaborated in Alan Merriam’s tripartite model from his 1964 book *The Anthropology of Music*. Perhaps the

most stylistically succinct articulation of this three-part mythos is Italian graphic designer Bruno Munari's 2015 book *Square Circle Triangle*, which explores the uses of the three shapes throughout a wide array of examples from art, architecture, and design. Munari characterizes each shape as representative of a principle: the square as "materiality"; the circle as "eternity"; and the triangle as "spirit." The square is related to the ground, the circle to divinity, and the triangle to humanity. The square is located at the base, the circle is above, and the triangle joins the two, as in the form of a pyramid.

This three-part logic shared by this wide diversity of cultural systems could be a marker of their shared affinity to what David Graeber calls the "Heracleitian tradition" of thought in his 2001 book *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*.⁸ In other words, all of these systems are marked by an understanding of the ultimate reality of objects as "one of constant flux and change" (50). This perspective is, of course, not foreign to improvisers—indeed, Heracleitian flux is invoked by Garry Hagberg (2006) and Rob Wallace (2010) to describe the improvisational approaches inherent to both jazz and American modernist poetry, respectively.

In his 2013 Gifford Lectures, Bruno Latour draws on the ancient Roman tradition of "translation tables," shifting his attention from the *names* (theos) of entities to their *function* (nomos) in order to better understand the *people* (demos) who are called into being under their auspices. Inspired by this approach, I have created one such translation table, the aim of which is to show the family resemblances of terms from various modes of thinking:

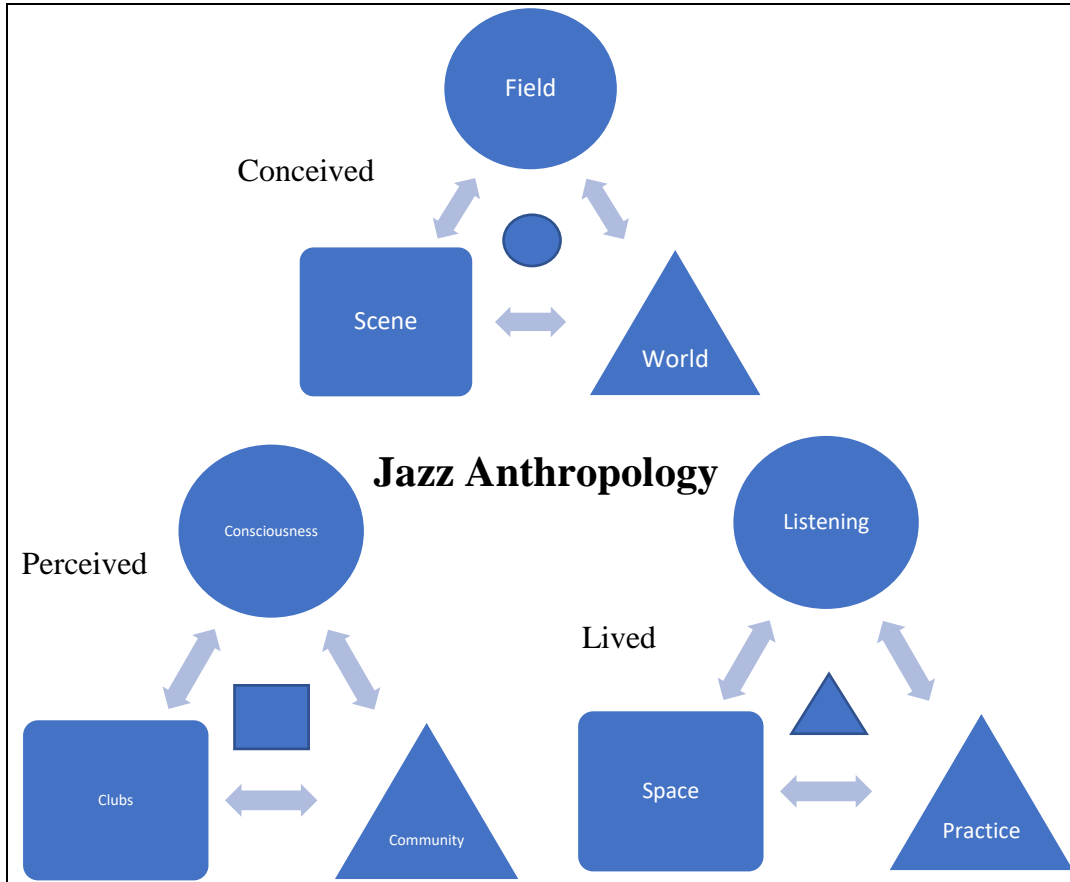
⁸ Graeber also spells this term "Heraclitean" throughout the book; I use the former spelling as that is how the term appears in the book's index.

Shape (Munari 2015)	■ Square ■	● Circle ●	▲ Triangle ▲
Design (Munari 2015)	Materiality	Eternity	Spirit
Space (Lefebvre 1974)	Perceived	Conceived	Lived
Trialectics (Soja 1996)	Firstspace	Secondspace	Thirdspace
Catholic Trinity	Son	Father	Holy Ghost
Global Connection (Tsing 2004)	Local difference	Global universal	Friction
Multi-sited Ethnography (Marcus 1998)	Thick	Thin	Thick and Thin
Practice Theory (Ortner 1984)	Structure	Agency	Practice
Music (Merriam 1964)	Sound	Concept	Behavior

Fig. 0.2: “Translation Table” of Tripartite Models

It also bears noting that Latour’s translation table is also organized in a similar tripartite fashion: what he calls “demos” is square, “theos” is circular, and “nomos” is triangular. It is important to note here how this mode of thought is related to—but also a departure from—the dialectical tradition in Western philosophy, a difference implied in Soja’s term “trialectics.” In explicating this term, Soja draws on the musical metaphor of fugal counterpoint to show how Lefebvre’s approach “spatialized the equally temporal sequential logic of dialectical thinking, always a vital part of Lefebvre’s work. Thesis, antithesis, and synthesis are thus made to appear simultaneously, together in every chapter in both contrapuntal harmonies and disruptive dissonances” (9). He also notes that Lefebvre drew up similar tables in his 1980 book *La Présence et l’absence*, through a process Soja calls “thirthing-as-Othering” (60).

The following set of concepts proceeds from a similar process, which I will now outline. It is the third of three triads that make up an overall matrix for how I understand the location of various concepts within a broader jazz anthropology. The two following diagrams represent the concepts that make up this matrix:



■ Jazz Clubs ■	● Jazz Scene ■	▲ Jazz Space ■
■ Jazz Consciousness ●	● Jazz Field ●	▲ Jazz Listening ●
■ Jazz Community ▲	● Jazz World ▲	▲ Jazz Practice ▲

Fig. 0.3: Nested Triadlectics of Jazz Anthropology

As these diagrams show, each of the terms has a “first-order” and “second-order” designation as circle, square, and triangle—the “first-order” triad is composed of three elements that are each composed of a circle-square-triangle triad. This includes the “square triad” of clubs, community, and consciousness; the “circle triad” of scene, field, and world; and the “triangle triad” of space, listening, and practice. I will now discuss each in turn, and then offer some synthesis via a consideration of the practice of listening in space as “global microstructuration.”

■ *Clubs* ■

The base of materiality in which this work takes place is the jazz club. Of course, this is not the only place that jazz practices can be located; it is, however, a useful construct to underpin an approach to jazz anthropology that is interested in connections across geographical difference. Jazz clubs are manifestations of isomorphic processes not unlike those identified by John Meyer et al in their article “World Society and the Nation-State” (1997). As they argue, “many features of the contemporary nation-state derive from worldwide models constructed and propagated through global cultural and associational processes.” Like embassies and stadiums, jazz clubs are among the material evidence of “common world forces” at work. Unlike embassies and most stadiums, however, they are *indirect* manifestations of nation-state phenomena, as they are usually built on private property and financed with private capital rather than direct investment from the state.⁹

In his 2012 book *Blowin’ the Blues Away*, Travis Jackson draws on the work of Lewis Erenberg (1984) and Kathy Ogren (1989) to historicize the nightclub phenomenon, noting that changes in public life and their attendant spaces in the early 20th century led to a rapid proliferation of clubs in New York City and elsewhere, especially in the wake of the Volstead

⁹ This is not always the case, however. The Komsomol Jazz Cafés in the Soviet Union during the 1960s and 1970s offer a useful counterexample (see Chapter 1).

Act of 1920, which prohibited the sale of alcohol in the USA. Although jazz clubs today are operating in a different economic, social, and legal environment than their predecessors, those who run them still draw on the 1920s speakeasy as a spatial-conceptual paradigm, contributing to the isomorphic effect. Kimberly Hannon Teal (2012) shows how the Village Vanguard, currently the oldest jazz club still in operation, sets the paradigm for jazz club design today. Michael Heller (2017) dedicates a chapter to the spatial practice of improvised music in the 1970s “loft scene,” which expanded the possibilities for how a jazz club could be managed and maintained.

■ *Consciousness* ●

In his 2005 book *Jazz Consciousness: Music, Race, and Humanity* Paul Austerlitz uses the term “jazz consciousness” to characterize the common stance among jazz musicians toward their music as both rooted in African aesthetics and universally applicable beyond ethnic classification. Following Paul Gilroy and W.E.B Du Bois, Austerlitz links this approach to three rhetorical strategies: strategic essentialism, planetary humanism, and double consciousness, arguing that “‘jazz consciousness’ embodies an aesthetic of inclusion and ecumenicity” (21).

For the purposes of this dissertation, I will take Austerlitz’s argument a step further: jazz consciousness, in my view, is epiphenomenal of what Cedric Robinson, in his 1983 book *Black Marxism*, calls the black radical tradition. In his foreword to the 2000 edition of Robinson’s book, Robin Kelley makes the jazz connection explicit: “Not unlike the music of Thelonious Monk,” he writes, “*Black Marxism* remains as fresh and insightful as when it was first composed, still productively engaged with the central questions posed by histories of the African Diaspora” (xx). Robinson argues that the black radical tradition, a strain of resistance to racial capitalism that exists independent of Marxist thought, can be traced through a tradition grounded

in African histories and epistemologies.¹⁰ Jazz consciousness, I suggest, is one of the tendrils through which this tradition manifests, transforming and informing human action according to its Afro-logic of struggle and survival in the face of the contemporary racial capitalist order. Part of what this dissertation aims to demonstrate is that this is part of what animates the formation and maintenance of some jazz clubs around the world. In other words, many who are informed by jazz consciousness engage in resistance—Marxist-inflected and otherwise—even without direct, sustained participation by black people. These engagements, however, are necessarily different depending on the locations—in terms of geography, race, gender, etc.—of the people involved.

That is not to say that jazz clubs are a pure manifestation of jazz consciousness (or, by extension, the black radical tradition). In fact, jazz clubs are often spaces that are produced according to the logic of racial capitalist domination. In his 2014 article “Freedom of Choice: Jazz, Neoliberalism, and the Lincoln Center,” for example, Mark Laver argues convincingly that the jazz club opened in Doha, Qatar by the US-based arts nonprofit Jazz at Lincoln Center “presents us with a vivid example of how American corporate and cultural interests have become increasingly inseparable, reflecting a broader tendency toward the corporatization of American neocolonialism” (539). Although none of the clubs profiled here offer such a vivid example of this neocolonial hegemony, their space is produced through a negotiation with it via the common spatial logic of racial capitalism; jazz consciousness inflects these spaces with black radical possibility to varying degrees.

■ *Community* ▲

Despite the challenges of conceptualizing those who share little in common beyond their love of jazz, Ken Prouty (2012) argues that “jazz community is a concept that is at once

¹⁰ See Moten (2001) for an especially virtuosic interpretation along these lines.

fundamentally important to the contemporary discourse of jazz at almost every level, yet simultaneously imprecise in its usage” (21). Indeed, he dedicates the first chapter to what he calls “The Problem with Community.” Prouty traces the term to an essay on psychological adolescence by Norman Margolis (1954) and its elaboration by Alan Merriam and Raymond Mack (1960), in which they define it as a “community of interest” with “specific behavioral patterns” (211). Crucially, the authors include both musicians and their audience in their formulation.

Prouty expands this concept to characterize the jazz community as a “community built on listening,” with the circulation of recorded music as the main fabric through which the community is connected. This is consistent with my personal and ethnographic experience, as well. Jazz clubs, it bears noting, are often an integral part of the listening—and even recording—process. The canon of recordings made at the New York City jazz club, The Village Vanguard, is perhaps the most well-known example of this phenomenon. I also witnessed live recording sessions during my fieldwork at bluewhale and Thelonious.

● *Scene* ■

The term “scene” is used in common parlance among musicians of many stripes; as Travis Jackson (2012) argues, this frequent usage “gives it an emic valence and specificity missing from other formulations.” Although the term has clear colloquial connotations, it has developed its own circulation among music scholars as well. The use of the term in popular music studies can be traced back to Will Straw’s 1991 article “Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music.” Straw uses the term to call for socio-musical analysis that does not rely on the term “community,” which he eschews because it “presumes a population group whose composition is relatively stable” (373). A musical scene, on

the other hand, “Is that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization” (373). By treating scenes, rather than communities, as the lens for analysis, Straw argues that one can examine “the ways in which particular musical practices ‘work’ to produce a sense of community” (373).

Sociologist Jennifer Lena, in her 2012 book *Banding Together: How Communities Create Genres in Popular Music*, identifies the “scene” as an important locus for the creation of *scene-based genres*, which she aligns along a time-based spectrum of genre formation that includes 1) avant-garde, 2) scene-based, 3) industry-based, and 4) traditionalist genres. Lena defines scene as “a community of spatially situated artists, fans, scene-focused record companies, and supporting small business people” (33). This is a slightly different usage than Straw’s, in that the community makes the scene, rather than the scene making the (sense of) community. My usage of the term “scene” will refer to the definition proposed by Straw, for the reasons that he enumerates. Rather than considering genre formation as something that communities do in scenes, I prefer to view this process through what Gaye Theresa Johnson, in her 2013 book *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity*, calls “‘spatial entitlement,’ a way in which marginalized communities have created new collectives based not just upon eviction and exclusion from physical places, but also on new and imaginative uses of technology, creativity, and spaces” (x). This decouples musical genre, scene, and community from one another as separate but interrelated entities.

Straw’s conceptualization offers a reasonable description of jazz scenes, as well. One can speak of scenes on different scales—for example, the scene in Los Angeles, or the USC scene, the Eagle Rock scene, the Long Beach scene, etc. Individual clubs such as The Baked Potato,

Catalina Jazz Club, or bluewhale have their associated scenes, as does the World Stage, a community center and performance venue in Leimert Park. There may be overlap between scenes—bluewhale, for example, is an especially heterogeneous hub—but the overall effect is one of polycentrism, more along the lines of the dance music profiled by Straw (1991) than his example of alternative rock’s center-and-periphery model.

However, it is important to note that there is no single jazz scene that exists on a translocal level, in the way that Straw suggests that dance music has “Detroit techno” and “Miami bass” scenes with no discernible center. The New York City jazz scene remains a central scene; what happens there matters in other scenes elsewhere. This phenomenon was identified as early as 1922 by Burnet Hershey, who wrote an article in *The New York Times* entitled “Jazz Latitude.” In it, he observes, “A new line of latitude one-steps around the globe. Its location is reckoned by the degree of its jazz and computed exactly by the number of minutes and seconds it is distant from its meridian—Tinpan Alley.”

● *Field* ●

To account for the translocal dynamic evident in the global proliferation of jazz clubs and scenes, it is useful to invoke the concept of “field,” elaborated upon in Pierre Bourdieu’s 1993 essay collection, *The Field of Cultural Production*. Bourdieu’s essay “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed” applied these concepts directly to artistic practice. For Bourdieu, “The literary or artistic field is a *field of forces*, but it is also a *field of struggles* tending to transform or conserve the field of forces.” In other words, it is both like an electromagnetic field—a field of forces—and a football field—a field of struggles. Within this field, Bourdieu locates social agents who act through position-takings within a *space of literary or artistic positions*, each of which is realized in relation to a *space of possibles*. The field is

maintained by what he had previously outlined, in *The Logic of Practice*, as *habitus*—“structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (1990:53) that generate what he calls “regulated improvisation” (57). The field emerges as a field of forces because of the collective effect of position-takings made by social actors. In attempting to articulate what he calls the “‘logics’ of particular musical terrains” (374), Straw’s understanding of “scene” draws on this work, as well—although his lack of attention to how these terrains are structured by geography leads to some terminological slippage that I aim to rectify with this scene/field distinction.

Although jazz scenes exist locally in a myriad of places, they are also acted upon by a field of forces; at the same time, people’s position-takings have the possibility of reshaping that field. This field of forces has been maintained by different institutions over time—it was dominated by commercial music production interests throughout the first half of the 20th century, with a transition in the 1970s whereby educational and cultural institutions became more prominent as primary mechanisms through which the field is reproduced.

The New York City and Boston metropolitan areas are home to many of the influential institutions that carry out this work today, including the Institute of Jazz Studies, Jazz at Lincoln Center, The New School, Berklee School of Music, and the New England Conservatory. These forces are enacted elsewhere both through direct teaching—for example, my jazz director in Portland, Oregon had received training from both Berklee and Jazz at Lincoln Center—and also through their high degree of influence over the narratives and aesthetics central to the field’s reproduction. For example, Wynton Marsalis and Dan Morgenstern—directors of Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Institute of Jazz Studies, respectively—were two primary consultants on the widely distributed 2001 documentary *Jazz: A Film By Ken Burns*. The presence of this field can be felt outside of the United States, as well: At Thelonious, for example, most performers strive

toward aesthetic values outlined by the New York scene. Evidence of this exists on the club's "About" page, which consists of laudatory comments (translated into Spanish) made by Marsalis during a recent visit to the club.¹¹ Furthermore, the scenes and field interact in the local spaces of New York and Boston, where the normative values of the translocal field and their instantiation in space are directly intertwined.

The evidence of this transnational jazz field, which interacts with local jazz scenes, supplements the material gathered by Motti Regev in his 2013 book *Pop-Rock Music: Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism in Late Modernity*. Regev proposes a term, "Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism," defined as

the ongoing formation, in late modernity, of world culture as one complexly interconnected entity, in which social groupings of all types around the globe growingly share wide common grounds in their aesthetic perceptions, expressive forms, and cultural practices. . . . [It] refers, then, to the already existing singular world culture. (3)

His examples and theories all derive from a position that pop-rock music, "the musical art form based on sound manipulation by recording machines, electric and electronic instruments, and amplification," is a "signifier of universal modernity, as manifestations of the proper way to create and express cultural uniqueness in late modernity" (9).

Transnational jazz practice takes place on the margins of the discourse described by Regev, and although it could be categorized as "aesthetic cosmopolitanism" under the broad definition given above, the fact that it does *not* always incorporate the musical elements outlined by Regev is significant. Therefore, I suggest that the term "aesthetic cosmopolitanism" still is useful, but only if it is decoupled from pop-rock music as it is defined by Regev; I propose that "jazz cosmopolitanism," "pop-rock cosmopolitanism," and other musical cosmopolitanisms

¹¹ See Marsalis (2015) for the language used.

operate through related and contested claims to their status as signifiers of universal modernity. I suggest that it fits Bourdieu's description of a field of cultural production:

The more autonomous it is, i.e. the more completely it fulfils its own logic as a field, the more it tends to suspend or reverse the dominant principle of hierarchization; but also that, whatever its degree of independence, it continues to be affected by the laws of the field which encompasses it, those of economic and political profit. (1993:39)

Furthermore, I would argue jazz cosmopolitanism informs a struggle for what Bourdieu calls the “dominant principle of hierarchization” (40) of global musical production: it is aligned with the autonomous principle, and against the heterogenous principle upheld by pop-rock music. This field has operated separately from similar debates around artistic value and hierarchization in pop-rock, except when the two genres overlap in what Kevin Fellezs (2011)—via Gillian Rose (1992)—calls the “broken middle” of jazz-rock fusion. In any case, the presence of jazz cosmopolitanism as a worldwide phenomenon distinct from pop-rock aesthetics suggests that Regev, with his Borg-like enthusiasm for the “already existing singular world culture,” may be putting the cart before the horse.¹²

● *World* ▲

It is important to note that both “scene” and “field,” as conceptualized by Straw, Jackson, and Bourdieu, are spatial constructs. For Jackson, the scene is “provisionally understood as a spatial formation” (54); for Straw, it is “cultural space”; for Bourdieu, it is a spatial metaphor. These three interpretations, ranging from the concrete to the conceptual, bound my uses of the terms as well. However, the “world” metaphor—articulated by Howard Becker in his 1982 book *Art Worlds*—is not a spatial one. In his critique of Bourdieu's use of the term “field,” Becker, in

¹² In case the reference to the Borg is unfamiliar to the reader: this refers to a hostile alien species in the universe of the television and film series *Star Trek* who are known for their slogans “Resistance is futile” and “You will be assimilated.”

an epilogue to a revised edition of the book, notes, “Bourdieu described the social arrangements in which art is made—what he calls a field—as if it were a field of forces in physics rather than a lot of people doing something together” (2008:374). Becker, by contrast, coined the term “art world” as a framework for understanding the variegated and expansive possibilities that exist when a lot of people do something together. As he explains,

The metaphor of world—which does not seem to be at all true of the metaphor of field—contains people, all sorts of people, who are in the middle of doing something that requires them to pay attention to each other, to take account consciously of the existence of others and to shape what they do in the light of what others do. (375)

Becker’s characterization rings especially true with my experience playing, talking, and listening with jazz musicians and fans. This also resonates with the Afrofuturist orientation of many jazz musicians; for example, Sun Ra wrote a song in 1978 entitled “There Are Other Worlds (They Have Not Told You Of)”. In this formulation, there is not a single field of constrained space, but an *outer* space, beyond Bourdieu’s space of possibles, that can be imagined and put into practice through art-making.

To discuss the musical in terms of Becker’s “art world” concept requires a modest reorganization of terminology. In his 1979 essay “What Can We Learn When They Sing? Vocal Genres of the Suyá Indians of Central Brazil,” Anthony Seeger argues, “Our assumption that music is an ‘art,’ a primarily aesthetic and therefore incidental activity, has led us astray” (392). Becker’s term “art world,” on the other hand, moves art into the realm of activity; it shifts our troublesome term “music” into the active process of music-making and allows for analytical attention to “musical worlds” in which these processes take place.¹³ The “musical,” as a

¹³ Although I am familiar with Christopher Small’s (1998) proposal that the term *musicizing* be used to denote this process, I prefer the term “music-making,” which is more widely used outside of academic circles, characterizes the activity as a creative process, and does not have the word “sick” imbedded within.

dimension of human phenomena with etymological roots in Western aesthetics, incorporates both the sonic and the cultural. It is distinct from speech as a mode of communication, as noted by Charles Seeger in his 1962 essay “Music as a Tradition of Communication, Discipline, and Play,” and has an important role in the organization of human social life. As Anthony Seeger puts it, for many “music is a fundamental part of social life, not merely one of its options” (392).

And as Feld (2012) argues, it is human stories that exemplify the complexities, contradictions, differences, and struggles at play beyond the jazz field (and the vision of a “singular world culture” that helps to disseminate it). These stories provide the threads through which we can begin to understand the nuanced human potentialities of the jazz world, which exists both within and beyond specific scenes or even the transnational field. It is, to translate a slogan from the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, “A world where many worlds fit.”

▲ *Space* ■

Rather than a metaphor of geographic coordinates and stylistic barometers, I imagine the global span of jazz today—following both Sun Ra and Henri Lefebvre— as *jazz space*. For Sun Ra (as is evident in the title of the 1973 feature film in which he stars), space is *the place*—the site of Afrofuturist possibility beyond the banalities of Earthly oppression; for Lefebvre (1974), space situated the political imperative to ground resistance in the everyday lives of city-dwellers, the site of capitalist spatiality’s reproduction. Lefebvre imagined spatiality as the interplay between three kinds of space: perceived space, or that which we could experience through our sense perceptions; conceived space, or that which our minds project onto reality; and lived space, that which is both “real-and-imagined” in the everyday lives of human beings. Lefebvre’s trialectics map elegantly onto jazz space as well, which consists of a similar trialectic: perceived space as the encounter with sound in real time; conceived space as the mediated inscription and

circulation of recorded sound; and lived space as the lived totality of systems and institutions that reproduce those sounds in society. This includes both the lived experiences of live musicians, audience members, studio musicians, and record buyers, as well as educational institutions, which have taken on an increasing role in the reproduction of jazz space since the 1960s.

These isomorphisms operate in jazz space in a manner that can also be described by Karin Knorr Cetina's term "global microstructures—that is, patterns of relatedness and coordination that are global in scope but microsocial in character and that assemble and link global domains" (2002:907). Global microstructures contribute to the strong sense of connection across vast geographies that I have witnessed among jazz musicians during my travels. I should add, however, that they are still deeply affected by worldwide asymmetries of economic development and other similar power dynamics.

▲ *Listening* ●

Listening perhaps is the most important microsocial act that constitutes today's jazz world. As mentioned earlier, Prouty argues convincingly for an understanding of jazz today as a "community built on listening" (2012:44). As I hear it, listening is the medium through which to understand the conceived dimension of jazz today—the powerful aesthetic affinities that magnetize jazz musicians and fans around the world are formed primarily through sound. This affects the ways in which often remarkably similar modes of listening allow for resonant engagements in jazz space, even across geographical distance and other cultural differences. By drawing my attention to listening, I offer a response to James Clifford's (1986) call in his introduction to the edited volume *Writing Culture*: "But what of the ethnographic ear?" (12)

Ethnomusicological literature, especially in the past thirty years, offers several useful approaches to ethnographic listening. Deborah Wong's 2004 book *Speak It Louder! Asian*

Americans Making Music, is one exemplary case; in it, she includes ethnographic interviews with listeners as well as performers, underscoring and situating listening approaches across a vast array of interviews. Thomas Greenland's 2016 book *Jazzing: New York City's Unseen Scene* also focuses its attention on the music's devoted listening audience. He shows that as with Wong's listeners, jazz audiences are formed by the microsociality of listening; in addition, jazz musicians are similarly constructed in the moment of improvised music-making, which can include feedback from an audience. In her 2008 essay, "Hearing, Seeing, and Perceptual Agency," the pioneering jazz ethnographer Ingrid Monson defines listening as a type of "perceptual agency—the conscious focus of sensory attention that can yield differing experiences of the same event" (537). Following this definition, I understand jazz listening as the auditory perceptual agency that informs jazz space and jazz practice—that which brings jazz sounds into being in a given moment for a given set of listeners.

As Prouty notes, this does not only take place in the space of live performance; there also exists a "*recording-listening continuum . . . stretching across boundaries determined only by where and when a recording is played*" (43). Telling the story of his first encounter with Ghanaian experimentalist Nii Noi Nortey, a fellow lifelong devotee of the music of John Coltrane, Feld describes one important consequence of this repeated act of listening. He writes, "I was knocked out by this moment of contact with Nii Noi, by the sensation that as complete strangers we could so instantly know each other, by the sensation that we might equally embody closely overlapping genealogies of listening" (2012:16). I had a similar experience during my first travels in South America in 2005, when I attended the Trombonanza Festival de Trombones in Santa Fe, Argentina, spending the week swapping records, stories, and licks with a cohort of young Argentines who shared my obsession with J.J. Johnson, Carl Fontana, and Fred Wesley.

▲ Practice ▲

In her contribution to the edited collection *Musical Improvisation: Art, Education and Society* (Solis and Nettle 2009), Monson calls for ethnomusicologists to engage in “the interdisciplinary study of music as cultural practice, in order to emphasize a practice-based anthropological conception of culture” (22). She also notes, in the essay on perceptual agency cited above, that active listening is practiced; Lefebvre, meanwhile, emphasizes this dimension of spatial production through his use of the term *spatial practice*. As Lefebvre understands lived space to be real-and-imagined; I understand practice similarly: as space-and-listening or listening in space. By using the term “practice” in this way, I aim to invoke the rich body of theory in anthropology and sociology that Sherry Ortner identified in her 1984 article “Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties” as “a new key symbol of theoretical orientation . . . which may be labeled ‘practice’” (127). She identifies Anthony Giddens’s 1979 book *Central Problems in Social Theory* as one of the turning points in this trend. In it, he calls for theories of structure to account for their practical instantiation in time and space by actual human beings, as “situated practices” (56). Giddens calls this relationship to structural formations—which both reproduces and serves as the manifestation of those structures—“structuration,” or “the ways in which [a] system . . . is produced and reproduced in interaction” (66).

In terms of the worldwide jazz community, then, the “global microstructures” that I discussed earlier could also be considered through Giddens’s lens as “global microstructuration”—that is, the process whereby patterns of relatedness and coordination link global domains through the practice of listening in space. This process sounds itself out at different scales, from the moment of improvised performance in a recording studio or jazz club, to the negotiated improvisations that club owners and university jazz studies professors take to

make space for these practices to continue. In each case, this involves embodied modes of practicing, listening, and space-making.

Further Relevant Literature

Having laid out this theoretical foundation, I now turn to situate it within a broader analytical lineage of jazz studies. This dissertation, of course, is far from the first to study jazz from an anthropological perspective; neither is it the first to account for jazz scenes outside of North America. Each of these two approaches, which I call “Jazz ethnomusicology” and “Jazz worldwide,” could be understood using Soja’s terminology as Firstspace and Secondspace approaches to jazz studies, respectively. Crucially, both take Jazz—with its attendant capital J—as their object of analysis. In this dissertation, I aim to “third” these approaches, synthesizing their useful contributions and also moving beyond the limitations inherent to each. I locate this approach within what I call “jazz transnationalism,” a more recent trend in the field.

Jazz Ethnomusicology

In a 2014 essay in *College Music Symposium*, Gabriel Solis offers a usefully succinct overview of jazz ethnomusicology’s *longue durée*—albeit one that also demonstrates the field’s internalized myopia when drawing its own disciplinary boundaries. Solis traces the genealogy back to anthropologist Richard Waterman’s 1948 essay “Hot Rhythm in Negro Music,” which built on the project of tracing African “retentions” in African-American culture begun by Melville Herskovitz (1941). Waterman, however, was not the only jazz-oriented scholar doing this work at the time—black intellectuals such as Zora Neale Hurston (1928, 1933), Alain Locke (1936), and J.A. Rogers (1925) had already produced a bevy of critical thinking about Jazz and its social and cultural situatedness, although this is not recognized by Waterman nor Solis. Later on, Marshall Stearns, an English professor whose 1956 book *The Story of Jazz* still serves as a

foundational narrative framework for Jazz History today, was also a close follower of Herskovitz. Stearns's anthropology-inspired kinship sketches of jazz styles throughout history can be found in his archive at today's Institute of Jazz Studies, housed at Rutgers University. Herskovitz, in fact, served on the Board of Directors when Stearns founded the IJS in his New York City apartment in 1952. In a similar vein, anthropologist Charles Keil drew heavily on jazz rhythmic principles to assert his argument in a forceful 1966 critique of Leonard Meyer, "Motion and Feeling through Music." Other important monographs that drew attention to the cultural dimensions of jazz practice in the ensuing years included Amiri Baraka (then writing as LeRoi Jones), (1963) A.B. Spellman, (1966) and Albert Murray (1970, 1976).

Into the 1980s, a cohort of scholars in California that included Olly Wilson, Eddie Meadows, George Lewis, James Newton and Anthony Brown was also doing important work that drew from the streams of jazz and ethnomusicology. Olly Wilson's "Black Music as an Art Form" (1983) and Eddie Meadows's "Ethnomusicology and Jazz Research: A Selective Viewpoint" (1987/88) emphasized the diasporic connections between African and African-American musical practices, suggesting new ways for ethnomusicologists to contribute to the study of those practices. Lewis's 1996 article, "Improvised Music After 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives" became an important touchstone for further work in the field. Another important contribution from this circle—Vijay Iyer's 1998 Ph.D. dissertation, "Microstructures of Feel, Macrostructures of Sound: Embodied Cognition in West African and African-American Musics," was advised by both Lewis and Wilson.

Although jazz has been a subject of academic interest for much of the 20th century, the scholarly literature on jazz has expanded dramatically since the 1990s. At the time, many jazz historians were busy defining Jazz, celebrating the remarkable musicianship of many musicians

and settling into a disciplinary canon (DeVeaux 1991). Other work during this time reframed jazz discourse in terms of the emerging field of cultural studies (e.g., Gabbard 1995, O’Meally 2004). The discipline of ethnomusicology contributed significantly to this project’s growth; three major monographs were written based on fieldwork done in New York City during this time. Paul Berliner’s 1994 book *Thinking In Jazz: The Infinite At of Improvisation* is the most exhaustive in its ethnographic detail, while Monson’s *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (1996) focuses on poststructuralist interpretations from linguistic anthropology and Jackson (2012), mentioned earlier, surveys jazz practice in New York as a scene. These works, based on extensive fieldwork, analysis of recordings, and in-depth interviews, nonetheless tend not to discriminate between Jazz, jazz, and the New York jazz scene—a feature that many scholars have since begun to expand upon through research on jazz elsewhere. The only definition of their field of ethnographic study in question comes from Jackson, who describes the music upon which his work focuses as “The kind of music played on WBGO,” a Newark-based jazz radio station that is still central to the city’s jazz soundscape. WBGO’s longtime producer Becca Pulliam, in fact, played an important role in both Monson and Jackson’s ethnographic projects. Surprisingly, however, none of these projects engaged with radio production as constitutive of jazz practice; this has only recently been analyzed in a 2014 Ph.D. dissertation by Aaron J. Johnson. Another more recent ethnographic take on jazz practice is Howard Becker and Robert Faulkner’s 2009 book *Do You Know . . . ? : The Jazz Repertoire in Action*, a sociological analysis of how jazz musicians negotiate unrehearsed performances from a shared set of musical assumptions.

Ethnomusicologists have also interfaced with jazz via the hybrid genre of Latin Jazz; this lineage can be traced back to Ernest Borneman’s prescient 1969 article “Jazz and the Creole

Tradition” in the German journal *Jazzforschung* and John Storm Roberts’s *The Latin Tinge* (1979). Another significant monograph, Steven Loza’s *Barrio Rhythms: Mexican American Music in Los Angeles* (1993) also deals extensively with jazz, as does his 1999 biography of Tito Puente (a musician listed on Stearns’s jazz kinship diagram in the 1950s). Chris Washburne, a practicing salsa trombonist and ethnomusicologist, has also contributed to this body of literature (1997, 2008). More recent work in this vein includes Jairo Moreno’s (2004) article situating the practices within black modernity. Alex Stewart (2007) also dedicates a chapter to contemporary Latin Jazz big bands.

Jazz Worldwide

Given that the aforementioned research has involved ethnographic work done entirely in the United States—with jazz historians also focusing almost entirely on North American artists—it is useful to consider a subgenre of the field that has existed alongside this work: jazz as it has been practiced elsewhere. Canonical discourses in jazz history usually include three important moments of transnational contact: the collaboration between Gillespie and Pozo, the oeuvre of Roma-French guitar virtuoso Django Reinhardt (e.g. Givan 2010), and the encounter between Brazilian *bossa nova* artists and American jazz stars such as Stan Getz. Recent efforts at canonization, such as the revised *Jazz: The Smithsonian Anthology* (released in 2011), also gesture toward the significance of recent work by non-North American artists. These contributions are sometimes paraded as evidence of Jazz as “America’s gift to the world” (a common phrase used by promoters of the music abroad) but associate these developments as stylistic innovations made by the North American musicians involved (e.g. Gillespie or Getz).

Much of the scholarship on jazz outside of the United States has emerged since the 1990s, with a notable outlier of particular relevance to this dissertation: S. Frederick Starr’s 1983

book *Red and Hot*, a history of jazz in Russia. The book follows the reception of jazz there, which featured wild swings from fervent enthusiasm to aggressive official hostility over the course of the 20th century. E. Taylor Atkins, who published a comprehensive and thoughtful history of jazz in Japan (2001) as well as an anthology of scholarly writings on jazz around the world (2003) has been one of the most fervent advocates for the study of jazz as a worldwide phenomenon. More recently, anthropological approaches based on single-site participant observation have contributed to this body of knowledge, such as Nanette de Jong (2010) in Curaçao, Ryan McCormack (2011) in Bulgaria, Mark Lomanno (2012) in the Canary Islands, Dave Wilson (2015) in Macedonia, and Siv Lie (2017) with the Manouche community in France. Other works include David Ake's ethnographic study of U.S.-American jazz musicians in France (2010), and Carol Muller's biography of South African jazzwoman Sathima Bea Benjamin (2011).

At the same time, jazz historians around the world have been writing locally focused histories in various places, especially across Latin America (e.g. Derbez 1997, Acosta 2003, Menanteau 2003, Corti 2015)—some of which were gathered into the 2013 edited collection *Jazz En Español: Derivas Hispanoamericanas* by Julián Ruesga Bono—and Europe (e.g. Heffley 2005, Cerchiari et al 2012). British jazz critic Stuart Nicholson even published a bold provocation in his 2014 book on European jazz: *Is Jazz Dead? Or Has It Just Moved to a New Address?* William Bares (2009) proposes an “eternal triangle” between Europe, North America, and Africa as a heuristic for better understanding the struggle over validation of European jazz histories. Also, it bears noting that this overview is limited by my reading proficiency to works in English and Spanish; many books have been written in this genre by local authors in their own

languages, such as Sergei Belechenko's 2005 book *Синкопы на Оби* ("Syncopy Na Obi"/Syncopation on the Ob), a history of jazz in Novosibirsk, Siberia written in Russian.

Perhaps the most significant recent contribution to this body of literature is the 2016 book *Jazz Worlds/World Jazz*, edited by Philip Bohlman and Goffredo Plastino. The collection of essays is full of relevant and well-researched reports from around the world, framed as a deepening of the discourse on Jazz around the world as an anti-canonical project. The limitations of this framework, however, are evident in its subtle omissions. For example, the authors dedicate a full subsection of their introduction to the topic "Race" without mentioning blackness. Perhaps most relevant to this dissertation, the authors also single out Latin American and Russian examples for exclusion! They argue that this is because the collected essays "do not reconfirm a teleology leading to the old canons. They circumvent the assumptions that world jazz must contain the canons of the past, say, of Latin jazz or jazz in the Soviet Union during the Cold War" (36). The authors do not cite evidence of either "canon" in English, Spanish, or Russian; my research suggests that writing about jazz practice in both regions could hardly qualify as "canonical." Furthermore, by asserting that Jazz in Latin America can be reduced to Latin Jazz (which came into being in New York City), they display another faulty assumption. Perhaps they are referring to the privileged place of Cold War diplomacy and Latin jazz in some recent English-language jazz textbooks' narratives; however, if this were the case, then this does not explain their inclusion of a chapter on Django Reinhardt. And even this collection cannot avoid New York: in this case, through Kristen McGee's remarkable study of pianist Hazel Scott. By mapping the focal locations of each chapter, it can be seen clearly that the formation is, geographically speaking at least, Eurocentric:



Fig. 0.4: Locations referenced in Jazz Worlds/World Jazz

Lost in the jargon of the editors’ cartographic coordinates—place, indigenization/globalization, history, and race—is the fact that these essays began as a pair of English-language academic conferences in Newcastle, U.K. and Chicago, U.S.A. I suspect that the exclusions are more likely a product of scholarly networking than systematic anti-canoncity. Nonetheless, by not accounting for this, the authors seem to replace the Jazz Canon with what Steven Loza (2006) has called the “Euroamericentric Ethnomusicological Canon.” By comparing this map with the following map of global population, we see how this differs from the geographical distribution of the world’s human beings:

UN-Adjusted Population Count, 2015: Global

Gridded Population of the World, Version 4 (GPWv4)

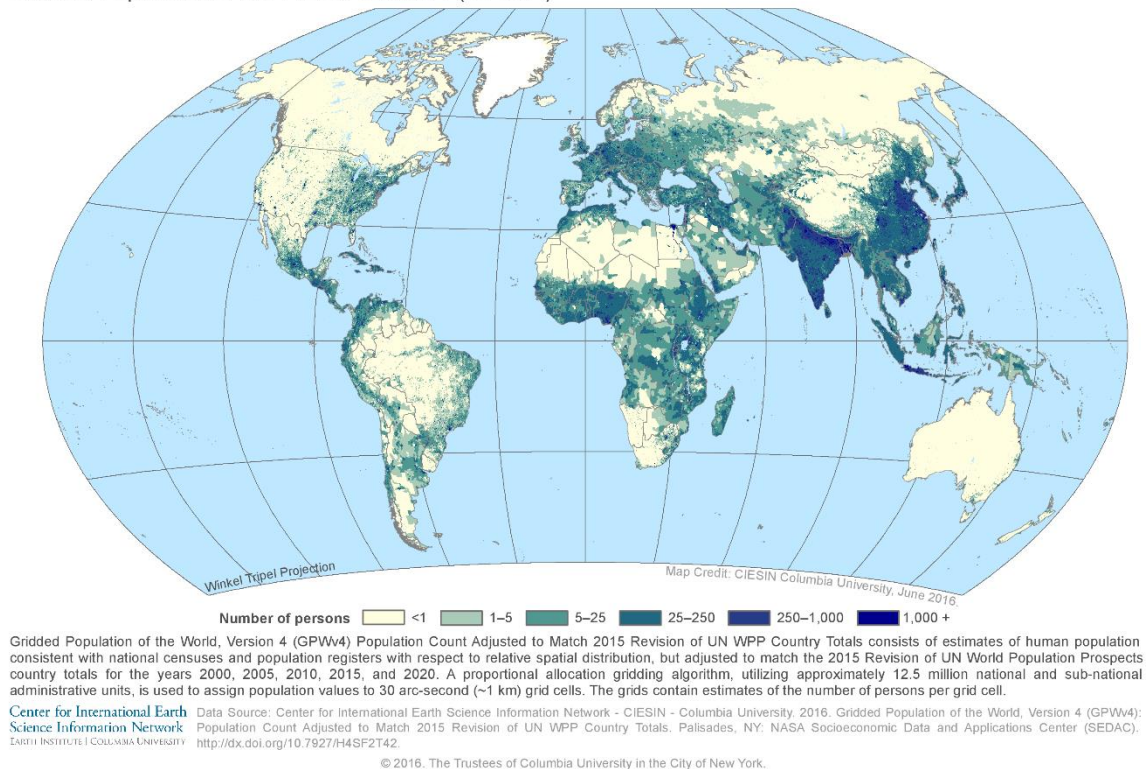


Fig. 0.5: UN-Adjusted Population Count, 2015 (Source: Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network, 2016)

The discrepancy between these two maps, one of which clusters between longitudes 9°W and 51°E, and the other from 67°E to 140°E, suggests that work remains to be done on the project of situating jazz practice in the world, and accounting for the very human practice of creating the jazz world.

Jazz Transnationalism

To be fair, any single book that purports to render coherent the chaotic multiplicities of the jazz world will inevitably make omissions. One alternative to this approach has been explored by a handful of jazz monographs that take jazz transnationalism as central to their thesis, as this dissertation does. Rather than making claims to totality or its negation, these books

document the ways in transnational jazz networks arose in response to the motivating forces of particular historical moments. Two books, Penny von Eschen's *Satchmo Blows Up the World* (2006) and Lisa Davenport's *Jazz Diplomacy* (2013), focus on the role that jazz musicians and advocates played in Cold War-era cultural diplomacy. Mark Laver's *Jazz Sells: Music, Marketing and Meaning* (2014), the first title in Routledge's new series *Transnational Studies in Jazz*, focuses on jazz as it is used in advertising.

Taken together, these projects hardly conform to a single vision of Jazz (or even jazz)—perhaps the only thread tying them together is their collective engagement with jazz practice in one way or another, and the fact that each stretches jazz outside of the boundaries discussed earlier. They certainly demonstrate that ethnomusicologists have offered a good deal to this field of scholarship. It is my intention to build upon this diverse body of work by combining ethnographic insight with detailed attention to geographical peripheries and global flows.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is organized into four main chapters connected by four narrative interludes, imagined as “mixing” moves akin to those made by a producer in a music studio.¹⁴ The chapters are organized roughly chronologically, tracing a jazz history anchored in the places of the three clubs where my fieldwork took place.

Chapter 1: Throwing Jazz History a Jazz Curve

This dissertation's opening chapter begins with a synchronic analysis of jazz histories in each of the three fieldwork sites (Los Angeles, Santiago, and Novosibirsk) at three moments in time—1917, 1959, and 1990. In doing so, this chapter takes the route of lower-case jazz history, which augments the more familiar Jazz History told by Ken Burns and many others. Harkening

¹⁴ I first encountered this device in the work of Steven Feld (2012).

back to the word's first usage in baseball, this chapter argues that spatially aware listening for jazz practice—this project's central method—throws the music's conservative gatekeepers a mean jazz curve. This strategy is a necessary intervention that opens further space for jazz practice around the world.

Fade In: Portland to Los Angeles (1991-2011)

This narrative interlude picks up shortly after 1990, in Portland, Oregon. In it, I tell the story of how I found my way into the jazz world—despite growing up in the United States' whitest metropolis. The story then follows my jazz forays in Amherst, Massachusetts; Santiago, Chile; Oakland, California; Newark, New Jersey; and Los Angeles, California, where I quickly found a new sense of home at bluewhale.

Chapter 2: Creating Space for Creative Music at bluewhale, Live Jazz + Art Space

The first of three local case studies, this chapter is based upon three and a half years of sustained fieldwork research at the Los Angeles jazz club bluewhale. During that time, the club blossomed into a uniquely vibrant space for improvised music in Los Angeles. This chapter situates the arrival of this club in the broader jazz scene, informed by field notes and interviews with owner Joon Lee, his employees, and some of the dedicated musicians that have made bluewhale their creative home base. Architecturally, the club has several striking features that echo some of the central musical aesthetics of jazz practice: it is clearly a jazz club, in conversation with the models established by iconic New York establishments, while also showing unique features.

Lee's background as a jazz improviser is central to his understanding of what has afforded his success. Operating a popular jazz club is almost always a labor of love for the club owner—Lee is no exception. These club spaces open seams for the local cadre of jazz

aficionados to gather and “play the breaks” together; they must do this, however, in a restaurant-and-entertainment marketplace with little subsidy from the state. At bluewhale, Lee has sought to carve out space in a community that needed it—his own—acting assertively, creatively, and virtuosically within both the physical and social constraints and disjunctures of his environment. Despite many practical vicissitudes—mostly related to the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood’s prickly landlords—Lee has managed to galvanize a community of collaborators to join him in making space for jazz practice here.

Crossfade: Los Angeles to Santiago (2012-2015)

This interlude tells the story of my return to Santiago, nearly seven years since my first pair of visits in 2005 and 2006, alongside other jazz travels that took place while I was based in Los Angeles. I discuss my first return for a monthlong preliminary fieldwork study in 2013, where I first performed at Thelonious, as well as my first concert at bluewhale, in 2015, at which I bade farewell to L.A. before launching into the next phase of fieldwork.

Chapter 3: Making the Hang at Thelonious, Lugar de Jazz

Santiago’s Thelonious, Lugar de Jazz is the focus of this project’s second case study. Opened in 2003 by the Chilean modernist poet Erwin Díaz, the club has since become his main occupation—and also his primary residence. When the massive earthquake that struck Chile in February 2010 claimed the famed Club de Jazz de Santiago as one of its casualties, Thelonious became the city’s main center for jazz activity. Even before the earthquake, however, it already served as the primary gathering place for the scene’s younger musicians. These ardent experimentalists have shown a striking degree of solidarity and entrepreneurship in cultivating the conditions for their artistic practice. In 2010, that took the form of Discos Pendiente, the country’s first jazz record label. Some of them have since moved to the United States, where they are successfully integrating themselves into the scene, and yet still maintain close ties to

Santiago through Discos Pendiente. (In fact, three of them performed at bluewhale during my fieldwork in Los Angeles.)

Now that some of the young musicians from the Thelonious scene are finding success in the United States, the club has become an important node of transnational jazz collaboration. This chapter explores one especially important microsocial act that constitutes today's jazz world: hanging. Used as a noun and as a verb, the hang, or *to hang*, is a location and process of social interaction that has coexisted alongside jazz since its early days in New Orleans and prohibition-era New York City. Like jazz itself, this four-letter word carries multiple meanings for musicians; it is a central characteristic of jazz improvisation, with roots in urban settings. A space where social interactions are less inhibited by dominant cultural mores, the hang affords improvised discourse on many different levels. As a form of social engagement, organized loosely around a mutual musical interest, the hang offers a compelling site for ethnomusicological inquiry, which can only be understood through attentive listening—not idly “hanging out,” but *hanging*.

In the second half of the chapter, I attempt to reconcile jazz practice with the literature on political resistance. At first listen, wordless modern jazz projects seem to pale in comparison to the more vociferous critiques of the status quo offered by their punk and hip-hop counterparts such as Ana Tijoux or Pussy Riot. But Nicolás Vera, one of the young Chilean jazz ringleaders on the Thelonious scene, sees his work as a part of this movement—which he articulates through subtle wordplay that draws on the double meaning of resistance as both social and *electrical*.

Remix: Santiago to Novosibirsk (2016)

Getting from Santiago to Siberia proved to be quite an adventure, and I tell the story of the globe-spanning, often-improvised, five-month journey from Santiago to Novosibirsk.

Although this period was extremely chaotic, it provided an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and limitations of ethnographic study and global scale—as well as a sense of how truly massive our planet is.

Chapter 4: The Field of Improvised Listening at Truba Jazz Club

Siberia, one of the Western imaginary's quintessential elsewhere, is in fact the home of over 40 million people; its largest city, Novosibirsk, is a regional cultural center with its own jazz scene. Over 16,000 kilometers from Santiago, this remote metropolis tests the limits to which jazz practices create global microstructures. Fieldwork in Novosibirsk took place over the course of just one month in the fall of 2016; that, alongside my improving but nonetheless limited command of the Russian language, makes for an ethnographic report that is far from the Geertzian ideal of "thick description." Instead, this chapter delves into the ways in which this very extensive detour—into what one of my Russian interlocutors called "the thin layer"—instead "thickened" my understanding of the jazz world, while highlighting the threads that connect Truba to it.

Fade Out: Novosibirsk to Portland (2016-2017)

This final interlude follows my return from the abbreviated stay in Novosibirsk to circle back to where I began the story, in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. Along the way, I stopped in New York City and Washington, DC to visit jazz friends and participate in the Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Conference. Exhausted, disoriented, and jet-lagged, I returned to my hometown to sort out the mess of jazz experiences that I had just witnessed, and began to present this material at academic conferences while weaving it into dissertation form the following year.

Conclusion: The Space of Jazz to Come

Taken together, these seven chapters address this dissertation's central questions—where and why do people engage with the jazz world today—from different geographical and theoretical angles. All are grounded in my own jazz practice, deeply informed by the ethnographic imperative of jazz anthropology. In this dissertation's concluding chapter, I explore how these questions gesture toward a global understanding of the complex ethnographic present in which these musical improvisers and listeners find themselves today—and speculate about the future in store for them in the rest of the 21st century.

Chapter 1

Throwing Jazz History a Jazz Curve

BEN'S JAZZ CURVE

“I got a new curve this year,” softly murmured Henderson yesterday, “and I’m goin’ to pitch one or two of them tomorrow. I call it the Jazz ball because it wobbles and you simply can’t do anything with it.” As prize fighters who invent new punches are always the first to get their’s (sic) Ben will probably be lucky if some guy don’t hit that new Jazzer ball a mile today. It is to be hoped that some unintelligent compositor does not spell that the Jag ball. That’s what it must be at that if it wobbles.

Los Angeles Times, April 2, 1912¹

The above excerpt is the first known use of the word “Jazz” in writing: a Los Angeles sportswriter describing Portland Beavers pitcher Ben Henderson’s new knuckleball. Having laid out the goals of this dissertation in the previous chapter, I will now follow the wobbly contours of jazz histories in California, Chile, and Russia to frame a broader approach to understanding Jazz History. In doing so, I aim to demonstrate how spatially and geographically attuned historiography can productively expand our notions of the jazz lineage. It builds on Sherrie Tucker’s (2008) call to listen for jazz in a manner that is “more in tune with its musical and social complexity” by connecting these faraway places through the jazz practices that circulated globally in each historical moment. In this telling of lower-case jazz history, I follow the processes by which the word “jazz” became inflected onto social and musical practices in three particular places at three particular historical moments: 1917, 1959, and 1990. Indeed, this is one of the few words with origins in the early 20th century that has traveled around the world without translation—earning it the American Dialect Society’s recognition as the “Word of the Century”

¹ The last two sentences are likely a reference to Henderson’s public struggles with alcoholism; see Brown (2014) for more about Henderson’s brief baseball career.

in 2000. The years were chosen for their significance as signposts in the canonical telling of Jazz History: the 1917 release of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's "Livery Stable Blues" is often cited as the moment of the music's birth; 1959 represents the music's "Golden Age" with canonical recordings made by Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, Charles Mingus, and Ornette Coleman; and 1990 marks what I call the "End of Jazz History," by which point a canonical history was being celebrated in most academic institutions and a historically oriented trend, led by trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, dominated the music's reception.²

This approach responds to Elsa Barkley Brown's call for historians to consider "everybody talking at once, multiple rhythms being played simultaneously" (1992:298) and is inspired by William F. Sewell's approach, outlined in his 2005 book *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*. Sewell argues that "every cultural analysis necessarily entails a synchronic moment of this sort, but ... the synchronic moment should be dialectically related to an equally necessary diachronic moment" (178). Sewell describes synchronic analysis as one in which "time is *suspended* or *abolished* analytically so that things that actually occur in the flow of time are treated as part of a uniform moment or epoch in which they simply coexist" (182). By tracing vignettes from these three places in these three historical moments, I aim to outline something of a thumbnail sketch of a global jazz history that is not "haunted by an excess of diachrony" (184)—an element of Sewell's critique that applies to most written Jazz History.³ One additional consequence of this overreliance on diachrony is that it also increases the difficulty of attending to the geographical breadth of jazz phenomena.

² See Chapter 7 in Porter (2002) for a thorough analysis of the Marsalis phenomenon

³ See Chapter 4 of Rodriguez (2011) for an elaboration upon this critique

What follows is far from an exhaustive history of jazz practice in any (let alone all) of the three locations; rather, it offers an analysis of jazz practice at each moment that draws on the traces that connect them across a wide geographical breadth. It also points toward the particularities of local diachrony threaded through the past century in each place. This technique is adapted from Edward Soja, who describes a similar approach to “mapping” the histories of Paris and Los Angeles his 1996 book *Thirdspace* (218-228). Although this chapter is organized to prioritize synchronic analysis, the diachronic threads can be read by following the three sections from each location in chronological order:

	Diachronic: Calif.	Diachronic: Chile⁴	Diachronic: Russia⁵
Synchronic: 1917	1917: California pp. 47-51	1917: Chile pp. 51-54	1917: Russia pp. 54-57
Synchronic: 1959	1959: California pp. 57-61	1959: Chile pp. 61-64	1959: Russia pp. 64-67
Synchronic: 1990	1990: California pp. 68-70	1990: Chile pp. 70-73	1990: Russia pp. 73-76

Fig. 1.1: Table of sections sorted by synchronic and diachronic relationships

1917: California

In his 1998 essay “Way out West on Central,” published in the edited collection *California Soul: Music of African Americans in Los Angeles*, Michael Bakan traces the arrival of musical practices that came to be known as jazz to the arrival of a group of New Orleans ragtime musicians led by Bill Johnson in 1908. This ensemble formed the core of the Creole Band, which by 1917 was a fixture on the vaudeville circuit and featured cornetist Freddie Keppard, who had moved to Los Angeles in 1914. As Bakan notes, this influx of black musical activity in Los Angeles was afforded by the expansion of railroad service to California in 1915, as well as the

⁴ See Menanteau (2003) for a diachronic overview of jazz history in Chile

⁵ See Belechenko (2005) for a diachronic overview of jazz history in Novosibirsk, Siberia

expansion of road networks for automobile use. At least one LA-based ensemble, Wood Wilson's Syncopators, began billing itself as a "Famous Jass Band" around 1916. By 1918, the Black and Tan Orchestra, which had arrived in 1916, had changed its name to the Black and Tan Jazz Orchestra and incorporated New Orleans-bred trumpeter Ernest Coycault (who had originally moved to L.A. in 1908 with Bill Johnson). As the quote at the beginning of this chapter suggests, the word "jazz" was already common in Pacific League baseball vernacular. *San Francisco Bulletin* sportswriter E.T. "Scoop" Gleeson even went so far as to define the term for the readers of his column on March 6, 1913: "What is the 'jazz'? Why, it's a little of that 'old life,' the 'gin-i-ker,' the 'pep,' otherwise known as the enthusiasalum." It appears that within about two years, the word was being used by musicians to associate their music with similar qualities. In this process, the term "jazz" was repurposed from its original usage in U.S. West Coast baseball circles and mapped onto this sphere of creative musical activity—in Los Angeles and elsewhere.⁶

It bears noting that many important players in this milieu hailed from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. One pair of Dallas-born musicians, John C. and Benjamin F. "Reb" Spikes, had moved to Los Angeles as children in 1897 and would go on to serve many important functions for the emerging jazz scene from the 1910s onward. The aforementioned Black and Tan Jazz Orchestra also hailed from Texas. This reinforces Lawrence Gushee's important point, in his essay "New Orleans-Area Musicians on the West Coast, 1908-1925," that

The emigration of black musicians from New Orleans was significant, but the ultimate effect uncertain. It needs to be remembered that there was an even more significant influx of musicians from Texas and Arizona, providing major competition for players from New Orleans. It is reasonable to claim for the Louisianians, black and white alike, a catalytic

⁶ The first print references connecting the word "jazz" to music appear in Chicago in 1915; in a 1957 letter to *Variety* magazine, Bert Kelley, a banjoist originally from San Francisco, claimed to have been the first to use the term for his own band when he moved to Chicago in late 1914. See Wilton (2007) for a thorough recounting of the word's origins in California baseball circles.

role in teaching a generation of musicians how to take the corners off ragtime and let the music breathe, but in the present state of knowledge it can only be a suggestion.

In other words, Black New Orleans musicians in Los Angeles during this time found themselves competing for work in an emerging commercial music milieu circulating through newly built North American railroad networks. This also coincides with the Great Migration of millions of African Americans from the U.S. South to urban centers elsewhere. As Gushee notes, U.S. Census data suggest that between 1910 and 1920, the number of Black musicians in both Los Angeles and Chicago increased while the numbers of Black musicians in New Orleans decreased. Rather than assume, as Bakan does, that Black New Orleans musicians represented a “genuine link” (34) to a Jazz Tradition rooted in the Crescent City, I hear them as active participants in a contested, improvised, creative struggle over the sound, meaning, and value of this emerging musical phenomenon.

This is perhaps best illustrated by considering the case of Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton, who moved from New Orleans to Los Angeles in 1917 to perform at the Cadillac Café on Central Avenue. In his 2003 book *Dead Man Blues: Jelly Roll Morton Way Out West*, Phil Pastras painstakingly documents the activities of the pianist and his circle during his years on the North American West Coast from 1917-23. What emerges is much more than a portrait of Morton’s life at the time—it also shows how he was intertwined with a milieu of fellow creative entrepreneurs through a combination of close friendships and friendly business rivalry. His main circle of friends included Bill and Dink Johnson, with whom he had played as a teenager in New Orleans and Biloxi, Mississippi, as well as their sister, who changed her name from Bessie Johnson to Anita Gonzales when she moved West around 1910. Morton and Gonzales began a romantic partnership shortly after Morton’s arrival in Los Angeles in 1917, and the surplus generated from her successful Las Vegas saloon, The Arcade, provided the financial backing for

most of their subsequent ventures up and down the West Coast from 1917-1923. The Spikes brothers were his primary musical rivals and also occasional business partners; in 1917, they were based in San Francisco's Barbary Coast entertainment district and returned to Los Angeles the following year.

Throughout this time, Los Angeles existed as one node within a circuit of popular music and theater performances. In his 2016 dissertation on the circulation of jazz practices in early 20th-century colonial Southeast Asia, Frederick Schenker frames the dissemination of popular music through the concept of the circuit, noting that these already existed around the world:

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, performers in circuses, minstrel troupes, acting groups, and musical ensembles regularly traveled from performance to performance through a system of connected theaters they described as a "circuit." These "circuits," which included the Keith Circuit in the U.S., the "African Theatres, Ltd." Circuit in South Africa, or the Tivoli Circuit in Australia, existed on regional, national or colonial scales. (50)

For example, Morton had first collaborated with the Spikes brothers in 1912 as part of the minstrel show "McCabe's Troubadors" before their work together in California later in the decade (Gushee 1985). And although Morton appears to have come to Los Angeles for a stable performance opportunity at the Cadillac, within a few months he had moved on and spent the next five years as far north as Vancouver, Canada, and as far south as Tijuana, Mexico.

Los Angeles was also home to another pioneering young musician who shared Morton's first name: Ferdinand Rudolph von Grofé, better known as Ferde Grofé. He had moved to Los Angeles as a young boy with his mother, a pianist, in 1902. By 1917, Grofé was a busy professional, proficient on multiple instruments and doubling on viola and celeste with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. That same year in San Francisco, Paul Whiteman took leave from his job with the San Francisco Symphony to explore more lucrative performance opportunities in the burgeoning San Francisco dance band market. The following year, Grofé moved to San

Francisco, where the two met and formed Whiteman's first jazz band (Rayno 2003: 26-27). The band then moved back to Southern California, where they had become popular enough to contemplate moving to the East Coast by the end of the decade.

Whiteman and Grofé finally did decide to move eastward in 1920, where their music served as the soundtrack to the infamous excesses of the city's Jazz Age. In his 1931 essay, "Echoes of the Jazz Age," F. Scott Fitzgerald reflects on the way in which the word "jazz" came to be used among the bourgeoisie in New York: "The word jazz in its progress toward respectability has meant first sex, then dancing, then music" (3). At the same time, Fitzgerald's essay shows how the three were inextricably linked to one another throughout the Jazz Age era, which he dates from 1920-1929. In California, we see that already by 1917 the word was being applied to an emergent popular music form by white and black musicians alike, and that it drew upon an even wider set of signifiers than the three identified by Fitzgerald. This emergence relied on networks of interaction between musicians in both Los Angeles and San Francisco, many of whom arrived from other parts of the country.

1917: Chile

In December of the same year, U.S. Merchant Marine Truman Blair Cook set sail from Oregon toward South America as an engineer on the *Madrugada*. His diary from this voyage was later published in *Oregon Historical Quarterly* (1976). The following entry describes his crew's arrival in Arica, Chile—a small mining town near the country's northern border:

Dec. 28. Arrived at Arica [in northern Chile] and dropped anchor at 11 a.m. Seems good to see signs of people. . . . Running from the beach is a pier of concrete and steel with locomotive cranes that lift the cargos from the lighters onto the flatcars. When anyone from the ship goes ashore they are rowed in by boatmen for a peso . . . each way. If after six up to ten p.m. he soaks you from 3 to 10 pesos if he thinks he can get away with it. Arica is the port for the railroad that runs back into Bolivia and Bolivia's outlet for her rich mines.

The town is of about 2,000 population, mostly Chileans, Spanish and Indians. Only a few Americans and few more English can be found, but all speak Spanish. . . . The whole town reeks of the smell that is common to all of the towns in this country. Everything is very high and doubly so to an American, as they see you coming, so to speak.

The town is very proud of its jazz band and its bright uniforms. It plays every other evening and Sunday morning and evening. I found it hard to talk to the people at first but now I know a few Spanish words and get along in a way. I have only been ashore four times as I always come back with enough fleas to keep me in misery for a week. The town is full of them and the dogs' backs are brown with them. The natives seem to be entirely ignorant of them. The only trees to be seen are the few in the plaza and a few more in the streets. The plaza is a jumble of trees, flowers, historic cannon, and statues of the liberation of the country. (119-120)

This entry is a rather typical seaman's description of a maritime voyage. What makes it remarkable, however—and also vexing—is that it refers to the town's "jazz band," and thus is the earliest use of the word that I have found referring to musical activity in Chile.

What makes this reference to the Arica town jazz band vexing, for jazz scholars at least, is that the reference alone does little to describe what the band *sounded like*. It is highly unlikely, for example, that the inhabitants of this remote mining village in the Atacama Desert had heard the Original Dixieland Jazz Band—those sounds being touted as the latest Tin Pan Alley fad in New York at the time. However, it is clear that popular music-making was taking place in the country long before North American recording companies set up studios in Santiago in 1930—according to musicologist Álvaro Menanteau, the first jazz recordings by Chilean musicians were recorded in Buenos Aires in 1926 in an effort to cater to Chilean taste in popular music (2003:27). The group that Cook encountered in Arica was most likely a brass band established by the local *oficina salitrera*, part of a network of company towns set up by British and North American mining corporations in the Atacama Desert during the area's nitrate boom. These were organized along the lines of the "Shanks system" for maximizing labor efficiency in nitrate extraction. According to Chilean historian Eugenio Garcés Feliú, whose 1999 book *Las*

Ciudades del Salitre chronicles life in these desert mining villages, “Soccer matches, musical bands that entertained on Sundays and holidays from the plaza pavilions, and theater, made up the entirety of the few pastimes available to the workers and their families” (40, my translation). It is likely that the music played by these bands would have drawn from popular sheet music that circulated throughout what Michael Denning, in his book *Noise Uprising: The Audiopolitics of a World Musical Revolution*, calls “an archipelago of colonial ports” (38). Like everything else about life there, the repertoire would likely have been supplied by the British and North American mining company managers.

This encounter between a North American merchant marine and this band of Chilean musicians demonstrates that the word “jazz” was used as a way of naming musical activity around the world. The ubiquity of the name is deeply connected to the United States’ role as a global power in the wake of World War I. In his 2105 book *Jazz Sells*, Laver draws on an argument from Ernesto Laclau to drive this point home:

[If] the unity of the object is the retroactive effect of naming itself, then naming is not just the pure nominalistic game of attributing an empty name to a preconstructed subject. It is the discursive construction of the object itself. . . . The essentially performative character of naming is the precondition for all hegemony and politics. (Quoted in Laver, 2015: 231)

The band of uniformed Aricans, then, was only thought to be a “jazz band” by an Oregonian merchant marine—and only documented as such thanks to the archiving of his personal diaries. And given the mention of the “jazz band” alongside complaints of shady business dealings and fleas, it is clear that the performative character of naming something “*jazz*” was structured by Cook’s position as a North American seaman. Whether or not the sounds produced by the “jazz band” in Arica reminded Cook of the popular music that had been circulating in North America at the time, his use of the word “jazz” to describe this remote brass band connects these

practices—which were also conditioned by the similar circumstances produced by the expansion of global capitalism during this time.

In South America’s more cosmopolitan port of Buenos Aires, however, the word “jazz” was being used to describe at least some musical activity by this time: as early as 1914, the Spanish bandleader Eleuterio Yribarren was billing his popular salon ensemble as his “Jazz-Band” (Corti 2015). Santiago and its neighboring port city, Valparaíso, would have been somewhere in between Arica and Buenos Aires in terms of their degree of access to cosmopolitan trends; with the construction of the Panama Canal in 1914, maritime travel along the Pacific coast of South America was no longer necessary for most shipping routes. The cities did, however, continue as important centers of regional political and economic power. Juan Pablo Garrido, the first Chilean bandleader to promote their own “jazz band” in the country, began doing so only in 1924 (Menanteau 2003:29). Earlier references to jazz, dating back at least to 1920, refer to it as part of the wave of social dancing fads that swept the country in the wake of World War I.⁷ Further north, in Lima, newspaper reports of jazz bands first appeared in 1920.

1917: Russia

In Russia, of course, the year 1917 marked a turning point that had little to do with the spread of the word “jazz”: the collapse of the Romanov dynasty and the October Revolution were momentous historical events in and of themselves. Before the Revolution and the civil war that followed, the city now known as Novosibirsk—then called Novonikolayevsk—had grown into one of the region’s largest industrial and financial centers. This was due to its place as a crucial stop on the Trans-Siberian railway, which had recently been completed in 1916 with the construction of its terminal station in the Pacific port city Vladivostok. Sergei Belechenko (2005)

⁷ See Gonzalez, Juan Pablo and Claudio Rolle (2005), especially pp. 538-552.

notes that Novonikolayevsk hosted its first concert of symphonic music in February of the same year, with a production of Rossini's opera *William Tell* (12). The Soviet Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of Novonikolayevsk took power at the end of 1917, controlling the city until the uprising of the Czechoslovak Legions and the White Guards the following year.

Despite the horrors of the war, music-making was nonetheless an aspect of everyday life throughout Russia. As Frederick Starr (1983) notes, "Civil War Russia rang with music. Wherever the White Army was in control—Omsk, Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Odessa, Rostov-on-Don—a frantic nightlife flourished. Music was also to be heard in areas occupied by the Reds" (39). Nevertheless, in his account of Russian Jazz History, the music "did not reach Russia until 1922 and did not take root there until three years later" (39). Starr's approach traces back to the first appearance of the word "jazz" in print (transliterated in the Cyrillic alphabet as джаз)—a product of Valentin Parnakh's evangelism upon hearing the music in Paris. Could it also be the case that the music being played at the onset of the Russian Civil War was also heard as "jazz music," along the lines of how Truman Cook heard the music of Arica's brass bands?

One possibility is that occupying forces supporting the White Army in the Civil War used the term "jazz" to describe the music that accompanied their "frantic nightlife." A 1922 article in the *Japan Advertiser*, which profiles a group of five Austrian musicians performing in Tokyo at the time, points toward this possibility:

Meeting in a prison camp at Tomsk, Russia, about two years ago they organised the present orchestra, and after being freed have preferred to play in Russia rather than return to their native land where conditions are still very unstable. . . . While the men rather frown on jazz, the popularity of which often crowds off the program their favorite classical selections, they have acquired the knack of rendering the latest tunes in a way that should reduce the ranks of Tokyo wall-flowers.

For the dances Mr. Prosenez will play the trap drums instead of the cello, and Mr. Malls will play the trombone instead of the violin. Mr. Malls says that he is indebted to an American negro for his knowledge of how to put tantalizing slurs into his jazz music. It was shortly after the men started playing for dances that they played at a Siberian camp

where some soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces were. The negro took the instrument and before the orchestra left had taught Mr. Malls all of the extra notes that make the "Memphis Blues" so popular in Memphis dark town.⁸ If this story is true, it likely took place in 1920, when the American Expeditionary Force was active in Vladivostok and surrounding railway depots in the Russian Far East.⁹ However, the term “jazz” is only used retroactively to describe the music, suggesting that the term had certainly caught on by 1922, possibly as early as 1920, but does not help determine whether or not it became associated with African-American dance music as early as 1917. Given that U.S. forces did not arrive in Russia until the fall of 1918, it is unlikely that this explanation could locate jazz practice in the country as early as 1917. However, the arrival of the Americans probably did invite jazz repertoire to Vladivostok, as is evidenced by the presence of Hawaiian musicians such as the Hanapi brothers, who would have been familiar with it by this time.¹⁰

Another possibility would be that extant Russian entertainment culture was engaging with practices known as “jazz” at this time, as was the case in Los Angeles and Buenos Aires. David MacFadyen (2002b) outlines the contours of this sound-world, describing the central aesthetic as “the muddled *mélange* of a bona fide circus” (6) with roots in Romani cultural practices. Thanks to Vladimir Alexandrov’s 2013 book *The Black Russian*, we also know more about the presence of a very small number of African Americans on this scene—largely due to the entrepreneurship of the American-born, black entertainment impresario Frederick Bruce Thomas, who owned successful theaters in Moscow and became a Russian citizen in 1915. For example, Thomas’s contacts with the European and North American entertainment industry

⁸ Thank you to Frederick Schenker for sharing this article with me.

⁹ Another American unit, the Northern Expeditionary Force nicknamed the “Polar Bear Expedition,” was stationed in the arctic port cities of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk.

¹⁰ In her 1996 book *The Hawaiian Steel Guitar and Its Great Hawaiian Musicians*, Lorene Ruymar states that Edward and Mike Hanapi went to Vladivostok in 1917 “to entertain American troops” (46); that likely reflects the date of their departure, rather than their performance.

helped him bring the boxer Jack Johnson to Moscow in 1914. However, references to “jazz” in Thomas’s milieu begin after the 1917 Revolution, when he fled to Odessa and then Constantinople. And in Russia, the “Gypsy Romances” and gramophone recordings of tangos and foxtrots would not have come to be understood as part of the umbrella of the term “jazz” until the early 1920s.

1959: California

By the late 1950s, the word “jazz” had become unequivocally associated with black music, and the burgeoning entertainment industry in Los Angeles had become an important site for its production. Although New York City remained the center of the jazz field, Los Angeles was no longer as peripheral. Many musicians now lived in the area, and the powerful American Federation of Musicians Local 47 established the first AFM pension fund that year, through negotiation with the recording industry, and had recently merged with Local 767 to become one of the first desegregated musicians’ unions (Monson 2007). The Jack Teagarden ensemble, made up of musicians based in Los Angeles, toured Southeast Asia under the auspices of the U.S. State Department. Between the recording studios and expanding nightclub scene, jazz activity flourished here.

Some recording industry agents began to establish new enterprises in Los Angeles during this time, as well. In 1959, the most successful was Los Angeles native Norman Granz’s Verve Records, which he established in 1955 as an effort to market jazz and emerging pop music forms side by side, with newly signed Ella Fitzgerald as its marquee star. In 1957, Granz stopped producing his influential Jazz At The Philharmonic tours in order to focus exclusively on running Verve and managing Fitzgerald. 1959 marked the tail end of Granz’s powerful tenure in Los Angeles; he moved to Lugano, Switzerland later in the year and became a key conduit for North

American musicians on the European touring circuit. He sold Verve to MGM in 1961. Film studios were also expanding into music publishing during this time: Warner Bros. Records, for example, was founded in 1958. Other labels, such as Contemporary Records, sprung up to document and disseminate the jazz phenomenon known as “cool,” which reached its peak in the late 1950s with the success of musicians such as Barney Kessel, Hampton Hawes, Shelly Manne, Red Norvo, and Art Pepper.¹¹

One reflection of the growth of the recording industry in Los Angeles during this time was the establishment of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) and the GRAMMY Awards, which in fact took place twice in 1959. The formation of NARAS grew out of planning conversations for the Hollywood Walk of Fame, which eventually opened in early 1960. Executives from the recording industry formed the organization to bestow the awards, which offered an additional criterion beyond sales-based recognition to establish eligibility for the Walk of Fame. Jazz artists Stan Kenton, Benny Carter, and Nat King Cole served on the Board of Directors. The first GRAMMY awards ceremony took place on May 4, 1959, at the Beverly Hilton, celebrating recordings from the previous year. Henry Mancini upset Frank Sinatra for Album of the Year for his soundtrack *The Music from Peter Gunn*. Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie won the awards for Best Jazz Performance; they each took home an award in the Pop category, as well, for Best Female Vocal Performance and Best Dance Band Performance.¹² On November 29, the second annual awards ceremony took place, covering recordings made in 1959. Sinatra took home Album of the Year for *Come Dance With Me!*, Ella Fitzgerald again topped the Jazz Soloist and Female Pop Vocalist categories, Duke Ellington

¹¹ See Gioia (1994) for a thorough profile of this burgeoning movement.

¹² For a complete list of awardees, see <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/awards/1st-annual-grammy-awards>

earned and Best Soundtrack for *Anatomy of a Murder*, and Jonah Jones won Best Jazz Ensemble for *I Dig Chicks*.¹³

Outside of Hollywood and the mainstream recording industry, the city also hosted a growing ecosystem of independent music. Central Avenue continued to play an important role in this growth. As Gaye Theresa Johnson demonstrates in her 2013 book *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles*, the entrepreneurship of black independent recording label owners such as John Dolphin created crucial spaces for these alternative formations in the years after World War II. Although Dolphin died in 1958, his signature projects continued after his passing. Part of Dolphin's success had to do with the way in which he was able to cleverly circumvent some aspects of the city's regime of racial segregation during this time:

In a bit of creative wordplay shaped by shaped by recognition of the ways in which new media forms enabled new kinds of cognitive mapping, he named his business—located at Vernon and Central Avenues—“Dolphin's of Hollywood.” He reasoned that although Blacks were unwelcome in Hollywood, he could “bring Hollywood to the Negroes.” He even named his first record label “RIH” (Recorded in Hollywood). The glamour previously attached to Hollywood as a physical place could now travel across town as a component of discursive space. (49)

Although these Central Avenue institutions remained central to the musical life of the city, by 1959 their influence had begun to wane. The integration of Local 47 and Local 767 had brought the area to the attention of the city's notoriously racist police force, resulting in what pianist Horace Tapscott remembered as a “city hall crackdown” (Bryant et al 1999:299). At the time, Tapscott had just returned to Los Angeles after touring with Lionel Hampton and was preparing to settle there; he founded the Pan Afrikan Peoples Arkestra two years later. 1959, then, was a year of transition for the Los Angeles jazz scene, with longstanding networks shifting and

¹³ For a complete list of awardees, see <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/awards/2nd-annual-grammy-awards>

reforming to accommodate new developments—most notably, R&B. At the same time, the seeds of new jazz movements were also being planted by musicians such as Gerald Wilson, whose first LP *Big Band Modern* was released that year. Wilson’s big band would continue to serve as a significant training ground for local jazz musicians up until his death in 2014.

But perhaps the most significant shifts were authored by an outsider to these mainstream jazz circles: saxophonist Ornette Coleman. In November 1959, Coleman moved to New York City after a seven-year stint in Los Angeles; the move coincided with the release of his second album, *The Shape of Jazz to Come*. David Ake (1998) outlines the ways in which Coleman’s arrival in New York thoroughly challenged the conventions of jazz practice at the time: his approach to form, intonation, and ensemble improvisation were all unique. As the German jazz critic Ekkehard Jost recalled in his 1975 book *Free Jazz*, “The views are so divergent that one wonders if everybody was talking about the same musician” (44). Coleman’s iconoclastic approach had been developed in Los Angeles—this experience had likely prepared him for the controversy that followed his New York debut. Unable to find outlets for his music in clubs or at jam sessions, Coleman lived in extreme poverty during most of his time in Los Angeles. But a handful of curious young musicians, including Don Cherry, Billy Higgins, and Charlie Haden, took to his approach and rehearsed his new music regularly in Watts. Coleman finally caught a break in 1957, when Contemporary Records recorded his first album, *Something Else!!!!* Although Coleman struggled to find sympathetic listeners on the Central Avenue scene, he finally found them in modernists such as Contemporary label owner Lester Koenig—and there were many more waiting (alongside plenty of persistent detractors) in New York.

As Mike Davis notes in his 1990 book *City of Quartz*, describing the “cultural guerillas” of the underground Los Angeles art worlds of the 1950s,

One of the qualities shared by these diverse groups was their concern for critically reworking and re-presenting subcultural experience—a quality that made them the first truly ‘autobiographical’ intelligentsia in Los Angeles history. For Coleman, [Eric] Dolphy, and other jazz guerillas, that shared existential ground was Black Los Angeles’s distinctive Southwestern blues tradition. (64)

In his appraisal of the impact of this scene, Davis adds a forceful footnote:

The Big Apple-biased perspective of jazz criticism often overlooks the seminal role of this Los Angeles underground in launching the New Wave dominated by Coleman, Coltrane, Taylor, and Dolphy. . . . A similar argument could be made about the neglect of the Los Angeles origins (from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey of much of modern ‘New York’ dance. (94)

Coleman’s approach—honed during his seven-year struggle in Los Angeles—quickly reverberated throughout the jazz world as one of the music’s most significant midcentury paradigm shifts.

1959: Chile

On the West Coast of South America, meanwhile, jazz lovers had established a dedicated cohort of fans and musicians through a small network of listening clubs, festivals, imported LP recordings, and radio broadcasts. Unlike many of their North American counterparts, jazz clubs in Chile were mostly established as spaces to facilitate gatherings of this group. The most prominent of these, the Club de Jazz de Santiago, was officially established in 1943. In the intervening decades, jazz clubs had also been established in Valparaíso and Concepción. These spaces laid the groundwork for jazz practice to become more associated with listening connoisseurs than with popular dance, a development that was also taking place elsewhere, and which had its roots in the long history of salon music within the country’s ruling class.¹⁴ Jazz aficionados such as José “Pepe” Hosiasson, who immigrated to Chile from Poland after World

¹⁴ See Menanteau (2006) for a thorough account of jazz activity in Chile during this time.

War II, were also instrumental in the expansion of radio broadcasting in the country's central region during the 1950s.

This network of jazz aficionados also worked to bring jazz artists to tour in Chile; the first major jazz tour, in 1953, featured Bud Freeman. When Louis Armstrong began to tour internationally under the auspices of the U.S. State Department's "jazz ambassador" tours, this group made sure that Chile was included in Armstrong's 1957 South American tour. In November of that year, shortly after his controversial comments in favor of school desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, Armstrong deplaned in Santiago for a series of concerts. Armstrong's visit catalyzed the Chilean jazz community into further activity, with younger musicians rededicating themselves to the music and the organizers beginning preparations for the country's second jazz festival.

In January 1959, the second Chilean jazz festival took place in Concepción, and included musicians from Santiago, Valparaíso, and Concepción. Meanwhile, hot jazz activity continued in Santiago, Concepción, and Valparaíso's clubs, with the University of Concepción stepping in to support the Concepción locale later that year. As the community grew, however, some members had begun to express an interest and preference for more modern jazz sounds—especially those emanating from Los Angeles as part of the "cool jazz" phenomenon. Thus began Chile's own version of the "moldy figs vs. modernists" debate that had consumed their North American and European counterparts a decade earlier.¹⁵ This schism began to develop in the early 1950s, and by 1959 had intensified to the point where the two camps occupied different spaces within the club: the traditionalists on the first floor, and the modernists on the second. By the early 1960s, the traditionalists left altogether to found a new club where modern jazz was prohibited.

¹⁵ These debates are documented by Bernard Gendron in his 1993 article "Moldy Figs and Modernists: Jazz at War (1942-1946)."

It bears noting, however, that these jazz debates paled in comparison to the larger political polarization that was beginning to take place in Chile during this time. Political developments in 1958, such as the repeal of the Ley Maldita (an anticommunist law that suppressed left-wing participation in Chile's political life) and the near-successful second presidential campaign of Salvador Allende, catalyzed an impassioned flourishing of left-wing political activity. The Cuban Revolution, which began the year 1959, further sped up these developments, as it offered a proof of concept for successful resistance to foreign capitalist domination. These developments brought Chile more directly onto the radar of U.S. foreign policy at the height of the Cold War. The CIA-backed School of the Americas began training hundreds of Chilean military members in their unique brand of brutal counterinsurgent tactics; the CIA also began monitoring local political developments more closely at the behest of North American corporate mining interests. Meanwhile, the music of *Nueva Canción* was on the way toward becoming the soundtrack of the political Left, pioneered by folklorist and guitarist Violeta Parra, who began composing her own songs around this time (McSherry 2015).

The aforementioned networks of jazz musicians and aficionados operated almost entirely separately from these developments, in an independent bubble of activity supported by their positionality within the Chilean bourgeoisie. Although not directly supported by the government at the time, these groups were able to self-finance their activities thanks to their privileged position within Chilean society and the prevailing governmental policy of economic liberalism from which they benefitted. This further incentivized these groups to take positions as connoisseurs, and to consider the music's value in terms of its sonic aesthetics. For the traditionalists, these sounds represented an idealized, exotic African-American life-force; for the modernists, the sounds represented an artistic vanguard. As one of the era's leading Chilean

modernist pianists, Omar Nahuel, put it, “Modern jazz gives a new perspective on instrumental freedom. It is compatible with chamber music; it doesn’t raise the masses like traditional does. In this sense, it produces a similar phenomenon to literature or music: the public is always a bit behind the new currents” (quoted in Menanteau 2006:89, my translation). This quote demonstrates that during this time, this group sought to situate jazz practice within an autonomous field of artistic production, although one that existed within a discursive frame that excluded emerging musical practices associated with left-wing political movements. Indeed, these groups’ fondness for North American culture, and their relationship with local U.S.-affiliated cultural organizations such as the Instituto Chileno-Norteamericano, made them attractive partners to the USIA and U.S. State Department during preparation for Louis Armstrong’s visit and also afterwards, aligning them indirectly with U.S. interests in the region.

1959: Russia

By the late 1950s, at the peak of the Khrushchev Thaw, officials in the Soviet Union were reluctantly coming to terms with jazz activity taking place within its borders. Penny von Eschen summarizes the music’s winding path toward official acceptance in her 2004 book *Satchmo Blows Up the World*:

The fortunes of jazz in the Soviet Union had waxed and waned along with the periodic openness or repressiveness of the Soviet government. Enjoying wide acceptance in the 1920s, jazz was driven underground during the purges of the 1930s, revived again in the more tolerant years of World War II, only to be officially proscribed with the renewed clampdowns of the Cold War; many jazz musicians were arrested and sent to labor camps during the repression of the late Stalin years. (94)

By the final years of Stalin’s rule, the music had been completely banned, but aficionados had developed a strategy for smuggling and copying the music on X-ray film, a practice known as

Джаз на костях (Jazz on bones).¹⁶ The Khrushchev Thaw saw further opportunities for previously banned cultural practices to reemerge—1959 was perhaps the Thaw’s high point, in which Khrushchev visited the United States (and vacationed in California).

Thanks to these clandestine recordings and the start of Willis Conover’s jazz radio program “Music U.S.A.” in 1955, jazz listening became a crucial part of the youth subculture that emerged during this time, known as *Стиляги* (“Stilyagi”/Style hunters)—a group that included Khrushchev’s own children.¹⁷ Russia’s first jazz club opened in Leningrad in 1958; these spaces were similar to their Chilean counterparts in that they catered to a cohort of aficionados interested in U.S. cultural practices, especially traditional jazz. By late 1959 the Komsomol, the Communist Party’s youth organization, attempted to coopt the music’s popularity by planning their own Jazz Cafés. The first of these spaces opened in Moscow in 1961, with similar initiatives in other cities following shortly thereafter (Starr 1983). The Cuban Revolution, meanwhile, had also sparked an interest in Afro-Cuban culture, especially among Soviet youth. Estrada, the musical descendant of *меа-джаз* (“tea-jazz”/theatricalized jazz), also had a massive audience in the Soviet Union. Although many of these performers had run afoul of the dictatorship in the late Stalin years, many—such as Eddie Rosner and Oleg Lundstrem—had resumed their careers in Moscow by the end of the decade. Leonid Utesov, a pioneer of *меа-джаз* also based in Moscow, had seen a career renaissance during World War II, but rejection by Soviet officialdom had spurred him to begin to distance himself from public life by 1959 (MacFadyen 2001). Although Utesov’s name was still what most Russians would have

¹⁶ The X-Ray Audio Project website features a collection of sounds and images from these recordings: <https://x-rayaudio.squarespace.com/>

¹⁷ The charming 2008 film of the same name, directed by Valery Todorovsky, offers a vivid portrait of the subculture; jazz practices feature prominently throughout.

associated with the word “jazz” at this time, this younger listening public was developing a taste for jazz sounds emanating from the United States (Galyas 2016).

International cultural exchange was another important pillar of Khrushchev’s new policy, which was institutionalized in 1957 under the State Committee on Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. This institution reached a cultural exchange agreement with the United States in 1958; however, as von Eschen (2004) recounts, these efforts were frustrated by diplomatic mistrust on both sides. In 1959, for example, the Soviets blocked U.S. jazz musicians from participating in the international Moscow Fair, while the U.S. State Department refused a tour by the Soviet Army’s chorus and ensemble (94-95). Von Eschen, Starr, and many other accounts of this awkward moment of jazz diplomacy credit Benny Goodman with the first jazz performance by U.S. musicians in 1962. However, 1959 also saw a series of performances by a jazz group: pianist Dwiki Mitchell and French horn and bassist Willie Ruff.¹⁸ The duo had met in the U.S. Army, pursued classical training at the Philadelphia Conservatory and the Yale School of Music under the G.I. Bill, then reconnected in 1954 with the Lionel Hampton band. They began performing as a duo the following year, opening for acts such as Duke Ellington and Count Basie. In 1959, Ruff—who taught part-time at the Yale School of Music—arranged for the pair to accompany the Yale Russian Chorus on a visit to the Soviet Union. Despite official skepticism toward jazz practice, the pair played and taught at music conservatories in Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev, Yalta, Sochi, and Riga. “I felt a mysterious bond between their people and my people,” Ruff told biographer William Zinsser. “I think I connected with their suffering” (2000:12).

¹⁸ Neither von Eschen nor Davenport (2013) mention Mitchell and Ruff’s performance. However, von Eschen does limit her claim to the fact that Goodman was “the first jazz musician to tour the Soviet Union for the State Department,” which is true. Zinsser, on the other hand, exaggerates with his claim that the duo “introduced jazz to the Soviet Union” (2000:3-4). Starr (1994) does mention the duo’s successful 1959 performances, noting that their contextualization of jazz within the “cerebral” nature of conservatory music practices resonated with Soviet music critics at the time (293).

Novosibirsk, meanwhile, proved to be a very hospitable environment for these trends. The establishment of Akademgorodok (“Academic Town”) in 1957 brought in a wave of migration to the city, which housed tens of thousands of scientists in this state-of-the-art campus. Thanks to this new community, Novosibirsk became the youngest city to reach a population of one million people in 1962—achieving the milestone in just under 70 years. Its geographical distance from Moscow and Leningrad allowed for inhabitants to develop a lively progressive intellectual atmosphere, which included a robust community of jazz fans—rivaling the audience for theater and orchestral music (Gourley 2016). This familiarity with the music was also related to the aforementioned fact that many successful Soviet jazz practitioners had been imprisoned in Siberian labor camps; Novosibirsk was an important regional transport hub through which they traveled upon their release.

Although Komsomol Jazz Cafés did not arrive in Novosibirsk until the early 1960s—according to Starr (1983), the best known was Akademgorodok’s Integral—jazz sounds resonated with the modernist bent of the campus’s cultural center, The House of Scientists, which hosted cultural activities that were prohibited in Moscow and Leningrad (Wainwright 2016). This milieu fostered the interests of a generation of students and young professionals to deepen their interest in jazz practices and seek out new trends from abroad. The avant-garde experimentalism that would flourish in the 1960s would find especially enthusiastic supporters in Novosibirsk, with an annual jazz festival taking place there starting in 1966 (Gourley 2016). These highly educated listeners seeded the community of aficionados that would become a welcoming home for jazz experimentalism starting in the mid-1970s.

1990: California

Many aspects of jazz practice that had established themselves in Los Angeles continued over three decades later. The GRAMMY awards continued their annual celebration of the recording industry, recording studios continued to provide lucrative opportunities for skilled musical labor, and had even magnetized prolific jazz artists to relocate (at least part-time) from New York, such as Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter. The Playboy Jazz Festival—which had begun in Chicago in 1959—had also relocated to Los Angeles as an annual event at the Hollywood Bowl in 1979. Verve Records was in a fallow period, its catalog being selectively reissued on CD by PolyGram; they would, however, become active again later in the decade, signing Hancock and others to revive the label. Davis, meanwhile, had signed to Warner Bros. Records in 1985, leaving longtime New York-based label Columbia. His final recording, *Aura*, won the GRAMMY awards for Best Improvised Jazz Solo and Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album in 1990; he also received a Lifetime Achievement Award and performed the song “Hannibal” at the 1990 awards ceremony, introduced by his protégé Herbie Hancock.¹⁹ Savoy Records, owned at the time by Arista, also released a compilation of Davis’s earliest catalog, *First Miles*, on CD the same year. Another titan of the music’s golden age, Detroit-born guitarist Kenny Burrell, had settled in Los Angeles, where he began his teaching career at UCLA with the course “Ellingtonia.”

Some jazz musicians with deep roots in Los Angeles continued their work there, as well. In 1990, Gerald Wilson continued to direct the Gerald Wilson Orchestra, and was honored by the National Endowment for the Arts with its annual Jazz Master award. Horace Tapscott continued to tour and record with the Pan Afrikan People’s Arkestra, who recorded their live double-album

¹⁹ At the time of this writing, this performance (along with Hancock’s introduction and Davis’s five-word acceptance speech) can be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arqim4gF-GU>

The Dark Tree the previous year. James Newton and Charlie Haden, both of whom had left L.A. for New York, returned to teach at the California Institute of the Arts in the 1980s.

These continuities, however, mask profound shifts in the city that were underway during this time. Tom Bradley, who was serving the final years of his 20-year tenure as the city's mayor, presided over a massive redevelopment of the Downtown area, financed primarily by capital from the booming Japanese economy. The Downtown neighborhood of Little Tokyo was an early site of this trend, with new developments such as Weller Court and the adjoining hotel begun in 1976. By the 1980s, this trend had accelerated dramatically, resulting in a boom of downtown development. As Mike Davis (1990) writes,

If there were just five new highrises above the old height limitation of thirteen stories in 1975, there are now nearly fifty . . . Yet, as Downtown has soared, the rising ante of speculation has forced many of the original corporate members . . . to sell equity and withdraw to the sidelines.

Downtown in a word simply became too big for local interests to continue to dominate, and recentering came effectively to mean internationalization. Thus in 1979 the *Times* reported that a quarter of Downtown's major properties were foreign-owned; six years later the figure was revised to 75 per cent (one authority has claimed 90 per cent). (135)

The Tokyo stock market crash of early 1990 was the first sign that this new arrangement might not bode well for wealthy Angelenos. But by then, this movement had already made its mark on urban Los Angeles, especially in the zone Edward Soja (1996:204) calls "CITADEL-LA, the 'little city' that defines the power-filled 'civic center' of the polynucleated Los Angeles region" and which includes Little Tokyo in its southeastern corner.

Some communities, meanwhile, had begun to develop creative strategies to resist this intensifying tide of inequality—one that would, in 1992, explode into the L.A. Uprising. Tapscott and the Arkestra, for example, were important players in the survival of the Leimert Park cultural scene throughout the 1980s. In 1989, along with Kamau Daáaood and Billy

Higgins, he helped to open the World Stage Performance Gallery despite the dwindling audience for live music in the area. As current World Stage Executive Director Dwight Tribble described the scene to Tapscott biographer Steven Isoardi, “When we would play, hardly anybody would be in the audience. . . . I mean *nobody* was there. The whole street was dark” (Isoardi 2006: 222). Nonetheless, the space hosted weekly activities such as drum and writing workshops, as well as regular performances; in 1990, Cornel Fauler started a regular jam session. In the wake of the traumas of the 1992 Uprising, new Leimert Park institutions like the World Stage would magnetize a new audience as their value to the local community became more obvious, cementing the neighborhood as the city’s hub of black cultural creativity, and affording the musicians of Tapscott’s and Higgins’s generation to transmit their musical practices to a new generation while also integrating emerging musical forms such as hip-hop.

1990: Chile

On March 11, 1990, the 16 ½-year dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet officially came to an end, with a new parliamentary government sworn into office to replace it. The following day, President Patricio Aylwin addressed tens of thousands of Chileans at the Estadio Nacional—now named after guitarist and songwriter Victor Jara, one of the hundreds of Chileans who had been tortured there in 1973. Before his speech, the national symphony orchestra performed an arrangement of the Chilean national anthem penned by jazz percussionist and composer Guillermo Rifo (“Guillermo Rifo” n.d.). “Our work before us is beautiful—to create together the homeland that we want: free, just, and good for all Chileans,” Aylwin proclaimed. This triumph of electoral democracy over one of the century’s most notoriously brutal dictators was celebrated around the world, especially by global pro-democracy institutions such as Amnesty International, which had organized a 20-concert world tour called *Human Rights Now!*

in 1988 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The concert ended in Buenos Aires—due to the volatile politics that surrounded Chile’s 1988 plebiscite, the tour could not continue on to Santiago. After the transition to democracy, however, the organizers arranged for a similar concert to take place at the same Estadio Nacional in Santiago, entitled “An Embrace of Hope,” in October 1990. The artist lineup included Sting, Peter Gabriel, Jackson Browne, Ruben Blades, Sinéad O’Connor, Wynton Marsalis, Inti-Illimani, and New Kids on the Block (“The Background” n.d.).

Some of these artists were veterans of previous Amnesty International concerts, but this was Marsalis’s first concert in this format. Since signing a lucrative record deal with Columbia and receiving successive GRAMMY awards in both Jazz and Classical categories in 1983 and 1984, his star had risen dramatically. In the same month as his tour to Chile, Marsalis was the fifth jazz musician to be featured on the cover of *Time* magazine (“The New Jazz Age” 1990). In a 2011 post on his website, Marsalis recalled being concerned about the group’s reception in the stadium format:

I remember playing a concert with Art Blakey in Chicago for a crowd that wanted to hear rock and roll. When we played they started throwing things on the stage. I remember telling cats before we walked out on the stage in Chile, if they start throwing things on the stage be cool walking off.

Instead, Marsalis received one of the most enthusiastic responses he had ever heard. In his description of the subsequent events, he writes,

We went straight to the universal language, the blues. Cone [trombonist Wycliffe Gordon] played a phrase in his solo that sounded like a song the native crowd sang at soccer matches. Then, and what I’m sure is the only time this ever happened in the history of music, all of the people began to sing that song which happened to fit the blues in the right place in the form. Normally a crowd has a two or three note chant but as you can hear, this song was involved and it took place over a chorus of blues. We couldn’t believe it, and the rest of the set continued in that vein. People loving the music. We had never experienced anything like that before or after. (Marsalis 2011)

Footage from the concert corroborates most of Marsalis's claims. Although it is unclear what catalyzed the crowd's decision to break into song, the crowd does begin singing the melody to the 1962 FIFA World Cup anthem, "El Rock del Mundial" ("The World Cup Rock"), during the second chorus of Marsalis's solo over his piece "Play the Blues and Go." "El Rock del Mundial" had been written and performed by the Chilean rock group Los Ramblers in 1962 to celebrate Chile's role as the host of that year's World Cup soccer tournament; it became a national hit through its ubiquity as the World Cup anthem. Ironically, perhaps, Marsalis *had* in fact found himself performing for a rock audience—but they were attuned to its formal similarities to the blues-based music he and his bandmates were performing onstage, thanks to their familiarity with this example of early rock & roll. By the end of Marsalis's second chorus, the members of the band can be seen visibly reacting with incredulity and excitement to the crowd's musical contribution; Marsalis even smiles and nods to the crowd between phrases. By the end of Reginald Veal's bass solo, pianist Eric Reed begins to insert quotes from the "Rock del Mundial" melody into his accompaniment. This concert was a hugely important event for the Chilean jazz community; many people whom I met there in 2005 recalled it with reverence and nostalgia. To many, it signaled the increasing connection to the world beyond Chile's border that was now possible, even though many jazz aficionados were still sympathetic to the outgoing regime.

Indeed, the Club de Jazz de Santiago had survived the dictatorship intact, largely due to some members' favorable relationship with the military government. During the transition to democracy, the club continued to host traditional and modernist small groups; it was also used as a rehearsal space for the Hamilton Big Band, formed by Hamilton Vela in 1982. The Club's weekly jam session became an important site for the continuation and transmission of styles and approaches, especially as younger members of what journalist Iñigo Diaz later called

“Generación 00” began to take the stage.²⁰ However, jazz practices had also made their way into the music of the dictatorship’s younger generation by other means, via their incorporation of jazz fusion—sounds not yet welcome on the Club de Jazz bandstand. The Chilean fusion phenomenon ranged from modernists such as Rifo, whose work gestured toward 20th-century European art music, to more rock-and-funk-oriented groups such as Quilín, who modeled themselves after 1970s fusion acts such as Miles Davis, Weather Report, and Herbie Hancock. These fusion practices, meanwhile, were crucial in the development of Chilean rock at the time, especially the *canto nuevo* movement, which maintained a connection to *la nueva canción* but used highly metaphorical language to evade state censorship. In 1986, the fusion group Cometa recorded instrumental tracks for *Enlaces*, an album by Isabel Parra (daughter of Violeta) who at the time was living in exile in Argentina—her vocal tracks were recorded separately and added to the final mix. The group later toured with Parra in Chile after the 1988 plebiscite that ushered in the new government (Menanteau 2006). The political transition of the 1990s, then, allowed for these various streams to share space under the banner of a broader understanding of what could constitute Jazz (if not yet *physical* space at a venue such as the Club de Jazz). This transition also marked an opening of possibilities for this music to be studied in postsecondary education institutions, with Rifo leading the way by creating the Composition, Arranging, and Performance in Popular Music specialization at the Escuela Moderna de Música in 1989.

1990: Russia

Four days after Aylwin was elected President of Chile, Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as the first (and, as it would turn out, last) President of the Soviet Union. Later that year, he was

²⁰ This term refers to the generation who came of age around the turn of the millennium, born in the later years of the Pinochet regime and raised during the transition years of the 1990s. Although most were too young to begin attending jam sessions as early as 1990, some slightly older musicians—such as vocalist Claudia Acuña (b. 1971)—had begun informal jazz apprenticeships in these circles by this time.

awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. These were, of course, pyrrhic victories that contrasted with his weakening political position due to opposition forces unleashed by the *perestroika* and *glasnost* reforms he had implemented in the 1980s—ones that would result in his resignation and the disillusion of the Soviet Union the following year. The attendant rapid changes that took place in popular music of the *perestroika* years is documented by David MacFadyen in his 2002 book, *Estrada?!*. MacFadyen argues that the genre's rapprochement with black musical aesthetics in the 1980s was an important part this transformation, starting with the work of singer Larisa Dolina:

Inspired by the work of Ray Charles, Ella Fitzgerald, and Dinah Washington, Dolina brought some fresh air and a hint of freer interpretation to a pre-*perestroika* audience, thanks to jazzy, unpredictable improvisations. A minor Black discourse began to chip away at Soviet song, for Dolina was deliberately invoking a minor, subversive state twice over: first the rare presence of a Ukrainian woman inside the jazz canon, and second, minor jazz inside major Estrada. (2002a:11)

Around this time, the California-based English professor and jazz critic William Minor began to plan a trip to the Soviet Union to write about jazz there—the trip took place in early 1990 and the book was published in 1995 as *Unzipped Souls: A Jazz Journey Through the Soviet Union*. MacFadyen's and Minor's perspectives on the music of this moment offer contrasting ways to view jazz practice at the time: either as the base of an older style of Soviet popular music being supplanted by a new generation of pop experimentalists, or as an exotic periphery where a handful of aficionados miraculously weave together a tenuous thread of authentic Jazz.

In any case, the late 1980s had seen a dramatic reshuffling of the people involved in both efforts. Many talented and ambitious jazz instrumentalists left the country. For example, two stars of Lundstrem's band, Igor Butman and Boris Kozlov, moved to Boston to study at the Berklee College of Music in 1987; free jazz pioneer Vyacheslav Ganelin moved to Israel the same year. The *glasnost* reforms, meanwhile, meant new opportunities for foreigners to perform

there—this is borne out by the Moscow International Jazz Festival, documented by Minor in *Unzipped Souls*, which featured Sun Ra (who performed a suite in tribute to Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin), Freddie Hubbard, Chico Freeman, Branford Marsalis, and Benny Golson alongside a handful of Soviet jazz mainstays such as Oleg Lundstrem, with a band fronted by Los Angeles-based vocalist Lynn Carey.²¹ According to Minor, the audience “brought a healthy curiosity and respect—if not always a lot of discrimination—to the concert. They were gratefully enthusiastic” (72).

For jazz lovers outside of Moscow, the political reforms provided new opportunities as well as new barriers. The loosening of ideological restrictions meant that the state-owned record label was open to recording new sounds—they even established a recording studio in Novosibirsk and made several albums under the category “Siberian Jazz” (Gourley 2016). On the other hand, without state patronage, many ensembles faced financial uncertainty. Nonetheless, in 1988 jazz critic Alexey Batashev claimed that there were about 20 professional jazz groups in the Soviet Union (Starr 1983: 354). In Novosibirsk, for example, Sergei Belechenko maintained an active jazz group called Снежные Дети (Snezhniy Dyeti/“Snow Children”). Perhaps the most remarkable story of jazz perseverance from this era, however, is that of Arkhangelsk-based saxophonist Vladimir Rezitsky. Legendary for his enthusiasm and prolific networking in the European jazz community, he founded the ensemble Arkhangelsk Jazz Group in the early 1970s—this group became well-known in European avant-garde circles thanks to concert recordings by the London-based label Leo Records. The perestroika reforms allowed for his group to travel extensively throughout Europe during the 1980s, but he returned to his hometown in the far north to focus on cultivating the local jazz scene. He established an annual festival in

²¹ Carey also recorded a promotional video for the Novosti Press Agency, directed by the jazz-loving film director Slava Chekin, which can be seen on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JweYHstooo>

Arkhangelsk, as well as a café that doubled as an educational center, where he endeavored to pass along what he had learned to another generation of Arkhangelsk musicians. During the transition from Soviet to Russian governance, he convinced the new municipal officials to support his activities by hiring him as a city employee, allowing him to turn the annual festival into an important stop on the European creative improvised music circuit (Moshkow 2001).

Synchronic Analysis and Concluding Thoughts

Having now documented this spatiotemporal potpourri of 20th-century jazz practices around the world, what—if any—trends can be gleaned from synchronic analysis? In other words, how can it be helpful to understand the interrelatedness of the activities of, say, Jelly Roll Morton in Los Angeles and Mike Hanapi in Vladivostok? I will now offer some thoughts along those lines by way of conclusion, although further conclusions—diachronic creatures that they are—will have to be drawn out in this dissertation’s subsequent chapters.

In 1917, jazz practices indexed the global spread of an emerging U.S. capitalist imperial order. They followed the contours of its rough edges through the hustle of dance band entrepreneurs adapting to new sounds and touring circuits, the expansion of the sheet music and record market into territories colonized by U.S.-based corporate interests, and the travels of its globetrotting military freshly empowered by its victories in World War I. In the crucible of these global phenomena, musical practices known variously as foxtrot, ragtime, tango, shimmy, and romance came into contact with the word “jazz,” with the word developing its local associations based on these processes, which are fraught with power differentials delineated by emerging U.S. global hegemony. The spread of jazz practices around the world was also partial, however, having not yet arrived in some peripheries of this hegemonic ambit.

By 1959, this imperial order had taken on new meanings through the Cold War, newly heightened by the Cuban Revolution at the beginning of the year. As the U.S. State Department began to take Jazz seriously as a cultural export extolling the virtues of democracy and legitimizing its global domination, jazz advocates around the world—usually aligned with U.S. State Department interests—welcomed their heroes in live performances. Due to the ideological polarization of both the Cold War and the Civil Rights movement, these performances could also foment political possibilities that cut against the grain of these interests. In the growing centers of U.S. cultural production, innovative stylistic developments served a growing listening public attuned to modernist ideals, which were followed closely abroad as they circulated in the grooves of LPs and through the Voice of America radio broadcasts.

The year 1990 saw a number of important political transformations, ushering in an unprecedented degree of economic interconnectedness and forms of democratic governance—alongside rising inequality, lessening power of trade unions, and thriving new networks of capitalist opportunism. Corporate hegemony began to take new forms after the Asian economic boom of the 1980s, transforming urban life on both sides of the Pacific. Jazz practices tended to be associated more with an older generation—many of whom had come to the music as younger adults during the Cold War—and with past practices. At the same time, restless improvisers persisted, and pockets of energetic musicality flourished in small, scattered bohémias. Jazz-focused educational institutions, which had first taken root in the U.S. in the 1940s, sprouted up around the world, and younger musicians with means to do so continued to flock to New York, with many emulating the style of black “young lions” such as Wynton Marsalis.

Taking these trends together, it would not be unreasonable to draw the same conclusions about the jazz world that Burnet Hershey did after his 1922 around-the-world jazz investigation

for the New York Times. Musical practices developed in New York City seem to exert something like gravitational force on all of this music, reflecting the city's importance as the main locus of control over the levers of power that operated the mechanisms of finance capitalism during its increasingly sophisticated global spread throughout the 20th century. In his 2017 book *Bankers and Empire*, Peter James Hudson traces the ways in which Wall Street banks developed strategies for aggressive expansion in the Caribbean—these developments took place at the same time that Tin Pan Alley publishing companies were developing the technologies for capitalist reproduction of musical commodities through sheet music and sound recording. As the power of U.S. financial institutions grew throughout the 20th century, so too did the reach of jazz practices. As Travis Jackson (2016) argues,

The travel of culture and its commodified representations enable the creation of musical palimpsests. In those places where we perceive a trace of jazz . . . we find jazz. And in those places where we find it, we see as well the traces left by the forceful spread of capitalism and its attendant technologies, ideologies, and metacultural ideas. (394)

Jackson's textual metaphor of the palimpsest—a document that has been used or altered but bears traces of its use at earlier moments in time—offers a useful way to read jazz diachronically in any of the sites that I have chosen (or any others, for that matter).

To leave it at that, however, and reduce global jazz practice to a text to be read against the spread of global capitalism, misses something important: what is the nature of those traces? Another way of understanding the developments laid out in this chapter would be as a progressive dissolution of the linkages between jazz practices and capitalist hegemony. Whereas in 1917, jazz practices were found in close proximity to the project of capitalist imperialism, and its contradictions begin to be exposed during the Cold War through the efforts of anti-racist organizers in the U.S., by 1990 those practices were being adopted by people connected to political projects that aim to bring about alternatives to capitalist imperialism—be they black

Angelenos prioritizing jazz spaces for intergenerational cultural transmission, Chilean leftists adopting jazz fusion as a model for expanding on their own musical traditions, or ambitious Russian improvisers using the music as a means of fostering civic virtues and global connections in the face of the country's devastating "shock therapy" austerity measures of the early 1990s.

Today, as we approach a similar temporal distance to 1990 as its temporal distance from 1959, the hold that this history has on jazz practice seems to be dwindling even further. Although one consequence of this trend is that it is becoming increasingly difficult to lead a life dedicated to Jazz in a financially sustainable way, the fact that musicians and listeners around the world are still hearing these sounds as possible links to a more just and peaceful global future is indeed promising. As these sounds have echoed throughout the 20th century, they maintain traces of their origins in 19th-century struggles—and triumphs—of black collective liberation. By listening for these echoes on the margins of this global struggle in the 21st century, we may be able to develop some insight into why and how this music continues to be made meaningful by improvisers around the world.

Fade In: Portland to Los Angeles



Fig. 1.2: Places where I witnessed jazz practice (1991-2011)

Before continuing with my ethnographic accounts and reflections on jazz practice in California, Chile, and Siberia, I am compelled to situate myself within the complex web of stories and spaces that make up this research. Although I do harbor some ambivalence about dedicating so much space to my own story, it seems that this work cannot escape what Mary

Louise Pratt, in her contribution to James Clifford and George E. Marcus's seminal edited collection *Writing Culture*, has identified as "the vexed but important relationship between personal narrative and impersonal description in ethnographic writing" (1986:27-28). This vexed relationship is framed in part by my positionality as a straight white man with a U.S. passport—writing in academic English—trying to argue for an understanding of the jazz world as polyvocal, multilingual, and legible beyond Eurocentric modes of knowledge production. As I mentioned in this dissertation's introduction, I am among those referenced by Bechet in his opening quotation: one of those people who "don't have the memory that needs to understand" the music. Indeed, my family experienced the late 19th century much differently than Bechet's—my German-Jewish great-great-grandfather Abraham Oberndorfer, for example, fought for the Confederacy to uphold the unjust institutions that fettered Bechet's ancestors. Meanwhile, the Oregon Territory had recently undergone its transition to U.S. statehood at the time of Bechet's story with a constitution that banned African-Americans from entering or residing there; my hometown continues to be our nation's whitest metropolis. After the Civil War, another great-great-grandfather, Rafael Rodriguez, fled "Juan Crow" Texas by homesteading in Idaho (a possibility that was afforded to him by his marriage to my German-American great-great-grandmother Ellen Rich).

Despite these differences, my circumstances have afforded the possibility of interaction with people around the world who share both dedication to jazz practice as well as that lack of culturally specific memory of black emancipation from U.S. slavery. Holding this paradox in mind, I continue with my own jazz story—both to frame the geographical complexities inherent in this project and to open my inquiry with one of the questions that animates it: How do those of

us without the memory to understand the music as an affective response to emancipation develop such a strong compulsion to try anyway?

The first appearance of the word “jazz” in my own memory arises from the 1991 NBA Playoffs, when my hometown basketball heroes Clyde Drexler, Kevin Duckworth, and Terry Porter led the Portland Trail Blazers past the Utah Jazz in the Western Conference semifinals. As my basketball fandom deepened, I came to learn that many adults in my family believed the Utah Jazz to be the most absurdly misnamed franchise in basketball, and that they had kept the name after their move from New Orleans in 1979. I also remember a lawn sign advertisement for Jazzercise fitness classes near my elementary school bus stop, and recall wondering if they had anything to do with my Blazers’ basketball rivals.¹

At age 10, I joined the Ainsworth Elementary school band’s trumpet section; braces forced me to the euphonium at age 12. In a middle school music appreciation class, I remember being impressed by a recording of Glenn Miller’s “In the Mood” and joining the school’s extracurricular jazz ensemble. Around the same time, I had begun private lessons with a local music teacher, Ben Medler, who encouraged me to take up trombone and delve more deeply into the jazz idiom. He gave me lists of recordings to purchase, and I would take them to Everyday Music in downtown Portland and look for used copies. By the end of middle school, I was spending much of my time listening to recordings by J.J. Johnson, Count Basie, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins, and James Brown (by way of his ineffably funky horn section of Maceo Parker, Pee Wee Ellis, and Fred Wesley.)

In her 1990 book *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, bell hooks writes,

This is an intervention. A message from that space in the margin that is a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity

¹ See Sherrie Tucker (2015) for an exegesis of the odd relationship between Jazzercise and Jazz Studies.

to erase the category colonized/colonizer. Marginality as site of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there. Enter that space. We greet you as liberators. (152)

I recognize something of this passage in my memory of those first sonic encounters with J.J. Johnson. Something in the recorded sounds of his trombone playing, and the way in which I was being encouraged to receive them, called out to me as both invitation and intervention. At the time, it was clear that Johnson offered an ideal model for how to play the trombone; what has become clearer in hindsight is that staking this ideal to the aesthetics and accomplishments of black people began a deeply unsettling process that has slowly revealed the contradictions of my socialization in white supremacist cultural norms.

Johnson passed away in 2001, during my sophomore year in high school. Medler, who worked as jazz director there alongside his wife Michelle, broke the news to the big band during our early morning rehearsal. I remember being somewhat surprised—not by Johnson’s death, but by the reminder that he had indeed been alive at all while I transcribed those solos from his *Trombone Master* album throughout the previous year. I had also come across a reference to Jazz in my U.S. History textbook, which described the 1920s as the Jazz Age, crediting the term to F. Scott Fitzgerald but also mentioning Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, whose recordings Medler had introduced me to in our weekly lessons. It remained unclear, however, what that music had to do with *The Great Gatsby*. The emerging jazz world that I was beginning to step into was thrown into chaos in the fall of that year, when Medler was unceremoniously let go from his position and replaced by a jazz-fearing woman who resented our jazz ensemble’s camaraderie, dismissively referring to me and my friends as “the jazzers.” I left my high school music program altogether by the end of the year, although I did continue to play in city-wide initiatives such as the Metropolitan Youth Symphony and the newly formed Portland Youth Jazz Orchestra, which the Medlers directed. I also participated in jazz activity at summer music

programs in Mammoth Lakes, California; Salem, Oregon; and Port Townsend, Washington. Nevertheless, the loss of connection at my local high school dealt a severe blow to my musical ambitions, and I shifted my focus toward writing and academics, hoping to attend college far away from the site of these painful memories. The more that I delved into the mythology that surrounded the origins of my new musical heroes, the more convinced I was to pursue my education on the U.S. East Coast.

Seduced by the Ivy League mystique, I applied to a handful of elite East Coast schools and was accepted into two: Columbia University and Amherst College. After visiting both, I chose Amherst despite Columbia's proximity to what I understood to be "Jazz Mecca." Looking back on that decision, I may have been somewhat intimidated by the prospect of big city life, even if it sounded so alluring on those recordings. Perhaps I had hoped that Amherst's small, rural campus would nurture my developing interest in writing; when I arrived, however, I found the English classes to be among my least favorite—with one important exception. Barry O'Connell, an avid jazz aficionado and radical pedagogue, nurtured my writing as well as my curiosity about jazz literature, lending me records, holding forth generously on jazz minutiae, and encouraging me to keep playing trombone all the while. I even made it down to New York City for a long weekend to hear the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra at the legendary West Village jazz club—although, being underage, I had to nurse a pair of absurdly overpriced Coca-Colas to cover the drink minimum.

And so, despite thinking that I had left my musical career in Portland, I spent countless hours in the College's myriad jazz ensembles as part of a small cohort of jazz players, organized by the kind and indefatigable saxophonist Bruce Diehl. Unfortunately, very little of this activity could count for academic credit, and so I remember this period as one fraught with disappointment and frustration, as music and academics seemed constitutionally unable to

accommodate one another, despite O’Connell’s consistent encouragement. Deeply disillusioned by the constraints of Amherst’s so-called “open curriculum,” as well as the limitations of its Spanish department, I arranged to study abroad during my junior year in Chile, where I planned to enroll in music courses in the local university, bring my trombone, improve my Spanish, and explore the local music scene.

Preparing for my departure to Santiago, I imagined exotic Caribbean rhythms and samba beats; of course, this was an absurdly ignorant assumption—Santiago is nowhere near Cuba nor Brazil. Upon arrival, I was surprised to find that many of the local musicians preferred Dixieland music to Latin Jazz. Everyone whom I met in Santiago had a unique and fascinating story about their jazz discovery: some, like my friends Jorge and Santiago Cerda, inherited their parents’ record collection; others, like Chilean jazz connoisseur Pepe Hosaisson, brought along a handful of treasured LPs while fleeing Europe in the 1940s. Under the tutelage of U.S. expatriate trombonist Kevin Roberts at La Universidad Católica de Chile, I dedicated myself studiously to my instrument and quickly found a place as one of the few improvising trombonists on the local music scene—especially at the Club de Jazz de Santiago, to which Roberts introduced me.

Although it happened nearly twelve years ago, I remember walking into the Club de Jazz de Santiago with impeccable clarity. Living for the first time outside of the United States to spend a semester abroad in Chile, I had learned quickly that nothing felt like home—everything from crossing the street to ordering lunch was uncomfortable guesswork. As I entered into the club, though, I was overcome by an uncanny sense of familiarity. Somehow, amidst these mundane but magical circumstances, I was home—10,000 kilometers away from my birthplace in the Pacific Northwest. At the time, this was such an utter relief that I barely even bothered to wonder how my strong identification with the jazz world could resonate so powerfully in such a

dizzily remote place. As this encounter grew into frequent collaborations, however, I came to understand that this paradox of geographical distance and musical intimacy, sparked by a mutual dedication to jazz improvisation, left an indelible mark on all of us. These connections also took me to the Trombonanza Festival de Trombones in Santa Fe, Argentina, and later on a weeklong tour with Santiago Cerda's Los Andes Big Band to the La Paz Festijazz in La Paz, Bolivia. At the end of the year, I left with a hunch: that I had merely scratched the surface of what was possible when like-minded musicians defy geography, as these Chilean improvisers and I had started to do that night at the Club de Jazz.

The adventure into which I had stumbled during my semester abroad quickly took on a new set of meanings upon my return to the United States, when I took Jeffers Engelhardt's "Global Sound" seminar. This was my introduction to the field of ethnomusicology, and I recognized that what I had been endeavoring to do the previous year resonated with accounts of ethnomusicological fieldwork. I had returned to Amherst fully committed to making the most of whatever it could offer me as a musician, and ethnomusicology became the core of this project, both in this course and a subsequent one the following year with Tim Eriksen and Mirjana Lausevic. The following year, Cerda arranged for the Amherst College Jazz Ensemble to perform at the Valparaíso Festival of Big Bands, affording my first chance to return to Chile in the fall of 2006—a memorable, if exhausting, experience. Diehl then returned the favor, commissioning Cerda to write a piece for the Amherst College Jazz Ensemble, which premiered in April 2007. Freshly empowered to apply an academic lens to this music-making practice, I prepared a senior jazz trombone recital with an ear for the music's history—and it turned out that the scholarly aspect often proved more stimulating than the performance preparation. A

scintillating visiting lecture by Lewis Porter during this time further inspired me to take this new path seriously.

After struggling through a year and a half as a freelance jazz musician after college in Oakland, California, I applied to the M.A. program in Jazz History and Research at Rutgers University's Newark campus, where Porter had built a thriving department alongside Henry Martin and John Howland. I continued to study trombone during this time, moonlighting in Conrad Herwig's studio at the main Rutgers campus in New Brunswick. And I ended up on the jazz scene in Manhattan much more than I had anticipated, albeit usually without my trombone in tow. In the summer of 2009, I began an internship with Josh Jackson at WBGO, the Newark-based jazz radio station. That position grew into part-time work as Digital Content Editor, managing the station's emerging online presence. I also joined the Jazz Journalists Association, started a jazz blog, *Lubricity*, and began covering the jazz beat as a freelancer for the *Newark Star-Ledger*.² This work introduced me to the sounds of contemporary New York jazz practice through the work of artists such as Orrin Evans, John Hollenbeck, Vijay Iyer, Allison Miller, Jason Moran, and Matt Wilson.

Having never been immersed in the deep waters of the New York music scene nor academic jazz studies, I thought that the Rutgers program could help me find my own place within the field. It was in these classes that I first read ethnomusicological accounts of jazz practice by Paul Berliner and Ingrid Monson, which, although fascinating, seemed to take for granted their emplacement on the U.S. East Coast. Indeed, in the seminal 2004 monograph *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies*, edited by Robert G. O'Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, and Farah Jasmine Griffin, the authors take pride in its geography of origin: "A

² Blog archives for *Lubricity* can be found here: <https://lubricity.wordpress.com/lubricity/>

number of the essays included here were first developed as presentations at meetings of the Jazz Study Group,” they write, “literally as parts of conversations held in uptown Manhattan” (4). Given that by 2009, when I began to read these books, the uptown conversations I was hearing tended more toward gentrification than Jazz, I began to think more deeply about what was at stake in this act of discursive centering.³ Oddly enough, many of the arguments put forward in these monographs did apply to my Chilean friends, despite their distance from New York—but not all of them fit. Still, the absence of geographical nuance helped me see the gap that my work could fill. I applied to Ph.D. programs in ethnomusicology, eager to continue this line of research by returning to Chile—this time as a jazz anthropologist—in order to better understand what jazz means to its practitioners far from Manhattan. Meanwhile, I wrote my M.A. thesis on trombonist Jack Teagarden, to whom I had first been hipped at the Club de Jazz de Santiago. A visit to the estate of Teagarden memorabilia collector Joe Showler in Toronto marked my first visit to Canada, and I also began presenting my work at academic conferences in Montreal and Cincinnati. During this time, I also attended the first of many Society for Ethnomusicology conferences in Los Angeles.

In 2011, I accepted an offer to study at UCLA; on the cross-country drive, my wife and I made a detour to New Orleans, ostensible birthplace of Jazz and certifiable birthplace of my mother. Spending one night in a French Quarter hotel, we spent the day enjoying beignets and café au lait, and the evening exploring the music on Frenchman Street. Shortly after arriving in Los Angeles—to prepare for ethnomusicological fieldwork with *Chilean* jazz musicians—I found another “jazz door” to cross through at the Downtown club bluewhale. Becca Pulliam—a

³ Columbia University and the West Harlem Local Development Corporation had been developing a controversial northward expansion for the campus, facilitated in part through the acquisition of land through eminent domain. The New York State Court of Appeals overturned a lower court’s challenge to the practice in 2010, allowing for the development to continue (Columbia Student Coalition Against Gentrification 2014).

senior producer at WBGO⁴—invited me to serve as an Assistant Producer for the West Coast leg of NPR’s New Year’s Eve program, *Toast of the Nation*, which took place there.⁵ Entering the space for the first time, I was struck by a similar sensation to that which I had felt at the Club de Jazz de Santiago; I soon came to understand that the sense of home that I had experienced didn’t only exist in Chile, or California, but in jazz space itself. This was a consoling realization, given that the physical space of the Club de Jazz no longer existed! (It had been destroyed in the massive earthquake that struck Chile in 2010; the site was redeveloped as a high-rise condominium complex. My friends informed me, however, that a younger generation of jazz musicians had already begun to center their creativity around a newer venue: Thelonious, Lugar de Jazz.)

In the run-up to the *Toast of the Nation* broadcast, I worked closely with club owner Joon Lee and local promoter Rocco Somazzi, helping to deal with logistics such as parking and delivering recording equipment. After hitting it off with both of them, I pitched a profile of Lee and his club to the NPR Music jazz website, *A Blog Supreme*, which ran the following April (Rodriguez 2012a). My jazz fieldwork process, then, followed naturally from the journalistic practices I had begun to hone on the East Coast. Ringing in the New Year at bluewhale, I began what I now intended to be a comparative ethnographic investigation of jazz space in Los Angeles and Chile.

⁴ Pulliam has been a crucial figure in jazz ethnomusicology; she is also acknowledged for her role in supporting the jazz fieldwork of both Ingrid Monson and Travis Jackson.

⁵ The broadcast can be heard at the following website: <https://www.npr.org/event/music/144532206/billy-childs-quartet-live-in-concert>

Chapter 2: Los Angeles, California

Creating Space for Creative Music at bluewhale, Live Jazz and Art Space



Fig. 2.1: Wall display near bluewhale entrance

In the summer of 2009, in the wake of a crippling recession, the L.A. jazz scene was struggling. Well-paying studio gigs continued to dry up, the prestigious Thelonious Monk Institute had left its longtime home at USC for New Orleans in 2005, and the city's most-celebrated venue, The Jazz Bakery, had closed its doors two years later. Meanwhile, a Korean-American jazz singer named Joon Lee was in the middle of recording his first album. But Lee also harbored another humble aspiration: "I had a fantasy about a little venue that people can come and play music," he told me in a 2012 interview. When he heard that a run-down karaoke bar in the corner of a Little Tokyo strip mall was on the market, Lee decided to check it out. As he explained, "The only really attractive thing about it was that the elevator was really close. That way, the musicians can bring their gear." From there, Lee completely redesigned the room, bringing the small but spacious new ambiance into being as bluewhale.¹ Resolved in his belief that, as he put it, "this was the time that we needed to have some seriously good music," Lee

¹ The club is variously referred to as bluewhale, The Blue Whale, Bluewhale, and Blue Whale. The one-word, non-capitalized variant is preferred by Lee, and is therefore the one that I use throughout this dissertation.

found himself suddenly intertwined with a new presence in the LA creative music community. Opening a jazz club in the middle of the Great Recession was only one of the challenges facing this ambitious upstart—for a while, even the elevator didn't work.

But as the late jazz icon Miles Davis is known to have said, “Don't play what's there, play what's not there.” When bassist Dave Holland first recounted this famous epigraph in a 1975 interview, he was referring to the trumpeter's relentless pursuit of new sounds, musical statements that existed beyond the habitual patterns of his musical collaborators (Carr 1998:247). Lee has followed this approach in the nine years since he opened the club, which has since blossomed into a uniquely vibrant space for improvised music in Los Angeles. In this chapter, I situate the club within the local scene that it has catalyzed. This exegesis is informed by field notes taken at the site from 2012-2017, and interviews that I have conducted with Lee and some of the dedicated musicians that have made bluewhale their creative home base.

Location

The first question in terms of locating the club spatially is simply to ask: Where exactly is it? The easy answer would be to give its physical location, in the third-floor corner suite of Weller Court, a small shopping center in the Little Tokyo neighborhood of Downtown Los Angeles. The unusual address, 123 Astronaut E.S. Onizuka St., adds a bit of mystique to this physical dimension; it can also be mapped with the cartographic coordinates (34.05, -118.24). In this photo, with the camera facing southeast from the inside of the Weller Court plaza, the club entrance is illuminated on the upper right side of the frame:



Fig. 2.2: Weller Court, 2012

The next important question regarding this club’s location is: what is a jazz club doing here? This is a question that Lee has had to address consistently—it is a departure from the speakeasy or supper club environs that characterize many jazz clubs. As Lee himself acknowledges, the location has drawbacks: for example, it is tucked away within a sterile shopping mall, in a neighborhood where parking is scarce and expensive. Lee’s decision to lease the space and start the club in 2009 came when a friend who knew the previous owner told him it was on the market. “I don’t go out often, so I didn’t know anything about Downtown,” he explains. “I came here, and it was a totally different place . . . a Japanese bar.”



Fig. 2.3: bluewhale exterior, 2012

These circumstances are also a manifestation of changes in the Downtown L.A. real estate market during the first decade of the 21st century. Changes in zoning laws in the early 2000s prompted a housing boom of “Live/Work” loft spaces in the nearby Arts District, starting a trend of upward movement for Downtown property values throughout the decade. Italian creative music promoter Rocco Somazzi, who moved to Los Angeles in 1998, booked music at the Café Metropol in the Arts District from 2003-2007, helping to plant the seeds of a scene that would later flourish at bluewhale. In the wake of the 2007-2008 financial crisis, many property owners sold their real estate to new developers—in the Little Tokyo neighborhood, many of these transactions involved sales from Japanese property owners to South Korean developers. Lee’s connections to this world—as well as his access to family investment capital—afforded him the opportunity to take the risk and open the club. This was due in part to the fact that when

he took over the lease, he inherited the previous bar's liquor license, allowing him to sell alcohol in the space. As is the case with most jazz clubs, revenue is generated primarily from the sale of alcohol and, to a lesser extent, food.

Interior

Now, I'd like to step inside and consider the club itself as a space of representation—in the sense outlined by Lefebvre (1974)—and consider *how* bluewhale creates space for creative music. Lefebvre argues that analysis of spaces themselves can contribute to an understanding of the underlying social relations that produced them; I will take that approach in the paragraphs that follow.



Fig. 2.4: Lee seated at bluewhale bar, 2012

In the case of bluewhale, this interrelationship is especially legible given that Lee has played such a central role in the financing, design, and continued maintenance of the space. Lee designed the performance area with three important features in mind, inspired by his experience as a jazz musician.

First, Lee installed upholstered cubes as the bar's seating, which are movable. They are colored brown for the bar area and blue for the performance area—according to Lee, this represents land and sea, respectively. Second, the performance room does not include a raised stage—instead, most musicians perform between the pair of columns in the middle of the room. As Lee explains,

We don't have a stage here, right? I just gave it a shot for that. People are so used to the stage, but wow. From my experience, when you improvise, the fun part and thrilling part is sharing the energy between the musicians. That's [an] unbelievable experience. . . . Sharing the energy is an important thing. And I thought that I was trying to share the energy with the audience, too. . . . The stage, and the audience clapping—that's always isolating. I was dreaming about a full experience for musicians.

The flexibility allows for musicians to be creative in how they arrange the space—for example, with the cubes clustered in the middle and the musicians surrounding the audience, or as Josh Nelson did in a performance of his first *Discovery Project* concerts in 2012, with a video screen hung on one wall and the musicians playing in front of moving images controlled by a video DJ. This unorthodox setup gives musicians the opportunity to decenter both themselves and the audience, allowing for the exploration of different spatial relationships between the two.

According to Lee, this was by design. “And the cubes—we don't have booths or anything,” he says. “Anyone can come in, play anywhere, sit anywhere, we can improvise with the cubes. The main thing is that everybody [can] just come in and enjoy things on the same level.” That said, on most nights, the cubes are lined up somewhat conventionally in rows in front of the performers.



Fig. 2.5: Performance area, 2012

The third and perhaps most surprising feature of the performance space can be found on the ceiling, where Lee emblazoned large slabs with mystic poetry, such as Hafiz’s “A Great Need” seen in the photo below. The presence of this detail gives the room a more spacious quality—reminding people in the space that intention went into every dimension of it, even the ceiling. This detail also compels attendees to look up occasionally and perceive the third dimension of the space, a powerful feeling especially when accompanied by music.

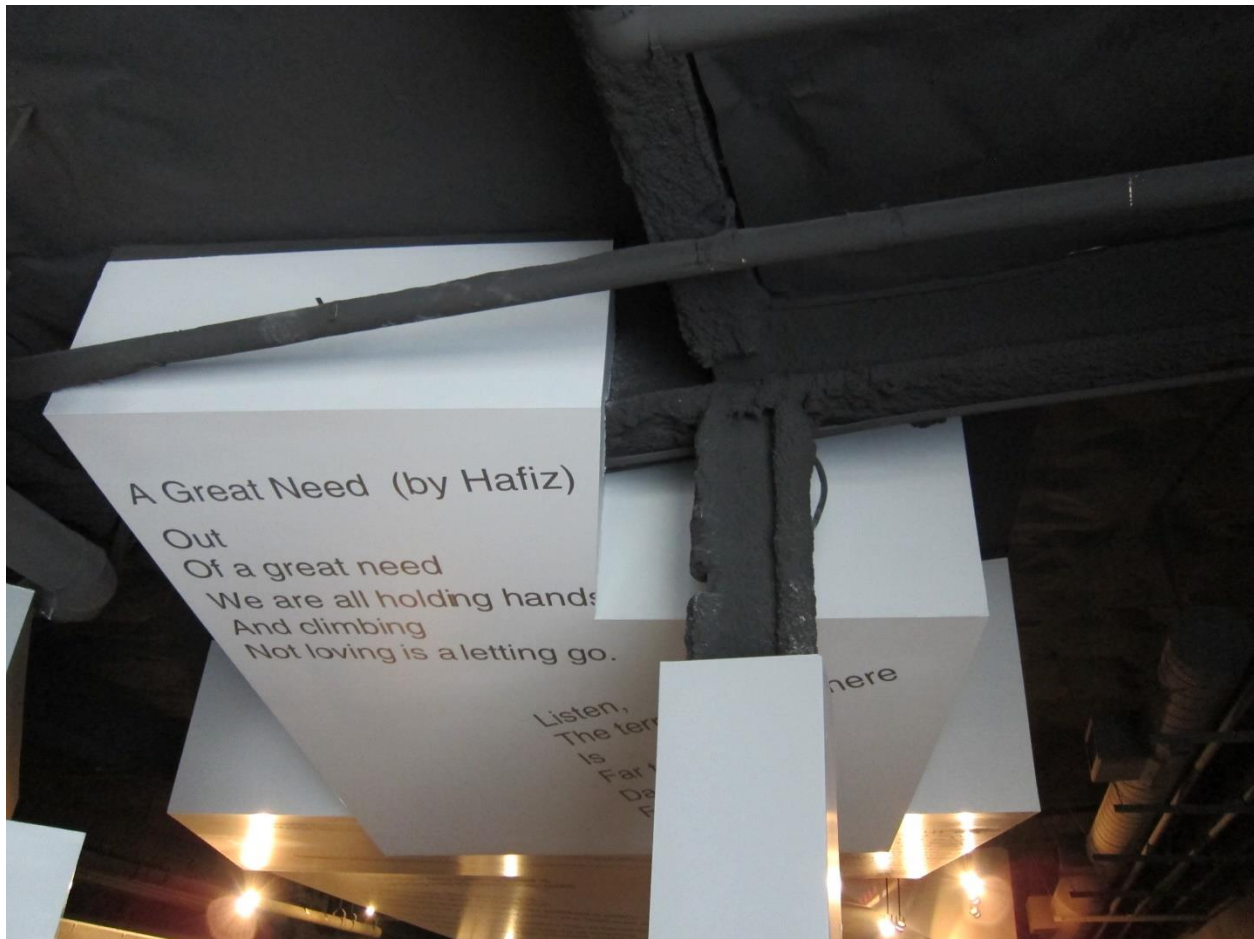


Fig. 2.6: Ceiling poetry, 2012

Taken together, these innovative spatial features suggest an intentional architectural vision: one that accommodates attentive listening and contemplation in the performance area, and relaxed food and alcohol consumption in the bar area. The vision is decidedly that of Lee himself: many of the details were designed, built, and maintained by him personally. As drummer Dan Schnelle put it in a 2012 interview,

It's his club. In every way, shape, and form it's his club. You're just as likely to see him at the sound board, at the front door, behind the bar, walking around picking up empty glasses. I mean, he's not your typical owner. He's invested in that club. He wakes up and he breathes the bluewhale. He works his ass off for that place. And he always puts the music first.

According to Lee, this was inspired by his romantic view of 1920s Parisian bohemia—one that he aspired to recreate in contemporary Los Angeles: “The only thing I was thinking about was

just a little playground for musicians and artists and writers,” he told me, “you know—poets, all these artists, just like the 1920s French scene, an artists’ hang.”

In order to produce the space of an “artists’ hang,” bluewhale also necessarily consists of spaces that are occupied only by certain smaller groups—although the club does not have a “stage” per se, there is still a “backstage” in a certain sense. For example, a hallway behind the performance area leads to two restrooms and a storage area for bar and kitchen supplies, as well as food and drink.² Another one of these spaces is the “green room” area, which is on the opposite side of the space, connected to the bar area through a small hallway marked with a door labeled “PRIVATE.”³ This area is used to store musicians’ unused gear, such as instrument cases, as well as to offer a semi-private space for them to congregate before and after their performance. This area has undergone the least amount of changes since its earlier life as the V.I.P. area of the previous karaoke bar—the windowless room still has the same small, round tables, curved benches, and groovy reflective wallpaper. A small, single-stall restroom is adjacent to the hallway that adjoins the space to the bar area. This is also the space where I conducted most of my interviews with Lee and musicians—it is the most sonically isolated from activity that takes place in the bar and performance area, although it is far from a silent refuge when musicians are playing in the performance area.

² The doorway to this area can be seen in the left side of the photo in fig. 2.5

³ The doorway can be seen in the black space behind Lee in fig. 2.4



Fig. 2.7: Green room, 2012

The other space that is not accessible to the public is behind the bar and in the small kitchen: this is the domain of the bluewhale staff throughout the evening. There are usually two bartenders on staff, one of whom also helps to manage the stage and sound in the performance area. The kitchen area is a tiny enclave behind the bar area, accessible through a small corridor in the performance area. The kitchen staff is rarely, if ever, seen outside of this space during the course of an evening at bluewhale; the only time that I saw them was when I came to the club well before the performance and specifically asked to meet them and see the kitchen. In that exchange, the two kitchen workers showed me the holiday decorations that they had recently installed to cover the approximately two square meters of wall space in the area. Notably, the bartenders have almost always been white men, and the kitchen staff has almost always been

women of color—a pattern that reflects the broader socioeconomic realities of racial capitalism, connected to Southern California’s long history as an “open shop” city.⁴

Social Location: Scene, Field, World

The club’s geographical location and architectural features are only part of what locates the club as a node for the making of jazz space; it exists within a dense network of social relationships that make up the jazz community. Considering the social production of this space as a complex manifestation of spatial practices allows for a reading of these emergent qualities at different scales, with each scale reflecting unique observable social phenomena. One could hear jazz, then, at many levels: as a manifestation of a small group, a local scene, a translocal field, and a world of musical practice. But any hearing or reading of these different emergent phenomena is only momentary and is not disconnected from the complex networks from which they arise.

No matter the formulation, however, Lee is a central figure in the production of space at bluewhale; he serves in many roles including artistic auteur (in terms of both architectural and musical design), entrepreneur, and legal lessee of the space—playing the breaks under the conditions of late capitalism. According to Arjun Appadurai, “The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics which we have barely begun to theorize” (1990:296). Lefebvre, too, considers the distortions and gaps in the contradictory logic of late capitalism as important constituents of representational spaces. The current global jazz network is similarly complex, full of its own disjunctures and conflicts. But it is in these disjunctures where space can be found—and an

⁴ See Mike Davis (1990) and Edward Soja (1996)—bluewhale is located in the southeastern corner of what Soja calls “CITADEL-LA,” an important zone of power described in chapter 7 of the book.

opportunity to “play what isn’t there.” Jazz musicians have always taken it upon themselves to insert an improvised articulation of individuality, into these spaces. Lee’s creation of bluewhale, spurred by an improvisational response to a moment of economic serendipity, could be considered an articulation of Davis’s mandate on its own terms, as a representational space. It could also be considered a form of spatial practice that allows for what might be called “more playable breaks” for other musicians in the jazz community.

Lee is himself a musician, although he rarely plays at the club. Despite being highly regarded in the local scene for his role in operating bluewhale, his work as a vocalist is less recognized; I attended two of his performances during my fieldwork, and both were sparsely attended. Lee’s approach to jazz vocals is deeply rooted in the midcentury style, having trained extensively with Cathy Segal-Garcia and collaborated with Mark Murphy. In his performances, Lee recontextualizes this lineage through unconventional instrumentation and collaboration with adventuresome experimentalists. For example, one working trio he employed in 2012 included bassist Putter Smith and trombonist Joey Sellers—Lee would often sing cool, unadorned melodies in a tenor voice that recalls Chet Baker, while Sellers would weave outrageously bombastic atonal flourishes to provide a striking contrast. But in general, rather than inserting his own music into the space, Lee books the club by developing relationships with other musicians whom he respects. These relationships, cultivated during his time as an active participant in the creative music community starting in the late 1990s, form the foundation of his curatorial approach. Musicians who frequent the club as curious and engaged listeners—such as Schnelle, quoted above—tend to perform there more frequently, as do musicians whom they recommend to Lee.

When I began frequenting bluewhale in 2012, the club also offered a space to showcase the communal visions of groups invited by Lee for monthly residencies, usually on Wednesday nights. For these residencies, Lee intentionally sought out a diverse range of jazz subcommunities to perform at the club, from free improvisers to modernist composers to bebop mainstays, all of whom flocked there like ant colonies to an abandoned picnic. Lee prides himself on his eclectic approach to booking, taking particular pleasure in his ability to connect prominent members of different groups who have not previously heard one another play. Through his booking priorities, Lee actively works to support local musicians whose music excites him. “I knew that we had good enough players here, and there’s no place to play that type of music,” he says. “All of these young guys who can really blow and everything, they don’t have a space to play. Of course they want to leave town to New York.”

By providing a public showcase for the musicians and drawing in jazz fans and fellow musicians throughout the city, bluewhale has also changed the citywide landscape of jazz practice. This has also taken place through regular jam sessions, which began as a weekly event and became a monthly practice around the time I began my fieldwork. When the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance returned to Los Angeles in the fall of 2012, they partnered with bluewhale to host the monthly jam sessions there. Daniel Seeff, the West Coast Director of the Institute, manages the sessions, which are frequented primarily by students at nearby jazz university programs such as USC, Cal State Northridge, and UCLA (where the Monk Institute has been based since 2012). The soundscape of the club’s interior at the jam sessions is different from most evenings at the club: the bar area is more densely populated with young musicians networking, and less attention is devoted to the music outside of a smaller group of listeners in the performance area.

The club's location has allowed the venue to attract neighborhood arts-lovers as well as jazz fans from other areas of the city, who are used to driving into the city center for an evening of high-quality music. The club seats just over 100 people at capacity, and attracts a significant cast of regular patrons, which provides an opportunity for the musicians to connect with an audience beyond their most loyal fans. The space also attracts casual neighborhood barhoppers, especially on Friday and Saturday evenings, thanks in part to its high Yelp rating. One important contributor to the sense of bluewhale as a crucial node in the metropolitan scene is the frequent presence of one of the city's most loyal jazz aficionados, Don Edmondson. A black Los Angeles native who has frequented the city's jazz scene for decades, Edmondson lives in a nearby apartment and attended multiple shows per week throughout the duration of my fieldwork. Edmondson also posts short videos of concerts on his Facebook page, a project he calls "The Quest," which is followed by hundreds jazz musicians and listeners, mostly based in Los Angeles. A photo of bluewhale serves as the banner image for the page.⁵

Sites such as Edmondson's, as well as Greg Burk's website MetalJazz.com and Tom Meek's LAJazz.com, serve a crucial role in bringing fans to the club.⁶ This is due to a rather curious break between the global and metropolitan jazz networks, which was revealed to me during my first project there: the *Toast of the Nation* program was available for free online, but LA was one of the few cities where it was not broadcast locally on the radio. The NPR affiliate KCRW displayed little interest in jazz, and the jazz station KJZZ preferred not to syndicate content from NPR. Since its inception, bluewhale has been competing for jazz listeners in the local media market, which has been dominated by KJZZ, Catalina Jazz Club, and the Jazz

⁵<http://www.facebook.com/Dons-Live-Music-Quest-223734887808648>

⁶ <http://www.metaljazz.com>, <http://www.lajazz.com>

Bakery Movable Feast concert series. Independent online media projects have offered an alternative way for word to spread about events at bluewhale, whose programming has resonated especially well with younger musicians and listeners.

Guitarist Anthony Wilson, a regular performer and listener at bluewhale (and son of local jazz legend Gerald Wilson), speaks to the indispensability of bluewhale as a part of the local creative music scene:

In L.A. there have not been enough places to play, then on top of that the places that are there aren't very sexy. . . . They're not accessible to everybody—either the club costs too much money or it doesn't feel like a room, a space that you'd want to be in. There's so many young people who want to hear the music but can't afford it. . . . But the lifeblood of the music is connected to people having access to it and wanting to be around it. There needs to be a place that you're going to get really quality music but there's a sense of community and people sharing, and I experienced all that stuff immediately when I first went [to bluewhale].

Saxophonist Ben Wendel has noted that, in contrast to other local venues, bluewhale attracts a diverse audience. “When you go to the bluewhale,” he says, “you see really young kids, you see old people, you see people in the middle, you see women and men, you just see a nice cross-section of a normal city, and that's really encouraging.”

Beyond these local networks, Joon also ensures that bluewhale interacts with jazz practice on a global scale by booking prominent acts from outside of Los Angeles—usually from New York City. As New York-based drummer Mark Giuliana explained to me in an interview at the club in August 2014, “I feel a strong New York energy in this room, and I feel like they have very reliable booking, and good taste. I've always felt very comfortable here.” Somazzi explained the club's unique vibe, and its ability to attract prominent out-of-town acts, as follows:

The people that are at the pinnacle . . . they have nowhere else to play [in Los Angeles], they normally wouldn't play at clubs this small. So . . . bluewhale has this unique opportunity to present music that is really at the highest possible level . . . in an intimate setting.

According to Somazzi, it is precisely the space created by the recession, the *lack* of globally networked venues has allowed blue whale to occasionally present globally prominent musicians in such a small venue. In June 2014, for example, the club hosted the stateside debut of the Afro-British rising star Zara MacFarlane, fostering a frenetic buzz that is more difficult to create in larger venues such as Jazz Alley in Seattle or Yoshi's in Oakland, the sorts of places that would usually book a higher-profile act.

The club also frequently hosts collaborations between like-minded artists from different cities—for example, I reviewed a concert by New York-based saxophonist Jessica Jones playing alongside two of her California-based former students, Hitomi Oba and Ambrose Akinmusire, in July 2012 (Rodriguez 2012c). Another highlight in this vein came in August 2014, when New York-based saxophonist Ben Wendel put together a stunning evening of improvised trio music with Akinmusire and Santa Cruz-based drummer Jeff Ballard. Wendel noted before the first set that Ballard had flown the night before from a festival in Paris, and Akinmusire had arrived from a performance in Siena, Italy. Perhaps the deliriousness of their jetlagged brains contributed to the exciting, spaced-out ethereality that emerged from their music that evening. And the spheres of spatial practice that keep bluewhale afloat expand further than just the music: that night, Lee also met with Wendel's father, a copyright attorney, to sign paperwork to make "bluewhale" into an international trademark.

Although Lee plays a central role in the social relations of this space on these many scales—through booking and managing the club's day-to-day existence as a business entity—his actions also leave a good deal of room for others to invest themselves in the production of space at bluewhale. This begins with his attitude toward musicians: "I have to thank all the musicians," he says. "We are all a team. This place—without good music, I wouldn't come here. . . . They're

all part of it, they help me a lot.” For the first few years, all of Lee’s employees outside of the kitchen staff had musical backgrounds; Lee told me that this helped set the tone of the place as one that fostered attentive listening. Musicians who frequent the space have reciprocated by investing it with their own creativity. “Joon books the place for musicians,” explains Schnelle in our interview. “This is the only music venue in LA that is for the music and for the musicians first—and worried about the crowd second. It’s the only place that gives a shit about how *we’re* doing.” As a result, the space has become the go-to place for creative music projects for both local and out-of-town players—record releases, live recordings, and multimedia experiments have all taken place there because Lee simply says “yes” to whatever musicians want to do there, offering what musicians have described to me as a fair and transparent process for distributing the proceeds from the performance.

Similar to the ways in which the space includes “public” and “hidden” areas, however, this sense of “who’s who” in the community that sustains the club is structured by race, class, and gender. The work of the kitchen staff, for example, is rarely included in the celebration of the community that is common among local musicians. In Los Angeles, participation in the local jazz scene is skewed largely toward men, as is the case throughout the jazz world.⁷ During the course of my fieldwork, in July 2013, *JazzTimes* contributor Nate Chinen published a derisive opinion piece in his regular column entitled “Behold the JazzBro: Like it or not, he speaks for you. Wooo!” Chinen describes the jazzbro as follows:

A jazzbro—not to be confused with a jazzbo, its older taxonomical cousin—is a self-styled jazz aficionado, overwhelmingly male and usually a musician in training himself, who expresses a handful of determinative social behaviors. Among these are a migratory pattern from the practice room, where they often nest alone, to the jazz club, where they travel in packs; a compulsion to signal the awareness of any mildly startling musical detail, with muttered exclamations like the aforementioned “Woooo”; the emphatic adjectival use of the word “killing,” as in “that solo was *killing*”; and the exploitation of

⁷ See Tucker and Rustin (2008) for a thorough analysis of this dynamic.

jazz knowledge as a private commodity selectively put on public display. Easily mocked but only partly understood, the jazzbro should be an object of concern for anyone who claims to care about outside perceptions of jazz.

I certainly witnessed an abundance of this phenomenon during my many hours at bluewhale—and like Chinen, admit to having engaged in many of these behaviors myself as a younger jazz enthusiast. I mention it here to simply draw attention to the fact that these behaviors index a set of normative cultural practices that are steeped in an especially white-masculine framework for understanding the value of the musical activity. This coexists alongside other frames of reference—for example, the space is a popular place for first dates by young couples, as well as local barhoppers who stay in the bar area and pay little attention to the music being performed on a given night. And most of the musicians who perform there, despite many also having been through postsecondary jazz education programs, seem to have outgrown any past jazzbro affectations. As a result, what I referenced in my field notes as the “bro-y vibe” on a particular evening would coexist in the space with other listeners, resulting in the diversity noted earlier.

Lastly, it also bears mentioning that all of this activity exists within the social relationship that Lee has with the owners of the building from whom he leases it. Although I was unable to confirm the identity of the building’s owner, Lee reported that building ownership has changed four times since he signed his original lease in 2009. All of the owners have lived outside of the United States and rarely visited the space. The frequency of ownership turnover is one indicator of the rapid changes that continue apace in the local real estate market, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Change Over Time

The circumstances surrounding the fieldwork at bluewhale allowed for the unique opportunity for me to conduct a longitudinal study of how space is produced there—from roughly 2012-2015, with occasional visits since. So far, I have focused primarily on aspects of the club that have remained consistent throughout this time, but it is also important to recognize what has changed over the course of the past six years and to note how that process has taken place. In general, changes have happened gradually, with small adjustments made as profits are reinvested in upgrades to the interior infrastructure. Perhaps the most telling example of this process is the sound system and lighting in the performance area. Musicians whom I interviewed remembered that for the first few months of its existence, the club didn't even have a piano—that had been Lee's first major purchase and was already in the space by the time I began attending events there in late 2011. At that time, only two small lights illuminated main performance area (the space between the two pillars). The photo below shows the space as it appeared in 2012 during a performance—this one by the Joshua White trio:



Fig. 2.8: Joshua White, Richard Giddens, and Dan Schnelle perform at bluewhale, May 8, 2012

The sound amplification system, meanwhile, consisted of a pair of Bose living room speakers, which were not always up to the task—especially for vocalists. In our 2012 interview in which he spoke glowingly about the club, bassist Dave Robaire brought up the sound system when I asked him if there was anything that needed improvement:

The only thing it doesn't have is the acoustics. Although I do like the sound of bluewhale, it could use some modifications, definitely. OK, so maybe it doesn't have a million dollars' worth of equipment and stuff like that—[Lee] can improve on that over time. He can build a curtain behind the band and invest \$1,000 to do that, and it will make a big difference. He can put nice rugs on the ground, he can get more comfortable seats, he can get a nicer sound system. I can't say I've spoken to one person who has had really much bad to say about bluewhale, other than maybe some acoustics or something like that.

The shape of the room, with its odd angles and hard surfaces, tends toward the “live” end of the spectrum, which can make it difficult for softer instruments and vocalists to be heard over louder instruments such as drums and piano; the underwhelming sound system exacerbated this issue.



Fig. 2.9: Sound amplification system, 2012

Over the course of my time there, profits alone did not generate sufficient income to make needed modifications to the amplification system. Shortly after my departure, in February 2016, the club hosted its first fundraising concert to raise the funds to cover the costs of the upgrade. All of the musicians, longtime regulars at the club by that point, donated their services and packed the house. It was Robaire, in fact, who led the ensemble that evening; the event was successful in raising the money needed to upgrade the sound system. The lights had already been upgraded by that point, with a set of more powerful bulbs as well as various light colors. These changes can be seen in the following photo, taken in June 2015—my first time experiencing the space as a musician leading an ensemble:



*Fig. 2.10: Alex W. Rodriguez and Friends perform at bluewhale, June 2, 2015
Left to right: Dave Wilson, Mehrenegar Rostami, Dave Robaire, Rodriguez, Otto Stuparitz,
Elisabeth Le Guin, Dan Schnelle, Josh Johnson, Pablo Infante Amate.
Photo by Nicole Andrews, used with permission.*

Beyond the physical aspects such as sound and lighting, however, many other aspects of spatial production shifted during my fieldwork at bluewhale. When the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance arrived at UCLA in the fall of 2012 (with Robaire as the first cohort's bassist), Lee invited the group to host the club's monthly jam session, a tradition that continues at the time of this writing. The students in the Monk Institute, one of the most selective postsecondary jazz education institutions in the country, have become a regular presence at the club beyond the jam session, as well. Over the four years of my fieldwork, I saw the initial network of a small inner circle of musicians upon whom Lee relied for booking advice—

including Nelson, Robaire, Schnelle, and Wilson—expand to include these and other talented young players who had decided to establish themselves in LA. Furthermore, I watched as these musicians’ projects became increasingly adventuresome—especially Josh Nelson’s, whose *Discovery Project* series included video projections, rearrangement of the room, and other creative spatial interventions.

That said, it is also important to recognize the important differences between bluewhale and other local spaces that host jazz practice. Regulars at the World Stage with whom I spoke about bluewhale were appreciative of its existence but did not espouse the same enthusiasm articulated by most of the musicians that I interviewed. Although World Stage regulars, such as Kamasi Washington, also performed at bluewhale, the reverse was not usually the case—that is, those who performed most frequently at bluewhale tended not to play as regularly elsewhere. This may have to do with bluewhale’s more catholic mode of community-building, as opposed to the World Stage’s directly Afrocentric approach. Although bluewhale’s patrons do include many black people, the sense of the space as one imbued with black community aesthetics is absent. This distinction is not unique to these clubs, of course, and is one manifestation of a larger trend throughout the jazz world.

The time that I spent regularly at bluewhale also coincided with the club’s rising profile as a space for creative music. Chris Barton, a music critic for the *Los Angeles Times* (whose imperious offices are located just across the street from Weller Court), wrote a glowing profile of the space in October 2010, less than a year after it opened. Former *Los Angeles Times* jazz critic Don Heckman also covered concerts there for his blog, *The International Review of Music*, starting in 2011.⁸ *LA Weekly* writers Brick Wahl, Sean O’Connell, and Gary Fukushima had also

⁸ Heckman’s posts can be found here: <https://irom.wordpress.com/>

been reviewing music here on a regular basis, with their frequency increasing in early 2012. I also wrote occasional concert reviews there for *LA Weekly* and my own blog. Two years into the fieldwork, Lee mentioned that the piece that I wrote for NPR Music's *A Blog Supreme* (Rodriguez 2012a) marked a pivotal point in the club's recognition as a part of the local scene. "You did a terrible thing to me," he joked. The piece's swift embrace on social media offered a glimpse into the club's positive reception in the local music community; the wave of enthusiastic comments also helped broaden its reach. Although my piece was not the only catalyst in this transition, watching it spread on social media offered a clear view into one aspect of this shift—marking the club's transition from what Raymond Williams (1977) calls "emergent" to "dominant" status in the cultural production of jazz practice in Los Angeles. At the same time, other institutions and the social norms and networks that surround their production, such as Catalina's Jazz Club, shifted from a dominant to residual status on the local jazz scene. Within five years of opening the club, Lee has also been recognized by local jazz luminaries for his efforts—both through invitations to serve on local jazz advisory boards and also in the form of the occasional visit from a high-profile star artist such as Herbie Hancock or Quincy Jones.

In a 2017 article for *LA Weekly* entitled "L.A. Jazz Is Having a Moment. So Why Are So Many of the City's Jazz Clubs Closing?", Tom Meek offers a comprehensive overview of the changing landscape of jazz space in Los Angeles, noting that bluewhale "is the last full-time jazz venue to open and survive in Greater L.A." Although one could quibble with his rather restrictive definition of what constitutes a "full-time jazz venue," the exhaustive list of spaces that were closing or restricting their jazz programming nonetheless reinforces the point that bluewhale is a striking outlier in the region. This points toward another significant dimension of change at bluewhale over the course of my fieldwork concerns: real estate economics. The

primary reason cited by Meek for the closure of so many clubs is that the increasing price of real estate, and also commercial rents, makes it very difficult to break even with a business centered around jazz performance. This is especially striking in the neighborhood surrounding bluewhale. It is likely that the club would not exist without the depressed real estate market that has given way to new development Downtown—Lee’s vision in founding the club was not only borne out of necessity for “seriously good music,” but opportunity.

The club opened shortly before the area underwent an intense process of new construction and gentrification: for example, the two lots across 2nd Street from Weller Court were parking lots when I first started attending in late 2011; now, they are mixed-use housing developments with luxury condominiums and retail spaces. In a disorienting juxtaposition, the tent colonies of LA’s Skid Row can be found just one block further south—due to aggressive policing in the area, the northernmost boundary of Skid Row tents slowly moved southward along Los Angeles St. and San Pedro St. throughout my fieldwork. In 2012, the tents could be found close to the corner with 2nd St.; by 2015, the tents could no longer be found north of 3rd St.⁹ Another index of increasing rents in the neighborhood is the growing scarcity and increasing cost of parking nearby. In 2012, parking in the underground lot of Weller Court was free for bluewhale patrons; however, the owner stopped offering parking validation a few months after I began attending events there. The current price for parking in the nearby lots has almost doubled since then, as well.

Lee signed a six-year lease for bluewhale in 2009, which he was in the process of negotiating during my final months of full-time fieldwork in 2015. During my conversations with him around that time, he described an arduous and tense negotiation process that left him

⁹ See Heatherton (2011) and Camp (2012) for more about this phenomenon.

preparing to close or relocate the venue. Fortunately, the owner of the building relented, and Lee signed a new 10-year lease, although the new rate for renting the space would make sustaining the club financially even more of a challenge. But as he struggles to keep the numbers adding up, Lee is also consistently supported by an expanding group of enthusiastic patrons who reaffirm his commitment to keeping the space open. In many of our conversations, Lee earnestly reiterated his sense of these people as “like a family” to him.

Conclusion: So What?

The previous photo offers a useful reminder that my participation in these changes was not only that of a neutral observer, but that of an active participant. Not only did I perform there on two occasions—these concerts will be discussed in the forthcoming interludes—I also logged hundreds of hours in the space as a curious listener and audience member. After our initial collaboration for *Toast of the Nation*, Lee seemed to recognize the value of having me around—as well as my limited graduate student budget—and offered for me to attend events there free of charge.¹⁰ This generous gesture allowed for me to attend events there frequently enough to get to know other regulars, such as Nelson, Robaire, and Edmondson, ask informal questions, and become a regular presence in the space myself. During my visits, I would usually chat informally with Lee before the music started or during a set break, to get a sense of the latest club-related news and learn about upcoming events that he was especially excited about. My fieldnotes from these visits are a mixture of analysis and thoughts about the music I heard there—similar to my previous practice as a music journalist—and snippets of insight garnered from these informal conversations. Looking back through these notes, one thing that stands out is the youth of so

¹⁰ Cover charges at bluewhale were usually in the range of \$15-\$25, with no drink minimum—significantly less than competing venues in the area.

many of the people involved—musicians at the events were rarely elder statesmen, with twenty- and thirty-somethings making up the majority of the events I attended.

As I mentioned in the previous interlude, the sense of “home” that I felt at bluewhale, starting with my first conversations with Joon, compelled me to spend more time there and deepen my relationship to the space. Outside of the university, I found few places like it in Los Angeles, and am emotionally invested in its continued flourishing. At the same time, I am sensitive to the fact that holding this perspective challenges me to articulate a reason to be highlighting it as part of this ethnographic work on jazz space, beyond the fact that I personally love being there and harbor affection and gratitude to the many people who keep it alive. In addition to the simple fact that it is quickly becoming one of the only surviving jazz-focused businesses in Southern California, I argue that some aspects of the creation of space at bluewhale offer a way to understand how jazz consciousness can manifest in the 21st century.

By taking the risk to operate this business despite a low profit margin, Lee’s initiative creates what I call *more playable breaks* on the local jazz scene. These point toward a model of social organization that could offer some ideas for strategies to construct alternatives to late capitalist exploitation. In a 2016 lecture to the Harvard Graduate School of Design, David Harvey cogently lays out the stakes of this practice:

It is no accident that most of the uprisings that there have been—in Brazil in 2013 and in Turkey in 2013—were more about the politics of realization than they were about the politics of production. . . . This is where a lot of the politics lies. And that is very difficult to organize for a number of particular reasons. . . . It’s not capital vs. labor in the realization process, it’s capital vs. everybody else. (57:00)

Harvey goes on to call for a political project that is “dedicated to the idea that cities are for people to live in, not to invest in,” noting that “all politics originates with local initiatives but needs to scale up.” Harvey also argues that efforts to sustain “unalienated spaces in a sea of

urbanized alienation . . . are important initiatives” (1:24:00). This position emerged from his work with the Right to the City Alliance, a coalition of racial, economic, and environmental justice organizations that have been organizing resistance to urban gentrification since 2007.¹¹ Since the 1990s, the politics of realization in the jazz world have been shifting away from marketing commodified, genre-based musical products to a niche consumer market—a project that reached its peak with the massively successful Ken Burns documentary *Jazz* in 2001 (as well as its multi-CD soundtrack). As the music industry has shifted its monetization strategy toward back catalog—especially with jazz artists—and urban real estate speculation drives up commercial rents in most major cities, the jazz community is faced with an existential crisis. What seems to be in evidence at bluewhale is that despite these structural challenges, the value of vibrant creative music has inspired people to sustain its own logic of spatial production—constrained by, but independent from, neoliberal value regimes—in spaces such as bluewhale.

As the club continues to thrive despite adverse conditions for jazz practice, Lee’s enterprise has some important lessons for arts advocates hoping to cultivate locally sustainable creative communities. For all of the recent enthusiasm for the creative placemaking movement, driven in large part by the National Endowment for the Arts, perhaps a more useful model would be creative *space*-making, informed by Lefebvre’s call for a unified concept of spatial production and social history that is accountable to city-dwellers’ “right to the city.”¹² At bluewhale, Lee has sought to carve out space in a community that needed it—his own—acting assertively within both the physical and social constraints and disjunctures of his environment. Through his own

¹¹ For more information about this organization: <https://righttothecity.org>

¹² This is outlined in Lefebvre’s 1968 by the same name, *Le Droit à la ville*, and expanded upon by Edward Soja in his 2010 book *Seeking Spatial Justice*.

desire to follow Miles Davis's mandate and "play what's not there", this space has galvanized a community of creative collaborators to join him.

Crossfade Los Angeles to Santiago

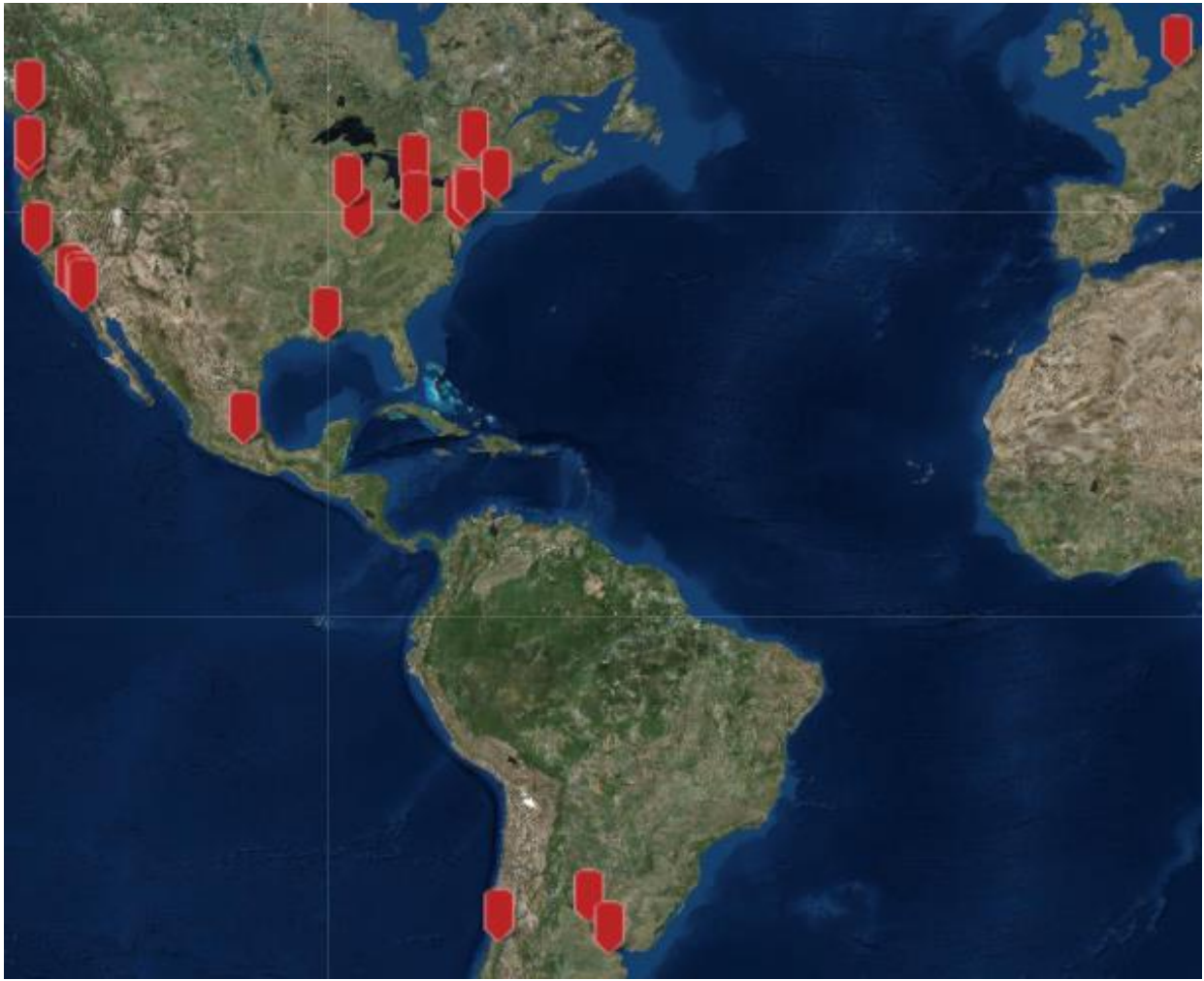


Fig. 2.11: Places where I witnessed jazz practice (2012-2015)

When I moved to Los Angeles in the fall of 2011, my intention at the time was to study jazz in Chile. California, then, would be a stopping place on a journey elsewhere, where I would train in using the tools of ethnomusicology to inform my approach. Of course, that's not how it turned out—the preceding chapter is evidence that jazz ethnography proved just as useful in Los Angeles as it would become in Santiago. Nonetheless, my time in Los Angeles was not only spent documenting jazz practice at bluewhale—it also took the form of preparation for my subsequent fieldwork stint in Chile, as well as other work related to my development as a writer,

trombonist, and improviser. Whereas the previous chapter documents the lessons I learned from fieldwork at bluewhale, this interlude tells the story of my preparation for fieldwork at Thelonious. Although both unfold over the same timespan (from roughly 2012-2015) and even occasionally overlap in physical space at bluewhale, the previous chapter takes place in the ethnographic present while this interlude arises as a narrative past. It is a story of how I moved from one place to the other—and as the above map demonstrates, ended up in a variety of other places along the way.

Two short months after my arrival in Los Angeles, I was back on a plane to the U.S. East Coast for the Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) conference in Philadelphia. The highly isomorphic space of hotel conference rooms and university classrooms in cities across North America was the most common site for my participation in jazz practice outside of bluewhale during this time; at the SEM conferences, this occurred through collaboration with the Society's many jazz-influenced scholars—especially with the Improvisation Special Interest Group, which hosted its second annual meeting in Philadelphia. Although the Improvisation SIG was not focused solely on jazz research, it served as an important hub for gathering those of us who were interested in exploring the music ethnographically. I also attended the subsequent annual SEM meetings in New Orleans, Indianapolis, and Pittsburgh over the next three years and helped organize Improvisation SIG meetings at all three events. I also attended conferences of the Analytical Approaches to World Music group in Vancouver, British Columbia; the International Society for Improvised Music in Paterson, New Jersey; and the West Coast Conference of the Society for Music Theory in Eugene, Oregon during my first year in Los Angeles.

During this time, I also continued my association with NPR Music as a freelance contributor to their jazz website, *A Blog Supreme*. In addition to the profile of bluewhale, they

published a piece on jazz presenters finding new audiences, which included a new Chilean record label that I had just begun following online: Discos Pendiente (Rodriguez 2012b). This short profile marked the beginning of my correspondence with Roberto Barahona, Sebastián Jordán, and Nicolás Vera, who became close collaborators during my fieldwork in Santiago. The following fall, *A Blog Supreme* published a pair of articles on the history of jazz education, following the arrival of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance at UCLA (Rodriguez 2012d, 2013a). Bassist Dave Robaire, whom I had interviewed for my fieldwork at bluewhale, turned out to be a part of the first Monk Institute cohort—and another member of the group, vibraphonist Diego Urbano, hailed from Chile. Although the Monk Institute program was very time-intensive, our paths crossed frequently over the next two years, both on campus and at bluewhale.

My arrival at UCLA also coincided with the formation of the Charles Mingus Ensemble, a new performance group in the Ethnomusicology Department led by James Newton. This ensemble brought a diverse array of musicians together to explore the work of Mingus, Jelly Roll Morton, Eric Dolphy, Jason Moran, Steve Coleman, and other innovative black composers, and offered me an opportunity to return to trombone playing—I had taken a hiatus from performance during my last year at Rutgers. Newton was a kind and patient guide throughout this transition, motivating me to work my technique back into shape and taking time to point me toward other fruitful avenues for musical investigation. He encouraged me to begin learning Ornette Coleman melodies, and to delve more deeply into the saxophonist’s catalog. I had been familiar with Coleman’s music before coming to Los Angeles, but Newton’s suggestion spurred me into a much more thorough investigation. I performed Coleman’s music for the first time that summer as part of a faculty recital at the Young Musicians and Artists summer music camp in Salem,

Oregon, where I worked as the low brass teacher. Accompanied by drummer Todd Strait, bassist Fletcher Nemeth, and saxophonist Sean Flannery, I will never forget the experience of losing myself in the music that took place during that concert—a sense of completely letting go into the trusting embrace of the groove, held down admirably by Nemeth and Strait.

Later that summer, this path into the art world of improvised music led me to Guelph, Ontario, for the two-week seminar and workshop put on by the Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice (ICASP) project, followed by a research presentation at the Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium.¹ This was a profoundly eye-and-ear-opening engagement, helping expand my understanding of what was possible in the improvised nexus of music, pedagogy, and advocacy outlined by the ICASP organizers. The seminars, taught by Imani Perry and Shirley Steinberg, took place during the daytimes; in the evenings, a smaller group of participants gathered to play in an open improvisation ensemble led by saxophonist Mark Laver. I was surprised to learn upon my arrival that I was the only participant who hailed from a U.S. university—the rest came from a wide array of places throughout Canada and Europe.

I returned from Guelph determined to open a similar space for improvised musical engagement at UCLA and began plans to form an Intercultural Improvisation Ensemble with Prof. Steven Loza while enrolling in Prof. Nyoman Wenten's Balinese Gamelan Ensemble. These aspirations coincided with an expansion of my research ambitions—I began studying Russian in the hopes of seeking out jazz space far away from California and Chile (and to be able to finally speak with my wife's grandparents). In conversation with New York-based improviser, ethnomusicologist, and violist Tanya Kalmanovitch, I learned about the existence of the jazz club Truba in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk and began to imagine the possibility of traveling

¹ The project now goes by the name International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI): <http://improvisationinstitute.ca/>

there. In November, I participated in another intercultural musical encounter when the Charles Mingus Ensemble performed in Mexico City as part of a university cultural exchange program with the National Autonomous University of Mexico, joined onstage by some of the school's ambitious young jazz students. This trip marked my first return to Latin America since 2007, motivating my preparations for a return to Chile a few months later.

After years of aspiration and preparation, I finally returned to the South American jazz scene for the month of August 2013. My visit coincided with that of another Mingus Ensemble trombonist, Jonah Levine, who performed with me at Thelonious alongside a Chilean rhythm section featuring bassist Milton Russell and drummer Carlos Cortez. We stayed with a friend and former section-mate in Los Andes Big Band, trombonist Boris Rojas, who also sat in with us that evening. Levine and I then traveled by bus across the Andes Mountains to Santa Fe, Argentina for the weeklong Trombonanza Festival de Trombones, followed by a brief stint in Buenos Aires, where we sat in at a jam session at the club Jazz&Pop.² From there, Levine returned to Los Angeles and I returned to Santiago for two more weeks. Upon my return, I had a chance to catch up with two old friends, Jorge and Santiago Cerda, and also get to know the organizers behind Discos Pendiente, especially Barahona and Vera.

Barahona, a photographer and radio DJ who is one of the most dedicated advocates for jazz practice in Chile, arranged for me to perform again at Thelonious, in a quartet with Vera on guitar, bassist Rodrigo Espinoza, and drummer Cristobal Massís. Seeing my name written in chalk on the small sign outside the venue after the concert—*Alex Rodríguez. Cuarteto, desde Estados Unidos*—I realized that this was the first time that I had ever performed with a group under my own name at a jazz club. (Fortunately, this occurred to me after the gig!) The show

² I wrote a short profile of the festival for the *Ethnomusicology Review Sounding Board* shortly afterwards (Rodriguez 2013b)

was well-attended, and the musicians responded well to my choice of repertoire. Our preparations for the performance in our single afternoon rehearsal were all about quickly establishing parameters and sonic spaces for cohesion amongst all four of us, with little time to do so. I noticed a different sense of jazz club spatiality from the moment I arrived for the rehearsal. I had seen bluewhale in a similarly empty state, and even stood in the area usually reserved for performers; standing there on the Thelonious stage preparing a presentation of music for an audience, however, was another experience altogether. I saw the tables, chairs and bar in a way that I hadn't before—not the “zoomed out” orientation of a listener taking it all in, but from the hyper-focused viewpoint of the performer.

Once the performance got underway later that evening, this feeling became even more pronounced: the intensity of having dozens of eyes and ears focused toward me slowed down my sense of time, and also its precious quality—whenever something happened, there was another important musical moment to attend to. As a result, the quality of time-slowed-down, of vivid colors, and of the emotional intensity of musical surprises still resonates strongly in my memory. The resulting performance was, to my ears at least, an interesting and challenging negotiation between our shared attempt to communicate as a unit, and the exciting and dangerous moments that we navigated together when our preparations failed to bring that about.

The most obvious example of this failure came at the beginning of the last number, a rendition of John Coltrane's famous blues, “Blue Train.” A simple blues melody, I called it in the key of B flat (*Si bemol*), but Vera and Espinoza thought that I had said E flat (*Mi bemol*), the key of the original recording. When Vera and I entered with what we thought would be a unison melodic statement, we instead heard the grinding dissonance of parallel fourths. In that moment, the audience expected Vera, Espinoza and I to resolve this dissonance, in real time, without

access to words. I remember an instant of panic, followed by a decision to simply stay in the key of Bb and trust Vera and Espinoza to adjust. Within seconds, they did—Vera looked over at Espinoza and seemed to acknowledge that they would accommodate my key choice—and the tune was propelled forward. After the gig, that moment was the first topic of discussion: I still remember Vera’s coy smile, to which I replied, “that’s jazz, isn’t it?” He laughed.

Thelonious hosted a weeklong festival the following week, featuring local artists as well as visitors from abroad, including Boston-based saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi. This also included the Chilean CD release celebration of the self-titled debut album by the Chilean jazz quintet La Resistencia—which includes three musicians now based in New York City. Vera invited me to spend some time with them at the club during and after one of their rehearsals, which offered me a chance to connect with saxophonist Melissa Aldana, who had recently been named a semifinalist for the prestigious Thelonious Monk Saxophone Competition, which would take place the following month. I also attended masterclasses at the ProJazz Institute held that week by Aldana and Bergonzi, the latter of which concluded with a memorable Q&A exchange: responding to a question from a student about what could be done to improve the conditions of musicians for the next generation, Bergonzi responded defiantly and only-half-jokingly, “Kill the rich.” (This led to an awkward pause in which the English-speakers in the audience laughed uproariously while the translator onstage considered the ramifications of repeating the phrase, then did so, leading to a second wave of nervous laughter.)

I returned to Los Angeles after this surreal and invigorating month of music to prepare for my final year of coursework at UCLA. But before school started, there was one other not-insignificant event to attend to: my wedding. My longtime partner Marina and I held a Buddhist ceremony in a park across the street from my grandparents’ house in Newport Beach, California,

with musical accompaniment by my former high school jazz bandmate, guitarist John Storie. For the ceremonial offering, Storie backed me through a chorus of the Duke Ellington ballad, “In A Sentimental Mood,” and the reception featured a DJ set by my esteemed UCLA colleague Michael D’Errico. We then moved out of our apartment in West Los Angeles to a new space in West Hollywood to prepare for the second chapter of our life in Southern California as a married couple. Over the course of the next year, I presented on aspects of my ongoing fieldwork research in Chicago and Montreal and penned a profile of Aldana for NPR Music after she won the aforementioned Monk Competition (Rodriguez 2013c).

Back in Los Angeles, I continued working on my Russian and, in January of 2014, successfully launched the Omni-Musicality Group (OMG), an intercultural improvisation ensemble in the Department of Ethnomusicology, along with Prof. Steven Loza. We conceived of the group as an experiment in musical improvisation across difference, inviting musicians from any musical or cultural background to join the group. Weekly rehearsals took the form of improvisational investigations of material brought in by group members, facilitated in a style that drew from the pedagogical methods of Paulo Freire.³ Shortly after our first concert in late May—featuring a potent mix of music from the Persian *radif*, modal jazz, Pauline Oliveros’s Deep Listening repertoire, and Britney Spears—I returned to New York City for the ISIM conference at The New School. There, my presentation focused on this work with OMG; it also happened to coincide with Vera and Jordán’s first visit to the city. So, I spent my days speaking in academic English about one world of improvised music-making and my evenings speaking in colloquial Chilean Spanish about another one—a strange but enlivening juxtaposition. Vera shared his first impressions of the city: dirtier and calmer than he had imagined. We made the rounds of West

³ See, for example, Freire’s seminal 1970 monograph, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

Village jazz haunts along with Aldana and Barahona. In fact, Barahona had recently relocated to Los Angeles, so we reconnected upon my return to record a jazz trombone edition of his radio show, *Puro Jazz*.⁴

In September, Marina and I celebrated our first anniversary in Amsterdam, where I presented research on La Resistencia for the Rhythm Changes Conference. There, I met in person for the first time with another important interlocutor, Fernando Ortiz de Urbina. A Spanish jazz writer now based in London, Ortiz de Urbina (whose wife is Chilean) was one of the handful of other non-Chileans writing about Discos Pendiente, La Resistencia, and the associated network of up-and-coming Chilean jazz artists. At the Rhythm Changes Conference, I also met Cyril Moshkow, editor of the Russian jazz magazine *Jazz.Ru*, who quickly became one of my most important sources of information about contemporary developments on the Russian jazz scene. This experience in Amsterdam also provided the first glimpse into the role that European production and promotion networks play in the distribution of Jazz around the world in the 21st century.

Throughout my fourth and final year in Los Angeles, I continued to direct the OMG and prepared for qualifying exams in May 2015. That fall, NPR Music published my last piece for *A Blog Supreme*, a profile of the Monk Institute's return to Los Angeles (Rodriguez 2014).⁵ That article coincided with their annual instrumental competition and the graduation of the first cohort of their Institute of Jazz Performance, including Robaire and Urbano. Both moved to New York City after completing the Monk Institute program, but returned for a performance with the Monk cohort, who decided to continue playing together after graduation under the band name

⁴ This weekly program is broadcast in Santiago by Radio Beethoven, and online at <http://www.purojazz.com>

⁵ *A Blog Supreme* ceased operation in October 2016, when editor Patrick Jarenwattananon was let go from his position at NPR Music (Jarenwattananon 2016).

Holophonor. When he was back in Los Angeles for a performance with Holophonor in April 2015, I learned that both had decided not to remain in New York; Robaire was planning a return to Los Angeles, and Urbano would be moving back to Santiago. Aldana, who was flown in by the Institute to perform at the finalists' gala, joined me and Marina for dinner the night before with her partner, Slovenian saxophonist Jure Pukl. She returned with her touring band, The Crash Trio, for her debut at bluewhale three months later; we enjoyed a day on the Santa Monica beach with bassist Pablo Menares, also a part of La Resistencia.

On June 2, 2015, my various L.A. projects—conducting fieldwork at bluewhale, directing the OMG, collaborating with other UCLA musicians in the Monk Institute and the Ethnomusicology Department—converged in an evening of performance at bluewhale, my first time performing in the space. Having recently completed my qualifying exams—and, inspired by Coleman's use of a plastic alto sax, purchased a blue pBone mini plastic alto trombone—I experienced the event as the closing seal on my fieldwork at bluewhale; it also began the process of leaving Los Angeles for Santiago in earnest. The performance took place over two one-hour sets. The first involved collaboration with various improvisers I had met during my time in Los Angeles: Albert Agha on oud, Pablo Infante on tabla, Josh Johnson alto saxophone, Elisabeth Le Guin on cello, Dave Robaire on bass, Mehrenegar Rostami on santur, Dan Schnelle on drums, Otto Stuparitz on electric bass, and Dave Wilson on tenor saxophone. The performance included five Coleman compositions—Sleep Talk, Peace, Law Years, Free Jazz, and Turnaround—interspersed with open improvisations between various constellations of smaller groups, based on the “Instigation Quartet” pieces written by Jeff Albert. The second set featured the OMG, which had recently performed a similar set list at UCLA. Aaron Farinelli, who had recently been hired as one of the bar managers, worked the sound system and was a gracious host throughout

the evening. The relatively sparse crowd, which included two men visiting from Argentina, was nonetheless enthusiastic. My goal had been to gather the diverse musicality of my Los Angeles musician friends into a single event, framed by Coleman’s framework of Universal Sound Grammar. In that sense—and in the positive energy shared by everyone in the room—the concert was a success. Before leaving for Chile, I consolidated my thoughts and experiences working with Coleman’s approach and the OMG into an academic article, “Harmolodic Pedagogy and the Challenge of Omni-Musicality,” published the following year (Rodriguez 2016b). Marina and I then packed up all of our belongings, sold all of our furniture, and left Los Angeles for the next phase of our lives together—in Santiago, Chile.

Chapter 3: Santiago, Chile

Making the Hang at Thelonious, Lugar de Jazz



*Fig. 3.1: Front entrance to Thelonious, Lugar de Jazz.
Photo by Roberto Barahona, used with permission.*

Santiago, Chile's Bellavista neighborhood is one of the city's nightlife hotspots, where open-air beer gardens blaring high-volume rock and reggaetón compete with brightly colored clubs hosting all-night parties raging under the lights inside. Empanadas, completos, and chacareros are abundant in small corner shops that abut the larger establishments, the streets buzzing with barhoppers stumbling from one venue to another. Amidst this flurry of activity, a large illuminated photograph of the jazz pianist Thelonious Monk peers over the proceedings, unflinchingly hip as ever. Below the saint-like visage, a different kind of bustle takes place behind the two thick wooden doors: jazz musicians improvise melodies while listeners sit at the bar and tables taking in a light dinner, wine, or a pisco sour. Six nights a week, the space serves as Santiago's preeminent jazz club; the rest of the time, it serves as the living room of the club's owner, Erwin Díaz—his small bedroom is tucked in the far rear corner.

A modernist poet and editor by training, Díaz has dedicated his life to this space since opening it in 2003. 13 years later, when I first interviewed him about his motivations for doing so, he leapt into an impassioned explanation:

These are not projects that function solely from money; rather, there is another motor, another spirituality. I come from the literary world, and I write poetry, and there one does not write because there is an audience, because there are many readers, because they're going to buy a book of yours, etc. There is no market, therefore we write for honor. And, among the poets, there is a lot of force, a lot of critique, a lot of rigor—the same as if the stadium were full, but the stadium is empty. So, this happens in jazz as well, because it is an activity of a very personal nature and very connected to the artistic more than to the market. The market, no! Nobody puts up a jazz club because a lot of people go to hear Jazz, no. They put up jazz clubs because they want to put up a jazz club. I think that's the difference with other places that are bars, that they only manage it and look at the numbers at the end of the month, and that's the only thing that matters.¹

Like bluewhale, its patrons and associates grew from a small, enthusiastic cohort of artists and aficionados into something much bigger by the end of the decade.

Now, having established itself as one of South America's renowned jazz spots, Díaz and his collaborators are beginning to connect more to the broader jazz world—thanks in part to a globetrotting cohort of younger jazz devotees finding success in New York City. This chapter focuses on the production of space at Thelonious as collective action, delving into how these co-conspirators sustain a jazz world there, far from the music's more robust support networks in Europe and North America. I argue that the activity known by musicians as *the hang* (in Spanish: *el hang*) offers an important emic conceptual framework for understanding this world-making process. This chapter shows how one such hang has developed in the space, culminating in two recent recording projects by the jazz collective La Resistencia. Taking a cue from the group's bold name, I then examine how the group articulates resistance through a conceptualization of the term as an electrical metaphor, gesturing toward a politics of generative societal possibility.

¹ I have translated this and subsequent passages from the original response, which was given in Spanish.

Erwin Díaz and the Story of the Space



*Fig. 3.2: Erwin Díaz in front of the bar at Thelonious, Lugar de Jazz, 2013.
Photo by Roberto Barahona, used with permission.*

Before “crossing through that door” and examining the space and its attendant hang, however, I turn to Díaz for historical context. Fortunately, he is a clear and eloquent storyteller—much of what follows is translated into English from an interview that I conducted with him in the club on the afternoon of April 7, 2016. Díaz’s move into jazz club ownership developed from a longer personal history of creative space-making; he located the origins of his entrepreneurial ambitions in his experience as one of the younger, working-class members of the Chilean Writers’ Society in the waning years of the Pinochet dictatorship:

I went from my poor neighborhood to the Writers’ Society, where there were intellectuals. When I first arrived, I didn’t know anything. . . . I started going to the Writers’ Society and I realized immediately that I was going to have to work and study three times more than everyone else. And so, in ’85, I founded my first literary magazine, and I realized that there was no way to sell it. So, I began to imagine how I could do that,

and I started selling it table by table in the bars. And that started working, so I had money for my family, my mother, my siblings, for myself—and I had a free day where I could study, where I could work, where I could do research.

Between his work with the Writers' Society and auditing classes in poetry and literature at the University of Chile, Díaz earned the respect of Chilean poetry elders such as Jorge Letelier, Enrique Lihn, and Nicanor Parra. After the return of democratic governance to Chile in 1990, he witnessed a widening of possibilities for artistic activity, including jazz practice:

I think that Jazz in Chile democratized after the 1990s. It started to come from the more working-class parts of the city. . . . [Much of the growth has come from] only the poorer municipalities. And before, they were all in wealthy municipalities, people with more money, before '73. . . . So, Jazz was in the hands of the Right. It's a matter of sociology: that is, to have instruments, to have time to play, to have the information, you had to have money. And they had the money: they were professionals that did their normal professional activity and also had time for this hobby. So, after 1990, with the return to democracy, ferocious artistic activity began to emerge. It was there under the dictatorship, but it was uncovered—fierce!

Díaz believed that his formation in the literary world could contribute to the cultural renaissance that emerged in the wake of the return to democracy:

I always had my motivation, that we had to rebuild the city after the military regime [ended]. We had to rebuild the night. I argue that Pinochet killed our bohemia and left us with debauchery.² They are very different—profoundly so. My idea, which came from my reading—which is to say the memory of writers and intellectuals—is knowing what the bar was for Chilean bohemia, what the bar meant for the country's culture, where people got together to have conversations.

With that vision in mind, he first opened a bookstore; he also began listening to music more often during this time—eventually discovering Jazz by recommendation from a fellow listener:

I had a bookstore, about 18 years ago, and was exchanging CDs with a friend: classical music CDs. And he slipped in some Coltrane on me, and I heard Coltrane and entered fascinated into Jazz, because I had, shall we say, a listener's musical education. And I had been to contemporary classical music concerts. So, my ear was prepared to hear modern Jazz without a problem. And, through my formation in literature, we have respect for tradition, which is something very rich, because we consider the poets who came before us

² Díaz used the word “carrete” here, a Chilean colloquialism that does not have the same negative connotation as this approximate English translation, “debauchery,” but describes similarly wild and pleasure-driven nighttime partying activity.

to be our fathers. So, knowing this, immediately all of Jazz opened up to me, the world of performers, composers, all of it, and I got to work investigating and studying. And from there, I connected my library with a friend's bar, and we made something called a "book-café," where we fused interviews with painters, poets, historians, and philosophers, and we started organizing music concerts the night before. First [classical] music, then later on, Jazz. And after that, I decided to create a place specialized in Jazz.

Díaz's first jazz club, El Perseguidor, was named after a Julio Cortázar short story about a fictional jazz musician's bohemian biographer.³ After a year, that club had failed to sustain itself financially, so Díaz closed it and started fresh with Thelonious a few months later—convinced that running a bar was his best opportunity to further his goal to "rebuild the night." Since then, it has grown into a significant cultural hub in Santiago. Díaz explained why he thought that running a bar would be a good fit for his skill set and ambitions:

Jorge Letelier would say that to be a bartender, one had to be very intelligent because there were multiple topics of discussion, many themes. So, to have the possibility of having a conversation at a bar, you had to be very learned, well-informed. So, the spirit of Thelonious is, in a way, almost the spirit of an institution, because we help musicians here. There are kids who sometimes don't have instruments; we see to it that they have their instruments. There are kids who don't pay a cover charge, they're "on scholarship." So, there are a lot of ways to go about helping the young people to have what we didn't have ourselves, which is the ability to develop our activities with ease, with means. Imagine: a pianist comes in, and here's a piano! This is not minor: a great piano. If a drummer comes in, here is a drum set. This is my way of understanding my adulthood: making the work easier for the young people who want to become artists. And in another way, it is a support for the collective aspect of our community. Although between poetry and jazz perhaps it is only a small thing, but Santiago with Thelonious has 600 more concerts per year, and that is very important.

Inside the Club

Like bluewhale, the interior space of Thelonious arises from its owner's idiosyncratic architectural vision. The space consists of a dining area and bar, performance area—also like bluewhale, not raised above the listeners—with riser seating behind it, a small hallway, patio, kitchen, and restrooms. Red walls are adorned with black-and-white photos of local jazz

³ Published in Cortázar (1959), *Las Armas Secretas*.

musicians, accompanied by stacks of old books in two corners near the front windows. In the photo below, two elder statesmen on the Chilean jazz scene, Martin Joseph and José “Pepe” Hosiasson, hold court at a table in front of the stage. In the background, the end of the bar can be seen on the left, with the front doors in the upper-right of the frame:



Fig. 3.3: Martin Joseph (l) and José Hosiasson (r) before a performance at Thelonious, 2013. Photo by Roberto Barahona, used with permission.

At the other end of the space, the bar seats about eight patrons, with the tip jar, cash register and servers’ station at the opposite end. A large projector screen, which broadcasts jazz videos during set breaks, hangs above. Beyond the bar is a small patio area with two small couches. Due to the fact that it is not covered by a roof, the area is exempt from Santiago’s indoor smoking ban, making it into the de facto smoking section—among the liveliest parts of the space before concerts and during set breaks, as well as Díaz’s favorite listening spot. The photo below shows the bar area; the patio can be seen in the background:



Fig. 3.4: A view behind the bar, with patio in background, 2015

A small hallway connects the main area to the back of the space, which includes the kitchen, bathrooms, and Díaz's bedroom.

This leaves the performance area: located in front of the bar, it is a small carpeted space with a piano, drum set, and overhead stage lights. A set of heavy wooden risers behind the stage serve as the overflow seating area during especially well-attended events. The photo below shows the performance area, with the patio area dimly visible on the right side of the frame:



Fig. 3.5: Thelonious stage area. Photo by Roberto Barahona, used with permission.

This photo also shows some aspects of the space's former life as a single-family residence: for example, wooden pillars that once supported an interior wall. Díaz leases the space from a family of Palestinian-Chileans, who own the building.⁴ As he describes the relationship,

This is very lucky. These immigrants are very respectful of other people's work. They truly appreciate it and respect it. And they know what happens in this house, and they are proud that their house serves what we're doing here, which is incredible. Incredible, and very good, and we have a very good relationship with the owner of the house, Ms. Nadia. And, well, in 13 years I don't owe her anything, so that is also a relief for her, no? That she has a renter who is a serious person, honorable, and does whatever she wants.

On any given night, then, this space is filled with musicians, servers, and listeners, all participating in the bustling ceremony of nighttime jazz club performance. Throughout eight months of regular visits to the space, I developed a sense of who came and went, and who some of the stakeholders were, in addition to Díaz. To examine that in more detail, I now turn to an

⁴ Chile is home to upwards of 500,000 Palestinian immigrants—the largest Palestinian community outside of the Arab world. Many live in the nearby Patronato and Recoleta neighborhoods in Santiago. See Schwabe (2016) for a fuller anthropological account of Palestinian-Chilean life.

analysis of how the community that sustains and supports this space is brought into being—through a process known throughout the jazz community as *the hang*.

Making the Hang

Used as a noun and as a verb, the hang, or *to hang*, is a location and process of social interaction that has coexisted alongside jazz since its early days in New Orleans and prohibition-era New York City. Like jazz itself, this four-letter word carries multiple meanings for musicians; it is a central characteristic of jazz improvisation, with roots in urban settings. A space where social interactions are less inhibited and bound by dominant cultural mores, the hang affords embodied, improvised sociality. At Thelonious, this process is a crucial element in the development of jazz musicians' projects. As Clifford Geertz posits, in a review of James Clifford's 1997 monograph *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*,

the most critical issue facing cultural anthropology in these postcolonial, postpositivist, post-everything times . . . is the value, the feasibility, the legitimacy, and thus the future of localized, long-term, close-in, vernacular field research—what [James] Clifford at one point lightly calls “deep hanging out.” (1998)

For ethnomusicology, this is also a fundamental concern: as scholars who employ fieldwork as a primary tool of disciplinary engagement, it is important to consider how that work can continue to engage productively with 21st-century music-making. As jazz scholars continue to expand beyond a US-centric notion of jazz to understand contemporary practice in Latin America and around the world, it will be useful to take Clifford's term more seriously than he does. But rather than “deep hanging out,” with its connotations of idleness, ethnomusicological fieldwork can be considered as “deep hanging,” in the sense that Geertz (1973) borrowed philosophers Jeremy Bentham and Charles Taylor's terms “deep play” and “deep diversity.”

My interest in pursuing this line of inquiry was inspired by a post on the social networking website Facebook, where many people—jazz musicians and academics among

them—share their thoughts with friends and acquaintances. In 2011, one prominent jazz musician with whom I am connected wrote a widely read Facebook post lamenting the lack of “real jazz hangs” in the contemporary jazz world. This lighthearted but pessimistic assessment led to a number of fond remembrances, especially of the New York City jazz club Bradley’s, which closed in 1996. Bradley’s was a prototypical hang: as jazz pianist Fred Hersch explained to jazz writer Ted Panken,

Everybody drank, sometimes people sat in, sometimes people argued, sometimes people had interesting debates on the chord changes of a tune. It was democratic—you were mixing it up as a young kid with the legends of the business, some of them not on their best behavior, but all of them with something to say. (Panken 2006)

A few weeks after the Facebook post, pianist George Colligan (2011) also posted a frustrated assessment of today’s jazz club scene on his blog, in which he concluded, “it’s not about the money, it’s about the respect. . . . Where’s the sense of community?” Jazz pianist, author and lawyer Jonny King invoked the hang in his response to Colligan’s blog, writing, “The clubs [today] reflect a more diffuse, split-apart scene generally, where there’s no sense of cultivating a community, *a hang*, where the musicians and the clubs are basically creating the scene.”

According to these comments, the hang is related both to the place and to the people that gather there—and serves an important role in the cultivation of jazz community and the local scene. And it seems that it is an aspect of jazz practice that was missing from many jazz venues in the circuits frequented by these artists—mostly in North America and Europe. However, King’s framework describes the activity that takes place at Thelonious very well.

Ingrid Monson (1991) has defined “hanging” as “public visibility,” in which those who hang are recognized as being on the scene. But hanging involves much more than just being visible—it also includes engaging in meaningful interactions with others. This conversational space is an important feedback mechanism and complimentary aspect of the social event that

takes place inside the club any given evening. It is also a useful space in which relationships that began to form in the musical context of the bandstand can then be hashed out through verbal discourse. This verbal improvisation is an analogous process to the musical one that takes place on the bandstand—borrowing Charles Seeger's (1977) useful dichotomy, I would argue that this “speech-communication” compliments the “music-communication” to establish and reformulate relationships between clubgoers. And following Steven Feld (1984), I would suggest that this space and process of talking about music affords the equilibration of individuals’ interpretive moves into intersubjective shared understandings of ongoing musical projects.

At Thelonious, the hang has a discernable spatiality, with a center located in the patio area, and surrounding constellations of conversations in the hallway and near the stage. I quickly developed an awareness of this dynamic even during my first visits to the club in 2013, largely due to the fact that I first entered it as a performing musician, and played there regularly throughout my longer fieldwork stay in 2015-2016: first through sitting in at jam sessions, then leading the sessions, booking a quartet, and finally, with a large ensemble—a reunion concert of Los Andes Big Band, which had offered me my first opportunities to perform in Chile in 2005. I would like to suggest that the experience of music-making in fieldwork affects the process in three main ways. First, it deepens the anthropologist's relationship to the spatiality and temporality of spaces. Second, it allows for strong social bonds to be formed with other musicians on the scene. And third, it resonates throughout the global network of discourses and practices in which anthropologists participate.

I noticed this different sense of spatiality from the first minute that I arrived at Thelonious, for a rehearsal the afternoon before my first show there in 2013. I had seen bluewhale in a similarly empty state—and even stood in the area usually reserved for

performers—but standing there in Thelonious and having to imagine and prepare a presentation of music for an audience was another experience altogether. I saw the tables, chairs and bar in a way that I hadn't before—not the “zoomed out” view of an observer taking it all in, but from the hyper-focused viewpoint of the performer. Once the performance got underway later that evening, this feeling became even more pronounced: the intensity of having dozens of eyes and ears focused toward me slowed down my sense of time, and also its precious quality—whenever something happened, there was another important musical moment to attend to. As a result, the quality of time-slowed-down, of vivid colors, and of the emotional intensity of musical surprises still resonates strongly in my memory, recalling other performance experiences in the space. I have similar memories from having attended performances at blue whale, too, but the experience of investing my creativity in the space in this particular way is noteworthy. My experience of the hang was also different after my own show—I found myself being approached by many more audience members to discuss the set, and also thanked all of them for attending the concert—in a sense acknowledging my role as a host in the space and establishing me as one of the centers of microsocial gravity in that moment.

Playing trombone has also affected my relationships with the musicians who frequent that space. At Thelonious, I arrived first as a musician and only later as an anthropologist—to the point where I received quizzical looks at first when I would show up to the club with a notebook and not my trombone. Furthermore, I became better acquainted with the musicians with whom I performed than those with whom I only interacted verbally. I don't believe that this is a coincidence—musical improvisation offers an exciting opportunity to navigate the unexpected together, and since we all seemed to enjoy the experience, that laid a foundation for a different kind of social interaction after the gig. In other words, the wordless interaction during the

performance widened the relational bandwidth for sharing jokes, assessments, and banter afterwards—creating conditions for a deeper hang.

One other important consequence of my decision to incorporate trombone-playing into my fieldwork was that it unsettled a number of my Chilean musical colleagues' assumptions about the differences between us. My American upbringing on swing and bebop fit right into the stylistic bent of many of the city's most influential jazz musicians. In other words, although I was an American outsider, when I returned this summer to play at Thelonious, I presented myself as a trombonist onstage. But when the inevitable question arose after the gig, “What are you doing here?” I explained that I had lived here previously and was now studying anthropology. Nonetheless, musicians related to me more as a passionate advocate for the music Ornette Coleman and Count Basie, with a good deal of our direct interaction taking place in the context of rehearsals and performance.

Perhaps most important, the relationships forged in the space of the hang at Thelonious quickly radiated outwards into other spaces. For example, a backstage hang with Rodrigo Recabarren after his performance with the duo Peregrinos led to a follow-up conversation at a coffee shop in another part of town the following week; I then helped him organize a house concert for a subsequent visit later that year with a New York-based trio. This went well, and he then introduced me to another young musician eager to perform more locally, Bernardita Fiorentino; the two of us produced another house concert in January 2016 that featured Recabarren on drums. To raise funds for the concert, we drew on my global network to offer an opportunity to “be there in spirit” and have access to an exclusive live recording of the concert, which was distributed digitally afterwards. As I later wrote for the *Ethnomusicology Review Sounding Board*,

Putting on this concert was the culmination of a long process of creativity, exploration, and global connection that led to a powerful felt sense of our collective humanity. Given the paucity of ethical ways for musicians and listeners to interact musically at a global scale, I am heartened by the playfulness, enthusiasm, and collective effort that surrounded this project because together we managed to bring an alternative into being—at least for one night. This project prioritized the fair compensation of performing musicians. It emphasized global connection through activating a network of geographically diverse participants through digital tools. And we used the recording as a way of *being there in spirit* together, across time and space but sharing a collective sense of global scale. (Rodriguez 2016a)

This story is just one small example of the ways in which the backstage improvisations at Thelonious, which I described in my field notes as “densely packed bowlfuls of serendipity.” I now turn to another project borne from the hang at Thelonious—although at a different phase of its development, having begun many years before my arrival.

Listening for La Resistencia



Fig. 3.6: (l to r) Pablo Menares, Sebastián Jordán, Felix Lecaros, Melissa Aldana, and Nicolás Vera perform as La Resistencia at Thelonious, 2013. Photo by Roberto Barahona, used with permission.

HAY DÍAS en que me levanto con una esperanza demencial, momentos en los que siento que las posibilidades de una vida más humana están al alcance de nuestras manos. Éste es uno de esos días.⁵

So begins Argentine novelist Ernesto Sabato in his essay "La Resistencia," published in 2000 as an experiment in electronic publication, and released to the public free of charge for two weeks.

The essay, published when the author was 90 years old, is a virtuosic rebuttal to the cultural decay brought about by neoliberalism. In it, Sabato writes,

El hombre se está acostumbrando a aceptar pasivamente una constante intrusión sensorial. Y esta actitud pasiva termina siendo una servidumbre mental, una verdadera esclavitud. . . . Pero hay una manera de contribuir a la protección de la humanidad, y es no resignarse. No mirar con indiferencia cómo desaparece de nuestra mirada la infinita riqueza que forma el universo que nos rodea, con sus colores, sonidos y perfumes.⁶

La Resistencia is also the name of the jazz quintet pictured above, featuring five Chilean improvisers in their 20s and 30s—three of whom (Aldana, Lecaros, and Menares) are based in New York City, and two of whom (Jordán and Vera) are based in Santiago. In this chapter, I aim to connect this exercise in collective artistic exploration to the possibility for a politics of imaginative transnational collaboration—along the lines of what Micah White outlines in his 2016 book *The End of Protest*. He writes,

The next generation of hybrid movement-parties must continue to expand across borders in order to win elections in multiple countries and implement a unified political program. Making complex decisions within a planetary social movement will require developing techniques of thinking that do not currently exist.

What does a Chilean DIY jazz quintet have to do with a transcontinental social movement for radical political change? That is precisely the question I have been asking myself since I returned

⁵ There are days in which I get out of bed with a demented hope, moments in which I feel that the possibilities of a more human life are within our grasp. This is one of those days.

⁶ Man has become accustomed to passively accepting a constant sensory intrusion. And this passive attitude ends up becoming a mental servitude, a true slavery. . . . But there is a way to contribute to the protection of humanity, and that is to not give up. To not look with indifference at the disappearance from our view of the infinite richness formed by our universe that surrounds us, with its colors, sounds, and scents."

from fieldwork. My hypothesis is that La Resistencia could offer a seed of possibility for a “technique of thinking” that would help bring radical transnational political movements to fruition by connecting them to global-scale information networks.

Part of my interest in this group lies in the fact that the intrepid young Chileans of La Resistencia are making inroads here in North America in ways that their political contemporaries are not. This has been made possible in large part by the success of Melissa Aldana, now recognized as one of the young stars of the jazz world. In an interview she conducted with her saxophone idol Sonny Rollins for *Burning Ambulance* magazine, Rollins told her,

You are getting a lot of publicity—you’re a good player, I’ve heard you, and life is putting you in a place where you’re the player other people are going to see. I used to go to see people, I wanted to see Charlie Parker, I wanted to see all those guys, and you are getting to the point now where you have to be Charlie Parker. (Freeman 2016)

Aldana is part of a cohort of young Chilean jazz artists who have found their way onto the New York scene over the past few years, starting with vocalist Claudia Acuña and later including Camila Meza, Recabarren, Lecaros, and Menares. These musicians return to Chile on a regular basis, and locally based artists such as Vera and Jordán have helped them organize performances and other creative projects in Chile during these visits. Vera, in particular, has become especially adept at fostering these connections and turning them into long-term projects, of which La Resistencia is one.

The initiative began in 2013, when the group recorded their self-titled debut album. By that point, the five musicians had grown up playing and hanging together, first at the Club de Jazz de Santiago, and later at Thelonious after it opened in 2003. Aldana left for to study at the Berklee College of Music in Boston before making her way to New York after graduation; Menares left for New York City around the same time, and Lecaros joined them more recently. Díaz remembers their time at the club fondly, recalling, “They would say that going to the Club

de Jazz was like going to Dad's house, and coming here was like going to your big brother's place. What an incredible difference: because there was more permissiveness, I was very close to their musical projects." This cohort represents part of the first generation of young musicians who came up playing at Thelonious; *La Resistencia* was created, in part, to provide an opportunity for them to continue working together long-distance, taking advantage of the New York-based players' regular return trips to Chile to produce concerts and recordings.

This has been possible thanks in part to the enthusiastic support avid jazz collector, drummer, and photographer Roberto Barahona. He was the one who introduced me to *La Resistencia*; he also arranged for me to perform with Vera and two other Chilean musicians at Thelonious during my first visit there in 2013. His devotion to the younger musicians' creativity is palpable. One can hear it in his weekly radio show *Puro Jazz*, the only regular jazz radio program in Chile. Barahona first met Vera when the guitarist was seeking financing to record his debut CD; what began as a small donation soon became a musical partnership, and later, Barahona provided the investment capital for Discos Pendiente. He has embraced his new role as Santiago's patron of creative music with enthusiasm and can be found frequently occupying the same front-row seat at Thelonious.

La Resistencia, then, arises out of a serendipitous confluence of these seven people's projects—the five musicians, plus Barahona and Díaz. It bears noting here that “project” (“Proyecto” in Spanish) is the word that Vera often uses to describe his activities, whether starting the record label Discos Pendiente, launching a new CD, arranging with Barahona for Aldana to tour Chile, or securing grant funding. “Projects” is also the word that cultural anthropologist Sherry Ortner (2006) uses to describe culturally constituted activities that take place on the margins of power. She writes, “This agency of projects is from certain points of

view the most fundamental idea of agency. . . and it is this . . . that the less powerful seek to nourish and protect by creating or protecting sites, literally or metaphorically, ‘on the margins of power.’”

That jazz musicians in Santiago, Chile would characterize their location within the jazz field as marginal should hardly come as a surprise. However, thanks to certain privileges that have been afforded to these musicians—such as Barahona’s class positionality, or Lecaros and Aldana’s musical inheritance from their legendary Chilean musical families, as well as the recent relaxation of visa restrictions for Chileans in the United States—these musicians have been able to articulate what Ortner calls “agency-in-the-sense-of-projects.” That it sounds strikingly similar to the agency of their North American and European counterparts speaks to the transnational circumstances that make these projects possible. It also bears noting that this sonic similarity—the ability of these musicians to “play on the same level” as their American and European contemporaries, has also enabled them to position themselves closer to the centers of power than their predecessors.

One place in which the discourse surrounding *La Resistencia* differs from mainstream North America, however, is how some of the musicians themselves understand the value of their projects. In his 2013 essay “Black Jazz in the Digital Age,” Greg Tate offers a succinct portrait of the jazz mainstream today: He writes,

The self-conscious engagement with philosophy I once heard in 70s jazz, politics, religion, and literature has migrated to contemporary African American visual art . . . why this is no longer the case in jazz has something to do with the class aspirations and subject position of most younger musicians, who are not, at the end of the day, social rebels, but middle-class arts professionals whose art has no significance even among a black middle class.

The artists in *La Resistencia* do seem at least well on their way toward the subject position Tate describes: Aldana and Menares are international touring artists, for example, and Jordán is one of

Santiago's most in-demand studio musicians. But as the name of their collective suggests, the rhetoric that frames the music is not the same wordy abstraction that one might expect from their North American or European counterparts. Although they may not be "social rebels" in the sense of bohemian outcasts, these musicians *do* think of themselves as "resistors."

The concept of "resistance," of course, has a long history of academic theorization, especially in the Marxist tradition. In her 2016 essay "Dark Anthropology and Its Others: Theory Since the Eighties," Sherry Ortner traces the development of this theorization in the discipline of Anthropology. She writes, "Anthropologists are beginning to document creative adaptations to neoliberalism, as well as resistance movements against it—and, in any event, some countries are clearly doing better than others." Later in the essay, she adds, "it seems clear that the anthropology of resistance, again in a wide variety of forms, is back." It was this idea, "anthropology of resistance" that came to my mind when I first heard about *La Resistencia*. Given the conditioning of my middle-class jazz education, I was initially surprised by the title's revolutionary connotations. I immediately asked Vera about the term's origins—I imagined that he might invoke Che Guevara, or perhaps Bob Marley. Instead, he pointed to Sabato's manifesto, adding, "plus, there's the electricity theme."

This "electricity theme" can be seen in the album's cover art, pictured below, which includes symbols that are used in electrical current diagrams. In addition to the pink lightning bolts and current arrows, there are faint neon symbols for the greek letter omega, a shorthand for ohms, the SI derived unit of electrical resistance, and a zigzag line that represents a resistor in electrical circuit diagrams. For Vera, this double-entendre is at the heart of understanding *his* sense of resistance, which, given the ubiquity and uniformity of sonic possibilities under Chile's neoliberal regime, offers a nuanced reinterpretation of the term.



Fig. 3.7: La Resistencia album cover, 2013

To delve into this, however, will require a small digression into the fundamentals of electromagnetism. At its most basic, a resistor affects the current and voltage of an electrical circuit. To use a common analogy, we can think of current like the rate of flow of water through a hose; voltage like water pressure; and resistance like the size of the hose. A wider hose invites less resistance. Or, in reverse: if the pipes are clogged (that means high resistance), it will take more pressure, or voltage, to achieve the same flow, or current. A resistor, then, increases the

resistance in a circuit. Resistors can also dissipate heat—that is what we see when the tungsten filament in a light bulb is exposed to current.

In Vera’s view of resistance, then, resistors don’t “keep things at bay” so much as reconfigure that which travels through them; rather than impede power, they transmute it. It’s also important to note that circuits need resistors—without them, they short-circuit. For *La Resistencia*, then, the low level of state support for creative music, which contributes to the noisy suffering articulated by Ernesto Sabato earlier, is simply the nature of the current powering their particular circumstances; their improvisations take on new meanings as sonic manifestations of “not giving up,” as “agency-in-the-form-of-projects,” as “electricity-themed resistance.” At the same time, it is important to note that this view is not necessarily shared equally among the five members of *La Resistencia*. When I asked Melissa Aldana about Vera’s reference to Sabato, for example, she told me that she had heard him mention something about it but hadn’t read the essay herself. As she put it in a 2013 interview, “What I feel like my part in this project is trying to create [is] a bridge between New York and Chile—to introduce them to people in New York, play concerts in Chile, to join forces.” She added, “Nico and Sebastian came up with the idea for *La Resistencia*, which is an excuse for us to play together. That’s the whole reason of the band — to play together and hang out together.” Given her position closer to the centers of power, her project is oriented toward sharing some of that power with her Chilean compatriots—directing current, perhaps, to draw from the electrical analogy.

Indeed, for a musical outfit that is made up of 80% acoustic instruments, the electrical metaphor may seem like a bit of a stretch. Although everyone’s creative participation is an absolute necessity for the success of the project, that doesn’t mean that everyone operates within the same conceptual frameworks. The musicians do agree, at least, that the commodification of

their music does not contradict their resistive aims; again, financial flows are part of the current that powers this enterprise. Vera happily reported to me that the label continues to be financially stable, having now released nearly 40 albums over the past decade. This wide array of individual motivations, I would argue, is part of what makes the group sustainable. This extends to the relationship with Díaz, who considers himself a collaborator and supporter of the project, part of a network of mutual aid that makes it possible:

Everything that we produce these days with Jazz in Chile we argued about 12, 11, 10 years ago: super profound and super nutritive discussions, very constructive. Because I would tell them—coming from the literary world, I just say these things—that it wasn't enough for them to just play. They also had to produce, they had to organize themselves, they had to get their labels together, they needed to build their websites, they needed to know their public, they needed to dress well. They needed to rehearse, they needed to play, they needed to compose, these were the discussions here. I remember having conversations with Sebastián Jordán, who didn't understand this [at first]. I would say, "you also need to produce," and he would say, "no, you, the business," and over time, that started to disarm itself. . . . The community in Chile sees the owner of a bar, and the musicians would see the owner of the bar as a son of a bitch. I had to show them that wasn't the case, and that we could work together. So, over time this grotesque idea—that the bar owner would scam you, not pay you for the concert, etc.—disappeared. And *they* turned themselves into real doers, which is incredible. And they started coming in with their projects and I started saying yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes ... Wow!

That said, not all musicians on the jazz scene in Santiago share Díaz's optimistic vision of concert production at Thelonious as mutual aid. For those who are less active in making the hang there, a relationship more akin to management and labor characterizes the exchange. I did hear complaints from other well-organized and active musicians on the scene that the payment is often low relative to other high-profile gigs, akin to the attitude Díaz describes as having "disappeared" there. His approach, then, requires the establishment of a great deal of trust that is not universally achieved—but when it is, this trust is developed over time through the hang.

Conclusion: Toward a Politics of Possibility

I now conclude with some speculation about what this means for contemporary political life, returning to the aspiration articulated by Micah White of a democratically organized, globally connected movement-party that could win elections in various countries and govern with a cohesive alternative to that organized around neoliberalism and its world market. In order for that to happen, I would argue that the same circuits that have channeled the sounds of contemporary New York jazz to Santiago—and magnetize Chilean jazz talent to New York—will need to flow in the opposite direction.

While living in Chile, I was struck by the sharp contrast between the anemic hopelessness among many of my friends in the United States—this was during the 2016 election season—and the sense of revolutionary possibility being imagined into being by some of my Chilean contemporaries, drawing from a youth-led protest movement that began in 2006 under the name *Los Pingüinos* (The Penguins). Raised in the wake of Chile's return to democracy and having begun their political lives as student protesters in their local high schools, young people such as Camila Vallejo (born in 1988) and Gabriel Boric (born in 1986) have emerged from this movement to win elections and enact crucial policy changes, such as universal access to free university education. Díaz, too, sees this movement as a harbinger of new societal possibilities:

Because of what happened in Chile, with the privatization of education, we are a country that has little critical density in all things. So, there's not a way to think every day, no way to revise ideas and inject vitamins into those ideas. So they are weak, and they remain weak. What did influence things, making them less weak, giving nutrition to these ideas, was the Pingüinos movement. Because they—as young people, as kids—have this important sensibility, working for those to come afterwards. That is such a marvelous gesture. . . . So, they were super generous in fighting for the young people to come. It's incredible. And they—this generation—are still here in the country! They are not dead. They are influencing things. Some got into politics, others are in everyday life, but they are really something else, impressive. And the country changes around them, because they are becoming a political bloc, through what they are accomplishing today. And they

are working—every single one a tiny dot wherever they are, all of these young people that fought—they are looking at the country from another perspective.

I sometimes joke with my Chilean friends that they hail from the most advanced nation in the world—after all, it was this coup that in many ways initiated the lived political reality of neoliberalism, powerfully symbolized by Chilean air force planes bombing the capitol building, La Moneda. It also brought about—thanks to Salvador Allende’s impassioned, extemporaneous plea for a better world broadcast over short-wave radio from inside that same palace shortly before his death—the beginnings of a political theorization of resistance to it.⁷ In his 2013 book *The Future As Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition*, Arjun Appadurai introduces the term “ethics of possibility,” which he describes as “those ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that increase the horizons of hope.” Allende’s speech—and, I would argue, La Resistencia’s music—can be read in this way.

Back in North America, groups such as Brand New Congress, Idle No More, and the Movement for Black Lives are clearly engaged in cutting-edge organizing that is making an impact on the ground and imagining fresh possibilities. Furthermore, recent student protests against gun violence bear some striking similarities to the early life of the Pingüinos movement in 2006. What would it take for the fruits of this resistance, now making their way into Chilean politics through groups like the Movimiento Autonomista, to inspire transformative electoral victories farther north? Perhaps something like the hang—a widely legible mode of engagement, or global microstructure—will emerge from the practices of collective organization that have begun to circulate more rapidly since the global Occupy Wall Street protests. It is my contention that these initiatives will begin to manifest at a global scale alongside parallel cultural projects, drawing on the transnational echoes of black diasporic aesthetics and powered by something like

⁷ See Guardiola Rivera (2013) for a thorough retelling of this important story.

the “electricity-themed resistance” articulated by Vera and La Resistencia. This will forge the necessary collective willpower to not only resist, but to become resistors—leading lives dedicated to a belief in what Sabato called the “demented hope ... that the possibilities of a more human life are within our grasp.” And here at least, as the altar to one of the 20th century’s most celebrated jazzmen above the door to the club attests, it will all take place under the watchful, abiding presence of Thelonious Sphere Monk.

Remix

Santiago to Novosibirsk

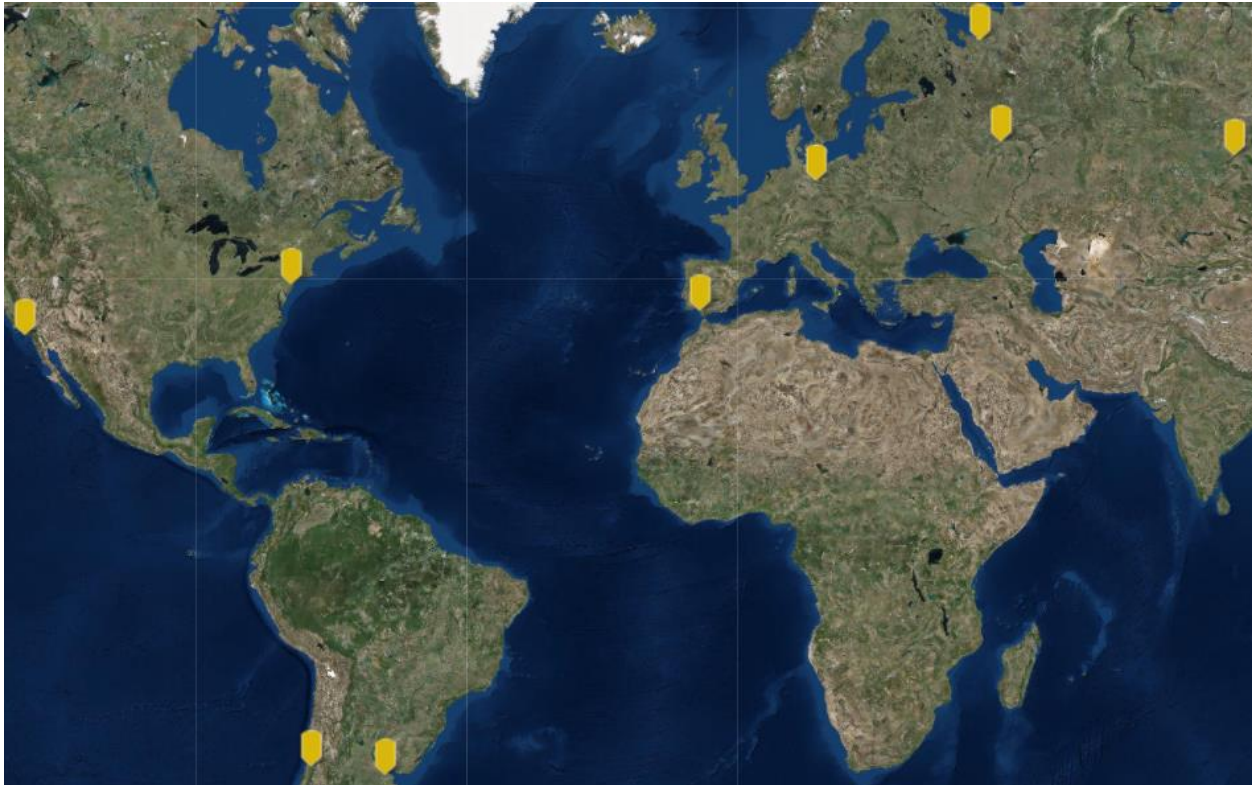


Fig. 3.8: *Places I witnessed jazz practice (January-October 2016)*

Unlike my previous relocation from Los Angeles to Santiago, I had very little time to prepare for the travel that was in store after once my time in Chile came to an end in May 2016. What follows is the story of how I managed to traverse a distance of nearly half the Earth's circumference in a few short months, by way of an improvised, zig-zagging itinerary that had to be composed and revised multiple times throughout its unfolding. This exhausting improvisation taught me a great deal about the barriers to transnational movement and the challenges of thinking ethnographically about global scale. It also gave me a felt sense of how truly massive our planet is, and the extent of the gap between our maps of the world and the territories to which their geographic markings refer. I had read Anna Tsing's remarkable 2015 monograph *The Mushroom at the End of the World* during the first months of my fieldwork in Chile, and

although this journey was a chaotic one, I felt buoyed by her dedication to “explor[ing] indeterminacy and the conditions of precarity, that is, life without the promise of stability” (2).

The beginning of the precarious conditions for this geographical leap of faith emerged on March 8, when I learned that I had been accepted into the U.S. State Department’s Critical Languages Scholarship program to study Russian in Nizhny Novgorod, which would start the following June. My first challenge was to secure the necessary bureaucratic requirements—such as a doctor’s physical certified by a U.S. board-certified physician and a visa from the Russian embassy—while still in Santiago. Jumping through these hoops began to take up more and more of my time and energy as I prepared to leave Chile, which introduced me to a new part of the city: the wealthy suburban neighborhoods that house both the Russian and U.S. embassies. The U.S. embassy stood out for its fortress-like quality, a reminder that the country’s economically liberal status quo is buffeted by U.S. military force. In my field notes, I compared the experience of time here to “The Waiting Place” from Dr. Seuss’ classic 1990 children’s book *Oh, The Places You’ll Go!* (Geisel 1960).

A few weeks before my departure from Santiago, Marina and I took a short trip to Buenos Aires, where I spent International Jazz Day (April 30) at *another* Thelonious jazz club. This one had more of a supper club feel, with table seating around a stage area and a very small bar. International Jazz Day offered a promotional opportunity for the club, bringing in a packed house to hear the established jazz-tango experimentalist Adrian Iaies perform with his piano trio. I also watched the live webcast of the main IJD concert event, hosted by Barack Obama in Washington, D.C. The opening sequence, which featured the U.S. Army Herald Trumpets performing an impeccably tuned yet unswingingly ominous rendition of “St. James Infirmary”, made me squirm; however, the speeches by UNESCO envoy Herbie Hancock and President Irina

Bokova—calling for their worldwide audience to understand jazz practice as an agent of global peace—resonated strongly with my own aspirations, despite their dissonance with the event’s U.S. imperial pomp and circumstance. I spent the rest of the week catching up with old friends I had met during my previous trips to the country for the Trombonanza Festival de Trombones, such as Joaquín de Francisco, Felecitas Rochi, and Rocío Elizade. Thanks in part to federal investment in youth orchestra programs, as well as the longstanding presence of some world-class pedagogues, the trombone community appeared to still be thriving there.

The final two weeks in Chile were a whirlwind of embassy appointments and goodbyes, with a few last visits to Thelonious interspersed throughout. This included a reunion performance that I had been working to organize with Los Andes Big Band, which packed the house and made for a memorable and energetic farewell concert. A few days later—on the day before my return travel to the U.S. had been booked—my Russian visa finally arrived; I spent my last night in Chile celebrating at Thelonious with Nicolás Vera and Pablo Menares, who had arrived in Santiago on a red-eye from New York that morning. The next day, I embarked upon the first of many long plane flights that would take me to three more continents in the following six months.

After landing at Newark International Airport the following morning, I spent the next week in the New York City area, celebrating my brother’s graduation with family, and listening to music at the Jazz Gallery and The Stone with New-York-based jazz friends: Tyshawn Sorey and Jason Moran played a scintillating improvised duo at the Gallery’s exhibition of photographs by John Rogers, and Adam Rudolph’s Go Organic Woodwind Orchestra headlined at The Stone. Both brought a degree of New York musicality to their performances that I had not heard in months; the subtle aesthetic differences from the jazz practices with which I had been engaging in Chile was a striking reminder of how the music can sound in different positions within the

global jazz field: this music demanded more improvisational acuity and energetic individualism from every performer, relying on the very personal approaches of the artists onstage to forge something original and undeniably attuned to the New York scene.

The subsequent long plane flight took me to Los Angeles, where I spent the following week catching up with university bureaucracy and preparing for a performance that I had arranged at bluewhale. Organizing a performance without a rehearsal—with musicians I had not seen in months—was a logistical nightmare, but everyone showed up right when I needed them, and both sets went off without a hitch. This experience, combined with the pain of leaving Chile, the intense anxiety of reverse-culture-shock, and the overwhelming uncertainty of what was in store for me in Russia led to a felt sense that I tried to document in my field notes the next morning:

I was just hit by this overwhelming wave of sadness on the bus going to campus, not a depressed kind but this raw heart feeling that was similar to what I felt last night during [Sun Ra composition We Travel the] Spaceways. It's something bigger than words . . . the linguocentric predicament, indeed . . .¹

The sense of positive interconnection and human possibility that I felt reminded me of the previous month's concert at Thelonious with Los Andes Big Band, only with fewer people in the room—about 20 at bluewhale as opposed to several dozen at Thelonious.

Three days later, I was back on a cross-country flight—this time to Washington, D.C. for the CLS orientation weekend. Immersed in the fluorescent light of hotel conference rooms for long meetings detailing a litany of government-mandated proscriptions, it sunk in quickly that I was no longer enjoying the liberties of “fieldwork mode.” I also learned that one of those government-mandated proscriptions involved traveling with any item manufactured outside of

¹ This is a reference to a phrase coined by Charles Seeger that appears throughout his work, especially the 1977 essay collection *Studies in Musicology: 1935-1975*. It refers to the inherent limitations of text-based written communication to describe details of musical practice.

Russia over 50 years ago, which included my 1954 Elkhart Conn 6H trombone. So, my longtime musical companion stayed with my cousin in Washington, D.C. while I boarded the long flight to Nizhny Novgorod (via Frankfurt and Moscow). I did, however, bring along the plastic alto trombone I had purchased in Los Angeles the previous year.

Less than a month since my departure from Santiago, I arrived in Nizhny Novgorod exhausted, bewildered, and tremendously fortunate to be staying with the Kudrins, an incredibly kind and generous host family. Upon learning that I loved jazz, my teenaged host brother Matvei introduced me to the charming 2008 Russian musical comedy *Стиляги* (Stilyagi/“Style Hunters”), about the jazz-loving Russian 1950s counterculture, after our first evening of awkward cohabitation across the language barrier. A week later, I witnessed jazz practice in Russia for the first time at Фонотека (Fonoteka), a small basement bar with booth seating in front of a tiny performance area that barely fit a piano and minimal drum set. My host mother Valia and I listened to a piano-and-drums duo of midcentury standards such as “What a Wonderful World” and “Girl from Ipanema.” I remember experiencing a profound sense of joy from hearing these sounds, knowing that I was so far away from anywhere that I knew—even though the musicians seemed to lack familiarity with Afro-diasporic musical aesthetics. For the rest of my time in Nizhny Novgorod, however, I didn’t get out much—the challenges of getting up to speed in the language, while getting accustomed to feeling completely groundless again without running afoul of the stringent program requirements kept me occupied. The one exception to this came during our group’s weekend trip to Moscow, when I was able to get an afternoon off to meet up with Jazz.ru editor Cyril Moshkow and local concert organizer Olga Duka. Unfortunately, I was unable to arrange for a visa to stay in Russia after the end of the

language program to conduct my research, so instead I reunited with Marina in Europe to plan our return to Russia together in September.

We first met up in Spain, where we weathered hot August temperatures while visiting Barcelona, Madrid, Granada, and Sevilla. The only place that I took in an evening of music at a jazz club came in Sevilla, where I found Naima Jazz Café. After the set, I spoke with the bartender, who turned out to be the club's owner, Jorge Moreno. He explained to me that summers are usually slow, and that the club runs a deficit that has to be covered in the busier winter months. He also runs a record label out of the club: Blue Asteroid Records. From Sevilla, we returned to Madrid for a flight to Berlin, Germany, where we would spend the next month applying for visas and exploring the bustling local jazz scene.

I was surprised by the density and volume of jazz activity in Berlin—it certainly felt more like New York in terms of its jazz scene than anywhere else I had traveled. This is evident, for example, in two web sites, Jazz Guide Berlin² and Echtzeitmusik³ (“Real-time music”) which offer comprehensive listings of activity in jazz and creative improvised music, respectively. On any given night, there are a multitude of musical events happening in a variety of spaces all over the city. Another aspect of this experience that was especially striking was that this was the first time I lived in a country where I did not speak the local language at all—even in Russia I could get by to some degree. Of course, many people in Berlin also speak English, so the day-to-day aspect was not a challenge, but I gained a new appreciation for how certain details—such as grocery shopping—cannot “translate” without human translators, even though the space of the supermarket was very similar to what I was used to in the United States and Chile. The

² <http://www.jazz-guide-berlin.de/>

³ <http://www.echtzeitmusik.de/>

importance of language as constitutive of spatiality is closer to the forefront of my awareness as I now transition to studying the clubs in Siberia.

Besides the word “jazz,” I learned that another word links Berlin to other spaces that I have been studying in the United States and Chile: gentrification. In May 2016, the city enacted stricter enforcement on subletting apartments through the San Francisco-based online short-term rental marketplace Airbnb; this was a much-discussed topic during my time there. A number of clubs—including B-Flat, one of Berlin’s flagship mainstream jazz clubs, where I attended a number of shows and a jam session—had recently been forced to close or relocate. Musicians with whom I spoke were grateful that B-Flat was able to reopen but commented that the new space was not as desirable as the old one. This has also been a common refrain among jazz aficionados in Santiago (about the Club de Jazz de Santiago, which reopened in a shopping mall in 2014) and Los Angeles (about Catalina’s, which moved in 2004). The uncertainty in the housing market also has an effect on artists, who struggle to afford neighborhoods that were recently affordable; in Berlin, this trend is ameliorated to some degree by the local government’s assertive policies protecting renters, but that is not always enough.

I also attended an event hosted by University of California, Berkeley Ph.D. candidate Ritwik Banjeri at the Exploratorium, an interesting experiment in music space-making that is a collaboration between academics and artists. Banjeri, who was just finishing his fieldwork in Berlin with experimental musicians and improvising computer programs, curated a pair of performances with local improvisers and two improvising programs he designed, “Maxine” and “Bob.” After each performance, Banjeri interviewed the human musician about their experience, and the audience was also invited to respond and ask questions. Although about half of this discussion took place in German, the English part of the discussion was quite edifying, and it

was a pleasure to participate in something that resonated so fully with my own experience as a scholar of improvisation and improvising musician.

My main goal during this time, however, was to apply for a visa to return to Russia in September, as I had just received funding from the Institute for American Cultures to continue the Russian jazz research into the fall quarter. After a number of attempts, it became clear that the ideal process for acquiring a Russian visa would be to first travel to Minsk, Belarus by train via Warsaw, and apply in Minsk for a Russian tourist visa. While in Germany, then, the first step was to acquire a Belarussian tourist visa, which I was able to accomplish with the help of some generous contacts in Berlin, and also Marina, whose fluent Russian helped get me through a few conversations when my Russian skills proved lacking. In Minsk, I just missed the monthly “jazz club” events organized by a local jazz aficionado at the downtown rock club—and so I did not attend any jazz events during my week there. However, re-assimilation into a Russian-speaking urban environment proved to be very helpful preparation for my return to Russia on October 10, when I traveled to Arkhangelsk via St. Petersburg for the Vladimir Rezitsky Jazz Days Festival.

I had heard about the festival from Moshkow, who was serving as MC for the proceedings and was able to arrange for press passes to the full three-day event. When I learned that Chilean bassist Cristian Galvez would be performing with one of the headlining acts, I knew that this was not an opportunity to pass up. The opening group performing at the festival, it turned out, hailed from Germany—and the drummer from Berlin. True to Rezitsky’s legacy as an open-minded musician with close ties to Europe, the festival included some stalwarts of the former Soviet Union’s improvised music circuit—such as Vladimir Chekasin, Alexey Kruglov, and Anatoly Vapirov—alongside local musicians as well as some visitors booked through the European jazz circuit, such as Italian keyboardist Paolo di Sebastino’s trio “Trace Elements,”

which included the African-American drummer Dennis Chambers and Galvez on electric bass. (When I introduced myself to Galvez backstage in Spanish, he asked quizzically, “what the heck are you doing *here*?” A fair question.) According to Galvez, the group was put together by his booking agency specifically for the European festival circuit. Another group that performed at the festival, Trio Altai, was named after the remote region in central Asia from which the group hailed—in fact, I would see this group again closer to their home during my stay in Novosibirsk the following month.

Following the final concerts, the festival organizers had prepared a sendoff dinner for the out-of-town guests at a local restaurant. This event showcased the intimate, family-like dynamic of the organizers, centered around a husband and wife team who had been close with Rezitzky. There, I had a chance to hang a bit more with Galvez and his tour manager Jeff Helman, who grew up in the same Russian neighborhood in New York City as Marina. This offered an important reminder that the systems and networks of commercial music production have a tremendously broad geographical reach—in this case, connecting a musician from Santiago, Chile (latitude 33° south) to a festival over 14,000 km away in Arkhangelsk, Russia (latitude of 65° north). In other words, I was not the only one being compelled to travel very long distances in the name of Jazz. After the food had been served, we were invited to another room with a piano, bass, and drum set—and a jam session ensued. The most enthusiastic participants seemed to be Galvez, di Sebastino, and guitarist Tim Dorofeev (one of the festival organizers and a dedicated former student of Rezitsky.) Having been invited to bring my horn, this offered my first chance to sit in on a Russian jam session; although I was still struggling to execute my ideas on the plastic alto trombone, I managed to get by on a chorus of blues.

Marina and I boarded a short flight to Moscow the following day, spent a long layover in the Sheremetyevo Airport domestic terminal, and finally took a red-eye to Novosibirsk. The snowy season had begun the week before east of the Urals, and the sun rose over a vast expanse of white tundra as we prepared for our descent into Novosibirsk. It soon occurred to me that I had not seen snow in nearly two years—my sense of seasons had been completely dysregulated by my previous year in South America. Upon arrival, we unpacked our warm coats and stepped into the final phase of this anthropological adventure in Novosibirsk, Siberia.

Chapter 4: Novosibirsk, Siberia

Improvising Cosmopolitanism Sideways at Truba Jazz Club



Fig. 4.1: Entrance to Truba Jazz Club

Arriving in Novosibirsk, settling into my purple-walled unit in an otherwise nondescript apartment complex, my body and mind were thoroughly discombobulated. The cumulative effect of thousands of miles of air travel, a disorienting time change—12 hours’ difference from the U.S. East Coast—and the utter unfamiliarity of the expansive, snow-covered destination both exhausted and excited me: I was too tired to move, but too wired to sleep. Staring at the ceiling, listening to the occasional buzz of nearby construction, I slowly came to terms with the fact that I had actually accomplished what I had set out to do: travel to Siberia to hear Jazz. There was just one problem: Truba, I had recently discovered, had closed—nonetheless, I still figured that I could find jazz practice elsewhere in the city. My arrival in Novosibirsk coincided with the annual SibJazzFest, which began the following day—so at least I knew where to start looking. Cyril Moshkow, my guide to all things Russian Jazz, was also in town for the festival, and graciously arranged for tickets and an introduction to the organizers. That day, I learned from

one of them that Pyotr Finov, the owner of Truba, had in fact reopened the club in a new location; the next jam session was to take place the following Thursday, so I marked my calendar.

In this chapter, I tell the story of this month-long jazz sojourn in Novosibirsk, and my improvised meanderings through jazz space there. The choice of this project's third site stems from an attempt to methodologically approximate Sun Ra's cryptic aphorism, "Somewhere else on the other side of nowhere, there's another place in space, beyond what you know as time."¹ In order to attempt to explore beyond my assumptions and speculations about the nature of jazz space based on my experiences in the Americas, I traveled to Siberia in order to connect with jazz practice as far away from there as possible—geographically speaking, at least: I was about 10,000 km from Los Angeles and 17,000 km from Santiago (nearly half the Earth's circumference of 40,000 km). The experience did, as Sun Ra predicted, change what I knew as time (and space)—starting with a jetlag like none I had ever felt before. By the end the month, my felt sense of planetary scale had indeed been stretched beyond that which I had previously imagined possible. What follows is an attempt to render this process legible to a broader understanding of the practice of listening in jazz space. Some of this listening took place in the club Truba, and the rest happened at the Novosibirsk Philharmonic Society's A.M. Katz Concert Hall during the SibJazzFest and the Novosibirsk International Student Jazz Festival.

Unlike the previous two field sites, I arrived in Novosibirsk with only a vague sense of the local jazz scene, a growing but limited grasp on the local language, and little time to investigate. What follows, then, is a different kind of report on my encounter with people in jazz space—one more informed by happenstance and an open aperture to listening practice than a

¹ A dedicated team of curators has kept his ideas and music circulating since his death, which includes a twitter feed that occasionally broadcasts these famously mysterious statements; see, for example (@sunrauniverse 2017)

predetermined set of relationships, questions or even hunches. Ever since I had resolved to include Novosibirsk in my fieldwork itinerary, by far the most common question that I received—from colleagues, friends, family, and even Russians—had been “There’s *Jazz* in *Siberia*?!” Although this seemed obvious to me—Novosibirsk is a city with 1.5 million inhabitants, after all—there is something about the region’s place as one of the Western imaginary’s quintessential “nowheres” that seems to render something so cosmopolitan as a jazz club difficult to situate. The framework of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork allowed me to travel to Novosibirsk in order to hear this “nowhere” as a “here”—which it is, of course, to its many residents. Indeed, when I recounted being met with such consistent incredulity to Natalia Miller, a manager in the Philharmonic Society’s International Projects Department and one of the SibJazzFest organizers, she cringed, scoffed, and retorted, “Of course we have Jazz! And good Jazz!”

Encountering Jazz Cosmopolitans in Siberia

One of the most striking features of my short stay in Novosibirsk was the ease with which I was able to connect with a very particular subset of the area’s jazz lovers: those also engaged in transnational jazz explorations. Steve Feld (2012) uses the term “jazz cosmopolitan” as a way of framing his co-investigation of experimental jazz practices in Ghana to contribute to anthropological discussions of global modernity. He writes,

The kind of intervention I offer you means to clear space to talk about cosmopolitanism from below, to reimagine cosmopolitanism from the standpoint of the seriously uneven intersections, and the seriously off-the-radar lives of people who, whatever is to be said about their global connections, nonetheless live quite remotely to the theorists and settings that usually dominate cosmopolitanism conversations in academia. (7)

Feld also notes that this approach is in conversation with the seminal work on “discrepant cosmopolitanism” carried out by James Clifford (1997). By introducing some of the people I met

in Novosibirsk as “jazz cosmopolitans,” I want to emphasize their loose transnational interconnections as part of what structures the jazz field both in Novosibirsk and elsewhere. Rather than reimagining cosmopolitanism “from below,” as Feld does, this section gestures toward a reimagining of cosmopolitanism sideways—following Ortner (2010) and focusing on the brief flashes of interconnection that arose from the coincidence of shared geography between five jazz lovers, myself included, hailing from four continents. That this took place in Novosibirsk—a place that is literally quite remote from the settings that usually dominate cosmopolitan conversations—demonstrates how wide the web of discrepant cosmopolitan routes afforded by the jazz field can be. My experience also suggests another aspect of these jazz cosmopolitan exchanges that Feld takes for granted: language. Part of the reason that I was able to connect so quickly with these other people was that I spoke English and Spanish much more fluently than Russian. Although I had learned a great deal the previous summer, connecting to the Russian-speaking local scene proved to be much more of a challenge—despite the fact that both groups shared many traits, including musical taste.

I have already introduced one of these individuals, Cyril Moshkow. A resident of Moscow, he dedicates his professional life to covering the jazz beat in Russia as a writer and editor of the magazine *Jazz.ru*. Although the financial viability of the magazine fluctuates dramatically, depending on the music’s perceived value among the advertisers and patrons who support it, he manages to make a full-time living at it, supplemented by gigs as a festival emcee—including both the Arkhangelsk and Novosibirsk festivals. As Russia’s representative to Europe Jazz Media, a network of European jazz publishers, he is well-connected to information about the jazz circuit there, although stringent visa requirements for Russian citizens in the Schengen zone can make physical travel there difficult. Thanks to these connections, as well as

his vast knowledge of the music's history and skill as a writer, he is positioned within Russia as the go-to expert on the subject. Organizations such as the Novosibirsk Philharmonic Society, which runs the jazz festival in Novosibirsk, often contract with him to be a part of the music's public face as a concert emcee. Although our time there only overlapped for a few days, he generously shared his time and contacts with local organizers, and even helped me get backstage at the festival's closing jam session to borrow a trombone.

My time in Novosibirsk also overlapped briefly with another Russian jazz cosmopolitan, pianist Roman Stolyar. We had met briefly a few years earlier at the International Society for Improvised Music conference in Paterson, New Jersey, and his music was among the only contemporary Siberian jazz with which I was familiar before my arrival there. A native of Novosibirsk, Stolyar is an ardent experimentalist whose artistic output is in conversation with avant-garde improvised music around the world. For Stolyar, broadcasting his music widely and networking with improvisers elsewhere is crucial for his survival; there is simply not enough support for his music in Novosibirsk to satisfy both his artistic ambitions and economic needs. His geographical position, however, has allowed for him to make connections and tour both in Europe and East Asia—after our brief encounter on my first day in Novosibirsk, in fact, he left for a residency in Shanghai, China.

Stolyar introduced me to another local jazz fan, Ricao Dohi, whom he had first met in Japan. Dohi was an enthusiastic listener with an ear for experimental music, having organized concerts that included Stolyar when she lived in Japan. The year before, she had moved to Novosibirsk to teach Japanese at a local university, motivated by a desire to get out of what had become a stifling local set of cultural possibilities in Japan. Meeting Dohi and hearing her story,

I was reminded of Feld's Ghanaian interlocutor Nii Noi Nortey's response to Feld's question, "Can I call you a jazz cosmopolitan?"

Yeah, I think the word "cosmopolitan//s//m" . . . cosmopolitanism was introduced by you because it's so so big a word for me to use! [Laughter.] But at the same time I think that it embraces the same concept, you know, of going beyond your little horizon. And hoping that outside of that little horizon of yours there's still sense and meaning. (2012:90)

Meeting Dohi on the edges of our respective little horizons set the stage for a delightful friendship. In Novosibirsk, she served as a knowledgeable guide to local music happenings—especially those of a more experimental bent.

Perhaps the most unexpected and serendipitous encounter with a fellow jazz cosmopolitan, however, took place during the jazz festival's closing jam session, which I describe in detail later in this chapter. There, I met the Afro-Cuban percussionist and music producer Sekoue Plam Romay Díaz, better known in Novosibirsk by his stage name, CQ Plam. What began for him as an adventurous touring opportunity afforded by his parents' connections to the Cuban entertainment industry turned into a decade-long residency after falling in love with a local woman, whom he later married. He now makes his living as a musician and concert promoter, fronting groups such as Hard Jazz Project and hosting Cuban-themed parties and other events throughout Siberia.² After our first encounter at the festival, we exchanged phone numbers and he agreed to join me for my first visit to Truba for a jam session the following week. Over the course of two subsequent hangs, Plam told the story his arrival in Novosibirsk, the difficulties he faces as a part of Russia's small black minority, and the challenge of transmitting black aesthetic nuances to local musicians. And in the months since, I have kept in touch with his activities through his vivacious presence on Facebook.

² For more information about Hard Jazz Project, see the group's website: <http://hjproject.com>

First Visit to Truba: On Being Vibed

As I began to find my bearings in Novosibirsk, I looked forward to the upcoming jam session at Truba with great anticipation. Still struggling with the effects of my exhausting recent travel itinerary, basic life tasks like grocery shopping and eating sapped most of my limited energy. I had managed to contact the local jazz scene's elder statesman, the drummer Sergei Belechenko, but was in the midst of stumbling through an awkward game of phone tag; misunderstandings abounded. Also, I was unable to connect with Finov during my visit, leaving me without an important perspective on the club's reasons for being. Marina and I attended a concert at another bar, Бродячая собака (Brodyachaya Sobaka/"Stray Dog") with Dohi and one of her Japanese language students featuring the Altai Trio—playing a similar set to the one I heard in Arkhangelsk—on a double bill with some friends of hers, an experimental noise music trio from Japan.

When the jam session did come around the following week, I eagerly packed up my blue plastic alto trombone and headed to the venue via metro. The club was located in a small basement space whose dark underground ambiance somehow reminded me of both the Village Vanguard and the Hard Rock Café. As with many other clubs around the world, photographs of local jazz musicians in performance adorned the walls, along with old brass instruments and other vintage paraphernalia. Dohi had already found a table; Marina and I joined Plam and his wife at the bar and chatted for a while as the house band performed familiar jazz standards. We connected over our mutual admiration for Herbie Hancock and Stevie Wonder, and he admitted that he struggled to share his love of black music beyond a narrow jazz canon with other musicians here. He mentioned that he rarely performed at Truba; his musical tastes tend more toward R&B and funk than the "Great American Songbook" repertoire preferred by the

organizers of this jam session. This made me nervous: I was still learning my way around the alto trombone, and the standard repertoire that I could play on it was limited.

Nonetheless, Plam and I stepped onto the stage together about halfway through the set. He suggested that we play “Superstition” by Stevie Wonder, but one of the members of the rhythm section did not know the form. I then called “Lonely Woman,” Ornette Coleman’s most widely known composition, and also received a blank look in response. Plam then suggested a more common standard with which the band was familiar. I went along, although I knew that transposing the melody onto the alto trombone in real time would be a stretch. After Plam counted off the tune, I fumbled through the first chorus of the melody, missing notes left and right and struggling to stay in tune. Plam took the first solo, scatting admirably over the form, followed by a local tenor saxophonist who coolly ran through the changes. By the time my turn came, I had lost confidence in my ability to navigate the situation competently; my mind went blank, I flubbed my way over the changes, and experienced the ensuing improvisation as an embarrassing failure.

The musicians in the house band seemed to agree, refusing to make eye contact or exchange niceties with me afterwards. In that moment, I was on the receiving end of a jam session ritual known in the jazz world as “being vibed.” In his ethnographic account of a Brooklyn jam session, Ofer Gazit (2015) describes vibing as “an active scolding of a musician during a performance and on stage, by musical, gestural, and verbal means. It is a way to indicate to a musician that they are messing up or are otherwise out of line. It is also among the first idioms newcomers learn upon arriving on the scene” (44). He adds that for newcomers, “being vibed during a performance by the musicians from whom they ultimately seek approval is a difficult experience, a clear delineation of social boundary” (45). In my case, the experience of

this social boundary was exacerbated by my lack of advanced fluency in the language; still, even in discussion with Plam afterwards, the fear that had arisen in my attempt to solo over the form had been evident. In his article on jam session culture, Dana Gooley (2011) argues that by liberating itself from a responsibility to a listening public,

The jam preserves something like an audience position, but this position is occupied by the performers themselves, not by the open-ended body of potential listeners and consumers known as the ‘public’. The players become their own audience, forming a closed circle that bystanders may peer into and admire but not enter. Members of the public might get involved by applauding and listening attentively, but they are not inscribed formally as auditors in the communicative logic of the event. If they are there at all, they are positioned as ‘incidental’ participants.

When the piece ended, I was relieved to be greeted by enthusiastic questions from an audience member in the front row, asking about my strange blue instrument, where I was from, and what brought me to Novosibirsk. It seemed that I too had been positioned as an ‘incidental’ participant—an иностранец (inostranyets/“foreigner”) outside of the circle of worthy jam session participants at this particular session.

Producing the Jazz Field

I had just traveled tens of thousands of miles to be here—only to be told loud and clear that my presence was not welcome. But Audra Simpson (2007, 2014) points toward refusals like this one as a crucial edge for ethnographic work, noting that they often shed light on something that the ethnographer has otherwise not noticed. Reflecting on this, it became clear to me that these straight-ahead Russian jazz players had pointed me back toward an uncomfortable truth that I had managed to skirt in my previous ethnographic encounters in jazz space: that despite many interventions over the decades, jazz communities are still formed and maintained through a particular kind of exclusion. What I had been avoiding through much of my previous ethnographic work was the way in which the core properties of Jazz still operated—despite my

own discomfort with many aspects of this operation—within something akin to Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of a field of cultural production.

Jam session hostility is even a core element of the Jazz mythos, recalling the stories of Charlie Parker having a cymbal thrown at his head, or Max Roach throwing a punch at Ornette Coleman. At the Truba jam session, as with many jazz jam sessions, the musical worlds outside of a specific set of standards—whether Wonder or Coleman—are simply ignored away. This function of the jam session—in Gooley’s terms, the configuration of an elitist aesthetic—was an uncomfortable truth that I had preferred to avoid. For example, I had negotiated a similarly fraught moment after a “mistake” during my first concert at Thelonious, as well—but that ended in a shrug and a laugh, growing into a fruitful musical collaboration. This had something to do with the fact that I had already established a baseline of rapport with the musicians, spoke fluent Spanish, and came recommended by a mutual friend. In turn, I trusted that the subsequent jam sessions they hosted at Thelonious would be more open to what I had to offer. The warmer, more inclusive sessions in which I had participated at Thelonious were an exception that proves the rule; having been unable to establish a similar shared ground of expectations with my Russian counterparts, I was subject to the jazz field’s harsh default setting: vibing.

Nonetheless, this discomfort helped bring my attention to the operation of the field; it was present across a wide geography, giving rise to similar aesthetic dispositions and practices that shape the regulated improvisations of jam sessions from New York to Novosibirsk. This includes the formation of a student jazz ensemble at Novosibirsk State Technical University during the 1960s, when jazz practice was embraced by the Soviet Komsomol. In fact, the ensemble celebrated its 50th anniversary at the A.M. Katz Concert hall a few days after the jam session. Graduates of this program, led by NTSU Cultural Center director Yuri Minyailo, form the core

of the jazz scene in Novosibirsk that participates in the Truba jam session. The jazz field manifests here thanks to the efforts of a handful of advocates who have managed to make these dispositions legible within this society's normative systems—in this case, through state support at a local university. This is consistent with the role that postsecondary institutions have played in producing this field elsewhere—for example, at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles or the Instituto ProJazz in Santiago.³ The presence of these student musicians also sustains the jam sessions at local clubs, generating a feedback loop that creates a shared set of standards and expectations in the session culture—often to the exclusion of other black musical practices (and, in the case of Plam, black people).

Given this state of affairs, I have had to adjust the scope of my analysis at Truba; between this refusal, my short duration of stay, and still-developing Russian language capacity, I was learning more about what I had overlooked elsewhere than any holistic sense of what this music means to Novosibirsk's jazz aficionados. Reflecting on this humbling experience, I revisited Truba once more, having this time abandoned a desire to be welcomed into the proceedings. This practice manifested as random acts of noticing that I hoped might inform a broader sense of jazz practice here and elsewhere. Indeed, I had set out to Novosibirsk with the idea that it might serve as a bulwark against subtle confirmation biases in the choices of my first two sites, giving my claims toward articulating an ethnographic “view from nowhere” some sort of generalizability. Having been pointed toward one such gap, I had just over a week left to play the break.

This improvised approach gestures toward what John L. Jackson, in his book *Thin Description*, calls

flat ethnography, where you slice into a world from different perspectives, scales, registers, and angles—all distinctively useful, valid, and worthy of consideration. And the

³ See Kenneth Prouty (2008) for a thorough history of this phenomenon in North America.

thinness of these slices is central. A flat ethnography values such thin-slicing, even if the scope of the questions posed are, in some ways, as massive as ever.

This thinness also resonates with a concept familiar to contemporary Russians, first introduced to me by Cyril Moshkow. He explained to me that the early 2000s saw a flourishing of independent thinking and writing through the early social media website Livejournal. The handful of writers, poets, and intellectuals whose work came to be well known in those circuits referred to it as the “thin layer,” a rarefied network of relationships that would occasionally intersect serendipitously with everyday life. This described the sense of being in space together, despite geographical differences—another kind of hang, perhaps, but distributed in cyberspace.⁴ Indeed, one consequence of my travel to Novosibirsk is that the relationships that I made there formed a “thin layer” of social media interactions in the months since I left. Now, of course, these networks are much more powerful than they were in the early 2000s—Facebook, WhatsApp, and VKontakte are the primary sites that I have used to maintain those ties. Having previously offered ethnographic reports of jazz space in the spirit of “thicker” analyses, I returned to Truba on the day before my departure from Novosibirsk, ready to reappraise the space by taking a thinly sliced approach to the practice of listening in jazz space.

Last Visit to Truba: Thin Description

After passing through the front glass door emblazoned with the club’s logo, the first space that greets the visitor is a rather bizarre unmarked stairway with old televisions and other defunct electronics sitting awkwardly on a ledge adorned with ornate wallpaper. I remember being surprised by the incongruity of this with the rest of the space on both of my visits there, and remembered to stop and take a picture during my second visit, which can be seen below:

⁴ David MacFadyen documents a contemporary variant of this practice through digital music production at the website Far From Moscow: <http://www.farfrommoscow.com/>



Fig. 4.2: Entryway into Truba Jazz Club

The ominous grey stairway quickly gives way to another space, however; this gives a much better sense of the rest of the club's ambiance: a retro aesthetic of found objects from an earlier era, with a plethora of slogans encouraging alcohol consumption—usually in English. This space is also where tickets are collected, and the evening's cover charge is paid; the coat rack is behind the door on the left side of the frame:



Fig. 4.3: Basement entrance into Truba Jazz Club

Entering into the club space, tables are packed into a small floor area, with a long red wall on the opposite side of the door adorned with mirrors and photographs—some of local jazz musicians, others of famous rock albums. The hodgepodge of paraphernalia contributes to a sense of Jazz coexisting with other signifiers of midcentury American popular culture, filtered through a retro aesthetic alongside old brass instruments—and alcohol advertisements:



Fig. 4.4: Truba main wall with photos

Truba’s interior is scattered with a similarly bright array of gestures toward American culture and alcohol; this is perhaps most obvious on the rear wall, where a chalk drawing invites clubgoers with the slogan: “Jazz and Bourbon: taste all here.” Pictured below, it includes a list of “the best bourbon” (e.g. Jameson, Chieftain’s) and “the best music” (Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Benny Carter, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton):



Fig. 4.5: Jazz and Bourbon display

This aesthetic is also evident at the bar, where I took my seat to take in that evening's concert. Nursing an IPA poured from one of the guitar-handle taps, I listened as the trombonist-led quartet worked their way through jazz standards such as "Girl From Ipanema," "My Favorite Things," "Cheek to Cheek," and ... "Caravan." Vlad, the bartender, generously acceded to my request to wander through the space to take these photos during the set break.



Fig. 4.6: Truba bar area

This provided an opportunity to photograph the club's small stage area, raised slightly and crammed into the opposite corner of the small venue. An upright piano is wedged against the wall at floor level, making eye contact between performers difficult during a performance. This didn't seem to be an issue for this band, though—perhaps they were already accustomed to the space constraints.



Fig. 4.7: Truba stage area

After taking this photo, I paid my tab as the show wrapped up and the other listeners began to leave. Before taking a cab back to the apartment to pack my bags and prepare for my return to the United States, though, I took a moment to soak up the sensation of being in jazz space—although coming here had been productively disorienting, that sense of home felt like it was close at hand. For that, I was grateful.

Another Jam Session: SibJazzFest

It turned out, however, that my most enlivening experiences with jazz practice came outside of the club, at the SibJazzFest, an annual jazz festival sponsored by the municipality's philharmonic society that takes place in the A.M. Katz Concert Hall. According to Miller, Truba owner Pyotr Finov is a key supporter of the initiative. Shortly after my arrival, I was quickly swept up in the three-day programming of SibJazzFest, which began under this name—a portmanteau of Siberian Jazz Festival—in 2010. I took it in as an interested listener with a seat in the hall's large balcony, alongside a few hundred concert-goers, and was struck by the strong attendance and buzz of anticipation among the crowd before the concerts. Clearly, it was the place to be that evening—scores of Russian men and women flowed in the main entrance and downstairs to the large coat check area to deposit their hats and overcoats. Each program included three acts: a double-bill on the main concert hall and an after-event in the spacious upstairs foyer, where a soundstage and dozens of folding chairs were set up during the mainstage concerts. The programming included a diversity of jazz styles, with mostly European artists on the bill.

Notably, onstage banter took place mostly in English, although it was clear that most people in the audience did not understand what the artists were saying; loud cheers would follow whenever an artist mentioned “Novosibirsk.” This reminded me of a concert I had heard in Santiago by jazz vocalist Jose James: English onstage, and an audience straining to understand offstage. Indeed, the event supported Henri Lefebvre's (1974) assertion that despite their differences, in terms of spatial production, Western capitalism and Soviet communism created similar results. This concert could have been put on anywhere in the modern, urban world—and the isomorphic spatial properties of these venues is precisely what enables commercial

production companies to manage tours across such geographical breadth. I recalled a previous conversation with Cristian Galvez after the festival in Arkhangelsk, where we compared notes on places that we had been in Russia, realizing we had both visited Kazan over the summer. When I asked if he had seen the Kul Sharif mosque—a stunning monument of Islamic architecture in the region, and by far the city’s most well-known edifice—he shrugged and responded, “Of course not—just the hotel.” It seemed that most of the European artists at SibJazzFest were taking a similar approach to their stay in Novosibirsk.

Two of the city’s longtime jazz institutions, the municipality-funded big band and the trad-style Siberian Dixieland Band, performed sets with guest artists from the Netherlands and the U.S.A., respectively. Highlights (to my ear, at least) included the virtuosic and creative Polish accordion group Motion Trio, and the closing act, the UK-based Tony Kofi Quartet, which presented buttoned-up versions of early Ornette Coleman repertoire. Introducing the music to the packed house, Kofi recounted an encounter with Coleman before his passing in 2015 in which the departed master told him, “Don’t let them forget my music.” It certainly brought a smile to my face to imagine what he would have thought of his compositions being greeted by an enthusiastic standing ovation in a sold-out Siberian concert hall.

After this performance, the audience exited the main concert hall and were escorted to the second-floor foyer, which had been set up with a portable stage for the festival’s concluding jam session. Very few left the venue at this point, creating a standing-room-only crowd on the second-floor foyer and third-floor balcony as the few-dozen folding chairs were quickly occupied. The Siberian Dixieland Band gave the opening set, with some of the festival’s featured guests sitting in. Their raucous energy radiated quickly throughout the receptive audience, and by the third song a brave handful of listeners stepped in front of the stage to dance. What began

as a slow trickle became a torrent of energetic dancing by the end of the band's first set; after a short break, Kofi's quartet took the stage to serve as the house band for the second half. These musicians were much more invested in playing midcentury jazz standards, adopting a hip indifference to the throngs of dancers doing their best to move to the music. Two songs into their set, hoping to sit in on an upcoming number, I managed to get backstage to borrow a trombone from one of the other performers. Waiting next to the stage, I found myself next to a broad-shouldered black man with a conga drum who seemed eager to sit in, as well—visibly frustrated by the proceedings. In a moment that exposed a subtly racist assumption, I asked him in English what was going on—this awkward exchange was how I met Plam. He seemed to understand my question but hesitated to respond. Realizing that English was not his first language, I asked again in Russian; he then shared that his frustration derived from a desire to play something that the crowd could dance to. We then agreed to take the stage on the next number and call Herbie Hancock's "Chameleon," a funk-oriented song that would likely be familiar to everyone onstage. Dohi, whom I would meet later in the evening, took the photo below from her position to the side of the stage:



*Fig 4.8: SibJazzFest Jam Session in A.M. Katz Hall foyer, October 2016.
Photo by Ricao Dohi, used with permission.*

During this song, the last of the evening, the energy in the room was like nothing I have ever felt. Onstage, the musicians were scrambling excitedly to hold down the groove and give everyone room to improvise; around us, dozens of concert-goers danced unencumbered while hundreds more looked on from the chairs and balcony—at a *jam session in Siberia*. Although the *idea* of jazz practice being a feature of urban spatiality around the world did not seem remote to me as I prepared for this project, the *felt sense* of it—an immediate experience of planetary scale—was joyfully visceral, fresh and invigorating.

Afterwards, Dohi and I chattered enthusiastically about the experience we had just shared, conversing in English as we headed to the coat room, where we were approached by a

pair of young German women and a Russian man—also speaking in English—who had heard the announcement from the stage that I was visiting from the United States. The five of us decided to continue the evening at a local bar, reveling in a collective euphoria that spilled over from the event. Thanks to a more conducive set of circumstances—including an instrument that I could more confidently navigate, and a critical mass of English-speaking jazz cosmopolitans—I caught a glimpse of that same sense of exploratory, celebratory collectivity and wonder that I had first felt at the Club de Jazz de Santiago over a decade before. Although I still have a long way to go to navigate the changes and complexities of the jazz world’s Siberian manifestation, feeling the jubilant energy radiating through the crowd and the musicians encourage me to return, and offer a good reminder that this music can be a site of profound surprises—regardless of the isomorphic pressures of the transnational jazz field.

Conclusion: Jazz Anthropology Radically Unfinished

Truba, the Novosibirsk jazz scene, and the fellow travelers I met there took me through yet another jazz door; crossing through and going inside, it ushered me across the other side of nowhere. Reading this through the lens of Sun Ra’s aforementioned aphorism, this transformed my relationship to Novosibirsk from “somewhere else” to just “another place in (jazz) space”—replete even with aspects that I didn’t even know I had been trying to leave behind. I had witnessed the concertgoing public’s remarkable enthusiasm for a wide range of jazz practices at SibJazzFest, as well as a euphoric moment of transnational synchronicity at the closing jam session. I had been vibed at Truba, jolted into a confrontation with the exclusivity that accompanies such an ostensibly open musical environment. And to be fair, my experience on the Novosibirsk jazz scene was not limited to the encounters described here. For example, I did finally end up connecting with Belechenko, who was kind and generous in sharing stories of his

jazz life in Siberia. Perhaps most important, I had experienced in Novosibirsk a felt sense of global scale—and the limitations and possibilities that go along with reaching toward it.

In a remarkably precise manifesto arguing for a reconsideration of the terms of anthropological practice, Tim Ingold (2014) argues that “to practice participant observation is also to undergo an education. Indeed I believe there are good grounds for substituting the word “education” for “ethnography” as the most fundamental purpose of anthropology.” Ingold’s insistence on “anthropology as a practice of education” resonates deeply with my experience of this encounter in Novosibirsk. In fact, it was the recognition of my initial forays into jazz practice elsewhere, in Chile in 2005, as *anthropological* that has grounded my own jazz education in the intervening years, shaping the questions and approach that brought me to Novosibirsk in the first place. Traveling to Siberia has offered an opportunity to double down on my commitment to ongoing jazz practice—for better or for worse, this is the world in which I live, and I intend to make the most of it.

Moving forward, I am inspired by Vijay Iyer’s idea of artistic practice as always being “radically unfinished.”⁵ In this orientation, always unfolding, new pathways emerge because questions beget new questions. During this first encounter in Novosibirsk, I found a powerful and miraculous sense of camaraderie among fellow jazz cosmopolitans yet struggled to connect with the local scene. In a sense, then, this chapter only hints at half the story. Still, I had conceived of this preliminary visit to Novosibirsk as something that would help unfurl some of those new questions, unsettling assumptions that had begun to sediment during my time in Los Angeles and Santiago—and as I hope to have shown, that was certainly one consequence of this brief fieldwork stint. Reflecting on this short stay, I believe that these new openings will bear

⁵ For an example of Iyer invoking this phrase, see Nguyen (2015).

further fruit upon my next visit. When I do return, though, it won't be to the same Truba that I left—last year, Finov moved the club yet again, this time to a more spacious venue closer to the city center. And when I do, I will come prepared for further surprises, at Truba and elsewhere.

Fade Out Novosibirsk to Portland



Fig. 4.9: Places I witnessed jazz practice (November 2016-March 2018)

By the time we had arrived in Novosibirsk, Marina and I had decided to return from there to Portland, where we planned to settle while writing this dissertation—this would bring my jazz journey full circle, geographically speaking. Leaving Siberia, however, proved to be nearly as challenging as getting there, and the chaos that ensued in our departure offered another instructive limit-case in the contemporary spatial production of global scale. Less than a week before our scheduled departure, my debit card expired—this had been one of the most reliable ways to make basic purchases in the city. Just in case, I arranged for money to be wired from the United States to a nearby bank, but the bank refused to accept my passport as valid proof of identification without a transliterated version in the Cyrillic alphabet. On the day of our departure, down to our last cash rubles, we managed to get a ride to the airport from one of Ricao Dohi’s friends. At the airport, however, Marina’s wallet disappeared—along with her debit card. In some nightmarish echo of those 1990s Visa commercials, the airport didn’t take American Express—so, we were unable to pay the flight’s additional bag fee. For about 20 panicked minutes, we entertained the possibility of actually being stuck in Siberia, or at least leaving a bag behind. Miraculously, our flight’s gate agent, recognizing the severity of our plight, took pity on us and allowed for the extra bag to be carried on free of charge for our flight to Moscow.

There, we found a bank that would accept our passports as identification; this allowed for us to pay for our hotel that night, but scuttled plans to visit a jazz club during my one-day layover there. On the flight to New York City the following morning, I realized that the 2016 U.S. presidential election would be taking place the following day. Fortunately, my host in New York City preferred not to watch the returns live, and I collapsed in exhaustion on their couch well before the results were in. But I woke up at 5 am the following morning; reports that Donald Trump had won the Electoral College suggested that the national political discourse to which I was returning would be dramatically different from the one I had left 14 months prior. I spent the following weekend in Washington, D.C., where I reunited with my Conn trombone and attended the annual conference of the Society for Ethnomusicology. There, I enjoyed my first meeting as Chair of the Improvisation Section, as well as my first performance stateside, with the SEM Orchestra. Commuting between my cousin's apartment and the hotel by subway, I sensed a quiet foreboding amidst the urban bustle.

Returning to New York afterwards, I was visited by a recurring sadness, a feeling that would arise in my chest. Perhaps it had something to do with losing contact with my fieldwork experience, coming back to the U.S. at a time of great uncertainty and fear. Nonetheless, I had a bit more time to take in the New York jazz scene, visiting a Brooklyn jam session, a performance at the Institute of Jazz Studies in Newark, and a gathering of jazz writers celebrating Stanley Crouch at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem. Retracing some of my old routes five years since living there, the experience brought to mind the metaphor of a spatial echo—repetition with a difference. Having broadened my sense of the jazz world's geographical breadth in the previous months, the scene didn't seem so large and all-encompassing as it had then; rather, I was struck by its unique *density*—surely New York City features the most jazz activity per

square kilometer. Even the jam session manifested this cramped spatiality: dozens of players huddled into the corner of a wine bar, listening intently, patiently waiting their turn to blow over a chorus.

I returned to Portland the following week, grateful to be in geographical proximity to my family of origin for the first time in years. A few days after my arrival, I heard the sad news that renowned local jazz club Jimmy Mak's would be closing at the end of the year. Through this news, I also learned that the club's owner, Jimmy Makarounis, lived a block away from my childhood home. He had originally planned to relocate the club from its Downtown Portland location after an impending rent increase, but a recent throat cancer diagnosis kept him from doing so. In a poetic coincidence that reminds us of the connection between these spaces and those who manage them, Makarounis passed away on January 1, 2017, mere hours after the last note of the club's New Year's Eve going-away celebration had sounded in the space. Shortly after returning to Portland, I made my first return trip to Los Angeles, where I caught an evening of Steve Coleman's two-week residency at bluewhale—an annual routine that has continued since its first iteration in 2015. Los Angeles's spatial echo invoked more traffic noise than my recent stint in New York—the sheer sonic weight of car-presence stood out after my time away from the city, although I took full advantage of the newly constructed Expo Line light rail line between Santa Monica and Downtown.

The following month, I flew to New Orleans to present an early draft of this material at the Jazz Education Network annual conference, my first time attending the event. This was another massive-scale endeavor, occupying the full conference space capacity of the enormous Hyatt Regency Hotel. Advertising itself as “The Big Hang,” the event was notable for the amount of music-making taking place inside the various rooms and corridors; the conference

packed an impossibly high density of jazz practice into a relatively small space, framed around a trade-show atmosphere promoting the sale of musical instruments, method books, and expensive undergraduate performance degrees. Due in part to this density, I enjoyed serendipitous encounters with a host of jazz acquaintances: Dave Picchi, the bassist from our college party band in Amherst; Andy Jaffe, a kind mentor during my undergraduate years; Kim Teal, whose 2012 dissertation on live jazz performance in New York is an important predecessor to this one; and Gene Perla, the bassist who traveled to Chile in 1970 and 1973 with Elvin Jones.

As I settled into writing back in Portland, I found it more and more difficult to remain engaged with local jazz activity—the novelty of focusing my energy and intention on being in jazz space as much as possible had worn off, and the idea of “being somewhere” again was just starting to feel real. However, I was grateful for the occasional show that I did attend—such as Cecile McLorin Salvant at the Old Church, hosted by the local jazz booking organization PDXJAZZ. Jazz listening still featured in my travel itinerary, however—in April and May, I returned to Los Angeles again and heard two Chilean friends, Pablo Menares and Rodrigo Recabarren, play at bluewhale with the New York-based quartet Beekman. From there, I traveled to the United Kingdom for the British Forum for Ethnomusicology conference in Sheffield. Staying with an artist friend in London afterwards, I took in a playfully retro jazz group in the speakeasy-style venue downstairs from his loft space.

Later in the fall, after attending the most recent SEM gathering in Denver and reprising my role with the SEM Orchestra, I made my most recent visit to Los Angeles and bluewhale. There, I heard one my former Charles Mingus Orchestra section mate and travel buddy, Jonah Levine, leading an ensemble under his own name. The evening highlighted what had changed in the two intervening years, as well as what had stayed the same. Levine had graduated from

UCLA, going from sitting in at jam sessions to leading his own band. TV screens with a live feed from the stage area could be seen from the far end of the bar; Weller Court now hosted a Starbucks on two corners of the block. And yet the upholstered cubes and ceiling poetry remained, as well as many of the personnel—Aaron running sound and greeting people at the door, Ken and Darryl behind the bar. Perhaps most important: crossing the door and going inside, it still felt like home.

Winter in Portland brings its own sense of home for me, having weathered many dark, wet days here growing up. As the clouds give way to an abundant and verdant spring season outside my window, I have arrived back where I started, 27 years later. Now, Jazz certainly means something more than Utah basketball and aerobics classes; instead, it has become a signpost that guides my approach to being in the world—informed by black musical practices and in conversation with listeners around the world. I have found many other jazz doors along the way; now, I will conclude by reflecting on what is at stake for their continued presence in the 21st century.

Conclusion

The Space of Jazz to Come

If you play James Brown (say, Money Won't Change You . . . but time will take you out") in a bank, the total environment is changed. Not only the sardonic comment of the lyrics, but the total emotional placement of the rhythm, instrumentation and sound. An energy is released in the bank, a summoning of images that take the bank, and everybody in it, on a trip. That is, they visit another place. A place where Black People live.

—Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), “The Changing Same (R&B and New Black Music)”¹

Having offered evidence and analysis of how jazz practice takes place at global scale, tracing its manifestation by listening in the jazz spaces of three very different places, I conclude by addressing what is at stake for the practice of listening in jazz space as it unfolds further into the 21st century. In the introduction to this dissertation, I outlined a tripartite mode of thinking that attends to three qualities: square, circle, and triangle; materiality, eternity, spirit; real, imagined, real-and-imagined. The first chapter builds a square base of historical traces in California, Chile, and Siberia that grounds the rest of the work in lived human history. The following three chapters present these places in the ethnographic present, attending to the triangular aspect through fieldwork. Each is inflected with a different quality of the triad: the bluewhale study focuses on the materiality of the club's spatial production; at Thelonious, I emphasize the triangular through analysis of the hang and La Resistencia; the circular element was brought to my attention by experiencing the manifestation of the jazz field at Truba, sensing the forces that regulate improvisation there as global-scale dispositions enforcing the notion of Jazz's core and boundaries in live performance. Weaving the story of my own body in transit throughout this thin layer of ethnographic presence, I aimed to ground it again in another kind of lived human reality—my own. As Sherry Ortner (1995) has argued, “Ethnography of course

¹ This essay, written in 1966, was published in Baraka [Jones] (1968).

means many things. Minimally, however, it has always meant the attempt to understand another life world using the self—as much as possible—as the instrument of knowing.” Situating myself as much as possible in the global flow of this work has been one way of tying these distant spaces together as part of today’s co-emergent jazz world.

Past, present . . . what remains to be addressed is where we go from here. Much of this project has been animated by a desire to understand why Jazz still matters so much to so many people around the world. It also unfolds from my own curiosity to learn what form it will take as musicians of my generation, born into the historical epoch of globalized late capitalism, exert more creative agency. Reflecting on this question, I have occasionally felt resigned to a bleak sense of diminishing possibilities, haunted by a nagging fear that—to borrow a phrase from Eric Lott (1993)—jazz love is inseparable from white theft. As I was conducting this fieldwork, the place of Jazz in U.S. popular culture did seem to shift—going from what Nate Chinen (2014) called “Jazz’s Year of Complaint,” full of hand-wringing articles tolling the music’s death knell, to a wider presence as a cultural signifier through the musical comedy *La La Land*, which features a brooding white jazz pianist and aspiring club owner as its male protagonist. A small handful of jazz musicians, meanwhile—such as Kamasi Washington—blossomed into mainstream popularity with music harkening back to the cosmic, spiritually inflected sounds of the 1970s.

This moment of reconnection with mainstream North American mass media, perhaps the first since the massive Ken Burns documentary *Jazz* was broadcast in 2001, provoked many disconcerting conversations when I would explain to people that I wrote about jazz clubs around the world. In *La La Land*, the main character is a prototypical (one might argue, stereotypical) jazzbro—attached to a narcissistic fantasy of the music as a dying art form that he has a

responsibility to save. After its release, I found myself instinctively dodging this unpleasant association in conversations with strangers or acquaintances whenever the topic arose in small talk. Given the word's history as a tool for the cooptation of black creative agency, however, perhaps this is a fair judgment. It is precisely for these reasons that many black musical artists, from Duke Ellington to Nicholas Payton, have distanced themselves from the term. Indeed, even Sidney Bechet is careful to avoid naming the music described at this dissertation's outset as Jazz, arguing elsewhere that the word was invented by white people.

If Jazz is inescapably bound to white people's grasping impulse toward black culture, then, what does the future hold for jazz space? Is there any hope for those of us who have been brought into contact with black spirituality through the music's transformative properties but "don't have the memory that needs to understand it" (Bechet 1960)? Following the quotation at the outset of this section, Amiri Baraka (writing as LeRoi Jones) offers a challenge to white listeners visiting this place where Black People live: "What is a white person who walks into a James Brown or Sam and Dave song? What would be the social metaphor for his (sic) existence in that world? What would he (sic) be doing?" (1968:181). These questions point toward what is at stake for the music as it is embraced beyond not only white people, but also other nonblack people around the world. If my peripatetic ethnographic investigation has anything to offer this question, I would argue that this fraught moment of contact can lead in one of two directions: further colonization or mutual struggle toward liberation. In an effort to resist the former and lean into the latter in my own work, I draw inspiration from John Perry Barlow's aphorism: "A good way to invent the future is to predict it."²

² This quote is attributed to him in Cohn (2018). It is a clever reversal of a common Silicon Valley adage, first attributed to Dennis Gabor (1963): "The future cannot be predicted, but futures can be invented."

What's Left?

Sooner or later all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. If this is to be achieved, man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.

—Martin Luther King, Jr., 1964 Nobel Prize acceptance speech³

The subtitle of Anna Tsing's remarkable 2015 book *The Mushroom at the End of the World* is "On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins." Examining the interspecies collaborations involved in the cultivation of matsutake mushrooms, she frames her opening investigation around the question, "What's left?" She writes, "Given the effectiveness of state and capitalist devastation of natural landscapes, we might ask why anything outside their plans is alive today" (19). Similarly, given the number of times that Jazz has been proclaimed Dead in mass media accounts since the 1960s, we might ask why jazz space continues to exist. I would argue that cultural production in these spaces is akin to what Tsing calls "disturbance-based ecologies in which many species sometimes live together without either harmony or conquest" (5). Although this investigation has not involved *interspecies* coexistence, this metaphor offers a way to understand these spaces as Baraka does, as possible portals to "a place, in the spiritual precincts of its emotional telling, where Black People move in almost absolute openness and strength" (181), where differences are engaged on those terms. My prediction is that just as the word has slowly (if only partially) shed its association with white imperial domination, to the extent that these spaces continue to exist, they will do so on these terms: neither in harmony with nor in conquest of black music, rooted in what Fred Moten (2013) would call its attendant

³ See King (1964) for the full text of this speech.

“submarine sociality” of celebration. Even in spaces where the relation to blackness is one of dominance and cooptation—for example, through its commodification as a signifier of exotic American authenticity to encourage alcohol consumption—the possibility also exists for its disruption.

Furthermore, I predict that the music that sounds in these spaces will be less bound to the constraints of the idea of Jazz as a genre signifier, sounding less and less like the music forged in the crucible of today’s jazz jam sessions around the world. Washington’s success points toward the growing possibilities for reconnection to streams of black musical practice that were pushed out of jazz spaces during the rise of the Young Lions in the 1980s, especially that which Baraka called New Black Music—associated with figures such as Sun Ra, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, and Albert Ayler. New Black Music, then—inclusive of, but not limited to Jazz—will continue to arise in jazz space, alongside whatever resonant creative musical practices that are relevant to that location. This is not to say that Jazz will be reduced to another epoch of Fusion, whereby elements of jam session culture are mapped onto diverse genres, but that the Changing Same of Black Music will compel contemporary musicians and listeners beyond the possessive listening habits exemplified by *La La Land’s* main character. One thing that this fieldwork has made abundantly clear is that the extractive, capitalist logics that once animated the construction of jazz clubs will not sustain them into the 21st century. Jazz may not be Dead, but it is, in a sense, Ruined. Although hundreds of jazz clubs have closed around the world in recent years, Tsing’s question is relevant to understanding those that continue to operate: “What’s left?”

What’s left, I believe, is a creative commitment toward collective liberation—in a word: love. Despite its implication in logics of racialized, capitalist domination, the word “jazz” has pointed toward a continuum of black spiritual practice, liberated celebration of black humanity,

including New Black Music. Baraka also points out that not everything indexed by the word falls into this category; as he points out,

The jazz that is most European, popular or avant, or the jazz that is Blackest, still makes reference to a central body of cultural experience. The impulse, the force that pushes you to sing . . . all up in there . . . is one thing . . . what it produces is another. It can be expressive of the entire force, or make it the occasion of some special pleading. (176)

To follow Baraka into this space, accommodating the tensions of “bodies responding differently, a (total) force,” is to enter into the discomfiting intimacy of friction across difference. It can bring us into contact with the dance of racial capitalist domination known as “love and theft”; it can also bring us into alignment with a lineage of skillful improvisers sounding another kind of love in the break: Louis Armstrong, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane . . . Vladimir Rezitsky, Joon Lee, Melissa Aldana . . .

Now What?

*Oh, my unborn child . . .
I love you . . .
No matter where you came from . . .*

—María Grand, “Sing Unborn”⁴

Jazz practice will continue to thrive, I believe, because the love that I have tasted in these spaces is a force greater than the impulse to grasp, coopt, and dominate. Whether or not the word “jazz” continues to be associated with this animating force remains to be seen, but the music will be legible to those who have engaged in the practice of listening in jazz space. The question of whether or not Jazz should remain the primary signifier under which this musical activity is organized has been contentious for decades; it was brought into the heat of contemporary online debate in 2011, when Nicholas Payton published a widely read post on his blog entitled “Why

⁴ Recorded on the album *Magdalena* (2018), Biophilia Records.

Jazz Isn't Cool Anymore.” Although the controversy surrounding Payton's provocation has since died down, I get the sense that his argument successfully unsettled many long-held assumptions about the music, especially those held by younger practitioners who, like me, were introduced to them in educational settings. Although Payton's suggested alternatives—Black American Music and Postmodern New Orleans Music—have yet to catch on, it seems that especially in New York, terms such as “Creative Music” are becoming more common. But regardless of what people continue to call it, an art world continues to be reproduced in service of the music, and that world is faced with more pressing challenges to ensure its sustainability.

The exigencies of ending racial capitalist domination provide one lens through which we can understand this imperative; however, in this moment, the art world seems to be shifting more dramatically in response to another form of domination: patriarchy. Aldana's successes, included her much-touted accolade as the first woman instrumentalist to win the Thelonious Monk Competition, has tracked with an influx of talented and creative women into the jazz world who have been able to attract attention and support in ways that were not available to their predecessors. This has, however, brought them into direct confrontation with the jazz field's deeply misogynistic tendencies, a state of affairs that has only recently come to mainstream public attention. Even Dr. King's provocative call for us to “transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood” evinces the limitations of a gendered, heteropatriarchal approach to this challenge. As Brandon M. Terry (2018) argues, “Any retrieval of King's legacy has to amend his triple evils [of racism, militarism, and poverty] to include a fourth: sexism.”

In the jazz world, the ugly truth of the need to address misogyny became evident to a wider set of stakeholders (that is, most men) as discourse moved online. In 2009, for example, an offensive and objectifying review of a Maria Schneider concert entitled “Maria With the Long

Bare Arms,” by *Montreal Gazette* writer Jeff Heinrich, became the subject of many dismayed blog posts.⁵ More recently, in an exchange that jazz journalist Michelle Mercer (2017) sardonically labeled “The Saga of Musical Clitoris,” jazz pianist Robert Glasper made a series of sexist remarks in an interview published online by Ethan Iverson, resulting in a torrent of negative feedback online. Mercer explained the fallout:

Much feminist work in jazz has focused on the noble goals of celebrating the genre's marginalized women musicians and advocating toward equal representation for them on today's bandstands. As necessary as representation may be, this scandal reveals that the issue of women in jazz goes deeper, into a gendered construction of the music itself. We need an intelligent public discussion about gendered notions of jazz, and this hot mess might as well be the impetus for that discussion. As one female industry veteran said online, “it can take a bomb like this to reset course.”

This exchange only scratched the surface—further revelations by Sasha Berliner (2017), Lara Pellegrinelli (2017), and Kalia Vandever (2018) offered heartbreaking accounts of their direct experiences with jazz misogyny; meanwhile, the *Boston Globe* uncovered a pattern of sexual abuse by teachers at the Berklee College of Music that included widespread institutional neglect (Lazar 2017).

In response, a collective of 14 musicians came together under the name We Have Voice Collective to call for an end to sexual violence and discrimination in the music industry. The group created a website, wehavevoice.org, where they posted a powerful open letter clearly addressing their concerns. It reads, in part:

Music is our field of work and also the place where we commune, unite, create, communicate, and practice dialogue, forward-thinking, empathy, and inclusion. Intergenerational collaboration, teaching, and socializing are beautiful traditions that are crucial for the development and survival of our art. When musicians from our communities violate others, it is not only those who are violated who are hurt. We all become complicit in the abuse of power, and our community's health and reputation are damaged. Addressing these issues seriously and openly is fundamental to changing the

⁵ The article was removed from the *Gazette*'s website; see Ramsey (2009) for a reprint of the article with commentary.

prevailing attitudes of abuse, sexual misconduct and discrimination present in our industry and society. (We Have Voice Collective 2018)

The open letter invited signatories in support of its message; at the time of this writing, 922 people across six continents have added their names. Notably, the word “jazz” is absent from their appeal; this absence reflects its continued association with patriarchal domination, and also recognizes that this issue goes beyond Jazz. But their music, some of which is still associated with the term, gestures toward emerging possibilities in the musical worlds they inhabit.

Take, for example, New York-based Swiss-Argentine tenor saxophonist María Grand, one of the members of the We Have Voice Collective. Her recent album *Magdalena* is an experiment in sounding what she calls “a feminine non-hierarchical power structure.” Its haunting vulnerability challenges received gendered categories about voice and sound, while still articulating a remarkably personal creative approach. This is just one example of the myriad creative journeys being sounded out in this world by the inheritors of this music’s legacy. Listening for (and to) these developments as they unfold, I will have to reject Tim Rice’s relativistic assertion that “Ethnomusicologists do not begin their research with a judgment about what they imagine is ‘good music’ or ‘music worthy of study’” (2013:2). Instead, following Duke Ellington’s notion that “there are simply two kinds of music, good music and the other kind,”⁶ I will listen with John Coltrane’s aspiration in mind, listening for the good not as an aesthetic formation, but an ethical one:

In any situation that we find in our lives, when there’s something we feel should be better, we must exert effort to try and make it better. So it’s the same socially, musically, politically, in any department of your life. I think music is an instrument. It can create the initial thought pattern that can create a change, you see, in the thinking of the people. I mean I want to be a force for real good. In other words, I know that there are bad forces. I know that there are forces out here that bring suffering to others and misery to the world, but I want to be the opposite force. (Kofsky 1966)

⁶ This quote was given in a 1962 interview in *Music Journal* and is republished in Tucker (1993:326).

As these forces radiate through the global pathways I have traversed and traced in these pages, I am cautiously optimistic that they will inspire, activate, and accompany the dramatic societal changes that our planet so desperately needs. In my estimation, that is the hallmark of good music—the sonic manifestation of liberational possibility. And whatever people call this music, today’s jazz spaces will play an important role in its continued unfolding.

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