"Dizzy Atmosphere":
The Challenge of Bebop

The development of bebop in the 1940s is crucial to understanding jazz as we know it. A product of jam sessions, big bands, small combos, and countless hours of "woodshedding," the musical language of bebop included rapid tempos, dissonant chords and melodic lines, tritone and other chordal substitutions, extensive chromaticism, off-beat piano accompaniment ("comping"), walking bass lines, poly-rhythmic drumming, and, perhaps most important, a focus on extended, improvised soloing on the front-line instruments. Swing-era heavyweights such as Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Roy Eldridge, Art Tatum, Duke Ellington, Jimmy Blanton, and Walter Page had previously explored aspects of this language in the 1930s, but they came together in spectacular fashion in the work of Charlie Parker, John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk, to name a handful of bebop's best-known practitioners.¹

Bebop continues to be a core element of the language of jazz. It informs the work of most contemporary players, and many stylistic and technical innovations created in the 1940s remain integral parts of jazz education. Bebop marked the ascendance of the small combo as the basic performing unit of jazz (which remains the case today) and its production and reception transformed the meanings associated with jazz and its place in American culture. Coming to prominence at the end of World War II, amid rising African-American political demands and increasingly visible American youth cultures, bebop garnered new capital for jazz as a music that spoke to observers of social and cultural change.

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cultural resistance. At the same time, bebop also gave jazz unprecedented capital as art music and signified its move into its current, albeit precarious, position at the intersection of high art and popular culture.

Bebop was also a product of a 1940s African-American social, cultural, and intellectual milieu, as well as a critical juncture in African-American musicians' ongoing public conversation about jazz. Building on recent scholarship on bebop that has sought to understand, as well as complicate, the relationship between bebop and its historical context, I reconsider the place of the music in African-American life. Rejecting assessments that view the music as an aesthetically and ideologically consistent project, I maintain that bebop, precisely in its varying musical expressions and in musicians' differing interpretations of its meanings, was a product of a collective orientation, if not a cohesive movement. Not only did the development of the music itself reflect the forward-looking, worldly perspectives of many of its practitioners, but their public responses to the idea of bebop (whether they embraced or rejected the term) also spoke of the refusal of the artistic and social boundaries that inspired their music. Ultimately, bebop marked an important moment in African-American musicians' critical conversation about jazz, an intellectual history rooted in musicians' aesthetic projects and social experiences and created in dialogue with general currents in African-American thought and the broader conversation about jazz. I do not believe we will have a full understanding of jazz and the meanings surrounding it until we have explored fully this particular trajectory of ideas.2

"The World Was Swinging with Change"

In recent years, bebop has become a test case for rethinking jazz history. Much writing about jazz, as Scott DeVeaux suggests, presents the music as a self-contained progression of styles that are divorced from their social context. Consequently, some write about bebop as if it is merely another chapter in the aesthetic development of the idiom. Others pay closer attention to social context and, in so doing, describe bebop as a cohesive aesthetic movement with a seamlessness between the formal qualities of the genre and the ideological orientations and social positions of musicians and their audience. Such narratives explain how bebop mirrored transformations in black life, attitudes, and politics in the crucible of urban American during World War II. By creating a new music, adapting a renegade style, asserting their intelligence, and demanding to be treated as artists, young African-American musicians forged a cultural politics that challenged all at once the banality of popular swing music, the complacency of
older musicians, and a system of economic exploitation and cultural expropriation by whites in the music business. In doing so, they helped forge a subculture that distanced itself from and challenged the mainstream. We see this approach in Amiri Baraka’s *Blues People*, where the author argues that bebop music and styles represented an “anti-assimilationist” challenge to black middle class and white society, and more recently in Eric Lott’s description of how bebop’s “aesthetic of speed and displacement” reflected, albeit indirectly, the political demand of the “Double V” campaign and the militant aspirations of its youthful, working-class audience.

Still, other studies challenge both types of narratives. Reexamining bebop’s place in the artistic development of jazz and interrogating assumptions about its political significance are staples of recent work. Bernard Gendron suggests that the construction of bebop in high cultural terms and as political expression was facilitated less by any inherent meanings in the music than by a preexisting modernist discursive field surrounding it. David Stowe argues that the perceived schism between swing and bebop is a product of the political meanings imposed on the music rather than a radical departure on behalf of the musicians themselves. Taking on Baraka’s analysis, Stowe rejects the notion that bebop was a significant expression of black militancy. Bebop’s interracial audience was more threatening than was the music as a symbol of race pride, Stowe argues, and many swing-era musicians were involved in more explicit political activism than were any of the beboppers. According to Stowe, it was the cultural style of bebop that shaped the perspective of later commentators, who read the politics of bebop’s reception into the music itself.

DeVeaux challenges Baraka’s and Lott’s assessments of bebop in his own recent book on the topic. He welcomes Baraka’s attention to history and is convinced by his insistence that bebop must be understood in the context of “the sense of resentment” that African Americans felt during World War II, when they encountered unyielding racism at a moment that offered promise for change. Similarly, he agrees with Lott’s assertion that “militancy and music were undergirded by the same social facts.” “But what, exactly,” DeVeaux asks, “constitutes the ‘intimate if indirect relationship’ of music to politics?” He characterizes bebop musicians’ relationship to politics as “oblique” at best and problematizes their relationship to a black mass audience, which at the height of bebop’s popularity turned its attention toward rhythm and blues. Ultimately, DeVeaux argues, the emergence of bebop stemmed less from the political orientation of its practitioners and audience than from a series of aesthetic and career decisions made by young, professionalized, primarily African-American musicians, who were inspired by a variety of artistic challenges and frustrated by a
music industry that provided some opportunities but was also rife with discrimination. Eventually, this led a number of musicians to forego the restrictive atmospheres of the swing big bands in favor of the relative artistic and social freedoms that small-combo jazz afforded.\(^5\)

This recent work by DeVeaux, Gendron, and Stowe complicates some of the claims other scholars have made about the political significance of bebop, which ultimately say as much about observers' interpretations of the music as they do about the orientations of musicians. Yet I believe there is room for exploring further the "social facts" of African-American life in the 1940s and their relationship to the emergence of bebop and the meanings later ascribed to it. Even if bebop should not be read as a direct expression of black militancy, we can understand it as a product of a worldly intellectual orientation and experimental aesthetic sensibility I term *critical ecumenicalism*. The music may not have represented a particular, class-specific ideological stance, but it did reflect changing orientations and perspectives among African Americans, especially black youth and young adults.

Most considerations of bebop touch upon Minton's Playhouse as one of its points of origin. Located on 118th Street in Harlem and owned by Local 802 delegate Henry Minton, the nightclub was the site of lengthy jam sessions where many of the musicians instrumental to the consolidation of bebop developed their techniques and musical ideas. Minton's club catered to African-American musicians, although others patronized the establishment as well. Pianist Teddy Hill took control of the club's music policy in 1940, hiring a house band and making jam sessions a prominent part of the club's operations. The Monday night buffet dinners, given in honor of whoever was performing at the Apollo Theater, brought together musicians from across the country.\(^6\)

Looking back on these Monday night dinners and the jam sessions that followed them during the early war years, Ralph Ellison evoked an atmosphere that resonated with expectancy, camaraderie, and an element of the unknown:

They were gathered here from all parts of America and they broke bread together and there was a sense of good feeling and promise, but what shape the fulfilled promise would take they did not know, and few except the more restless of the younger musicians even questioned. Yet it was an exceptional moment and the world was swinging with change. . . . For they were caught up in events which made that time exceptionally and uniquely then, and which brought, among the other changes which have reshaped the world, a momentous modulation into a new key of musical sensibility; in brief, a revolution in culture.\(^7\)
What can we make of such memories? On one level, the ambiguity of Ellison’s comments suggests that the atmosphere at Minton’s, and by extension the emergence of bebop, did not simply reflect the political and social struggles of the war years. Indeed, later in the passage Ellison carefully distinguished artists’ concerns from those of sociologists and historians, as he maintained that musicians and fans alike went to Minton’s to seek sanctuary from the war and social tensions around them. But what, then, do we make of the “needs of feeling” that brought people to the club, the “promise” that society held out to them, musicians’ kindred spirit of exploration, and a “world swinging with change”? And just how did these elements relate to this “revolution in culture”?

Musicians who participated in the movement have been similarly resistant to make direct connections between bebop and political activism. Drummer Kenny Clarke expressed an ambiguous account of the relationship of bebop to its moment. Asked if he was making a statement about the world around him, Clarke responded, “Yeah in a way. The idea was to wake up, look around you, there’s something to do. And this was just a part of it, an integral part of our cultural aspect.” If there was a message to African Americans, Clarke continued, it was this: “Whatever you go into, go into it intelligently. As simple as that.” Dizzy Gillespie also made it clear that there was no direct connection between music and politics: “We didn’t go out and make speeches or say, ‘Let’s play eight bars of protest.’ We just played our music and let it go at that. The music proclaimed our identity; it made every statement we truly wanted to make.” Yet Gillespie thought that he and other beboppers were on the “vanguard of social change.” What he remembered was a collective will to artistic excellence and a sense of African-American pride joined with a refusal of social, creative, and even national boundaries. Speaking to charges that beboppers expressed unpatriotic attitudes, Gillespie remarked, “We never wished to be restricted to just an American context, for we were creators in an art form which grew from universal roots and which had proved it possessed universal appeal. Damn right! We refused to accept racism, poverty, or economic exploitation, nor would we live out uncreative humdrum lives merely for the sake of survival.”

Bebop emerged at a crucial moment in African-American life. The 1940s witnessed an acceleration of migration, proletarianization, urbanization, and immersion in mass culture that had begun earlier in the century. The war economy and the political climate around the conflict also contributed to changing cultural tastes and shifts in class, gender, and race relations. The ideological war against the white supremacist Nazi regime made the enduring racism in American soci-
African Americans' sense of group identity was augmented by a widespread belief that the expanding wartime economy, and an anticipated democratization of American society, would lead to greater access to jobs, housing, and education. This collective sense of expectancy translated into the overt political demands of A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington Movement, which promised a June 1941 march on the nation's capital if discrimination in defense industries did not subsist. The march never materialized, but the threat was enough to pressure Pres. Franklin Roosevelt into issuing Executive Order no. 8802, forbidding discrimination by the government and defense industries, and subsequently establishing the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to enforce the order. The hopes of black Americans during World War II were also evident in the Pittsburgh Courier's December 1941 call for a "double victory" campaign "to declare war on Japan and against racial prejudice in our country"; early civil rights lawsuits; the growth of black union participation; struggles against housing discrimination; and the subtle, individual struggles for respect and equal treatment in public spaces like streetcorners and buses. When social freedoms did not materialize, or when acts of resistance were met by government intransigence (the FEPC ultimately did little to end discriminatory practices) or violent responses by the state or unruly white mobs, African-American solidarity was fused with anger and growing militancy.

The climate of militancy and expectancy in urban centers was accompanied by reconfigured racial affiliations and identities in flux. For our purposes, the relationship of this growing, politicized, African-American consciousness to black culture and intellectual life is critical. Writing in 1943 about New York, Roi Ottley discussed the development of African-American solidarity and what might be called a popular culture of black nationalism. This collective feeling cut across class lines; it could be found in the thoughts of Garveyites, highbrow cultural critics, religious leaders, historians, and journalists. "Black nationalism," Ottley wrote, "torn from its circus aspects, and made more palatable to a wider section of the Negro population, permeated every phase of Negro life." This orientation was also a product of Pan-Africanist sentiment and the development of feelings of kinship with other people of color within the United States and throughout the globe. African Americans expressed internationalist affinities in their support for Ethiopia during the Italo-Ethiopian war from 1935 to 1941, and as Penny Von Eschen has recently shown, these sentiments were also evident in the internationalist orientation of African-American politics and popular culture in the 1940s, as well as in the treatment of African affairs by the African-American press. Moreover, George Lipsitz argues that the racist propaganda directed
toward Japan, and the internment of Japanese Americans, helped generate domestic interethnic affiliations among people of color.\textsuperscript{11}

Not only did African Americans see themselves in an internationalist context but, as Von Eschen illustrates, the Pan-Africanist "popular discourse" of the 1940s was based not on biology but on a historical awareness of divergent yet shared experiences under European and Euro-American domination. Historical knowledge of these experiences helped forge a widespread understanding of the "constructed nature of race," which was paralleled by a growing, publicly stated distrust among African-American intellectuals of a biologically determined, undifferentiated concept of race as a marker of cultural identity and basis for political affiliation. Among the texts that interrogated the idea of a static "Negro" identity in the early 1940s were W.E.B. DuBois's autobiography \textit{Dusk of Dawn} (1940), Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography \textit{Dust Tracks on the Road} (1942), and Alain Locke's essay, "Who and What Is 'Negro'?" (1942).\textsuperscript{12}

At the same time, a collective sense of African-American pride during the war facilitated cultural sharing across class boundaries in African-American urban communities. While we should not play down the structural aspects of class stratification in these communities, this period saw a loosening of cultural distinctions. Although class lines had been broached in the 1920s, they were further challenged in the 1940s as a result of the economic dislocation of the Great Depression, the cultural leveling of the New Deal, the impact of left-wing political ideas, and the rapid growth of African-American urban society. Ottley identified the emergence of a "Café au Lait Society," a professional and intellectual middle class with liberal political beliefs and fewer social pretensions than the "traditional" black bourgeoisie. Their existence and consumption of popular entertainment (including jazz) was symbolic of the cultural sharing between distinct groups of African Americans.\textsuperscript{13}

Rising black consciousness and militancy, combined with shifting class relations, an internationalist perspective, and a dissatisfaction with some of the limitations of racial identities, fostered a certain kind of oppositional consciousness among African Americans from different social backgrounds during the 1940s.\textsuperscript{14} On the musical front, this often translated into a critical ecumenicalism, as many artists maintained a strong sense of identity as African Americans while embracing a cosmopolitan approach to life and art. Musicians bristled at the primitivist stereotypes to which they were expected to conform. They also resisted cultural boundaries, whether based on high-brow "legitimacy," race, or national identity; often rejected the generic categories that separated jazz from other kinds of music; and, at times, refused to accept the political meanings ascribed to their craft. Ellii-
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son’s evocation of a community based on “feeling,” and his attempt to celebrate the artistry of bebop while rejecting the militant intent ascribed to the music, may be read as a description of a cultural expression that spoke of group affirmation and demand, yet resisted the confines of blackness as a racial category. Gillespie’s refusal of creative and social boundaries also resonates with this ethos, as does Clarke’s description of bebop as a call to “wake up” and approach the world “intelligently.”

“Now’s the Time”

As mentioned earlier, DeVeaux carefully documents how the “birth of bebop” was in part a function of the simultaneous freedom and restriction the wartime music industry presented to young African-American musicians. Turning to ideological motivations, he offers an interesting discussion of beboppers’ vexed relationship with the blues. Although some of Charlie Parker’s earliest recorded musical accomplishments—for example, his 1944 work on Tiny Grimes’s “Red Cross” and “Tiny’s Tempo”—stemmed from his ability to fuse “bluesy ‘rice and beans’ gestures” with the “esoteric arabesques of the improvising virtuoso,” many beboppers saw the blues as a symbol of the limitations placed on their lives as musicians and as African Americans. Not only was the harmonic structure of most blues tunes fairly simple compared to original modern jazz compositions, the blues came to symbolize the primitivist expectations of a white audience and culture industry that wanted to pigeonhole black music. It also represented a rural cultural past with which “upwardly mobile professional musicians” no longer wanted to be associated. Drawing in part from a passage in Gillespie’s autobiography, DeVeaux argues that many beboppers were “ashamed” of the blues, just as were many members of the African-American cultural and political elite. The musical limitations were rather easily transformed, but the social implications of the blues were harder to change. Musicians knew they had an obligation to a black audience that demanded the blues, and they often found these performances inspiring. Yet they also saw the blues less as a cultural essence or birthright than as “point of exchange, between artist and audience.” In keeping with a “progressive” ethos that linked musical experimentation and racial uplift, musicians often looked to bebop as a way out of the blues, and they tried to “educate their audiences” in the process.

DeVeaux is correct in describing the blues as a symbol of social and musical restrictions for young African-American musicians. However, I want to build on his work by situating this response to the blues and the bebop movement in general in the African-American cultur-
al and intellectual context sketched out above. One can read the passage from Gillespie's autobiography as evidence of both the anxiety and affirmation that came from interclass cultural sharing. A few lines later he discusses how he defended his own explorations of the blues to other musicians: "Man, that's my music, that's my heritage," he told them, adding that Charlie Parker was a "real blueser" as well. Ultimately, the young musicians in DeVeaux's analysis in some ways remain more rooted in an early century, Washingtonian doctrine of racial uplift rather than in a more fluid, forward-looking ethos and acute awareness of identity stemming from the cultural and intellectual ferment of the 1940s. I say this not to deny the professionalism of these musicians, some of their middle-class orientations, or the legacy of uplift ideology, but to emphasize that beboppers' rejection of the blues may also be understood as a product of a collective ethos involving exploration, aversion to categories, mental acuity, group pride, and an understanding that racial categories and assumptions be called into question. Speaking in 1948, Dizzy Gillespie's arranger Gil Fuller suggested that earlier forms of music were simply no longer relevant as African Americans moved into the future: "Modern life is fast and complicated. . . . We're tired of that old New Orleans beat-beat, I got the blues pap."16

Bebop's style politics reflected this broader ethos, as intellectual practice and sartorial display coincided for musicians and their audiences. Although Eric Lott's assessment of bebop ultimately describes a cohesive and rather narrowly defined cultural and aesthetic politics—the meaning of which seems dependent upon a dominant reading of the subculture that accompanied the music—his description of bebop's "style" calls attention to the way that musicians and fans alike engaged in serious mental endeavors that responded to the world around them. "Bebop," he writes, "was about making disciplined imagination alive and answerable to the social change of its time," and the style "was where social responsiveness became individual expression, where the pleasures of shared identity met an intolerance for racist jive." Beboppers and their fans even adopted the personae of intellectuals; goatees, berets, and horned-rimmed glasses became the uniform of the subculture.17 The adoption of this regalia of the intelligentsia not only distanced musicians from the mainstream but challenged racist ideologies that were based in part on a belief in African-American mental inferiority. We may also understand bebop style as a signifier of musicians' collective search for a better understanding of music theory and the world around them.

Beyond style, African-American musicians' artistic projects, activities, and ideas give insight into the deployment of their critical ecumenicalism. Musicians involved with bebop after the war pursued
their creative goals and their professional careers while negotiating the growing, albeit precarious, popularity of the genre and occasionally the discourse surrounding it. By the late 1940s bebop had come to symbolize, among other things, juvenile delinquency, black militancy, masculine assertion, serious artistic expression, and intellectualism. For a brief moment bebop seemed to be a vehicle for making serious, black jazz artistry respectable and remunerative. And it seemed as if this legitimacy might come from either or both its potential to enter smoothly into the realm of high culture and its oppositional capital as avant-garde expression. Yet bebop was never quite able to escape its association with social deviance. As bebop was institutionalized as black creative expression and intellectual work in contradictory ways, musicians achieved a certain degree of voice to articulate their aesthetic visions and their concerns about their lives in the music industry. Musicians’ words give further evidence that bebop was not a unified ideological and aesthetic movement, but in fact an artistic challenge that was understood in a variety of ways in its social, cultural, intellectual, and creative context. These comments illustrate how an ethos of critical ecumenicalism helped fuel the development of the idiom and eventually caused some musicians to reject bebop as an inadequate description of a broader musical and intellectual endeavor.

When Gil Fuller described bebop to the New Yorker as a “fast and complicated” music linked to “modern life,” he voiced an artistic orientation that was presentist and forward-looking and sought to escape the stereotypes and audience expectations of the past. Fuller rejected the blues and the music of the Dixieland revival as well. Likening Dixieland and bebop, he argued, was like comparing “a horse and buggy with a jet plane.” Gillespie dismissed older jazz forms as well, as he discussed the genesis of bebop: “That old stuff was like Mother Goose Rhymes. . . . It was all right for its time, but it was a childish time. We couldn’t really blow on our jobs—not the way we wanted to.”

The New Yorker’s Richard Boyer perceptively noted that beboppers rejected the labels of “critics who referred to them, with the most complimentary intent, as modern primitives playing an almost instinctual music.” Similarly, an article in the African-American publication Our World described how musicians often explained the development of bebop as a psychological response to conditions and as “a revolt by Negro musicians against the old-time jazz which, they felt, white people expected them to play.” They refused the “Uncle Tom” roles and the “so-called compliments of critics who called jazz an art form imported from Africa.” As discussed below, a number of musicians had some interest in African music and culture; however, this partic-
ular rejection of African roots should be understood as a response to the primitivist language that many jazz critics, particularly those who championed the Dixieland revival, used to describe the music. Ralph Ellison later wrote, “By rejecting Armstrong they [beboppers] sought to rid themselves of the entertainer’s role. And by getting rid of the role they demanded, in the name of their racial identity, a purity of status which by definition is impossible for the performing artist.”20 But we should keep in mind that at this moment some musicians were in fact rejecting an essentialist and racist discourse about music and attempting to redefine jazz and African-American artistry in general on their own terms.

This intellectual orientation and ethos of exploration was critical to the development of the small-combo extensions of popular song and blues forms that have come to represent bebop. “Classic” recordings by major figures in the movement—such as “Now’s the Time” and “Koko” from Charlie Parker’s November 1945 Savoy date—reflect the disdain of category and a self-conscious worldliness that demanded access to a variety of cultural referents. Parker extended the language of the blues on “Now’s the Time,” a medium-tempo blues, on which Dizzy Gillespie provides piano accompaniment with Thelonious Monk–like dissonant chords and jarring comping. Parker and Miles Davis each provide solos, although Parker’s is more complicated, as he weaves together chromatic runs and dissonant intervals with soulful blues licks. “Koko” gives a sense of the radical approach to the popular song form that some of the beboppers embraced. Based on the chords of Ray Noble’s “Cherokee,” Parker and his quintet dramatically transform Noble’s sixty-four-bar tune. Played at a blistering pace, “Koko” begins with a thirty-two-bar section of new material in which Gillespie and Parker perform an introductory theme in unison. Then Gillespie and Parker state their own improvised material as a call and response, with the two horns coming together to restate the introductory theme. The main section of “Koko” consists of two choruses over which Parker solos. The extended harmonies and substitutions by bass, piano, and saxophone dramatically alter the original tune in the complex interplay of spontaneous composition. Parker also employs the familiar bebop practice of calling generic boundaries into question by quoting from the existing jazz, classical music, and popular-song repertoire, in this instance a clarinet part from the New Orleans march “High Society.” The performance ends with a drum solo by Max Roach and a restatement of the introductory theme.21

On the West Coast, young Angeleno musicians’ heterogeneous responses to East Coast players and their recordings are illustrative of their ecumenical visions. Musicians were exposed to a fully articulated genre when bebop recordings became available and later when
East Coast–based musicians visited their city. Howard McGhee relocated to Los Angeles in early 1945, Parker and Gillespie played an engagement at Billy Berg’s in Hollywood in late 1945 and early 1946, and ex-Angeleno Dexter Gordon returned home in 1946 fully versed in the new style. Although the Billy Berg gig was something of a financial disaster (and a personal disaster for Parker, who ended up in a mental institution), Parker and Gillespie’s visit had an effect on many young players. After his release from the hospital, Parker stayed in Los Angeles for several months and took on mentoring role in the musicians’ community, as did Howard McGhee.

For some musicians, moving fully into the bebop idiom was a logical extension of the harmonic and rhythmic ideas and the expansive ethos already circulating in Los Angeles’ musicians’ community. Cecil McNeely and Sonny Criss formed a “progressive” band during their last year of high school. They were initially influenced by older musicians like Lester Young, Don Byas, and Coleman Hawkins, but as McNeely put it, “when we heard this stuff [bebop], man, it was just incredible and we really enjoyed it and we got right into it.” Others drew upon the bebop idiom while exploring other musical avenues. Buddy Collette never fully immersed himself in bebop idiom, but his exposure to Parker and others inspired him to write a couple of “bop-like” tunes and incorporate bebop phrasing into his own playing. Charles Mingus thought of himself first and foremost as a serious composer and wrote music that was grounded in both the jazz and classical music idioms, yet he too adopted bebop phrases and harmonic ideas. Jackie Kelso tried to avoid positioning himself within any one genre. He played R&B, swing, and bebop during the 1940s. Looking back on this time, he claims his job as a musician was in part defined by a responsibility to the tastes of his audience and a desire to fulfill himself “financially, emotionally, [and] intellectually.”

We see this critical ecumenicalism in other attempts to move into areas of musical and extramusical study that called into question racial, national, and creative boundaries. The recording of Gillespie’s September 29, 1947, concert at Carnegie Hall is an important artifact from the history of the genre. Not only was the concert symbolic of bebop’s growing, albeit contradictory, cultural legitimacy; it provides a window into the wide range of artistic visions and stylistic influences maintained by musicians associated with the bebop movement. The first set was a performance by Gillespie’s quintet (featuring Parker) of several bebop “standards,” including “Koko,” “A Night in Tunisia,” and a version of “Dizzy Atmosphere” taken at an incredible tempo. On these numbers one can hear the respectful applause by the Carnegie audience, as well as raucous cheers of encouragement from some of its members, which illustrates that even in the concert hall
the music had not lost its ability to inspire interactions between performers and their loyal audience. A set by Ella Fitzgerald and the Gillespie big band followed the quintet. Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan were among a handful of female vocalists who had incorporated bop intervals and chromatic melodic figures into their vocal lines and had helped move jazz singing in new directions. The big band’s performance of Babs Gonzales’s “Oop-Pop-A-Da” shows how musicians could weave together novelty song and serious musical statement.

The Gillespie big band’s instrumental performances illustrate an even wider range of expressions and a variety of approaches to incorporating bebop language into compositions and arrangements. “Cubano-Be, Cubano-Bop” is representative of Gillespie’s strong affinity for Afro-Cuban music. Both Parker and Gillespie, in fact, were interested in Afro-Cuban rhythmic concepts; Gillespie in particular was influenced by associations with trumpeter Mario Bauza, vocalist and conguero Chano Pozo, and bandleader Machito. We can also hear this ethos in Gillespie’s 1947 Afro-Cuban-influenced big band hit, “Manteca,” his other recordings with Chano Pozo, and in Parker’s 1948 and 1949 recordings with Machito’s Afro-Cuban group. Pianist and composer George Russell cowrote the multisectional “Cubano-Be, Cubano-Bop.” Russell built upon the theme that Gillespie had sketched out for the first part, adding a modal introduction. Russell wrote the second part himself and added a section where Pozo improvised passages on percussion and vocals. There were a variety of influences in the piece, but the main goal was to synthesize elements of Afro-Cuban and “traditional” jazz rhythms. As Russell put it, “We were striving for exactly that kind of world grasp, a kind of universality.” Russell spent the next several years rethinking the harmonic relationships in western music and devising a new system of improvisation. He eventually consolidated and published these ideas as *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization* (originally published in 1953), the first widely acknowledged work in music theory written by a jazz musician. Gillespie’s band also performed pianist John Lewis’s “Toccata for Trumpet and Orchestra,” a composition that anticipated Lewis’s attempts to fuse the language of classical music and jazz with the Modern Jazz Quartet.25

Parker’s own well-known interest in contemporary classical music was also emblematic of many of the beboppers’ aversion to musical boundaries. Parker quoted classical motifs in his solos, discussed the work of Stravinsky and other composers in interviews, and hoped to take lessons in composition from Edgard Varèse. In a 1949 interview with *Down Beat*, Parker expressed this forward-looking orientation. Although he rejected the bebop label in other interviews, at this particular moment he viewed bebop as an entity distinct from jazz or
classical music. As a rhythmically complicated idiom, where front-line instruments had more of an impact on the rhythmic accents of a performance, bebop provided more flexibility than earlier forms of jazz, where musicians were constrained by the steady beat. Parker thought bebop succeeded best in a small group format, yet he also saw it as the first step in a broader musical expression. He saw possibilities in an orchestral context where one could explore a “variety of coloration” and looked forward to a music that would combine harmonic structures from modern classical music with the emotion and dynamism of the jazz idiom. “Music is your own experience,” Parker argued, “your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don’t live it, it won’t come out of your horn.” And this personal expression should not be encumbered by category: “They teach you there’s no boundary line to music. . . . But, man, there’s no boundary line to art.”

Parker tried to move in new musical directions with his 1949 and 1950 recordings with symphonic strings, a project that was consistent with his interest in classical music but which also suffered from substandard arrangements Parker had contracted out to others. A more successful and dramatic attempt to use bebop harmony and rhythms as a basis for a classically oriented musical statement was pianist and composer Mary Lou Williams’s *Zodiac Suite*, a twelve-part extended composition inspired by the different astrological signs and, more important, the friends, fellow musicians, and other entertainers who fell under them. “Libra” for example was dedicated to her “great friends” Gillespie, Art Tatum, Bud Powell, and Thelonious Monk. Williams introduced the suite in 1945 on her Sunday radio program on WNEW, performed it later that year at Town Hall with an eighteen-piece orchestra, and then in 1947 performed three movements of the composition at Carnegie Hall with the New York Symphony.

In a 1947 article entitled “Music and Progress,” Williams articulated the goals of this musical project while giving insight into how the celebration of bebop was often tempered by a recognition of its controversial reputation. She challenged the discourse around juvenile delinquency by arguing that the problems facing young people in the 1940s were no different from those she encountered as a young woman in the early 1930s. As long as one used “good judgment, clear reasoning and unbiased thinking,” there was little to worry about. Advocating a rudimentary kind of goal orientation and open-mindedness as a means of succeeding in society, she then applied the same philosophy to modern jazz: “If we are to make progress in modern music, if you prefer jazz, we must be willing and able to open our minds to new ideas and developments.” New ideas must be developed to perfection and then these would become the old ideas upon which new ones were built: “This is not only progress in music, for the same
is true for all forms of art including painting, sculpture, architecture, and even the theatre." Bebop, which was the "newest invasion into the field of modern music," was the most important development to hit the jazz world in years. "I believe that all musicians should open their minds to it in order to understand what it means to them and to their music... Those who have already accepted Be-bop have found the inspiration and feeling they have been looking for."28

Williams’s comments about young people and her vision of "progress" rejected the idea that jazz (and beebop in particular) was a site of social deviance and a threat to the musician’s community or society in general. For African-American women immersed in the idiom, charges that beebop was socially deviant resonated in particular ways. Not only was a woman put in a position where she had to affirm her legitimacy in the male-dominated jazz world, but the sexual connotations of the beebop label could damage one's reputation both as woman and as musician.29 Her call for “acceptance” of the genre in almost religious terms sought to win widespread recognition for the art form and make it part of the everyday language of jazz.

By embracing beebop and seizing this notion of progress, Williams also validated her own aesthetic vision and demonstrated discomfort with the constraints that generic categories placed on music and musicians. Jazz could be celebrated as black musical culture but it signified the primitivist expectations of its audience as well. Jazz also symbolized the limitations on where black musicians could perform. In a 1944 interview Williams asserted that many of the best black musicians performed on Fifty-Second Street because symphony orchestras would not hire them. In 1947 her desire to situate beebop as part of "modern music" rather than "jazz" illustrates a common dissatisfaction with the stereotyped image and entertainer’s role while optimistically looking forward to musical and social transformations. In Williams’s mind, beebop provided a means of moving beyond the formalistic and spatial constraints of jazz. Noting her performance of Zodiac Suite with a seventy-piece “‘Pops’ Symphony orchestra” at Carnegie Hall earlier that year, she announced plans to perform with Syracuse University’s symphony orchestra in the near future. Williams celebrated the scholarly attention to modern jazz and saw it as a means of moving outside of the economy that produced it: “I have discovered that a good many University people are musically up-to-date and I try my best to cooperate with them when they suggest new ways of getting music to the public.” With this attention, she hoped soon to realize her ambition of presenting some of her work with the New York Philharmonic or Boston Symphony.30

Beboppers even explored African music and culture and, at times, did so in ways that challenged primitivist ideas about the continent.
Parker’s and Gillespie’s affinity for Afro-Cuban music was developed in part in performances with African and Cuban drummers and dancer Asadata Dafora at benefit concerts at the Diplomat Hotel for the African Academy of Arts and Research. Williams and Dafora performed at a two-day April 1945 Carnegie Hall “festival.” This show took a serious look at the relationship between African dancing and music and their counterparts in the West. Drummer Art Blakey took an interest in Africa in another direction in 1948 when he spent a year on the continent. He later claimed that his intent was not to study music but to study Islamic philosophy and religion. Although as Norman Weinstein points out, Blakey’s 1953 recording, “Message from Kenya,” later African-themed albums, and his intricate cross-rhythms, use of space, and manipulation of pitch suggest he was profoundly influenced by African drummers.

Blakey was one of a growing numbers of African-American musicians turning to Islam in the 1940s. Although reports of “Mohammedism” in the jazz community were often exaggerated and sometimes used to discredit the bebop movement, a small cohort of New York-based musicians became practicing Muslims. In 1948 Gillespie noted that many musicians turned to Islam in response to the injuries that society inflicted upon them. Blakey, who at times used the Arabic name Abdullah ibn Buhaina, became a Muslim after he was almost beaten to death by a white policeman in Albany, Louisiana, for failing to address him as “Sir.” “After that experience,” he remembered, “I started searching for a philosophy, a better way of life.” Beginning in 1947 he and Barrymore Rainey ran a Muslim mission out of Blakey’s apartment, before moving to a mosque on Thirty-first Street in New York.

Although musicians gave a variety of reasons for becoming Muslims, the desire to find spiritual purpose and social dignity were common denominators. Many turned to Islam at least in part to challenge the stigma attached to race in American society. Some claimed they were attracted to the religion because it recognized no color line, while others, once they became Muslims, used their religious status to challenge segregation. A number of Muslim musicians said they claimed an identity that was something other than “Negro” American. As citizens of a community that transcended the social mores of Jim Crow, they demanded to be served in restaurants and hotels while on tour in the South. Not only was the popularity of Islam in the musicians’ community symbolic of the growth of Islam in African-American communities in the postwar era, it was also a product of the will to challenge social categories that fueled the imaginations of many musicians. Thus a broad-minded approach to life and art could serve as a weapon in the struggle against the absurdities of race in American society.
The Problem with Bebop

Despite the social and creative freedoms that bebop promised, many African-American musicians eventually concluded it had become symbolic of the creative and social restrictions facing them. By the end of the 1940s bebop represented both challenges to and the constraints of jazz as an art form and commodity. As African-American musicians discussed bebop in the press, their comments demonstrated a complicated understanding of the connections between the music's status as art, the racial politics of the jazz world, their own livelihoods, and the possibilities for social change at this historical juncture. This was particularly the case at the very end of the decade when the jazz industry went into decline and, as Bernard Gendron demonstrates, the industry's ill-fortunes led to a strong backlash against bebop.35

To be sure, some musicians continued to put their faith in bebop. Pianist and future jazz educator Billy Taylor published a small musical instruction volume entitled Basic Be-Bop Instruction for Piano in 1949. Taylor was already crafting a persona for himself as a champion of jazz. The following year he told Down Beat, "My objective is to do all I can to call attention to the fact that jazz, like any other art form, can and should be presented in an artistic manner."36 In the first lesson of his volume, "What Is Be-Bop?," Taylor linked bebop to a particular creative context, arguing that its emergence was the result of experimentation by young musicians who were not content to play in the "stereotyped" styles of the 1930s. Taylor emphasized how bebop "enlarged the scope of jazz" through the "ingenuity" of its practitioners. He identified a central component of the artistry of bebop in "the alteration" of existing compositions to the extent that new compositions were created during performance. The music's complexity, however, did not remove it from the jazz tradition. Taylor placed the music firmly within a jazz canon; bebop was merely the "most recent and most revolutionary development." No matter how "intricate" a particular passage, "It must swing or it is not good be-bop." Taylor also provided lessons in bebop rhythm, melody, and harmony, with a concluding section on how one could improvise all of these elements when revising a popular tune.37

Taylor's little book linked the ideas of "New Negro" intellectuals, an earlier generation of musicians, and later considerations of jazz. Taylor situated bebop firmly in an American context. He argued that jazz was both the "most truly American music" and "an art form, originated and used as a medium of expression by the American Negro." Like James Weldon Johnson, W. C. Handy, Duke Ellington (although Ellington usually rejected the term jazz), and others before him, Taylor presented jazz as an important American artistic form that was
rooted in black creativity but had universal appeal. Bebop was a further extension of this history of achievement. Taylor’s analysis paralleled the formulation of black experience put forth by Ralph Ellison in *Invisible Man* (1952), which defined an African-American birthright by placing black people at the symbolic center of American life and history. His comments anticipated Ellison’s later essays on music and the work of Ellison’s intellectual descendants Albert Murray, Stanley Crouch, and Wynton Marsalis, who have more recently figured jazz as simultaneously a product of American exceptionalism and black cultural achievement. In the context of the jazz community of 1949 Taylor’s celebration of bebop as both American and African-American art seemed geared toward validating black creativity, challenging the derogatory articles about bebop in the press, and perhaps improving the economic situation of its practitioners by demystifying it through jazz education.

But at various points in time during America’s love-hate affair with bebop during the late forties, musicians often saw it as a loaded term that obscured as much as it illuminated and might even threaten their livelihoods. As Ralph Ellison later wrote about the bebop label, “A word which throws up its hands in clownish self-deprecation before all the complexity of sound and rhythm and self-assertive passion which it pretends to name; a mask word for the charged ambiguities of the new sound, hiding the face of art.” Similarly, some musicians reacted to the often-absurd meanings that were ascribed to the music. Signifying on critics’ sometimes overzealous desire to find a social context for artistic expression, Dizzy Gillespie once explained that his late-1940s big band arrangement of “Things to Come” represented the conflict between Slettibus and Molotov during the formation of the United Nations. Another time he claimed it symbolized the struggle between good and evil during a nuclear war. The bebop label was especially troubling during periods when the music was the object of hostile attention. Speaking to *Metronome* in 1947, Charlie Parker said,

Let’s not call it bebop. Let’s call it music. People get so used to hearing jazz for so many years, finally somebody said “Let’s have something different” and some new ideas began to evolve. Then people brand it “bebop” and try to crush it. If it should ever become completely accepted, people should remember it’s in just the same position jazz was. It’s just another style.38

In a 1948 article for *Record Changer* pianist and composer Tadd Dameron trivialized various labels while championing the music itself: “Call it be-bop, rebop, progressive, or modern; whatever you call it (and whatever you think of it) it’s the only kind of music I’ve ever
wanted to play.” Charting the development of a progressive aesthetic in the jazz community, he celebrated the flexibility that the new music gave composers and interpreters alike. “Modern music seems to me to have a much greater freedom. We can improvise on both structure and melody and we aren’t hampered by a strict dependence on the beat the way the old jazz is.” In his mind the “high spot in our work so far” was Gillespie’s Carnegie Hall concert, for which he did much of the arranging. Dameron also saw possibilities in work with nontraditional jazz instrumentation; he mentioned strings and French horns specifically. Yet “modern music” as a movement was incomplete. “We’re just beginning; we’ve only been at it a few years; this is still a crude music.” The present state of modern music was just a step along the way to future developments, which musicians would develop while educating audiences along the way.39

And then there was economics. Ultimately, the idea of bebop was inextricably linked to the marketing of the music. As bebop became popular, the market created a certain expectation for a product that might not be consistent with musicians’ own aesthetic visions. Although a Romantic notion of the African-American bebop musician as artist, working against and outside of the restrictions of the market, has been a staple of critical interpretations of bebop and African-American music in general, the question of “selling out” was an issue for musicians.40 This is not to say that bebop musicians were not concerned about making a living. As professionals, they were clearly interested in getting paid and worried about not getting paid by unscrupulous booking agents and record companies. Some musicians were, however, concerned with musical standards or projects that might be at odds with the expectations of the marketplace.

When Dameron spoke about the need to educate an audience about the new music, he noted that musicians might have to simplify it somewhat so that the public would understand it. He thought Gillespie’s music might be too complicated for the public and suggested that musicians bring their audience along slowly, “giving them just so much at a time.” He characterized this as “commercializing it a bit,” a process that he seemed somewhat uncomfortable with but thought ultimately necessary. Parker, on the other hand, said in 1949 that Gillespie had become too commercial. He criticized his stage antics and dress, as well as the selling of bebop in general. By catering to a dancing audience’s tastes, Gillespie and others had stymied their own musical development. “Diz has an awful lot of ideas when he wants to, but if he stays with the big band he’ll forget everything he ever played.”41

The economic reasons to reject bebop as a label became more obvious when the music’s popularity began to decline. During the sec-
ond half of 1949 and 1950, bebop’s status degenerated, as the jazz industry as a whole faced economic crisis from postwar recession and competition from other musical forms such as popular vocal music, country and western, urban blues, and rhythm and blues. Dance halls and nightclubs went out of business or cut back their hours. Even black middle-class audiences began paying more attention to urban blues and rhythm and blues. A 1949 *Ebony* article explored the music of Louis Jordan, while a 1950 feature on the blues celebrated the popularity of Dinah Washington, Jimmy Rushing, T-Bone Walker, Chip- pie Hill, and others, while noting the centrality of the blues idiom in the creation of jazz. Soon writers in the jazz press began to see bebop as the cause of the industry’s decline, and musicians themselves began to question their commitment to the genre.42

In a December 1949 *New York Age* article, vocalist Babs Gonzales traced the development of bebop. He said that in 1945, “so-called ‘bop’” was an important musical movement that involved “about 20 progressive musicians,” but by 1947 the label “bebop” was a marketing tool used to describe an array of musical styles of which only some maintained the spirit of the early experiments. The music, he argued, had suffered from unscrupulous disc jockeys and promoters showcasing inferior products, as well as hostile reactions from older musicians, whose lack of education and musical training prevented them from understanding some of the intricacies of the new music. Gonzales thought bebop’s interracial audience was one of the causes for the unfavorable reactions by the press, and he recognized that “bebopper” had become a synonym for juvenile delinquent. In the end, Gonzales championed the music itself and encouraged young musicians to devote themselves to composition, orchestration, and arranging, while learning from established figures like John Lewis, Walter Fuller, Miles Davis, and Mary Lou Williams. Yet, he also thought that the meanings associated with the word bebop exacerbated the “unemployment situation” facing musicians. Commenting on *Down Beat*’s contest to find a new word for “jazz” at this moment of crisis, he suggested that Dan Burley and the *New York Age* do the same for “bebop.”43

Dizzy Gillespie’s career and comments in 1949 and 1950 give insight into his own attempts to balance artistic goals, professionalism, and popularity as the bebop idiom fell out of favor. For several years, Gillespie and his management worked hard to promote the trumpeter’s image as a bebop innovator, yet during this period Gillespie also worked hard to maintain his connection to a dancing audience. Although his 1945 big band ran into trouble with the “unreconstructed blues lovers in the south,” he achieved a measure of success in the concert and dance halls when he launched his second big band in 1946. Yet even this band faced the dilemma of whether bebop was
made for dancing or listening. And when dancers began looking elsewhere for entertainment, the band’s existence became increasingly precarious.\textsuperscript{44}

In a 1949 response to Parker’s Down Beat comments, Gillespie emphasized that, contrary to what the saxophonist said, bebop was part of the jazz idiom. And as part of that tradition, it was crucial that it kept its steady beat.

Bop is part of jazz, and jazz music is to dance to. The trouble with bop as it’s played now is that people can’t dance to it. They don’t hear those four beats. We’ll never get bop across to a side audience until they can dance to it. They’re not particular about whether you’re playing a flatted fifth or a ruptured 129th as long as they can dance.

In an effort to recapture the audience that was slipping away, Gillespie announced his intention to change his book to make his band more dance-friendly. As a big band, his group could not support itself (or even fit into) small nightclubs, so they were forced to play larger auditoriums. But they could not depend on a loyal cadre of bop fans to consistently fill these halls. Thus they were dependent upon a larger, dancing audience.\textsuperscript{45}

Despite his efforts Gillespie was forced to break up his band in 1950. In a Down Beat interview that September, he lamented the lack of work that led to the decision. He claimed bebop may have reached the end of its road, as he found himself displaced by the “dance music” (probably R&B) he considered inferior. His comments also suggest that part of the failure had to do with his continued association with the bebop label and the contradictory meanings associated with it. Gillespie believed the cool pose adopted by some of the modernists, whom he claimed were not committed to entertaining their audiences, contributed to the economic hardships for black jazz musicians. For Gillespie, bebop meant artistic seriousness, but it also meant playing the role of the entertainer. Chastising fellow musicians, he said, “They think it would be a drag if people were to think they like what they’re doing. They think it’s enough if they just blow. . . . If you’ve got enough money and can afford to play for yourself, you can play anyway you want to. But if you want to make a living at music, you’ve got to sell it.”\textsuperscript{46}

Two months later Down Beat columnist Ralph Gleason lamented Gillespie’s predicament, suggesting that the problem lay with Gillespie’s management continuing to market him as a “bebopper.” Gleason wrote: “He’s so much more than the best connotation of that twisted word that it’s a mortal shame.” Shortly thereafter, in response to a Milwaukee Sentinel article that linked bebop to juvenile delinquency, Down Beat opined,
Perhaps it's all for the best. When people all begin thinking that be-bop is a swear word, or a noun to be connected only with shoplifters, drunks, or users of narcotics, then they'll forget its origin. And then the music can go on being played with no stigma attached. It'll all be jazz again. And maybe the whole music business will be a lot healthier.47

Many musicians seemed to follow this lead, for in the context of the economics of industry and the racial discourse surrounding the music, the label had the power to fix a complicated series of musical innovations in a particular time and place and make them irrelevant. Gillespie recalled that Ellington warned him about the problems with categories: “Duke Ellington once told me: ‘Dizzy, the biggest mistake you made was to let them name your music be-bop, because from the time they name something, it is dated.’"48

Coda

Bebop did not disappear when the market bottomed out. It continues to be a core element of the language of jazz. Although many of its major African-American figures experienced hard times in the late 1940s and early 1950s, at least some of them had resurgences in popularity during the 1950s and beyond, even as their music, the market, and its categories changed. Bebop was not only critical for determining the direction of jazz history, it also impacted the way it was understood. Just as bebop changed the sonic language of jazz, the response to bebop institutionalized a variety of meanings that have characterized jazz and jazz musicians up to the present.

Bebop also marked the emergence of a particular aesthetic and critical orientation in the African-American musicians’ community. African-American musicians changed the direction of jazz as an art form by rising to the artistic challenges presented by existing music, while drawing from their own experiences and a broader social, cultural, and intellectual milieu. Musicians expressed a keen sense of African-American identity, while calling into question narrowly defined racial categories and embracing a forward-looking worldliness. Their disparate aesthetic projects reflected this emergent consciousness, as did their embrace of the idea of bebop. And when they recognized the limitations of bebop as both genre and idea, their rejection of the term similarly spoke of this orientation, as well as the constraints placed on them by the economics of the jazz business. African-American critical perspectives on genre, tradition, economics, race, gender, art, and other subjects updated a tradition established by James Reese Europe, W. C. Handy, Duke Ellington and others, while anticipating the commentaries of future generations of artists—Charles Min-
gus, Abbey Lincoln, Anthony Braxton, Wynton Marsalis, to name a few—who, in changing social, cultural, and intellectual contexts, inscribed jazz with their own meanings.

NOTES

The author wishes to thank Catherine Ramirez and American Music's two anonymous reviewers for their comments on this essay, as well as Richard Crawford, Robin D. G. Kelley, Earl Lewis, and Jimmie Reeves for their feedback on the dissertation chapter from which this is drawn.


5. DeVeaux, Birth of Bebop, 20–31, 39–69. DeVeaux emphasizes an ethos of “progress” in the jazz community as a major motivation for the beboppers. With roots in the early jazz community and as developed during the swing era, progress linked musical experimentation, respectability, and racial-uplift strategies.


8. Kenneth Clarke, quoted in Dizzy Gillespie with Al Fraser, To Be or Not to Bop (New York: Da Capo, 1979), 142.

9. Gillespie and Fraser, To Be or Not to Bop, 287–91.


11. Roi Ottley, “New World a Coming”: Inside Black America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 105, 334; Penny Von Eschen, Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolo-


14. This perspective should not be confused with the sometimes naive and often oppressive colorblindness of Cold War liberalism, where government officials and intellectuals assumed that racism was a product of psychology rather than social structure and consisted of individual acts that were aberrations in a fundamentally fair and just society. The adoption of this perspective marked a retreat from a critical engagement with a historical legacy of racism and changed the direction of African-American intellectual life and popular culture in the late 1940s and 1950s. For a discussion of this turn see Von Eschen, Race Against Empire, 145–66.


18. For discussions of the discourse surrounding bebop, see Gendron, “Short Stay in the Sun,” and Stowe, Swing Changes.


25. Ira Gitler, liner notes to ibid.; Russell, quoted in Gillespie and Fraser, To Be or Not to Bop, 324.


27. Dan Morgenstern, liner notes to Mary Lou Williams Trio, Zodiac Suite, Folkways FTS 32844.


from Dec. 11, 1944, *New York Post*). Similarly, pianist Dorothy Donegan, who was classically trained at Chicago Conservatory of Music from 1936 to 1939, told *Ebony* that she planned to give up jazz and concentrate on classical music. Donegan expressed pride in jazz as black expression, but also saw the expectations of audiences and the music industry as limitations on what she could do as an artist. She planned for jazz henceforth to occupy a secondary place in her repertoire and eliminate “mugging” on stage. “Is Jazz Going Highbrow?” *Ebony* (July 1946): 15–16.


32. Norman Weinstein, *A Night in Tunisia: Imaginings of Africa in Jazz* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1993), 51–54. Blakey’s albums with African themes include *Drum Suite* and *The African Beat*. Blakey also said his reason for going to Africa also stemmed from the fact that he “couldn’t get any gigs,” which points out the ongoing financial difficulties many innovative musicians continue to experience in the music industry.

33. Boyer, “Profiles,” 31; “Moslem Musicians,” *Ebony* (April 1953): 104–11; Gillespie and Fraser, *To Be or Not to Bop*, 293, 343. Gillespie was talked into posing as a Muslim for a 1948 *Life* photo spread that cast bebop in a disparaging light.


37. Billy Taylor, *Basic Be-Bop Instruction for Piano* (New York: Charles H. Hansen Music Co., 1949), 2–7. The lesson on rhythm emphasizes a four-beat feel, even when the rhythm is complex and syncopated. The section on melody tries to explain how seemingly discordant notes in bebop are generally related harmonically. Taylor argues that the ear has to be conditioned to flatted fifths, raised or lowered ninths, ending phrases on active tones. The section on harmony emphasizes beboppers’ “incorporation of modern harmonic principles into their idiom.”


46. “Bop at End of Road, Says Dizzy,” *Down Beat* (Sept. 8, 1950).
