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**Abstract:** Until the late twentieth century, the historiography and analysis of jazz were centered on the US to the almost complete exclusion of any other region. This was largely driven by the assumption that only the “authentic” version of the music, as represented in its country of origin, was of aesthetic and historical interest in the jazz narrative; that the forms that emerged in other countries were simply rather pallid and enervated echoes of the “real thing.” With the growth of the New Jazz Studies, it has been increasingly understood that diasporic jazz has its own integrity, as well as holding valuable lessons in the processes of cultural globalization and diffusion and syncretism between musics of the supposed center and peripheries. This has been accompanied by challenges to the criterion of place- and race-based authenticity as a way of assessing the value of popular music forms in general. As the prototype for the globalization of popular music, diasporic jazz provides a richly instructive template for the study of the history of modernity as played out musically. The vigor and international impact of Australian jazz provide an instructive case study in the articulation and exemplification of these dynamics.

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## New Jazz Studies and Diaspora

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The driving premise of this chapter is that “jazz was not ‘invented’ and then exported. It was invented in the process of being disseminated” (Johnson 2002a, 39). With the added impetus of the New Jazz Studies (NJS), it is now unnecessary to argue that point at length. Accordingly, this opening survey will generally sample-cite rather than repeat recent literature. The NJS challenges an entrenched jazz narrative in which the primary texts are recordings by US “masters,” mainly African Americans, of each successive stylistic development. Diasporic jazz studies take us beyond that orbit, not simply out of a contrarian spirit, but because of crucial lacunae they fill.

Jazz was globalized with a rapidity unprecedented for any music, largely via musicians’ migrations and new mass media (Johnson 2002a, 34–40). Given the global demographic, it seems likely that today most jazz is played outside the US. Professional US jazz musicians “make their living largely abroad” (Rasula 2002, 68), with jazz in Europe alone generating \$US250–300-million per year (Harris 2003, 106). It is widely felt that qualitatively also the balance has shifted, as jazz in its homeland has become increasingly conservative (see for example Nicholson 2005, xii, 19–20, 76, 124). Without the contributions made by the diaspora to our understanding of the music, the standard jazz narrative would be incomprehensible.

The importance of the diaspora was already implicit in the recognition that jazz was in a process of formation through its migrations within the US, for which significant stylistic discriminators are often named: “New Orleans,” “Chicago,” “Kansas City,” “West Coast.” The history of the music would make no sense if we did not respect what happened after it left New Orleans. Applied to music, even the name jazz appears to be a diasporic construction (see for example [Shipton 2001](#), 100; [Crow 1990](#), 19–22; [Merriam and Garner 1998](#)), while among its New Orleans pioneers the term was unstable, often interchangeable with ragtime ([Lomax 1950](#), 13, 61; [Gabbard 2002](#), 4).

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### Diasporic Discourses and Infrastructures

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The discourses which have conferred intelligibility and gravitas on jazz are themselves diasporic creations ([Gennari 2006](#), 16), and particularly European ([Gennari 2006](#), 111; [Heffley 2005](#), 177). Europeans published the “first serious studies of jazz” ([Rasula 2002](#), 57, and the French produced the first “authenticating narratives” ([Braggs 2016](#), 27), with work from the 1930s by Hugues Panassié, Charles Delaunay, and Andre Hodeir decisive in defining jazz for Americans. Panassié was of particular importance (see further [Perchard 2015](#), 20–53) in establishing one of the enduring central pillars of jazz historiography by insisting in 1934 that the “only real jazz spirit” was “Negro” ([Panassié 1944](#), 81).

The material supports of cultural forms develop in conjunction with the discourses, and accordingly a great many jazz infrastructures evolved in diasporic sites. The early “aestheticized discourse of jazz” in the 1930s and 1940s emerged from “hot clubs” and their modernist “little magazines” which sustained the crystallizing jazz canon that “defined the very idea of jazz—down to our time” ([Gennari 2006](#), 65). These infrastructures were certainly not in evidence in the putative seminal city, New Orleans, nor primarily in the US, nor did the former initially produce any of what are regarded as the founding canonical “texts”—sound recordings. While the mail order record distributor, the United Hot Clubs of America, was established in 1936 ([Grove 1988](#),

565), the obsessive jazz connoisseurship that began documenting details of the primary texts was largely a product of the English fraternity from the 1930s (Gennari 2006, 61–63). Perhaps the most influential and durable of all the clubs was French: the Hot Club of France (HCF), which at its peak boasted a membership of 5,000 (Perchard 2015, 41).

The first magazines/newsletters devoted to jazz were European. HCF's *Le Jazz Hot*, began February 21, 1935, only months after the establishment of *Down Beat* (Harris 2005, 113), but earlier examples included Sweden's *Orkester Journalen* from 1933 (Gioia 2011, 159) and Finland's *Rytmi* from 1934 (Johnson 2002a, 35). The jazz festivals—now a mainstay of jazz activity—were diasporic creations. America's first Newport Jazz Festival in 1954 was preceded by the first Nice Jazz Festival, organized by Panassié, in 1948, then the Festival International de Jazz organized by Delaunay (Gennari 2006, 211). An even earlier annual festival, the Australian Jazz Convention, was inaugurated in 1946 (Johnson 1987, 87–90). It is still going, which makes it the world's longest running such event. Even that was preceded by the one-off Sydney Jazz Week in 1919 (Johnson 1987, 4–5). For decades, jazz “education” was informal mentorship. While the “first big American jazz courses,” such as Berklee College of Music or University of North Texas, date from the 1950s and 1960s (Nicholson 2005, 105), jazz had been incorporated into educational projects as far back as the 1920s and 1930s in, for example, Germany, Finland, and France (Kater 1992, 17; Johnson 2002a, 47; Nettelbeek 2004, 52).

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## Local Jazz Forms

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The diaspora also produced local jazz forms, social meanings, functions, and instrumentations. While the highest profile examples include the “manouche” jazz of Django Reinhardt, the “Nordic” sound of Jan Garbarek and ECM records, the bossa nova, there is growing recognition that this is a global phenomenon (see for example Hefley 2005, 32, 190, 211–212; Bragg 2016, 11; Perchard 2015, 107, 191, 193; Nicholson 2005, 93). Many of these have become seminal in their own right, as in the case of the so-called Australian style, the origins of jazz-rock and later

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“acid jazz” from the UK (Ross 2016; Shipton 2001, 852; Nicholson 2005, 333; for a general overview see Heffley 2005, 68–116, 166–235). In this development, the focus has been from the late twentieth century and the emergence of free jazz (Heffley 2005). Jazz musicians, however, have been drawing on their own local traditions from the early 1920s. The Nordic region, for example, developed early local syncretisms (see Johnson 2002a, 39–40), and “national” styles can be localized even further into regional and even to particular coteries and even individuals (Ross 2016; Perchard 2015, 203).

More broadly, such shifts entail a displacement of an imperialist center/margins model of cultural diffusion and a respectful attentiveness to all attempts to play “jazz,” no matter how geographically or historically marginalized. The supposedly clumsy and gauche work outside the US in the interwar period has significant value, partly as an instructive site of the diaspora in progress, presenting us with jazz “in the making,” as opposed to the far more “placeless” facsimiles of the two postwar decades. When a group of, say, Finnish or Australian musicians, or even a black US band in Boulder, Colorado (see below) in the early 1920s played and recorded music under the name jazz that now evokes derisive wincing, were the musicians and the dancers wincing? On the basis of what we do know—contemporary reports in the press, in diaries, letters, and recollections—it appears that these now derided bands meant a great deal in terms of pleasure and socio-political meaning to a lot of people. It is instructive to try to understand this; it is certainly an essential part of the story of jazz. These were the sites, not originally New Orleans or Chicago, where jazz first became the internationally influential music on the basis of which its significance rests and which sustains the very discourse that now derides it. How, then, do we engage with popular music which is the source of the vast majority of musical satisfaction across the globe, that by all the analytical tools deployed by scholars is dismissed as “mediocre” or “risible?” (see further Björnberg and Stockfelt 1996). I want to suggest that one way toward the answer is to extend the investigation of diasporic jazz, both because it is a counter-narrative to the US canon-centered version and because of the specific kinds of insights that it will disclose.

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## Diaspora and the Canon

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Such studies will produce revisions of not only jazz history but also the dynamics of the socio-political structures within which the music has lodged. Thus, for example, studies of jazz in authoritarian regimes have begun to reconfigure our understanding of totalitarianism (Pickhan and Ritter 2010; Johnson 2016). Such insights are exclusive to the study of jazz in its diasporic forms. This is emphatically *not* to argue for the abolition of a canon, but for parallel counter-narratives. Gabbard argues that a “postcanonical” study “is possible only after the discipline has built a foundation around key works” (1995, 6; see similarly Perchard 2015, 232). The canon is a necessary prelude to the development of a “jazz-specific” discourse. The problem with the established narrative is not that it is US canon-centered, but that it continues to declare itself to be the only narrative, *The History of Jazz* (Gioia 2011, my emphasis), in the face of the growing weight of evidence to the contrary. Like cultural theory in general, the canon only increases its explanatory value as it begins to break down under the weight of the social practices it seeks to account for, at which time it is useful as a reference point against which to construct a repertoire of alternative discourses that might reflect more effectively the specificity of jazz practice and history.

That specificity may be articulated under two headings. The first is the sonic modality of jazz—a distinctive phenomenological, cognitive, and affective foundation. Jazz is centrally a sonic phenomenon, not a scopic form from which the prevailing analytical models are derived. Second, it is still necessary to respect the distinctiveness of jazz from other sonic expressive forms. In the formation of the jazz *mythos*, that has most often been “classical” music. The latter’s narrative is also canon-based, with its point of reference written texts—the scored opus (see further Johnson 2002b). Sorbonne musicologist André Pirro’s declaration that he does not need to listen to music, that “to read it is enough” (Johnson 2000, 181), would make no sense at all in relation to jazz. That is, not only for literature but also for art music, the canon is central, yet inapposite for jazz: apart from the obvious inappropriateness of the idea of a scored *oeuvre*,

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unlike the art music “opus,” even for the most prolifically recorded performer, the recording represents the barest minimum of a musician’s “work.” Furthermore, how a musician addresses a formal recording date is generally very different from the way he or she addresses the conditions of the weekly or nightly gig. The overwhelming majority of the “work,” the site of experimentation, development, and adaptations to the material conditions of her or his output, is the gig, of which usually the only “record” is in an array of subjective, distracted memories colored by conditions that are not musical or “artistic” in the usual sense.

This takes us to questions of historiographical methodology. There is some significant tension between the “great man/work” approach to jazz history and the idea of “representativeness.” Rasula explores the problems of histories based unreflectively on recordings (Rasula 1993; Rasula 2002, 135, 157 fn. 4). There is a difference between a narrative in which the subject is the recordings and one in which the subject is the music (Rasula 2002, 140). Furthermore, a focus on the rare masterpiece, by definition, does not give us the kind of representative sample of a musician’s output that enables us to align her/him with a working tradition; and, even further, the work of the “greats” like Louis Armstrong or Charlie Parker, simply by virtue of its rare excellence (as we judge it), can give only the slightest glimpse of the day to day contours of the enfolding musical landscape. In principle, it cannot be a representative sample of what went on nightly in New York, in the USA, or in the global context on which the claim of jazz’s global significance as a modern music is based. Parker had off-nights, on which he would have fallen back on the formulas which do in fact constitute the basic templates we are trying to discover as historians. And the great majority of journeymen musicians sustaining the music would also provide a more reliable picture of what was actually going on, as well as being aspired to, than a single recording sanctified as a masterpiece. We know, for example, that Armstrong’s “classic” recorded solos were not necessarily an effusion of spontaneous brilliance, but the outcome of a lengthy period of often more or less repetitive workshopping in performance (see for example Harker 2011, 50).

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To build an overview on the peaks of its “masterpiece” recordings tells us little about the plains on which most jazz activity was conducted and through which the music was formed. It is in the ordinary, night-after-dull-night performance from which the flesh of “genius” has been stripped, such that we hear the bare bones of the music-in-practice. This will disclose a “history” no less illuminating than those canonical works defined by how exceptional they are; likewise in diasporic bands before they have reached the stage of being indistinguishable from recorded source material, which is itself unrepresentative of the general standard of performance. The “canon” is a place to start, but hopelessly inadequate as a guide to a musician’s “work” and the general landscape. This is all the more so when it is based on solos deracinated from not only the other musicians against which it is constructed but also the larger soundscape with which the performance is negotiating. It is necessary to develop alternative narratives, to continue to shift emphasis from the “text” to the larger historical and cultural contexts, but also to think in terms of different kinds of discourse, as for example the “process approach” discussed by [Harris \(2003, 120\)](#).

These alternative “off-center” perspectives will also sustain a healthy skepticism about the criteria of evaluation that are deployed in jazz historiography, including the dubious instrument of “authenticity” and its associated aesthetics. They include the autonomy of the text that transcends place and time ([Williams 1983, 253](#)), the “essence” of jazz, and an imposed teleology ([Gioia 2011, 45, 185](#)). It is notable that the teleological model is rarely if ever applied to, for example, tribal musics that are situated as the irredeemably “other.” This teleology is a privilege reserved for western and westernized musics. By these criteria, performers are understood not on their own terms but only in relation to some platonic model decided upon by commentators. Perchard cautions against “any notion of historical process that is unidirectional and goal-directed, rather than the repetitious, messy and inconclusive” ([Perchard 2015, 12](#)). Once the “center” is displaced, we are able to find interest and value in any performance as an engagement with place and history.



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## Methodologies

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To appreciate jazz performance on its own terms, it is also useful to avoid “talking over” the subject, and be prepared to surrender some *ex post facto* essentialisms. Given the testimony of the jazz pioneers, positivist categorizations like “jazz, pure and simple” (Gioia 2011, 63) sound rather glib. The assertion that for Morton, the dividing line between jazz and ragtime was “elusive,” leading to categorizations that “few jazz historians would agree with” (Gioia 2011, 20), is a solipsism that underlines the cultural colonialism pervading jazz historiography. In fact, Morton had a clear understanding of the distinction between jazz and ragtime (see Lomax 1950, 61–62). The problem is that it is not the understanding that we sanction, based on subsequent developments that inform our “hindsight.” As a general principle of historical research, it is useful to begin by respecting these contemporary accounts, wherever they come from, and then explore their implications. Of course, such testimony is itself not necessarily reliable, especially where some self-aggrandizement might be at work (see further Peretti 1995). But instead of scornfully smiling, it is useful to ask, for example, why an Australian lifestyle journal in 1921 defined jazz as a dance (Johnson 2000, 65). That enquiry will take us much further into the cultural history of the music than a simple ruling that it is not. When we read Duke Ellington’s description of rock as a “raucous form of jazz,” it is helpful to seek “to explain how Ellington could credibly make such a claim in 1955” (Brennan 2017, 4, 31). It might be argued that such testimonies are merely “anecdotal” and unscholarly, but if we trace most jazz primary sources back to their origins, they are generally anecdotal, ephemeral, or based on sound recordings, with their own problems addressed above. The ethnographic dictum “Let the subject speak” distributes the evidentiary burden more evenly, supplementing rather than displacing other primary sources.

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## Alternative Narratives and Diaspora

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The foregoing is the kind of introductory survey of the field appropriate to a Companion format. I now want to unravel some of the issues and suggest avenues along which future work on the jazz diaspora might take us.

### Blackness

A shift away from the US as a geographical center would interrogate the perennial motif of blackness, described by Rudi Blesh (1958, 25) as “the key that unlocks the secret of jazz.” “In international academic discourse, American jazz studies have focussed . . . on African roots and African-American fruits of the music” (Heffley 2005, 15). Schuller declared that “every musical element—rhythm, harmony, melody, timbre, and the basic forms of jazz—is essentially African in background and derivation” (Schuller 1986, 62, Schuller’s emphasis). This is at best arguable. Take away the European elements and you no more have jazz than if you take away the African. There have been intermittent challenges to the prevailing model of African diaspora in general (see for example Perchard 2015, 7; Gennari 2006, 361–362, 369; Braggs 2016, 6; for a broader discussion of these problematics see Garcia 2017). Even African Americans themselves have disputed the bias. Sidney Bechet declared that the “foundation” of jazz was to be found in France (Perchard 2015, 44), and more recently singer Dee Dee Bridgewater objected to being essentialized as black (Benedict 34’30” to 35’30”). The power of the African cliché, however, is still proclaimed in the image of a (male) black saxophonist that pervades the literature, book covers, festival programs, and other jazz representations. This also reminds us of the jazz gender stereotype. Thus, it surprises even many jazz scholars to discover that in its earliest diasporic phases, jazz was very much a feminized space (Johnson 2000, 59–76; Ballantine 1991, 141; Ballantine 1993, 46–50), a fact which also throws into focus the role of women in the emergence of modernity.

In spite of the emphasis on the African origins of jazz, in New Orleans the cultural mix was far more diverse. Morton’s account of his background, for example, refers to France, Spain,

Italy (Lomax 1950, 3, 32, 62, 3–4, 6, 32, 62, 32), and the music of Europe and Christian hymns (Lomax 1950, 6, 15, 16). Noting the connection between the level of public music activity and the city's multicultural character, Shipton observes the proliferation of festive days: Independence Day (July 4), Bastille Day (French), Mardi Gras (Hispanic Catholic), and various other national-inflected festivities (Shipton 2001, 74–75; on the cultural heterogeneity of early twentieth-century New Orleans, see further Raeburn 2011). One tradition occluded by the dominance of the “African” model is that of indigenous American culture. Among the multitude of community clubs and associations in New Orleans that had their own parade bands, Lomax refers to one called the Iriquois (Lomax 1950, 11). Morton recalls in detail and at length one of the most popular clubs called the Indians, even out-drawing audiences for the Mardi Gras parade. “When I was a child, I thought they really was Indians” (Lomax 1950, 14). One of Morton's songs was “an ancient Mardi Gras Number, associated with the Indians” (Schafer 2008, 205). It seems that indigenous culture and its music—like jazz, an improvised form (Nettl and Russell 1998, 5, 6)—was a living presence in the New Orleans community. Louis Armstrong recalled that Morton was able to get work in the District (references to “Storyville” are primarily diasporic) by claiming he was Indian or Spanish (cited Shipton 2001, 92). Doc Cheatham recalled that “back in those far off days there was a lot of hanky-panky going on, between the Indians, the black folks, the white folks”; Cheatham's own paternal grandfather was a “native North American Indian” (Shipton 2001, 16). Native American identity is a recurring presence in jazz lives, including Frankie Trumbauer (Gioia 2011, 81), Charlie Parker, Cecil Taylor (Hefley 2005, 251), and of course “Big Chief” Russell Moore. New Orleans-born Wingy Manone recalled working in a vaudeville-cum-jazz band led by a Sioux Indian chief. Anthony Braxton's “fascination with Native American culture and history” feeds into his music (Hefley 2005, 252). In the 1920s, Coeury and Schaeffner included “Native American” culture among possible influences (Mawer 2014, 46). Even this highly selective catalog suggests that the area is worth focused research (see further Johnson forthcoming)—if the jazz narrative could come out from under the African shadow and into its diasporic field. References to jazz as the “Africanization of

American music” (Gioia 2011, 5) beg the question: what was “American” music before, or apart from, its Africanization? Native American music has an ancient heritage, and significantly, it shares probably more with African than with early modern European music.

## The Genesis Myth

Apart from the issue of ethnicity, the study of diaspora also raises questions about geographical maps of jazz. New Orleans remains identified as the single point of origin, from which all flowed. But a closer exploration of the diaspora presents nuanced alternatives: “A growing body of research traces vigorous activity in cities as otherwise unrelated as St. Louis, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Memphis, Houston, Cincinnati, and Minneapolis. “Territory bands, black and white, traveled complicate itineraries throughout Texas, Oklahoma, the plains states, and the Southwest, bringing hot music with them” (Sudhalter 2000, 156). For Joe Darenbourg, the black string bands in his hometown of Baton Rouge were the “first jazz bands” (Shipton 2001, 30). The repertoire of a string band in which George Morrison played in 1915 in Boulder, Colorado included “Darktown Strutters’ Ball”: “played . . . as a jazz number” (Shipton 2001, 30). At the same time, New Orleans native Barney Bigard declared that during that decade (the 1910s) the local bands “didn’t sound anything like the jazz bands that you hear today” (Shipton 2001, 32). In general, Shipton notes the emergence of proto-jazz forms in a number of US centers in the early twentieth century (Shipton 2001, 33–36, 65–67); Wilbur Sweatman, born Brunswick Missouri, recorded his “Jass Band” in 1917 (Shipton 2001, 38).

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## Diaspora as a Model—Problems

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It begins to appear that even the use of the term “diaspora” privileges the center by the flow of traffic it implies. Diaspora provides an essential entry point for this interrogation, but it implies a straightforward genesis myth with a subsequent migration flowing unilaterally from a single

source (Gennari 2006, 48). The idea of “diaspora” is in danger of imposing the very politics we are trying to question. Closer attention reveals a far more complex dynamic than one-way traffic from center to margins, a “polyspora” (Johnson 2002a, 52). Django Reinhardt influenced musicians in Belgium, Norway, Finland, and, via Oscar Aleman, Argentina (Shipton 2001, 391). The “diaspora” also doubled back through the perennial assimilation of non-US sources by US jazz musicians (Shipton 2001, 831–836). Perchard argues that to at least some extent, Coleman Hawkins derived some of his “new approach” that was leading to bop from exposure to Reinhardt, and cites Lawrence Cugny’s identification of examples of “modal jazz” that anticipate Miles Davis’s vaunted work, as early as 1952 (Perchard 2015, 59, 253 fn 12). The history of European composers influencing US jazz musicians is well documented (Mawer 2014; Heffley 2005, 252). The center/margins model underpinning jazz historiography and the canon is deeply misleading, and to recognize this is to open the door to radically new jazz narratives.

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## Further Directions

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If we enlarge our perspective, we will also challenge the exceptionalism of jazz itself, including the much-vaunted distinctiveness of its improvisational element, vis-à-vis the European concert tradition. But if we look beyond the black/US axis to the diaspora, we are reminded of how many practices of which jazz has “taken ownership” are in fact outgrowths of pre-existing local traditions. Manouche jazz is an obvious example, but while improvisation is definitive to jazz (see Johnson 2002b, 103–107), it is not exclusive to it, and every musical culture has a history of improvisation far older than that of notated music. Indeed, improvisation is in many cultures valued above “precomposed” music (Nettl and Russell 1998, 7–8)

In all this, there are implications far deeper than the question of a jazz history that shifts its focus of attention. That shift will also situate jazz studies to take a lead in redirecting the deeper currents of cultural analysis and its models. We would be led to some of these changes in the way we talk simply by changing where we walk. I conclude with some sign-posts.

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It would be instructive to go further into studies of the material culture out of which jazz performance emerges, to balance the “ideational” history that pervades the canon model, which sees the history of jazz as primarily driven by aesthetics constructed around the US “center.” Why, for example, the rise of singers in the early 1930s? The most general answer is that tastes changed ([Gioia 2011](#), 122). But why? Some exploration of material forces—demographics, venue sizes, performance amplification—casts light not only on this development but also on the subsequent history of popular music. And these material conditions were in turn an outcome of the diaspora, the shift to the big northern cities and larger performance spaces (see further [Johnson 2000](#), 81–135). The study of material culture would also bring forward the sonicity, rather than just the aesthetics, of jazz. One of the changes in the “diaspora” from New Orleans to Chicago, for example, was in the physical nature of the performance space: from outdoor perambulation to static interior, enabling a transition from loud and portable brass to the string bass, shifts of pace from march to dancing and later static audiences, from open air and small halls to cavernous interiors. The global diaspora also involved climatic shifts, from New Orleans humidity to the dry heat of Australia and the Nordic cold. Every horn player, for example, understands the necessary adaptations to articulation, intonation, and improvisation that must be made to such conditions.

One of the major problems with a jazz historiography based on “textual” canons, center-margins, and the dynamics of figure-ground (soloist-backing) is that it is rooted in discursive models that are ultimately scopocentric. The diaspora invites us to attend to local sonic profiles, and thus more generally it directs our attention to sonic phenomenology. In doing so it can breathtakingly enlarge our horizons of investigation, because this leads jazz studies into theories of cognition and the mind/body relationship (see further [Johnson 2016b](#)). Many accounts of jazz affect allude to its somatic element and the complicity between corporeal and mental responses. Panassié, for example, sought to persuade those who attended his record sessions to experience jazz “somatically rather than intellectually” ([Perchard 2015](#), 30) and involved elaborate gestural theater which he invited his audience to mimic ([Perchard 2015](#), 30–31). The discourse is littered


with similar examples (see for example [Benedikt 2006](#), 1'001'02'to 1'01'22; [Perchard 2015](#), 26), but the implications have scarcely been extrapolated. They run parallel with studies of “flow” (see [Hytönen-Ng 2013](#)) and point toward developments in cognitive research involving mirror neurons, gestural cognition, and extended mind theory. Sonic phenomenology is well situated to take a lead in this research, and jazz has the potential to be the most instructive among our expressive forms, as its discourses escape the gravity field of the “center.”

The vast majority of jazz performed from day to day has been written out of the dominant discourse, and much of that can be recovered through the study of its “off-center” practices, its diaspora. Without that, we quite simply have a deeply inadequate account of the true scope of the social function of the music. At the same time, while we rest content within the safe framework of the standard US-centric canon model, we attenuate the music’s potential as a vehicle of radical change in cultural analysis. To a significant degree, this project is about historical method and, even more fundamentally, epistemology, a different way of knowing culture and history.

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