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Categories and Music Transmission

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Lucy Green's (2008) *Music, Informal Learning, and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* gives rise to an interesting corollary. Does the manner of music's transmission inform our understanding of a musical category? While categories of music (Western Classical, popular, jazz, etc.) can be difficult to define according to strict musical characteristics, a better understanding of musical transmission—of how a music is passed on and learned—may provide insight into the nature of a musical category itself. Green's work, which associates informal learning with popular music practice, presents this possibility. Such an understanding offers potential for music educators and students to become increasingly clear about what and how they are teaching and learning.

This essay uses the jazz tradition as a means of exploring the understanding of a musical category through its modes of transmission. The jazz tradition has synergies with Green's research because it is a music that has made the transition from informal to formal realms of learning.¹ The formalization of jazz education, within teaching institutions, has in recent decades, focused more on 'what' has been transmitted than 'how' that transmission has occurred, affecting, among other things, our understanding of jazz as a category. This essay proposes that jazz and popular music can be linked through pedagogy by highlighting their shared cultural origins and overlapping communities in ways that further inform the idea of category as a pedagogically-driven construct.

Chronologically, I will begin at the end. Formal Jazz Education² has frequently been a controversial topic. Several scholars and performers have suggested that Jazz Education represents an adopted (or much adapted) method of transmission, which changes our understanding of the musical tradition itself.³ The traditional ways of transmitting this music have been changed, compromised, or subverted to formal methods of instruction that fit more comfortably in the formal habitat, or are more efficient (perhaps even more effective, at least in achieving certain results) in the context of classroom or group settings. The discussion

around how jazz is currently transmitted provides insight into how formal teaching and learning has affected our understanding of jazz as a musical category.

Jazz is a precursor to Popular Music as a music that has already shifted from informal to formal realms of transmission. In doing so, the jazz tradition has faced certain obstacles. These obstacles are informative in understanding how Jazz Education became framed as a valid course of study, and how its accompanying jazz pedagogies were developed. This context is particularly relevant in relating formal jazz pedagogies to both informal jazz pedagogies and the pedagogy developed by Green. Jazz is also an important precursor to Popular Music as the first music of the West African Diaspora to move into the ‘formal’ [institutional] arena. It has become increasingly important to understand jazz’s process of formalization as other musics from this Diaspora become introduced to ‘formal’ music education. It is thus necessary to present some of the principal motivations behind the efforts to formalize Jazz Education—including establishing legitimacy—in order to ultimately view jazz as part of a broader musical tradition, and understand the potential of linking the modes of transmission to the music being transmitted.

All of this will bring me to the chronological beginning, with a brief examination of how jazz was transmitted prior to its formalization. The modes of transmission employed by Green (developed through her study of popular musicians) are, as mentioned, similar to modes of transmission utilized by jazz musicians prior to Jazz Education. In showing these similarities, I focus on select musicians who have emerged as skilled and valuable jazz practitioners prior to the advent of Jazz Education.⁴ This observation serves to demonstrate ways in which Jazz Education has changed the modes of transmission in the jazz tradition.⁵ More importantly, it accounts for my strongest reaction to Green’s work. By establishing the commonalities between the traditional transmission processes of these two types of music, the issue of musical category emerges. One side of this requires consideration of the possibility that the admission of jazz into formal structures was, in fact, the admission of a broader musical tradition. Another is the possibility that Green’s work might suggest that a category can more aptly be defined by its modes of transmission than by its musical characteristics.

Attempts to define jazz as a musical category have proven difficult and prompted much debate. The difficulty of defining jazz has affected Jazz Education from its inception. As jazz became part of formal education (alongside its movement into other formal

settings—concert halls, arts organizations), there became a need to develop an idea of what is to be taught and what kind of music counted as ‘jazz’. Much of the controversy associated with the development of Jazz Education has resulted from the elusiveness of a categorical definition of jazz. Certain scholars and educators have viewed ‘jazz’ as a relatively strict body of more-or-less canonical works (“America’s classical music”⁶). Others viewed any attempt at strict definition as running contrary to their ideas of jazz (Deveaux, 1998, pp. 485–486; 504–505).⁷ In order to frame the controversy, a brief description of the emergent and predominant pedagogies is useful.

The process by which jazz became an accepted part of music education curricula has resulted in some generally recognizable pedagogies that are supported by a wealth of published materials. Many of these pedagogies can certainly be viewed as emerging from a particular understanding of the jazz tradition. Equally important, however, are the ways in which these pedagogies represent a departure from that tradition. Many of the ways of transmission that have arisen in support of Jazz Education tend to focus on the ‘teachable’ aspects of jazz. Among other things, this results in a premium being placed on an analytical understanding of canonical jazz improvisers that can be translated into print materials and play-alongs; a jazz ensemble repertoire that focuses on great works and is largely transmitted through notation; a history that focuses on a linear progression and stops when that progression becomes problematic, generally somewhere in the 1960’s.

In North American public schools, these pedagogies typically involve the use of the ‘jazz ensemble’ (big band) as the primary vehicle for jazz instruction. The jazz ensemble—the staffing of which generally adheres to the model provided by the Count Basie Band (among others)—supports enough students to make reasonable class sizes, and allows for certain aspects of jazz to be accessed and learned by students: history, theory, improvisation, certain kinds of reiterative pulse associated with jazz, and musical independence (when educators are able to follow the ‘one player per part’ rule of jazz ensemble staffing). The bulk of teaching and learning takes place, however, through the rehearsing of repertoire. For better or worse, it allows music educators to function in ways that are often indistinguishable from rehearsing other large instrumental ensembles—pedagogies rooted in orchestral and wind band instruction can be used in jazz ensemble rehearsals, providing some level of comfort to non-jazz trained music educators (conducting, rehearsing notes and rhythms from a score, tuning, balancing, blending, and sight-reading all come to mind). In university-based

programs, jazz instruction typically involves discrete courses in jazz history, jazz theory, jazz improvisation, jazz ensembles (often large and small), jazz pedagogy, private lessons, jazz aural skills, jazz composing and arranging, keyboard skills, and transcription and analysis.

In supporting these pedagogies, there has developed a sizable body of teaching materials: jazz theory books, jazz history/appreciation texts, jazz play-along recordings, jazz charts (many written with specific pedagogical aims: developing improvisational skill; accessing important historical works, or developing a sense of the ‘jazz canon’, appealing to students through accessing popular tunes or grooves), and ‘how-to-improvise’ methods. It has been asserted that these Jazz Education pedagogies, and their accompanying materials, are largely reflective of an unquestioning adoption of musicological practices in the codification of jazz practices and in the construction of a coherent jazz history. Music that is analyzable according to pre-existing academic methods and ideals receives the lion’s share of attention in institutional settings (Walser, 1993, pp. 347–348).⁸ The pedagogies are constructed along the lines of studying great works of great artists, or preparing students for this study, and the value in the study comes from the musical attributes of the music – those things that can be analyzed.

Jazz and its transmission became formalized in ways that allowed it to exist more-or-less comfortably alongside Western Classical methods of transmission. This clearly had certain advantages, not the least of which is that organized and discrete courses, along with the printed and recorded materials that accompanied them, allowed educators to reach more students and evaluate their work. Put another way, most jazz instruction is recognizable to a non-jazz-educated music educator. Some jazz musicians and scholars have identified disadvantages that extend from the adoption—wholesale or partial—of formal methods of transmission and have impacted on the state of the jazz tradition. These concerns speak to a sense that shifting the modes of transmission have resulted in the jazz tradition changing in ways that fundamentally alter the music and our ways of understanding it.

Writing in 1994, jazz pianist and scholar Ben Sidran provides a sense of this concern:

In many ways, these are the best of times and the worst of times for jazz. On the one hand, music schools are turning out thousands of thoroughly prepared young players who, at an earlier age, are better versed in the grammar and idioms of jazz than ever before. The recorded evidence speaks eloquently of the “success” of our education system.... On the other hand, most of the new jazz prodigies don’t *sound* like anybody.... Why doesn’t today’s education lead to the development of style? (Sidran, 1995, p. 3)

Noted jazz performer, composer and educator Bob Brookmeyer echoed this sentiment in speaking of difficulties in writing for modern musicians: “All of us (jazz composers) have structural problems with solos, where to put them, how they belong, because the soloists have become so generic” (Ramsey, 1999, p. 92). These two musicians speak to a broad concern that the creation of a canonical, codified way of understanding and learning jazz has led to a loss of individuality. Teachers using the same approaches, students learning the same music, the same patterns, and the same recordings in the same ways has led to an increasingly generic generation of musicians.⁹

From another perspective, jazz pianist and educator Michael Cain, writing in 2007, states that “... I found that jazz pedagogy in the academy and jazz pedagogy among practitioners, as I came to know it, often had very little in common” (Cain, 2007, p. 35). Illustrating this observation, Cain compares the audition processes he has experienced as a professional jazz musician (processes which Cain rightly asserts can be understood through and rooted in jazz practices, jazz pedagogy, and jazz history) and those auditioning processes used in university-based jazz programs. His comparison results in the observation that the two processes, although linked somehow through a shared musical tradition, are not recognizably related. Cain states that:

no jazz school would consider auditioning students the way Jack DeJohnette and Robin Eubanks audition their players, and yet they are two musicians most jazz schools would want their graduates to work with. (Cain, 2007, p. 36)

Where Sidran asserts that institutions are training jazz musicians who are “thoroughly prepared” (Sidran, 1995, p. 3), Cain illustrates that this preparation does not always line up with the expectations of the domain itself. This disconnect between the academic instruction of jazz musicians and the practices of tradition-steeped professional jazz musicians¹⁰ can be interpreted as, at least in part, a result of the ways in which the study of jazz became ‘formalized’. Implicit in this observation is the possibility that through adopting particular ways of teaching the jazz tradition, those musicians that study long enough have been prepared for a different kind of music and either need to retrain in the community of musicians, or make a different kind of music.

Historian Gary Tomlinson speaks of the formalization of jazz as having followed a European notion of high culture in the creation of a jazz canon, and that this notion of canon informs the majority of pedagogies associated with Jazz Education. He states that canonical construction, largely through its exclusionary function, results in a narrowing of what can be

studied, what can be learned, and how we can teach. Furthermore, Tomlinson states that the canon, underpinning “jazz courses around the country” features,

exemplars of timeless aesthetic value instead of being understood—as the European works next door should also be understood but too rarely are—as human utterances valued according to the dialogical situations in which they were created and are continually recreated. (Tomlinson, 1996, pp. 76–77)

David Ake, also a pianist, scholar and educator, further articulates this concern. In examining the formalized study of canonical jazz saxophonist John Coltrane’s music, Ake describes how certain aspects of jazz lend themselves to formal study, while others do not. In this case the earlier work of Coltrane is ‘teachable’ (more easily lending itself to analysis and therefore can be systematized) while his later work, from his ‘avant-garde’ period, is largely ignored. Ake attributes this decision to the ease with which Coltrane’s earlier work fits into the mold of a ‘European’ model of music education. Ake makes two observations that are pertinent to this discussion. The first is that through selectively excluding/ ignoring the later work of Coltrane “a type of musical ‘half truth’” is “passed on from teacher and institution to student” (Ake, 2002, p. 145). The second is that “... jazz pedagogy’s classical biases result... in a narrower understanding of what counts as ‘jazz’ in America today” (ibid., p. 145).

Robert Walser, like Tomlinson, strongly questions the ways in which the construction of a jazz canon based upon Western European notions of analysis and the objectification of certain musical works, affects the musical tradition. Walser, focusing on the improvisations of Miles Davis, writes:

The uneasiness many critics display toward Miles Davis’ ‘mistakes,’ and their failure to explain the power of his playing suggest that there are important gaps in the paradigms of musical analysis and interpretation that dominate jazz studies. (Walser, 1993, p. 345)

The jazz tradition, although having gained recognition as ‘a music worthy of study’, has arguably reached a position where that study has become a study of past accomplishments deemed canonically significant. Guitarist Pat Metheny, in his keynote address at the 2001 IAJE Convention, expressed reservations about this model in stating:

The attempts to make jazz something more like classical music, like baroque music for instance, with a defined set of rules and regulations and boundaries and qualities that MUST be present and observed and respected at all times, have always made me uncomfortable. (Metheny, 2001)¹¹

Keith Jarrett, a jazz musician of comparable achievement to Metheny, stated a similar concern towards viewing the tradition as a set of past accomplishments for study and preservation. In asking the question “When did jazz become a theory—a thing, not a process; a package, not an experience?”, Jarrett suggests that canon-building changed the tradition (Jarrett, 1996, p. 36). Jarrett furthers this assertion by saying: “Jazz is about closeness to the material, a personal dance with the material, not the material itself” (ibid, 36; 102). While Jarrett’s essay does not focus on the role of Jazz Education, Walser does make this connection. He argues that the dominant methods of analyzing and transmitting jazz, adopted from pre-existing practices of analyzing and transmitting Western art music, fail in helping us understand jazz (Walser, 1993, p. 359).¹²

Jazz Education’s adoption of formal modes of transmission has been criticized not only for its inadequacies in developing an understanding of jazz, but for failing to substantively change formal music education. Put another way, formal music education was viewed as a means of transmitting jazz rather than jazz viewed as a means of transmitting music. This is in contrast to Green, who investigates the inclusion of informal learning practices as a means to “recognize, foster and reward a range of musical skills and knowledge that have not previously been emphasized in music education” (Green, 2008, p. 1). Wayne Bowman, well known to readers of this journal, wrote in 2004 that: “... adding jazz to the curriculum did little to transform the way music educators conceptualized music, or curriculum” (Bowman, 2004, p. 30). Bringing jazz into the fold of ‘formal’ music has changed the kind of music we can study and practice, the kinds of ensembles we offer our students, the kinds of instruments, and the kinds of histories and theories we can learn. It has not substantially changed the ways in which we can study and teach music.

Based upon all of this, it is facile to conclude that Jazz Education got it wrong. This conclusion, however, would fail to articulate what Jazz Education represents to music education and how it has changed our ideas of formal music education. Instead, it is useful to understand the circumstances under which jazz became formalized. By looking at the ways in which jazz entered the academy, it becomes possible to see a larger and longer process at work. This process has not only provided continued scrutiny of itself and its own practices, but has established the possibility of a musical tradition other than Western Classical Music being accepted into our educational institutions.

The inclusions of ‘jazz’ into the curricula of Western schools and universities undoubtedly required compromise. Formal Music Education was required to acknowledge that jazz was worth learning—an acknowledgment that was problematic in many ways, and took a considerable amount of time. In 1924, *The Etude*, the most popular American music teachers’ journal, grappled with ‘the jazz issue’ (in ways that seem remarkably similar to contemporary concerns over the inclusion of various popular musics). The magazine emphatically stated that addressing the ‘jazz problem’ was not an endorsement of jazz. The only positive attributes of jazz that the magazine’s editor seemed to acknowledge was that its popularity increased the number of students studying wind instruments (Walser, 1999b, pp. 41–54). A popular textbook, published in 1941 and used in university music education classes, stated that:

Jazz and art music are at opposite poles of the musical earth. In most respects they contradict one another... educationally they are antagonistic... [jazz] tears down what the music educator is trying to build up; and it is because the pupil hears so much more jazz than real music that his artistic tastes tends to deteriorate. (Dykema & Gehrekens, 1941, p. 203)

There are many personalized accounts that point to the powerful resistance that jazz faced within academia. One example comes from Benny Golson, a renowned jazz saxophonist, composer and educator. In 1997, Golson stated:

When I went to college, I could have been expelled for playing jazz. The official attitude about jazz was not good then. I had to practice my saxophone in the laundry room of the dormitory at night because I could not enter college and practice the saxophone as a part of the studies. I had to major on the clarinet. It seems to me that it was a European thing they were trying to uphold. (Fisher, 2003, pp. 11–15)¹³

While Golson did not offer a date, the experience he described would have occurred at his Alma Mater, Howard University, between 1947 and 1951 (Kernfeld, 1994, p. 436).

Somewhat ironically, Howard University’s website boasts that in 1970 it became the first primarily Black university to institute a jazz studies program.¹⁴ Jazz pianist and educator Bill Dobbins describes a similar experience, roughly twenty years after Golson’s collegiate career:

Those of us who formed the school’s (Kent State University between 1964 and 1970) first ongoing jazz ensemble were thrown out of practice rooms, prohibited from signing out school instruments to play jazz and, in general, strongly discouraged from having anything to do with America’s greatest musical contribution to world culture. (Dobbins, 1988, p. 30)

The idea of including jazz in the practice rooms, classrooms, board-rooms, rehearsal halls, and performance spaces of educational institutions was clearly controversial. The University of North Texas, which is credited with having the first jazz major, would not initially use the word ‘jazz’ in its calendar, calling it “Dance Band” instead (Gennari, 2006, p. 213).

Wrapped up in these illustrations of the resistance that jazz faced (which are neither extraordinary nor universal) from formal music education are notions of art music, race, and values. For the purposes of this discussion, it is enough to recognize that these were significant obstacles for early jazz educators to negotiate. Not only does this partially account for ways in which the development of jazz education can be described as ‘haphazard’ (L. Porter, 1989, p. 137), but it also helps in understanding the ways in which it unfolded. Undoubtedly, those advocating the inclusion of jazz in formal education responded to specific obstacles in ways that must inform our understanding of the resulting emphases we now see in Jazz Education. Issues of cultural significance (legitimacy), racial equality and tolerance, and popularity emerge as central motivating factors.

Leonard Feather, whose work at New York’s New School for Social Research in the 1940s is considered a landmark in jazz education, stated that one of his “principal, vital objectives in giving these classes was the inclusion in the students’ minds of an acceptance and appreciation of the black man’s central role in jazz” (Feather, 1981, p. 21). Feather communicates an idea that gained currency over time: jazz was useful to schools because it provided a venue through which African-American achievement could be justly celebrated.

In late 1957 the Lenox School of Jazz was founded. The Lenox School lasted for four summers and was an outgrowth of an academically oriented lecture series (begun several years earlier) dedicated to a discussion of jazz. The intent of the lecture series was to demonstrate that “jazz is a significant contribution to American culture” (Nicolli, 1951, p. 18). The Lenox School of Jazz retained this idea as part of its objectives, stating in its 1957 brochure that, among other things, it would offer students “a point of view toward jazz as a significant and vital art form of our time.”¹⁵ This is a good example of jazz making a case for it being worthy of study as high art, refuting deep-seated notions that it is some lower form of music. The Lenox School has been described as “a first of its kind institution aimed at establishing an academic basis for the study of jazz performance, theory, and history” (Gennari, 2006, p. 210). The curriculum at Lenox, while involving small ensembles and a

unique approach to private instruction (students were often deliberately assigned to master jazz musicians who played different instruments to avoid direct imitation), would be palatable to most music schools—that is to say jazz-specific classes in history, theory, composition, and improvisation were offered. Perhaps it is not coincidental that the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium also took place in Lenox. This symposium concluded, among other things (including that popular music ought to be studied in school), that jazz “should be an important component of American music education” (L. Porter, 1989, p. 134).

Many of the current practices associated with Jazz Education can be linked with this need to legitimize the music, either as a form of high art or as a means of developing racial tolerance in a racially intolerant society, in order for it to gain acceptance. Western Classical Music tools of analysis were an obvious and highly effective way of demonstrating the intricacies of jazz in ways that were irrefutable to formal institutions. Walser writes that “it seems natural enough that people who are trying to win more respect for the music they love should do so by making comparisons with the most prestigious music around, classical music” (Walser, 1993, p. 347). The fact that jazz instruction was being modeled upon a Western Classical Music framework must have also been just as obvious.

It is also demonstrable that factors of economics and popular demand were involved. Educational institutions could view jazz as a way to meet a particular demand, and thereby increase enrolment and revenue (Murphy, 1994, p. 35). Jazz scholar John Gennari states that the societal changes of the 1960s—a shifting jazz audience, a shrinking jazz audience, fundamental changes to the ways in which Americans occupied their leisure time (television, for example), increasing awareness of issues surrounding civil rights, among others—was “a boon to jazz education” (Gennari, 2006, p. 213). Professional jazz musicians, faced with these changes in the 1960s, could view ‘formal’ education as a means of supplementing their income. Established musicians, aware that their music was popular among college-aged students, discovered that universities were among the most lucrative venues for their work.¹⁶ Colleges and universities began meeting this demand—both through presenting jazz performances on campus and developing curricula that included some study of the jazz tradition.

Establishing the legitimacy and value of jazz took precedence over establishing the ways in which it would be/ should be transmitted to students. The transfer of Western ideas regarding teaching method, canon construction, and analytical models into Jazz Education

was largely unquestioned (Walser, 1993, p. 348).¹⁷ Establishing jazz as good for society, good for business, and as art music worthy of inclusion alongside the Western canon seems to have required the favoring of teaching methodologies that were familiar and accepted. This set of decisions lay the groundwork for the complexity and controversy that would surround the questions “what are we teaching?” and “why are we teaching this?”

If the social upheaval of the 1960s created favorable conditions for institutional jazz education, the 1970s is often seen as the decade in which jazz became an accepted reality in formal educational settings.¹⁸ Given this timeline, along with the benefit and curiosity of hindsight, it is irresistible to ask why jazz was the African-American ‘other’ music chosen for inclusion. While we have seen that considerable effort has been expended to confer the status of ‘art’ music on jazz, it is reasonable to suggest that by the 1970s African-American music included other ‘types’, and that jazz had been eclipsed in popularity by several of them. It is equally reasonable to suggest that the blues would have been considered of equal historical significance to jazz and therefore just as worthy of formal study.¹⁹ Jazz was selected (instead of blues, soul, R&B, or rock) for reasons that seem to have included emergent concerns over its future as a musical tradition.

Cannonball Adderley, an alto saxophonist who gained prominence through his association with Miles Davis and continued leading his own groups into the 1970s, began his career as a music educator in Florida. In 1969, Cannonball addressed the question of why jazz would be the African-American music to enter formal music education.²⁰ In an interview with Leonard Feather, he stated that:

Although there’s more interest in performing music today than ever before, the standards for performance are probably lower than ever. When I was a kid, I knew I had to be a pretty good saxophone player to get a job.... Today, though, a kid may be playing guitar just for his own enjoyment, then find that someone who doesn’t play any better than he does has just earned \$5,000,000 with a couple of records. There’s not enough public admiration for truly great artistry. The only ones who are lionized and revered are the old men, like Pablo Casals. People select these institutions to idolize rather than the artistic level to emulate. We’re hoping, with our college tours to stimulate young musicians into wanting to improve themselves. (Cannonball, 1973, p. 32)

Cannonball expresses the widely held view that his musical tradition represented and required significant musical accomplishment. He also demonstrates that the very same upheaval that represented a ‘boon’ to jazz education in the 1960s was a threat to the economics of being a jazz musician, and therefore a threat to the survival of his musical tradition. In dealing with

these issues, Cannonball made the logical conclusion that the future of jazz could be secured through education. His desire to see his musical traditions and practices preserved can be read as a foreshadowing of the ideas presented by Wynton Marsalis, a jazz musician closely associated with the ‘neo-classical’ view of jazz.

Neo-classicism arose after the 1970s. It clearly supposes a classicized tradition for its own referential existence, and therefore is committed to a canonical vision of jazz and its supporting Jazz Education. Marsalis, an eloquent and well-positioned jazz musician and educator, has served as a lightning rod for the neo-classical view of jazz based on statements like:

People think I’m trying to say jazz is greater than pop music. I don’t have to say that, that’s *obvious*. But I don’t even think about it that way. The two musics say totally different things. Jazz is *not* pop music, that’s all. (Zabor & Garbarini, 1999, p. 340)²¹

Marsalis would get more specific about his views in a piece written in 1988 for the New York Times, writing that “rock isn’t jazz and new age isn’t jazz, and neither are pop or third stream. There may be much that is good in all of them, but they aren’t jazz” (Marsalis, 1999, p. 335). Like Adderley, Marsalis identified ‘popular’ genres as threatening to the future of jazz. Marsalis perceived the threat not simply as jazz being eclipsed by more popular types (‘easier’ and more lucrative, in the view of Adderley) of American-born musics, but also as a blurring of boundaries between types of music. Pop musicians performing at jazz festivals capitalize on the cultural cache of an association with art music while audiences are misled into believing they have experienced quality art-music, all of which serves to dilute and diminish the ‘real’ music. Marsalis, often maligned for presenting a narrow definition of jazz, presents a view of jazz that is essential for a canonical understanding. He makes an emphatic case for what gets included and what gets left out. As the focus of neoclassicism and its associated controversy, Marsalis has instigated much valuable debate.

Adderley is equally useful for jazz educators and scholars in rethinking the idea of ‘what gets included’. As examples of jazz musicians who turned to educational settings as a source of work, members of the Cannonball Adderley Quintet (in the late 1960s) developed a seminar on “jazz and black-oriented music” that was delivered on university campuses (P. Wilson, 1972, p. 13).²² Cannonball’s seminar, while maintaining a focus on jazz, was promoted as a “two-day program of lectures, seminars and demonstrations on black music” (J. Wilson, 1969). ‘Black music’ was defined as ‘music created by black people’ and, because the seminar explored the relationships between popular music and jazz, can be

interpreted as the American part of the West African Diaspora. Adderley aimed to incorporate musicians from outside the jazz idiom as part of the seminar, and considered jazz to be an aspect of a larger field of musical study. In 1969 he expressed a desire that these seminars would “set a precedent with jazz so that other areas of black music can be explored as well” (Gleason, 1969, p. 59). While it would be inaccurate to suggest that Adderley would support the notion that jazz and popular music were the same musical traditions (he stated the opposite on many occasions), these seminars espouse a notion that jazz and popular musics have a shared ancestry. This leads to the notion that while each type of American-born Diaspora music (jazz, soul, funk, R&B, rock, country and western, pop, etc.) can be understood (and therefore taught) as a discrete tradition, each is also part of a larger, shared musical and cultural tradition. When the jazz tradition was admitted into the academic arena perhaps, as Cannonball had hoped and Green’s work might indicate, jazz set a precedent by which this larger tradition also gained, even if tacitly, a foothold.

We can understand that the formalization of jazz pedagogies emerged out of utility and in ways that accommodated the prevailing values and priorities of the institutions involved. Jazz Education has ultimately functioned in ways that have substantively impacted our institutions and the music itself. While the impact of Jazz Education has often and justifiably been framed negatively, its very existence (along with the accompanying controversies) has likely informed the kinds of thinking about music and music education that lead to the sort of work Lucy Green has produced. Likewise, in order for Green’s work to have greater meaning for Jazz Education, we must place formal jazz pedagogies into context with the modes of transmission relied upon by jazz before its ‘formalization’.

Prior to Jazz Education, as mentioned above, jazz was transmitted in ways that are demonstrably similar to those described by Lucy Green. Students did not have access to books or printed music that codified the process of developing fluency, and therefore were left to their own devices. Sonny Rollins, in writing a foreword to John Fordham’s book *Jazz*, states:

Nothing like this was available for my generation when we were growing up. We had to pick up what we could when we could and where we could. It was mainly recordings in those days until we were old enough to be admitted to nightclubs...(Rollins, 1994)

The informal transmission of jazz is largely documented through oral histories and personal accounts. Interaction between jazz students and jazz teachers was not common or required

(although by no means unknown), and tended to be in the form of one-on-one instruction often instigated by the aspiring youngster. There are many examples of young jazz musicians studying with older jazz musicians—Johnny Hodges getting lessons with Sidney Bechet; young bebop musicians receiving insights from Dizzy Gillespie; Lee Konitz's studies with Lennie Tristano; Sonny Rollins' and John Coltrane's experiences with Thelonious Monk—but fewer examples of study that occurred as either initial or regular instruction. Lennie Tristano, a rare jazz musician whose reputation is balanced between his accomplishments as a performer and as an educator, worked primarily with advanced students. There are numerous examples of celebrated jazz musicians who began with non-jazz music instruction, often in 'formal' classroom settings, including many of the musicians mentioned or quoted in this essay.

Green states that jazz musicians have traditionally learned under the guidance of their elders—“‘apprenticeship training’—whereby young musicians are introduced, and explicitly trained or just generally helped by an individual adult or a ‘community of expertise’” (Green, 2008, p. 6). Green's observation is intended to distinguish the learning practices of popular musicians from those used by jazz musicians. This is a commonly held view, and can be supported with several examples. As a distinguishing element between jazz and popular music, however, two points must be considered. The first is that this distinction often fails to account for initial learning processes that jazz musicians engaged prior to their interactions with elder jazz musicians. The second is that the role assumed by the jazz elder often resembles the role of the teacher in Green's pedagogy.

As one example, Rollins refers to formative experiences he had with Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell. Rollins describes these experiences as taking place in the context of playing or rehearsing, but nonetheless ascribes formative educational value to them. Many jazz musicians speak of their interactions with elders in ways that, while not contradicting Green's statement, indicate an absence of 'explicit' instruction in favor of an 'experience' heavy approach to the sharing of expertise. The following exchange between Rollins and George Goodman provides one example: “I had wanted to ask Rollins what he learned from Monk. He answered me in a word: ‘Everything.’ What was it that Monk taught him? ‘Nothing’” (Goodman, 1999, p. 84). Rollins provided a more detailed description of his 'apprenticeship' with Monk:

Every day after school I would go to Thelonious Monk's place and practice with his band. He never really told me what to play, because I guess he respected my playing. But I learned a lot from Monk just hanging out with him (Nisenson, 2000, p. 31).

On one level, it is clear that in order for Rollins to function in this kind of instructional setting, he needed to have certain fundamental skills in place—Monk did not need to teach him saxophone fingerings, for example. On another level, it is clear that working with Monk seems to have addressed all aspects of Rollins' musicianship. We can conclude that 'learning through doing' was a guiding principle of this kind of pedagogical apprenticeship, reinforced by the experiences John Coltrane also had with Monk. According to Coltrane, Monk would simply start playing something, "maybe just one of his tunes", over and over again until Coltrane would 'get it' (L. Porter, 2001, p. 108). This instruction took place at a time in Coltrane's life when he was also musically advanced.²³ Most examples of 'jazz apprenticeships' with which I am familiar (including Louis Armstrong with King Oliver, Coleman Hawkins with Louis Armstrong, Don Byas with Art Tatum, Miles Davis with Charlie Parker, and Cannonball Adderley with Miles Davis) seem to have required that certain fluencies be developed at an earlier stage and rarely account for the 'beginning' stages of learning.²⁴ On the other hand, the role of the teacher in Green's pedagogy, largely removed from hands-on instruction, can be seen, at least loosely, in the role assumed by Monk. This kind of mentoring role is also common in the ways many other esteemed jazz musicians led (or continue to lead) their groups and interacted with younger musicians.²⁵

How did jazz musicians acquire fundamental skills that allowed them to enter into productive learning situations with elder musicians? Coltrane, Rollins, and many other jazz musicians, seem to have acquired these skills largely through aural processes (primarily listening to and playing along with recordings), and often in the context of peer groups (along the lines described by Lucy Green). There is ample evidence of this, most of it anecdotal, scattered through a variety of source material—biographies, trade journal interviews, and histories. Including Johnny Hodges and Harry Carney, John Coltrane and Benny Golson, or Sonny Rollins and the rest of the 'Sugar Hill Gang,'²⁶ there are many examples of aspiring young musicians getting together outside of school to listen to and learn from the recordings they admired, as well as practice together. Benny Golson provides an articulate example of this practice:

And it was an empirical process, trial and error, bouncing off of one another. We imitated others, but that wasn't the total end. We were highly eclectic. How could

there be anything else? You know, we bought the records. We listened to them. I copied solos. But we used that as a basis, intuitively. We didn't know what we were doing, but we set up our own infrastructure upon which we could build things in the future. (Golson & Merod, 1998, p. 37)

Hand-in-hand with this kind of self-training came a broader—one might say cultural—study of the musical tradition. Following musical trends, adopting dress codes, language patterns, and sensibilities could be included, something that is evident in another quote from Sonny Rollins:

We used to follow Coleman Hawkins all around. He was my idol and just being in his company was thrilling for me. He lived in elegant style, driving a new Cadillac and always dressing really well. I admired his sense of style almost as much as I did his playing... We learned a lot about what it meant to be a jazz musician (Nisenson, 2000, pp. 30–31).

The role of the elder, therefore, can be expanded to include certain ideas involving culture—imitation of dress, lifestyle, speech, character—that would seem to be true for today's aspiring pop musician as much as it was true for young jazz musicians. It also seems that whether apprenticeship comes in the form of playing in groups with elders, or playing along with recordings of those elders, the apprenticeship phase is a key element to the transmission of both traditions. The jazz tradition may well be distinct from popular music in that the learning process in jazz is often overtly viewed as continuing well into a jazz musician's career, as he or she moves into professional groups playing under the direction of older musicians. Perhaps this is a result of a longer apprenticeship stage in jazz, or the frequent intermingling of generations within jazz bands. Perhaps even these observations are subtle and easily blurred distinctions.

The commonalities in the transmission practices of these two traditions lead me to question the use of particular categories in discussing what kinds of music we are teaching. In relation to jazz, pedagogical issues have emerged as a result of the construction of a canonical vision of the category. This category-building, made necessary by the institutionalization of the music, forced the issues of not only what will be taught, but how those things will be taught. If, for example, Keith Jarrett's idea is to be considered—"jazz is not the material itself, but the musicians' 'dance' with the material"—our constructs of category need reconsideration.

Of all the categories of music, 'popular' seems the most clearly described and therefore the least problematic. Its title allows for the inclusion of music regardless of connotations of style or instrumentation or culture. Berry Gordy Jr., the founder of Motown

Records, called his music ‘pop’ in order to avoid being categorized (Robinson, 2008, p. 310). We ought to be able to identify popular music simply by asking the question ‘is it popular’? Perhaps because of the inherent practicality of this title, however, it falls short of being useful in identifying specific musical practices and associated methods of teaching and learning. Issues of what can be included and what cannot are not addressed by the category.

Green’s work is remarkably unaffected by this observation, as her pedagogy, for the most part, does not rely on a prescriptive definition of ‘popular music’, but rather on the musical understandings of those involved in the transmission-process. In her pedagogy, the connotations associated with the term ‘popular music’ are left largely in the hands of the learners and teachers. Her pedagogy does, however, emerge from a study of pop musicians, so the methods of transmission that she uses are rooted in an interpretation of ‘what is popular music’.²⁷ Jazz, and the impossibility of defining it based upon a set of musical characteristics, provides an example of how complex this issue can become. Rather than transfer these difficulties across genres, it may be useful, if not inevitable to rethink categories as they relate to music education.

‘Jazz’ and ‘popular music’ are complex references that undoubtedly mean different things to different people. As Green demonstrates, the same holds true for ‘classical’ music. She shows that students enter the classroom with definite sets of pre-conceptions regarding classical music that are often different than those held by their teachers and parents. Her work also illustrates that those pre-conceptions can break down through experience—largely in Chapter 7 (thinking of Justin’s story on page 166 regarding *Fur Elise*, Madeline’s heart-warming description of finding “a bit more joy in it” on page 170, but also the reporting on stages 6 and 7). Perhaps this is evidence that exposure to non-familiar genres of music leads to tolerance of those genres, but it also demonstrates that the categories might break down when listeners become ‘doers.’ This breakdown does not seem unusual. Duke Ellington is frequently cited as an example of a musician with little use for categories. On one occasion, Ellington stated “I don’t write jazz, I write Negro folk music” (Jewell, 1986, p. 22). Other jazz musicians have expressed a similar sentiment. Max Roach, in a powerful essay written in 1972, stated that jazz, a term he ultimately rejected,

is the cultural expression of Africans who are dispersed on this North American continent. It derives in a continuing line from the musical and cultural traditions of Africa. We must recognize what those traditions are, what it is we are doing

musically, how we learn our music, how it pleases and has meaning, and what its significance is. (Roach, 1999, p. 308)

Roach encouraged not only that the learning processes associated with his musical tradition need to be upheld, but that musicians needed to “cleanse” their minds of

false categories which are not basic to us and which divide us rather than unite us. They are misnomers: jazz music, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, gospel, spirituals, blues, folk music. Regardless of what they are called, they are various expressions of black music, black culture itself, the expression of Africans in the diaspora. (ibid., p. 309)

Roach uses cultural heritage, not racial propriety, as a means of establishing a category that has more meaning, more pedagogical utility, and can be more easily defined and understood. The ways of learning and understanding are included in his definition of the category. One might conclude that the category would not exist separated from its traditions.

Randy Weston, a jazz pianist, states that prior to knowing what being a musician was, he thought jazz was “the music of the black people: free, creative, and swinging.” His understanding of this category seems to have changed with experience, in part noting that classical influences became increasingly apparent to him in jazz, but also in his own exploration of the cultural ‘roots’ of jazz:

I have decided to search for the roots of jazz, of gospel music, of calypso and of Latin music—all the different music by different people with dark skins spread out all through the New World, producing everything from Bossa Nova to Aretha Franklin, from Ray Charles to Charlie Parker. There is a definite link between all those people. They’re all black, but there is another something else, too, and I think that other link between them is rhythm, a beat. (A. Taylor, 1993, pp. 29–39)

In the context of the above quotes, it makes a great deal of sense that popular musicians would have similar methods of transmission to those of pre-Jazz Education jazz musicians. While it is possible that these similarities are purely coincidental or the result of similar circumstances (having to learn music outside the walls of academia), the kinds of music being discussed, through a common heritage, also have substantial and fundamental links. First among these links would be a deep emphasis on groove. Others would include certain notions of function, social and cultural connotations/ meanings, histories, and non-Western ideas of technique and timbre. The history of popular music would start at basically the same time, with basically the same people, and in basically the same place as the history of jazz. It is untenable to suggest that jazz and popular music are the same, but this is not really the point. They are part of the same musical tradition—maybe branches of the same

family tree. Therefore, jazz and its relationship to the academy has meaning to popular music and Green's work can certainly have meaning for jazz.

I am inclined to give Jazz Education some credit for creating not only a space in our institutions for 'other' music, but also for providing much needed discourse on the ideas of what counts, what we are teaching, and how we are teaching it. It seems possible, if not demonstrable, that Jazz Education and its accompanying controversies functioned as an earlier version of bringing 'non-traditional' ideas into formal structures steeped in tradition, as Cannonball had hoped. This neither downplays Jazz Education's other contributions nor diminishes Green's pedagogy. Green's work, from this perspective, seems to represent something significant: the inclusion of an 'other' music (in this case a music from the West African Diaspora) primarily through the modes of instruction associated with that 'other' music.

A cynic might wonder if certain modes of transmission can exist within our academic structures. Surely there are valid reasons why, to paraphrase Michael Cain, no jazz school would adopt the auditioning process or rehearsal techniques of working, even canonical, jazz musicians (Cain, 2007, p. 36). Perhaps the kind of teaching and learning described by Green will be uncomfortable in institutions, which may prove poor substitutes for basements, garages, and clubs. Perhaps opening our schools to these ways of teaching these kinds of music will negatively affect our treasured yet commercially fragile musical traditions. All of these issues, and surely many more, will provide for interesting conversations, research, and decision-making.

Perhaps it's because I recognize and identify with her pedagogy that Lucy Green's work seems rich in common sense. Perhaps for these same reasons, I might be inclined to read too much into her work. It indicates awareness that the methods of transmission must now be considered a crucial part of the music being transmitted. From my perspective, this appears as a shift, as in jazz we have more focused on learning things that canonical jazz musicians seemed to know, rather than learning things in the ways that those musicians had learned. The later stages of Green's project—the classical music phase—demonstrates that the transmission of musical material can be viewed as more important than the material. This seems to resonate with ideas presented in this essay— notions that, at least within certain musical traditions, the process can take priority over the product. Taken into the difficult realm of category, all of this leads me to wonder if our notions of category can, in fact, be

better dealt with through modes of transmission. Whether the piece is *Fur Elise*, *Take The A Train*, or *Cameo*, the ways students approach learning the music might have more to do with its categorization than its composer. For educational purposes, what kind of music it is might be more accurately defined through understanding how it was learned and for what reasons.

Returning to my areas of jazz and Jazz Education, a wholesale return to pre-Jazz Education modes of transmission is clearly impossible. Nonetheless, Green's pedagogy offers worthwhile challenges and opportunities to Jazz Educators, which I expect will prompt further discussions around the jazz canon and the ways in which it is constructed, preserved and transmitted. These discussions, particularly those focused on and emerging from Jazz Education, may involve the challenge of broadening of our ideas of category, particularly as popular musics enter our formal institutions. In many ways, all of this seems a very long time coming as Cannonball Adderley and Max Roach, to name but two, were discussing the importance of studying music of the West African Diaspora almost forty years ago.

A broader understanding of categories for pedagogical purposes, linked to cultural systems of knowing and valuing music, where our more discrete categories are viewed as branches (branches that can intertwine) that inform our modes of musical transmission, in many ways (like Green's pedagogy), just seems like common sense. Many would agree with Derek Scott's preface to Green's book, in which he states that a "relativistic outlook has replaced the universal perspective of modernism" (cited in Green, 2008, p. vii) and, as a result, we increasingly view music as deriving its meaning from its context. It seems entirely logical, and likely, that our pedagogies will be one of the crucial aspects that reflect this shift. What this could mean for jazz is impossible to predict, although it might present new ways of determining what counts and what doesn't count—practices might count more than the results of those practices. It might lead to a particular understanding of jazz that is not rooted in debates of definition, but in particular ways of making and learning music using a variety of materials, the diversity of which can be understood, transmitted, and linked through culture as much as through canon. Whatever might follow, Lucy Green, through her pedagogy, has given us much to consider.

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Notes

¹ Largely following Green's example, I will use 'formal' and 'informal' simply to distinguish transmission practices that occur inside (formal) and outside (informal) of schools and universities. I do not intend the use of 'informal' to imply 'casual'.

² I will use capital letters throughout this paper to distinguish institutionalized, or formal, Jazz Education from informal jazz education.

³ These scholars and performers include Ben Sidran, David Ake, Scott Deveaux, Michael Cain, and Robert Walser.

⁴ This is to indicate that my examples should not be taken as definitive. My limited selection undoubtedly excludes many musicians that would better fit another model, and excludes other musicians who have come along in the post-Jazz Education world. I am only using some examples that account for my response.

⁵ There are other factors that have undoubtedly affected and altered the transmission of the jazz tradition—the recording industry, being one example—but I will focus only on the role of Jazz Education.

⁶ "America's Classical Music" is included in the title of Grover Sales' 1984 textbook, but is also closely associated with the celebrated jazz pianist and educator Dr. Billy Taylor.

⁷ Also useful for grasping the implications of 'definition' on jazz pedagogies are Eric Porter (2002, pp. 287–334) and David Ake (2002, pp. 112–145).

⁸ Gary Tomlinson also addresses this in his article "Cultural Dialogics and Jazz: A White Historian Signifies" (1996, pp. 74–77).

⁹ This idea is also briefly discussed by Charles Beale in his essay "Jazz Education" (2000, p. 757).

¹⁰ Both Jack DeJohnette and Robin Eubanks are deeply rooted in the pre-Jazz Education jazz tradition primarily, though not exclusively, through their musical associations with 'canonical' jazz musicians who pre-date Jazz Education.

¹¹ <http://www.patmetheny.com/writings.cfm> (Pat Metheny's official website).

¹² On this page Walser also states "the work of Miles Davis seems to repudiate conventional notions of aesthetic distance and insists that music is less a thing than an activity." This further supports the sentiment of Jarrett that jazz is more a 'way' than a 'thing'.

¹³ While taking place on March 1, 1997, this interview was not published until 2003.

¹⁴ http://www.coas.howard.edu/music/academics/degree_programs/jazz_studies.html

¹⁵ It's also interesting to note that the Lenox School, given its deliberate attempt to place students in contact with working professional musicians, in some ways is similar to stage 5 of Green's book. The brochure referenced can be seen at <http://www.jazzdiscography.com/Lenox/brochure.htm>.

¹⁶ Gennari, on page 212 of his book (2006), points out that a 1966 *Billboard* poll found that Dave Brubeck, Miles Davis, Modern Jazz Quintet, Gerry Mulligan, Stan Kenton, and Duke Ellington were among the most popular musicians for college students.

¹⁷ As Tomlinson points out in his essay ('Cultural Dialogics'), critic and historian Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) did question the transfer of Eurocentric notions into the jazz tradition in his 1967 article 'Jazz and the White Critic.' On page 18 of this article, Baraka wrote that dating back to the 1940s "the white middle-brow critic...was already trying to formalize and finally institutionalize it. It is a hideous idea. The music was already in danger of being forced into that junk pile of admirable objects and data the West knows as *culture*."

¹⁸ Murphy, Dan (1994). 'Jazz Studies in American Schools and Colleges: A Brief History.' Murphy summarizes a generally accepted reading of this history where the 1970s was the decade when the idea of including jazz in formal music education settings became generally accepted and acceptable. Another is found in Bash and Kuzmich (1985), who state that "Jazz Education is essentially a product of the 1970s and usually associated with the formation of the National Association of Jazz Educators (NAJE) in 1968" on pg. 14.

¹⁹ These ideas emerged from a long discussion of this essay with my colleague, Michael Cain.

²⁰ It would be impossible to fully answer 'why jazz'. Cannonball's comments and the following discussion of preservation and protection is only intended to raise one particular aspect of 'why jazz', and lead into the idea of formal structures as protective of a canonical structure.

²¹ The article from which this quote is taken is a fascinating exchange between Marsalis and Herbie Hancock. It should be noted that Marsalis quickly retreated from his assertion that jazz was superior to pop music.

²² At the peak of his activity, Cannonball probably presented this seminar about 100 times in a year—by the time of this interview, Cannonball's group was noticing a decline in university interest due to an increase in the number of jazz programs at universities. Interestingly, Cannonball is asked if the teaching of jazz in academic institutions risks 'over-formalizing' the music, indicating that this was a concern as early as 1972.

²³ My use of the term 'elder' should be qualified. Monk was only thirteen years older than Rollins and nine years older than Coltrane. I'm using this term to connote both the experience of the older musician and the esteem in which he (and in this essay, they are all 'he's') is held. Thinking purely in terms of chronology, this term can be misleading.

²⁴ I am not familiar with the sources used by Green to support her view of the 'apprenticeship' model in jazz transmission. My examples are intended purely to demonstrate another interpretation of 'apprenticeship' in the jazz tradition, not refute Green's.

²⁵ As examples, both Sonny Rollins and Miles Davis have been known to give very little direction to members of their bands, seemingly preferring musicians to develop their intuition, their ears, and their own sensibilities rather than through direct instruction. Nisenson (2000) mentions this on page 7, but it can be documented in other sources.

²⁶ 'The Sugar Hill Gang' included Rollins, Jackie McLean, Walter Bishop, Kenny Drew, and Art Taylor (among others), who would all become notable jazz musicians.

²⁷ Wayne Bowman (2004), on pages 31–37, provides a very useful examination of the complexity of 'popular music' as a category.

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