What is this Revenant Called Jazz?

Value, Nostalgia, and Racialized Listening

AJ Kluth, PhD
Case Western Reserve University
September 9, 2022

“Jazz Is Dead,” Theo Croker

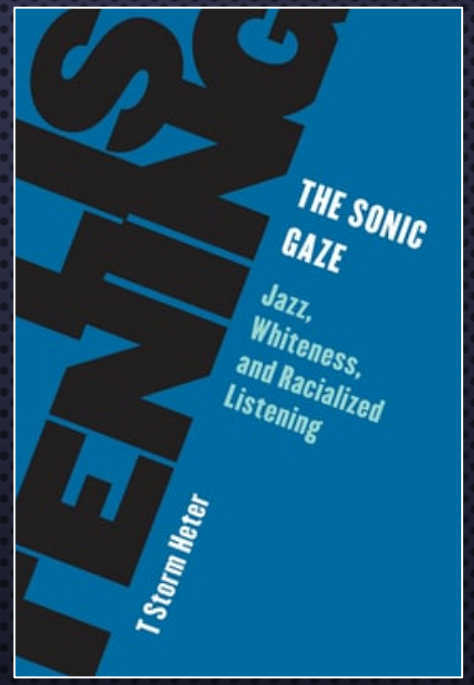
ft. Gary Bartz, Kassa Overall - April, 2022



T STORM HETER

THE SONIC GAZE: JAZZ, WHITENESS, AND RACIALIZED LISTENING (2022)

AMONG BLACK PHILOSOPHERS OF EXISTENCE, THE WHITE PROBLEM IS FORMULATED AS A PROBLEM OF REALITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND VALUE. WHITENESS ALLOWS WHITES TO INVERT REALITY, EVADE KNOWLEDGE OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS, AND FLEE FROM MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHITE VIOLENCE. IN *DARKWATER*, DU BOIS ASKS WHITE READERS, "BUT WHAT ON EARTH IS WHITENESS THAT ONE SHOULD SO DESIRE IT?" IN [LEWIS] GORDON'S VARIATION, "THE WHITE PROBLEM…IS THAT THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY SALVATION FOR WHITES IN A RACIST WORLD ONCE RACISM IS ADMITTED TO BE OPPRESSIVE." FANON ADMONISHES, "LET US HAVE THE COURAGE TO SAY IT: *IT IS THE RACIST WHO CREATES THE INFERIORIZED*." **IN ALL OF THESE FORMATIONS, WHITENESS IS UNDERSTOOD AS DEATH**. AS GORDON MAINTAINS, "TO BE BLACK MAY MEAN TO SUFFER, LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY, ON AN EVERYDAY BASIS, BUT TO BE WHITE MAY ULTIMATELY MEAN–AT LEAST WHEN MORAL REFLECTION IS PERMITTED TO ENTER–TO BE CONDEMNED." (104-5)



JAZZ IS DEAD

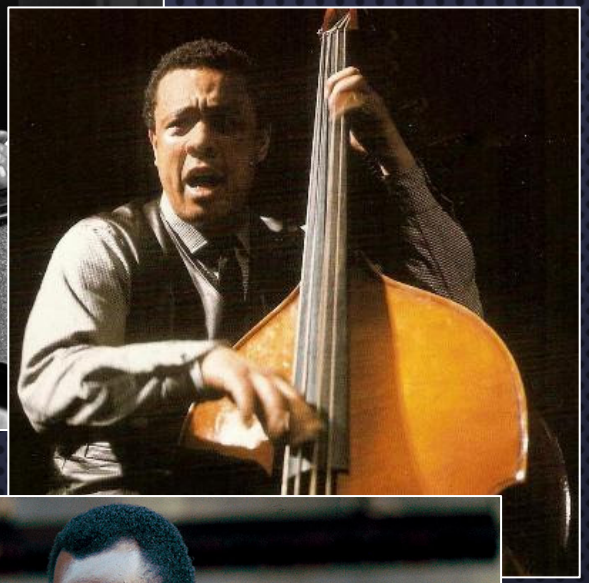








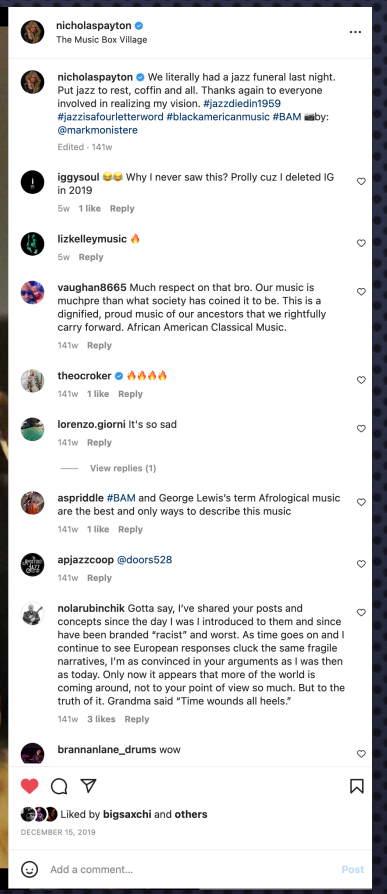












NICHOLAS PAYTON

HOME NICK'S WEBSITE

November 27, 2011 by nicholaspayton

ON WHY JAZZ ISN'T COOL ANYMORE

Jazz died in 1959.

There may be cool individuals who say they play Jazz, but ain't shit cool about Jazz as a whole.

Jazz died when cool stopped being hip.

Jazz was a limited idea to begin with.

Jazz is a label that was forced upon the musicians.

The musicians should've never accepted that idea.

Jazz ain't shit.

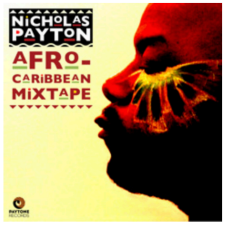
Jazz is incestuous.

Jazz separated itself from American popular music.

NICK ONLINE

Search ...

NICHOLAS PAYTON – AFRO-CARIBBEAN MIXTAPE



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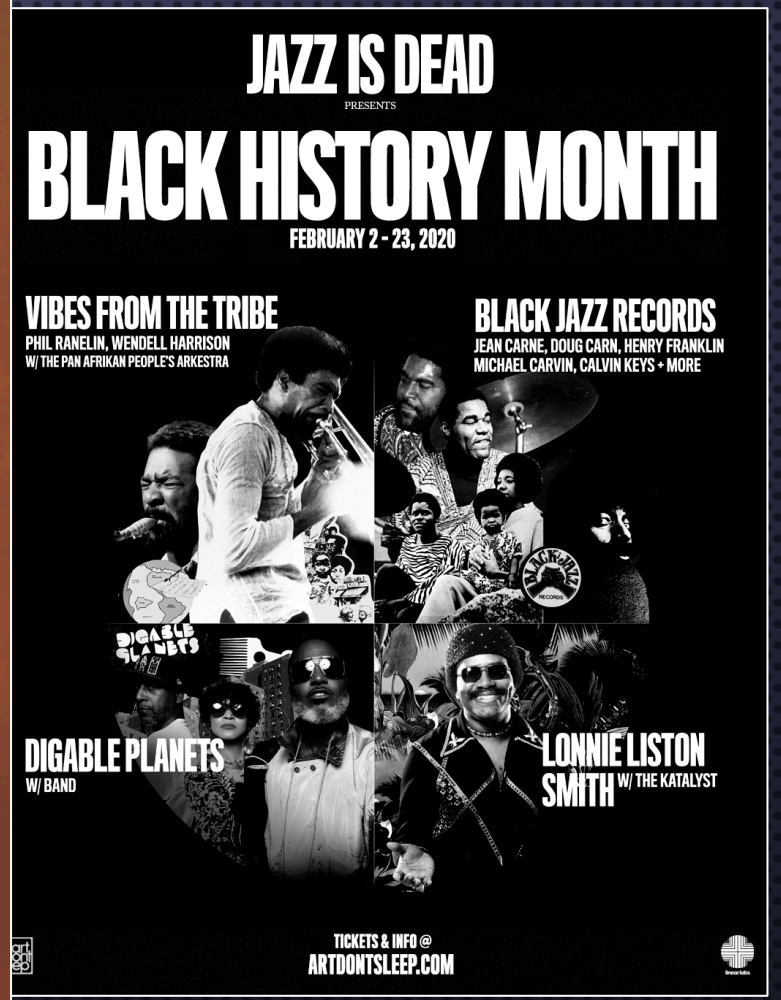
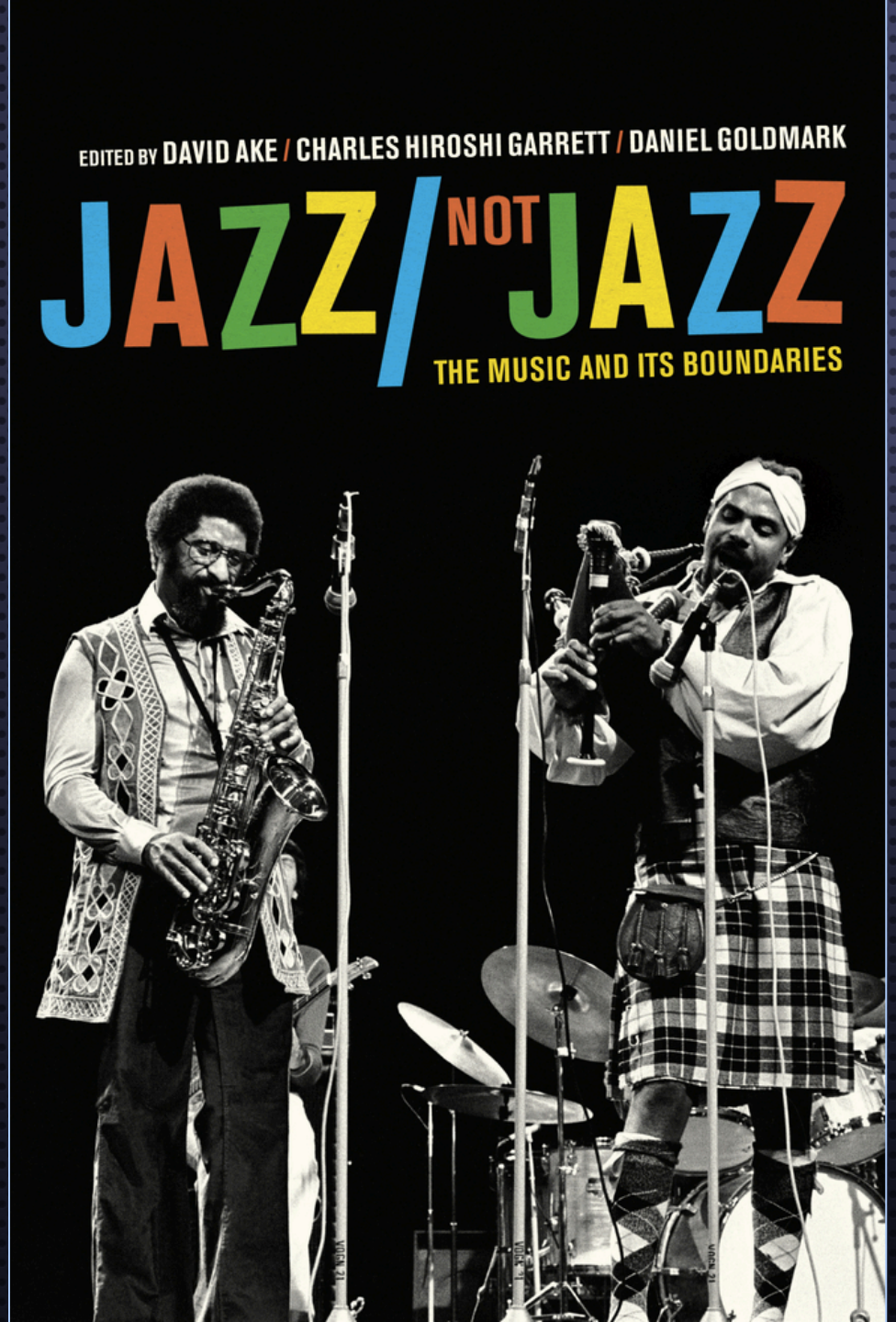


1. Drawn-out prolegomenon
2. Racialized Listening: The Sonic Gaze
3. Nostalgia: “’Member?”
4. Value: Thing-ification, Institutionalization, Memes
5. Conclusion

1. DRAWN-OUT PROLEGOMENON


EDITED BY DAVID AKE / CHARLES HIROSHI GARRETT / DANIEL GOLDMARK
JAZZ/NOT JAZZ
THE MUSIC AND ITS BOUNDARIES





2. RACIALIZED LISTENING

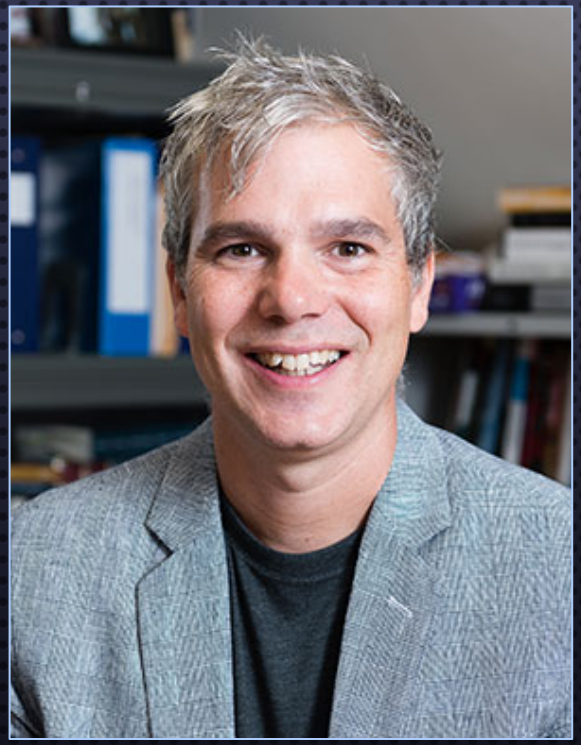
The Sonic Gaze

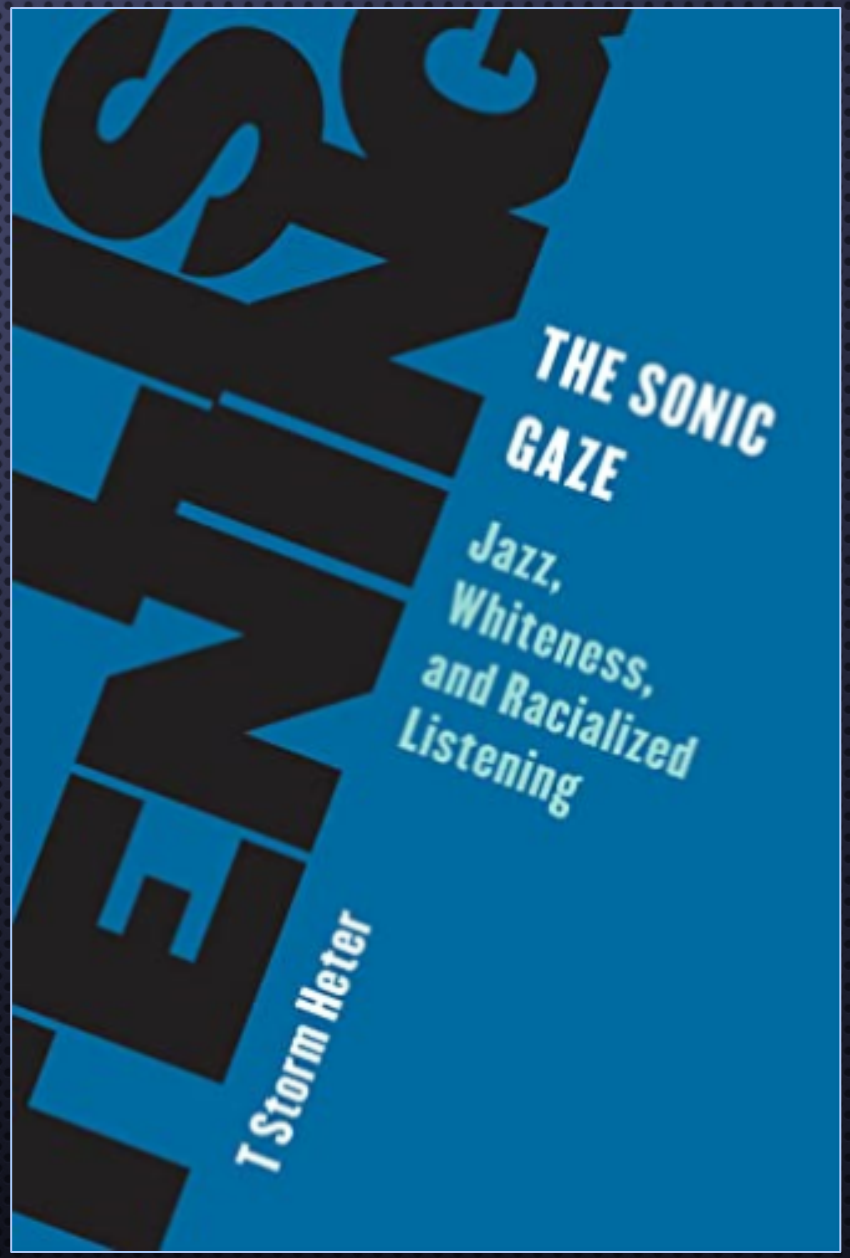
THE SONIC GAZE:

JAZZ, WHITENESS, AND RACIALIZED LISTENING

T STORM HETER, 2022
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY, PA







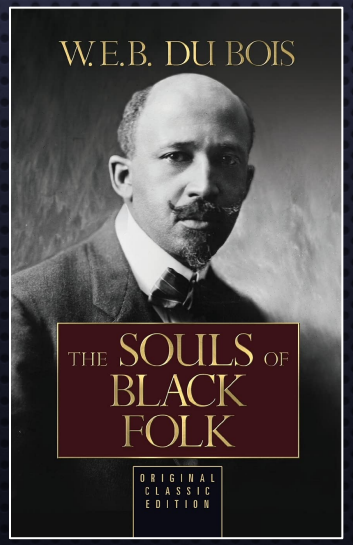
"Bad Faith" & Double Consciousness

"Bad faith" here is in reference to an existential concept in the Sartreian sense: a flight from freedom; a means by which to lie to one's self; to evade the responsibility of discovering and understanding one's authentic self (Sartre [1943] 1956).

…earlier, W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) had developed a related idea as part of his schema of "second-sight" that occasions Black double consciousness: a capacity for Black subjects to see themselves not just as they are, but as seen by White America.



Jean-Peal Sartre
Being and Nothingness
[1943] 1956



W. E. B. Du Bois
The Souls of Black Folk
1903

Patterns of White "Bad Faith" Listening

Heter, 2022

White Minstrel Listening	conflates actors with their roles, stereotypes Black people, emplaces minstrel images and sounds assigned to Blackness as components of White psychology
White Savior Listening	characterized by the attitudes of a White public fascinated but disturbed by jazz; praised White musicians for having tamed and cultivated the primitive raw material of jazz (e.g., Paul Whiteman)
White Hipster Listening	self-congratulating attitude pleased for being beyond "commercial" jazz; fetishized Black and Creole folk musician; desiring contact with non-White "others," leaving the killjoy world of Whiteness behind (e.g., Mezz Mezzrow)
White Revivalist Listening	collectors, festival organizers; archival pleasure-seekers rediscovering "lost" sounds; reproduces the logic of racial essentialism and purity through the uncritical supposedly "authentic" encounters with others; not mutual, but a one-way street of discovery and celebration by Whites of previously hidden or lost Black "knowledge"
White Colorblind Listening	normalization of jazz as White by musicians, critics, and audiences uncomfortable being perceived while listening to jazz music as Whites; motivated by grievances of White shame; "You can't hear race" as a crutch for colorblind ideology (e.g., Leonard Feather)
White Ecstatic Listening	related to "classical" listening; codes Black people and listening as noisy, fleshy, and embodied while coding Whites as disembodied intellectuals able to transcend the flesh by closing their eyes and quietly entering trance; listening hierarchy; highbrow/lowbrow; myth of Absolute music

3. NOSTALGIA

"'MEMBER?"

← **Thread**

Eric Weinstein ✓
@EricRWeinstein

I just don't see any path back. At least tonight. I was not looking forward to this speech. And it was bad.

We seem determined to continue to unravel this amazing country.

Gonna go listen to some live blues where no one cares about race.

Thankfully there is a 2 drink minimum..

11:30 PM · Sep 1, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

798 Retweets **761** Quote Tweets **11.6K** Likes





NEWS

Affluent White Man Enjoys, Causes The Blues

2/23/00 3:00PM

HIGHLAND PARK, IL–Steve Smalls, a senior vice-president at Chicago's Alliance Manufacturing, the world's largest producer of industrial refrigeration systems, is a self-described "blues nut."



Steve Smalls enjoys a Kenny Wayne Shepherd CD with his wife June.

With his regular table at Dan Aykroyd's House Of Blues, vast CD collection featuring the likes of B.B. King, Bonnie Raitt, and Jonny Lang, and framed photo of himself with Stevie Ray Vaughan, Smalls has been "a huge fan" of the music for more than 20 years.

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- ▶ Watch Now Basketball Fact: Did You Know?
- Herschel Walker Brushes Up On Theoretical Physics, Linguistics To Formulate Ideal Conditions For Warnock Debate

But the 43-year-old Smalls is not merely a blues lover: With his May 1999 relocation of Alliance's main assembly plant from Cicero, IL, to Hermosillo, Mexico, Smalls put 2,700 mostly black employees out of work, making him one of Chicago's greatest blues causers.

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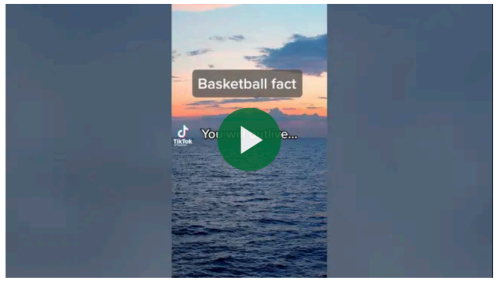
Watch

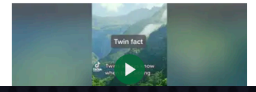


Basketball Fact: Did You Know?

Uber App Now Allowing Passengers To Rate Driver's Ethnicity
Wednesday 12:59PM



Twin Fact: Did You Know?
8/26/22 2:09PM



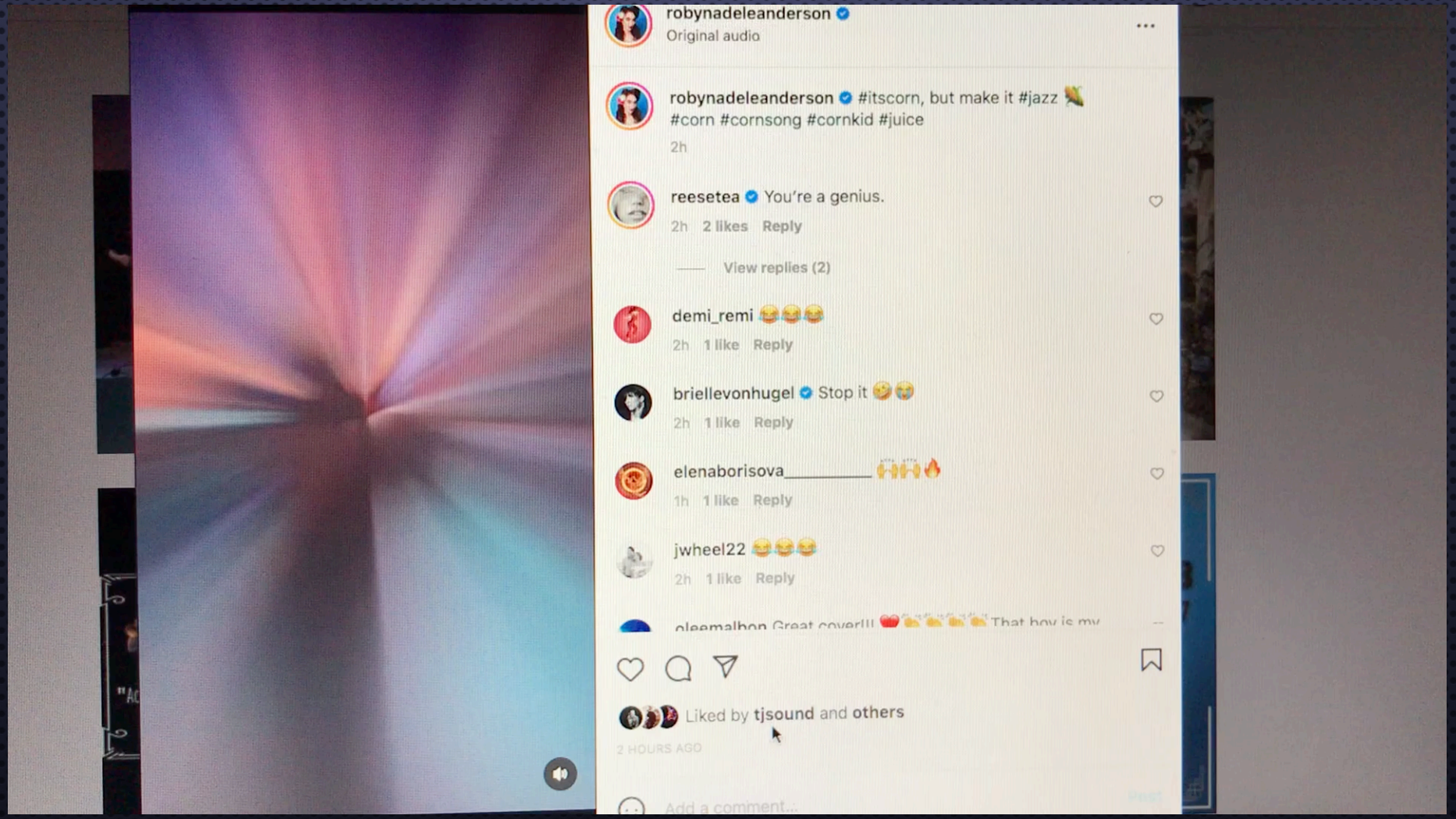
“IT’S CORN”

SCHMOYOHO, PREMIERED AUGUST 28, 2022



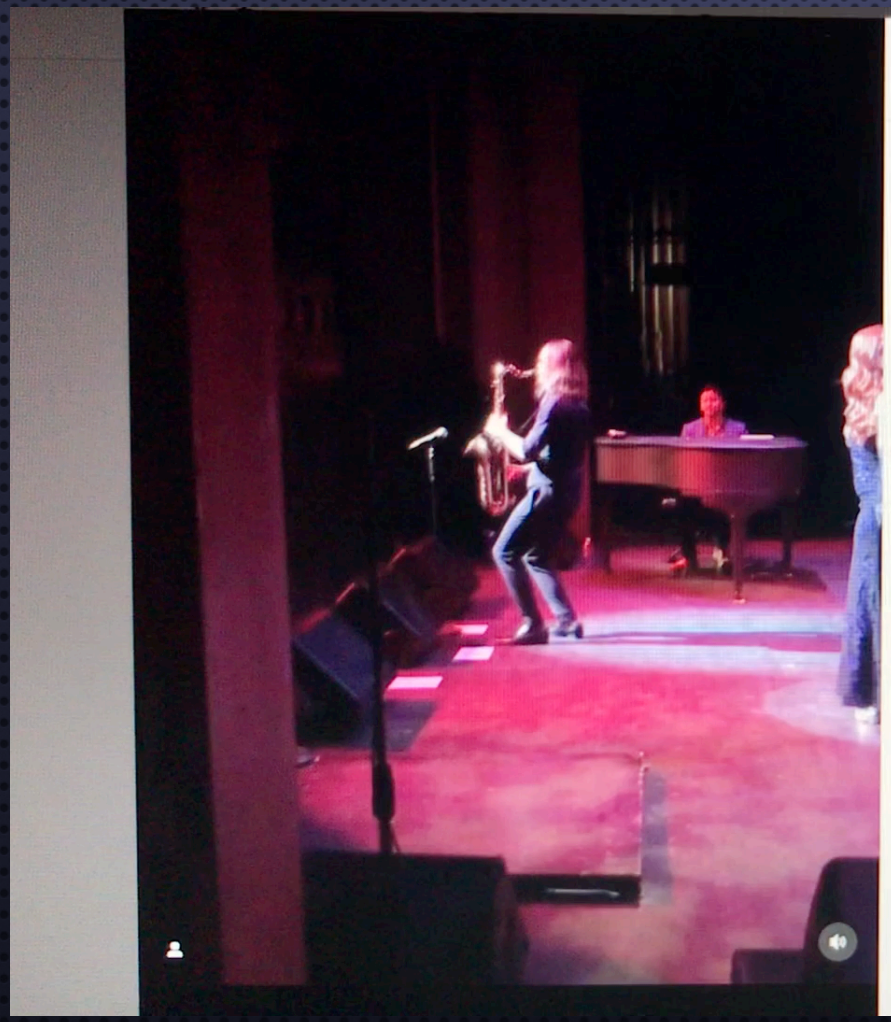
“IT’S CORN (BUT MAKE IT JAZZ)”

ROBYN ADELE ANDERSON ET AL - PREMIERED SEPTEMBER 3, 2022



“CARELESS WHISPER”

AJ ON TOUR WITH POSTMODERN JUKEBOX
FEBRUARY 2019 *CRINGE?*










COMEDY CENTRAL

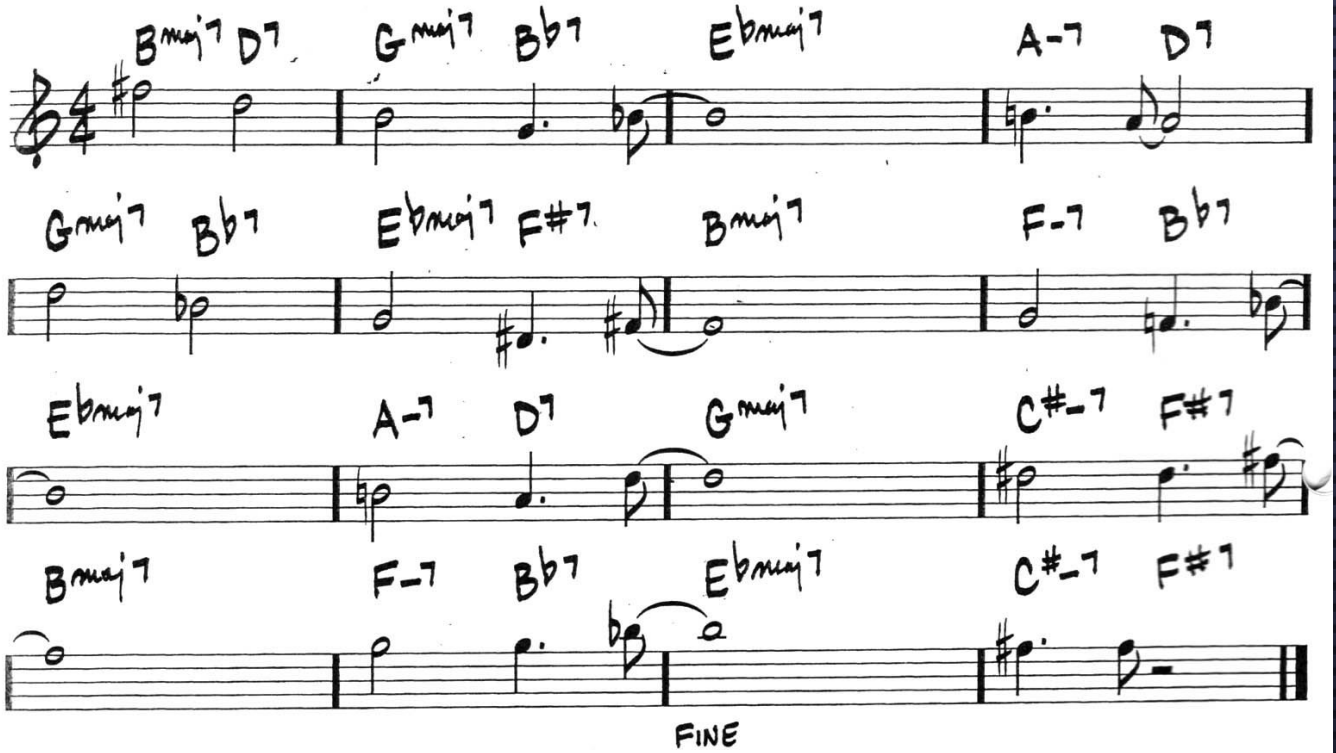
VALUE

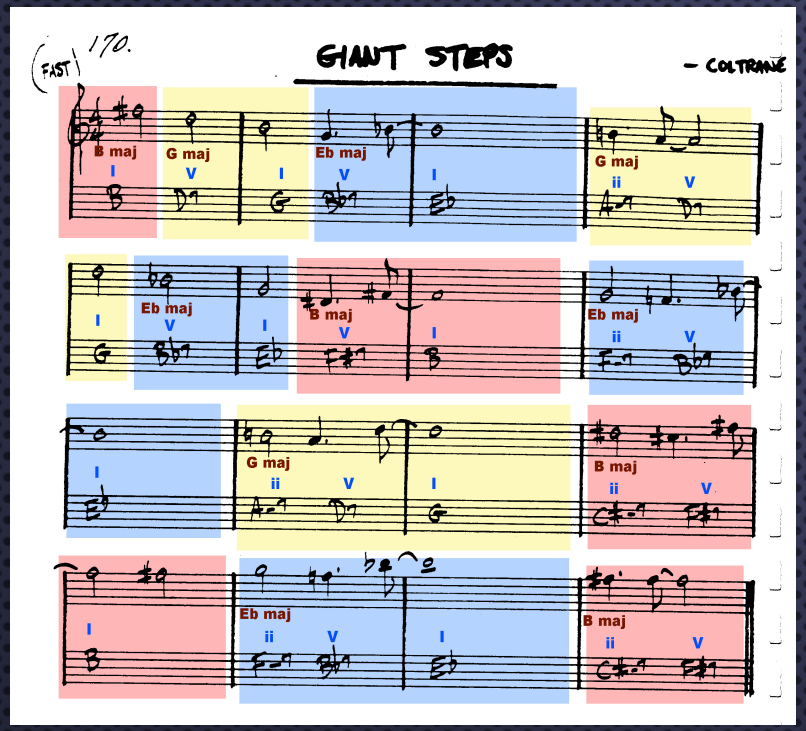
Memes & Institutional Thing-ification

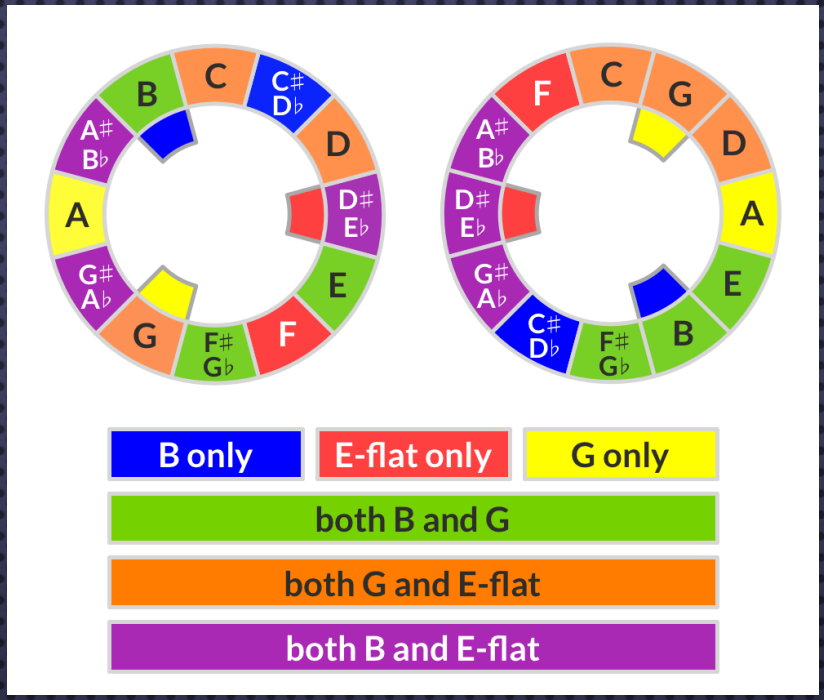
GIANT STEPS

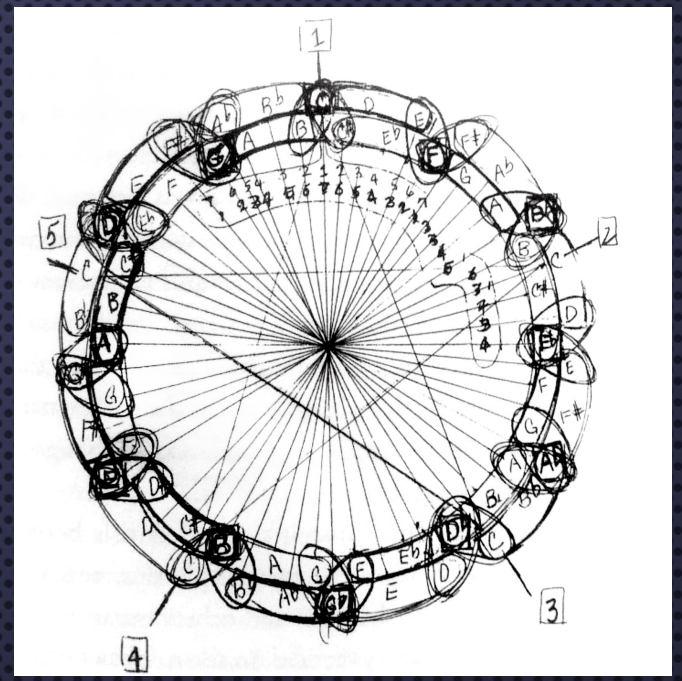
(UP)

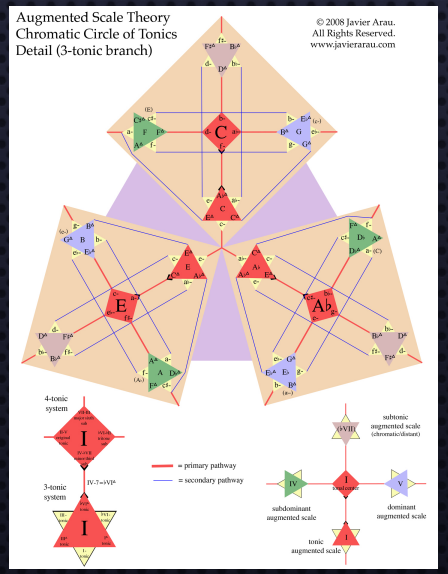
-JOHN COLTRANE




FAST 170.
GIANT STEPS
– COLTRANE
B maj
G maj
Eb maj
G maj
Eb maj
B maj
Eb maj
G maj
B maj
Eb maj
B maj


B only
E-flat only
G only
both B and G
both G and E-flat
both B and E-flat




Augmented Scale Theory
Chromatic Circle of Tonics
Detail (3-tonic branch)
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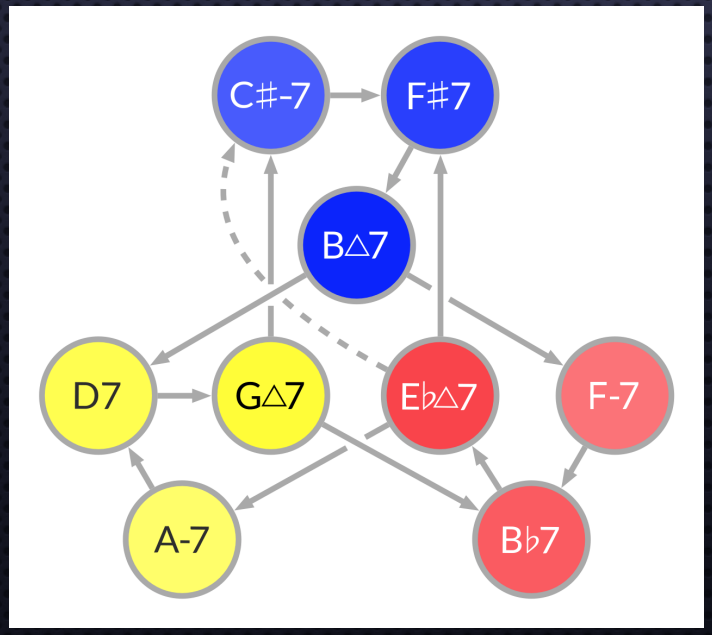
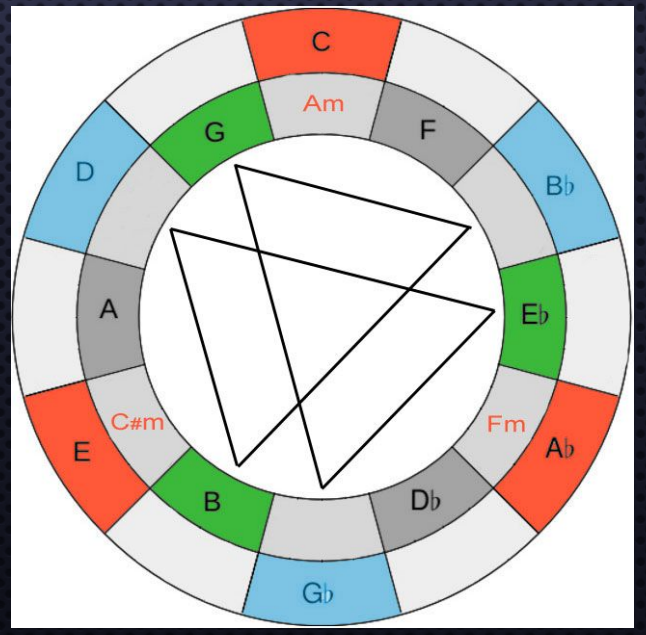

C♯-7
F♯7
B△7
D7
G△7
E♭△7
F-7
A-7
B♭7


C
Am
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D♭
Gm
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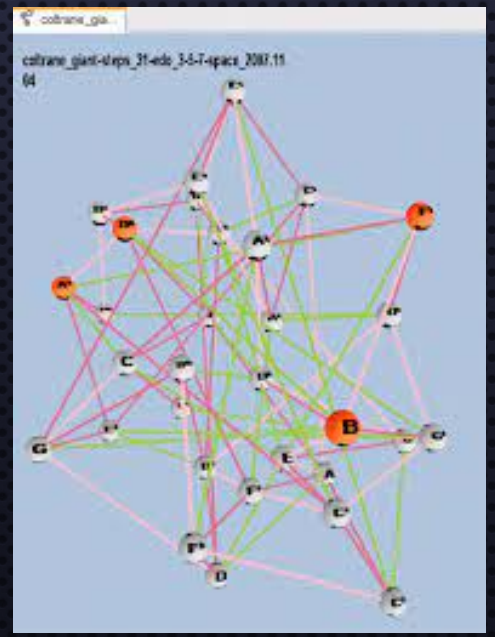


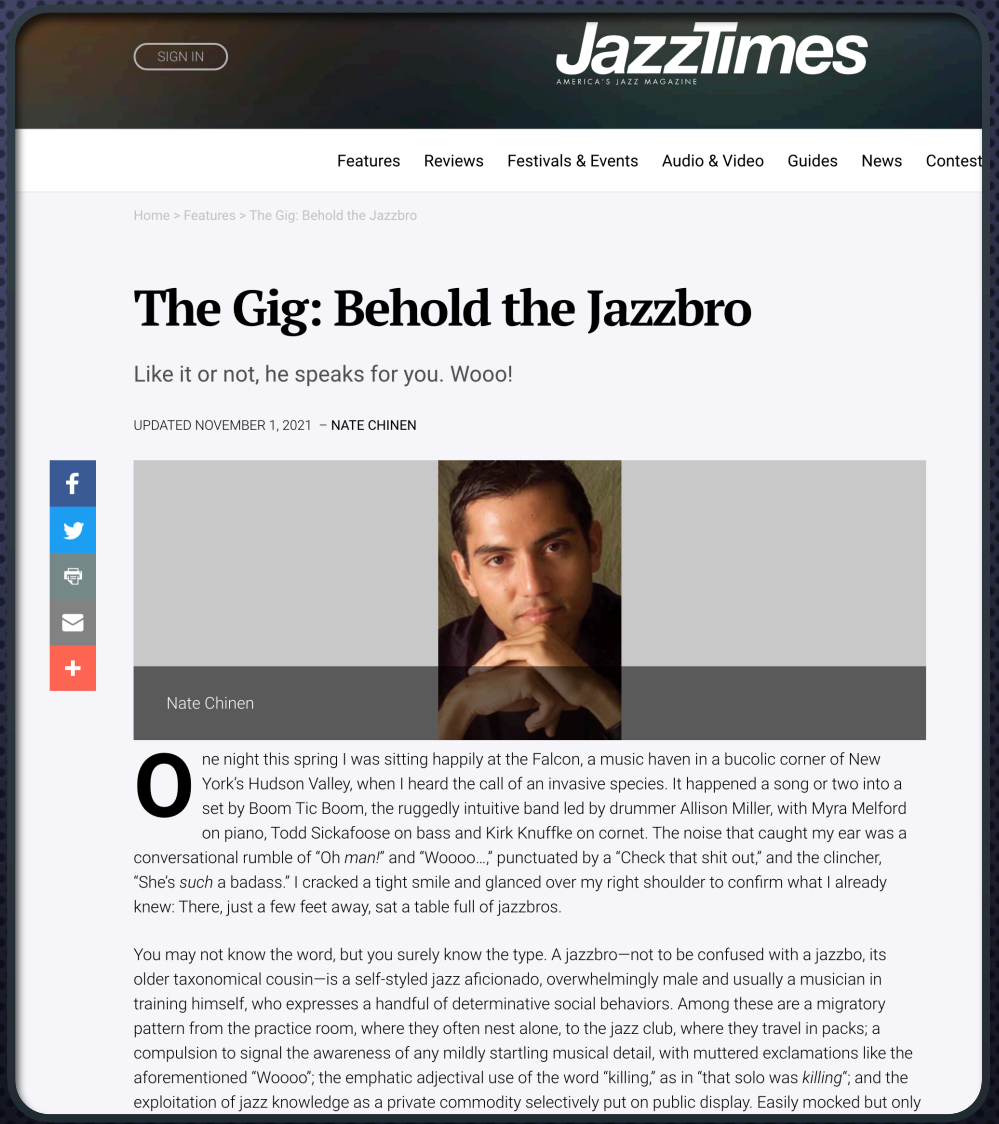
“GIANT STEPS”

BUT IT’S A GIANT COLLECTION OF MEMES



THE "JAZZBRO"

- YOUNG JAZZ MUSIC AFICIONADOS
- OVERWHELMINGLY MALE
- USUALLY A MUSICIAN IN TRAINING
- MIGRATES FROM PRACTICE ROOM TO JAZZ CLUB ASSURED OF THEIR SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE AND SUPERIOR TASTE



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The Gig: Behold the Jazzbro

Like it or not, he speaks for you. Wooo!

UPDATED NOVEMBER 1, 2021 – NATE CHINEN

Nate Chinen

One night this spring I was sitting happily at the Falcon, a music haven in a bucolic corner of New York's Hudson Valley, when I heard the call of an invasive species. It happened a song or two into a set by Boom Tic Boom, the ruggedly intuitive band led by drummer Allison Miller, with Myra Melford on piano, Todd Sickafoose on bass and Kirk Knuffke on cornet. The noise that caught my ear was a conversational rumble of "Oh *man!*" and "Woooo...," punctuated by a "Check that shit out," and the clincher, "She's *such* a badass." I cracked a tight smile and glanced over my right shoulder to confirm what I already knew: There, just a few feet away, sat a table full of jazzbros.

You may not know the word, but you surely know the type. A jazzbro—not to be confused with a jazzbo, its older taxonomical cousin—is a self-styled jazz aficionado, overwhelmingly male and usually a musician in training himself, who expresses a handful of determinative social behaviors. Among these are a migratory pattern from the practice room, where they often nest alone, to the jazz club, where they travel in packs; a compulsion to signal the awareness of any mildly startling musical detail, with muttered exclamations like the aforementioned "Woooo"; the emphatic adjectival use of the word "killing," as in "that solo was *killing*"; and the exploitation of jazz knowledge as a private commodity selectively put on public display. Easily mocked but only

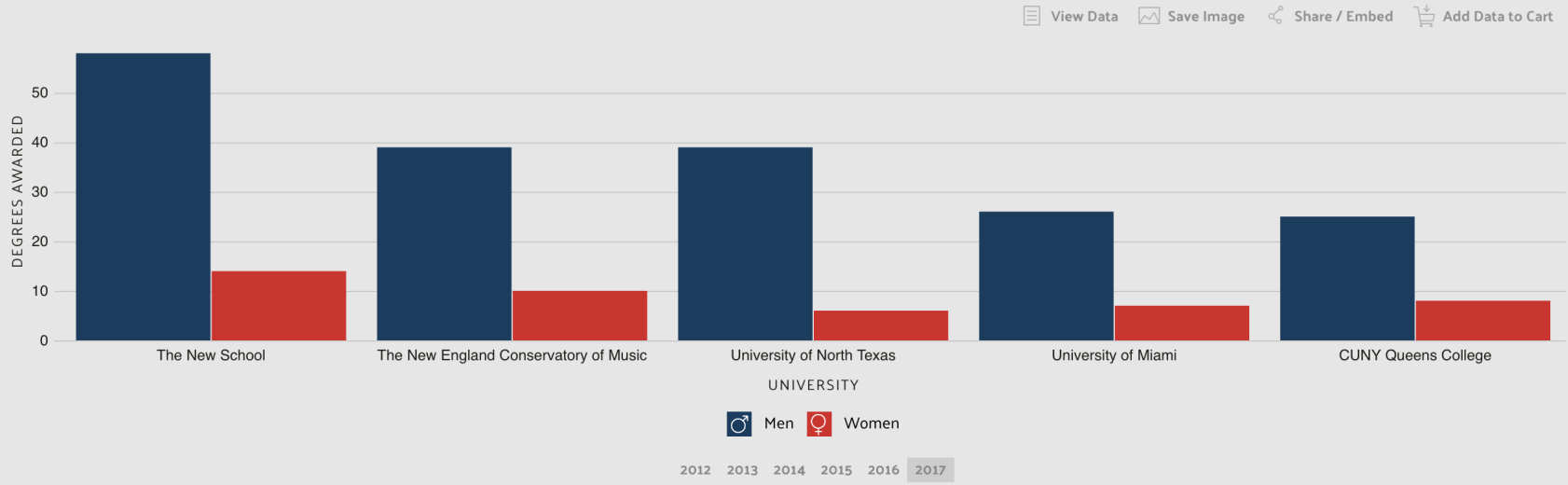
Gender Imbalance for Common Institutions

Male (82.9%)

MOST COMMON GENDER WITH A DEGREE IN THIS FIELD

This chart shows the granted degrees by gender at the 5 institutions that graduate the most students in Jazz & Jazz Studies.

Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Completions.



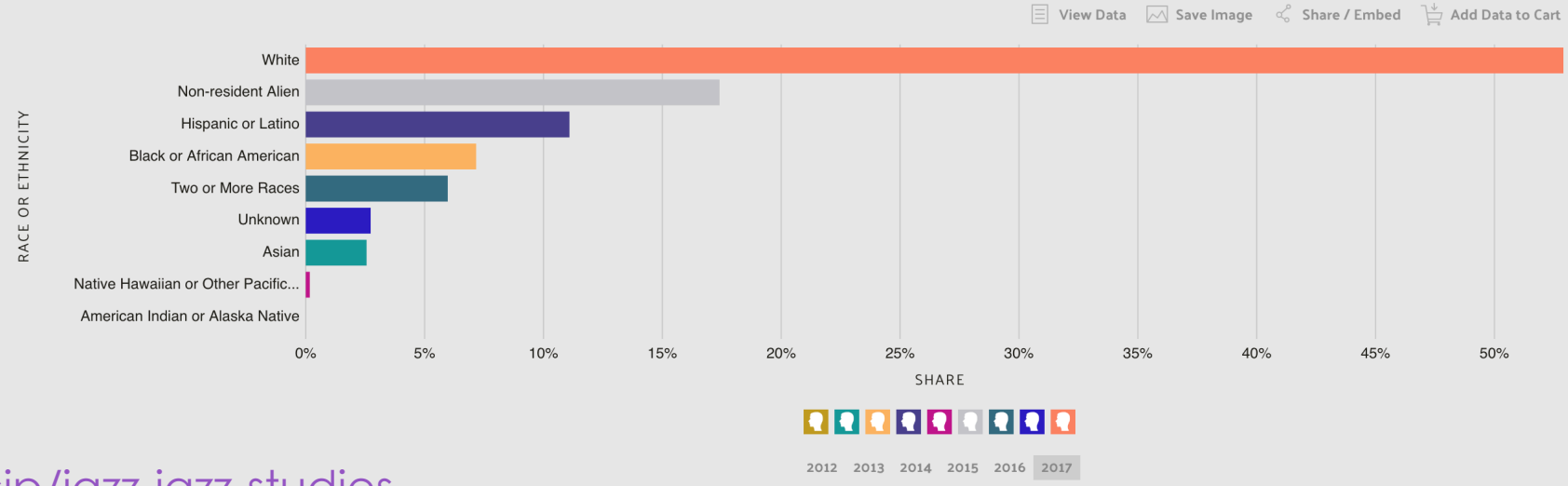
Race & Ethnicity by Degrees Awarded

MOST COMMON RACE OR ETHNICITY

1. White
   310 degrees awarded
2. Non-resident Alien
   102 degrees awarded
3. Hispanic or Latino
   65 degrees awarded

This chart shows the number of degrees awarded in Jazz & Jazz Studies for each race & ethnicity. White students earned the largest share of the degrees with this major.

Data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Completions.



https://datausa.io/profile/cip/jazz-jazz-studies

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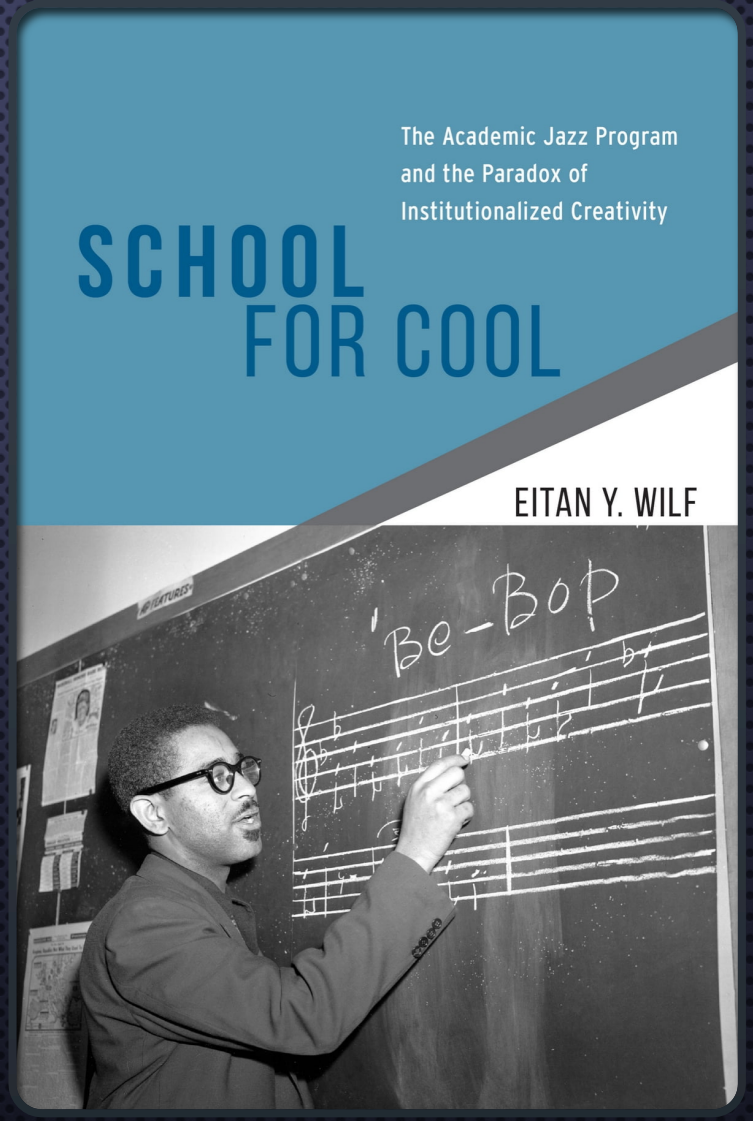
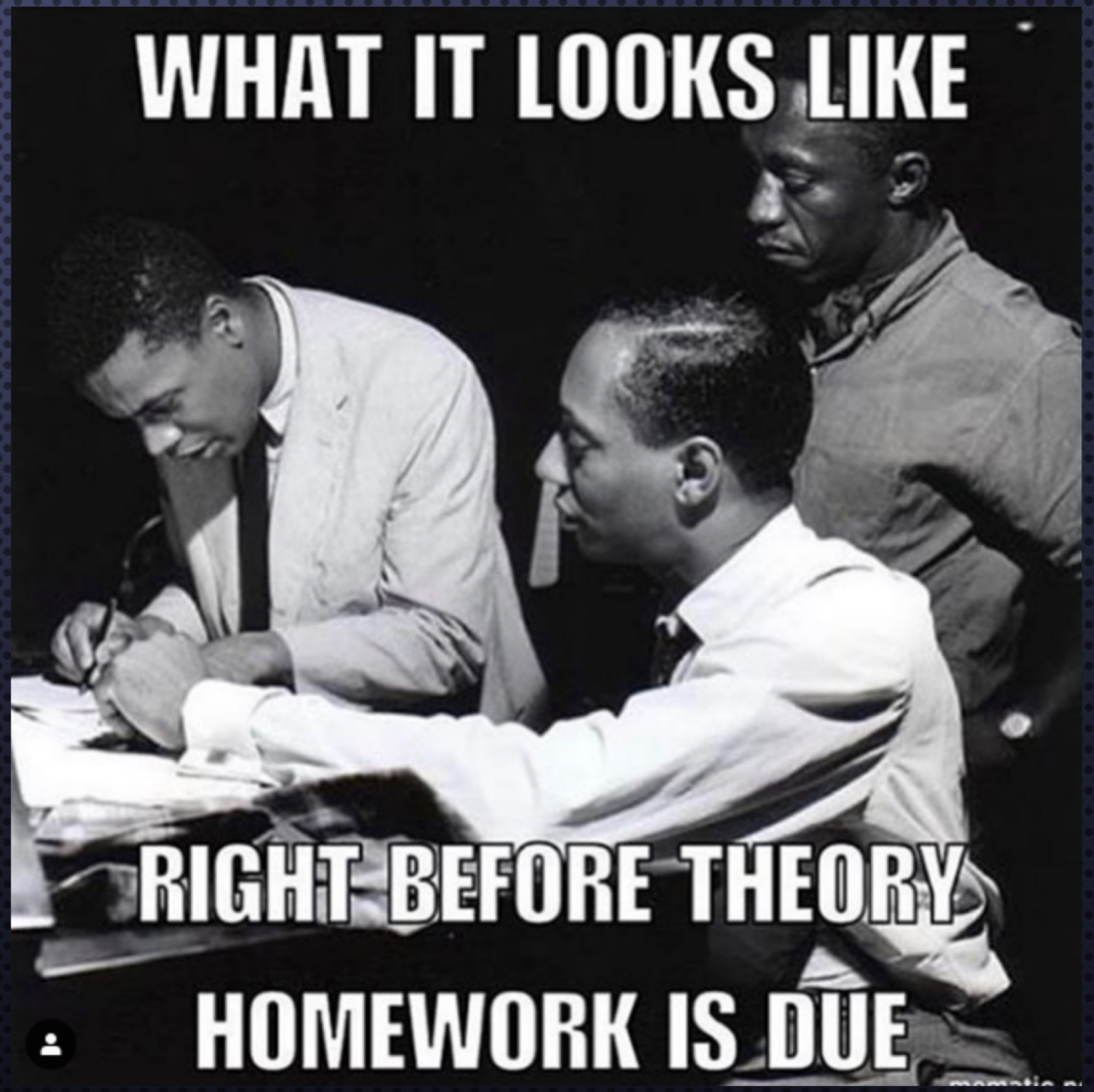
https://datausa.io/profile/cip/jazz-jazz-studies

"Educators' strategies of [formalist] interpretation strengthen the link between the school's expert knowledge and the legendary past masters." For example, by demonstrating the theoretical perfection of an exemplar solo, "educators deify and further validate the past masters. Consequently, this deification increased the masters' role as authorizing agents for the school's institutionalized terminology when it is demonstrated time and again in class that the masters 'had thought' all along in the terms of this terminology in the course of their playing" (157).

Wilf, Eitan Y. 2014. *School for Cool: The Academic Jazz Program and the paradox of Institutionalized Creativity*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.




WHEN THE PIANO PLAYER
DIDN'T SHED THE TUNE BETWEEN
REHEARSAL AND THE GIG


WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
RIGHT BEFORE THEORY
HOMEWORK IS DUE

Blacksound

- Understood as a sonorous analog to blackface minstrelsy, Blacksound is an object of study as well as a methodology that considers how the construction of raced sound comprises American popular music, most often to the benefit of non-Black artists and at the expense of the Black artists and communities whose ingenuity is appropriated.
- An uncritical performer can engage in the performance of raced modes of musical production while not having to inhabit the marginalized space of racialized power structures. This allows the non-Black subject to put on Blackness - not with burnt cork, but with musical gestures and vocabulary.

Morrison, Matthew D. 2019. "Race, Blacksound, and the (Re)Making of Musicological Discourse." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 72 (3): 781–823.

Digital Blackface

- Results in a form of blackface minstrelsy that is a memetic sort of "critical fabulation" that works to ventriloquize Blackness as social media's logic of disengaged engagement allows for the mediation or obfuscation of the identity of the author.
- Permits the immediate exigencies of still-present racialized power structures to be seemingly neutralized with issues of race lost in the disembodied activity of interface interaction.

Conclusion

Creolization and Coalition

JAZZ WITHOUT PATRIARCHY



WIJO

WOMEN IN JAZZ ORGANIZATION







THIS IS
A MOVEMENT

“THE MISSION THEN FOR THE DENIZENS OF THE UNDERCOMMONS IS TO RECOGNIZE THAT WHEN YOU SEEK TO MAKE THINGS BETTER, YOU ARE NOT JUST DOING IT FOR THE OTHER, YOU MUST ALSO BE DOING IT FOR YOURSELF. WHILE MEN MAY THINK THEY ARE BEING “SENSITIVE” BY TURNING TO FEMINISM, WHILE WHITE PEOPLE MAY THINK THEY ARE BEING RIGHT ON BY OPPOSING RACISM, NO ONE WILL REALLY BE ABLE TO EMBRACE THE MISSION OF TEARING “THIS SHIT DOWN” UNTIL THEY REALIZE THAT THE STRUCTURES THEY OPPOSE ARE NOT ONLY BAD FOR SOME OF US, THEY ARE BAD FOR ALL OF US. GENDER HIERARCHIES ARE BAD FOR MEN AS WELL AS WOMEN AND THEY ARE REALLY BAD FOR THE REST OF US. RACIAL HIERARCHIES ARE NOT RATIONAL AND ORDERED, THEY ARE CHAOTIC AND NONSENSICAL AND MUST BE OPPOSED BY PRECISELY ALL THOSE WHO BENEFIT IN ANY WAY FROM THEM. OR, AS MOTEN PUTS IT: “THE COALITION EMERGES OUT OF YOUR RECOGNITION THAT IT’S FUCKED UP FOR YOU, IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE’VE ALREADY RECOGNIZED THAT IT’S FUCKED UP FOR US. I DON’T NEED YOUR HELP. I JUST NEED YOU TO RECOGNIZE THAT THIS SHIT IS KILLING YOU, TOO, HOWEVER MUCH MORE SOFTLY, YOU STUPID MOTHERFUCKER, YOU KNOW?” (10)”

HARNEY, STEFANO AND FRED MOTEN. 2013. *THE UNDERCOMMONS: FUGITIVE PLANNING AND BLACK STUDY*. WIVENHOE: MINOR COMPOSITIONS.

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DU BOIS, W. E. B. 1903. *THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK: ESSAYS AND SKETCHES*. CHICAGO: A. C. MCLURG & CO.

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THANKS!

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