PART TWO

Jazz practices

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5 Jazz as musical practice

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Definitions of jazz as musical practice are contingent upon a host of factors, not least of which are the intellectual histories and life experiences that condition writers' approaches to definition. Some are likely to see as most distinctive jazz musicians' usage of rhythm, harmony, melody and/or timbre in jazz performance and composition, others the relative balance of oral/aural and textual materials, and still others the music's connections to African-American expressive culture. Early writers on jazz, for example, tended to have European concert music as their primary frame of reference. The 'work-' and 'score-centric' concepts and terminology of concert music almost dictated that these writers would focus on parameters of music-making amenable to staff notation and textual analysis – e.g., melody, harmony, form (and, to a lesser degree, rhythm) – and describe jazz chiefly through the ways in which it differed from concert music.[1] Whether or not one agrees with that approach, it is a manifestation of the desire to identify and describe jazz's distinctive character. In a world of diverse musical expressions displaced geographically and temporally, the practical necessity of making distinctions (Lakoff 1987, 5–6) has required those writing about jazz to find ways to distinguish it not only from concert music but also from Tin Pan Alley popular song, from other forms of African-American music and from other musics that prominently feature improvisation. This chapter will examine the ways in which other writers have defined jazz, taking account of the characteristics they have invoked and the usefulness of those items for definition.

Early jazz writers focused almost exclusively on what we might call the notatable characteristics of jazz *qua* music. One of the first to offer a sustained meditation on jazz's musical essence was Winthrop Sargeant in *Jazz: Hot and Hybrid* (1938).[2] A reading of his chapter headings indicates what elements he considered most important for defining jazz: 'elementary rhythmic formulas', 'hot rhythm', 'anatomy of jazz melody', 'scalar structures', 'derivation of the blues', 'harmony' and 'aesthetics and the musical form of jazz'. In each of those chapters, he describes the music's repertory and performance procedures for an audience presumably well-versed in concert music and not convinced of jazz's *musical* value. Thus, when writing on rhythm, he observes that to say that jazz is 'syncopated', although correct,

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overly simplifies a complex series of practices. Not only are there two kinds of syncopation, there are also rhythmic practices – e.g., multimetre and polyrhythm – that are often mistakenly classified as syncopation.[3] Understanding the distinctions between those different practices is essential if one is to grasp Sargeant's central point: that swinging rhythms, achieved by a variety of means, lie at the heart of jazz. He makes that position clear by considering rhythm prior to any other musical parameters and couching his discussions of melody, harmony, repertory and form in terms of rhythm. Improvisation is likewise presented as subsidiary to, and dependent upon, rhythmic practice. He mentions it primarily by placing jazz at the warmer end of a continuum ranging from 'sweet', largely pre-composed music to 'hot', largely improvised music (1938, 48–54).

Among those who followed Sargeant, two writers in particular were as concerned as he with musical practice. André Hodeir, in *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence* (1956), reverses Sargeant's order – discussing improvisation before rhythm and swing – but otherwise shares with him the same focus. He uses them to explore an expansive range of materials, noting that effective improvisation emerges from the interplay of melody, harmony, articulation, timbre and blues feeling. In definitive jazz performances or recordings, those improvisatory inputs are made more compelling through swing, which he glosses as 'vital drive' (*ibid.*, 207–9). Furthermore, the perception of vital drive is dependent upon musicians' creative setting of tempo, use of accentuation and placement of sounds in the temporal flow of performance. Thus, for a given piece of music to be classified as jazz, it must effectively merge the different elements that define improvisation and do so through idiomatic use of rhythm. Writing from Europe and addressing himself, like Sargeant, to *aficionados* of classical music, Hodeir's analyses of performative conventions are illuminating, even if his disparaging assertions about jazz musicians' cognitive capacities betray his investment in notions of blacks as 'uncivilized'.[4]

The second writer to follow Sargeant, Gunther Schuller, has been praised for his meticulously notated analyses of the harmonic, rhythmic and orchestrational aspects of jazz performance. In *Early Jazz* (1968), he acknowledges a debt to both Sargeant and Hodeir and is, like them, concerned with explaining jazz to those from a concert-music background. His work differs from that of either of his predecessors in the emphasis he places on Africa as the ultimate source of jazz. He suggests that 'every musical element – rhythm, harmony, melody, timbre, and the basic forms of jazz – is essentially African in background and derivation' (*ibid.*, 62). While his insistence that jazz's origins and development are different from, rather than derivative of, concert music is laudable, his positioning of a singular African musical practice as the main source of that development – based on reading one book

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(A. M. Jones's *Studies in African Music*, 1959) – devalues the *transformation* of African musical *practices* in the United States and leads him to extreme positions. In discussing the 'Africanness' of Charlie Parker's highly fluid rhythmic sense and use of quavers as primary rhythmic units, for example, he writes, 'Was [his playing] – like the emergence of some underground river – the musical reincarnation of impulses subconsciously remembered from generations earlier and producible only when the carrier of this memory had developed his instrumental technique sufficiently to cope with it?' (Schuller 1968, 25).

Despite the presence of romantic speculations like Schuller's, the value of his work and its two predecessors is a focus on what jazz musicians do – at least from the standpoint of observers better-versed in concert music. Each of those writers addresses the ways in which jazz musicians have approached rhythm, melody, harmony and form in performing. Their emphasis on the interlocking roles of many performative conventions notwithstanding, it is from work like theirs that the most simple and orthodox definitions of jazz emerge – those that locate its essence in the qualities glossed by swing and improvisation. The numerous pedagogical materials developed since the 1920s for novice jazz musicians are likewise complicit in that simplification process. Pedagogues have reinforced the status of swing as a *sine qua non* for jazz performance by counselling young musicians to play 'swing eighths', with an uneven 2:1 or 3:2 durational relationship between the first and second quavers in a single beat. By making that rhythmic approach normative, such pedagogy perhaps forecloses more creative and interactive ways of engaging with rhythm in performance, such as adjusting the degree of one's unevenness to create (or complicate) the perception of swing. Moreover, primers for novice jazz musicians tend to downplay timbre, blues feeling and articulation in favour of a focus on pitched elements: harmonies, harmonic substitutions and appropriate accompanying scales.[5] Similarly, jazz appreciation textbooks, while adding a historical and social dimension, also generally present swing and improvisation as the music's main attributes – if, for no other reason, because the pair functions as a convenient heuristic to apply across time, whatever distortions it might introduce into the historical narrative.[6]

Mark Gridley, Robert Maxham and Robert Hoff have outlined the problems with defining jazz based on only those two characteristics. A definition requiring both swing and improvisation, they observe, is useful for distinguishing jazz from musics that feature improvisation but don't swing, like Hindustani music, or those that arguably swing, but rely less on improvisation, like early rhythm-and-blues (1989, 517). Strict application of that definition, however, might force one to disqualify pieces usually described as jazz that neither swing nor prominently feature improvisation, such as

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Duke Ellington's 'Single Petal of a Rose'.[7] Partly because of such difficult cases, those three authors reject the viability of defining jazz in strict terms (1989, 524). They propose instead two alternative strategies – a 'family resemblances' approach and a 'dimensional' approach – both of which leave room for pieces excluded by a strict definition. The first strategy, for example, draws from a larger inventory of characteristics that, like those visible characteristics that make family members resemble one another, help one to ascertain whether a given piece belongs to the jazz 'family'. One using that approach assumes that 'at least one [characteristic] must be present for any performance to be called jazz, but no one particular element must always be present; i.e., no single element is necessary and no single element is sufficient' (*ibid.*, 525). The second strategy slightly modifies the family resemblances approach, making jazz an 'open concept' whose definition can change over time. Whether or not a piece can be described as jazz 'hinges on the idea that, of those elements that have been previously associated with jazz, the more that are present and the more clearly they can be heard, the more a particular performance qualifies as jazz. In other words, jazz is not an all-or-none event, but is a continuum, a dimension: jazzness' (*ibid.*, 527).[8] When we confront a performance or recording that sounds like those things we already recognise as jazz, therefore, there is a greater probability that we can consider it to be covered by the term.

Using Gridley's, Maxham's and Hoff's ideas as a template, one might fruitfully return to the wider array of musical characteristics discussed by Sargeant, Hodeir and Schuller to determine the family resemblances or dimensionality of jazz recordings and performances. Because the early writers focused a great deal of attention on it, it might be wise to begin the expansion with jazz harmony. One of the most distinctive ways in which jazz musicians have approached harmony is that they have relied almost exclusively on harmonies with at least four distinct pitches – seventh chords, sixth chords and various extensions and alterations of them – rather than triads as primary building blocks. Such harmonies are connected to one another in composition and performance in quite specific ways, for example through series of ii–V chords (minor sevenths and dominant chords, e.g., Dmin7 and G7) that resolve to the next structurally important chord (e.g., a major seventh or major sixth chord – here Cmaj7 or C6: see Ex. 5.1). Moreover, since the 1930s, as jazz composers and improvisers have grown more adventurous in the manipulation of harmony, they have devised ever more ingenious and abstract ways of connecting chords – from tritone substitutions (Ex. 5.2) and common-tone diminished-seventh chords to more abstract quartal harmonies (Ex. 5.3) and tone clusters (Ex. 5.4) that defy functional classification.[9] Thus, while one can describe the development of jazz harmonic practice in terms of increasing complexity and ambiguity – particularly as evinced in the 'open'

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or 'extended' tonality of Wayne Shorter's 'E.S.P.'[10] – it is just as possible to present counter-examples that argue for greater harmonic simplicity, such as Miles Davis's 'So What' and Herbie Hancock's 'Maiden Voyage'.[11] The Shorter composition features a harmonic progression rich with major-seventh sharp-11 chords and possessing no clear key centre, while the Davis and Hancock compositions move in the opposite direction by minimising harmonic movement to two and four chords, respectively, that have the same basic quality (Dorian minor sevenths for Davis and dominant suspended-fourth chords for Hancock). Moreover, jazz harmonies are distinguished not only by the pitched resources they use, but by the way they are voiced, with closed, drop-two and drop-two-and-four voicings being among the most basic (Ex. 5.5).[12] The consideration of elements adapted from blues performance – particularly the alteration of thirds, fifths and sevenths that constitute 'blue tonality' – give jazz harmony an additional kind of uniqueness (see Tallmadge 1984). Such tonality is frequently, but incompletely, described as the usage of 'flattened' or neutral pitches, though in practice it is much more common to find musicians (including pianists) playing with the intonation of these and other pitches through whatever means their instruments afford. Use of such procedures makes possible the addition of other colours and extensions to the basic four-pitch building blocks of jazz harmony.

Ex. 5.1

Ex. 5.2

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Ex. 5.3

Dmin11 G13 C

Ex. 5.4

D G7(♭9♯11) CMaj7

Ex. 5.5

G7 Drop 2 Drop 2 and 4

As with swing and improvisation, these aspects of harmonic usage provide a useful way to distinguish between pieces that employ those resources and those that do not, but harmony is not always a viable differentiator. In and of itself, harmony cannot mark jazz off from all other forms of music, particularly those that use the same kinds of harmonic resources, such as the Tin Pan Alley tunes that have become jazz standards or the rock music made by musicians familiar with jazz practice (e.g., Joni Mitchell, Steely Dan and Stevie Wonder). Again, therefore, the identity of a piece within the jazz family or jazz dimension is less a function of a specific characteristic than it is of that characteristic's deployment and articulation with respect to others.

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The same might be said of instrumentation, timbre and texture. Small ensembles consisting of saxophone, trumpet, piano, acoustic bass and trap drum set, or big bands featuring choirs of trumpets, trombones and saxophones, are indelibly associated with jazz, even for those with little to no knowledge of the music. Instruments such as the electric piano, electric bass, French horn, cello, synthesizers, drum machines and even bagpipes, however, have also been used to great effect in 'jazz' performances and recordings. Whether or not an ensemble features conventional instrumentation, the parcelling of roles to different instruments seems a more definitive criterion for describing the sound of jazz. Instruments capable of producing multiple pitches simultaneously (pianos, keyboard and guitar) are grouped with basses and percussion instruments to form 'rhythm sections' that accompany 'single-line' instruments, such as saxophones and trumpets. In practice, though, even rhythm-section instruments can assume the foreground at the appropriate points in performance. The presence of rhythm-section/front-line organisation in pop and rock music, however, suggests that even instrumental roles are not always a reliable way of distinguishing jazz.

Discussion of instrumentation might be made more useful by examining how jazz musicians actually produce sound. Whatever the aggregation of instruments, jazz musicians and critics most highly praise those players with personally identifiable approaches to their instruments. Whether those approaches result from the technical details of fingering, blowing, tuning or striking an instrument; use of harmonic, melodic or rhythmic resources; or some combination of those, possession of a timbrally distinctive sound is perhaps more prized by the individual musician than anything else. Based on such sounds, well-informed listeners can upon hearing them identify the timbral signatures of musicians such as Miles Davis, Coleman Hawkins, Bill Evans, Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus or Tony Williams. The sound of groups, then, becomes a function of the individual sounds of *musicians* rather than the sounds of *instruments*. While musicians of necessity adjust and adapt to one another's sounds to create 'group sound', the resultant textures are ideally heterogeneous mixtures. Olly Wilson describes this 'hetereogeneous sound ideal' in the following way: 'a kaleidoscopic range of dramatically contrasting qualities of sound (timbre) is sought after in both vocal and instrumental music. The desirable musical sound texture is one that contains a combination of diverse timbres' (Wilson 1992, in Wright and Floyd, 329). Thus, the kind of 'blend' that orchestra players seek is diametrically opposed to what jazz musicians seek. Wilson adds that, even in a solo performance, a musician seeks to differentiate even individual phrases from one another through varying attack, articulation, register and other performative nuances. As was the case with instrumental

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organisation, heterogeneity of this kind is not unique to jazz performance, especially given the adaptation of similar procedures in pop and rock music via amplification, stereo recording, multi-track recording technology and various electronic means of timbral manipulation.

Whether we describe jazz through swing, improvisation, harmony or timbre, or define it via family resemblances or dimensionality, however, the most fruitful understanding might result from shifting emphasis from static characteristics to a focus on the *processes* involved in jazz performance.[13] Those processes, to be sure, include ways of swinging (or not swinging) and ways of improvising, but they also reach more fundamentally into the realm of human action and decision-making. In other words, jazz might best be defined not on the basis of its characteristic forms, harmonies and rhythms, but based on what jazz musicians do with various performative elements.

Scholars interested in that kind of definition, among them Paul Berliner and Ingrid Monson, see jazz as a form of music-making that privileges the oral/aural over the literate, the processual and the performative over the executory and interpretive. In reducing oral or aural phenomena to notation and applying text-based analytical procedures, writers such as the three mentioned at the outset perhaps imply that their transcriptions have the same status as the sources used to generate them. Scores, lead sheets and transcriptions do make it possible for those who read music to *see* relationships they might not hear. But, at the same time, such texts encourage their readers to see them as 'objective' renderings of musical practice, when in fact they hide as much as they highlight (see M. Johnson and Lakoff 1980). Writing of whatever kind, Walter Ong observes, 'fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another. It separates the knower from the known. By keeping knowledge embedded in the human lifeworld, orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle' (1982, 43–4). By favouring oral/aural procedures, jazz musicians endeavour to keep their performing and recording vital and connected to the contexts in and out of which they make music rather than to those associated with textual analysis. Notated scores, sheet music and extant recordings of tunes are thus rarely, if ever, the final authority with regard to performance; instead they are starting points. A musician who wants to perform Bronislau Kaper's and Ned Washington's 'On Green Dolphin Street' might learn it from the sheet music published in 1947, from lead sheets published in various fake books or from recordings of the tune by musicians such as Miles Davis or Eric Dolphy.[14] From such sources, one learns that the tune is a thirty-two-bar, ABAC composition typically performed in E♭. Any performance or recording that faithfully replicated notated symbols or the sounds of those recordings would run counter to the general imperative that each performance is supposed to be different from all that precede it, that

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it should be as identifiable as the musicians who play it. Thus, while players are expected to be aware of, and conversant with, previous approaches to a tune, their versions ideally make more or less explicit reference to the tradition of performance on that tune while at the same time transforming it.[15] The rhythmic and improvisatory procedures discussed by Sargeant, Hodeir and Schuller are part of the act of transformation but so too are ways of approaching and altering form, melody, harmony, timbre, texture and intensity in performance (see Waters 1996). One might be able to sight-read well, but what matters more in the course of performance is being able to *hear* what other musicians are doing and to respond supportively.

Indeed, what is most important is inflecting those items and the moment-to-moment flow of performance with timbral shadings and interactive nuances that mark it as emanating from a particular group of performers at a specific location and point in time. Bill Evans's subdued introduction to the Davis recording of 'On Green Dolphin Street' seems more like the beginning of a solo piano piece than a group performance. His particular use of 'impressionist'-inspired harmonies identifies him as the pianist on the track as well as on Davis's 'So What' (*Kind of Blue*) in 1959. Likewise, once the solos are under way, the repeated two-bar cadential progression or 'tag' that marks their endings identifies the group as one of Davis's 1950s quintets and sextets, which often made such tags part of their performances on thirty-two bar tunes.[16] While Dolphy's recording more strictly maintains the thirty-two-bar form, one can recognise the distinctiveness of his version through other nuances: an evocative two-bar introduction featuring bass, bass clarinet, and drums and piano that continues through the first four bars of the tune; the timbral shadings of Dolphy's bass-clarinet playing and Freddie Hubbard's trumpet playing; and a more extensive exploration of dissonance in the solo and ensemble playing than is evident in the Davis recording.

Each recording is an intermusical exploration informed by the musicians' understanding of the tune, a particular arrangement of it, their experiences playing with one another and jazz performance practice more generally.[17] As each recording unfolds, the musicians make it *jazz* by virtue of the choices they make: syncopating and swinging, improvising, using harmonic substitutions, alternately raising and lowering the level of intensity, responding to and highlighting the work of other members of the group, stating or leaving implicit the metric framework, emphasising or obscuring the arrival of structural units (phrases, important cadences, four-, eight- or sixteen-bar sections, the ends and beginnings of choruses) among other things. The process is less aptly described by the literate metaphor of music-reading than it is by the oral/aural metaphor of conversation in the sense that these are 'musical personalities interacting, not merely instruments or pitches or

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rhythms . . . At any given moment . . . the improvising artist is always making musical choices in relationship to what everyone else is doing. These cooperative choices, moreover, have a great deal to do with achieving (or failing to achieve) a satisfying musical journey' (Monson 1996, 26–7).

The oral/aural emphasis in jazz performance is often described as emerging from African-American musical practices. Olly Wilson's previously cited comments on heterogeneity were applied to jazz when in fact he was describing practices common to musics in the 'black music cultural sphere' that includes west and central Africa, northern South America, the Caribbean and the United States. This sphere, more recently termed the 'black Atlantic' by Paul Gilroy (1993), is distinguished less by specific retentions of African rhythms or melodies than by a shared conceptual approach to music-making among African diasporic populations. Among the practices Wilson identifies as common in this sphere are the dominance of percussion and percussive playing, off-beat phrasing of melodic accents, polyrhythm and use of overlapping call and response (Wilson 1974, 6). To varying degrees, one can find examples of each of these practices in the work of jazz musicians and groups widely dispersed in time. What is crucial in Wilson's formulation is the notion that however the surface details of African-derived musics – including jazz – may change over time, a conceptual approach emphasising such elements is a primary animating force. His concern, therefore, is less the provenance of particular harmonic, rhythmic or timbral nuances than it is the way musical resources of whatever kind are realised in performance. One might see his position as an enlightened modification of Schuller's tracing of jazz's essential elements back to Africa. Rather than simply positing Africa as a source whose particulars have been transformed, he argues that processes of transformation are the real inheritance, and that their use in performance indicates the connection of African diasporic musics to one another in the present, not just in a mythical African past.[18]

Wilson's view of jazz's Africanness or African-Americanness is not uncontroversial. Since jazz emerged in the early twentieth century, commentators have debated its provenance and questioned whether it can indeed be called African-American music. Most recently such questions have been raised in the writings of James Lincoln Collier (1993), Gene Lees (1994), Terry Teachout (1995) and Richard Sudhalter (1999a). As evidence they cite the historical record – the absence of 'harmony' in the western sense in indigenous African musics, the early participation of whites in the making of jazz, the stellar achievements of white musicians such as Bix Beiderbecke, Benny Goodman and Bill Evans, and the dwindling African-American audience for the music – and a United States political climate that salves African-American feelings of inferiority by elevating their contributions

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to jazz's development while erasing the contributions of whites. For these writers, rather than being African-American, jazz is essentially American and intimately tied to democracy and racial integration. As they state their argument, the music may at one time have been African-American, but it is no longer exclusively so. Interestingly, their most frequent targets of criticism are LeRoi Jones (especially for his book *Blues People*, 1963), Albert Murray (*Stomping the Blues*, 1976), Stanley Crouch and Wynton Marsalis, but not European-American writers such as Schuller and the late Martin Williams, who have both described jazz not only as African-American but also as connected to notions of democracy and integration. By attributing the 'African-American version' of jazz history only to African-Americans, Collier and company are being as selective and loose with the facts of jazz history as those they criticise. Upon further examination, their revisionist position is based on a particular confusion: the mistaking of culture for race. The former refers to ways of acting and being in the world that one learns from observation, imitation and practical action over a long period of time. The latter, to the degree that one can say it exists at all, is a category that for many is based largely on visual perception.[19]

Some descriptions of jazz as African-American music have admittedly focused attention on the skin colour of the music's most influential performers but, if we return to Wilson's work, what seems paramount is how those performers have *approached* music-making and how their cultural backgrounds and knowledge have informed their work. While those musicians may have come from different socio-economic backgrounds and geographic regions, what they shared was a commitment to creating contexts for performance that were profoundly shaped by an African-derived understanding of performance. Those understandings, however, were not ones they were 'born with'; they are ones that each had learnt to come to from listening to recordings, interacting with other musicians and cultivating individual and collective sound. To say that jazz is an African-American music, therefore, is not the same as saying that it can be made only by African-Americans. Instead, such an assertion draws attention to the importance and greater relative influence of African-American musical practices in the music's development. Even when we consider the often-cited dyad of European harmony and African rhythm used to describe jazz's ancestry, we have to acknowledge that specific individuals mixed those elements in a way that had implications for the way that future musicians would perform.[20] The seemingly obligatory mentions of Jelly Roll Morton, Fletcher Henderson, Don Redman, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus, Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman in jazz historical writing is not part of a conspiracy to denigrate the work of white musicians. It is instead a testament to the power and

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persistence of ways of adapting and deploying musical resources in performance. Those practices, moreover, argue for more writing that connects jazz not just to European music but also to African-derived and African-American music contemporaneous with it.

Defining jazz as musical and cultural practice, then, seems more a matter of defining an aesthetic, a set of normative and evaluative criteria utilised by musicians in performing and judging performance. Through interviews with a number of musicians in New York City in the mid-1990s I came to understand that, specific musical parameters aside, working musicians – African-American and otherwise – foregrounded the same group of concerns in discussing their work as well as the work of others: developing 'an individual voice; developing the ability to balance and play with a number of different musical parameters in performance; understanding the cultural [and historical] foundations of the music; being able oneself to "bring something to the music"; creating music that is "open enough" to allow other musicians to bring something despite or because of what has been provided structurally or contextually; and being open for transcendence to "the next level" of performance, the spiritual level' (Jackson 2000, 35). Using such criteria as a guide, they could equally produce music identifiable as jazz whether they were performing original compositions or adaptations of jazz standards, rhythm-and-blues songs or pieces from the western concert repertory. Miles Davis and Eric Dolphy's realisations of 'On Green Dolphin Street' are likewise excellent illustrations of that aesthetic at work. As published or played by other musicians, the tune is a template which they and their bandmates use to play with the history and conventions of jazz, to present their distinctive approaches to performance, to interact with one another, and to use the occasion to make a satisfying and engaging musical journey. As with the conceptual approach to music-making outlined by Wilson (1992), they are concerned with making jazz anew each time they perform, drawing upon and transforming it in real time.

Jazz as musical practice is thus more than the sum of its parts or any of the ways in which we might configure them. While we can try to define it in terms of swing, improvisation, harmony, instrumentation and timbre, those characteristics are only a beginning. No single one nor any combination of them is sufficient to capture the diversity of musical expressions gathered under that rubric. At best, those different aspects are ingredients that have to be combined by skilled cooks using the idiomatic and idiosyncratic knowledge they possess as well as whatever other tools they have at their disposal. While musicians' ability to read a recipe (score or recording) or to abstract it from someone else's realisation of it is surely important, in the end it is what they do with the recipe that makes the difference. In decrying the boundaries imposed by labels like 'jazz' in 1962, Duke Ellington asserted

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that categories and characteristics, while useful at times, were potentially misleading. He explained to Stanley Dance that a satisfying dish was less a function of what went into it – whether one was having fish or fowl, served hot or cold – than of how it was prepared (Ellington 1962, 13–15). His seemingly offhand comment that 'the art is in the cooking' made clear that in the end it's not what goes into the music – the meat or how it is served – that makes the difference: it's what the musicians do with ingredients they have gathered.

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