DIRECTING JAZZ ON TELEVISION

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ABSTRACT

DIRECTING JAZZ ON TELEVISION

by Robert Lewis Spangler

This thesis is intended to inform and to assist the television director in directing programs of non-orchestrated, improvisational jazz. By citing examples of both successful and unsuccessful jazz programs, it will attempt to offer insight into the past and thereby present useful perspective for future reference.

Because the quality of a jazz performance may be greatly influenced by a number of factors which fall within the jurisdiction of the director, Chapter II will outline some of the fundamental needs of a jazz musician, particularly in regard to pre-program planning and studio rehearsals. There is also an examination of the expanded role of the floor director as a liaison between the director and the musicians.

While formal musical training is not essential to the sympathetic and sensitive director, his task will be easier and more enjoyable if he is familiar with the simple rhythmic and structural aspects of typical jazz compositions. To this end, Chapter III offers a layman's guide to understanding commonly used time signatures and constructions.

The final chapter presents one approach to directing jazz on television. This includes a discussion of Dr. Colby Lewis' "Two Reasons for Changing Picture Statements" as they apply to the inherent motivational properties of a jazz performance, suggestions regarding framing and transitions and information regarding the unique problems of staging and audio that may be encountered.

A half-hour videotaped program is an integral part of this thesis. It is on file with the Television and Radio Department at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan.

DIRECTING JAZZ ON TELEVISION

by

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--Robert L. Spangler

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: SOME PERSPECTIVES

It is not fair to claim that jazz and prime-time television are strangers to each other, for jazz has been heard and even on occasion, seen on the medium. Most often, it has been used in dramatic and adventure series, to underscore scenes of action or violence. Almost inevitably the theme of these presentations will deal with crime of some sort, usually narcotics traffic or prostitution. Jazz can also be heard performed by the "house bands" on the loosely-formated type of variety program typified by NBC's Tonight Show. But while many members of these studio orchestras are fine jazz musicians, they, or the band itself, are featured infrequently and certainly not under the most ideal conditions. Furthermore, even though these men may be outstanding musicians, they were chosen for their versatility reading ability, and playing skill, but not necessarily because of the particular style they play (as would be a musician auditioning for the Duke Ellington orchestra). This can result in a great diversity of styles and approaches, factors which cannot be viewed as positive in terms of the empathy and cohesion necessary to a significant jazz performance. This same kind of program does, however, occasionally present "name" combos and orchestras. But even then, limitations of time and manner

of presentation tend to result in performances far less than memorable.

It can be stated fairly then, that although jazz and prime time television are not strangers to each other, their relationship has not progressed very far beyond the level of casual acquaintance.

There was a time, eight years ago, when commercial television got seriously interested in big time jazz, and found a willing if not eager respondent. This was in the late fifties, when Timex announced a series of "Jazz Spectaculars." These shows were greatly anticipated by the critical establishment and the jazz fans at large, for they represented the first venture of their kind. Unfortunately, it was a veritable three ring circus of stars, presented in a manner which now seems strongly similar to the fast-talking, tight-cued "Top Forty" radio programs of the present. To give what is perhaps <u>the</u> outstanding example of the critical reaction to that series, here, reprinted in its entirety is a review by television critic and jazz fan Will Jones of one of those programs.

Dear Timex,

> Near the end of your last All-Star Jazz Show on TV this fat man (Host Jackie Gleason) said, "Why don't you send a letter to Timex and let them know the kind of jazz you'd like to hear and the kind of guys you'd like to have play it."

I don't know whether or not the fat man really meant it. I couldn't tell whether he meant anything he said during the whole hour. He was the most insincere-sounding fat man I've heard in a long time. I'm easily bothered by an utterance like "Y'know, sometimes we take these jazz guys for - well for granted." Why the phony pause? What else was he going to take these jazz guys for? A one-way ride? No, sir, Timex. You know and I know it was granted all the time, and the fake pause was an attempt to reach for some coziness that wasn't there.

Well, here's a letter, Timex, whether you really invited it or not.

The kind of guys I'd like to hear play jazz? How about guys like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington and George Shearing and Dizzy Gillespie? Crazy list, huh, Timex? Exactly the guys you had playing on your last show.

I say I'd like to hear them play-but where I'd like to hear them play is something else again, Timex, I'd rather hear them play anywhere other than on a Timex All-Star Show.

You've got a wild thing going there, Timex. You've got some of the best commercials in the business, with John Cameron Swayze shloshing your watches in water. I mean, if I accidentally dropped my watch into the garbage disposal tomorrow and suddenly needed a new watch, I'm sold; I'd buy a Timex. I would, that is, if I didn't hate you so much for what you're doing to jazz on TV.

Your commercials are quite effective in showing the indestructibility of your watches. Just as effectively, your programs prove the destructibility of jazz and jazz artists.

I don't know quite how you've gone about it, but you've succeeded in your last couple of programs in turning some of the most-respected persons in jazz into a bunch of blathering Uncle Toms. And when I say Uncle Toms, I don't mean to draw any color lines. You've created some white Uncle Tims, Timex-bouncing, howling, finger-snapping caricatures of jazz performers, conned somehow into appearing not as themselves, but as a mis-guided ad man's concept of what the great watch-buying unwashed think jazz performers ought to be.

A few have got by you unscathed, Timex, but not many. Where you really trap them is when you have them mouth the inanities invented by your script writers - or have them blowing scripted inanities such as the finale of that last show. "I'm tellin' you now, this is the bust-out of all times," said your insincere fat one, wiggling his fanny languidly in anticipation. And then 30 or 40 musicians ad-libbed a din that was not jazz, and the fat one narrowed his eyes in a manner calculated to suggest deep inner appreciation and wiggled his fanny a bit less languidly.

If you really wanted suggestions from viewers, Timex, here's a suggestion from this one:

Go on hiring the same kind of jazz musicians you have been. Your instincts have been pretty good in that respect. Oh, maybe you could tax your imagination a little and try not using Louis Armstrong just one time and see whom you come up with then, but I wouldn't insist upon that.

But after hiring the musicians don't abandon your instincts. Don't turn them over to idea men. Let them bring their own ideas to the show-the kind of ideas that made you want to hire them in the first place.

Meanwhile, Timex, no matter how desperately I may happen to need a watch, and no matter how solidly your man Swayze has sold me, I'm going to refrain until you tidy up your TV ways. He's pretty irresistible, but I'm determined to resist - even the Timex self-wind, the completely automatic watch, with the winding stem on it.

Yrs,
Viewer Jones [1]

The awful Timex fiasco, the <u>only</u> such major attempt at presenting jazz on a semi-regular prime-time basis, must have left some ugly scars on the commercial television community, and has undoubtedly induced a number of second thoughts about undertaking such a venture again.

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[1] Will Jones, "A Wild Hour With Jazz, Timex-Style," <u>Down Beat</u>, (February 19, 1959), p. 13.

But this happened eight years ago, and both television and jazz, as young as they were, have done considerable maturing since then. Certainly jazz is no longer the place for "Uncle Toms" of whatever hue. It is no longer the music of the minstrel show with its knee-slapping and grinning pearly teeth, if, in fact, it ever was.

Nat Hentoff, author, jazz critic, and writer of many sociological articles dealing with minority groups in America, succinctly presents the case for today's jazz musician.

> However they regard the function of jazz, the new players are linked by a conviction that their music is art, not a form of show-biz fun and games after dark. But they are not pretentious or portentous in insisting on respect from audiences and entrepreneurs. There is still much wit and unabashed lyricism in the music. . . . Since their music is no longer for the casual night-club goer, the number of clubs at which they can play has diminished. The audience for the new jazz consists of the same quality, and roughly the same quantity, of serious listeners who are devoted to chamber music and lieder.[2]

Although Hentoff is referring to the current jazz avant-garde (see Appendix II) it can honestly be stated that a growing number of music critics and listeners share this point of view, even in regard to some of jazz's more accessible forms.

But regardless of how the artists or their audience may view the significance of their achievements, the fact remains that since the demise of the Timex shows there have been no network originated prime-time series devoted to the presentation of jazz.

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[2]Nat Hentoff, "Black, Angry, and Hard to Understand," New York Times Sunday Magazine (December 25, 1966) pp. 38,10.

When jazz has been presented in its own context (rather than occupying a slot within the format of a variety show, as described earlier) it has been on either such non-prime time programs as Look Up and Live, Camera Three and Twentieth Century, which generally handled the productions with both taste and sympathy, or via series produced for syndication. In the case of the latter, the half hour series Jazz Scene USA made its debut in early 1963, but as of June 1965, had been sold to fewer than twenty American cities, although it attracted relatively more attention in foreign countries.[3]

In examining the past and present state of jazz on commercial television then, one might easily conclude that jazz and television will never be "happily married." I leave such conjecture to the critics except to suggest that the obvious realities of network TV's rating wars indicate that such a marriage would be, at best, a mis-match. This seems to be especially true when perceived in terms of the size of the jazz audience, which must, in all fairness, be labeled a minority audience. Or as Leonard Feather puts it:

> In assessing the manner and extent of the use of jazz in this medium it is reasonable to take certain facts into consideration. One is that the prime-time evening

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[3]Leonard Feather, "Jazz on Television, Part Two," Down Beat, June 3, 1965, p. 13.

> television program, for the most part is aimed at securing the attention of as many as possible of the 192,000,000 potential viewers in the United States.[4]

What proportion of this 192,000,000 would watch a jazz program in preference to the more easily accessible forms of pure entertainment cannot be determined, but it seems reasonable to conclude that the network programing chiefs have been economically realistic in scheduling their situation comedies and first run movies in preference to that unknown quantity, the jazz series.

And yet jazz <u>does</u> belong on television. Those who know it only through recordings have missed a great deal, and a well directed television performance offers opportunities that are missing in the most congenial night club or finest concert hall. For example, a well-chosen close-up of a musician engrossed in his playing can mirror and therefore enhance the concentration, energy, or just plain fun that is apparent in his music. I suspect that anyone who argues that jazz is not a visual medium has never been fortunate enough to witness the moments of humor, passion, and tenderness that can only be implied by a strictly aural presentation. Naturally, it cannot be claimed that such moments are assured with each performance, for the jazz artist conceives every phrase and idea at the moment it is played. He therefore lacks the opportunity to polish his performance for weeks,

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[4]Leonard Feather, "Jazz on Television, Part One," <u>Down Beat</u>, May 6, 1965, p. 19.

or months as does a Horowitz or a Stern. Furthermore, the very nature of jazz makes a performance which retraces steps, or even treads upon safe ground equivalent to an artistic failure. It is also true, however, that even the greatest of performances would no doubt bore or even offend the viewer not sympathetic to the music.

So while we may (for the present at any rate) expect no significant increase in the amount of jazz being offered on commercial network television, it does seem reasonable to turn to the best mass media friend that jazz has had in recent years; educational, or "public" television.

If the critics (both amateur and professional) of network television have had a field day lambasting the commercial networks for their neglect of jazz, they have conversely found themselves heaping praise upon the educational system; specifically NET (National Educational Television). The following remarks by usually hard-to-please Nat Hentoff can be said to be representative.

> The lack of jazz on commercial television has long been one of the most familiar plaints among all of us, and yet here is Gleason (Producer-Host-Critic-Ralph J. Gleason) setting an exemplary standard for jazz presentation on the National Educational Television network.
>
> Gleason's approach to jazz on television couldn't be more simple and more correct. Each week's guest is his own music director. The camera-men accommodate themselves to the musicians--not the other way around, as has been the practice in nearly all other previous associations between jazz and television. And Gleason himself is only briefly and unobtrusively on camera.
>
> The result is that the musicians on Jazz Casual are able to reveal themselves more completely than is possible in many clubs and in most concert situations.
>
> . . . . . .

> Gleason is certainly the first to present jazz with total honesty and with utter lack of superfluous "attractions" on a national television series. He is setting a most important precedent.
>
> I have lost all hope that commercial network television is going to do even moderate justice to jazz in the foreseeable future, at any rate, But as educational television grows there can be an increasing number of openings for various kinds of jazz series on television.
>
> The fact that Gleason has been successful at showing that undiluted jazz is exactly right for the medium will, I'm convinced, be a major stimulus for more such efforts.[5]

Although Jazz Casual is not currently in production, many NET cities across the country are repeating the series (as one would replay an outstanding phonograph recording a second or a fifteenth time), and is therefore possibly still available for perusal by the reader (i.e. the prospective director of jazz on television) in his area.

While I will resist the considerable temptation to expound on the values and virtues of this generally fine series, I do feel that a few relevent comments on some of its features are appropriate at this point.

Generally speaking, the comments by Mr. Hentoff describe the method and content of the program. It is important to note that while some of its shows used virtually no set whatsoever, what sets were used were simple, attractive and yet inexpensive. And although it has been nearly two years since this writer last had the opportunity to see one of the programs, I recall that its uncomplicated and

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[5]Nat Hentoff, "Second Chorus," Down Beat, May 7, 1964, pp. 39-40.

direct approach could be satisfactorily duplicated on a local level by any station with enough equipment to properly televise a panel discussion. In other words, many local television stations are capable of producing their own Jazz Casuals (or would it be casual jazz?).

Beyond the considerations of effective audio (an area more critical than usual in jazz) a standard complement of equipment essential to any television operation ought to yield satisfactory results.

One of the other essential ingredients is, of course, capable and willing musicians.

In most American cities, there are many musicians who can play jazz and are happy to do so when the opportunity presents itself. If any single group is blatantly guilty of the "busman's holiday" syndrome, it is the professional or semi-professional musician. The well known phenomenon of the "after-hours" jam session includes virtually any free time these performers might have, and their willingness to perform on television when they can expect a tasteful production (see Chapters II and III) has never ceased to amaze this writer.

Naturally, if budgetary considerations permit, union scale wages should be paid the men. However, this need not be a drawback, if the men are <u>willing</u> to donate their time. Fortunately, the American Federation of Musicians tends to be extremely cooperative in allowing its members to perform without pay, if those members wish to do so.

This is both because of the non-profit aspect of educational television, and because the Federation believes in the value of such exposure.

Therefore, only studio time and operational costs emerge as absolute budgetary necessities. What remains is the selection of a knowledgeable producer (easily the subject of another work), talented musicians and a director capable of assembling the many elements that will go into an effective jazz program. The remainder of this study will be devoted to the specific tasks of that television director when directing improvisational jazz performances.

CHAPTER II

THE DIRECTOR AND THE MUSICIANS

The process of directing classical or "serious" music for television is one which requires an exact sense of timing and a knowledge of orchestral shading and dynamics. But because it is fully orchestrated it carries with it the inherent qualities of predictability, a built-in "road map," for camera shots that can be examined an hour or three months prior to shooting.

Jazz, because it relies almost exclusively upon improvisation and the challenge of instantaneous creation during a performance, contains far fewer elements of predictability. (The orchestrated jazz band is obviously an exception to this and will not be discussed here.) Consequently, the director of jazz is required to possess certain skills and knowledge somewhat apart from, but not exclusive of, those necessary to the directing of classical music.

The information that follows is intended as a guide to the elements, both musical and extra-musical, that play an important part in the preparation for, and the performance of, jazz on television. It is hoped that this information will provide a useful "road map" to the successful presentation of this music.

A local semi-professional musician described a recent experience while on tour with a jazz group in England.

A woman television director greeted the band with a cold efficiency when they arrived at the studio for a video-taping and, stop-watch in hand, inquired as to the lengths and orders of their solos. Her ignorance of the music and the nature of its form was apparent to the musicians, and consequently made them ill at ease. This communications gap grew to the point of confusion and misunderstanding with the result that the performance was described as a "disaster."

This story exemplifies many of the "dont's" one could expect to encounter when directing jazz on television. For our purposes, they can be divided into two categories: "the director and the musicians," and "what the director should know about the music." These are discussed in this chapter and the one to follow.

Because of the tenuous nature of the jazz performance, it is affected by many external variables. The television director, in aiming for the best possible production, will necessarily desire the control of as many of these variables as are within his domain,so that the performance, and therefore the production, will be granted the optimum conditions for success. Most of the suggestions that follow are basic enough to be applicable to any production situation involving live talent. To be sure, many of them will be redundant to the thoughtful director who has made the needs of performers a consistent and important factor in the preparation of any production.

Because of the director's necessary occupation with other matters, the floor director must be expected to function not only as a means of relaying information, but also as an extension of the director himself. Ideally, he should be sympathetic to the director's point of view in regard to the artists, the music, and the production concept so that his answers are virtually the same as the director's answers. Above and beyond the usual responsibilities of the floor director are a number of seemingly minor considerations which can make a large difference in the outcome of the production.

For example: One of the most common complaints voiced by professional or semi-professional musicians who offer their services to broadcasting, is that they were made to feel like outsiders. They felt as though they had little importance to the overall operation until rehearsal time, or in some cases, until air time, and by then it was too late. To alleviate this source of tension, it would be wise if the floor director could be excused from normal "set-up" duties at the expected arrival time of the musicians so that they may be greeted at the door and ushered to the studio. Another member of the crew might be drafted to assist in the transport of equipment, if the group's paraphernalia is considerable.

Such a greeting and offer of assistance immediately makes the artists a part of the activity, and helps to establish from the first their importance to the outcome

of the program, a realization which cannot help creating an atmosphere of mutual interest,and even better, cooperation.

Once the musicians have begun to unpack, the floor director should remain with them, ready to be of any further assistance, and prepared to make sense of the apparent chaos that often precedes a taping or broadcast. The reason for this is that, although these musicians can and do perform in almost any kind of environment, few environments will appear as confusing and ominous as the television studio in the midst of set up. Without unnecessary detail, the floor director should explain how the activity they see relates to the finished product, and specifically to them. The information imparted by the floor director will not only be enlightening, but will also provide reassurance so that the artists are then left free to do exactly what they came for, i.e., play their music as well as they can.

Besides the essential information given in regard to hand and time signals, microphone positions, etc., the floor director should be ready to address himself to some other somewhat unique needs. The guitar player cannot find the electrical outlet; the drummer desires to nail down his equipment; the saxophone player wants to borrow a knife to trim his reed, and many other problems special to musicians. Needless to say, rapport is once again enhanced; and with these simple needs properly satisfied, the production will certainly benefit.

Hopefully, many of the previous references to the "apparent chaos" of pre-show activities will be unnecessary as a result of efficient preparation prior to the arrival of the artists, but more realistic consideration reveals adequate set-up and rehearsal time as the fantasies they usually are. One point, however, must be strongly stressed, for it undoubtedly holds precedence over all of the other suggestions presented in this section--the matter of adequate "warm up time" for the musicians.

The concept of "warm up time" is not an arbitrary one designed to provide recreation for the artists. Rather it is a necessary procedure which must precede a performance.

Musicians, all musicians, need to limber fingers, lips, wrists, lungs, and even feet before they are ready to play. Certainly anyone who has ever attended a symphony orchestra concert is familiar with the inevitable cacophony of runs and exercises that precedes each performance. But unlike their symphonic brethren, jazz artists lack a central figure in the person of a conductor to meld their individual voices into one. They must respond to each other, and to do so, they must be able to hear each other. A director mindful of this need will have chosen a method of staging which provides optimum conditions, not only for his audio and video needs (see Chapter IV) but also for the best intra-group acoustics. The artists must be allowed adequate time to discover their proper balance in relation to each other, and to the room (studio).

If fifteen minutes or more can be made available for such a purpose, it should be provided. No time is wasted in this, in that it provides the perfect opportunity for a realistic audio and video check out. Make sure that both the crew and the musicians are aware of when this warm-up time is planned, so that it does not interfere with any of the other activities. It has been my all too common experience in the past to have had cooperative, talented artists told to "shut up" by an over-zealous crew member who considered their work far less important than his own. Such an occurrence will make it increasingly more difficult to secure such talent.

The preceding discussion is not meant to imply that a "prima donna" aura surrounds jazz artists. It is, as indicated earlier, an extension of the good practices of dealing with talent to encompass the unique aspects of this particular segment of the artistic community.

It should be further cautioned that the "folklore" surrounding the world of the jazz artists is in most cases merely that--<u>folklore</u>. It would be foolish and embarrassing for any representative of the production team, from crew member to director, to succumb to the temptations of using musician's slang or to otherwise attempt to make the artists aware of one's "hipness." A straightforward, mature approach is appreciated far beyond any such display.

Although the above material refers generally to the floor director as the director's primary agent it is assumed that the director will, at his earliest convenience, make his presence known to the artists, therefore lending both prestige and authority to the floor director's role.

At some point in time, not necessarily on the day of shooting, the director will want to meet with at least the leader of the group to discuss his production concept and the group's forthcoming performance.

If he is not himself a musician,and hopes to adequately address himself to the subject of the music itself, he will find certain basic information useful. The chapter that follows is intended to provide that information.

CHAPTER III

WHAT THE DIRECTOR SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE MUSIC

The television director about to embark upon the presentation of a program of jazz music does not necessarily have to be familiar with the history of the music, its evolution, or its current state to present it in an effective manner. He does, however, need to address himself to certain areas of the jazz performance with both knowledge and sensitivity. Since assistance with the latter is beyond the range of this writer, the following is intended to be of value in terms of strengthening the former, i.e., knowledge of the music.

Initially, it is important that the director be, to some degree, interested in or sensitive to the art form. It is my strong belief that someone with no interest in or appreciation of the music should not be assigned to direct it and should bow out of such an assignment if that alternative exists.

Assuming then that the prospective director of a television jazz presentation is one who is not incapable of sympathetic responses to the music and the musicians, let us now discuss the make-up of the jazz performance.

With the exception of some very new developments in jazz,the jazz musician, regardless of era or school, improvises upon a melodic structure of some kind. This very basic point is an extremely important one, since it must

often appear to the uninitiated jazz listener, regardless of sensitivity and receptiveness, that once the initial melody has been stated, the soloists merely "take off," as I have heard them put it. This is far from the actual case, as the jazz soloist must find his "freedom" within the confines of the structure of the melody upon which he has chosen to improvise. In other words, if he is performing "Over the Rainbow," "Bye Bye Blackbird," "Once in a While," or any other song (whether a standard or a jazz original), he is restricted by both its harmonic and non-harmonic aspects. While his improvised melodies may not appear to relate to the original, they very definitely do, although the relationship is less obvious with some artists than with others.

Does this mean that the director must familiarize himself with the hundreds of possible styles and approaches in order to "follow" a solo? The answer is "no." For while familiarity is certainly an asset, it is not a necessity. Fortunately there are other far more accessible clues and landmarks provided by a jazz performance that will enable the director to "keep his place" in regard to the music, as well as he might if the performance was fully scored. Possibly the most important of these is a knowledge of the non-melodic construction of common song forms, that is, an understanding of their rhythmic structure, form and length.

There are two outstanding categories of songs which are preferred by most jazz artists as vehicles for their improvisations--the so-called "standard" 32 bar melody and the 12 bar "blues." Most other forms are variations on either of these. The basic unit here is the bar (or measure, as it's also known). The rhythm of each bar is designated by a fraction such as 4/4 or 3/4. These designations are commonly referred to as time signatures. Here now are examples of three time signatures presented in such a way that the non-musician can easily learn to count them.

In the common time signature of 4/4, a bar can be determined by counting on every beat: one-two-three-four, two-two-three-four, three-two-three-four, and so forth. In waltz time (3/4 or 6/8) the count would go: one-two-three, two-two-three, three-two-three, four-two-three, etc., in the case of 3/4, or one-two-three-four-five-six, two-two-three-four-five-six, three-two-three-four-five-six, in the case of 6/8 time.

Naturally, no director who expects to immerse himself in the diverse activities of his job will care to saddle himself with the irritating task of counting measures, and the use of an assistant to do this is really quite unnecessary, as we will see.

The two basic forms mentioned earlier are so prevalent that they can be heard almost anywhere. Anyone who listens to any form of popular music hears them constantly, and except in some specific instances, an ability to recognize them and be aware of their form will easily be as valuable

as any amount of measure counting. For the time being, then, let us remember this technique of counting measures and examine these forms more closely.

The Thirty-two Bar AABA Form

A large percentage of popular music, especially those songs generally regarded as standards, are built on this form. It is easily broken up into eight bar units, and the problem of keeping track of these is simplified by the fact that only the third set of these is different from the other three. Before this statement is allowed to become totally confusing, let's look at an easy example in the old song, I Got Rhythm. Here are the first eight bars:

I got rhythm,
I got music,
I got my man,
Who could ask for anything more?

Now, the second eight, which utilizes exactly the same melody as the first eight:

I got daisies,
In green pastures,
I got my man,
Who could ask for anything more?

The third eight-bar phrase is the only different eight-bar melody in the song. It is known as the "bridge."

Old man trouble,
I don't mind him,
You won't find him,
Hangin' 'round my door.

The final eight bars again utilize the original eight-bar melody.

I got starlight,

I got sweet dreams,

I got my man,

Who could ask for anything more?[1]

This technique of repeating the first eight bar phrase twice and then again at the end of the song is called the "simple ternary" form, or, as musicians often refer to it, the AABA form. The important factor here is the third eight-bar phrase, the bridge, as it serves as a convenient point of reference. It should be mentioned, however, that there are a number of other types of constructions which, while relating to this common form, differ from it to some degree. Furthermore, there are emerging schools of jazz which are deliberately seeking to dispense with formal construction as we have come to know it (examples of both typical and unusual constructions will be presented in Appendix II).

The Twelve-Bar Blues

Because of its fame as a concept and the occasional misuse of the term in song titles (e.g. Birth of the Blues is not technically a blues), many are surprised to learn that the blues is a structured musical form. As implied, the blues is nearly always a twelve-bar form, that is, each full chorus is twelve bars long. Here are the lyrics of a

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[1]Copyright 1930 by New World Music Corporation, used by permission.

common blues, Roll 'Em Pete. Note that the lines of the complete stanza are broken up into three parts. Each of these represents a four measure section.

I got a girl who lives up on a hill,
I got a girl who lives up on a hill,
She wants to quit me but I love her still.[2]

Regardless of the number of minutes an improvising jazz musician may devote to his solo, if the twelve-bar blues is the vehicle with which he is working, his choruses will usually be built on that form and in multiples of twelve bars. The same can be said of other formal constructions.

Using the previous discussion as a point of departure, it is valuable to point out a number of devices employed by the jazz artist when improvising upon these forms. For purposes of clarity, it seems best to list a number of important terms often used by jazz artists in referring to these devices. While they are obviously a kind of jargon or even slang, they are quite far removed from the area of "hiptalk," and can therefore be considered to be both universal and relatively enduring. They are explained strictly from the director's point of view, and in some cases are not complete. They tend to exemplify situations relevent to small combo performances of from three to eight men.

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[2]Roll 'Em Pete by Pete Johnson and Joe Turner, copyright 1941 by MCA Music, a division of MCA Inc., New York, N.Y., used by permission. All rights reserved.

Chorus: This confusing term may mean either a literal chorus, as described above, or the entire improvised solo, regardless of actual length. In the case of the latter, the term 'choruses' may also be used.

In-chorus: This is the first actual chorus of the song, usually performed by the band as an ensemble, usually a statement of the melody.

Head: This may mean the same thing as "in-chorus," or (depending upon the context) any non-written arrangement, in which case the term "head arrangement" may be used.

Out-chorus: This is the final chorus of the song, usually performed in an ensemble fashion, and consisting of a restatement of the melody.

Lead: The prominent voice in the ensemble portions is referred to as the lead instrument,

Bridge: This is the third eight-bar phrase in a standard AABA structured melody. For the purpose of textural variety, the bridge on an in- or out-chorus will sometimes be performed by an instrument which has not previously been the lead instrument. Drums , bass or piano are usually chosen, in that order of preference. The bridge is also referred to as the "release," or "channel."

Riff: This is an ensemble backdrop for a soloist.

Rhythm Section: This may be any combination of rhythm players. Older schools of jazz employed a bass, piano, guitar and drums. Contemporary players may eliminate any of these, although bass and drums are rarely absent.

Horn: Any non-rhythm-section instrument may be called a horn.

"Fours:" This refers to the practice of trading four-bar intervals between soloists. This will usually be between a horn player and the drummer, although other variations are used. This usually occurs toward the end of the piece, and begins with the horn taking the first four. Four fingers held up by any of the instrumentalists may generally serve as a signal. Less common are variations of "eights," "two's," and "ones."

Intro: This may be two, four, or eight bars long, and it is most often played by a member of the rhythm section, usually piano or guitar.

Tag: A tag, or series of tags may be played at the conclusion of a chorus (usually the out-chorus). These are most often four-bar units repeated any number of times at the discretion of the lead instrument. (Note: trumpeter Miles Davis is noted for his use of this device).

Once the above information has been assimilated, it will be a relatively easy task to outline the performance of a piece from "intro" to "out-chorus." A brief consultation with the leader of the group should easily yield complete data in regard to the length and order of solos, thereby suggesting a virtual camera-plotting script, although in many cases esthetic considerations will supersede the limitation of choruses.

The author further suggests that, if all else fails, and both the order and length of solos fail to correspond with the planned outline (as can definitely happen), the director would do well to simply remain alert, watch the musicians for visual cues and allow his instincts to sense and suggest the most likely new approach. For these reasons the most valuable asset a director can have when directing a jazz program is a familiarity born of listening to typical jazz recordings (see Appendix II).

CHAPTER IV

DIRECTING THE PROGRAM

It's the top of the ninth, the home team leads by one run but the visitors have a man on second with only one out. The batter connects with a searing ground ball that pulls the first basemen off the bag. He makes a magnificent diving stop, tags the base in the nick of time, and fires the ball to home plate to stop the runner who has rounded third and is on his way to score the winning run. Realizing that he won't make it, the runner turns in his tracks and heads back to third. The catcher throws the ball to the third baseman, and back and forth it goes until the runner is trapped between the two players and tagged out, putting a tense and exciting finish on a thrilling game.

For those in the stands, the moment will long be remembered, but for the folks at home? Well, the television director chose to show us the manager of our home team as he stood on the edge of the dugout watching his men perform the successful rundown. It was an interesting shot, well framed and focused, but, needless to say, totally unmotivated. Also needless to say, several thousand viewers were thinking very unkind thoughts about the director.

In all likelihood, this story never happened and probably never will. It is even unlikely that the director

might have stayed on the shot of the first baseman after he had thrown the ball to third, for he would have known what the center of action and interest was, how to get the shot, and when to take it. In baseball, if you follow the ball, you seldom miss the action. Baseball, it can be said, provides plenty of shot motivation.

Jazz is not baseball, but it is my contention that it too provides plenty of shot motivation. A jazz performance suggests what is important, when it is important, and even some of the better points of view. And yet too often a director who misunderstands or ignores those motivations leaves his audience figuratively looking at the manager.

Baseball is just one of several of the more obviously motivated activities that dictate the director's role within moderate limits. On the other end of this spectrum we might place an activity like televised drama. Here again an understanding of the activity will reveal its inherent motivational clues. Drama, however, is a more highly sophisticated form than baseball. Consequently, a complete understanding of the form and a resultant grasp of its motivational aspects will be considerably more difficult to come by.

Directing jazz falls somewhere between these two points. Just as someone familiar with the logical sequence of baseball or the nuances of drama could explain the correctness of a series of shots, the director of jazz can determine a correct approach to his craft. This is not to suggest

that a single approach exists. Rather it is intended to imply the existence of certain elements which will clearly take precedence over others. Since these elements can be easily misunderstood or overlooked, the following section will be devoted to an examination of shot motivation as applied specifically to the small group jazz performance.

Shot Motivation

The imaginary baseball sequence cited at the beginning of this chapter was an extreme example of an ignorance or misunderstanding of the motivational clues which are present in most, if not all, of the activities presented on television. Whether in a panel discussion or Shakespearean tragedy, the jolt that accompanies an unmotivated shot is never comfortable for the viewer; but with jazz, as with any musical form which develops in an essentially sequential manner, the jolt is particularly strong and obvious.

And yet it is not unusual to see a director cut to a shot of the bass player during the middle of a building solo by the tenor saxophonist. Even worse, the shot may come at any point during the chorus, and we may stay on it for a merely random period of time. Or, worse yet, he may take another equally irrelevant shot while the saxophonist (still the center of <u>musical</u> interest), plays on with no visual support whatsoever. Logically the director's job in such a situation should be to call attention to this center of musical interest and to enhance its presentation until that center changes (at the conclusion of the

saxophonist's performance and the beginning of the next solo).

It can be said then that the director's primary responsibility to the jazz performance is to emphasize and enhance the center of musical interest. This is simply another way of saying that his shots should be motivated by the music, for when he shows us anything, the director says in effect: "This is the important thing to see and to listen to." If he is wrong in this, he not only misleads the novice jazz viewer, but he also offends the knowledgeable fan. The following discussion will offer some insight into the motivational clues inherent in a jazz performance.

As a basic rule it can be said that the soloist will be the center of musical interest and, therefore, the center of visual interest as well. However intriguing and intricate the other members of the group may be in their support of him, the soloist is nonetheless the key figure for the duration of his performance. (Important exceptions to this will be discussed later.)

Similarly, ensemble or unison sections should receive corresponding visual support.

Bearing this in mind, the "rundown sheet" (as discussed in Chapter II) now becomes a very useful tool in plotting the shots for each song to be performed. Because it contains information regarding the structural make-up of the song (the order and perhaps length of the solos) it,

in effect, lists the areas of musical interest in the order in which they will occur. In other words, when listed in a vertical column allowing two to three spaces between entries, the "rundown sheet" has become a virtual shooting script to which the director need only add his camera blocking.

At any rate, for the director of a jazz performance, the "rundown sheet" is as useful as, and in most ways is parallel to, a score for a concert performance or a script for a play. With it, the director can be assured of the primary sequence of events which will require his attention, and correspondingly prepare for them.

But the "rundown sheet" is still only a tool, and not the complete machine. Like a score or a script, it too is subject to a variety of interpretations. Since many interpretations will validly meet the criteria of enhancing and emphasizing the center of musical interest, it seems appropriate here to discuss two basic techniques which, though notably distinct, may easily be used together in various combinations and to varying degrees.

1) As stated earlier, there are many elements of visual appeal inherent in the successful jazz performance. Consequently good visual and esthetic results can often be achieved by simply maintaining a shot of the soloist for the duration of his performance, and not changing picture statements until the next soloist (new center of musical interest) begins. While this technique is certainly correct,

it may be a trap during extended solos--arbitrarily, let us say three or more choruses--or in those dreary performances that fail to qualify as successful.

2) The second technique which might be employed is to change shots occasionally within the duration of a solo. While this approach can also be correct, its success is dependent upon its tasteful use, with an eye toward resisting the "see how many shots I can take" school of overdirecting.

While the mere statement of these two techniques offers nothing significantly new, a closer examination and discussion of them should prove useful in determining the motivational clues which will lead to their most appropriate use. To assist us in this, here are the two "reasons for changing picture statements" as presented by Dr. Colby Lewis in his article on visual punctuation:

(1) to direct attention to a new subject, and

(2) to reveal a new aspect of the same subject in order to emphasize a different point about it.[1]

Using a four chorus saxophone solo on a standard 32-bar song as our example throughout this discussion, we can now take a closer look at the two techniques using Lewis' two reasons as our criteria.

Upon examining the first technique, we see that it is a near literal translation of reason number one. That is:

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[1]Colby Lewis, "The Director Punctuates," NAEB Journal, September-October, 1966, p. 76.

if we have no new subject, no new picture statement is necessary. We need not change statements until a new subject (the next soloist) is introduced.

Reason number two, however, suggests that there may be elements within a solo which may motivate a new picture statement, thereby providing support for (and insight into) the wise use of technique number two (changing shots within the context of a solo). What then are the "new aspects" of the jazz solo which the director ought to be aware of?

New Aspects of a Performance

Because jazz is so personal an art, the mood or feeling it conveys may be expected to run the gamut of human emotions. It may be angry and nearly overwhelming in its power, or tender and gently lyrical. Even though these moods are usually consistent within the format of each individual song (a ballad which began as a pretty statement would tend to explore that end of the emotional spectrum), the soloist will himself undergo changes and development within his performance. These stages of development can certainly be interpreted as "new aspects" of his performance, and, therefore, qualify as proper motivation for a new picture statement.

The best way to recognize these changes--and they can be quite subtle, admittedly--is to listen to the music. But the director, in the midst of a program, may find close listening a decided luxury. Consequently, the next best

alternative is to watch for the physical manifestations of these changes. Since a solo usually grows as it unfolds, he should be aware of cues which signal increased involvement, intensity, passion, humor, et cetera. The physical manifestations of these emotions will vary greatly, which is another reason that at least a minimal familiarity with the musicians is recommended. Generally speaking, however, the face of the artist will duplicate visually what his music expresses aurally. Martin Williams' description of noted director Robert Herridge in action is an example of this kind of awareness at work. He noted: "a close concentration by the cameras on the deep involvement of the musicians as they played--physical involvement that manifested psychological involvement as well."[2]

In such moments of involvement, we are interested in new and more poignant statements about our center of musical interest. Therefore, the best approach should be to eliminate the extraneous elements from sight.

Let us say that the vehicle for improvisation is a ballad, and we are on a medium shot which includes man and saxophone and a bit of background including the bassist. As the solo progresses, and the involvement grows, the background elements serve only to distract, so we push in (zoom in, dissolve or cut) to a medium close-up which eliminates the

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[2]Martin Williams, "Videotaping with Duke," Down Beat, (August 27, 1964), p. 20.

bassist and shows us the neck of the saxophone and the face of the artist. Later we may want to eliminate all but his face in a close-up.[3]

Admittedly, this is an example of extreme involvement of both artist and camera, but it is intended to make the point that unnecessary information should be excluded. There will, of course, be many other variations and interpetations according to the artistic responses of the individual director.

Just as there will be moments when the close-up will ultimately provide the most appropriate emphasis for the individual, there will be other times when wider, more inclusive shots will be warranted to emphasize the expanded role of the group. Because the successful solo is so significantly influenced by the empathy and rapport of the supporting members of the group, there will be many occasions when one, or even all, of the other players should share visual emphasis by inclusion in the shot. Often the soloist becomes involved in a musical dialogue with another member of the group. It may be that the bassist emerges as the strong second voice. In this case, we would want to pull out to include him in the shot, if at all possible. To leave him out would be to recognize only one-half of the conversation which would be doubly unwise due to the interesting visual possibilities of such a shot.

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[3]Other physical manifestations of the soloist's involvement may be seen in wider shots. These include changes in posture such as an increasingly hunched back as the solo grows (best seen in profile), a weaving or swaying motion of the upper half of the body which roughly corresponds to the rhythm, and, with a few volatile performers, an extremely agitated upper torso that would be lost in close-up.

It may also happen that the entire group becomes involved in a sort of musical gestalt such as in the old New Orleans (Dixieland) forms, or as is becoming increasingly more prominent with the present day avant-garde. Naturally the director will want to give almost equal emphasis here, as the soloist per se has all but disappeared into the unit.

Besides the simple examples of exclusion and inclusion I have presented, there are, of course, numerous other approaches and variations which may be utilized to emphasize the new aspects of a performance. These may involve the use of moving cameras (arcs, trucks, booms), electronics (superimposures, split screens), lighting effects, and so forth. The responsibility of enhancing the musical center of interest should provide a stimulating artistic challenge for the director.

Before we leave this discussion of shot motivation, let me offer a word about the more practical aspects of what has been said.

I have pointed out that the new aspects of a performance may serve to motivate new picture statments. It can be the case that these changes are so strong and obvious that they virtually demand a new shot, or conversely, they may be so subtle as to go easily unnoticed. Aside from esthetic considerations, however, these moments can be extremely useful in dealing with the merely practical problems of directing a television program. The wise use of these

moments (however subtle) may prove them to be the director's friend when the business at hand is not one of enhancing, but rather the problem of freeing a camera or adding the spice of variety to a dull and static performance.

Timing and Transition

Our discussion of shot motivation suggested the important things to see and emphasize in a jazz performance. It is to be hoped that it has provided insight into "what" should be on the screen. It remains now to address ourselves to the elements of timing ("when"), and, to a lesser extent, transition ("how"). Once again, by considering Lewis' two reasons, we can make some basic statements about both of these.

When our purpose is to direct attention to a new subject (first reason) we should naturally do so when the new subject (next soloist) begins to play. Ordinarily, this will happen at the beginning of a new chorus (although where it occurs should present no problems since the director will have already secured that information for his rundown sheet) and so the director will be ready to change statements on or about the first beat of the first bar of the new chorus. Similarly, if the new subject is to enter on the bridge, the vicinity of the first bar of that section is the best time to change shots.

Although it can be very effective to cut to a new soloist on the first beat of the first bar, it will not always

be desirable. Often, the concluding soloist will linger a bit, and may play on for several bars into the next chorus, or there may be an overlap at which point both the concluding and the beginning soloist share a bar or two.[4] This rather likely situation suggests the use of the moving camera as a transitional device. It can pull out from the shot of the old soloist, reveal the new one, then push in to feature him. This not only assures that no pertinent information is lost, but also helps to establish the sequential relationship between the soloists, and the musical relationship of both to the song.

More complicated, and less well defined, are the moments when the new aspects come into play, since these can be quite subtle and, therefore, difficult to locate in points of time. Fortunately, the specific moment of one of these new aspects is not of great importance.

This is true because of the structure of the music. In most cases it will appear that the change in intensity, dynamics, or general level of excitement takes place in one of three places within a ternary composition: (1) the beginning of a new chorus, (2) the beginning of the bridge, and (3) the beginning of the section following the bridge.

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[4]This will happen often between two "horns," but less frequently in the transition between a horn and a member of the rhythm section.

These three locations (listed in the order of importance) carry an inherent sense of tension and release which provide an ideal spot at which to change picture statements.[5]

Because of the musical transition to a new set of chord changes at these locations, they will usually be the places where the soloist does, in fact, reveal a new aspect. Even if that is not the case, it will in all likelihood appear to be, and, therefore, remains preferable in most situations. Here the first beat of the first bar of any of these is the best place to cut to a new shot, and should be utilized as such, particularly on medium or fast tempo songs. On ballads, camera movements or dissolves are recommended for use within the first bar of these three spots because they can better approximate the mood and tempo of this type of song.

The director who, for purposes of variety or special effects, wishes a further breakdown, will find that the following locations will be most natural and will, therefore, call the least attention to themselves. On a 32-bar song, the beginning of any eight, four, two or even one bar section may be utilized. With the blues, the divisions beyond twelve are four, two and one bar. The halfway point in the blues form (six bars), is not an effective location for transitions, although the end of eight bars may be in some cases. This

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[5]In the case of the blues or any other non-ternary form the beginning of the chorus provides the primary location.

is particularly true during a vocal rendition because the last four bars contain what might be described as the "punch-line" for the whole chorus.

There may be some special applications when the director purposely wishes to impart a chaotic and random effect. In such an instance, the above suggestions could serve as an antithetical guide. It is hoped, however, that such an approach would be limited to application where novelty and not music is of prime importance.

Framing

There can be no rule about what specifically should occupy the 3x4 frame. Every director's sense of composition as interpreted by his cameramen must, by nature, be his own. Therefore, I simply offer my own opinion regarding those rare moments when that frame is occupied by performing jazz artists.

The human being seems to me to be a far more appealing subject for visual consumption by other humans than the most intricate assemblage of brass, wood, or gut. He is more likely to evoke empathic response, and, in general, to be more interesting. The man <u>with</u> his instrument is an interesting and compelling thing to see.

Far less interesting, however, is the shot of the saxophone bell, the guitar bridge, or the trumpet valves.

These shots have their place in demonstrations or in rare change-of-pace applications, but they omit too much pertinent information to be used regularly in a normal sequence of picture statements. It is my feeling that to maintain a shot of any instrument which is blown while excluding the face from the shot risks the loss of rapport with the audience. A brief tilt down to the fingers in action on a saxophone may inform for a moment, but maintenance of such a shot reveals far too little about the activity that is taking place.

On the other hand, shots of instruments which are not blown--percussion, keyboard, or string--may reveal a great deal when only the hands and/or feet are shown. It is important to note, however, that <u>both</u> hands are essential. For example, the right hand of the guitarist is often shown to the exclusion of the left hand. This is only half of the story, since the left hand is at least equally necessary. Naturally then, both hands ought to be included in the shot. The same can be said for bassists, pianists, violinists and vibraharpists. For drummers and organists, both hands and feet are hard at work and offer many interesting possibilities for shots.

Finally, it can be said that the shots which reveal the involvement of the artist will be most effective. His virtuosity is subservient to the act of creating music. For this is not the music of one man being <u>interpreted</u> by another, as is usually the case with classical music. It

is, instead, being both created and performed by one man at the very moment we hear it. The relationship between man and instrument should be emphasized, but the man, engrossed in the creative process, should receive primary consideration.

Staging

It seems appropriate to focus our attention for a moment upon two areas of production which fall under the supervision of the director, either specifically or as he may see fit to assign them. These areas, staging and audio, will be dealt with in a general manner. There will be no attempt to discuss specifics, as each of them requires specialized knowledge and could easily be the subject of another study.

The manner in which any program will be staged is largely dependent upon the overall production concept as outlined by the producer or director. Since the elements of staging and lighting will be determined to a great extent by their organic relationship to that concept, it will be impractical and really quite unnecessary to detail specific suggestions. There is, however, one general principle which should also play a major role in the designing and execution of sets for programs including or featuring jazz musicians.

As stated earlier, jazz musicians can and do perform in many kinds of environments, from the neighborhood bar to the concert hall, indoors and outdoors. But regardless of where they play, they will invariably seek certain constants.

Primary among these is how the group sets up (is positioned) in relation to each other. As mentioned in Chapter II, the intra-group acoustics are an extremely important consideration. Because the ability to hear and interact with each other is an important factor, one which may easily affect a performance, most groups will have a preferred way (or ways) to arrange themselves physically on the bandstand. The author recalls a major jazz festival at which trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie had to summon stagehands to reposition his drummer's set (which they had nailed to a riser too far from the rest of the group). The result was a delay of fifteen minutes in a major concert performance. A conference with the leader will provide this kind of knowledge in advance so that those in charge of staging may then feel free to create an environment as bizarre or as conventional as they might conceive, and yet still feel confident that the performers will be satisfied. Such prior knowledge should, in fact, make the job of staging much easier and it seems unlikely that any truly significant disagreements will arise between performer and designer.

From the director's point of view, however, it must be noted that some of the arrangements preferred by the band may tend to eliminate certain shot possibilities. Here we are confronted by considerations of visual appeal as opposed to musical cohesion. Naturally, it is up to the individual director to weigh the merits of each in regard to what he may ultimately hope to achieve.

Beyond this, we must consider the necessities of placement as they effect the very important factor of audio pick-up. So ultimately (aside from what the set will look like), we must conclude that the best staging arrangement will be the one that successfully incorporates the demands of the visual, aural and musical elements of the program. It is hoped that the director will see the wisdom of emphasizing the third element, for without it, the best of the other two will amount to very little.

Audio

Because of such variables as studio size and shape, available microphones and the versatility of the console, it seems highly probable that any specific advice regarding audio pick-up will not apply to the majority of practical situations. Therefore, for purposes of perspective rather than instruction, I sought the views of Don Kemp, a very capable audio engineer whose experience at WMSB-TV in East Lansing has encompassed a wide range of live music pick-ups

including the annual Congress of Strings telecasts and numerous jazz presentations. On February 11, 1967, Mr. Kemp served as audio engineer for a half hour jazz program which I directed (see Appendix I).

The program featured a quartet composed of bass, guitar, drums and trumpet performing before a studio audience. The following comments by Mr. Kemp will provide insight into one effective method of approaching the jazz program from the standpoint of a knowledgeable audio engineer:

> Aside from two RCA BK-1 dynamics for the audience pickup, the mikes used were seen in the set, which is the way I prefer audio for television. I like the close-up sound it gets. The mikes used were all Electro-Voice (E-V) dynamics:
>
> 635A Drums and Guitar (one for each instrument)
> 666 Bass
> RE-15 Trumpet and cover (also for the announce between numbers).
>
> I would have preferred to use a ribbon microphone on the bass. Such a mike is ideal for this, but as you are aware, with drums in close proximity the mike just won't take it. I chose the 666 for its responses to low frequencies and its ruggedness.
>
> The 635A has good frequency response and is a good mike for close-up work on drums and amplified guitar. I had to use a ten db pad in the line from the guitar mike, since the console pre-amp was being overdriven to distortion. I had thought that the drums would be more likely to cause this, but they were fine.
>
> The RE-15 is a new product from E-V, and, for my money, is a great microphone. Bob Ruskin, the trumpet player, was as favorably impressed as I was. I would like to have several on hand as I think it will be THE all-purpose mike for television.[6]

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[6]Don Kemp, personal letter, May 1967.

Mr. Kemp commented further that there was very little need to "ride gain" for this performance other than to boost the soloist (particularly the bassist) slightly. He found that, once the balance had been set, the group effectively controlled its own dynamic range without much need for electronic assistance.

In a later conversation, I suggested that the placement of the mike used for the pick-up of the drummer should have given more emphasis to the large cymbal (the "ride cymbal"), since this cymbal plays an extremely important role in time keeping. He agreed, and added that two microphones might better capture the complete sound of the drum set. We agreed that the mike used for the cymbal should be placed facing the drummer to best achieve a "natural" audio point of view similar to that of the members of the audience.

It may be added that such a natural perspective should be the goal of the audio engineer with each instrument, and certainly with the overall group balance.

To offer further assistance in this, here is a list, in order of preference, of Mr. Kemp's personal choices of the microphones that he feels will best capture the true sound of the musical instruments with which they are paired.

Accoustical bass and guitar: Ribbon microphone (if isolated from the drums which may be damaging to this delicate instrument), dynamic microphone.

Amplified bass and guitar: Condenser microphone, dynamic microphone.

Brass instruments: Condenser microphone, dynamic microphone.

Percusssion: Dynamic microphone, condenser microphone.

Woodwinds: Condenser microphone, dynamic microphone.

Piano: Condenser microphone, two dynamic microphones.

APPENDIX I

THE VIDEOTAPE: A DIARY

APPENDIX I

THE VIDEOTAPE: A DIARY

On February 11, 1967, while the preceding work was still in progress, I had an opportunity to test some of the ideas I was writing about in a practical situation. On that day, I directed a half-hour video-taped jazz program that was aired on WMSB-TV as a part of the series called Gamut. Since the videotaped program is a part of this thesis, it is hoped that the reader will arrange to see it after reading this work. It is on file with the Television and Radio Department at Michigan State University.

The following is an account of some of the preparations for that program, my comments and criticisms regarding it, and a few retrospective observations on the body of this work as applied to my own practical experience.

Since I served as both producer and director for this program, I had no difficulties in correlating my directorial responsibilities with the production concept. It was my idea to present a small combo in an informal, live-audience situation. I knew that such an environment would be familiar to the musicians, and therefore, conducive to a relaxed and effective performance. I knew also that I would be able to assemble all of the necessary elements for such a program from resources which were readily available.

To secure a responsive and genuinely interested audience, I contacted Bill Currie, president of the Jazz Society of West Circle Drive. As advisor to this group, I had worked with Mr. Currie many times in the past in presenting even more informal Sunday afternoon concerts in various living units at Michigan State, and I knew that he could be counted on to select a representative group of members to serve as the audience for the program. In effect, then, we would simply televise a fairly typical Jazz Society meeting (or "session," as we usually referred to them), in WMSB's Studio B.

Some time earlier (about mid-January) I had asked four of the best musicians I knew to participate in the taping, and I was able to arrange for their appearance. I was admittedly at an advantage in that I was both a friend and a fellow musician, but, here again, I feel that their willingness was far from an atypical response.

The four men I selected (Ron English, guitar; Bill Parker, drums; Bob Ruskin, trumpet; Jim Kaye, bass) were chosen not only because of their individual ability, but also because I could expect them to perform well as a unit since they had performed together many times in the past. They were also four of the most dependable people I knew--a factor which should rank alongside musicianship in selecting performers for such a gratis performance.

For a time I had considered the use of a quintet so that I would be working with a more typical combo, in terms of both size and construction (piano, rather than guitar, is usually the chording instrument), but my choice as a pianist was drafted into the army several weeks prior to the program.

The crew for each Gamut production was composed of students from the Television and Radio Department and each producer was to select his own crew members. I was fortunate in securing two cameramen, a lighting and staging director and an audio engineer, all of whom were experienced in their fields. My floor director was chosen not so much because of his experience as because of his positive attitude and his genuine interest in working with the musicians. On the day before the taping, he read Chapter II of my thesis. He stated that he found it helpful, and that he would have no trouble in following its suggestions.

On the afternoon of Friday the 10th, the staging and lighting director set up the risers and the "random studio paraphernalia" that were to serve as our set and arranged the chairs for the members of the audience. When I arrived later that afternoon we discussed shot possibilities that might be affected by our original plan of placing two rows of people on the floor directly in front of the bandstand. It was agreed that even with an aisle to allow room for a camera, such an arrangement was too great a limiting factor, especially since I wanted to avoid longer lenses

in favor of shorter "moving" lenses. As a result, we decided that the audience (whose presence would be established in the opening shots), would be largely off camera except for those who might be seen in reaction shots within the program.

The audio engineer arrived at approximately the same time (around 5:00 p.m.) and began to set up his equipment. The musicians arrived at approximately 5:30, as scheduled, and we began a two-hour rehearsal that yielded both a satisfactory audio test and the rundown sheet that I would use for the next day's program.

With the taping set for 10:30 a.m., I arrived at 9:00 to complete pre-show preparations. Since so much had been accomplished on the previous day, I felt little need for more studio time. After the cameras were checked out, I sat down with the two cameramen to discuss some of my attitudes about framing. I am confident that this was an important factor in avoiding the on-the-air delays which otherwise would have necessitated "talking them in" to a framing. I also suggested the area that each camera would be responsible for, and the instrumentalists that they were most likely to be shooting. We then tested these areas and shot possibilities using members of the crew to stand in for the musicians.

The musicians arrived at approximately 9:30. They were greeted and assisted from that point on by the floor director. My only contact with them was to finalize the information I had secured the previous day (primarily

regarding the rundown sheets) and to give them the "go-ahead" for their warm-up period.

The members of the Jazz Society were ushered into the studio at about 10:15. This allowed the band to have completed its warm-up before the audience arrived. The idea here was to make their half-hour performance as fresh and as new as possible for the musicians, the studio audience, and ultimately, for the viewers. After a greeting and a few words from me regarding what I wanted them to do on the opening shot, the audience walked through the opening twice for the benefit of everyone involved. There was time after this to allow the band to play another tune to warm up the audience. Naturally, they chose a selection which was not going to be played on the program.

A few minutes prior to tape time, the band was signalled to "wrap-up" the song, and we awaited word from master control that everything was ready.

At this point, only the open of the program and the sequence of shots which would be used to introduce the members of the quartet had actually been rehearsed. I had also utilized the band's warm-up tunes to check a number of shot possibilities with the cameramen. Other than this, the rundown sheet and the preparations I have described were to serve as my "script."

The next section is a series of comments on the program itself. To provide a handy index for the reader who wishes to consult the videotape, the approximate time elapsed from the start of the program will be given preceding each remark.

Commentary

00:00 Opening shot.

00:55 In an effort to get a tight cue from the end of the announcer's remarks to the opening note of the first song, I cued the band too soon. I would have been better off with a little space than with this overlap. This first tune ("Doxy") is a 32-bar composition.

02:00 As we push in on the trumpet player at the beginning of his second chorus, note how his concentration and involvement are evident in his face.

03:30 This two shot of the guitarist and drummer indicates their musical relationship, as they were involved in some strong interplay. Note how much work the drummer is doing with his right hand on the large cymbal, and yet how little of this is heard due to the microphone placement (see Chapter IV).

04:10 This is the only reaction shot in the program because of the fact that I had not made provision for lighting the audience adequately. Had I known that other such possibilities were unlikely, I probably would have chosen to use no reaction shots at all.

04:45 Note the guitarist's strong visual cue to the bassist as he nears the end of his chorus. This kind of cue can be valuable to the director as well. We will see similar cues throughout the program.

04:50 The loose nature of the program is a comfort to the musicians but can be a hazard for the director. Here the trumpet player blocks the bassist for a moment, but quickly understands the signals he receives from the floor director and moves out of the shot. This possibility was foreseen, and the floor director had briefed all of the men in the band regarding such signals prior to the program.

05:40 This shot of the drummer is informational and interesting, but the push in at the beginning of his second chorus is a little late. It would have been more effective to cut to a new shot at this point, but the choruses were short and this was a two-camera show.

06:20 I was pleased with the rhythmic accuracy of this cut to the full quartet.

07:50 The name of the host-guitarist is Ron English, a fact which was never revealed by Mr. English who otherwise did a fine job in his dual role.

08:00 This is a 32-bar composition called "So What," and the bassist is the lead voice--an unusual situation. Cuts between the bass and the horns might have been very effective here.

08:30 Note the problem of framing the bassist to allow for adequate head and hand room. This is true of most string bassists.

08:55 This is virtually the same shot of the trumpet player that I used in the previous selection. While the bass and guitar present problems in terms of the esthetic versus informational aspects of picture composition (I wanted to keep both hands in the shots), the trumpet (and drums, for that matter), allow for more variety and freedom than I took advantage of here.

09:45 This cut to the two shot of the trumpet player and guitarist comes at the beginning of the bridge rather than at the beginning of a new chorus. This is a good point of tension and release in the composition.

11:00 Note the trumpet player's visual cue to the guitarist as he wraps up his solo.

11:05 Because I know the work of these men, I expected a great deal of interplay between the drummer and guitarist here. I therefore cut to a two shot once again.

12:25 This two shot, which includes the bassist with the guitarist, indicates how they are also interacting. The cut comes on the bridge again.

12:40 We were all caught off-guard here as the guitarist ended his chorus four bars early (for reasons he still cannot explain). Fortunately, the cameraman realized the problem even before I did, and pushed in to the shot of the bassist.

14:25 The bassist is not playing recognizable time here. This is where the director must be particularly alert for visual and aural cues.

14:55 Because my shot pattern had been altered, I decided to turn it into a positive factor by cutting between the bass and the horn on the final chorus. Unfortunately, I failed to realize that the trumpet player would block the shot of the bassist. Consequently, I was left with two cameras with shots of the guitarist and trumpet player, and no shot of the bassist. I decided not to compound the error and stayed with the shot I had until the tag of the tune.

16:20 At this point, Ron English,the host,is strongly contrasted with Ron English, the guitarist, by the very definite change in mood as he begins to play his ballad, "When Sunny Gets Blue," a 32-bar composition. I should have supported this change with a visual transition such as a dissolve to another shot of him.

16:20 The value of including the drummer in this shot is debatable.

19:45 There should have been some visual support, such as a new picture statement, for the final 8 bars of this song.

19:25 The beginning of the bass solo on "Who Can I Turn To," a 32-bar composition.

21:20 The super of the brushes on the snare drum seemed well motivated according to the audio we were hearing in the control room, but I found that the high frequency sound of the brushes "swish" was all but lost on home receivers, thus making the shot fairly meaningless.

22:20 This transition is accompanied by applause and would be a perfect spot for a shot of the audience, but again, my lighting is inadequate.

22:30 The beginning of the trumpet solo on "Lover Man," a 32-bar composition.

24:50 A loose barn door accounts for the loss of set light here.

25:05 The beginning of "Eggie," a 32-bar tune.

25:10 This cut to the ensemble following the four bar drum introduction was late, as were several other cuts in the program.

25:40 Note the camera in the left side of the frame. Since the announcer had informed everyone that we were in a television studio, and since the set itself consisted of an array of equipment, I fully intended that cameras should be seen on the air if they were so positioned. However, I neglected to tell one of the cameramen of my attitude. Consequently, you will see a pan to the right to avoid showing the other camera. By the time I realized what was happening and explained it to the on-the-air man, the second camera had pulled back. I suspect I will remember such details in the future.

28:05 This cut to a cover shot was to be followed immediately by the closing slides and announcements, but it was at this point that the technical director and I discovered that our audio engineer had not heard any of our standby cues (which began one minute earlier). To obtain the best possible audio for the control room, he had set a speaker system in a large cabinet on top of his console. While the speaker was excellent for the purpost of judging balance and sound, it was so large that it blocked his view of both the

monitors and the studio and, worse yet, it prevented us from being heard over the music. After a bit of shouting and arm waving, the closing announce tape was rolled, the slides were supered, and the program was concluded.

Afterthoughts

The preceding comments were written after my fifth viewing of the videotape. Since few directors have the opportunity to examine their own work at such length and leisure I hope that I put this experience to good use. Two things in particular began to annoy me, perhaps as early as the second playback. These were the lack of variety in shot composition (as implied by my comment at 8:55) and a number of missed opportunities in regard to emphasizing "new aspects" (as I mention concerning the end of the guitarist's ballad). These obviously do not correspond to the ideas put forth in Chapter IV. By way of explanation, I should point out that the videotape was made several months before Chapter IV was written and was, in fact, a stimulus for much of it, especially the section which discussed the uses of Lewis' second reason for changing picture statements. The lack of variety may be explained by the fact that I had directed only one program in the nineteen months prior to the taping, and was--to say the least--a bit rusty.

After the program, it was suggested by one of my cameramen that the elimination of one of the risers (we used a twelve-inch riser in front for the trumpet and guitar, and a twenty-four inch riser in the rear for the bass and drums) would have allowed for a greater variety of heights from which to shoot. As it was was, the two pedestal cameras were partially boomed-up throughout the program to obtain a "normal eye-level" point of view. Shots from a higher level were thus eliminated and camera movement was also impaired somewhat by the high center of gravity. I believe that the carpet we used to cover the risers might easily have served to suggest the borders of the bandstand in the front, thus permitting a lower rear riser and a consequently greater range of camera angle and freedom of movement.

Finally, I wish to thank my cameramen, Paul Witkowski and Larry Stone for their cooperation and patience, and for their fine work. I am also indebted to Dr. Robert Schlater, the faculty adviser to the MSU Broadcasters and the Gamut series, for making air time and facilities available to me.

APPENDIX II

A DISCOGRAPHY

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Most writers, critics, and musicians in the jazz community would agree that the art has more varied approaches, divergent points of view and warring factions now than at any other time in its brief history. They agree on little else.

While this situation produces considerable excitement for the jazz fans, it makes the task of assembling a brief and somewhat representative discography a very difficult one. Let me state, then, that the lists which follow were assembled for the purpose of acquainting the reader with the kinds of music he may encounter as a television director.

With them I hope to familiarize the reader with a number of examples of the basic forms discussed in Chapter III as well as to offer examples of music which either deviates from these to varying degrees, or utilizes forms which are significantly new. There will be no attempt at listing all of the major artists, or even the best recordings of the artists that are represented. Instead, what follows is a compilation of recordings which are exemplary of both the established schools and developing new trends in small-group jazz as of July, 1967. Because of the nature of the art they are (as they say) subject to change without notice.

Familiar Forms:

Brown, Clifford. At Basin Street (EmArcy MG36070).

Evans, Bill. Waltz for Debby (Riverside RS-9399).

Jones, Elvin. Dear John C. (Impulse AS-88).

Parker, Charles. Now's the Time (Verve MG V-8005).

Powell, Bud. This Was Bud Powell (Verve VSP-37).

Smith, Jimmy. Midnight Special (Blue Note 4078).

The six albums listed above contain general examples of the basic styles and instrumentations of many of the groups performing around the country today. We will not discuss the all too numerous aspects of these recorded performances except to point out that they too are representative, and consequently deserve attentive listening. We will instead turn our attention here to the constructions of the melodies played by these groups in hopes of offering some information which will enable the reader to better follow the whole performance and, at the same time to familiarize himself with these rather typical forms. We will begin by citing the performances of songs in the twelve-bar blues form. In all that follows (*) denotes an original jazz composition.

12-Bar Blues

Charles Parker: Laird Baird,* Cosmic Rays* (two cuts) Chi Chi* (three cuts), Now's the Time.* The multiple cuts provide an excellent opportunity to hear how differently a

a jazz artist improvises from performance to performance.

Bud Powell: Willow Grove.

Jimmy Smith: Midnight Special,* Jumpin' the Blues,* One O'Clock Jump.*

32-Bar AABA

Clifford Brown: What Is This Thing Called Love? Time,* Gertrude's Bounce.*

Bill Evans. Detour Ahead,* Some Other Time. (Note: the final A section of Detour is 10 bars long, making this a 34-bar composition.

Elvin Jones. Dear John C,* Anthropology,* Ballade,* Everything Happens to Me.

Charles Parker: Kim* (two cuts), I Remember You, Confirmation,* (Note: Kim is based on the chord structure of I Got Rhythm, as are many "be-bop" compositions).

Bud Powell: Get Happy, I Didn't Know What Time It Was, Stairway to the Stars, Hallucinations,* Celia,* 52nd Street Theme.* (Note: Celia has an 8-bar tag at the end of the

first chorus. There is a 4-bar tag at the end of I Didn't Know. This is not too uncommon with standards; such a device is used at the end of the standard Moonlight in Vermont.)

Jimmy Smith: A Subtle One.*

Now we turn to other forms of the 32-bar melody. Unless otherwise indicated, these are constructed in an ABAC fashion, which means that a fourth 8-bar phrase is added at the end instead of repeating the A phrase. Technically, there is no bridge in the same sense as the B section of the more common AABA form. Consequently, the tension-release element is not as strong at any particular point within the development of the line.

32-Bar ABAC

Clifford Brown. Love Is a Many Splendored Thing, The Scene Is Clean.*

Bill Evans. My Foolish Heart, My Romance.

Elvin Jones. This Love of Mine.

Bud Powell. Sweet Georgia Brown, All God's Children Got Rhythm. (Note: All God's Children is an ABAB construction)

Jimmy Smith: Why Was I Born?

The following songs are of still other constructions and are listed according to artists rather than in groups.

Clifford Brown. I'll Remember April is a 48-bar composition in an ABA form with 16-bars in each section rather than the more common 8-bar divisions. Powell's Prances* is a 24-bar composition in an ABA form. It has 8-bars per section.

Bill Evans. Waltz for Debby* is a 40-bar composition in an AABAC form. The first chorus here is in 6/8 time with all others in 4/4. Milestones* is also a 40-bar composition in an AABBA form.

Elvin Jones. Love Bird* is a 64-bar composition in an AABA standard form with 16 bars in each section. Fantazam* is also a 64-bar composition in AABA form with 16-bar sections. Feelin' Good is an unusual 44-bar composition in an AABA form with 11 bar sections.

Charles Parker. The Song is You is a 64-bar composition in an AABC form with 16 bars in each section.

The New Jazz

Ayler, Albert. Spiritual Unity (ESP-Disk 10010).

Coleman, Ornette. At the Golden Circle (Blue Note BST-84224).

Coletrane, John. Ascension (Impulse AS-95).

Davis, Miles. Miles Smiles (Columbia CS-9401).

Dolphy, Eric. Out to Lunch (Blue Note ST-84163).

Lloyd, Charles. Forest Flower (Atlantic 1473).

Rollins, Sonny. East Broadway Rundown (Impulse A-9121).

The music listed above represents both the present and what may prove to be the future of jazz. Referred to as "avant garde," "new thing," "free jazz," and by other less complimentary labels, there are in actuality so many varied concepts and approaches being suggested that the term "new musics" seems most appropriate to describe the phenomenon. Since there are nearly as many new directions as there are musicians, this list can only attempt to offer a cursory listening guide so that the reader may become conversant with at least a few of them.

A fairly common goal of the new musics is to move away from the rhythmic and harmonic restrictions imposed by western musical tradition. Consequently, it is both difficult and relatively unrewarding to enter into any examination of the forms utilized here, since they may be representative only of these performances and not used again to any significant extent. It can be said that the recordings by Messrs. Davis, Lloyd, and Rollins are more obviously evolutionary than the others, and will therefore

maintain a certain relationship to the music already discussed. For example, the two extended performances on the Rollins record are both based on the 12-bar blues.

On the other hand, the five remaining albums present music which may seem to have little evolutionarly relationship to the past. While this is not actually the case, these artists are among the most discussed and, to an unfortunate degree, the most controversial in jazz today. Yet it is an undeniable fact that their various approaches to jazz have already begun to influence an entire generation of young players.

Two very distinct approaches to small-group jazz can be heard on the recordings by Albert Ayler and Ornette Coleman, and several equally distinct excursions into the realm of larger-group improvisation will be heard on the remaining records. The Coltrane recording, featuring eleven men, may typify the big band of the future, performing without written arrangements. The Eric Dolphy album offers examples of a more subtle use of group interaction to attain still another kind of musical freedom. And the Cecil Taylor recording presents a cross-breeding of all-out freedom and intricate musical structures.

In dealing with all musics, whether new or old, strange or familiar, remember that the principles set forth in Chapter IV remain valid. The director should strive to enhance the center of musical interest, whether one man engrossed in a beautiful saxophone solo, or eleven men engaged in a fierce group improvisation.

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