some heart who will recognize me truthfully. Who will know what I am and what I wanted beneath the mask of meanings and attitudes that shape the reality of everything. Beneath the necessity of talking or the necessity for being angry or beneath the actual core of life we make reference to digging deep into some young women, and listen to her come.

Solves fly away in madness. Liquid self shoots out of the joint. Lives which are silly and sticky. Why does everyone live in a closet, and hope no one will understand how badly they need to grow? How many errors they canonsize or justify. or kill behind? I need to be an old monk and not feel sorry or happy for people. I need to be a billion years old with a white beard and all of ASIA to walk around.

The purpose of myself, has not yet been fulfilled. Perhaps it will never be. Just those existences and poses. Just this need to reach into myself, and feel something wince and love to be touched.

The dialogue exists. Magic and ghosts are a dialogue, and the body bodies of material, invisible sound vibrations, humming in emptiness, and ideas less than humming, humming, images collide in empty ness, and we build our emotions into blank invisible structures which never exist, and are not there, and are illusion and pain and madness. Dead whiteness.

We turn white when we are afraid.
We are going to try to be happy.
We do not need to be fucked with.
We can be quiet and think and love the silence.
We need to look at trees more closely.
We need to listen.

Harlem 1965

From Black Music

Black Music features fugitive music reviews and articles (originally published between 1959 and 1967) and is Basie's black nationalist meditation on Afro-American music. It includes pieces on such artists as Billie Holiday, Sonny Rollins, Archie Shepp, and John Coltrane. For Basie, Coltrane is the great black-nationalist artist-him. He declared: "Trane is a mature man whose wings span was a whole world. But he also shows us to murder the popular song. To do away with weak Western forms. He is a beautiful philosopher." Basie wants the black artist to emulate Coltrane by creating art that will destroy Western forms.

with

Jazz and the White Critic

Most jazz critics have been white Americans, but most important jazz musicians have not been. This might seem a simple enough reality to most people, or at least a reality which can be readily explained in terms of the social and cultural history of American society. And it is obvious why there are only two or three fingers' worth of Negro critics or writers on jazz, say, if one understands that until relatively recently those Negroes who could become critics, who would largely have to come from the black middle class, have simply not been interested in the music. Or at least jazz, for the black middle class, has only comparatively recently lost some of its stigma (though by no means is it yet as popular among them as any popular musical product that comes sanctioned by the taste of the white majority). Jazz was collected among the numerous skeletons the middle-class black men kept locked in the closet of his psyche, along with watermelons and gin, and whose retelling caused him no end of misery and self-hatred. As one Howard University philosophy professor said to me when I was an undergraduate, "It's fantastic how much bad taste the blues contain." But it is just this "bad taste" that this Uncle spoke of that has been the one factor that has kept the best of Negro music from slipping steriley into the echo chambers of middle-brow American culture. And to a great extent such
"bad taste" was kept extant in the music, blues or jazz because the Negroes who were responsible for the best of the music, were always aware of their identities as black Americans and really did not, themselves, desire to become vague, featureless, Americans as is usually the case with the Negro middle class. (This is certainly not to say that there have not been very important Negro musicians from the middle class. Since the Henderson era, their number has increased enormously in jazz.)

Negroes played jazz as they had sung blues or, even earlier, as they had shouted and hollered in those anonymous fields, because it was one of the few areas of human expression available to them. Negroes who felt the blues, later jazz, impulse, as a specific means of expression, went naturally into the music itself. There were fewer social or extra-expressive considerations that could possibly disqualify any prospective Negro jazz musician than existed, say, for a Negro who thought he might like to become a writer (or even an elevator operator, for that matter). Any Negro who had some ambition towards literature, in the earlier part of this century, was likely to have developed so powerful an allegiance to the sacerdotal middle-class American culture that he would be horrified by the very idea of writing about jazz.

There were few "jazz critics" in America at all until the '30s and then they were influenced to a large extent by what Richard Hazlitt has called "the carefully documented gee-white attitude" of the first serious European jazz critics. They were also, as a matter of course, influenced more deeply by the social and cultural mores of their own society. And it is only natural that their criticism, whatever its intention, should be a product of that society, or should reflect at least some of the attitudes and thinking of that society, even if not directly related to the subject they were writing about. Negro music.

Jazz, as a Negro music, existed, up until the time of the big bands, on the same socio-cultural level as the sub-culture from which it was issued. The music and its sources were secret as far as the rest of America was concerned, in much the same sense that the actual lives of the black man in America was secret to the white American. The first white critics were men who sought, whether consciously or not, to understand this secret, just as the first serious white jazz musicians (Original Dixieland Jazz Band, Bix, etc.) sought not only to understand the phenomenon of Negro music but to appropriate it as a means of expression which they themselves might utilize. The success of this "appropriation" signaled the existence of an American music, where before there was a Negro music. But the white jazz musician had an advantage the white critic seldom had. The white musician's commitment to jazz, the ultimate commitment, proposed that the sub-cultural attitudes that produced the music as a profound expression of human feelings, could be learned and used not be passed on as a secret blood rite. And Negro music is essentially the expression of an attitude, or a collection of attitudes, about the world, and only secondarily an attitude about the way music is made. The white jazz musician came to understand this attitude as a way of making music, and the intensity of his understanding produced the "great" white jazz musicians, and is producing them now.

Usually the critic's commitment was first to his appreciation of the music rather than to his understanding of the attitude which produced it. This difference meant that the potential critic of jazz had only to appreciate the music, or what he thought was the music, and that he did not need to understand or even be concerned with the attitudes that produced it, except perhaps as a purely sociological consideration. This last idea is certainly what produced the reverse patronization that is known as Crow Jim. The disparaging "all you folks got rhythm" is no less a stereotype, simply because it is proposed as a positive trait. But this Crow Jim attitude has not been as menacing or as evident a flaw in critical writing about jazz as has another manifestation of the white critic's failure to concentrate on the blues and jazz attitude rather than his conditioned appreciation of the music. The major flaw in this approach to Negro music is that it strips the music too ingenuously of its social and cultural intent. It seeks to define jazz as an art (or a folk art) that has come out of no intelligent body of socio-cultural philosophy.

We take for granted the social and cultural milieu and philosophy that produced Mozart. As western people, the socio-cultural thinking of eighteenth-century Europe comes to us as a history legacy that is a continuous and organic part of the twentieth-century West. The socio-cultural philosophy of the Negro in America (as a continuous historical phenomenon) is no less specific and no less important for any intelligent critical speculation about the music that came out of it. And again, this is not a plea for narrow sociological analysis of jazz, but rather that this music cannot be completely understood (in critical terms) without some attention to the attitudes which produced it. It is the philosophy of Negro music that is most important, and this philosophy is only partially the result of the sociological disposition of Negroes in America. There is, of course, much more to it than that.
Strict musicological analysis of jazz, which has come into favor recently, is also as limited as a means of jazz criticism as a strict sociological approach. The notator of any jazz solo, or blues, has no chance of capturing what is effect are the most important elements of the music. (Most transcriptions of blues lyrics are just as frustrating.) A printed musical example of an Armstrong solo, or of a Thelonious Monk solo, tells us almost nothing except the facility of formal musicology when dealing with jazz. Not only are the various jazz effects almost impossible to notate, but each note means something quite in adjacent to musical notation. The notes of a jazz solo exist in a notation strictly for musical reasons. The notes of a jazz solo, as they are coming into existence, exist as they do for reasons that are only concomitantly musical. Coltrane's cries are not "musical," but they are music and quite moving music. Ornette Coleman's screens and rants are only musical once one understands the music of his emotional attitude seeks to create. This attitude is real, and perhaps the most singularly important aspect of his music. Mississippi Joe Williams, Snooks Eaglin, Lightnin' Hopkins have different emotional attitudes than Ornette Coleman, but all of those attitudes are continuous parts of the historical and cultural biography of the Negro as it has existed and developed since there was a Negro in America, and a music that could be associated with him that did not exist anywhere else in the world. The notes mean something; and the something is, regardless of its stylistic considerations, part of the black psyche as it dictates the various forms of Negro culture.

Another hopeless flaw in a great deal of the writing about jazz that has been done over the years is that in most cases the writers, the jazz critics, have been anything but intellectually (in the most complete sense of that word). Most jazz critics began as hobbyists or boisterously memners of the American petit bourgeoisie, whose only claim to any understanding about the music was that they knew it was different; or else they had once been brave enough to make a trip into a Negro slum to hear his favorite instrumentalists defend Western musical tradition. Most jazz critics were tind and not only white middle-class Americans, but middle-brow as well. The irony here is that because the majority of jazz critics are white middle-brow, most jazz criticism tends to enforce white middle-brow standards of excellence as criteria for performance of a music that in its most profound manifestations is completely antibalitical to such standards; in fact, quite often is in direct reaction against them. (As an analogy, suppose the great majority of the critics of Western formal music were poor, "uneducated" Negroes?) A man can speak of the "beauty of bebop" for instance, only if he is completely unaware of the psychological catalysts that made that music the exact registration of the social and cultural thinking of a whole generation of black Americans. The blues and jazz aesthetic, to be fully understood, must be seen in as nearly its complete human context as possible. People made bebop. The question the critic must ask is: why? But it is just this why of Negro music that has been consistently ignored or misunderstood; and it is a question that cannot be adequately answered without first understanding the necessity of asking it. Contemporary jazz during the last few years has begun to take on again some of the anarchy and excitement of the bebop years. The cool and hard bop/funk movements since the '40s seem pitifully tame, even decadent, when compared to the music men like Ornette Coleman, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, Cecil Taylor and some others have been making recently. And of the bop pioneers, only Thelonious Monk has managed to maintain without question the visceral creativity with which he first entered the jazz scene back in the '40s. The music has changed again, for many of the same basic reasons it changed twenty years ago. Bop was, at a certain level of consideration, a reaction by young musicians against the sterility and formality of Swing as it moved to become a formal part of the mainstream American culture. The New Thing, as recent jazz has been called, is, to a large degree, a reaction to the hard bop/funk/groove/soul camp, which itself seemed to come into being in protest against the squelching of most of the blues elements in cool and progressive jazz. Funk (groove, soul) has become as formal and clichéd as cool or swing, and opportunities for imaginative expression within that form have dwindled almost to nothing.

The attitudes and emotional philosophy contained in "the new music" must be isolated and understood by critics before any consideration of the worth of the music can be legitimately broached. Later on, of course, it becomes relatively easy to characterize the emotional peanunics that informed earlier aesthetic statements. After the fact, is a much simpler way to work and think. For example, a writer who wrote liner notes for a John Coltrane record mentioned how difficult it had been for him to appreciate Coltrane earlier, just as it had been difficult for him to appreciate Charlie Parker when he first appeared. To quote: "I wish I were one of those sages who can say, 'Man, I dug bird the first time I heard him.' I didn't. The first time I heard Charlie Parker, I thought he was ridiculous..." "Well, that's a noble confession and all, but the responsibility is still the writer's, and in no way involves Charlie Parker or what he was trying
to do. When that writer first heard Parker he simply did not understand why Bird should play the way he did, nor could it have been very important to him. But now, of course, it becomes almost a form of reverse snobbery to say that one did not think Parker's music was worth much at first hearing, etc. etc. The point is, it seems to me, that if the music is worth something now, it must have been worth something then. Critics are supposed to be people in a position to tell what is of value and what is not, and, hopefully, at the time it first appears. If they are consistently mistaken, what is their value? Jazz criticism, certainly as it has existed in the United States, has served in a great many instances merely to elaborate what has actually been happening with the music itself—the pitiful banalesques that reigned during the '40s between two 'schools' of criticism as to which was the 'real jazz,' the new or the traditional, provides some very ugly examples. A critic who praises Rank in Tazz Gillies's expense is no critic at all, but then neither is a man who turns in and knocks Rank to swell Tazz. If such critics would (or could) reorganize their thinking so that they begin their discussions for these musicians by trying to understand why each played the way he did, and in terms of the constantly evolving and redefined philosophy which has informed the most profound examples of Negro music throughout its history, then such thinking would be impossible. It has never ceased to amaze and infuriate me that in the '40s a European critic could be arrogant and unthinking enough to inform serious young American musicians that what they were feeling (a consideration that exists before, and without, the music) was false. What had happened was that even though the white middle-brow critic had known about Negro music for only about three decades, he was already trying to formalize and finally institutionalize it. It is a hideous idea. The music was already in danger of being forced into that junk pile of admirable objects and data the West knows as culture.

Recently, the same attitudes have become more apparent in the face of a fresh redefinition of the form and content of Negro music. Such phrases as "anti-jazz" have been used to describe musicians who are making the most exciting music produced in this country. But as critic A. B. Spellman asked, "What does anti-jazz mean and who are these days who've appointed themselves guardians of last year's blues?" It is that simple, really. What does anti-jazz mean? And who coined the phrase? What is the definition of jazz? And who was authorized to make one?

Reading a great deal of old jazz criticism is usually like being run on the social and cultural malaise that characterizes and delineates the bourgeois philistine in America. Every rece joyful someone as in-
The Changing Same (R&B and New Black Music)

The blues imp-also transferred... containing a race, and its expression. Primol (innovations... transfers and imitations). Through its many changes, it remained the exact replication of The Black Man In The West. An expression of the culture at its most unself: (therefore showing the larger consciousness of a one self, immune to bullshit) conscious. The direct expression of a place... jazz seeks another place as it weakens, a middle-class place. Except the consciously separate from those aspersions. Hence the so-called avant-garde or new music, the new Black Music, is separate because it seeks to be equally separate, equally unself-conscious... meaning more conscious of the real weights of existence as the straightest R&B. There are simply more temptations for the middle-class Negro because he can make believe in America more, cop out easier, become whiter and slighter with less trouble, than most R&B people. Simply because he is closer to begin with. Jazz, too often, becomes a music of special, not necessarily emotional, occasion. But R&B now, with the same help from white America, in its exploitation of energy for profit, the same as if it was a gold mine, strings that music out along a similar weakening line. Beginning with their own various "understanding" of what Black music is, or how it acts upon you, they believe, from the Beatles on down, that it is about white life. The Blues, its "kinds" and divinity, its identifying parent styles. The phenomenon of jazz is another way of specifying culture influences. The jazz that is most European, popular or avant, or the jazz that is straight, still makes reference to a central body of cultural experience. The impulses, the force that pushes you to sing... all up in there... is one thing... what it produces is another. It can be expressive of the entire force, or make it the occasion of some special pleading. Or it is all even... we simply identify the part of the world in which we are most responsive. It is all there. We are exact (even in our lies). The elements that turn our singing into direct reflections of our selves are heavy and palpable as weather. We are moved and directed by our total response to the possibility of all effects. We are bodies responding differently, a (total) force, like against you. You react to push it, re-create it, resist it. It is the opposite pressure producing (in this case) the sound, the music. The City Blues tradition is called that by me only to recognize different elements active in its creation. The slick city people we become after the exodus, the unloading of an energy into the Northern urban situation. Wholesale. The line we could trace, as musical "tradition," is what we as a people dig and pass on, as best we can. The call and response form of Africa (lead and chorus) has never left us, as a mode of (musical) expression. It has come down both as vocal and instrumental form. The rhythm quartet of the last thirty years is a very obvious continuation of Black vocal tradition, and a condensation in the form from the larger tribal singing units... through the form of the large religious choirs (chorus) which were initially donors and singers, of religious and/or ritual purpose. Indeed, to go back in any historical (or emotional) line of ascent in Black music leads us inevitably to religion, i.e., spirit worship. This phenomenon is always at the root in Black art, the worship of spirit—or at least the summoning of or by such force. As even the music itself was that, a reflection of, or the non thing itself. The slave ship destroyed a great many formal art traditions of the Black man. The white man enforced such cultural rape. A "culture-
less" people in a people without a memory. No history. This is the best state for slaves: to be objects, just like the rest of massa's possessions. The breakdown of Black cultural tradition meant finally the destruction of most formal art and social tradition. Including the breakdown of the Black pre-American religious forms. Forcibly so. Christianity replaced African religions as the outlet for spirit worship. And Christian forms were traded, consciously and unconsciously, for their own. Christian forms were emphasized under threat of death. What resulted were Afro-Christian forms. These are forms which persist today. The stripping away, gradual erosion, of the pure African form as means of expression by Black people, and the gradual embasement of mixed Afro-Christian, Afro-American forms is an initial reference to the cultural philosophy of Black People, Black Art. Another such reference, or such stripping, is an American phenomenon, i.e., it is something that affected all of America, in fact the entire West. This, of course, is the loss of religiosity in the West, in general. Black Music is African in origin, African-American in its totality, and its various forms (especially the vocal) show just how the African impulses were redistributed in its expression, and the expression itself became Christianized and post-Christianized. Even today a great many of the best-known R&B groups, quartets, etc., have church backgrounds, and the music itself is as churchified as it has ever been ... in varying degrees of its complete emotional identification with the Black African-American culture (Smokey and Dave, etc., at one end ... Dionne Warwick in the middle ... Leslie Uggams, the other end ... and feeling). The church continues, but not the devotion (at no level of its existence is it as large, though in the poorest, most abjectly abject levels of churchgoing, the emotion is the devotion, and the God, the God of that feeling and movement, remains as powerful though "redistributed" somewhat). But the kind of church Black people belonged to usually connected them with the society as a whole ... identified them, their aspirations, their culture: because the church was one of the few places complete fullness of expression by the Black was not constantly censored by the white man. Even the asking of freedom, though in terms veiled with the biblical references of "The Jews," went down in church. It was only those arts and cultural practices that were less obvi-ously capable of "alien" social statement that could survive during slavery. (And even today in contemporary America, it is much the same ... though instead of out and out murder there are hardly more merciful ways of limiting Black protest or simple statement ... in the arts just as in any other aspect of American life.) Blues (Lyric) its song quality is, it seems, the deepest expression of memory. Experience re-sslwning. It is the racial memory. It is the "abstract" design of racial character that is evident, would be evident, in creation carrying the force of that racial memory. Just as the God spoken about in the Black songs is not the same one in the white songs. "Though the words might look the same. (They are not even pronounced alike.) But it is a different quality of energy they summon. It is the simple tone of evolving by which we distinguish the races. The peoples. The body is directly figured in it: "The life of the organs."

But evolution is not merely physical: yet if you can understand what the physical alludes to, is reflective of, then it will be understood that each process in "life" is duplicated at all levels.

The Blues (impulse) lyric (song) is even descriptive of a phase of evolution, a direction ... coming and going ... through whatever worlds. Environment, as the social workers see ... but Total Environment (including at all levels, the spiritual).

Identification is Sound Identification is Sight Identification is Touch, Feeling, Smell, Movement. (For instance, I can tell, even in the shadows, halfway across the field, whether it is a white man or Black man running. Though Whitney Young would like to see us all run the same.)

For instance, a white man could box like Muhammad Ali, only after seeing Muhammad Ali box. He could not imitate that style. It is no description, it is the culture. (A.D. 1969)

The Spirituals ... The Camp Meeting Songs at backwoods churches ... or Slave Songs talking about deliverance.

The God the slaves worshipped (for the most part, except maybe the "pure white" God of the toms) had to be willing to free them, somehow, someway ... one sweet day.

The God, the perfection of what the spiritual deliverance and world are said to be, is what the worshippers sang. That perfect Black land. The land changed with the God in charge. The churches the slaves and freedom went to identify these gods, and their will in heaven, as well as earth.

The closer the church was to Africa, the Blacker the God. (The Blacker the spirit.) The closer to the will (and meaning) of the West,
The Implications of Content

The form content of much of what is called New Thing or Avant Garde or New Music differs (or seems to differ) from Rhythm and Blues, R&B oriented jazz, or what the cat on the block digs. (And here I am talking about what is essentially Black Music. Although, to be sure, too often the "newfangledness" of much of the "new" is because of its association, derivation and even straight-out imitation of certain aspects of contemporary European and white Euro-American music — whether they are making believe they are Bach or Webern.) Avant-garde, finally, is a bad term because it also means a lot of quacks and quackery, too.

But the significant difference is, again, direction, intent, sense of identification — "kind" of consciousness. And that's what it's about; consciousness. What are you with, (the word Con-Weh’/Sca-Know). The "new" musicians are self-conscious. Just as the boppers were. Extremely conscious of self. They are more conscious of a total self (or want to be) than the R&B people who, for the most part, are all-expression, emotional expression. Many times self-consciousness turns out to be just what it is as a common figure of speech. It produces world-weariness, cynicism, coolness. Even in the name of Art, Or what have you... social uplift. "Now we can play good as white folks," or "I want to jazzified, and this piece exhibits a Bach-like contrapuntal line," and so forth right on out to lunch.

But at its best and most expressive, the New Black Music is expression, and expression of reflection as well. As what is presented in a consciously proposed learning experience. It is no wonder that many of the new Black muscians are or say they want to be "Spiritual Men" (Some of the boppers embraced Islam, or else they are interested in the Religious Religion itself, i.e., the rise to spirit. It is expanding the consciousness of the given that they are interested in, not merely expressing what is already there, or alluded to. They are interested in the unknown. The mystical.)

But it is interpretation. The Miracles are spiritual. They sing (and sing about) feeling. Their content is about feeling. . . the form is to make feeling, etc. The self-conscious (reflective, long-form, New Thing, bop, etc.) Art Musicians cultivate consciousness that wants more feeling, to rise . . . up a scale one measures with one's life.

It is about thought, but thought can kill it. Life is complex in the same simplicity.

R&B is about emotion, issues purely out of emotion. New Black Music is also about emotion, but from a different place, and, finally, towards a different end. What those musicians feel is a more complete existence. That is, the digging of everything. What the wisdom religion preaches.

(But the actual New Black Music will be a larger expression. It will include the preoccupation of The New Music, as actuality, as summation of Black Spirit, the evolved music of the then evolved people.)

The differences between rhythm and blues and the so-called new music or art music, the different places, are artificial, or they are merely indicative of the different placements of spirit. (Even "purely" social, like what the musicians want, etc.)

For instance, use of Indian music, old spirituals, even heavily rhythmic blues licks (and soon electronic devices) by new music musicians point toward the final close in the spectrum of the sound that will come. A really new, really all inclusive music. The whole people.

Any analysis of the content of R&B, the lyrics, or the total musical will and direction, will give a placement in contrast to analysis of new jazz content. (Even to the analysis of the implied vocabular of the new music: what are its intent end direction, what place it makes, etc., are concerned.) Again even the purely social, as analyzing reference, will give the sense of difference, what directions, what needs are present in the performers, and then, why the music naturally flows out of this.

The songs of R&B, for instance, what are they about? What are the people, for the most part, singing about? Their lives. That's what the New Musicians are playing about, and the projection of forms for these lives. (And I think any analysis will immediately show, as I pointed out in blues People, that the songs, the music, changed, as the people did.) Mostly, I think the songs are about what is known as "love," required and so. But the most popular songs are always a little sad, in tune with the temper of the people's lives. The extremes. Wild Joy — Deep Hurt.

The songs about unrequited, incomple, obstructed, etc., love probably outnumber the others very easily. Thinking very quickly of just the songs that come readily to my mind, generally current, and favorites of mine (and on the other top ten, which is, you bet, the indication of where the minds, the people, are). "Walk On By"
This world ought to be, or the next. The angels in the church had
provided, during the early days of the town, a place for the
sorrows and joys of the people. The church was a place where
they could turn to, and find comfort in the presence of others
who were going through the same experiences. It was a place
where they could find solace and hope, and know that they were
not alone in their struggles.

The church was also a place where the people could come to
worship and praise God. It was a place of worship, a place of
devotion, a place of peace and tranquility. It was a place where
the people could come to find their way back to God, and
remember that he was always with them, even in their darkest
hours.

The church was a place of community, a place where the people
could come together and support each other. It was a place
where they could share their joys and sorrows, and know that
they were not alone.

The church was a place of education, a place where the people
could learn about the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. It was a
place where they could learn about the importance of love and
kindness, and how these qualities could bring peace to the
world.

The church was a place of prayer, a place where the people
could come to ask for forgiveness and guidance. It was a place
where they could seek the help of God, and know that he was
always there, ready to listen and respond.

The church was a place of beauty, a place where the people
could find inspiration and comfort. It was a place where they
could see the beauty of God in the world, and know that there
was still hope for a better future.

The church was a place of hope, a place where the people
could find the strength to keep going, even in the darkest
times. It was a place where they could remember that God was
always with them, and that he would never leave them alone.

The church was a place of community, a place where the people
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could come together and support each other. It was a place
where they could share their joys and sorrows, and know that
they were not alone.
scopic of all their strength, in a unified portrait of strength, beauty and contemplation.

The new music began by calling itself "free," and this is social and is in direct commentary on the scene it appears in. Once free, it is spiritual. But it is soulful before, after, any time, anywhere. And the spiritual and free and soulful must mingle with the practical, as practical, as existent, anywhere.

The R&B people left the practical God behind to slide into the slicker scene, where the dough was, and the thrift folks congregated. The new jazz people never had that practical God, as practical, and seek the spiritual God both emotionally and intellectually.

John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, Sun Ra, Pharoah Sanders, come to mind immediately as God-seekers. In the same energy sometimes, as with Ayler and drummer Sunny Murray. Since God is, indeed, energy. To play strong forever would be the cry and the worshipful purpose of life.

The titles of Trane's tunes, "A Love Supreme," "Meditations," "Ascension," imply a strong religious will, contagious of the religious evolution the pure mind seeks. The music is a way into God.

The absolute open expression of everything.

Albert Ayler uses the older practical religion as key and description of his own quest. Spirits, Ghosts, Spiritual Unity, Angels, etc. And his music shows a graphic connection with an older sense of the self. The music sounds like old timey religious tunes and some kind of spiritual march music, or probably the combination as a religious marching song if you can get to that. (New cusses, so to speak. A recent interview article, with Albert Ayler and his brother, trumpeter player Donald Ayler, was titled "The Truth Is Man, God Is," and this is an excellent metaphor of where Albert and his brother Donald want to move.)

Albert's music, which he characterizes as "spiritual," has much in common with older Black-American religious forms. An openness that characterizes the "shouts" and "holiers." But having the instruments shout and holier, say a saxophone, which was made by a German, and played, as white folks call it, "illegitimately" sounds like don't let Harlem be a funeral, is changed by Ayler, or by members of any sanctified or Holy Roller church (the blacker churches) into howling spirit summoners tied around the "meat" Black man's neck.

The Daddy Grace band on 125th Street and 7th Avenue in Harlem, in the Grace Temple, is a brass band, with somewhat the same instrumentation as a European brass choir, but at the lips of Daddy's summoners, the band is "free" and makes sounds to tear down the walls of anywhere. The instruments shout and holier just like the folks. It is their lives being projected then, and they are different from the lives Telemann, or Vivaldi sought to romance with their music.

But James Brown still shouts, and he is as secular as the old shouters, and the now ones. With the instruments, however, many people would like them to be more securely European oriented, playing notes of the European tempered scale. While the Eastern Colored peoples' music demands, at least, that many many half, quarter, etc. tones be sounded, implied, hummed, slurred, that the whole sound of a life get in... no matter the "precision" the Europeans claim with their "reasonable" scale which will get only the sounds of an order and reason that patently deny most colored peoples the right to exist. To play their music to be them and to act out their lives, as if you were them. There is then, a whole world of most readiness and most expression, which is yours, colored man, but which you will lose playing melancholy baby in B-flat, or the Emperor Corcor.

To, for that matter. Music lessons a dying people.

Albert Ayler has talked about his music as a contemporary form of collective improvisation (Sun Ra and John Coltrane are working in this area as well). Which is where our music was when we arrived on these shores, a collective expression. Aid to my mind, the solo, in the sense it came to be represented on these Western shores, and as first exemplified by Louis Armstrong, is very plain indication of the changed sensibility the West exorcised.

The return to collective improvisations, which finally, the West-oriented, the whitened, says, is chaos, is the all-force put together, and is what is wanted. Rather than accompaniment and a solo voice, the miniature "thing" securing its "greatness." Which is where the West is.

The Ornette Coleman Double Quartet which was called Free Jazz was one breakthrough to open the '60s. (It seems now to me that some of those "Clash Mingus" earlier efforts, e.g. Pitcuthorpeus Erectus, provide a still earlier version of this kind of massive orchestral breakthrough. And called rightly, too, I think. Pitcuthorpeus Erectus, the first man to stand. As what we are, a first people, and the first people, the primitives, now evolving, to recivilize the world. Ann all these and Sun Ra who seems to me to have made the most moving orchestral statements with the New Music, all seem so not so curiously joined to Duke Ellington. Ellington's "Koko" and "Diminuendo and Crescendo ..." (can provide some immediate reference to freed orchestral form.)
The secular voice seeking clarity, or seeking religion (a spirit worship) compatible with itself. They are both passed by an emotional arm that seeks freedom. Its answering category, the definition of the freedom sought, is equally descriptive of who is playing what? If we say we want social freedom, i.e., we do not want to be exploited or have our lives obstructed, there are roots now spreading everywhere. People even carry signs, etc. There is also the 'freedom' to be a white man, which, for the most part is denied the majority of people on the earth, which includes jazz players, or for that matter, blues performers. The freedom to want your own particular hib self is a freedom of a somewhat different and more difficult nature.

Then, there are all kinds of freedom, and even all kinds of spirits. We can use the past as shrines of our suffering, as a poetizing beyond what we think the present (the actual) has to offer. But that is true in the sense that any clear present must include as much of the past as it needs to clearly illuminate it.

Archie Shepp is a tenor man of the new jazz, who came out of an American background of Black slums and white palaces. He is a Marxist playwrighting tenor-saxophone player now. His music sounds like a peculiar barrelhouse where trip. It wanders chronicles of vibrato Ben Webster Kansas City style, but turns that character actor wall into a kind of polished cry. Which, finally, if you have ever heard him speak at some public social gathering, is articulate at a very definite place in America. Archie is a secular music, that remains, demands secularity, as its insistence. He probably even has theories explaining why there is no God. But he makes overtures to the spirits of ancient, "traditional," colored people ("Thirdborn, "The Mac Man, "The Piccadilly") and what has happened to them from ancient times, traditionally, here (Huhns, Swung, his feet at least to the wind. Then his neck snapped or Malcolm or picked clean).

Archie is the secular demanding clarity of itself. A recoding according to the known ("The Age of Cities"). Modern in this sense. But that means, we must begin to ask, "What does Modern Mean?" and "What is The Future?" or "Where Does One Want To Go?" or "What Does One Want To Happen?" You hear in Archie's music modes that are clues for understanding.

Cecil Taylor is also secular. He is very much an artist. His references determinedly Western and modern, contemporary in the most Western sense. One bears Europe and the influence of French poets on America and the world of "pure art" in Cecil's total approach to his playing. Cecil is perhaps the most European sounding of the New Music, but his music is moving because he is still Black, still has imposed an emotional sensibility on the music that knows of actual beauty beyond "what is given."

Even though Cecil is close to what's been called Third Stream, an "infiltrated" Western modernism, he is always hotter, saner and clearer than that music. But the Black artist is most often always like to European art, often at his jealousy.

The most complete change must be a spiritual change. A change of essences. The secular is not complete enough. It is not the new music, it is a breaking away from old American forms. Toward new American forms. Orenette Coleman is the elemental land change, the migratory earth mass, the country blues person of old come in the city with a funkier wilder blues. Such energy forces all kinds of movement. The freshness of this Americans. A bebopper, bebop, a funkier funky. But tuxedos can be planted among such vegetation, strings and coad tied up to send the life stretched out along a very definite path. Like Ivy, finally grew up listened to an academy. No longer wild, no longer funky, but domesticated like common silence.

Orenette. Archie and Cecil. Three versions of a contemporary Black secularism. Making it in America, from the country, the ghetto, into the generous maw of the Western art world. The freedom they, the music, want is the freedom to exist in this. (What of the New? What?!) The freedom of the given. The freedom to exist as artists. Freedom would be the change.

But the device of their asking for this freedom remains a device for asking if the actual is not achieved. Literacy Negro-ness, the exotic instance of abstract cultural resource, say in one's head, is not the Black Life Force for long if we are isolated from the real force it self and, in effect, cooled off. Cool Jazz was the abstraction of these life forces. There can be a cool grant, in fact there is, already. The isolation of the Black artist relating to, performing and accommodating his expression for aliens. Where is the returned energy the artist demands to go on? His battery (guns and engines)?

We want to please the people we are (feel with and or for) at all the times, in the respect of actual living with. Our neighbors? Our people? Who are those? Our definitions change. Our speech and projection. Is that a chick or a broad or a woman or a girl or a bird . . . or what is it? Where are you? What is this place that you describe with all your energies? Is it your own face coloring the walls, echoing in the halls, like hip talk by knowledgeable millionaires. What does a
millonaires went as he passes through the eye of the needle? Can he really pass?

The New Music (any Black Music) is cooled off when it begins to reflect black any in any place—universal—hardly. It is this fog or that look, and not the hope and promise and need for evolution into a higher species. The artist’s resources must be of the strongest, purest possible caliber. They must be truest and straightest and deepest. Where is the deepest feeling in our lives? There is the deepest and most meaningful art and life. Beware “the golden touch,” it will kill everything you use (used to) love.

There are other new musicians, new music, that take freedom as already being. Onnette was a cool breath of open space. Space, to move. So freedom already exists. The change is spiritual. The total. The absolutely new. That is the absolute realization. John Coltrane, who has been an innovator of one period in jazz and a master in another period, is an example of the secular yearning for the complete change, for the religious, the spiritual.

Sun Ra is spiritually oriented. He understands “the future” as an ever widening comprehension of what space is, every to the physi cal travel between the planets as we do anyway in the long human chain of progress. Sun Ra’s Arkstra sing in one of his songs, “We travel the spaceways, from planet to planet.” It is science-fact that Sun Ra is interested in, not science-fiction. It is evolution itself, and its fruits. God as evolution. The flow of it. So the future is man explained to himself. The travel through inner space as well as outer. Sun Ra’s is a new content for jazz, for Black music, but it is merely, again, the spiritual defining itself. “Love in Outer Space.” “Anak.” “Out of Nothingness.” “The Heliocentric World.” “When Angels Speak of Love.” “Other Worlds.” “The infinity of the Universe.” “Of Heavenly Things,” etc., etc.) And the mortal seeking, the human knowing spiritual, and willing the evolution. Which is the Wisdom Religion.

But the content of The New Music, or The New Black Music, is toward change. It is change. It wants to change forms. From physical to physical (social to social) or from physical to mental, or from physical—mental to spiritual. Soon ecologists, Albert Ayler no longer wants notes. He says he wants sound. The total articulation. Ra’s music changes places, like Duke’s “jungle music.” Duke took people to a spiritual peak, Ra to a spiritual future (which also contains “Little Sally Walker . . . sitting in a sewer . . . what kind of sewer? . . . a flying saucer”). African sounds, too: the beginnings of our sensibility. The new,

the “primitive,” meaning first, new. Just as Picasso’s borrowings were Western avant-garde and “the new” from centuries ago, and Stravinsky’s borrowings were new and “savage,” centuries old and brought new.

The Black musicians who know about the European tempered scale (mind) no longer went it, it only just to be contemporary. That changed. The other black musicians never wanted it, anyway.

Change
Freedom
and finally Spirit. (But spirit makes the first two possible. A cycle, again?)

What are the qualitative meanings and implications of these words?

There is the freedom to exist (and the change to) is the existing, or to resonate in a new thing.

Essence
How does this content differ from that of R&B?

Love. For R&B, is an absolute good. There is love but there is little of it, and it is a valuable possession. How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You. But the practical love, like the practical church the R&B people left, a much more emotional church and spirit worship than most jazz people had, is a day-to-day physical, social, sexual love. Its presence making the other categories of human experience much favorably with beautiful conclusions. “Since I Lost My Baby” (or old er) “When I Lost My Baby” . . . I almost lost my mind. “There is the object (even, the person). But what is the object of John Coltrane’s “Love”. . . There is none. It is for the sake of Loving, Trane speaks of. As Ra’s “When Angels Speak of Love.”

I said before, “the clearest purpose.” The rise, the will to be love. The contemplative and the expressive, side by side, feeding each other. Finally, the rhythms carry to the body, the one (R&B) more “quickly,” since its form definitely includes the body as a high regist er of the love one seeks.

The change to Love. The freedom to (of) Love. And in this constant evolution of Love, its need, its demands, its birth, its death, there is a morality that shapes such a sensibility, and a sensibility shaped by such moralizing.

Sometimes through Archie Shepp’s westling comes a dark yowl of desire in the place we are at, and for that place, to love him. And of actual flesh that also comes through, that it is a man, perhaps crying. But he will reason it (logic as popping fingers, a hip chorus with arcane reference) down to what you hear.
Gospel (influenced form) also sees to it that those TV jobs, indeed that dollar-popularity, remains white. Not only the Beatles, but any group of Middle-class white boys who need a haircut and male hormones can be a pop group. That's what pop means. What is exactly what "cool" was, and even clearer, exactly what Dixieland was, complete with funny hats and funny names... white boys in lieu of the initial passion, will always make it about funny hats... which be their constant minstrel need, the derogation of the real, come out again.

Stealing Music... stealing energy (lives) with their own concerns and lives finally, making it White Music (like influencing a shrill rite form). From anywhere, anytime to "We all live in a yellow submarine," with all their banks, etc., the exclusive white... exclusive meaning isolated from the rest of humanity... in the yellow submarine, which shoots nuclear weapons. (Content analysis... lyrics of white music show equally their concerns, lives, places, ways, to death.) In the yellow submarine. Choices are it will never come up.

They steal, minstrelize (here but a minstrelsy that "hippens" with cats like Stones and Beatles saying: "Veh, I got everything I know from Chuck Berry.") is a scream dropping the final... "But I got all the dough..."

...named Animals, Zombies, in imitation (minstrel-hip) of a life style as names which go to show just what they think we are... Animals, Zombies, or where they finally be, trying to be that, i.e., Animals, Zombies, Beatles or Stones or Sex the Sham for that matter, and not ever Raveas, Orioles, Spaniels or the contemporary desired excellence of Supremes, Miracles, Imperials, Impusions, Temptations, etc., etc., get to them names.

Actually, the more intelligent the white, the more the realization he has to steal from niggers. They take from us all the way up the line. Finally, what is the difference between Beetles, Stones, etc., and Minstrelsy? Minstrels never convinced anybody they were black either.

The more adventurous bohemian white groups sing songs with lyric content into where white bohemian poets moved long ago, as say the so-called psychedelic tunes, which may talk about drugs (LSD, Psilocybin, etc.) experience, and may be also shaped by so-called Ragstock (Indian-influenced) or Folk-Rock (i.e., Rock songs with more socially conscious content). Bob Dylan, Fugs, Blues Project, Mothers, etc. But in awe of the poetic-psychedelic and LSD, the chemical savour of gypsies. They hope to evolve (as the rest of us) "true chemistry," which sounds like Dupont. The "widening of the
Black religious music has always had an element of protest in it. In the so-called "invisible institution," or pre-church worship of the Black slaves, the songs were about freedom, though most times couched in the metaphorical language of the Bible, substituting Jews, etc. for themselves, to escape master's understanding. But with secular music, integration (meaning the harnessing of Black energy for dollars by white folks, in this case the music b"iness) spliced the content open to a generalizing that took the bite of specific protest out. ("You know you can't sell that to white folks.") Early blues is full of talk about Black people and their exact up-hill lives. In fact you can tell an early blues tune if the word "Black" is even mentioned. Or "white" for that matter. The slickening music process shrewd a lot of exactness in one area. They talk of love, and that is exact, but as a preacher said, "Today we gonna talk about Love. I was gonna talk about Truth, and I figure I might offend somebody. So today we gonna talk about Love," if you can dig that.

But the cycle will turn round. The more bohemian white people's desire to be at least in a recognizable world of war and stuff will be passed around to Black people, as legitimate part of the music b"iness. Just as the quickest way to get Black people to dig Africa, wear African clothes, etc. is to let B. Altman sell it, it would seem to white people, then watch all the hipster show up like they are worshipping some Otrishas.)

Steve Wonder with Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" is a case in point. Now James Brown with his social consciousness of "Don't Be a Dropout." Specific, but civil-servant stuff, nevertheless. The Impressions "Keep On Pushin'" or Martha and The Vandellas "Dancing in the Street" (especially re summer riots, i.e., "Summer's here...") provided a core of legitimate social feeling, though mainly metaphorical and allegorical for Black people. But it is my thought that soon, with the same cycle of the general "integrated" music b"iness, the Black songs will be more socially oriented. (Black and Beautiful; j'had Singers. I'm reminded that a few years ago, Ben E. King and a few others... Spanish Harlem, etc. had made a special placement of social music, but then was largely picked up by grays.)

Note: Let the new people take care of some practical bi"uss and the N-R&B take care of some new bi"usses and the unity music; the people, etc. can begin in earnest. Social consciousness in jazz is something again because it is largely a purely instrumental music... though there have al...
ways been musicians who had been deeply conscious of their exact placement in the social world, or at least there was a kind of race pride or consciousness that animated the musicians and their music (again, here, King Von is a giant. "Black Beauty," "Black Brown and Lahore." "For My People," and so many many others."

In recent times musicians like Charles Mingus (eg. "Vulas of Faubus," etc.), Max Roach and some others have been outspoken artists and off the stage, using their music as eloquent vehicles for a consciousness of self in America. The new musicians have been outspoken about the world through their music and off the stage as well. Archie Shepp has perhaps been the most publicized of the new socially conscious musicians. And some of his music is self-consciously socially responsive, e.g. "Malcolm," but this so-called consciousness is actually just a reflection of what a particular generation is heir to, and their various responses from wherever they are

find themselves.

Also, of course, the music is finally most musicians' strongest statement re: any placement of themselves socially. And the new music, as I have stated before about Black music, is "radical" within the context of mainstream America. Just as the new music begins by being free. That is, freed of the popular song. Freed of American white cocktail dress, intrigue, etc. The street jacket of American expression sans blackness...it wants to be freed of that temper, that scale. That life. It screams. It yearns. It pleads. It breaks out (the best of it). But its practitioners sometimes do not. But then the vibrations of a feeling, of a particular place, a conjunction of world spirit, some of everybody can pick up on. (Even innately, which is Charlie McCarthy shouting freedom or white dock workers going back to Jumppoff Manor after giving a few months to "The Problem." It is an ominous world all right. You can say spiritual! You can say Freedom. But you do not necessarily have to be either one. If you can dig it. White, is abstract. A theory. A saying. A being...the verb...the energy itself, is what is beautiful, is what we want, sometimes. You see.

Music as the consciousness, the expression of where we are. But then Otis redding in interviews in Muhammad Speaks has said things (or Shakes Lake, for that matter) more radical. "Blacker, than many of the new musicians, James Brown's screams, etc., are more "radical" than most jazz musicians sound, etc. Certainly his sound is "further out" than Ornette's. And that sound has been a part of Black music, even out in them backwoods churches the year...