

## Reading

### A Brief History of Jazz – A Unique American Art Form

By Lois L. McNamara

#### 1

Jazz is the one art form which was originated by Americans. Jazz, as an art form, was created by African-Americans around the beginning of the twentieth century. It developed its most distinctive features in New Orleans and continued its evolution into “classic jazz” in such Midwestern cities as Kansas City, St. Louis, and Chicago between 1920 and 1940. Though jazz was the creation of Americans of African descent and it embodied an awareness of the African-American experience in America, it also built upon the heritage of European music. Early jazz musicians fused the very complex rhythms of West Africans with the harmonic system of Europeans. Likewise, the majority of jazz instruments, the trumpet, trombone, piano, clarinet, and bass fiddle, were of European origin, but the all-important instruments – the drums, banjo, and xylophone as well as numerous other idiophones that add to the versatility of the percussion section, derive from Africa. Other features of the music such as the forms used can be traced to both traditions.

#### 2

Jazz as a style of music is not easily defined. Most significantly, perhaps, jazz is a form of music that is based on improvisation; that is, the individual musician whether performing alone or in a small group is expected to develop his own unique variation on the common melody, harmony, or rhythm. Another distinctive feature of jazz music is its use of syncopated rhythms – rhythms which were much more complex than those that had been developed by musicians in Western music. [Both of these features – syncopation and improvisation owe more to the African tradition than the European tradition.] Syncopation is defined as the “accenting of a note at an unexpected time, as between two beats or on a weak beat” (Kamien 662). Jazz musicians not only use complicated syncopated rhythms, various group members frequently play different rhythms at the same time. Still another feature of jazz is its “bluesy” sound which is said to result from the way certain notes (generally the third, fifth and seventh notes of a major scale) are “bent” or flattened when they are sung by a vocalist or played on an instrument; in instruments, the clarinet is most associated with this “bluesy” sound. [This style of singing originated in Africa and developed in the field songs and work songs of slaves in the American south.] The aural tradition of the blues also encouraged interaction between performers and audience, and that interaction, in turn, encouraged greater spontaneity on the part of the performers. To summarize, then, jazz was “characterized by syncopation, polyrhythms, blue tonalities and a strong beat” (Ogren 7).

#### 3

For decades, jazz was the music that expressed the broad spectrum of African-Americans’ experience – the range of emotions from despair to joy. But beginning around the time of the First World War, other Americans began to be aware of this highly creative music. In the next decade, jazz was both reviled and praised, both denounced and seized upon as representing the modern spirit. Critics feared it would destroy people’s taste for “better” music. Admirers found it exciting and “an antidote for repressive industrial society” (Ogren 7). By the later thirties, jazz had become the popular music of Americans. Its features have continued to influence American music since then; the movement has left an indelible imprint upon almost all of twentieth century music.

#### 4

Slavery began in America (the area now recognized as the United States) in 1619. Most African slaves who were brought to America in the next two hundred years were from west Africa, from the countries known at that time by such names as Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, Slave Coast – an area which includes the present day countries of Senegal, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Gambia, and parts of Zaire and the Congo region (Southern 3) [Zaire is now called Democratic Republic of the Congo] Music and dance played a very important part in the lives of west Africans. They used music for almost every event in life, not only for recreation and religious purposes, but also for agricultural festivals, coronations and other ceremonial occasions, war preparations and hunting expeditions, religious rites which included chanting and

singing, funerals, recreation, and for the preparation of food; they had songs for almost every activity, from boating to songs for greeting important visitors (Southern 7-9). Musicians in Africa included both singers and instrumentalists; the singers were expected to remember and relate the history of their people.

## 5

Africans had a wide variety of instruments, including thumb pianos and xylophones. They had some kinds of flutes and wind instruments similar to bagpipes. They used horns and trumpets made from animal horns and some string instruments which were similar to lutes and fiddles. Musicians often used idiophones, such as bells, castanets, and rattles. Africans also added musical effects by hitting, clapping, and foot stomping. Vocalists added special effects through the use of falsettos, groans, and shouts. [Some of these sounds would become part of blues singing which in turn influenced the creation of jazz.] But the most prevalent instruments were the drums in all sizes and shapes (Southern 11-14).

## 6

Drums were the most important African instruments because they were used for long distance communication; they were the “talking instruments” (Southern 11). Hence, complicated rhythms were probably developed by Africans from practical as well as musical purposes. Jazz historian James Lincoln Collier writes that “The essential principle of African music was the setting of two or more time schemes against each other” (Ogren 13). The simplest example of this would be one musician drumming to a beat of two [meter] and another keeping the beat of three simultaneously. Usually the rhythms were far more complex than the beat of two against three, with three to six instruments all playing different rhythms; such complexity of rhythms was unknown in music of the European tradition” (Southern 13). In his book *Blues People* Baraka summarizes the features of African music which survived in the music of African American slaves: first of all, the rhythms themselves; secondly the emphases on rhythm instead of harmonic or melodic qualities; thirdly, the use of polyphonic or contrapuntal rhythms. Another African tradition carried over into the music of African-Americans was the antiphonal technique of a leader singing a theme answered by a chorus which comments upon the leader’s statement in improvised verses. The technique of improvisation is certainly one of the most important characteristics of African-American music. And finally, the preference for percussive instruments, including the banjo (which was much like an instrument used in Africa), the xylophone, and especially the drums are features carried across the ocean and used as the basis of the uniquely creative music of African-Americans (Baraka 25-26). [All of these musical elements mentioned by Baraka influenced the creation of jazz.]

## 7

In their lives as slaves, African-Americans continued to make music part of their daily lives. White Americans did not allow slaves to possess drums because it was soon discovered that the “talking drums” could be used as a means of communication (Galantry). But the slaves soon exhibited their habit of using work songs, and these could hardly be objected to since they clearly facilitated the work. African-Americans were accustomed to having songs for every type of work; they adapted these songs to the work they were required to do in the fields, on the docks, and on the levees in America; as time went on, they transmitted the practice to their children. Certain types of work are facilitated by establishing a rhythm or having a group of workers move in rhythm. Group work songs were often sung in an antiphonal way known as call and response, just as had been done in Africa. Most commonly, a leader would sing a line of music and words twice; then the chorus would respond, sometimes improvising the response (Ogren 20). (Having the leader sing the same line twice of course gave the others a bit more time to think of an appropriate response.) [This African practice of singing the same line twice, would become a big part of blues music.]

## 8

During the antebellum era a “syncretism between European and African musical practice took place, depending upon the amount of contact blacks had with whites and their music” (Ogren 19). [In simpler words, this means that Africans became increasingly aware of white music – stemming from the European tradition – and whites became increasingly aware of African styles.] Slaves sometimes played for the social functions of white Southerners, and Southern slave

owners in general encouraged the use of work songs, perhaps interpreting the music as a sign of a contented rather than a resigned populace. [Slaves also had contact with the white style of church singing – hymns, etc. which they incorporated into their own musical tradition.]

## 9

Following the Civil War, African-Americans developed new work songs as they found new kinds of work: there were songs for working in the lumber mills, for western cattle drives, for working on the building of railroad beds such as the song “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad.” Of particular interest was the genre of the prison song; because [after emancipation – the freeing of the slaves] the black man was frequently imprisoned unjustly or for minor offenses a whole body of songs about working on the chain gang evolved.

## 10

### Ragtime

At the turn of the twentieth century, ragtime became the first type of African-American music to gain popularity with whites in both Europe and America [and would become a source of what later would be called “jazz”]. Ragtime music was first heard by the general public in the 1890s. It was generally played in cheap eating places, saloons, dance halls, and honky-tonks. Many Americans also heard ragtime in traveling minstrel shows, which were a popular entertainment source in the late nineteenth century (Ogren 14).

## 11

Ragtime music was mostly piano music [a European instrument] and probably evolved from the banjo music played on the plantations. This music was characterized by the steady beat in the left hand, emphasizing beats 2 and 4, while it featured a syncopated rhythm in the right hand throughout the selection. This continuous syncopation [an African musical feature] was new to Europeans and white Americans (Ogren 14-15). The first ragtime musician of note was Scott Joplin (Ogren 14). Joplin grew up in Sedellia, Missouri and because he showed such musical gifts as a young lad, a German immigrant piano teacher gave him free piano lessons. Joplin went on to study composition and harmony at the college level. Joplin’s father had been a slave, the family was poor, and Joplin left home at fourteen to become an itinerant piano player, playing in honky-tonks and brothels in the Midwest and Texas.

## 12

Many people loved the new music with its syncopated rhythm. While some derided it for its “ragged” rhythm and linked it to “an irresistible force or contagious disease” (Ogren 15), those who liked ragtime cited its “popularity, innovation” (Ogren 15). As jazz professor Grover Sales has written, “In an era on the verge of kicking over Victorian restraints, ragtime burst on the scene as happy, infectious dance music” (50).

## 13

“Ragging the music” was a term with which Americans soon became familiar; it meant music that “was performed in an unpredictable and percussive manner” (Ogren 14). Other African-American musicians would take hymns, two-steps, schottisches, polkas, or waltzes [schottisches, polkas, and waltzes are dances that came to American from Europe] and “rag” them. To “rag music” meant to suspend the rhythm momentarily and use unusual rhythmic accents, that is to use syncopation throughout the entire composition. *Opera* magazine in 1916 reported that “Ragtime has carried the complexity of the rhythmic subdivision of the measure to a point never before reached in music” (Ogren 15).

## 14

The popularity of ragtime music was made possible because people could buy the sheet music and play it themselves. People also learned to play Joplin’s music through the use of a new musical invention, the player piano. Musically inclined people would learn the music by putting their fingers down on the keys as the piano roll caused them to be depressed (Williams 16). Unfortunately, hundreds of lesser composers copied Joplin’s musical style and the

compositions were sold in sheet music form by music publishing companies, chiefly the Tin Pan Alley Publishing Company of Chicago (Leonard 10). As the music declined in creativity and was played on pianos that had been altered to sound “tinny,” its popularity waned. Nevertheless, African-American music had seized the consciousness of whites, and there was more to follow.

## 15

### Blues

From the days of slavery and continuing into the twentieth century, another type of music, which was to play a major role in the evolution of “classic jazz,” was being developed by African-Americans. Songs known collectively as the “blues” had been taking shape in a particular form and epitomized the African-American’s experience. The genre of the blues is defined by both its sound and its form. The most common form is the twelve-bar blues, in which the singer (or later the instrumentalist) sings stanzas of three lines of words, each of which is four bars [measures] long, thus constituting the twelve-bar stanza. The singer will sing the first line twice (giving her a chance to think of the third line). For instance, the best known blues singer of the early twentieth century, Bessie Smith, is known for her “Lost Your Head Blues”:

I’m going to leave my baby, ain’t going to say good-bye.  
I’m going to leave my baby, ain’t going to say good-bye.  
But I’ll write you and tell you the reason why (Kamien 563)

## 16

Each stanza of the blues is performed to the same series of chords, most typically a combination of I, IV, and V (also known as the tonic, subdominant, and dominant) chords (Kamien 563). It seems clear that this form is derived from the West African call and response pattern in which a leader sang a line twice and was followed by the choral response. However, resemblance to the common AAB form of European music may also be noted and the chordal pattern involving the I, IV, and V chords is definitely the most common harmonic pattern in western music. (A guitar singer can sing hundreds of folk songs knowing these three chords in one commonly used key.) [Harmony, as mentioned in an earlier paragraph is not part of traditional African music, so the use of these harmonic patterns shows European influence.]

## 17

But the blues are distinguished as well by their characteristic “blue” sound. The blues sounded dissonant to Europeans and Americans who were only familiar with the music based upon the European system of tonality (Ogren 17). The blues were characterized by a distinctive voice quality as well as pitch. The voice quality was usually “strained, raspy, abrasive, nasal, fierce; there was plenty of falsetto, humming, growling – whatever it took to sing the lament or tell the story” (Southern 370). [As mentioned earlier, this style of singing is an African feature.] A blues singer might be accompanied simply by a guitar [European-influences] or single instrument, but many other instruments were also used, including the banjo, the mandolin, the harmonica and jug bands, which were made up of homemade instruments such as crockery jugs along with other inexpensive instruments like the harmonica and kazoo (Southern 369). Some folksy blues singers produced bluesy sounds by the use of such objects as broken bottle necks, polished stones, or knife blades on strings (Southern 371). Blues players achieved extraordinary variation of sound through creative innovations such as drawing the breath in on a harmonica, instead of blowing into it as is customary. They did whatever it took, such as cupping the hands, fluttering the fingers, or beating the strings on the guitar, to make the instrument talk. Instruments were also used to achieve “whining tones reminiscent of the human voice” (Southern 371).

## 18

Though blues songs were passed from one singer to another and sung by many African-Americans who performed their own songs as well as those of other blues singers, the improvisation emphasis in African music also vitalized the blues. Singers sang songs they had heard other blues singers sing (either live or on record), but a distinctive quality of the blues

was the *unique expressiveness which as singer brought to the song*. She was expected not only to sing a song as though she really “felt” the emotion being described (this ensuring that each repetition of the blues song was a little different); she was also expected to take established songs and create some new lyrics to add to the song. Thus, the singer was often the composer as well as the performer. It is widely believed that Bessie Smith “simply ad libbed “Lost Your Head Blues” in the studio to fill out a record date that had come out one selection short (Williams 17).

## 19

Ogren states that “white Americans often believed the blues conveyed sad or sorrowful messages exclusively, when, in fact, the blues expressed a wide range of emotions and descriptions of Afro-American life” (18); however, these emotions more frequently tended toward the melancholy. Though the blues frequently told sorrowful stories, they were not confined to sad subjects. However, even Baraka writes that the “blues could not exist – if the African captives had not become American captives” (17). Thus, he hypothesizes that the blues began when the first slave stood in some field and sang (in imitation of the call and response song he had learned in Africa):

Oh, Ahm tired a dis mess  
Oh, Ahm tired a dis mess  
Oh, yes, Ahm so tired a dis mess

## 20

Beginning around the turn of the century, especially in New Orleans, a type of music developed which is referred to today as Dixieland jazz, or New Orleans jazz. This kind of music was usually played by a small combo of musicians, typically five, in which three melodic instruments (usually the clarinet, trombone, and cornet – later the trumpet) improvised simultaneously on a particular melody so that the result was a rich kind of contrapuntal polyphony. At first, the improvisation might be a simple embellishment of the melody such as adding extra notes. The next stage would have the musician changing the timing of the notes in the manner that slaves had done when they reshaped into spirituals the hymns they were taught (Southern 364). The entire process bore some resemblance to the theme and variations form of European traditions. Gradually, the creativeness of musicians developed certain patterns. Kamien characterizes the usual pattern this way: “The cornet was the leader, playing variations of the main melody. Above the cornet, the clarinet wove a countermelody, usually in a faster rhythm. The trombone played a bass line that was simpler than the upper lines, but melodically interesting nevertheless” (564). Backing the three main musicians (who were known as the *front line*) was the rhythm section, consisting of a drummer and string bass or tuba, to provide rhythm and harmony (Kamien 567). Sometimes additional front line instruments include another cornet, or trumpet, while a banjo, guitar, or a piano might be included in the rhythm section.

## 21

The improvisational aspect of the new music lent a kind of spontaneity to jazz that had not been heard in western music since the time of Mozart and certainly had not been equaled since the death of J.S. Bach [1750]. It also made possible the participation of creative musicians who had not obtained any formal instruction in reading music; in fact, most of early New Orleans jazz players did not know how to read music.

## 22

Musicians who could not read music were called “jazzmen” or “headmen” or it was said of their treatment of a melody that they “jagged it” or “ragged it” (Ogren 31). Those who could read music were called “musicianers,” as opposed to those who couldn’t, who were described as playing “blind” and were called “fakers” (Ogren 30).

## 23

From the beginning, jazz music stressed most what was learned by ear training (Ogren 30). Even when they were able to read music and trained in the European tradition, being able to play by ear gave a tremendous advantage to musicians who were playing a type of music that was based on the creativity of improvisation. Some years later, Lil Hardin, who

had studied music at Fisk University, was working in a music store in Chicago. She was sent to audition with the New Orleans Creole Jazz Band when it came to Chicago. She remembered:

“When I sat down to play, I asked for the music and were they surprised! They politely told me they didn’t have any music and furthermore never used any . . . the leader said, ‘When you hear two knocks, just start playing’” (Ogren 54).

Harding was accomplished enough to do this, and she was hired that day. She never went back to the music store or Fisk (Ogren 54).

## 24

Another characteristic of the New Orleans music was that it was highly syncopated and generally energetic. Harvard Professor of Afro-American Studies Eileen Southern characterizes the music this way:

Its most striking feature was its exotic sound, which was produced not only by the kinds of instruments used in the orchestra, but also from the manner in which those instruments were played. Little attention was paid to “correct” intonation (i.e. playing strictly in tune) for example, or to obtaining exact pitches. Instead the players glided freely from one tone to another (or through a long series of tones known as glissandos) and frequently fluctuated the pitches of sustained tones (i.e. used a wide vibrato). Equally striking was the rhythmic intensity of the early jazz music, derived from solid, driving four-beats-to-the measure rhythms coupled with strong accents on beats one and three (Southern 364).

## 25

Music historians see New Orleans jazz as evolving from its African-American predecessors – blues, spirituals, and ragtime music – as well as the American tradition of brass marching bands (Southern 361). Ragtime music provided complicated rhythm training for many jazz musicians; even though it began as piano music, within a few years, bands and even orchestras had taken to playing some syncopated music (Ogren 14). Brass marching bands had been popular as far back as the Civil War, and the most famous of these was the U.S. Marine Band, led by its conductor, John Phillip Sousa. Almost every American town of a few thousand people had a bandstand for open air summer band concerts. These bands played marches, folk songs, ballads, sentimental songs, and by the turn of the century, some transcribed syncopated music like the rags of Joplin (Lenoard 9). Early jazz ensembles featured the melodic instruments (trumpet, cornet and clarinet) of these bands, functioned as an ensemble, played syncopated music for dancing, and adopted some of the mobile performance practices of these bands (Southern 361, 364).

## 26

Various melodies and compositions became the standard repertoire of jazz musicians. By the early 1920s each band generally had its own version of Joplin’s “Maple Leaf Rage,” and W.C. Handy’s “Beale Street Blues” and “St. Louis Blues.” They also revised marches and spirituals, such as “Down by the Riverside,” and built upon worksongs like “John Henry” (Southern 365).

## 27

Jazz historians give various reasons for the birth of jazz in New Orleans. The city was one of considerable ethnic diversity, providing for real cross-culturalization. Besides the colonial French culture, many Italians and Sicilians had emigrated there (Ogren 33). In addition to the African-Americans who were descendants of slaves, there was in New Orleans, a Creole population that was descended from free blacks and the original French population. In the late nineteenth century, the caste system of New Orleans placed them above the African-Americans who were descended from slaves. It has often been said the New Orleans culture (though certainly racist), because of its Catholic heritage and

multi-cultural population, was probably more tolerant of African American culture than the Anglo-Saxon culture in other cities, which was more likely to censure various types of entertainment (Ogren 22).

## **28**

The city itself had a rich music tradition. It had theater orchestras, operas, amateur musical societies (Ogren 22) as well as many marching bands, some white, some black, and some Creole (Ogren 34). The city's white population had established many social clubs and benevolent societies. Various organizations sponsored parades other than the extravaganza of Mardi Gras. People had parties and hired bands for holidays, birthdays, and entertaining friends. Parties held on the wharves of Lake Pontchartrain were especially popular, and each social club hired a band to play on a particular wharf for its Sunday afternoon picnics (Ogren 22-25). In addition, black Americans had their own unique tradition of hiring bands to lead the procession of mourners for funerals.

## **29**

Besides the special occasions calling for musical entertainment, the city also had many business establishments which employed musicians. It is estimated that in 1902 New Orleans had 85 jazz clubs, 800 saloons, and more than 200 bordellos (Ogren 33). All these musical occasions and establishments created numerous employment opportunities for musicians. Until 1917, prostitution was legal in the section of New Orleans known as Storyville. Brothels generally hired only a piano player; Eubie Blake, Jelly Roll Morton, and James P. Johnson were a few of the accomplished jazz musicians who worked in bordellos in their early musical careers. Wages were high in the classier bordellos and pianomen also received tips, so that the bordellos tended to employ the best jazz pianists, who were referred to as "piano professors" (Ogren 58-59). Both in New Orleans and in other cities where jazz became popular, the bordellos and many of the entertainment businesses were located in the tenderloin districts (areas where the police and politicians were bribed to allow illegal activities); in New Orleans, people knew that the police were always around; though the excused illegal activities in the business establishments, they made it safe to walk the streets.

## **30**

These varied employment opportunities for musicians favored the development of jazz. Sometimes bands rode through the streets in a wagon to advertise with a sign the place they were playing at that evening. The trombone player, of course, was seated at the tail gate end of the wagon (Ogren 23). Frequently, would-be band members followed the musicians, joining in on their own instruments or merely dancing around the musicians. Poor children in New Orleans made their own instruments out of wooden boxes, strings or fishing cord. They even improvised instruments out of saws, washboards, spoons, bells, sandpaper and bottles. Either singly or in groups, such children could be invited into an establishment because they entertained the customers who gave them tips. When they earned enough money, they bought "real" instruments (Ogren 28), and if they learned well enough by imitation to save a small sum, they could afford to take lessons. Musical families taught their children to play; others learned to play in bands at schools, orphanages, and churches. Louis Armstrong began by singing in the streets for nickels and dimes as part of a children's vocal quartet; he learned to play the cornet at the Colored Waifs' Home, to which he was sent for a minor infraction of the law (Ogren 29). He became the leader of the Home's brass band, which would play for social gatherings and parades (Southern 374).

## **31**

At its geographic latitude, windows in New Orleans were kept open much of the year so that people frequently heard the music that characterized their city; the waterfront city itself, then without skyscrapers and motorized traffic, enabled musical sounds to carry greater distances than they would today. Peddlers also added to the musical scene. Each peddler developed and called out his own distinct line (Ogren 22).

### 32

Many of the great musicians in early jazz came from New Orleans. Besides Louis Armstrong, there were others like Joe Oliver who was known as King Oliver, Johnny Dodds, Kid Ory, Johnny St. Cyr, Sydney Bechet, James P. Johnson, Eubie Blake, and Jelly Roll Morton. Southern writes that:

Jelly Roll Morton is regarded as the first true jazz composer; he was the first to write down his jazz arrangements in musical notation, and he was the originator of a large number of pieces that became staples in the jazz repertory (376).

In 1915 Morton's "Jelly Roll Blues" was the first jazz arrangement to be published. By 1926 he was recording with his Red Hot Peppers, and, after discussing with his bandsmen what each would play (a "head arrangement"), he wrote out the music carefully.

### 33

The fact that jazz was mostly heard in the red light district of New Orleans and in that in other cities often confined to the tenderloin area led to a shady reputation of jazz as being associated with the illicit side of city life (Ogren 33). That reputation was to be a hard one to live down, but for many Americans, the "naughty" reputation just made it that more alluring.

### 34

In 1917, during the First World War, the secretary of the U.S. Navy ordered the closing of the houses of prostitution, gambling places, saloons and dance halls in the Storyville district in New Orleans. This event is widely reported as the catalyst which sent jazz musicians to seek work in other cities (Kamien 567). But even before that date, jazz musicians and African-Americans in general had been leaving New Orleans via the Mississippi River and migrating from the South to more northern cities in a movement known as the Great Migration. In the decade from 1910 to 1920, more than 500,000 blacks left the South to escape poverty, repression, and discrimination (Ogren 4). The repression of blacks was very real; there were, for instance, 3,600 lynchings of African-Americans in the South from 1865 to 1915 (Southern 363); though northern cities offered more economic opportunity, African-Americans were generally restricted to living in crowded segregated districts (Ogren 4). Race riots occurred in various cities when blacks were enticed to the city to take jobs as strike breakers; riots also erupted when vigilantes invaded their racially segregated areas. Jazz musicians sought work in these segregated districts; they made a living by entertaining other blacks who had migrated north (Ogren 4).

### 35

Even before Storyville was closed down, jazz musicians had been traveling up and down the Mississippi to work in dance bands on the steamboats, which held segregated dances for both whites and blacks. They also played at piers along the river (Ogren 48). In the decade before 1920 more than 50,000 blacks had migrated to Chicago, most of them working in the meat-packing and steel industries. World War I increased the demand for factory workers and some of the jobs vacated were those left open by white American soldiers who were being sent off to war. (Black soldiers fought in World War I also but in proportionately lower numbers than in World War II and subsequent wars.) So many jazzmen migrated to Chicago from New Orleans during World War I that Chicago became the jazz capital. King Oliver was one of those who left New Orleans in 1918 – after the closing of Storyville; in 1922 he sent for Armstrong (Southern 373). Louis Armstrong, just one of the many musicians who left New Orleans on the river, compared himself to Huck Finn (Ogren 50). Like many other jazz musicians, Armstrong settled in Chicago, playing clubs and making records through which he gained a national following (Ogren 54). Chicago became the city of New Orleans jazz: a contemporary reporter wrote that "The fire department is thinking of lining Thirty-Fifth Street with asbestos to keep these bands from scorching passerby with their red-hot jazz" (Southern 373). Louis Armstrong gets the credit for defining jazz style of cornet/trumpet playing. Southern writes of him,

Armstrong was the first great jazz soloist and one of jazz's most creative innovators . . .

Thousands were inspired by his playing and tried to emulate it (375).

### **Works Cited**

Afro-American Music: Its Heritage. Dir. Sidney Galantry. With Calvin Jackson. Communications Group West, 1969.

Baraka, Amiri. Blues People: Negro Music in White America. New York: William Morrow, 1963.

Kamein Roger. Music: An Appreciation. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992.

Leonard, Neil. Jazz and the White Americans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

Ogren, Kathy J. The Jazz Revolution: Twenties America and the Meaning of Jazz. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Sales, Grover. Jazz: America's Classical Music. New York: DaCapo Press, 1992.

Southern, Eileen. The Music of Black Americans: A History. New York: Norton, 1983.

Williams, Martin. The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1973.