

May 2007

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## Recommended Citation

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Jazz and the Academy

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Senior Honors Thesis  
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April 2007

**Abstract**

Jazz education has gone from the streets and clubs where the music was played into the halls of the university. This recent entry into the academy provides a unique opportunity to study the process of institutionalization and its effects on creativity in instruction. What social factors influence how jazz professors develop their curriculum? Has jazz teaching become standardized and uncreative or is it vibrant and inventive? This study consists of six semi-structured interviews with jazz professors in the US which are examined in relation to Peterson and Anand's (2004) Six Facet Model of cultural production. This model is used to examine six major influences on producers of culture: technology, market, organization structure, industry structure, legal restrictions, and the culture of production. The results indicate that while the field is not highly competitive there is a high level of creativity in the curriculum but little creativity in the structural aspects of jazz programs. I suggest that as disciplines move from a culture of informal instruction into a bureaucratic institution they lose some, but not all creativity.

## **Introduction**

Jazz began over a hundred years ago as the much reviled, raucous music of brothels and other places of ill-repute in New Orleans. Over the next sixty years, the music went from the streets to a fad of the youth to the nation's popular music, then into a high art form and commercial obscurity. In recent decades the music has been institutionalized in places like New York's Lincoln Center, the White House, and, interestingly, school systems, all of which promote the preservation of the music. Jazz has even made its way into the legitimacy of the university alongside Western classical music. The head of the International Association of Jazz Educators estimated in 1992 that about half of all colleges in the United States offer jazz classes or programs (Collier 1993). Typically, these schools have either a jazz band instructed by a professor or some classes related to jazz music, or both. Professors also commonly teach private lessons with students who study the professor's main instrument.

The role of the jazz professor in teaching a college class or a musical ensemble is to interpret, filter, and present the vast music called jazz. Jazz does not have a set lexicon and canon to the degree that classical music does, which has some standard teaching methods and a well-defined group of "great" composers, so the professor's viewpoint plays a stronger role in the curriculum of jazz. While institutional requirements may

restrict individual jazz professors' teachings, the strong cultural background of jazz and its history of informal and idiosyncratic teaching and learning techniques pose questions as to the ways in which this creative art has been interpreted. My research questions are: What social factors influence the jazz professor's decisions on what to teach and how to teach it? How much freedom do jazz professors have and what do they do with it? Specifically, I am interested in seeing if jazz curriculum has become standardized and homogenous or if professors are creative with their teaching and there is a wide variance in curriculum.

I argue that jazz professors in effect are producers of a cultural product. Just as a record label sorts through available musicians and categorizes and represents music, so the jazz professor sifts through a wealth of information and music and defines the art form, the important figures and styles, the way to practice and play jazz. All professors are producers of knowledge, which is no less of a cultural artifact than the music played on the radio or the books that are published each year, and the jazz professor's production in particular is varied in the way that early cultural industries are. To understand the reasons behind the jazz professors' teachings I will turn to the extensive body of sociological literature on cultural production, and I will also review relevant literature on jazz and the university.

Up until this point the role of the university system in cultural production has largely been ignored (Peterson and Anand, 2004). This omission leaves a gap in the literature because university music programs train students that take jobs in the music

industry. My study analyses the education that these people receive. I will also examine the university as a system of production. Studies of the university system are scant, perhaps because professors themselves are part of this system. Sociologists may be reluctant to study and criticize their colleagues. At the same time a study of this nature necessitates an interest and understanding of other disciplines that is difficult for the highly specialized professors to obtain. However, studying the university system and its effects on creativity is vital to understanding the education that students receive, and is becoming increasingly important as college enrollment levels continue to increase dramatically. The results of this study will be of interest to anyone who observes or questions the higher education system and its effects on students. Finally, this study will illuminate the role of jazz in society and the college. Many of the authors who write on jazz either ignore the influence of the higher education system altogether or make assumptions about its purpose and influence. It is important to examine jazz in the universities because commentators often disagree about the merit of such studies and their effects on the music.

Approaching universities as sites of cultural production, I interviewed six professors who teach jazz courses at colleges and universities in the U.S. The sociological study of cultural production focuses on the influences of social structures on the cultural product, such as the market's effect on the creation of musical recordings (Peterson and Anand 2004). First I review relevant literature on jazz education, then I explain the theoretical framework by examining Peterson's Six Facet Model of cultural production, which analyses the organization structure, industry structure, technology,

legal restrictions, culture of production, and the market to contextualize cultural production. I then discuss my interviewing methods and research design. I present my data in the form of the Six Facet Model of cultural production and interpret the interviews using this theoretical tool. I argue that jazz curriculum is creative in some areas and standardized in others because of the unique attributes of the university system and the gap between the formal aspects of the university and the practices of professors. I conclude by discussing possible extensions of my findings and by suggesting areas of further study.

## **Literature Review**

I will begin this review by explaining the sociological study of cultural production. Then I will discuss the sociology of knowledge perspective and offer some critiques of the culture of production model, pointing out ways in which this study can further the understanding of cultural production. This will set up my theoretical framework and provide a basis for the rest of the literature review, which will examine each of the facets of cultural production and how existing research on jazz education relates to them.

Sociologists have done a considerable amount of research in music that focuses on why certain music is produced. Research on this topic is generally situated within the wider study of the production of culture. Peterson and Anand (2004) have provided a review of the literature on the production of culture and have shown that across a wide

variety of studies there are six factors which shape the production. These factors are the available technology, legal frameworks, the structure of the industry and the organizations within it, occupational careers, and the marketplace. The authors use these six factors in a theoretical model they call the Six Facet Model of cultural production. As Peterson and Anand (2004) point out, the interplay between these six forces can produce either an uninventive oligopoly, a competitive and creative field, or a competitive oligopoly that produces diverse but uninventive content.

In examining the music industry, the concept of cultural production is usually tied to recording companies. Scholars have shown the importance of the six facets of cultural production in relation to what music is recorded and sold by these companies. For example, Peterson's (1997) study of country music reveals a series of changing representations of the same type of music, from "hillbilly music" to "country," depending on factors like the perceived market and the changing legal restrictions on recording. The stars of the music were portrayed in various ways, as bumpkins or rough men or sophisticates, depending on these factors. The production of knowledge that is carried out by jazz professors is quite similar. They create or interpret a notion of what jazz is, who its major players are and what makes them that way, and what needs to be studied in order to play the music. For example, was Charlie Parker a genius or a sleazy drug addict? Should a student learn how to play his music or the music of one of the radical avant-garde jazz musicians?



The new field of the sociology of knowledge has provided studies on the formation of knowledge in both academics and culture. Many studies on cultural production are claimed by both fields, but the sociology of knowledge has more deeply examined the university system. Authors have written on factors like the market and the industry and organization structures in relation to academic fields. Their work both confirms the predictions made by the culture of production model and also suggests new viewpoints. Various authors have shown that academic pursuits actively create boundaries and claims over knowledge by defining their field and disputing the claims of other fields (Swidler and Arditi 1994). In jazz this view would predict that the boundaries of jazz studies will be heavily defined and defended in opposition to classical and pop music and to other art forms, and that this would guide the production of curriculum.

The production of culture and sociology of knowledge would seem to predict a very standardized system of jazz education since the teaching and classes are carried out in highly formalized bureaucracies with well defined limits. However, these perspectives have been criticized for focusing too much on structure. Often the outward appearance of organizations and industries does not correlate to actual practices. When official rules and regulations conflict with the need for efficiency, the rules are simply ignored. This arrangement is allowed by creating gaps between the work that is done and the larger structure that supposedly guides it (Meyer and Rowan 1977).

How can the culture of production model analyze the large structures that influence the production of culture while taking into account the lower-level practices of

individuals? And how does the study of the production of culture inter-relate to the sociology of knowledge? And how can both of them be used to assess areas outside their established scope?

A study on jazz education is in a unique position to shed light on these questions. First, jazz is a cultural product that has to a large extent exited the domain of the production of culture perspective and entered into the area of study usually claimed by the sociology of knowledge. A sociological study of jazz education must take into account both fields of study and examine the largely unstudied grey area between the two, which rests on the unique institutionalization of the university. Second, jazz music has traditionally been informal in its teaching and has a legacy of independence and deviance which may have carried over into the university setting. It is therefore an excellent topic to study the creation of bureaucratic gaps between official structures and actual practice.

Early sociological research on jazz ignored cultural production analysis in favor of studies on deviance or on the subculture of jazz musicians (Becker 1963). As the popularity of jazz faded, studies of jazz musicians as a sub-culture faded as well, and when jazz moved into the legitimate realm of the university, studies on its subculture ceased. Small communities of jazz aficionados and critics continued to study and write on jazz, but mainly in a cultural or historical setting instead of a sociological one. Ignoring the sociological perspective led to a lack of knowledge about the process of institutionalization and its effects on jazz.

More recently there have been a handful of sociological books on jazz. Paul Berliner (1994) has released an ethnographic study of jazz musicians that reveals some of the communal aspects and social influences on the development of jazz musicians, but his treatment of the university's role is disappointingly brief. The prominent jazz scholar Scott Deveaux has written a highly acclaimed book that examines the social and structural influences behind the formation of the jazz style bebop in the 1940's (Deveaux 1997). Both of these books generally describe the experiences of jazz musicians in the days before the induction of jazz into the university. They emphasize the idiosyncratic methods of playing jazz that came from highly individualized learning routines. Most young jazz musicians from the pre-academy days had to learn jazz either on their own from listening to recordings and live shows and developing their own practice routines or on the job through experience playing with different people, all of whom might think about jazz and practice jazz in different ways. However, these works do little to illuminate the learning and teaching of jazz in the university setting, and while each work examines aspects of cultural production, neither makes an explicit analysis. No researchers to date view jazz professors as gatekeepers involved in a process of cultural production. However, just as a record company filters through available musical groups, choosing and altering content for a selected audience, the professor of jazz shifts, alters, and defines the music of jazz for the students.

There has been a small body of work on the pedagogy of jazz professors. In addition to his book on bebop, Scott Deveaux has written on the history textbooks of college jazz programs (Deveaux 1991). He observes that jazz history textbooks routinely

present the music as having an uninterrupted narrative, ignoring many issues and stopping at the 1960s. He theorizes that these gaps are ignored in order to present a harmonious story that is more entertaining and better received among students and also to coincide with a dominant framework set up by some prominent jazz musicians and scholars. His thesis pertains to the market facet of cultural production.

Implicit in Deveaux's argument is the idea that for jazz educators, the market is directly related to the students coming into jazz programs. In fact, many jazz programs were started to increase revenue for colleges when overall enrollment was down during the 1970's (Collier 1993). In the end, any jazz program needs the financial support of their college, and colleges give money to programs that have a large number of talented students and receive recognition inside and outside of the college. This means that professors may construct teaching methods and material in order to attract and appease students. They also may have an interest in building a talented band and using it for recruiting purposes. The ability of the individual professor or department head to get money from the administration is also quite important, and may be dependent on the resonance of their arguments with administration (Mason 2005).

The young ethnomusicologist Kenneth Prouty has also written on jazz education from a critical perspective. He argues that the students feel pressure from their teachers to conform to standard models of playing and that professors feel pressure from the administration to conform to standard models of teaching (Prouty 2004). The traditional methods of learning jazz, where students and teachers were very informally connected,

did not exhibit this conflict. Pressuring students to conform to their teachers' models seems to be present in the traditional classical music department as well, but not teachers being pressured by the administration (Kingsbury 1988). To the latter problem, Prouty supplies a useful distinction between two methods of teaching jazz, the academic or theoretical method geared towards obtaining technical proficiency and the traditional or practice-based method which focuses on creativity. These two methods are in constant conflict, he argues, because jazz is essentially a creative music that is restricted by the great need for efficiency in the academic system. The academic method is a representation of the organizational structure of universities, and the necessary efficiency is part of this system.

There is a small field of scholars of organizational sociology that argues for an improvisational approach to organizing that is based on the principals of jazz. They envision a dynamic structure with a high level of freedom and innovation given to employees (Hatch 1998; Barrett 1999). There is some evidence that at least the early college jazz programs followed this model of organizing and were extremely experimental and innovative (Mason 2005). However, early and small cultural fields are often more open to innovation, so this may no longer be the case in college jazz departments (Crane 1997). Jazz also has the unique position of being an immigrant into the college music department, which was once dominated solely by Western Classical music. It therefore may have made itself fit into the music department organizational mold, so to speak (Nettl 1995).

The shared values and culture of the professors can have an impact on the pedagogy. Several scholars make arguments for the influence of a “culture of production” in organizations, which can include dominant beliefs or aesthetic values (Negus 1997; Fine 1992). For example, Kingsbury (1988), in his ethnography of a college music department, notes that there is a common conception of musical skill as being divided into technique, which can be learned, and musicality, which is a sort of inborn talent. This division, though it is culturally specific, has dramatic effects on the success of students, especially when a student is deemed to be lacking in what the instructor considers to be musicality. In jazz similar distinctions may be made, or other values, such as the importance of non-commercialism, may be just as influential (Collier 1993).

The impact of technology, which can be enormous for record companies looking for a new format or recording technique, may be much less significant in jazz studies. There are certainly technological advancements, such as the invention of computer programs that slow down recordings without changing pitch, but their effects on jazz education have not been alluded to in any of the research I have read. Legal issues, which may have a large effect in structuring the recording industry, are not as restrictive on jazz educators, but as Mason’s (2005) work on early jazz educators shows, the administrative and departmental restrictions may have a similar effect.

The Six Facet Model of cultural production will guide this study. Combined with my research on jazz, it will inform and shape my questions to professors. I will also use it as a base for my analysis of the interviews. In the end I will see if the institutionalization

of the instruction of jazz has stemmed creativity and variation in teaching. Since I am most concerned with the creation of the teachings of jazz professors, I have chosen to focus on the professors themselves to understand what factors influenced them.

### **Data and Methods**

To examine this complex topic I needed the in-depth insights that semi-structured ethnographic interviewing can give. Interviewing allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the lives of jazz professors than other methods could. I was able to ask complicated questions, and was partially guided in my research by the responses and outlook of my subjects. The follow-up questions I asked led to some of the most fruitful information in my study.

I interviewed current jazz professors in the United States. I was able to interview six college jazz professors from five different colleges, four from the Midwest and one from the East coast. My small sample size precludes generalizing to the larger population of US jazz professors. Most of the names and contact information I received from acquaintances of mine, who often guided me to some of the more interesting professors that they knew. This may present some bias in my study. There are several types of jazz professors and schools that I was not able to get in my sample, especially professors from the largest and most well-known jazz programs in the country, so my findings should not be taken as universal. They should, however, illuminate many of the factors at work in

the construction of jazz in the university setting, as they represent a good variety of types of professors.

I asked each professor a series of thirteen questions, each of which was designed to illuminate the influence of a specific facet from the Six Facet Model. The subject of each inquiry was based on my research on jazz and the literature's explanation of the issues facing the jazz professor. Questions focused on the institutional constraints on professors, their personal experiences that informed their understanding of jazz and teaching, the influence of their students, and the materials and ideas that guided their curriculum. I began each interview by asking the question "Where did you learn how to play jazz?" to get an idea of the participant's background in the music and examine to what extent there is a shared culture of experience among jazz professors. I then asked questions about their interactions with their organization, the extent to which legal issues were present, their use of technology, and their interactions with their students in order to understand the market. (See Appendix for the full schedule of opening interview questions.)

## **Findings**

My findings show that despite strong institutional constraints, jazz professors develop very creative curriculum. This happens because of bureaucratic gaps between rules and practice, a wide range of personal experiences and ideas from both professors and



consumers, and also because of the personal relationship between professors and their market. This suggests that the production of culture model can be revised to include new possibilities in the structure and practice of cultural industries. My analysis proceeds by examining the interviews using each angle of the Six Facet Model. I will start with the Industry Structure, then Organization Structure, Market, the Culture of Production, Technology, and Legal Restrictions.

### *Industry Structure*

The structure of the industry that jazz professors take part in, the network of colleges and universities that offer jazz programs, is quite different from most industries. My data indicate that it is somewhere in between the small and competitive state and the large oligopoly state. It also can encompass a variety of institutions and outlooks.

The industry structure is a difficult thing to assess through my study. There seems to be a fairly small number of schools with a large and well-developed jazz major, possibly only two dozen or so. There are hundreds of schools that have some sort of jazz program, though. Graduate programs in jazz are quite rare, but several exist. In large part, however, jazz has come into colleges through the Western classical music departments that have been common since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The university system differs from most industries in its scope and geographical diversity. The vast majority of schools are non-profit organizations, some privately run

and some publicly run, but the capitalist forces that would usually push the industry towards an oligopoly are not present. Colleges may have become more competitive in many ways, but this does not lead to the domination of a few gigantic schools and the exclusion of smaller ones, as evidenced by the massive number of small colleges in the US.

There is some indication that competition between schools exists in regard to jazz programs. Gary, a professor at a major public university, commented that his school started their jazz program in part because their peer schools were starting to have them. But both of the large university professors I interviewed, Gary and Evans, were teaching at their schools when the jazz major or minor programs were cut while some of their peer schools continued to have strong jazz programs. Because public and private schools, for-profit and non-profit schools, and many niche markets and divisions exist, it is difficult to qualify the industry structure in terms of simply small and competitive or a large oligopoly. Contrary to many studies on the production of culture, the subjects here seemed only vaguely influenced by the industry structure. Studying a non-traditional industry like higher education seems to lend itself to a more in-depth and complicated analysis than studying something like the recording industry. In education the product is made and consumed in different ways with different interests, leading to a diverse and multifaceted field.

### *Organizational Structure*

The organizational structure for jazz professors consists of their school's administration and departments. One professor, Rich, worked at a for-profit school where the organizational structure was looser and open to informal interactions and decision making. The other schools were more like a standard bureaucracy that tries to keep up to date by giving its workers some freedom on the individual level. Organization structure is one place where these professors feel a lot of outside pressure to conform to set models, yet at the same time they are allowed significant freedom to develop their curriculum. This supports the notion of a buffer or gap between the bureaucratic regulations and the actual practices.

The organizational structure of the four non-profit schools in my sample is fairly homogenous. In all of them the music department is just one small branch of a much larger bureaucratic structure, and the jazz program just a smaller subsection of the department. Professors had varying degrees of difficulty in dealing with these larger structures. Rich received his undergraduate degrees from one of the very well-known college jazz programs in the country. He recounted significant resistance to jazz from the Western classical music department at this school, which would only offer classical music lessons and clashed with the jazz program over various issues. Gary, who studied classical music as a college student but played jazz on the side, recalls that he was almost kicked out of a prominent conservatory for putting on a jazz concert as a student. These experiences support the notion of disciplines defining their control of knowledge, but this struggle occurred long ago and seemed to be no longer present in the schools at which these professors taught.

Many tasks must also be done outside of the music department. Getting a course approved for all the non-profit schools is a long process that involves submitting an application that must pass through several committees, occasionally requiring a vote of the entire faculty of the school. Professors must prove that the course is needed by the students and offer a general idea of its content. Gary commented that at his school it was rare for a new course request to be refused outright, but that the committees might tell the professor to wait because of lack of resources. David has plans for adding more courses to his jazz program, but he realizes that these changes will come very slowly.

It is more difficult to get more professors for a jazz program. Evans has been unsuccessful in getting another professor for the jazz program, even though the program has grown significantly under his leadership and he is currently turning down some of the students who audition for one of his three jazz big bands. In his case, the decision to hire another professor is up to the college, which weighs his request against the needs of all the other departments.

Though these bureaucracies limited professors, all of the professors were given a significant amount of freedom in designing and teaching their courses and in instructing their students and ensembles. None of the professors I interviewed ever had anyone check their curriculum. Two of my subjects recalled having a member of some state education body visit one of their classes, but this was only once in over a decade of teaching and no suggestions were made. One of these professors, Betty, who teaches at a medium-sized

school, took over the teaching of a jazz course without ever having to run even the basic concepts of her curriculum by anyone. My subjects indicated that this freedom was viewed by the administration as essential for the efficiency of the school. Professors had to be allowed to change and develop their curriculum at will to accommodate the needs of students and the changing nature of the subject matter. So while on the surface the professors are part of a restrictive and standardizing bureaucracy, in actual practice they have a great deal of flexibility

The freedom allowed to professors in creating curriculum resulted in a high level of creativity. For most of the professors, the available textbooks were never good enough for the course. Almost all the courses had some material that was created by the professor for the purposes of the class. Many were entirely composed of the teacher's own lesson plans. For some, this was because of dissatisfaction with the text books. Betty remarked that very few texts would make any mention of female jazz musicians, which she found unacceptable. For others, it was a matter of the broader goals of education and classes. Gary didn't use textbooks for any of his classes because he believed that the point of classes was to learn from the professor directly.

Donald was formally trained in classical music but learned other musical genres through playing in different settings. His approach to jazz theory was a very original departure from the way many jazz and classical theory classes are taught. Instead of following the standard progression of classical theory, which has been taught for hundreds of years and focuses on attaining basic knowledge and building up, he taught

his class using his own system of logical analysis that used formulas to understand even very complicated concepts easily. He felt that his method came naturally from the way that jazz musicians conceive their music. He described a general apathy towards his method and his class on the part of the other music professors at his school, with a couple of exceptions.

At his current school, Rich was teaching a class on songwriting for all styles of music. He was using a textbook that he liked, but found it necessary to create a lot of his own material to go along with it. When we spoke he was working with the author of that book to include the extra materials that he had developed. He also used a lot of new technology in his classes, and he noted that it's hard for textbooks to keep up with the advancing technology.

Rich's school was an exception to many of the patterns of the other schools. It was a for-profit college that had started off as a sort of vocational school and had recently become accredited as a college of music. The school was small and had an entrepreneurial, market-driven attitude. Its programs were geared towards practical application in the music industry and it taught jazz combined with other styles of music like rock. Not only was Rich able to create his own curriculum without having it approved or checked, he was working with another professor to make their two different arranging courses into one. He was also proposing an entirely new major to the administration that he designed with some other professors.

In addition to the cooperation, there was also considerable conflict among the faculty on the direction that the school should take organizationally. Before it became accredited the professors generally did not have college degrees and were brought in because of their experience with the music industry. Now that the school was accredited and there were people like Rich, who had a doctorate degree, there was ongoing disagreement over the direction that the school should take and the policies it should have. A tenure track program was started at one point but had to be cancelled because of the concerns of the faculty over these issues. The college is currently seeking a president, and there is conflict over the criteria for making this selection, whether they should chose a music industry head who has no education or somebody with a doctorate in music.

This level of involvement of the professors suggests that the gap between administration and professors was much less pronounced than in the other schools, but the professors still had significant freedom in designing and teaching their courses. The difference is that the employees in Rich's school were not only allowed creative freedom in their curriculum, they were also involved in shaping the organizational structure itself, while in the other schools where there was a gap between organization structure and practice, the professors could not easily change the larger structures.

### *Market*

Jazz professors considered two interrelated markets in the construction of their curriculum. The first is the market of available students, which the professors need to

constantly attract to their classes and direct their teaching towards. The second is the job and skill market for the students that they teach. Students wish to study things that will allow them to get jobs after school, so the professors use their first-hand knowledge of the music and education industries in their teaching.

Most schools were not as market-focused as Rich's, which partly based the topics they taught on the *Billboard* charts of music sales, the music industry standard for understanding popular tastes (Peterson and Anand 2004). But all of the professors had the market in mind to some extent when they developed their courses. Market considerations were an important self-imposed restriction for jazz professors, who were all concerned with the usefulness of their teaching in the "real world" and the expectations and limitations of their audience.

Betty was considering proposing a major for popular music at her own school. She had been thinking of this idea for years, but was moved to act when the heads of her college issued an edict that eliminated classes with an enrollment of fewer than ten students, the reason being cost-effectiveness. This edict would make it extremely difficult for the jazz program to survive, as the number of students involved was already fairly small. The college was imposing some market constraints, and her response was to move into teaching more popular music in order to attract a greater number of students. We have yet to see if her ideas will come to fruition, however, and the process will undoubtedly take some time.



In addition to teaching many students who were jazz musicians, Betty taught students with no prior knowledge of music in her Jazz History class. The abilities and interests of the students are an important consideration for jazz professors. Betty developed a routine to get these students, many of whom did not know how to play a musical instrument, to play a simple blues song together. She felt that this got students really interested in the music and gave them some understanding that would contextualize their learning in the class.

Other professors described having classes with classical music students who were not particularly interested or devoted to jazz, and that this held back the class. For David, a lot of the real teaching of jazz took place in his lessons, where he had students who were dedicated to learning the music, and in his classes he made adjustments for the students who didn't have a strong knowledge of theory or jazz.

Evans described the need to find a balance between all the different focuses of the students in his classes and ensembles. Some of his students were music education majors trying to gain an understanding of jazz and how to teach it while others were performance majors who needed to gain a working knowledge of how to play jazz. He found it difficult to shape the classes and groups to meet everyone's needs, but he felt that his success was measurable in the dramatic growth of participation in the jazz program, much of it coming from students with these different areas of focus.

In terms of the market of the student body, there wasn't much that professors could do to change incoming students. None of the professors were aggressively recruiting students, though there was certainly some recruitment. Evans noted, however, that the caliber of students in the music department was increasing in part because of a school-wide change in recruiting strategies that increased the number of students applying for the school and made it more selective. Similarly, Betty noted that her school was very much focused on practical, vocational majors, which meant that the students who came there were more likely to be interested in other topics. David also commented that his students were often interested in other disciplines because of the type of school that he taught at. So to a large extent, this student market is out of professors' hands.

The job market for music majors is the second consideration for professors. All of the professors had some concern for the applicability of their teaching to this market. As noted above, Rich's for-profit school was definitely the most concerned with the state of the music industry. But the professors at the non-profit schools were concerned with the post-graduation opportunities as well.

The opportunities they focused on almost never involved becoming a professional jazz musician. There is little market for musicians who strictly play jazz, and besides there was a severe lack of student interest in the jazz majors and concentrations that existed at some point in the colleges. In a majority of the schools I studied, the jazz program had to be scaled back or put on hold in some way because of the lack of students and the lack of professors who could teach jazz.

This made Betty think about drawing more students in with popular music, but Evans and Gary had a different reaction. They taught jazz as a way for the classical music students to supplement and diversify their education. Few people can actually be jazz musicians, but many can benefit in their careers from learning the music. Gary gave the example of a student he had that went on to become a premier music producer and said that the music industry was always looking for people who understood the fundamentals of music and had the sensitivity of a musician but did jobs other than playing. For Evans, playing jazz music was a way for classical music majors to open more horizons. Before he was a teacher he had been a freelancing musician, playing in a variety of different styles at all sorts of gigs, from jazz to classical to musical theater. The people who were educated in jazz and classical were the most successful at this type of work.

Graduate school was another consideration for the professors, especially those who had postgraduate degrees. Rich, teaching at the for-profit school, viewed his classes and the jazz at his school as an added level of difficulty that enabled students to think about graduate studies in music. To help his students in graduate studies and in getting jobs, Evans employed the ingenious strategy of trading recording sessions at a local studio. In the fall he would use the band to record a demo for a publishing company, then in the spring he would use the money he got for the demo to record the band's own songs. Throughout he was careful to distribute solos to all the students so that everyone would have a studio-quality demo of their playing that could be used for applying to jobs and graduate school.

Despite the non-profit status of most of the schools, the market played an important informal role in the decisions of the professors. Professors displayed sensitivity towards the needs and level of students and also the usefulness of their teachings in the job market. The variety of different types of schools in my sample presented some diverse markets of students, however, so while market influence was strong, it did not homogenize the curriculum. Instead, it provided the professors with opportunities to be creative in response to what they perceived their market to be. It is perhaps the personal nature of the producer-consumer relationship here that allows such diversity in market. The professors have a better knowledge of their market's needs, and do not have to shape their consumers' interests as much as a larger, more impersonal industry would.

### *Culture of Production*

The culture of production and the life-experiences of the professors played a big part in their outlook and how they designed their courses. There were a variety of influences, both formal and informal, on the professors, which led to an overall agreement on some values but also unique perspectives arising from differences in their experience.

In some respects their occupational careers were very similar. All of them had college degrees in classical music and a few had degrees in jazz. Almost all of them had taught classical music classes at some point, so a classical music degree was clearly

beneficial to their careers. Those who had masters or doctorate degrees had been the heads of jazz programs at some point while those who didn't have a masters were not given access to the higher pay levels and tenure tracks. Donald remarked that he and his curriculum were looked down on or regarded as unimportant by some of the other professors at his school because he didn't have a doctorate degree.

The necessity of college education means that all of the professors had a high level of respect for Western classical music. In many respects they regarded this as the foundation for all other learning in music. Ability on an instrument was a universal quality to them and being a good jazz musician meant first and foremost to be adept on one's instrument. Western classical music gave students this foundation. Evans stressed the need for playing in tune, on time, and with a good tone, saying that these were the most fundamental qualities of musicianship, and that if these were mastered a student could play any style of music.

All of the professors had important experiences outside of the academic world as well. Everyone played music, of course, but in different ways. Evans and Betty had both been freelancers for a long time, so they had this job prospect in mind when they taught their students. Rich had played with a variety of pop stars and also owned his own record label, so his outlook focused more on music business and popular music. Betty identified herself strongly as a Kansas City player because that's where she learned how to play jazz. She felt that she emphasized the groove and the feeling of the music in her teaching

in college because of the high regard for these considerations in the Kansas City jazz scene.

There was some evidence that the professors defined the boundaries of their trade by making knowledge claims for the field of jazz. Donald defined jazz and classical music in opposition to modern popular music such as rock and hip-hop, saying that the musicians in these newer styles did not have mastery over their instrument. And several professors defined jazz studies as the route to improvisation, which classical musicians did not study or understand, and a few other techniques that were essential to jazz but not other forms of music. At the same time, however, many of the professors were open to teaching other forms of music, and three of them were playing in rock bands as well as jazz groups.

### *Technology*

While I first assumed that technology did not play a significant role in the cultural production of jazz studies programs, I found that significant changes had taken place in regard to technology. The use of technology was freeing for some professors, it gave them tools to make their courses and private lessons more efficient. Others considered the technological advances to be limiting for players, and a foreign influence on real jazz.

The first, and perhaps most fundamental, advancement of technology in jazz pedagogy was the shift from largely oral and recorded knowledge of songs to the focus

on printed materials. When the older professors I talked to started learning jazz, there no “lead sheets” or transcriptions of jazz solos available for purchase, one had to either learn songs from someone who knew them, listen to recordings of those songs, or pick them up by ear through playing with other jazz musicians at gigs or jam sessions. In contrast, the younger professors had grown up playing from books of jazz tunes and even jazz etude books, which provided technical exercises for jazz in the same vein that classical music books had done for generations.

A unique advance in these materials is the Jamey Aebersold line of jazz lead sheet and practice books. These books have about ten jazz tunes in sheet music and a play-along CD that has a rhythm section playing the backing for each song, allowing a student to play the melody and improvise along to a recording of professional musicians. Though these books first came out with vinyl records instead of CDs, they have proliferated dramatically in more recent years, now including over one hundred books. Many of the jazz professors here used these books with their students. Gary, a professor at a large public school, expressed concern over the popularity of these books. He noted that it was possible for a student to learn how to play songs entirely through a recording and that if depended on too much, the Aebersold books homogenized solos and did not teach students how to interact with live musicians, a skill he considered fundamental to jazz improvisation. In fact, Gary’s students have jokingly described him as a “music Luddite” for his opposition to new technologies in music.

Gary also did not use composing software in his classes for reasons similar to his argument against the Aebersold books. Composing software, such as Finale and Sibelius, are computer programs that notate sheet music and speed up the process of composing, similar to the way Microsoft Word or similar programs speed up writing. The composing software, especially when combined with instrument imitation software like Band-In-A-Box, allow the user to hear the music they write without ever consulting the musicians who are to play the part. This further separates the student from the interactive and human element of music-making.

On the opposite end of the spectrum from Gary is Rich, a record company owner and professor of composition and popular music history. Rich is much more focused on the use of developing technologies in music composition. The first school that Rich taught at was a public university with a traditional music department that decided to add jazz to the curriculum. At this college he had to install new programs himself and maintain the computers to a large extent. The school that he currently teaches at is a small, private, for-profit music school that focuses on vocational programs. Here he is encouraged to use the latest technological advances and has a college computer worker that installs software and maintains the computers.

The advances in technology are resisted in some places because of the negative impact they can have on the student. But they are becoming standard tools for the music industry and for jazz education. The long term effects seem to be to allow the musician to operate and learn independently of other musicians, so that eventually we may see



regional styles of jazz playing fade and a more unified or standardized version of jazz being taught in schools nationwide. However, technology and the efficiency it can provide is increasingly becoming a necessity in the world of commercial music, so Rich's school's orientation towards the marketplace has no room for Gary's purist ideas.

### *Law and Regulation*

At first glance, legal restrictions might appear to limit jazz professors and standardize curriculum. The main restriction is copyright law, which can prevent the distribution of sheet music or recordings to students and supports the production of textbooks on jazz for use in college classes. However, this law is often informally broken, and the professors rarely rely heavily on textbooks unless they wrote them.

Copyright law makes some exceptions for educational usage, but copying sheet music or recordings that can be purchased is a violation of copyright law (The National Association for Music Education, 2003). However, I have seen no evidence of this law being enforced on an individual level for the professors. Many professors copied sheet music for students or gave them copies of recordings or textbook passages as part of their class materials. Of course, their schools could not support such activity officially, but there was very little oversight, perhaps because paying for copyright materials for large numbers of students would have been cost prohibitive. When going through the school system, however, these restrictions are enforced. When Rich started teaching at his large state school in the mid nineties jazz sheet music was still limited, and the main source for

combo charts was “The Real Book,” an illegal compilation of the standard jazz songs. The school wouldn’t let him use this book because it infringed copyright laws, so he developed and published his own book using songs that he had written to educate students on the basic forms of jazz. In fact, half of the professors I spoke to had their own books out, some of them quite well-known. Many newer jazz books also include CDs, so the growth of jazz books has provided professors today with little need to break copyright laws officially. The copyright laws have, however, created a small industry of jazz lesson and text books that can provide jazz professors with additional income and name-recognition.

## **Conclusion**

The production of culture that is performed in jazz education is standardized in some areas, but is also very creative in others. Many of the areas in which the production of culture perspective often perceives standardizing forces do not appear to have a homogenizing effect here. This is due to the nature of the university system and to gaps that exist between the formal attributes of schools and the actual practices of professors.

On the surface, the production of culture model would seem to predict a very standardized product. However, many of the facets of cultural production here have the opposite effect. In the culture of production we see many workers who all receive similar formal training and share many of the same opinions. Yet they all bring strong opinions

and methods from a wide variety of informal training and outside experience. This gives them some fundamental differences before they ever begin teaching and some different approaches once they start. The organizational structure is, for most schools, a heavy bureaucracy that might be seen as a standardizing force. And indeed, we can see that the general structure of most jazz programs here was pretty much the same. However, there is significant leeway for the professors in creating their curriculum, and very little oversight is used. These conditions create an environment in which creativity is able to flourish in the curriculum. The legal restrictions, which might hamper professors' ability to use sheet music and recordings in their teaching, instead encourage the development of new and different curriculum that can be made into profitable textbooks.

The Industry Structure and Market are usually homogenizing forces for most fields of cultural production that have existed for as long as college jazz education has, and one might expect these to balance out whatever freedoms are allowed elsewhere. But the university system of the United States has unique qualities that separate it from most producers of culture. It does not seem possible for the field to compete in such a manner as to become an oligopoly and settle on a standardized market. The small scale of the producer-consumer relationship in universities, and the large amount of personal interaction between the two, seems to keep the cultural producers from homogenizing the market, and instead gives them a more in-depth understanding of its needs. Technology does seem to be a standardizing force, but the extent to which it is used depends on the professor, and most professors are wary of depending on it too heavily. So while some

facets of college jazz programs are fairly standardized, such as the types of courses, significant creativity is present in the curriculum.

The implications for the production of culture model are significant. First, these findings re-affirm the existence of gaps between macro-level structures and individual practices. In this study it is clear that the existence of such gaps, combined with other factors such as the varied markets and culture of production, can result in a high level of creativity. This study's findings also suggest that the production of culture model's prediction of homogenizing markets and industry structures is due in part to the type of industry and market studied. Here the consumers are grouped into relatively small units and have personal contact with the producer, which leads to a more customized, diverse product. The educational industry also seems to resist homogenization and condensing. It is quite possible that as communication between consumers and producers increases due to technological advances such as the internet, we may see cultural production with less homogenization of markets and industry structures.

Further studies on jazz education in colleges need to be done on a larger scale to see if these findings hold true for the larger industry of college jazz. In particular, this study lacks a subject from one of the major jazz programs in the country. Although this type of school has been studied elsewhere, scholars would benefit from analyzing these schools from a production of culture perspective. It may be that with greater attention paid to the program by the administration some of the freedoms that come from the gap between professors and bureaucracy would not be present.

Further studies would also be needed to generalize these findings to the other arts and disciplines. To create a greater picture of how the university influences the artistic fields it would be necessary to study these areas, and a better picture of the academic institution could be created by researching other fields of study, such as the social sciences. In such studies, it would be important to assess the relationships between professors and the larger structures at work as well as the relationship between professors and students. It may be beneficial to study administrators and students as well as professors in order to obtain a fuller view.

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## Appendix

## Interview Schedule:

1. Where did you learn how to play jazz?
2. When you were first hired here, what were you instructed to do and how did you develop your curriculum?
3. What are the available textbooks like for teaching jazz and have you used any of them?
4. Is there a lot of collaboration between the professors in the music department?
5. Are you a member of the International Association of Jazz Educators?
6. What is the process by which curriculum is approved?
7. How do you get your budget for the jazz program?
8. What do your students want from a jazz program?
9. What do you do to attract students to the jazz program?
10. What artists' works and types of jazz do you teach your students?
11. What types of things do you recommend students practice?
12. Do students often come in with interests or influences outside of jazz?
13. What do your students do when they graduate?