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NEW ORLEANS MUSIC AS A CIRCULATORY SYSTEM

MATT SAKAKEENY

This essay provides a roughly chronological history of a single musical tradition in New Orleans, the brass band parade, as a case study that supports a more expansive proposition. The first half of this proposition is specific to New Orleans: I note that the city has become largely identified with African American musical practices and repertoires and, further, that the associations between music, race, and place can be adequately subsumed under the categorical term *New Orleans Music*. While New Orleans Music includes an amorphous collection of interrelated styles—brass band, jazz, blues, rhythm & blues, soul, and funk, to name the most prevalent—they are bound together through an association with race (African American), place (New Orleans), and functionality (social dance) to such a degree that even a disaster of immeasurable consequences, which disproportionately affected that race and dislocated them from that place, has not threatened its cohesiveness. The consensus about the overall attributes of New Orleans Music is so pervasive that naming them as such seems redundant.

Bruce Raeburn started me on this project years ago and has been an invaluable resource ever since, along with Lynn Abbott at the Hogan Archive of New Orleans Jazz. David Novak offered critical insight to two versions of the manuscript. Valuable comments on early versions came from Aaron Fox, Ana Ochoa, Christopher Washburne, and George Lewis. Conversations with Michael Taussig, John Szwed, and Robin Kelley have shaped my approach to history, African American culture, and writing. I also extend gratitude to editor Christopher Wilkinson for his guidance and for his patience, and to my colleagues at Tulane University, particularly John Baron, John Joyce, and Dan Sharp. Research was supported by a National Science Foundation grant in Cultural Anthropology and a Giles Whiting Foundation fellowship.

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The second half of the proposition raises a more sweeping question: By what processes do specific musical forms and practices become linked to particular people and places? This essay pursues the role of discourse and media—including eyewitness accounts, historical and musicological studies, musicians' autobiographies, fictional writings, media reports, images, films, and sound recordings—in solidifying the connections between people, places, and musical traditions. New Orleans Music is broadly synonymous with African American music, but this affiliation is by no means timeless and was facilitated, in part, by the writing of jazz history since the 1930s.

The claim made most resoundingly in the book *Jazzmen* (1939) that jazz began “just [in New Orleans], not somewhere else” (Ramsey and Smith 1939, 5) changed the characterization of New Orleans as a musical city, altering understandings not only of where jazz came from but what constitutes the entirety of New Orleans Music. Prior to being nominated the birthplace of jazz, New Orleans's musical reputation was based on a multitude of offerings, including ballroom dance and French opera, street criers and organ grinders (Kmen 1966). The marching bands that led parades and funerals with music represented numerous ethnicities and races, but as jazz emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century, African Americans, mixed-race Creoles, and European Americans reconfigured the brass band as a black music ensemble, performing syncopated and improvised dance music in burial processions that came to be called *jazz funerals* and in community parades known as *second lines* (Schafer 1977; White 2001). These parades wound through an extraordinarily heterogeneous urban center, led by a diverse set of musicians that embodied the city's complex history of interaction, but in narratives of jazz and New Orleans Music they are often narrowly presented as a strictly African American phenomenon. More precisely, jazz funerals and second line parades have been reimagined as a conduit that links jazz back to the celebrated slave dances at Congo Square and, by implication, to Africa.

A representative example can be drawn from the television documentary *Jazz Parades: Feet Don't Fail Me Now* (1990) directed by folklorist Alan Lomax near the end of his career. In the opening sequence, we are shown a community procession called a second line parade, with African Americans dancing through the streets while the Dirty Dozen Brass Band plays their original song “My Feet Can't Fail Me Now.”

“This isn't chaos,” Lomax narrates. “It's black tradition right out of Africa.”

In an arresting scene, footage of black New Orleanians is intercut with various archival clips of ritual and folkloric dancing in West Africa. As Lomax discusses the intimate relation between music and bodily movement and points out similarities between specific dance steps, he states what

cannot have escaped the observation of any attentive viewer: "Below the surface runs the deep tide of African tradition." Despite my misgivings about decontextualized images portraying contemporary Africa as the site of African American cultural origins, I, too, find the visual evidence of cultural affinities striking and ultimately convincing.

Lomax was deeply committed to tracing the retention of African culture in America, and when he traveled around the United States and the Caribbean documenting blues, spirituals, drumming, or other styles of black music, he sought out the continued presence of Africanisms. Lomax was an early proponent of anthropologist Melville Herskovits's theory of acculturation, which suggested that the degree of African retentions varied greatly across the New World, with the United States representing the culture most assimilated to Anglo-American norms. Yet New Orleans was an exception where Herskovits found "those aspects of the African tradition peculiar to this specialized region have reached their greatest development" (1941, 245), most notably in religion (245–251) and music (262).

Foundational research by Herskovits, Lomax, Zora Neale Hurston, and others established New Orleans as a place with an exceptionally high rate of African cultural continuities. The positive valuation of New Orleans Music as African American music was part of a broader antiracist agenda to combat theories of African deculturation and racial pathology (Szwed 1975; Sakakeeny 2005, 144–147). But in seeking to valorize black music by drawing explicit connections between African and diasporic cultures, the sheer number and complexity of other vectors were necessarily reduced. As Richard Bauman suggests of all performance traditions that are translated out of their primary context, it was necessary for narrators to make black music "intelligible, coherent, and meaningful" in order to secure its "canonical status and value" (2001, 15820). Bauman and Charles Briggs (2003) refer to this process as one of *purification*, of nominating select cultural attributes as representative in order to accomplish certain ends.

This essay situates research on African continuities in New Orleans Music "on the ground," as it were, by expanding the field of inquiry to accommodate the exceptional levels of diversity, interaction, racial mixing, and cultural creolization in the city. In so doing, I draw attention to how this history of human and cultural circulation has forever been shaped, or purified, by narrators who connect the dots between people, places, and music, such as when the "discovery" of the birthplace of jazz set in motion a series of events that ultimately redefined a city's musical identity. People, places, and music are entangled with their representations in media in discourse and together they constitute a circulatory system. This is a loosely structured system of mobility and interaction, where African ring shout dances meet European military marches; liberating processions in the

streets are captured as sounds, images, and texts; and cultural dynamism is constrained by everything from Supreme Court decisions to researchers who have shaped our understandings of black music.

This understanding of New Orleans Music as a circulatory system brings together several theories of the production of culture and history that I'll briefly outline here:

- As Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) demonstrated in his historiographic account of the Haitian Revolution, the meanings of culture and history are inherently subjective and are continually being revised through the fluid interactions of diverse actors, rather than preserved through the collective memory of an isolated culture.
- Tracking the development of culture is not only a matter of documenting practices and practitioners but also of contextualizing them within the webs of discourse that imbue them with meaning. Music, media, and discourse circulate in what Ana María Ochoa (2006) calls an "aural public sphere" that changes shape over time as it accommodates participants with diverse subject positions and agendas.
- Culture cannot be transmitted intact because culture is always transfigured as it circulates, such as when the appearance of recordings altered future performances of South Asian Karnatic music (Weidman 2003) or when national discourses of racial identity recalibrated the parameters for playing, listening, or otherwise interpreting African American music (Radano 2003).
- Circulation does not merely *distribute* extant culture, it *generates* cultural forms and meanings and it does so cyclically, rather than linearly, in a process that David Novak (n.d.) identified as the *feedback* of culture "between things, people, places, ideas and feelings" connected together, in Novak's example, through Japanese "noise" music.

Returning to the Lomax documentary with these points in mind, the dance steps could be situated within a dizzying history of movement not only from Africa to America, slave to slave, and slave to freedman; and not only from black to white or vice versa; but betwixt and between Africans of diverse ethnicities, rural plantation slaves, urban slaves, free people of color, mixed-race Creoles, European immigrants, Anglo-Americans, Latin Americans, and so on; no one reducible to these ethnic and racial identities, but each individually positioned within and against them, their exchanges creating a feedback loop that produces new forms and discussions. The determining role of media and discourse within this system can be gleaned from an experience I had at a public program in November 2009, when I showed a scene from *Jazz Parades* to members of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band and they responded by outlining a historical trajectory linking their funky innovations to a distant African past. The Lomax film, the book *Jazzmen*,

and even my own pursuits do not only *represent* New Orleans Music, they also *determine* it.

In this essay, I sketch the outlines of an expansive circulatory system full of people, events, and artifacts that have informed understandings of New Orleans Music and, in varying combinations, have shaped the way musicians carry tradition forward. These threads are drawn together through the brass band parade and a select few of its predecessors, siblings, and offspring. The point of departure is the early-nineteenth-century accounts of an earlier outdoor performance tradition, that of the ring shout dances in Congo Square, where the circulation of New Orleans Music began before anyone could have conceived of such an association between music, race, and place. To situate the brass band parade in the historical development of New Orleans Music, I begin with a consideration of these celebrated slave dances.

Squares, Rings, and Lines

Louisiana was a colony of France (1718–63) and then Spain (1763–1803) before being purchased by the United States in 1803. The European Catholics who initially governed New Orleans established a slave society that was distinct from the Anglo-Protestant model that prevailed elsewhere in the United States. A large number of slaves were imported from a single source, Senegambia, and shared an unusually high degree of cultural and linguistic commonalities. And this population was governed by a slave regime that permitted more interaction than elsewhere in North America, laying the groundwork for New Orleans to develop into “the most African city in the United States,” according to historian Gwendolyn Midlo Hall (1992, 59).

One by-product of this system of enslavement was a concession for a “free day” on Sunday, when slaves could move about relatively unsupervised. Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, slaves were permitted to gather and sell goods every Sunday in a grassy field on the outskirts of the French Quarter that later became known as Congo Square (Johnson 1991; Evans 2011). There, they played music and danced in the form of a *ring shout*, with small groups of instrumentalists, singers, and dancers arranging themselves into a circle surrounding a rotating cast of dancers. Historians and musicologists have pointed to the Congo Square dances and their persistence until the eve of the Civil War as crucial to the establishment of Africanized cultural traditions in New Orleans.

Samuel Floyd locates “all of the defining elements of black music” in the ring shout, including “call-and-response devices; additive rhythms and polyrhythms; . . . timbral distortions of various kinds; musical individuality within collectivity; . . . and the metronomic foundational pulse that under-

lies all Afro-American music" (1991, 267–268). The most detailed account of Congo Square, from an 1819 journal entry by architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, refers to several of these characteristics. The many drummers, whose sound Latrobe compared to "horses trampling on a wooden floor" (203), were likely creating the complex polyrhythms that characterize ritual drumming in West Africa and the Americas. While one group of women was "respond[ing] to the Song of their leader" in call-and-response fashion, others were "walk[ing], by way of dancing, round the music in the Center" (203), creating what Floyd would recognize as "an activity in which music and dance commingled, merged, and fused to become a single distinctive cultural ritual" (1991, 266).

The highest percentage of slaves were Senegambians of Bambara and Bakongo origin, but Mende, Mandinka, Ewe-Fon, and Yoruba were also enslaved, along with those transported from points in the Caribbean (Hall 1992, 68). One account noted that the rings of "dusky dancers" were grouped by ethnicity, so that "[t]he Minahs would not dance near the Congoes, nor the Mandringos near the Gangas," though each circle featured an "orchestra" of drums, jawbones, and "a peculiar kind of banjo" ("The Congo Dance . . ." 1879). Michael Gomez writes that gradually the ring shout helped to strengthen communication among slaves, "[bringing] them together, transcending cultural barriers and hastening the creation of a pan-African cultural mix with numerous points of intersection" (1998, 271). The ring shout was a circulatory system that accommodated a relatively diverse mix of participants.

The slave dances in Congo Square provided a formidable basis for the development of the city as an epicenter of African American music, and the search for subsequent retentions has guided much of the historical, folkloric, and anthropological study of culture in New Orleans. In recent decades, meanwhile, the very possibility of locating Africanisms in contemporary cultural forms has been questioned, raising the specter of racial essentialism and stirring a debate over the consequences of Afrocentric research. In *Lying Up a Nation: Race and Black Music*, Ronald Radano argues, "[T]he analytical concept of 'retentions' implies a historical continuity that cannot be comprehended apart from the discourses and social processes that cast this very idea into being" (2003, 10). When Samuel Floyd criticized Radano for supporting the notion that "black music has no continuity with African music" (2008, 113), Radano responded with a clarification: "[T]he connections [between Africa and America] are so deep and so complicated as to challenge analysis," and with an absence of sonic documentation "we can never locate a pure musical object existing autonomously" from the textual accounts of observers (Floyd and Radano 2009, 4–5). The study of New Orleans Music provides an opportunity for ameliorating this debate:

there is an abundance of historical narratives that, on the one hand, offer evidence of the African derivation of cultural objects and practices while, on the other, give insight into the comparatively understudied phenomenon of how the production of history and the purification of narratives have helped determine the course of cultural development.

It is notable that Radano does not take up this opportunity and New Orleans receives little mention in his research. Perhaps this is because the city's unique history of colonialism and urban slavery does not fit within Radano's plantationcentric study or because the accounts of instrumental performance at Congo Square fall outside his focus on slave songs and the black voice. When Radano writes, "[T]he primary indications of African-American expression continued to specify vocal melody [over rhythmic capacities] well beyond emancipation" (2003, 243), he cannot be referring to New Orleans, where accounts of African-derived rhythms began in the first decade of the nineteenth century and reached critical mass in the 1830s.

And yet, tracking musical continuity across time in New Orleans becomes problematic when the lens of analysis is widened to accommodate the degree of interaction that characterized the city, and when contemporary researchers confront the reality that virtually all of the available documentation has been filtered through the eyes and ears of white spectators. Radano's theories, even though disrupted by the specter of New Orleans Music, shed light on the generative role of discourse in shaping the ways that we hear music: "The stories we tell do not simply surround the sound but are inextricably linked to it, as sound and text work hand in hand in casting music's spell" (2003, xi).

Music facilitated communication among slaves in Congo Square while also communicating to the fascinated crowds on the square's perimeter, to a reading public far from the Southern city, and ultimately to future researchers attempting to disentangle the bundle of information that has accrued. Published travelogues, such as those of New Yorker Christian Schultz (1810) and South Carolina state representative Isaac Holmes (1823), attest to the power of the dances in the formation of African American culture not only from the perspective of the participants but also from that of the observers. In the most comprehensive history of Congo Square, Freddi Williams Evans notes that the dances became a "tourist attraction" for visitors such as E. P. Christy, the founder of the blackface minstrelsy troupe Christy's Minstrels, and for locals such as Grace King, the author and apologist for slavery (2011, 50–51). One spectator referred to the dances as a "gala occasion" where "not less than two or three thousand people would congregate . . . to see the dusky dancers" ("The Congo Dance . . ." 1879), while another observed that "[h]undreds of nurses, with children of all ages, attend, and

many fathers and mothers, beaux and belles, are there to be found" (Creecy 1860, 22–23).

These accounts circulated the reverberations of the drums and voices outside the insularity of the ring and, in retrospect, call into question the local applicability of Gomez's assessment that "black folk were not at all interested in performing the shout for whites" (1998, 266). In the absence of documentation of the slaves' perspective, it is clear from the historical record left by an attentive audience that the dances were experienced as a racial spectacle, and rather than serve as a footnote to black culture or merely a repository of resources, these accounts have provided us with the fundamental thrust of black music's significance: *the performance of power within a hierarchical order that imposes humility and deference*. These public displays and their representation in text created what Joseph Roach calls a "behavioral vortex" (1996, 64) in which the participants performed their racial identity as blacks and the spectators correspondingly performed their whiteness, "telling each other how scandalized they were even as they pushed and shoved to get a better view" (2001, 107).

Congo Square was perhaps the inaugural moment of African ritual drumming and dance in the United States, but the dances also amplified the presence of black music in the American racial imagination through the circulation of discourse, literally inscribing music as a site for the production of racial difference. The ring shout anchored African culture to the New World, but concentric circles rippled out from this center ring and carried the sound further from its point of origin, solidifying racial identities along the way. The echoes created by the messengers departing Congo Square *preceded* the sound emanating directly from the source. These writings distorted the sound as they amplified it, saturating African fidelity with American noise.

Not all who witnessed the dances were scandalized by them. There are very few accounts of the dances from Creoles in New Orleans, perhaps because they did not consider them particularly noteworthy. The Creole composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk was attuned to African-derived music, and his piano piece "Bamboula, dance des nègres" (1845) is one of many works based on his reinterpretation of black music that he heard in New Orleans, Cuba, Brazil, and elsewhere. And yet, whatever his intentions were in appropriating and inscribing the bamboula dance, Gottschalk's audiences received the work as an example of cultural elevation, a kind of rescue mission from Congo Square, where the dance "takes possession of the Negro's whole life, transforms him with all the instincts, the sentiments, the feelings which nature gave to his race," as one biographer put it, to the concert stage, where the source is "partially obliterated by the touch of civilization" (Didimus 1853, 62).

Accounts and interpretations of the bamboula and other dances contin-

ued to gain momentum after the ring shouts were halted, slavery was abolished, and racial identities were reconfigured according to a revised social order. During Reconstruction, when New Orleans and the entire country were undergoing a social, political, and cultural sea change that I sketch below, the dances at Congo Square remained central to understandings of race in New Orleans, with the writings of George Washington Cable as the impetus for debate.

Cable was a journalist and bookkeeper from New Orleans who wrote with guarded sympathy for equal rights, first in the 1860s for the *Picayune* newspaper and then for *Scribner's*, *Century*, and other national periodicals. His novel *The Grandissimes* (1880) was a work of historical fiction that centered on the complex interrelations of Americans, free people of color, French Creoles, mixed-race Creoles, and slaves during the tumultuous months following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The figure connecting the characters to one another is Bras Coupé, an African slave who escapes captivity to become a feared outlaw maroon. Brian Wagner's (2009) meticulous research suggests that Cable's interpretation of the Bras Coupé folktale became the canonical version through the success of *Grandissimes*. In the climactic scene of Bras Coupé's capture, which in previous versions of the story had ended with the exhibition of the fugitive's corpse at the stately *Place d'Armes*, Cable instead places him in the center of a ring in *Place Congo*, where the slaves "howled with rapture" at his mastery of the "Babouille and Counjaille dances" (1880, 189–190) until the police intervened.

It is difficult to underestimate the impact of Cable's writings in shaping perceptions of New Orleans at the time. In his hometown, Cable became a *cause célèbre*, called upon by visitors such as Oscar Wilde and lecturing at the stately Grunewald Opera House to "perhaps the largest audience that the house has ever held" ("Our Novelist at Home" 1884). But after writing "The Freedmen's Case in Equity" in 1885, he became a lightning rod for criticism by Southern Redeemers, accused by the French Creole historian Charles Gayarré of committing treason on two fronts as "the champion of Africa and idol of the North" (cited in Powell 2008, 13). Cable was ostracized from elite circles for his stance on the Negro Question, while his warm embrace in the North—where his writings, fictional or otherwise, were revered for their authentic documentation of the South—only inflamed the critics further.

After fleeing New Orleans and settling in Massachusetts, Cable submitted to *Century* two studies of black music in New Orleans, "The Dance in Place Congo" and "Creole Slave Songs" (1886). The link between politics and music was not coincidental. Cable, like Herskovits and Lomax after him, was a committed antiracist who understood expressive culture as a forum for social and political action. Throughout the antislavery movement and the struggle for equal rights, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, and oth-

ers praised slave songs as evidence of black humanity (Radano 1996; Cruz 1999). Despite Cable's reproachful tone, his texts helped to demonstrate that slave songs emanated from a body of musical practices that included, in his words, "the booming of African drums and blast of huge wooden horns" (1886, 519), cyclical rhythms of "maddening repetition" (522), and improvised structures that "rose and sank" in tandem with "the play of emotion in the singers and dancers" (522). Cable inscribed New Orleans as an Africanized space in America and attempted to translate black music into something intelligible, coherent, and meaningful to uninitiated readers.

These two writings raised the profile of black music in New Orleans to a national audience three decades before recordings would circulate jazz beyond the city limits, setting in motion a narrative thread of confusion and misinformation that cannot be fully untangled. So while Herskovits praised *Grandissimes* as "one of the richest stores of data" (1941, 246) on black culture and cited Cable's descriptions of music, dance, and religion in New Orleans in *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Cable's authority was later systematically deconstructed by historian Henry Kmen (1972) in the most rigorous survey of writings on music in Congo Square. Cable, who was born in 1844 and had never witnessed the dances, based his descriptions primarily on travelers' accounts. His most useful source did not describe a dance in New Orleans but a *vodoun* ritual in Saint-Domingue. Many of the musical transcriptions of Creole and African songs sprinkled throughout Cable's texts were borrowed from the family of composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk (who never claimed to have attended the dances) and musicologist Henry Krehbiel (who never set foot in New Orleans).

At the time of publication, there was nothing exceptional about Cable's substitutions, displacements, and dramatizations; his reputation, after all, was based on fictionalized accounts of Louisiana history. But the essays were met with such enthusiasm, and their significance ballooned so greatly over the ensuing decades, that they ultimately lost association with their historical and narrative context and became inserted into the lore of African American music. After Herbert Asbury reproduced Cable's account of the Congo Square dances in his bestselling 1936 book *The French Quarter*, that retelling became the basis for *Jazzmen* (1939), the first thorough history of jazz published in the United States, and has since reappeared in one form or another in the bulk of historical literature on New Orleans jazz (Kmen 1972, 5–8; Wagner 2009, 97–103).

The most poetic and personalized narrative of the significance of the Congo Square dances comes from New Orleans jazz clarinetist Sidney Bechet, who begins his autobiography *Treat It Gentle* (1960) with a tale of his grandfather Omar, a slave who was drawn to Congo Square by the sound of music: "[H]e'd hear drums from the square. First one drum, then

another one answering it. Then a lot of drums. Then a voice, one voice. And then a refrain, a lot of voices joining and coming into each other. And all of it having to be heard. The music being born right inside itself, not knowing how it was getting to be music" (8). After telling the story of a life spent in New York City and Paris and points in between, Bechet returns to Congo Square for the book's conclusion and says that it was Omar's "remembering song" that grounded his musical travels, a "long song that started back there in the South" (202).

As with Cable, the accuracy of Bechet's account has been subject to close scrutiny (Chilton 1987, 291). Most significantly for the purpose of this essay, the surrogate character of Omar bears a striking resemblance to Bras Coupé, whose appearance in Congo Square became part of the renegade slave's legend only in the stories that spun out from Cable's novel (Wagner 2009, 99, 113–115). It would seem that Cable's dramatization of the Congo Square dances circulated, however indirectly, to inform Bechet's own historical narrative. And, just as Cable's account's circulated widely, so did Bechet's, providing researchers with evidence of a direct link between New Orleans Music and African music (e.g., Williams 1967; Gioia 1997). Most often, the relationship of Omar to Bechet is put forth as an example of *cultural memory*, the systems of oral communication that have provided the data bank for African American culture in the absence of recorded documentation.

In the monumental book *The Power of Black Music* (1995), Samuel Floyd launches his discussion of African continuities in African American music with Omar's remembering song as an example of cultural memory, a "repository of meanings that comprise the subjective knowledge of a people" (8). Just as Omar's song "drives memory," Bechet's memory "drives the music" of his jazz innovations (8). Floyd extends cultural memory "back beyond Omar and the slave experience to Africa" (9), while projecting forward to the development of jazz and the distinctive New Orleans parading traditions that were critical to jazz's emergence. In another, more expansive discussion of African retentions in New Orleans music, Floyd writes, "[T]he ring straightened itself to become the Second Line of jazz funerals" (1991, 267).

Here we arrive at a critical juncture for the holistic view of African American music, as well as for my more focused discussion on the formation and development of New Orleans Music. Floyd's linkage of Congo Square to jazz, through the tradition of the funeral parade, is part of a vigorous intellectual tradition that places the origins of America's most celebrated original art form—jazz—in Africa, via New Orleans. The association between the Congo Square dances and jazz was most forcefully spelled out in 1939, when two jazz collectors from the Northeast, Charles Edward Smith and Frederick Ramsey Jr., assembled a collection of essays on early jazz music. The book, *Jazzmen*, left little room for doubt about where and when jazz was "born":

You have to think of New Orleans [as a] band city or it will be hard to understand why it couldn't have happened on the levee at Memphis, on the waterfront of Savannah, or on the Gulf Coast with the deep, sobbing blues. . . . Elsewhere [slaves] forgot the music that they had brought with them. . . . In New Orleans you could still hear the bamboula on Congo Square when Buddy Bolden cut his first chorus on cornet. (Ramsey and Smith 1939, 5)

Written during the national craze for swing and on the verge of bebop, *Jazzmen* brought earlier days of jazz into sharper focus and provoked the redefinition of *hot jazz* as *New Orleans jazz*. A central component to *Jazzmen's* argument that jazz began "just [in New Orleans], not somewhere else" (5), was the city's unique black brass band tradition. *Jazzmen* contributors William Russell and Stephen Smith wrote, "New Orleans could always find an excuse for a parade" and "most unusual of all were the funeral processions" (1939, 26). In the space of a few pages, the authors of *Jazzmen* laid the groundwork for what Bruce Raeburn calls the "environmental thesis," placing jazz's origins "within a discrete geographical and chronological setting" that included "a variety of indoor and outdoor performance sites, overlapping correspondence of brass and dance bands, [and] functional aspects of festival and funeral traditions in which music acted to define community and lifestyle" (2009a, 67).

Many important addenda and caveats have been injected into this narrative over time. It is now common knowledge, for instance, that early jazz cornetist Buddy Bolden was born four decades after the dances at Congo Square were stopped. The environmental thesis has also had its share of critics. Leonard Feather launched an early attempt to demythologize New Orleans as the birthplace of jazz, and his counternarrative was based partly on evidence that funerals with music were not restricted to New Orleans but took place "wherever there was a substantial Negro population" (1957, 22). Yet the environmental thesis has remained relatively intact, so that the bulk of survey textbooks, university courses, and documentaries on jazz begin with some version of this origins narrative: the ring shout provided the basis for the emergence of jazz in New Orleans; hand drums and other African-derived instruments were swapped for horns and marching drums; the ring shout straightened into the second line parade; and the musicians and dancers marched off the streets and into indoor performance venues where repertoire, orchestration, and dance steps were modified accordingly. A representative recent example can be found in Ned Sublette's history of colonial New Orleans: "[A]t some point [black Protestants] began having procession funerals. After a step was taken of adding a brass band to the procession—and I can't put an exact date on when that happened—New Orleans musicians were on the road to something we could call jazz" (2008, 110).

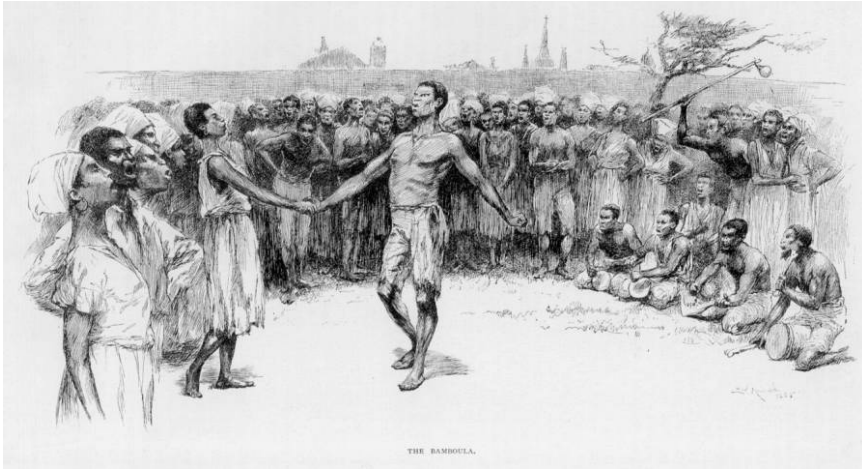
The durability of the environmental thesis is measurable by its wide circulation in public discourse. When the city's first jazz festival debuted in 1949, the founders of the New Orleans Jazz Club organized it on the same grounds where the slave dances had occurred, an act they described as "returning jazz to Congo Square" ("N.O. Jazz . . ." 1949). The current New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival features a stage named Congo Square where musicians from Africa and throughout the African diaspora trade sets with local brass band and jazz ensembles. In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Wynton Marsalis debuted *Congo Square* (2006), a musical dramatization of the environmental thesis, on the site where the dances had been held (now named Armstrong Park). The work began with a brass band parade that led to a stage where the Ghanaian drummer Yacub Addy and his group of drummers, singers, and dancers collaborated with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in a reenactment of jazz's progressive development.

In light of research by Henry Kmen, Brian Wagner, and others, it is apparent that modern understandings of the role of Congo Square dances in the development of African American music can be traced, sometimes through circuitous routes, back to the historical fiction of George Washington Cable. If a final example is needed, consult page 524 of Cable's "The Dance in Place Congo" and examine the illustration titled *The Bamboula*. If you recognize this picture, it is because it is the most evocative visual depiction of the Congo Square dances and has appeared in numerous histories of African American music and dance (e.g., Southern 1971, 136; Emery 1972, 161). The inscription in the bottom right-hand corner, "E. W. Kemble 1885," is the signature of the artist (best remembered as the illustrator of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* [1884]) and the date he created the drawing. Kemble was dispatched to New Orleans by the editor of *Century*, but the temporal distance between his illustration and the scene it depicted is rarely noted in replications of the illustration, and on occasion it is literally erased, as when Eileen Southern's editors scrubbed out the signature and date.¹

Just as Cable's imaginative rendering of the Congo Square dances was later misinterpreted as firsthand observation, the illustration has taken on a life of its own as a realistic portrayal. Faced with a historical record filled with silences and shadows—what Krin Gabbard calls "ghost sounds" (2008, 10)—researchers have outlined the contours of history with those clues that are available. Within a circulatory system that also includes musicians and audiences, these endeavors have given New Orleans Music part of its overall shape. Any interpretation of the music necessarily

1. Eileen Southern later wrote extensively about Kemble's illustrations in Cable's articles; see "Reminiscences of Africa in Old New Orleans" (Southern and Wright 2000, 33–39).

Figure 1. *The Bamboula*, by E. W. Kemble (1885).



relies upon others' interpretation of its historical significance, creating a feedback loop that draws attention not so much to "what history is" but "how history works" as an ongoing process (Trouillot 1995, 25). Narratives of the complex origins and development of New Orleans Music have been purified to remove any traces of their own determining resonances and self-perpetuating conclusions.

Congo Square came to figure prominently in the gradual redefinition of New Orleans Music as synonymous with African American music. The line from a distant African past to an Afro-American present has most conventionally been connected through the brass band parade, which is based upon musical practices that have a historical precedent in the ring shout dance. Though black brass band processions date back at least to the 1870s and were routine by the following decade (when Cable was researching Congo Square), I have not found any evidence of anyone suggesting that the two rituals were related until historians began researching jazz in the 1930s. In the intervening years, what we find instead are numerous descriptions of funerals with music and community brass band parades of no generalizable racial or ethnic identity. Black bands and white bands paraded on the same streets—sometimes in the same parades—and these accounts indicate that, initially, the music, dance, and dress were roughly comparable. In the following pages, I offer a localized history of brass bands, funerals, and parading traditions as they developed along with jazz and other musical styles around the turn of the twentieth century.

Reconstruction and Redemption

Musician and scholar Dr. Michael White has written, “The New Orleans brass band, more than any formation in jazz or other musical styles, has been the longest running and most direct link to the true spirit and heritage of the Crescent City” (2001, 69). The paradigmatic form of the New Orleans brass band parade is the *jazz funeral*, a burial procession that begins with slow dirges performed on the way to the grave site and ends with up-tempo music and dance after the body is laid to rest. In a jazz funeral, the brass band ensemble—made up of trumpets, trombones, saxophone or clarinet, tuba, and marching drums—leads the procession of family, friends, and associates of the dead in what is called the *first line*, while the crowd marching behind them is collectively known as the *second line*. At some point in the late nineteenth century, the second line detached from the funeral and took on its own identity as a parade sponsored by the city’s many neighborhood-based mutual aid and benevolent societies, which carried on in modified form as Social Aid & Pleasure Clubs.

Black New Orleanians have paraded to brass band music at least since the late nineteenth century, and these processions derive in some unquantifiable measure from the dances at Congo Square, leading several researchers to draw a direct cause-and-effect relation between “African” slave dances and brass band parades. The problem with the *straightening* thesis—that the ring shout of slave dances straightened into the second line of the emancipated—is that the origins are more diffuse and complex than a theory based solely on continuity and collective memory could account for. The roots of the brass band ensemble and related parading traditions in Europe, and evidence of European-Americans and mixed-race Creoles performing parades and funerals with music in the streets of New Orleans well before African Americans, exemplify the degree of cultural entanglements. The significance of the black brass band tradition is not limited to the retention of Africanisms under threat of erasure, because African American musical practices circulated with a host of others in a field of interactive performance and then recirculated as secondary mediations in the form of texts, images, and sounds.

The level of mobility and interaction permitted in New Orleans is evidenced by the extraordinary musical heterogeneity of the city during the antebellum period. Lafcadio Hearn wrote about the Congo Square dances while residing in New Orleans from 1878 to 1888, but he also composed ethnographic vignettes of Italian organ grinders in the French Quarter, the musical cries of black and white fruit peddlers, and the work songs of carpenters sung in French Creole (Starr 2001). Kmen’s thorough study

Music in New Orleans: The Formative Years, 1791–1841 includes descriptions of opera houses with seating for whites, free people of color, and slaves, concerts by the Negro Philharmonic Society, and nightly ballroom dances that turned the city into “one vast waltzing and galloping Hall” (1966, 5). There is no end to the commentary on New Orleans as a musical city, but this reputation could not yet be attributed to the profusion of black music.

In the decades following Emancipation, forty thousand freed slaves came to New Orleans from rural plantations, and these African Americans insinuated themselves into a complex social order that included former urban slaves, free people of color, mixed-race Creoles, and diverse others. It was during this period that African American music flourished with the advent of ragtime, blues, and jazz, and in New Orleans the brass band became entangled with these and other musical genres as it developed into a signature style of local black music. By surveying the many activities of brass band ensembles, the identities of the musicians who played in them, and the street performances that made them a fixture of everyday life, we recognize that the ingenuity of the music is its capacity to remain vital by perpetuating certain conventions and incorporating others into a relatively open circulatory system. By highlighting the generative role of media and discourse in narrating the significance of these activities, the potentially infinite scale of this system becomes evident.

All over the United States, as in Europe and the colonies, bands made up of wind and percussion instruments increasingly became a fixture of social life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Under the influence of bandmasters Patrick Gilmore and John Philip Sousa—two musical celebrities without equal in their time—over ten thousand community bands were organized in small towns and major cities by 1890 (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 8). There were military bands, circus bands, and volunteer marching bands for carnivals, minstrel and medicine shows, picnics, holiday gatherings, and dances.

Bands were an integral part of military rule in the city of New Orleans, from the fife and drum bands of French soldiers to the modern wind bands of the Union and Confederate armies. Many immigrant populations could also claim at least one band, including the German “Yagers” and the Italian “Mount Vernon Musketeers” (Kmen 1966, 204). On a single Sunday in 1833, there were notices for ten military parades in New Orleans (205). The inundation of bands, a direct result of advancements made in the manufacture of brass instruments, nonetheless reflected the cosmopolitanism and heterogeneity of this bustling port city. The parades following these bands were also diverse, attracting not only whites, but mixed-race Creoles and free people of color. One observer noted in 1837, “Boys, negroes, fruit

women, and whatnot followed the procession—shouting and bawling, and apparently delighted” (205).

After the Civil War, during Reconstruction, we find the first accounts of community brass bands made up of people of color, and these earliest reports suggest that the ensembles were modeled after their European American counterparts: the musicians wore Prussian-style military uniforms, marched in closed formations, and performed stock arrangements of published music (Schafer 1977, 24). In 1881, bands of every race and ethnicity marched during the funeral parade for President James A. Garfield (13). At the massive New Orleans Cotton States Exposition of 1885, the Excelsior Brass Band played at the opening of the Colored People’s Exhibit (9). As diverse groups were finding their way within a new social and political structure, they hired bands for their social clubs, baseball games, and business openings. The musicians played the latest marches, European dances, and popular songs, and adopted names (the Excelsior, the Imperial, the Superior) that captured some of the grandeur previously reserved for the white bands.

In retrospect, we can identify the circulation of the brass band ensemble to black musicians as a turning point in the development of New Orleans Music, but contemporary accounts suggest that these bands were broadly comparable to those made up of immigrants from Europe and Latin America, Anglo-Americans, or the French *ancienne population*. Based on the available information, it appears that black brass bands were initially mimetic replications of white bands, exemplifying what Michael Taussig calls *second contact* (1993, 247), the attempt to harness and redefine power by appropriating its salient symbols.

Funerals were the bread-and-butter jobs for bandsmen, who were paid a set rate of \$2.00 or \$2.50 per funeral at the end of the nineteenth century (Schafer 1977, 77). “Funerals with music” were such a common occurrence in the city that the *Picayune* printed an editorial in 1853 decrying the practice: “[T]he sound of the mournful dirge, as they slowly and sadly bear their companion away, or the gay and lightsome air as they return from his grave, may have a fatal effect on the nerves of the sick” (“Music at Funerals” 1853).

Primary sources that reference funerals with music challenge the notion that slave dances simply “straightened” into brass band parades. Funerals with music were widespread among black and white New Orleanians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, for example, four of five New Orleanians, regardless of race, were members of benevolent and burial societies that arranged funerals and offered a brass band for an extra fee (Jacobs 1998). According to research by Jack Stewart, it was standard practice in these funerals to play

“solemn music on the way to the grave and happy music on the return” (2004, 37). Honoring the dead through music, with a set progression of mourning to celebration, had precedents in Europe as well as Africa, and this tradition was carried forward by bands of varying ethnicity and race.

The racial identity of black brass bands also requires qualification because until the twentieth century most of these musicians would not have identified as black but as Creole, a prominent mixed-race group whose in-between status had long been recognized within New Orleans’s three-tiered racial hierarchy that was as much Caribbean as North American (Hirsch and Logsdon 1992). Prior to the Civil War, New Orleans boasted the highest concentration of freemen in the United States, the majority of whom identified as Creole, and, after the war ended, many Creoles retained cultural differences that marked them as distinct from the newly free.

The Creole population was diversely constituted and extended out of the city to the rural towns and plantations along the Mississippi River. However, as a group they were distinguished by language (French), religion (Catholicism), location (concentrated downtown in the historically French districts of the Tremé and the Seventh Ward), occupation (doctors, lawyers, educators, entrepreneurs, artisans, and skilled craftspeople), and a Eurocentric view of culture as the fine arts. All of these characteristics pertained to the historian and lawyer Rodolphe Desdunes and many of those profiled in his book *Nos Hommes et Notre Histoire* (“Our People and Our History” [1911]), such as Edmond Dédé, a violinist and composer who attended the Paris Conservatoire. Along with the Creole artisans who crafted the unique architecture of New Orleans, and the Creole lawyers and politicians who waged a losing battle for the rights of black subjects, the Creole musicians who performed in the opera houses, symphonies, dance orchestras, and brass bands of the city were often trained professionals who mastered techniques associated with Western classical music.

New Orleans’s reputation as an inordinately musical city has a very long history, and the performance of concert music, ballroom dance, and marches in the nineteenth century by Creoles and European Americans indicates that this reputation sprang from the sheer abundance and diversity of musical styles rather than the cultivation of a specific and uniquely black approach to making music that eventually took precedence. This shift in musical associations—with New Orleans music eventually becoming synonymous with African American music—has everything to do with the rebalancing of power and the redefinition of racial identity that began with the Civil War.

Louisiana blacks were the first in the nation to obtain free suffrage and in the elections of 1867 roughly half of the ninety-eight seats went to candidates with some African ancestry (Scott 2005, 41). For an instant, it appeared that the emerging political system could be based upon the ideals of equal

representation and interracial collaboration. A decade later, however, the Redemeeers won the state elections in a fraudulent vote count, sweeping out the “black and tan” legislature and ultimately sealing off the legal aims of Reconstruction for nearly a century. Then the Supreme Court issued its “separate but equal” ruling in the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* case, which began in 1892 when Homer Plessy, a Creole, was arrested for sitting in the car for whites in a segregated train leaving New Orleans. The codes of racial segregation and disenfranchisement that enabled the slave system were rewritten as Jim Crow law: African Americans and Creoles were lumped together and stripped of their rights.

Between 1860 and 1910, the black population of New Orleans quadrupled and the number of black musicians and music teachers more than doubled (Gushee 1994, 6). Of those African American arrivals from rural Southern plantations, the majority were Protestant (Baptist, Methodist, and Sanctified), worked primarily as laborers and domestics, and settled above Canal Street in the uptown district. The great numbers of African Americans who called New Orleans home by the end of the nineteenth century were purveyors of a richly diverse set of cultural practices that flourished with their newfound freedom. While Creoles had their quadrilles, schottisches, and marches, African Americans such as Buddy Bolden and Louis Armstrong learned these forms and continued to play and sing blues, work songs, spirituals, ragtime, and more.

Perhaps most critically, for many African Americans music was less of a specialized art form than an everyday activity based on performance practices that were antithetical to the rigidity of European American performance, including collective improvisation, audience participation, rhythmic syncopation and repetition, and the use of pentatonic scales and blue notes. These are the musical characteristics that Floyd identifies in the ring shout and are integral to what George Lewis (1996) terms an Afrological musical belief system, a “particularity of perspective” (93) related to the historical and cultural context of the black experience in America.

New Orleans’s black population reached a critical mass by the start of the twentieth century as Jim Crow laws attempted to classify former plantation slaves, urban slaves, free people of color, mixed-race Creoles, and others as either black or white. White musicians also were performing alongside black musicians and/or playing music with shared characteristics. Together, these diverse subjects connected via music, forming what Bruce Raeburn has called an “incipient jazz community” (2009b, 124). The circulation of instruments, repertoire, and performance practices in this community caused a musical efflorescence akin to a chemical reaction brought about by the synthesis of multiple elements. Indoors, this music was played by varying combinations of cornets, clarinets, trombones, violin, bass, piano,

banjo, guitar, and drums, and would eventually become known as jazz. Outdoors, marching bands began performing a mobile version of this music that transformed the funeral procession into what we now recognize as a jazz funeral. Jazz would become an international phenomenon, a process bookended by the overnight success of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's "Livery Stable Blues" in 1917 and the Congressional declaration of jazz as "a rare and valuable national American treasure" in 1987. Meanwhile, the brass band and the jazz funeral developed as distinctively local performance traditions that have marched forward as vital intermediaries, connecting contemporary New Orleans Music back to the most Africanized slave culture in the United States.

The development of the brass band as a black music ensemble is not clear until after World War II, when researchers and boosters from New Orleans and elsewhere began studying and promoting the music. The way that the brass band became a critical component of New Orleans Music is spelled out in the final section of this essay, but just how the brass band journeyed to that point is not fully known. What is evident is that the brass band was entwined with the emergence of jazz at the turn of the twentieth century: many brass bands doubled as jazz bands with minor modifications, there was much overlap in the repertoire (of rags, marches, blues, and spirituals), and certain musical practices were fundamental to each. Innovation was occurring rapidly between jazz and brass bands, but the parameters of how this happened are elusive.

No single musician embodies both the innovation and elusiveness of New Orleans Music, as it developed as African American music, more than Buddy Bolden. Bolden's crowning as the "first man of jazz" came about posthumously as the result of rigorous research that nevertheless leaves many questions about his contribution to jazz, African American music, and New Orleans Music open to interpretation. Bolden's mythical status is a fascinating example of the power of discourse—oral histories, biographies, archival research, etc.—to shape our understandings of history and music, and I rely upon this discourse to compose my own narration about the African American origins of jazz rather than attempt to excavate historical "facts," as I have throughout this essay.

Charles Joseph "Buddy" Bolden was born in 1877 and raised in the Central City neighborhood of the uptown district, on the other side of Canal Street from the downtown neighborhoods where Creole musicians were concentrated. As a child, he attended one of the increasing number of Baptist churches known for their spirited singing, which offended the sensibilities of some Catholic Creoles. When Bolden picked up the cornet, he played blues music and he played mostly "by ear"; unlike many of the professional white and Creole musicians, he was schooled only in the rudiments

of reading music. These and other facts collected in Donald Marquis's *In Search of Buddy Bolden, First Man of Jazz* (1978) have been crucial to narrating the African American origins of jazz.

Bolden attended St. John the Baptist Church at a time when the Baptists had retained a strong link to African-derived traditions of worship. Parishioners were encouraged to "catch the spirit" through participation, especially dancing, clapping, shouting, and singing along to the hymns. Participation was organized by way of *heterophony*, a musical texture that is produced when individuals participate in the improvisation of a shared theme.² In the book *Louis Armstrong's New Orleans* (2006), Thomas Brothers defines heterophony as "the practice of simultaneously singing multiple versions of the same melody . . . [resulting in] a collective rendition of the tune that is both spontaneous and socially organized, coherent yet richly diverse" (41). Brothers suggests that after Buddy Bolden picked up a cornet around 1895, he began playing ragtime and blues with other musicians in a way that transposed the heterophony and spiritism of the church onto the instruments of the jazz band and the brass band. These bands arranged melodies for the three instruments known as the *front line*: a cornet or trumpet (playing the theme), a clarinet or saxophone (responding to the trumpet with embellishments of the theme), and a trombone (providing a melodic and rhythmic bass part). The simultaneous improvisation of these melodic instruments, though by no means a formula that was strictly adhered to, created a musical texture that became the dominant aesthetic of the New Orleans style (Schuller 1968, 57). According to Creole musician Paul Dominguez, improvising was not valued by most Creoles, partly because it was associated with African American musicians, who (as a rule) "can't tell you what's there on the paper, but just play the hell out of it" (quoted in Lomax 1950, 76–78).³ But Bolden became a celebrated musician precisely because of his ability to creatively interpret compositions along with other musicians with comparable or complimentary skills.

Another expressive practice that indexed Bolden's African Americanness was *the blues*. In the American South, the blues was predominantly a solo singing tradition associated with field hollers and work songs of rural plan-

2. In characterizing musical texture as heterophony rather than polyphony, I follow Thomas Brothers in intentionally stretching the definition of heterophony to include the collective improvisation associated with the "front line" of New Orleans jazz and brass band musicians, suggesting that the dominant "melody" of many New Orleans jazz performances is actually a composite of independent melodies (see Brothers 2006, 41–46; for a contrasting view, see Hersch 2007, 139–140).

3. Throughout the essay, in order to draw attention to the circulation of musicians' discourse in print, quotes from musicians are cited as they have appeared in secondary sources. The majority, though not all, are drawn from oral history interviews archived at the William Ransom Hogan Archive of New Orleans Jazz at Tulane University.

tation slaves, but New Orleans was a city of instruments and of bands. What Bolden and other early jazz musicians became known for was articulating the musical devices and sentiments of the blues with wind instruments. "We didn't sing the blues," remarked trumpeter Hypolite Charles, "we *played* the blues" (quoted in Brothers 2006, 328). Bolden's ability to mimic the human voice via bluesy manipulations of pitch, timbre, and phrasing "could make the women jump out the window," according to trombonist Bill Matthews (quoted in Marquis 1978, 100). Before his first professional job at a honky-tonk, Louis Armstrong's friend advised him, "All you have to do is put on your long pants and play the blues for the whores that hustle all night" (Armstrong 1954, 58). Following this instruction was enough to launch Armstrong's professional performing career, at the age of thirteen.

However, Armstrong's expansive view of black music did not begin and end with improvised blues; he would come to incorporate European dances, American popular songs, and classical cadenzas into his style. Eventually, as a member of Fate Marable's riverboat orchestra, his ambition led him to learn how to read music: "I wanted to do more than fake the music all the time because there is more to music than just playing one style" (182). The black musical landscape in New Orleans was full of dance bands equivalent to Marable's, including orchestras led by A. J. Piron, John Robichaux, and others playing arrangements that have been positioned as a *sweet* counterpoint to *hot* jazz (Marquis 1978, 79–82). But the travels of Armstrong and many other musicians across diverse musical terrains reveal that hot and sweet bands shared much in terms of membership, bookings, and repertoire.

There were also whites performing comparable music and participating in the development of new styles. One researcher has estimated that one third of New Orleans jazz musicians born before 1900 had Italian names (cited in Raeburn 2009b, 138). In the 1890s, Montague and Marcus Korn, sons of an itinerant rabbi, played with Creoles, Italians, and others in the Reliance Brass Band (128). New Orleans was the principal geographic connection between the United States and Latin America until the mid-twentieth century, and several Latin American musicians were prominent in early jazz and brass bands, including the Spanish-speaking Creole Manuel Perez, who played cornet and led the Onward Brass Band from 1903 to 1930.

Whites, Creoles, and African Americans interacted in the formation of a new approach to performing music, but that this approach was fundamentally reoriented towards an African American musical logic is evident from changes in brass band performance in the first decades of the twentieth century. The Creole bandleaders of the Excelsior and Onward Bands continued to perform standard repertoire from written music, but the younger ranks were filled with musicians keen on incorporating the emerging sounds of

jazz and blues. The instrumentation was reduced from sixteen to eight or twelve pieces (Knowles 1996, 21) not only because smaller bands were more economical to operate; they were also more efficiently engineered for heterophonic group improvisation. Bandleaders moved away from written stock arrangements and towards “head” arrangements transmitted by ear (Schafer 1977, 24–25). These changes in instrumentation and arranging were applied to new repertoire, including blues and hymns. Military-style uniforms were exchanged for black pants, white shirt, black tie, and an eight-point visored cap with the band name on the crown (Knowles 1996, 13).

The new sights and sounds were displayed in jazz funerals and second line parades. At a time when lynchings were at their peak and Redeemer politicians were passing a series of segregationist laws, the public nature of mounting cultural displays in the streets added a layer of significance to funerals and parades. This significance was compounded by the legacy of peoples of African descent performing musical burials, processions, and dances throughout the Black Atlantic (Epstein 1977, 63–66), as well as the primacy of blues, collective improvisation, audience participation, and other musical practices that differentiated the second line parade from other brass band parades. In this way, both ring shout dances and second line parades are circulatory systems in which specific black musical practices bring about collectivity and cultural coherence by fostering interaction. With the freedom of relatively unrestricted movement, musical voices resounded in spaces where political voices had been silenced.

As the brass band developed into a black musical form and funerals with music became indelibly linked to black New Orleanians, those playing this music in these processions represented a diverse mix of African Americans and Creoles. By 1910, when the African American cornetist Joe “King” Oliver joined Perez’s Onward Brass Band, all of the leading brass bands featured mixed personnel of Creoles and African Americans. In a photograph of the Onward taken a few years later, we see Creoles Perez and Peter Bocage sharing cornet duties with African American Andrew Kimball, and standing to their left is African American Buddy Johnson and Creole Vic Gaspard on trombones. When the Onward temporarily disbanded around 1917, Oscar “Papa” Celestin formed the Tuxedo Brass Band with many of the members, eventually replacing the Creole cornetist Sidney Desvigne with the young African American Louis Armstrong (Knowles 1996, 111). With both musical practices and racial identities under considerable revision, ultimately it became untenable to definitively associate one with the other, as exemplified by the “ratty” blues-inflected music of Sidney Bechet, son of a Creole dentist from the Seventh Ward, who by the 1920s was not so much a “Creole rebel” (Brothers 2006, 195) as

representative of an emerging black subject and member of a coalescing jazz community (see also Ake 2002).

By this time, musicians had long been circulating their music beyond the city limits, at least since the 1910s when the Creole Band toured extensively on the vaudeville circuit (Gushee 2005). In 1917, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band alerted a record-buying public to New Orleans jazz with their recordings for Victor in New York City. King Oliver left for Chicago the following year, and he would summon Armstrong to join him in 1922. Bechet ultimately settled in Paris, Armstrong settled in New York, and it was in these cities, far from home, where jazz burgeoned into an international phenomenon.

Not coincidentally, marching music was waning in popularity around the country. The significance of community brass bands was profoundly diminished with the rise of new musical styles, the professionalization of entertainment, and the development of radio, phonograph, film, and the automobile (Hazen and Hazen 1987, 190–192). In New Orleans, white brass bands followed this pattern and gradually lost their relevancy during the twentieth century. As the jazz funeral became identified as a performance practice that articulated an emerging black identity, brass bands appeared only at white funerals of political leaders and dignitaries, and then they were to play only solemn music, with none of the “happy music” that was increasingly associated with black funerals.

Meanwhile, the black brass bands, with African American, Creole, and (less frequently) European American members, would flourish as a localized and racialized performance tradition. The brass band parade, which began as a communal activity with no specific ethnic or racial affiliation, developed into a black performance tradition crucial to the emergence of jazz.

Beginning in the late 1930s, researchers and collectors then began to use funerals and parades as evidence of the unique environs necessary to produce jazz. It was also during this period that New Orleans was moving away from an industrial economy based in the oil and shipping industries and towards a tourist economy based in the city’s culinary and musical traditions. These changes coincided with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement and the dismantling of Jim Crow laws, opening up new spaces for performance where black music took on added value as a form of economic and cultural capital. In this new order, the brass band began to circulate as an authentic form of local black culture, particularly through commercial recordings, media representations, and the staging of parades in festivals and other contexts far removed from the inner-city neighborhoods where brass bands continued to march forward as a community tradition.

Heritage

The brass band became integrated into the social lives of black New Orleanians through the community-based traditions of the jazz funeral and the second line parade, but it was through its circulation beyond neighborhood boundaries that it came to be recognized and revered. Brass band performance is, of course, a *tradition*, according to Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett's definition of "music that is part and parcel of a way of life" (1998, 52). But it is also a form of *heritage*, or music "singled out for preservation, protection, enshrinement, and revival" (52). Partly as a consequence of its representation in media and discourse, the brass band parade has been decontextualized from the streets and re-presented, or exhibited, in other contexts, securing its status as a distinctive form of local black culture. Tradition and heritage became entwined in the circulatory system that is New Orleans Music.

This process began with the publication of *Jazzmen* in 1939 and intensified in the 1940s when a national revival solidified understandings of hot jazz as New Orleans jazz. Enthusiasts and collectors began making pilgrimages to New Orleans to find authentic brass band and jazz but instead discovered that the local effects of the revival were minimal (Hulsizer 1945; Suhr 2001, 108). The bulk of New Orleans musicians were contributing to the war effort, but more distressing to these jazz pilgrims was the lack of self-awareness among New Orleanians about their city's paternal affiliation with jazz (Raeburn 2009a, 217–258). Though jazz's origination in New Orleans was becoming common sense to national and international jazz enthusiasts, New Orleanians—especially white New Orleanians with the resources and wherewithal to organize a local revival—were slow to publicize and celebrate this new discovery of their city's heritage. "The simple truth of the matter is that the people of New Orleans enjoyed and sustained the music without the music itself getting more than a passing nod from the local guardians of culture," wrote Smith in *Jazzmen*. "The bigwigs of New Orleans music, who knew their operas but not their four-in-a-bar, utterly disowned it" (Ramsey and Smith 1939, 268).

It was not as though members of the New Orleans elite were oblivious to jazz and brass band as forms of local music. Since the turn of the century, black bands entertained whites on riverboat excursions and at the levee camps along Lake Pontchartrain, such as Milneburg, West End, and Spanish Fort. Subscription dances at Tulane University featured jazz bands for five decades before the first black student was admitted in 1963, and black brass bands had long been hired by white Mardi Gras krewes to march in their parades. Black bands operated within elite social spheres

as thoroughly ordinary forms of entertainment. It took the work of outsiders to alert New Orleanians to the value of jazz and brass band music as a uniquely local resource, and to assess this musical entertainment in terms of heritage. As Kirschenblatt-Gimblett writes, "Heritage is a 'value added' industry," which "is created through a process of exhibition" (1995, 369). To add value, powerful New Orleanians would need to begin exhibiting the music in addition to hiring musicians for everyday functions.

In the decades following World War II, local institutions began forming to achieve this goal. Among the first were the National Jazz Foundation in 1944, the New Orleans Jazz Club in 1949, and the Hogan Archive of New Orleans Jazz in 1958. These organizations, Raeburn writes, were "composed largely of socially prominent individuals, whose very interest in supporting jazz gave the cause an air of respectability" (2009a, 237). Though interracial collaboration would not have been possible in that place at that time, the majority of these men had racially progressive, even altruistic goals, as did the founders of Preservation Hall in 1960 and the Jazz & Heritage Festival in 1970. Bill Russell, in particular, dedicated much of his life to New Orleans musicians through his research as well as his collaborations with the Hogan and with Preservation Hall, where he could often be found collecting admission or sweeping the floor. By organizing concerts and meetings, and producing sound recordings and publications, Russell and others inserted jazz onto city maps.

By this time, New Orleans was being remapped as a tourist destination and the local economy was becoming increasingly dependent on the staging of culture for tourists. With the rise of the tourist economy in the postwar years, numerous business entrepreneurs and governmental visitors' bureaus became gradually attuned to what George Yúdice (2003) calls the "expediency of culture." Mark Souther (2006) writes that the rise of the tourist economy opened up new venues for the staging of local culture:

Like the preservation of [architecture in] the French Quarter . . . the resurrection of [traditional] jazz reveals the advance in the post-war years of the notion that responding to tourists' expectations served New Orleans' economic interests [103]. . . . What had started as a reinvigoration of a black music genre by jazz enthusiasts gradually became a cash cow for tourism promoters [108].

If acknowledging New Orleans as the birthplace of jazz was bound up with a mix of progressive politics and strategic economics, then promoting the fundamental role of the brass band, the jazz funeral, and the second line parade in the emergence of jazz was a way of claiming jazz not simply as a national treasure but also as a distinctly local form of culture. The appearance of the Eureka and Olympia Brass Bands on the stage of Preservation

Hall beginning in the 1960s is one example of the recontextualization of the brass band out of black neighborhoods and into spaces of consumption that primarily attracted white tourists. For another example, consider the myriad of ways that parading traditions were utilized to produce a successful jazz festival.

The city's first jazz festival was a small, unsuccessful venture launched by the New Orleans Jazz Club (NOJC) in 1949, but through the intervention of political and economic leaders from outside the organization the full economic potential was eventually realized. In the mid-1960s, Greater New Orleans Tourist and Convention president Harry England, Royal Orleans Hotel general manager Olaf Lambert, developer Lester Kabacoff, and hotel association president Seymour Weiss convinced Mayor Victor Schiro of the merits of a jazz festival (Souther 2006, 119). In December 1964, Schiro invited NOJC members and other prominent businesspeople to a meeting to discuss how a jazz festival "might achieve the importance of the Sugar Bowl in this historic city which is 'The Birthplace of Jazz.'" Based on the success of such events elsewhere, we truly believe that the annual Festival would produce a substantial profit" (Schiro 1964).

The International Jazz Festival was launched with a parade on June 27, 1965, featuring the most prominent brass band of the 1960s and 1970s, the Olympia. The parade was another indication that, to position themselves as the living embodiment of the jazz tradition, New Orleans musicians needed to demonstrate jazz funeral and second line performances for curious visitors, as well as those locals who were unwilling to pass through inner-city neighborhoods. The festival, however, was not a financial success, in part because few other local artists were invited to participate. In 1968, the NOJC sought out civic and industry support to expand their festival, arranging for the Olympia Brass Band to march into the City Council Chambers, where council president Maurice "Moon" Landrieu (future mayor and father of current mayor Mitch Landrieu and senator Mary Landrieu) welcomed the interruption, announcing that "a jazz Festival in May will bring visitors to us in a season that now has no other special celebration to attract tourists" (Raeburn 2009a, 245).

Ultimately, the International Jazz Festival was replaced by the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (a.k.a. Jazz Fest), which, as the name indicates, placed more of a premium on local culture. Newport Jazz Festival director George Wein was brought in to produce the festival, and Wein hired two Tulane students, Quint Davis and Alison Miner, to curate local talent. Jazz Fest kicked off in earnest in 1970 with a second line parade through the French Quarter, and the festival gradually became successful based on a winning formula of combining internationally popular artists with

representations of authentic local music and cuisine. Jazz Fest continues to attract tourists, who come to see the brass bands play onstage and lead parades through the festival grounds.

Jazz Fest's decontextualized parades were part of a circulatory system of writings, images, and sounds that transported local tradition around the globe. The autobiographies by Armstrong (1954), Bechet (1960), and Baby Dodds (1959) spoke to the distinctiveness and significance of brass band parades in New Orleans, but it was the representation of parades on sound recordings—beginning with a trickle in the mid-1940s and increasing in the 1950s and 1960s—that preserved the most tangible artifacts in the brass band archive for future researchers and listeners.

Though a recently rediscovered film clip of the Eureka Brass Band marching in a Mardi Gras parade in 1929 is the earliest available recording of a New Orleans brass band, it was not until 1945 that a conscious attempt was made to document the tradition in sound, and even then the conditions were less than ideal. The record was not of a working band but a pickup group that trumpeter Bunk Johnson assembled in clarinetist George Lewis's backyard on a hot May afternoon. Yet the notes Bill Russell made in his diary about his interactions with the musicians leave little doubt of their commitment to producing an authentic document of a funeral parade.

After Russell worked out microphone placement and recording levels with the band playing the "When the Saints Go Marching In," he requested a "real funeral march" (quoted in Hazeldine 1993, 77). This took some effort: snare drummer Baby Dodds had not played a funeral in twenty-five years and wondered aloud whether he could remember the appropriate rhythms; several of the musicians were not familiar with "Flee as a Bird," the dirge Russell suggested; and Lewis took some time to adjust to the E-flat clarinet, with its high, shrill tone that was believed to be more authentic than the standard B-flat model. (Johnson had instructed Russell specifically not to include saxophones because he deemed them inauthentic, although they had been standard in brass bands for some time.) After an unsuccessful attempt to locate written parts for "Flee as a Bird," one of the musicians suggested "Just a Closer Walk with Thee" instead, but after a few takes Russell was unsatisfied, later deeming it "the most peculiar band music I'd ever heard" (Hazeldine 1993, 80). They spent the rest of the afternoon calling out up-tempo hymns, popular tunes, and another dirge in no particular order.

When it came time for Russell to release the recordings, the songs were sequenced in the progression of a traditional funeral as an album of three 78 RPM discs titled *New Orleans Parade: An Album of Six Marches by Bunk Johnson's Brass Band*. The first disc contained "In Gloryland" and "Just a Little While to Stay Here" played at march tempo to replicate the band's march

to the church, a kind of mobile overture intended to notify second liners that a parade will soon begin. The second disc condensed the progression of the funeral from slow dirges to up-tempo hymns into two representative songs: "Nearer My God to Thee" (the band's second attempt at a dirge) on side A was paired with its up-tempo counterpoint "When the Saints Go Marching In" (originally intended as the session's sound check) on side B. The last disc concluded with upbeat popular songs of the type that brought the procession to an ecstatic end: the standard "Didn't He Ramble" and the sentimental Tin Pan Alley number "You Tell Me Your Dream," interpreted as a fast march.

Just as the musicians' choices of instrumentation and repertoire reflected their standards of authenticity, Russell's production decisions were made with the purpose of replicating an ideal jazz funeral. Even placing the musicians outside may have been done intentionally to reproduce the funeral environment as faithfully as Russell's recording technology would allow. In 1951, when Harvard University students Alden Ashforth and David Wyckoff made the first recording of a working brass band, the Eureka, they also chose to approximate the effect of a parade by situating the musicians outdoors (in an alley) and sequenced the record in the order of a traditional funeral. In 1957, Louis Armstrong recorded *Satchmo: A Musical Autobiography*, which included a telescoped version of a jazz funeral, with a spoken introduction by Armstrong attesting to the defining role of the parades in his musical youth.

This has become standardized as the prototype for exhibiting the brass band in a host of contexts, including the Hollywood film *Pete Kelly's Blues* (1955) and the James Bond film *Live and Let Die* (1973). Viewers of *David Brinkley's Journal* on NBC had the sounds and images of parades beamed into their living rooms, while readers of *Time*, *Ebony*, and other publications were transported to the streets of the New Orleans via lyrical essays illuminated by timeless black and white photographs.

Live exhibitionary performances, demonstration records of traditional repertoire, and televised funeral processions circulated the brass band parade out of its origins in the streets and onto the world stage. The death of elderly musicians who had lived in relative obscurity, such as clarinetist John Casimir and pianist Lester Santiago, attracted media representatives from across the United States and Europe, expanding and redefining the historical record. As the articles by George Washington Cable had cemented the lore of the Congo Square slave dances in the public imagination, brass band parades were retroactively recognized as a fundamental part of the environment that produced jazz through mediated representations that displaced the parades from this environment.

Conclusion

In the summer of 1965, a group of French tourists inquired at the NOJC offices about witnessing a jazz funeral. The visitors were disappointed to learn that their stay did not coincide with the death of a prominent musician, but they were directed to Preservation Hall, where Sunday brass band performances always included a condensed jazz funeral progression of a slow dirge followed by an up-tempo dance number (Souther 2006, 116).

In this transitional moment when musicians and others began scheduling funeral performances to cater to the itineraries of observers, something else remarkable happened: the funerals—both in authentic and exhibited form—received a new name. The term *jazz funeral*—a neologism that localizes funerals with music by rooting them in the birthplace of jazz—arose through dialogue among musicians, audiences, and other intermediaries. The earliest reference that I have found in print is from a 1955 article in the *Times-Picayune* announcing that Jack Webb, the star of *Pete Kelly's Blues*, had arrived in New Orleans “to film a jazz funeral, comparable to ‘Papa Celestin’s,’ which will constitute the first five-minute segment of the picture” (“Star of ‘Dagnet’ . . .”).⁴ The term became commonplace by the mid-1960s, though it took a generation or two for brass band musicians to accept it. The name of the tradition, and by some measure the tradition itself, was a product of its circulation beyond the backstreets and into concert halls, recording studios, and diffuse spaces of the media. The effectiveness of this circulatory system to shape our understandings is borne out by the ubiquity of the term today, including this essay’s description of events that predate its introduction.

At this same moment, local music and parading traditions began undergoing what has been called a “brass band renaissance” (Burns 2006). In the late 1960s, guitarist and singer Danny Barker introduced a new generation of musicians to the brass band tradition by founding the Young Fairview Baptist Church Marching Band. Out of the Fairview came a legion of musicians grounded in traditional performance practices (such as clarinetist Michael White’s Original Liberty Brass Band and trumpeter Gregory Stafford’s Young Tuxedo Brass Band), as well as progressive musicians who have updated tradition to match the experiences and preferences of contemporary black New Orleanians (beginning with the Dirty Dozen and continuing with the Rebirth and Soul Rebels Brass Bands). The radically different perspectives and approaches of these musicians attest to the cur-

4. The first uses of the term *jazz funeral* in print dates from the 1920s, not in New Orleans, but in newspaper accounts from Salt Lake City to Montrose, Colorado (e.g., “Whiskey and jazz funeral . . .” 1921).

rency of brass band music and the ongoing vitality of jazz funerals and second line parades as community-based traditions.

Bands are also called upon to perform exhibitions of parades at festivals, concerts, and conventions in New Orleans and around the globe. The career of a contemporary brass band musician is a balancing act between *tradition* (community-based parades and performances) and *heritage* (staged exhibitions of tradition). Musicians circulate through various contexts as they fortify their association with New Orleans Music.

The tradition that today's musicians carry forward in their performances, recordings, and discussions resides within a circulatory system that is a selective accumulation of what came before. The contemporary significance of the brass band parade in the formation of New Orleans Music derives from the circulation of people, music, and discourse through time and space. The legacy of New Orleans Music stretches back to slave dances in Congo Square, to military marches, to the emergence of jazz and subsequent styles, and to the representation of these musics as sounds, images, and texts. These histories have been brought together in such a way that makes them difficult to disentangle or deconstruct, and this essay has taken that as a lesson rather than a challenge.

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