

DECONSTRUCTING JAZZ by Peter M. Scott.

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This book is dedicated to all surviving members of:

The Semitones (Bradford, Yorkshire, 1943-46)

The RAF Dance Band (Gibraltar, 1947-48)

The Home Office Jazz Music Performing Society (Whitehall, London, 1978-88)

The Old Fashioned Jazz Quartet (Fleet, Hampshire, 1990-97)

The O.F.J.Q. Mark II (Woy Woy, New South Wales, 1998-2003)

The Vintage Jazz Ensemble (Ballina, New South Wales, 2003-)

CHAPTER ONE. (What is it?)

We are looking into a room furnished only with a piano and a few chairs. A number of individuals enter (any number between two and twenty would be feasible, but the optimum, as here, is eight) all but one of whom carry instrument cases of various shapes and sizes. There could be women among them, but they are probably all men. There could be blacks among them, but they are probably all white. They have never met before. They have come from eight different countries, and speak, for the most part, different languages. They are not professional musicians, but earn their livings in a wide variety of ways, spanning all classes of society, and, as they open their cases, we can now see that they all play different instruments, namely, clarinet, trumpet, tenor saxophone, trombone, piano, drums, guitar, and string bass.

No sheet music is produced, however, and nobody is identifiable as musical director or even leader, although the trumpet player may emerge as first among equals (with the pianist in close second place) when, amid the cacophonies of warming up and tuning up, a certain amount of discussion takes place, mostly in English, which seems largely to consist of shouting out the names of women ("Rosetta", "Sweet Sue") or cryptic phrases of not more than three words ("After you've gone", "Mean to me", "Day is done") coupled with key signatures ("F", "G", "E flat", "B flat" and so on). Eventually, there is unanimous agreement to play (it seems) a tune called "Sweet Georgia Brown" in the key of A flat. Another short discussion follows about the tempo, during which fingers are snapped and feet are tapped as snatches of music are wordlessly sung ("Doo-da-day-da:doo-da-day-da..."). Finally, the matter is settled and the trumpet player, after a short pause, gives out the agreed tempo, probably by saying quietly "A-one, a-two: a-one-two-three-four", and everyone starts to play.

Surprisingly, perhaps, the music that emerges from this group of complete strangers sounds not only quite complicated, in that the four wind instruments are playing separate parts in counterpoint to each other while the four percussion instruments introduce individual (and even combined!) variations into the basic four/four time, but also quite cohesive, in that the counterpoint is not discordant, the melodic and harmonic structures of the tune are clearly discernable and the whole ensemble sounds reasonably well-orchestrated and rehearsed - as if, in fact, the band had been playing together for some time. It is, of course, quite a simple tune - a 32-bar sequence comprising four 8-bar phrases, two of them identical, in an ABAC format - but what the musicians are doing with it is both interesting and exciting.

Listening to the performance in a little more detail, we note that the first chorus is taken as an ensemble with everybody playing more or less all the time. The four percussion instruments, usually referred to collectively as the rhythm section, in addition to keeping up a steady pulse (which, by fractionally anticipating the beat, they make much more exciting than a simple four in a bar would be), are also playing the sequence of harmonies or chords which underpin the melody. Of the four wind instruments, often called the front line, the trumpet is the only one playing the well-known tune while the clarinet sings an almost continuous obligato above it, the trombone underlines the inherent harmonic progressions by pedalling from one note to another below it, inserting short rhythmic figures, like punctuation marks, into the space between phrases,

and the tenor sax weaves in and out, below the trumpet but above the trombone, making sotto voce comments, as it were, on the melody. It is evident that the individual characteristics of each instrument are being exploited to the full, without imposing on, or interfering with, the others.

The second chorus is also taken by the full ensemble, but, this time, the familiar features of the melody, so clearly discernable in the first chorus, begin to dissolve and even disappear as the trumpet moves into a free variation on the theme; this is still, however, sufficiently restrained for the others in the front line to continue to relate to it without any significant change in their *modus operandi*. There is a general feeling of, on the one hand, settling down, as the instrumentalists get to know each others' musical personalities, and, on the other, opening up, as each of them begins to explore the possibilities of the tune within the context of what they are hearing from the other members of the group - a curious amalgam of relaxation and rising tension.

There follows a series of choruses taken as solos by each of the instruments in turn. The order in which these occur is decided, initially, by an exchange of eye signals between the players (they are grouped in a loose circle facing inwards), or by the trumpet player (the only one with a hand free) waving at the piano player to take the first solo and thus allow time for a brief discussion among the other seven about the subsequent sequence of events. As one solo succeeds another, each individual seems to be striving to produce a variation on the original tune which not only exploits the unique characteristics of his instrument to the fullest possible extent, but is as different as he can make it from anything that has gone before. The resulting displays of musical imagination and instrumental virtuosity receive audible support from the rest of the band in the shape of cries of pleasure, shouts of admiration, verbal encouragement to take additional choruses and, more interestingly, ad hoc ensemble accompaniments, obviously aimed at stimulating the soloist's imagination.

These last can take a number of forms. The rhythm section, of course, performs its basic function of driving things forward, four in a bar, throughout the whole proceedings but there seems to be, within this simple framework, a whole range of options open to them for heightening the tension or otherwise fuelling the soloists' inspiration. They can accentuate different beats in the bar, play quavers instead of crochets, play three of the four beats, two beats, one beat, one beat every two bars even - as when the double bass finally takes a pizzicato solo. The drummer can play on cymbals only, instead of drums, with brushes instead of sticks, on tom-toms, on a wooden block, on the rims of his drums instead of the skins - anything to keep the impetus from flagging. Similarly, the front line instruments can accompany a solo by playing sustained, or even staccato, chords (three, two or one beats to a bar, augmenting the rhythm section), or, more impressively, by working up among themselves short, repetitive melodic figures of an incantatory nature. These figures, or riffs as they are sometimes called, can be faint and faltering at first while being formulated, rehearsed and adjusted to fit the movement of the tune's harmonics, but, after gradually gathering confidence and volume, can eventually assume a life of their own and take over the whole proceedings and be played *tutti* for a chorus or two. There is even the possibility that, when the time comes for the drummer to take his solo, the other seven may seek to encourage him to exploit his technical vocabulary to the fullest by ostentatiously laying down their instruments and leaving the room for a while!

In addition to solos, there may be duets between different and sometimes quite unlikely pairs of instruments, playing either simultaneously or sequentially -

two or more bars apiece, for example, in question and answer form. Some brave soul may even attempt a vocal. Finally, however, with individual innovation honourably exhausted, the full band storms into the final choruses with everyone blazing away, and excitement levitating towards its highest pitch. It is not impossible that, at some pre-arranged signal (a four bar drum break?) the band will give one final turn to the screw by modulating from A flat to B flat for the very last chorus - a move which could unlock just one more heaven of invention. And, of course, the coda, which consists of repeating the last four bars of the tune in a variety of exuberant ways, may go on for quite a while before the ultimate drum roll and cymbal clash over a two bar sustained chord involving all the other instruments brings matters to an irrevocable close.

Left to themselves, the musicians would probably go on, pausing only for breath and to refresh themselves with any available beverages, to choose and play another, probably slower, tune in the same style, but their activities need detain us no longer as we have witnessed enough for our present purposes. Before stating what those purposes are, I should add that, although it is a figment of the imagination, the scene described above would have been perfectly feasible and could have taken place anywhere in the Western World (wartime travel restrictions permitting) at any time between about 1935 and the present day.

It is not enough to say that we have been observing eight musicians playing jazz. The word "jazz" has been sprayed around the world of music so freely and widely since it was first invented in the early days of the century, that its use today, without qualification, cannot but beg more questions than it answers. Before we ask, then, "What kind of jazz?" - for there are, apparently, so many kinds that only experts can tell them apart - we must ask a far more fundamental question about the term itself. When we use it, are we talking about Jazz the Idiom or about Jazz the Method - or both? Or are we uncertain? It is easier to be certain about the presence of the idiom, or musical language, of jazz than it is about the method, and there is a tendency for the term to be used rather indiscriminately, when the jazz idiom is present, to imply that it is a product of the jazz method, when this may be very far from the case.

The musicians we observed above were playing jazz in both senses of the term; not only were they playing in the unique idiom of jazz, but they were also using the method which is unique to jazz - collective improvisation. The difficulty is that there is no accepted terminology for giving due and separate weight to both the idiom and the method. Jazz musicians do not normally describe themselves as indulging in "collective improvisation in the jazz idiom". They may say "Let's get together and play a little jazz", leaving the method clearly implied in the context. They may even say "Let's arrange a jam session", the word "jam" having undoubtedly been used, in the past, as a code word for collective improvisation in the jazz idiom. But not, perhaps, with any real consistency or conviction, and the term has acquired the later meaning of a public event at which two or more different concert bands combine to play, mainly on amplified guitars and drums, unrehearsed music in a rather unstructured and uninhibited manner.

There is another word which British musicians use amongst themselves to describe improvisation in the sense of playing without written music. That word is "busking" and it often crops up in a jazz context. But, even apart from its faintly comic associations with the world of street theatre, the term has no specific attachment to the jazz idiom and can be applied to any situation where music has to be made and the "dots" are unavailable - when, for example, special tunes or dances are requested at parties, weddings and barmitzvahs.

No matter. The absence of a clear vernacular distinction between idiom and method may be a bit confusing, but, having drawn attention to it, we can manage quite well, from here on in, with "collective improvisation in the jazz idiom" as an adequate account of both aspects of the unique contribution made by jazz to the music of the twentieth century. Before moving on, however, let us be clear that there is no intention, in differentiating so carefully between the two, to anathematise music in the jazz idiom which is not produced by the jazz method, since, to do so, might leave us with little to talk about.

On the other hand, the point has to be made that, even though genuine collective improvisation may be rather less common than the uninitiated listener supposes. There can be no doubt that a seductive image exists of the jazz musician as free spirit and untutored instrumental virtuoso, a natural genius, untrammelled by instructions from some absent composer, transmitting his own musical inspiration directly through his instrument to the listener, who can thus enjoy the unique privilege of being present at both conception and birth of a minor masterpiece. Since the features of this icon are inextricably woven into the fabric of whatever larger picture may be conjured up in the public mind whenever it contemplates the subject of jazz, it must follow that improvisation in the jazz idiom is more authentically jazz, and would rate higher on any critical scale applicable to jazz, than is music in the jazz idiom which is not improvised - even if it does not follow that the latter is not jazz.

We have chosen to begin, then, by imagining what must be, by any definition, the pure, unadulterated, genuine article. The eight musicians described above have never met before, they come from different countries, speak different languages and play different instruments. Yet, they can meet like this - barely thirty years after jazz was first heard of - and, with little hesitation, produce authentic jazz by collective improvisation for hours on end. Not only that, but none of them is a professional musician, none is on drugs, all are reasonably healthy, gainfully employed and in other respects, it seems, quite ordinary. Not only that, but there is no audience (and no microphone), so they must be playing simply for their own amusement.

Whether they are playing good jazz or not is a question we cannot really address at this stage. We know they are playing authentic jazz. They are obviously playing competent jazz, otherwise the whole thing would fall apart and degenerate into chaos. But it doesn't. It works and they enjoy it. They enjoy it because it works. And when they have finished and packed up their instruments and gone their separate ways, nothing will remain except the pleasure each one of them has gained from the experience. That, and whatever they have learned from it - from playing with this particular group and listening to the other musicians perform.

Perhaps if they were to meet again in a fortnight's time, under similar circumstances, and play the same tunes again, they might play them even more competently. But would the jazz be as authentic as before? And would they enjoy it as much? And if, as is more likely, they chose to play at their second meeting a completely different set of tunes, might they not, with the experience of the previous session behind them, find themselves playing even these new tunes a little more competently or even a little more adventurously than before - taking more risks in the solos, perhaps, and stretching such virtuosity as each one of them possesses just a fraction more towards the outer limits of their musical imagination? This would surely increase their enjoyment (otherwise, why do it?) but, again, would it make for better jazz? Or more competent jazz, even? Taking risks with their technical ability in the solos

could, by definition, end in either success or failure, so how could the latter outcome be better jazz? Unless, of course, it's a good thing in itself that the musicians are seeking to improve their performances in some way. Or would that be a bad thing? Less authentic, perhaps?

Speculating further, let us now imagine these eight musicians meeting together frequently, in spite of all the difficulties, at regular intervals; getting to know each other better and better, tidying up the ensembles by eliminating, with growing confidence, any nervous tension that may have been felt initially and allowing the music to lean more nonchalantly into the rhythm; increasing the technical virtuosity of the solos by smoothing out the rougher edges - even working them out in advance. Given all this, could it be long before these meetings began to look very like a sort of rehearsals? And could it be long, after that, before the possibility was mooted of the group performing in public? If this were to happen, and the beckoning prospect of playing for a live audience began to be taken seriously, the time for equivocation would be over. We could be quite certain that their innocent enjoyment of the genuine article had become a thing of the past and nothing would ever be quite the same again.

It would not be the simple prospect of performing in public that changed the nature of things for the group - by appealing to some members more than others, for example. As we shall in due course see, this contingency is one of the principal attractions of jazz to the budding performer, and, in any case, it is highly unlikely that any of these musicians could have reached the level of competence which enabled them to participate in that very first session without having played in public before. No, the transformation would be brought about by the fact that, once they had decided to try and find an audience, the group would have crossed over, possibly without realising it, into the outer fringes of a jazz business. And this, as they say, is a whole new ball game - as different from that which preceded it as marriage is from love.

This push into the public domain, however tentative, would require some kind of organization, however vestigial, and some kind of extra-musical effort, however feeble, on somebody's part. In other words, some kind of management and marketing organ, no matter how primitive, would have to be grafted onto the hitherto purely musical anatomy of the group in order to pursue what had now become an important objective of its existence. There is no way that these eight individuals who have been playing jazz together, however companionably for however long, can collectively improvise the necessary arrangements for giving a public concert. Someone has to take charge.

In this case, it would be unusual if the necessary management and marketing skills were not volunteered from within the group, a more likely problem being that there might be an overabundance of them - in the opinion, that is, of their putative possessors. But, if disaster is to be avoided (and it usually is, at this stage) the group will have to agree on a single leader who will become, in effect, the managing director of a small business in which the eight of them will each have, initially, a nominal 12.5% share. They may not see it quite like this. The whole thing will probably be handled much more informally, even haphazardly, but this will be the underlying reality.

Once appointed, the leadership will begin to exercise its management and marketing skills, more or less energetically, more or less successfully, in pursuit of what has now become the accepted common goal of playing jazz in public with a view to earning (and enjoying) the appreciation and applause of some kind of audience. It is unlikely, however, that they will attain these goals without accepting some degree of constraint on their individual freedoms,

and not only in the area of artistic self-expression. Certainly, the jazz might have to be adjusted to fit whatever occasion presented itself for the playing of it, leading to pre-programming, even skeleton arrangements, with certain rather hackneyed numbers occurring more often than many of the players would prefer, "by popular request". Worse, the business, if it prospered, could make demands on the time, energy and even musical stamina of some of the musicians which they might find it difficult to tolerate. Personnel changes would become unavoidable. Group dynamics would change. The jazz would change. Where would it all end?

It would be stretching credulity too far if we continued to use this purely hypothetical group as a paradigm for the difficulties and dilemmas encountered by jazz musicians in the real world when they follow the well-trodden path which leads from playing for pleasure in private to playing for pleasure in public, and then, dear oh dear, to playing in public for profit. We have followed them far enough to get a taste of the tensions which exist between the jazz idiom, the jazz method and the jazz business and we can develop these themes later. For the present, let us return to the pristine purity of that first session of our Hypothetical Jazz Band (as we shall call them) and contemplate the amazing phenomenon it presents.

It is surely one of the wonders of the twentieth century musical world that these eight complete strangers, who come from different countries, speak different languages and play different instruments, are able to get together and unhesitatingly produce such coherent, articulate and lucid (not to say disturbing and exciting) music by collective improvisation in the jazz idiom. How on earth do they do it? And how did it come about that they can do it? These are the kinds of questions we will be considering in subsequent chapters as we look into the how?, why? and what? of jazz, rather than the who?, where? and when? of it - there being more than enough books already about these latter.

CHAPTER TWO. (How is it done?)

Although our Hypothetical Jazz Band proved to be rather unsuitable as a paradigm when transposed from the private into the public domain, there is nothing to prevent us from continuing to use it now to explore the question of how jazz music is actually made. Theirs was, after all, that astonishing feat of apparently spontaneous musical combustion which, as originally conceived, offers as pure a specimen of collective improvisation in the jazz idiom as we are likely to find. On closer inspection, however, this performance will turn out to have been not quite as extemporaneous as it seemed, because, even though the eight musicians had never met before, their meeting would have been much less fruitful without the amount of individual preparation which all of them, without exception, had undergone beforehand.

The groundwork began with each of them mastering his instrument to the necessary extent. Jazz musicians are no different from other musicians in this respect, and their way of learning to play an instrument to a required degree of proficiency is the same - by practice, more practice and still more practice. It is not impossible for a dedicated individual to achieve an adequate initial standard of jazz performance by simply shutting himself away in a room with nothing but his chosen instrument and a collection of gramophone records, in order to practice for a very long time. Such a one may finally emerge to astonish any friends he still has left by "sitting in" or "guesting with" some hospitable established jazz band and acquitting himself honourably in a couple of the numbers he has learned to play well enough to do so. He may even go on, playing entirely by ear, to become a well-established and widely-respected jazzman with an extensive repertoire of tunes in his head and an enviable facility for learning new ones.

Most jazz musicians, however, follow the more conventional path of learning to play their instruments and read music at the same time, usually under some form of tuition. They become musicians first, and jazz musicians second, even though their ultimate goal, when they started to learn, may have been to play jazz. There is no way of proving it, but it is probably true to say that, all other things being equal (such as natural talent and dedication), the investment of identical amounts of time and effort in the two methods will produce better results in the second. Nor is there any evidence to indicate that jazzmen who cannot read music learn to play better jazz than jazzmen who can. Or that a greater proportion of either who start out to learn to play jazz, succeed in the end. On the other hand, a jazzman, who can read music, will always have some advantages over one who cannot, as we shall see.

One way or another, then, all the members of our Hypothetical Jazz Band would have mastered their instruments well enough to enable them to take the next important step of joining some kind of local jazz band, and this would have been when, where and how their formal preparation for playing in the HJB took place. Bearing in mind that the session we witnessed occurred sometime after 1935, it can be taken as a near certainty that any local group these musicians joined for the purposes of playing jazz would bear more than just a passing resemblance to our Hypothetical Jazz Band itself. By that time, the ability to make jazz music had spread from the source of its original conception in the USA to most of the other developed countries in the world. We shall be looking into why and how this happened later, but, for our present purposes, let us accept the dissemination of jazz to many different countries as a fait accompli and focus

rather on those common denominators of idiom and method which had been established in those countries by then.

The species of music eventually called jazz that was born of such very mixed parentage in the southern states of the USA before World War One, had, by World War Two, evolved and diversified in a number of quite remarkable ways, and although these matters will also be dealt with in greater detail in later chapters, certain aspects of them can be touched on here for our present purposes. Innovation and marketing in an ever-expanding jazz industry produced, as we shall see, sub-species and hybrids of the medium which, while speaking a similar language, bore little physical resemblance to their humble progenitor. But the original strain survived, being far too well adapted to its environment (and too attractive to musicians) to be in any danger of extinction, and it, too, developed. It was all very haphazard, of course, but the development here was in the direction of simply refining the basic language. This was done, largely by improving instrumental techniques, and thus extending the musical vocabulary, as it were, while retaining the original grammar and syntax, but it also involved exploring the possibilities opened up by the jazz method - collective improvisation, in particular.

Not surprisingly, it was found that, in practice, collective improvisation imposed fairly strict limits on the numbers of musicians who could play together at any one time without getting in each other's way. It also placed restrictions on the style or manner in which they could play when they were all playing together. There are no prizes for guessing that the eight instruments played by our Hypothetical Jazz Band - clarinet, trumpet, tenor sax, trombone, piano, guitar, string bass and drums - proved to be just about as far as numbers and diversity of instrumentation could be pushed without requiring some degree of pre-arranged orchestration. As for the style or manner in which the jazz was played, this was thought to be so closely related to the historical prototype that it was named after the original source, below the Mason-Dixon line, in dear old Dixieland. It has to be said, however, that, although the line from ancestor to descendent was clearly traceable, they resembled each other about as closely as did, say, the Hollywood Western of the same period and the original Wild West of the previous century.

By the end of the '30s, the Dixieland jazz style had been refined and disseminated to such an extent that it had become established, in effect, as an international musical convention in which the jazz idiom and the jazz method had reached a point of perfect balance. On the one hand, there was the Dixieland octet as the optimum number and instrumentation for collective improvisation in the jazz idiom and, on the other, the Dixieland style providing the "compositional rules" to be observed by the members of the octet when they improvised together - indeed, the only coherent and cogent musical language available to such a relatively large number of different instruments when playing as an ensemble. Other styles of collective improvisation were possible with smaller groups, of course, but where two or more front line instruments were involved in improvising together, the conventions of the Dixieland style could not but apply if confusion was to be avoided.

Thus, our eight musicians had all played jazz in the Dixieland style (or convention) before they met, and each was fully conversant with the part he had to play in the new whole - not unlike the members of a scratch football team who have all occupied their given positions many times before in other teams. No wonder our Hypothetical Jazz Band was able to put the ensemble together so confidently after only four beats in. But that still leaves the apparent wizardry of the improvisation involved in each individual contribution. How

difficult is that? On the face of it, each musician appears to be playing, composing as he goes, his own free variation or decoration on the original melody without once clashing or conflicting with anything the others may be playing at the time. Surely it must require a great natural talent, and a lot of experience, to be able to launch oneself so confidently into such a free-flying, open-ended situation as that - composing and playing simultaneously at high speed without once losing sight of the original theme with which the newly invented melody line must, at all times, be compatible? Well, it may not be easy, but neither is it quite as death-defyingly difficult as it appears.

To begin with, there are a number of elements in each foray into collective improvisation, which are rigidly fixed. In agreeing to play the tune called Sweet Georgia Brown in the key of A flat, or four flats, the members of our Hypothetical Jazz Band accepted, in addition to the melody and the key signature, a number of quite significant constraints on their individual freedom of expression. First, they accepted the tune's time signature - 4/4 time, or four beats in a bar; then they agreed the tempo, or speed, at which those four beats in a bar would proceed - these would remain unchanged for the duration of the number, as it is usually called. They also accepted the 4 x 8 = 32 bar length of the tune, of course, but, most important of all, they accepted the harmonic sequence underlying the melody which would normally be referred to by them as the chords. In music, a chord is defined as something which occurs when two or more different notes are sounded together, but, for jazz musicians, the chords of any tune which they propose to use as a vehicle for collective improvisation in the jazz idiom are a convenient and simple means of conveying information which is vital to their purpose. To them, the chords for Sweet Georgia Brown (transposed into the key of C to make the subsequent explanation easier for the uninitiated to follow) look like this:

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(1) [A]::A7///:A7///:A7///:A7///:D7///:D7///:D7///:D7///:
(2) [B] :G7///:G7///:G7///:G7///:C ///:G7///:C///:E7///:
(3) [A] :A7///:A7///:A7///:A7///:D7///:D7///:D7///:D7///;
(4) [C] :Am///:E7///:Am///:E7///:C///:E7/A7/:D7/G7/:C///:
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These are chord symbols and they form a simple code which, once understood, is a much more compact and convenient way of conveying the essential information about the tune Sweet Georgia Brown than by using the traditional notation to express the melody and its underlying harmonies on the five lines and four spaces of the musical staff. Going back to the Hypothetical Jazz Band for a moment: apart from the trumpet player, who would have to be familiar with the melody of the piece in order to play the first chorus, the above chord sequence is all that the musicians would need to know about the tune in order to make their own individual contributions - and the drummer, of course, not even that! For the full significance of chord symbols in jazz to be properly appreciated, some technical exposition is unavoidable but it need not be lengthy, nor need it be too complicated for the musically untrained reader to follow. If, however, this turns out to have been an over-optimistic assumption, the rest of this chapter, except for those paragraphs marked with an asterisk (*), can be skipped without serious loss.

2

Starting from middle C on a piano keyboard, the white keys in ascending order are designated C, D, E, F, G, A, B and top C, and constitute the scale of C major. There are black keys between C and D, D and E, F and G, G and A, and A and B, but none between E and F, or B and C. Since there is a half tone (or semitone) rise in the pitch of the sound between each piano key, whether black or white, this means that there are whole tones between C and D, D and E, F and

G, G and A, A and B, but only semitones between E and F, B and C. This particular sequence of intervals is called the diatonic scale and has been the basis of virtually all Western music since the Middle Ages. This scale may take any of the 11 notes between C and B as its starting point, or keynote, or tonic, provided that the sequence of semitone intervals remains the same -

2,2,1,2,2,2,1. The interval between low C and top C is called an octave, or an eighth; the interval between C and D is called a second, between C and E, a third, between C and F a fourth, and so on. The semitones outside this scale are expressed by using sharps (#) or flats (b). So the full, or chromatic, scale is: C, C#, D, D#, E, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, C; or C, Db, D, Eb, E, F, Gb, G, Ab, A, Bb, B, C;

and the diatonic scales of, for example, D major (two sharps) is:

D, E, F#, G, A, B, C#, D - and of Bb major (two flats): Bb, C, D, Eb, F, G, A, Bb.

The chord symbol C indicates the C major chord of C, E, G. The space between C and E is called a major third because it consists of two whole tones (four half tones), but the space between E and G is called a minor third, being only one and a half tones or three half tones. The symbol Cm indicates the C minor chord of C, Eb and G, made up of a minor third plus a major third. The symbol C7 stands for a C seventh chord of C, E, G and Bb - that's a major third, a minor third and another minor third (strictly speaking, this chord should be called a minor seventh since the true seventh of C is B, but it never is, because that term is reserved for the C minor seventh which is written Cm7 and consists of C, Eb, G, Bb). Viewed objectively, this chord (C7) contains a discord, since Bb and C are only one whole tone apart (a second), and when these two notes are played together they sound disharmonious, unlike C and E or even C and Eb which sound harmonious. This makes the seventh chord sound rather unstable, as if wishing to settle on (or resolve into) a better harmony. It is in the nature of the chord C7 to move towards the chord (and the key) of F major, but that need not concern us just yet.

Looking back, now, at the chords for Sweet Georgia Brown, we see that the first four bars of the tune are in some way carried by, or contained in, the chord of A7 for four beats (/) in a bar. What this means is that the piano, guitar and string bass are playing some version, or inversion, of that chord (which consists of A, C sharp, E and G), four beats in a bar, for four bars. It also means that any melody line played above that chord which is made up of only those four notes strung together in any of the very many sequences which are possible, will sound, if not exactly inspired, at least unexceptionable. It will fit. This, in fact, is how the true melody of Sweet Georgia Brown is constructed. The first four bars of it go:

A. B. C#. A. E. C#. F#. E. top A/ E. C#. A///

In the tune, all but two of these notes are crochets (having a time value of one beat), and all but the two underlined are contained in the simple major chord of A. The seventh above A (G) is not used in the tune at this stage, but the second above A (B) and the sixth above A (F sharp) are used as linking, or passing notes. Similarly, the second four bar stanza is carried by the chord of D7, which is D, F sharp, A, C. The melody continues:

A. B. C. A. E. C. F#. E. top A/ F#. E. D///

This has the same rhythmic shape as the first phrase, and still uses only two notes which are not in the chord. Again these are the second above D (E) and the sixth above D (B), but, this time, the seventh (C) is used.

The third four bar stanza is carried by the chord of G7, which is G.B.D.F. The melody once again follows the same pattern:

G. A. B. G. D. B. E. D. top G/ D. B. G///

Once again, there are only two notes not in the chord - the second above G (A) and the sixth above G (E). The final four bars of the first half of the tune have only one chord to each bar. Number one is C major (C, E, G), number two is G7, number three is C major again, and number four is E7 (E, G#, B, D). The melody here consists of a short two bar phrase, which is repeated using the notes G and A when the chord is C, and E when the chords are G7 and E7. A is the sixth above C, and E the sixth above G. Then, in the same way that C7 leads, or modulates, into F, so E7 leads back into A and to the beginning of the second half of the tune. In fact, as will now be evident, the whole tune is based on these modulations, starting in A7, which leads into D7, which leads into G7 which finally leads into the tonic C. This is what makes the tune so interesting and attractive to jazz musicians. Simple though it is, it is quite unusual for a tune in the key of C to kick off with an A major chord.

* We do not need to analyse Sweet Georgia Brown any further to make the point that any musician who has (a) mastered his instrument and (b) knows the chord sequence underlying the tune, and (c) of what notes those chords consist, will be able to fashion some kind of variation on the original melody by stringing those notes together in as felicitous a manner as possible. There is, of course, much more to it than that. Fluency has to be acquired in the jazz idiom, then there is the voicing, the phrasing, the construction, the architecture which the experienced jazz musician will bring to each variation on the original theme when simultaneously composing and playing it. But the essence of it is in the chords, and knowing the chords - if not by name and by rote, then by feel.

* Just as there are jazz musicians who never learn to read music, so are there many more who never learn to read chords, and, just as it is not necessary to read music to play good jazz, so may it be considered even less essential to be able to read chords. Nevertheless, for reasons, which are, I hope, by now obvious, an ambition to play nothing but jazz would be better served by learning to read chord symbols rather than notes. But reading both is best. No. Correction. Reading both and feeling both is best. It is given to certain gifted individuals not only to read dots and chords but also to feel them as well. These people can listen to a tune and, without hesitation, write it down in the correct key on the staff, filling in the chord symbols underneath as they go. To such people, once they have mastered an instrument and the idiom, the playing of jazz comes just as naturally as breathing. As it does, of course, to those others who are gifted enough to be able to feel the notes and the chords of a new tune with pinpoint accuracy, but, never having learned to put a name to them, are unable to give us anything but their own song.

* The vast majority of jazz musicians, however, fall outside these two minorities and rely, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on their individual gifts, on learning the chords of a tune, even learning how to read them, in order to be able to improvise around them. In fact, most of them begin with the melody and learn how to improvise around that before finding their way to the chords. It can be a long and arduous process involving a great deal of solitary experimentation, called "wood-shedding" in the trade, during which the aspirant goes over and over the tune, exploring its possibilities and working his way towards his own original set of variations on it, which he will then commit to memory before venturing to try them out in whatever jazz ensemble he may be fortunate enough to have access to. And this has to be done with every tune at first, unless and until he learns either to recognise (by ear) or to

read (by eye) the chords of unfamiliar tunes and thus acquire the ability to improvise around them without prior research.

* Not all the tunes, which jazz musicians play are as simple as Sweet Georgia Brown but, for obvious reasons, a lot of them are even simpler - although few of them "spell out" quite so precisely in the melody the separate notes of the underlying chords. Learning to play jazz is like learning any other craft, one has to start with the simple things before moving on to the more complicated ones, and even a group of experienced jazz musicians, when meeting together for the first time, as in our Hypothetical Jazz Band, will tend to choose the simpler tunes to begin with - just to be on the safe side. And there is more to constructing a variation on a tune, no matter how basic the original, than simply re-arranging the notes of the chords in a different sequence. Even a melody which sticks so obligingly to the notes of the underlying chord sequence as does Sweet Georgia Brown, contains, as we have seen, a few "wild" notes (mostly seconds and sixths), so it is not surprising that, when elaborating their individual variations on it, jazz musicians should find it necessary also to make use of notes which lie outside the chord for decorative effect. This, after all, is where the skill comes in. But, which notes can they use and how can they use them? To answer these questions requires another brief plunge into technicalities.

Staying, for simplicity's sake, with the key of C major, we have already seen that the chord symbolised by C is made up of C, E and G, that the chord C7 adds a Bb to this, and that the chord Cm substitutes an Eb for an E. We must now meet two other chords which are widely used in jazz: the first is C sixth (C6) which is made up of the C chord with a sixth instead of a fifth, i.e, C, E, (G), A. The other chord is C ninth (C9) which adds a major third to C7, as follows, C, E, G, Bb, D. D is an interval of a second above C and it will be recalled that, in Sweet Georgia Brown the most commonly occurring passing notes in the melody were the second and the sixth above the tonic of the underlying chords. This indicates that, when improvising around the chords of C and C7 the sixth and the second respectively can often be used with impunity as passing notes. Similarly with the minor third, Eb, which can always be slipped in as a passing note in major chords. There are also chords Cm6 and Cm7 - the interesting thing here is that Cm6 (C Eb G A) is virtually interchangeable, for improvisational purposes, with F9 (F A C Eb A) and the chord of C6 (C,E,G,A) is similarly related to that of Am7 (A,C,E,G).

Two other important chords, which occur regularly in jazz are C diminished - usually written Co or C dim - and C augmented - usually written C+ or C aug. The more common of these, C dim, consists of C, Eb, Gb, and is made up of two minor thirds, one on top of the other. C dim is an unstable or transitional chord which is often used by song writers (and so by improvisers) to "turn round" the chord sequence by taking a C chord through C dim to G7 (the Gb sliding easily up into G) and, thence, back to C again, as in C,Cdim,G7,C. On the other hand, C+, which consists of C,E,G#, two major thirds, is used to move sideways into C, as it were, (rather than down into Ab) from the relatively remote Eb7 by sliding from the G#(Ab) to G, the fifth above C in the sequence Eb7: C+: C. This chord often occurs as a C augmented seventh written Caug7 or C7+ or C7+5, made up of C,E,G#,Bflat, in which case it tends to move, more conventionally, into F, but from the chord of Ab rather than the more usual G7, to wit, Ab, C7+, F.

Finally, there is the chord of C major seventh, written Cmaj7, and consisting of C,E,G,B - that's a major third, a minor third and a major third (hence the name). This is a most interesting configuration in that B is only a semitone

away from C and the two notes played together are undeniably discordant. Yet, a number of the most attractive tunes in jazz rely for their appeal on this juxtaposition of tonic and seventh to produce a "blue note" effect in the melody line which is happily seized upon by jazz musicians when improvising around it. Cmaj7 really belongs in the same group as C6 and C9, chords which "thicken up" the harmony by adding one extra note to an existing common chord - and it often occurs in alternating sequence with C6. But we are not concerned, here, with the vast subject of chord sequences, but attempting only to shed some light on the options open to a jazz musician when he is constructing a variation on a simple melody like Sweet Georgia Brown when it runs for as long as four bars at a time over a chord such as C7.

To this end, having now enumerated what might be called the common or standard C chords, we can see that, when presented with the basic C major triad of C,E,G, the following notes are probably safe to use as passing notes at all times: D (from C9), E flat (from Cm), A (from C6) and B flat (from C7); and that the following are probably safe to use as passing notes at certain times: G flat (from C dim), G# (from C+) and B (from Cmaj7). From the full chromatic scale of C, this leaves only C# and F unaccounted for, and of these C# can often be squeezed in, as a passing note, between C and D, leaving only F, which, as the fourth of C, is, frankly, best avoided. It may seem odd that F, the tonic of the key into which the chord of C7 naturally modulates, should be so incompatible with the harmonics of the key of C but that's the way it is. This is not a treatise on harmony but merely an attempt to explain, as simply as possible, how jazz musicians use their knowledge of its underlying chords to fashion variations on a given theme.

* Nothing is more indicative of the importance to the improvising jazz musician of the chord sequence underlying the chosen tune than the fact that the single most important vehicle for the making of jazz, since its appearance on the world stage, has been, not a tune, but a simple chord sequence. This phenomenon is, of course, The Blues, most commonly manifesting itself as the twelve-bar blues, which emerged, as we shall see, from the mists of time as an indigenous folk music to make its unique and massive contribution to the development of both the jazz idiom and the jazz method. But, for all the riches which have been mined from it, for all the hundreds of melodies which have been played and sung to it, the basic twelve bar blues remains today the almost childishly simple chord sequence it has always been:

C///,////,////,C7///,F///,////,C///,////,G7///,////,C///,////:

The most noteworthy feature of this chord sequence, given the familiar tragic burden of the blues (the blueness of the blues, as it were) is that it contains no minor chords. The characteristic "blue notes" in a blues melody line are achieved by juxtaposing minor thirds and sevenths on the common major chord. The best way of demonstrating this would be to play the following notes, in sequence, on a piano:

(up) C, D, Eflat, E, G, A, Bb, (down) Bb, A, G, Eb, E, G, C, and think of this as the jazz scale of C. It contains the two most common blue notes (in the C scale) of Eb and Bb and is recognisably a jazz cliché. But all jazz musicians, when they begin to learn to improvise, rely heavily on clichés - in fact, there is an extent to which all jazz is made up of clichés. What counts is how those clichés are strung together.

* In the end, the aspiring jazz musician's biggest single advantage is to be found in the very fact that he is "making it up as he goes along". Not having to play what some other musician has written down for him means that he can stay

always within his own technical limitations - provided that he can cope with the underlying chords of whatever tune he has elected to embroider. The corollary of this is that the aspiring jazz musician has to be careful to avoid getting out of his depth in the company of those whose pleasure it is to play around with tunes he is either not familiar with or which are written over chords of a greater complexity than he has, as yet, learned to cope with.

To this end, let us remind ourselves that not all the tunes around which jazz musicians choose to improvise are as straightforward as Sweet Georgia Brown. Here, for example, are the chords for another well-known song, quite popular with jazzmen, called "Tea for Two" [music Vincent Youmans, words Irving Caesar, 1924]:

- (1)[A] :: Bbm7/Eb7/: Bbm7/Eb7/: Abmaj7/Ab6/: Abmaj7/Ab6/: Bbm7/Eb7/:
Bbm7/Eb7/: Ab/Ab6/: Ab/Ab6/:
- (2)[B] Dm7/G7/: Dm7/G7/: Cmaj7/C6/: Cmaj7/C6/: Dm7/G7/: Dm7/G7/:
C///, Eb7///:
- (3)[A] Bbm7/Eb7/: Bbm7/Eb7/: Abmaj7/Ab6/: Abmaj7/Ab6/: Bbm7/Eb7/:
Bbm7/Eb7/: Cdim7///: F7///:
- (4)[C] Bbm/Cdim7/: F7///: Cdim/Bbm/: Dbm///: Ab/G/: Eb9/Eb7/: Ab///:
Ab///::

These quite complex chords underpin a very simple melody which can easily be picked out with two fingers on the piano as a simplified succession of crotchets, as follows :

- (1)[A] Ab, F, G, F; Ab, F, G, F; G, Eb, F, Eb; G, Eb, F, Eb; Ab, F, G, F; Ab, F, G, F;
C/// ////;
- (2)[B] C, A, B, A; C, A, B, A; B, G, A, G; B, G, A, G; C, A, B, A; C, A, B, A;
E///: ////:
- (3)[A] Ab, F, G, F; Ab, F, G, F; G, Eb, F, Eb; G, Eb, F, Eb; Ab, F, G, F; Ab, F, G, F;
lEb///l///ll
- (4)[C] F, F, Eb, Eb; D, D, C, C; Eb, Eb, D, D; C, C, Bb, Bb; Ab, F, G, F; Ab, F, G, C;
;Ab///: ////:

The deceptive simplicity of this fine old song has lured many a budding jazzman out of his depth, leaving his brave attempt to construct a suitably coherent variation on the melody floundering ignominiously among the rapidly shifting harmonies. And "Tea for Two" is by no means the most disconcerting of the many apparently easy tunes in the standard jazz repertoire, as we shall eventually see.

3

Since we are dealing here (however superficially) with technical matters, we should, for the sake of completeness, touch on the question of key signatures and their relevance to collective improvisation in the jazz idiom. We have seen that an eight note diatonic scale can be constructed by taking any of the twelve notes in the chromatic scale from C up to B as a starting point, and that it depends on the starting note as to how many sharpened notes, or sharps, or flattened notes, or flats occur in the scale. The scale of C has no sharps or flats, the scale of F, one flat (Bb), the scale of G, one sharp (F#), and so on, until the scale of C# is reached with its seven sharps. Generally speaking, the more remote keys, as they are called, are more difficult to master, and musicians, therefore, learn to play in the simple keys before progressing to the remoter ones.

The matter is made more complicated by the mechanics of the wind instruments in the front line of a jazz band, each one of which has been constructed to take account of the fact that the basic pitch of the instrument is dictated by the

length of the closed "tube" in each case. Other notes are created by, either opening holes in the tube with the fingers of both hands (in the case of the reeds - sax and clarinet), or adding and subtracting extra lengths to the tube with the fingers of one hand (in the case of the brass - trumpet and trombone). This means that wind instruments are made in a specific key, and that the scales of all the other keys have to be arrived at by using more complicated manoeuvres than those required for this basic key. It follows from this that the more remote the key from the basic key, the more physically difficult it is for the instrument to perform in.

In earlier times, before the versatility of these instruments had been extended by the addition of extra holes covered by moveable pads, or extra lengths of tube operated by valves, this difficulty was to a certain extent overcome by making the same instrument in different keys (flat keys and sharp keys) in order to make the remoter keys easier to tackle, but nowadays we are left, to all intents and purposes, with the clarinet, tenor sax, trumpet and trombone all pitched in the key of Bb, or two flats. This means that, when the keyboard, guitar and bass of the rhythm section are playing in the key of Bb, the front line are playing in what to them is the easier key of C, and that music written for Bb instruments has to be transposed up a whole tone from the concert pitch. It also means, of course, that tunes written in C concert are played by the front line in D, or two sharps, and that the relatively simple, and very common key of G concert (one sharp) becomes the key of A (three sharps) for the front line.

To get to the point. What all this adds up to is that, given his need for maximum fluency when improvising around a selected theme (or chord sequence), there is a natural tendency for the budding front line jazz musician initially to favour tunes in easier concert pitch keys like Bb (two flats), F (one flat) and Eb (three flats - which put him in C, G (one sharp) and F - and to progress painfully, if at all, to the keys of C, Ab (four flats), and G, which put the front line in D (two sharps), Bb, and A (three sharps), respectively. Virtually all the popular songs which form the basis of the jazz repertoire are written in these six keys (largely for the benefit of the vocalist) but there is a strong tendency for tunes in Ab and G to be taken in Bb and F by less experienced groups. This is another reason for the aspiring beginner to be careful of the company he keeps.

* This chapter disposes of the only questions about jazz, which require the use of technical terms to answer.

CHAPTER THREE (Why is it done?)

Information about the origins and development of jazz - where it was born, when it was born, who played what, where and when - is readily available from the many works of reference on the subject. These are matters, after all, of fairly recent history which it is now considered quite respectable to study in universities. But to understand why jazz came along just when it did, and how it spread so far, so fast (filling, as it so obviously did, some widely felt but hitherto unsatisfied need), it will be necessary to look beyond the confines of jazz itself into that larger world of music from which jazz is derived, and of which it is still inescapably a part, in order to examine the circumstances prevailing there before jazz came along. And although we shall be looking for predisposing factors of a specific nature, we should, in passing, note that the underlying implication of our search must be the more general proposition (unwelcome though it may be to some) that a proper understanding and appreciation of jazz music is not possible without some understanding, and even appreciation of, all that music which is not jazz.

To help us with our investigation, let us refer back once again to our Hypothetical Jazz Band and remind ourselves that, not only did its eight musicians play different instruments, hail from different countries, speak, for the most part, different languages, and come from different walks of life, but they also earned their livings in different ways, none of them as a professional musician. It may turn out to have been the most significant fact about them that they were all simply amateurs, playing jazz, as much for pleasure and relaxation, as for profit, outside their normal daily round as breadwinners.

The histories of music have little to say about amateur musicians, even though it is probable that they have always outnumbered the professionals - to an ever increasing extent as the spreading affluence of the last two centuries has provided growing numbers of individuals, up and down the social scale, with both the money to buy musical instruments and the leisure time in which to learn to play them. Not only that, but the same socio-economic forces which produced all these amateur musicians, has also arranged for their burgeoning numbers to be concentrated into the relatively small urban areas of the rapidly developing towns and cities, making it easy for them to meet and play together, on a regular basis, in various combinations.

What kind of music were these amateur musicians playing in the first decade of the twentieth century, when jazz came along? And why were they playing it at all? Taking the second question first: the motivation of amateur musicians is no different from that of other amateur performers - they do it, first, for their own satisfaction, second, for the approval of their fellow musicians, and, third, for the admiration of anyone who will come and listen to them. It is a many-layered experience which achieves its apotheosis of pleasure only when all three objectives are met, particularly if the resulting sense of achievement is unalloyed by feelings of inferiority towards comparable professional standards of performance. It follows that, within these parameters, they would play the kind of music they enjoyed playing with others of a similar inclination, and for which there was some kind of public demand, and that this latter would coincide, for the most part, with what the professional musicians were playing at the time.

The market for music in the Western World at the turn of the century reflected the increasing complexity of society by exhibiting a number of apparently different strands - interweaving, branching, merging and separating. But, although difficult to categorise objectively, using terms such as high-brow, middle-brow and low-brow, or classical and popular, or concert hall, music hall and dance hall, these widely different types of music had two things in common - they were all predominantly urban in character, and all manufactured and marketed by an international music industry which, like so many other industries at the time, was increasing in size, and developing its innovation and marketing skills to promote and keep pace with the demand for its wares.

Outside the urban marketplace, however, an older type of music persisted which was resistant to commercial development and exploitation. This was folk music. Handed down from generation to generation without the benefit of professional middlemen, it exhibited a number of characteristics, which were not shared by the rapidly evolving polymorphic music of the urban mainstream. For a start, it eschewed innovation, and had no need of marketing. The whole point about folk music was that it was traditional, functional and, above all, amateur.

Traditional, in that it was transmitted relatively unchanged, orally and aurally, from the past; functional, in that it was performed on specific occasions such as christenings, weddings, funerals, festivals and celebrations of all kinds; and amateur, in that the performers were, almost invariably, ordinary members of the community who, between functions, earned their livings in other ways. Folk music was also, of course, participatory, in that, these being social occasions involving either singing, dancing or marching, everybody was encouraged to join in. And, although the forms in which the music was handed down were traditional, they often left plenty of scope for interpretation, decoration, and even improvisation, by the individual performer.

Most, if not all, of these characteristics are common to folk music the world over (in spite of the many different guises in which it appears) but, underneath the idiosyncratic surfaces of its wide spectrum of melodic, harmonic and rhythmic conventions, another similarity can be discerned. There is an important property of music, which cannot be adequately comprehended by the usual sub-division of its total aesthetic appeal into the composite elements of melody, harmony and rhythm. This is best described, perhaps, as the incantatory effect, and it is something else about which the history books are largely silent - probably because it is more of a psychosomatic than an aesthetic phenomenon.

The incantatory effect is produced by any music, which is unvarying in beat, unchanging in tempo, melodically repetitive, harmonically simple...and loud enough to screen out other distracting sounds. The steady, insistent pulse is probably the most important element in inducing what is, in effect, a mild hypnosis in listeners who will almost invariably be participants in some form of concurrent communal activity such as dancing, marching, or worshipping together in time to the music. It should not be difficult to recognise certain aspects of any folk music played anywhere in the world in this description. The incantatory effect can be produced by the simplest of musical and instrumental means, and this has the additional benefit of enabling amateur musicians, not only to cope with it, but to go on playing it for far longer than would be possible if the music was more demanding, physically and mentally, and less narcotic.

It is reasonable to assume that, wherever, whenever, and however music originated in the distant past, it began life as a form of folk music chanted by

human voices and played on the most primitive of percussion instruments, and that an early recognition of the hypnotic power of the incantatory effect played a not unimportant part in its early appeal. Once invoked, the rapid incorporation of this magic into religious ceremonies would be a foregone conclusion - it is difficult to imagine the rituals of primitive religion unaccompanied by the musical paraphernalia needed to produce the incantatory effect. The evidence of the mythological record indicates that the two were inextricably linked, and that music was seen as a gift of the gods to a significantly greater extent than were the other arts. The harnessing of this apparently supernatural power to whatever war machine the government of the day could muster would follow as a matter of course, and armies have been marching into battle to the insistent beat of drums reinforced by the frequent repetition of simple musical phrases on pipes and horns of various kinds, ever since.

The mysterious primeval power of the incantatory effect of music should not be exaggerated, however. Like hypnosis, it is a relatively weak force, which, whatever the occasion - whether social, sacred or state - achieves its optimum effect with the help of a certain amount of co-operation on the part of the subjects. Bear in mind also that it is often accompanied by fairly vigorous and prolonged physical activity, such as dancing, marching or chanting, which, by raising the metabolic rate, leads, as we now know, to the production in the human body of endogenous morphine-like substances called endorphins. It is the combined effect of the two "drugs" which produces the mildly trancelike state in the subject, and renders what an uninvolved onlooker might see as meaninglessly repetitive, and even boring, activity not only endurable but also quite enjoyable for long periods of time. That, plus the transcendental nature of an experience, which almost invariably involves a number of people acting simultaneously and surrendering their individual identities to the collective emotional sovereignty of a group.

Even the uninvolved onlooker is unlikely to remain uninvolved for long. The incantatory effect of music may be a relatively weak force, but it is very difficult to ignore. Depending on the volume of sound, the timescale of his exposure to it and the numbers of people involved in the activity, the uninvolved onlooker will eventually find himself compelled to make a choice between sympathy for, and antipathy towards, the effect the music is forcing upon him. If sympathetically disposed to it, he will allow himself to be invaded and enchanted by the incantatory effect, if only to the extent of nodding his head or twitching one or other of his extremities in time to the beat of the music. If unsympathetic, he will resist the spell without too much effort at first, but with a growing sense of irritation at the primitive intrusiveness of the beat and the melodic banality of the music, which will almost certainly urge him to distance himself from the source of it as soon as he can. Staying within earshot would oblige him to come to terms with the "attention leak" demanded by the music, to "tune in and turn on" to it with part of his mind, if only to allow the rest of his mind to be more constructively engaged elsewhere.

In the beginning, then, folk music was the only music there was. It was produced by amateurs for singing, dancing and marching at special social gatherings - occasions which celebrated the secular, the sacred, the peaceful, and the warlike, as appropriate, and at which audience participation was not only invited but seen as the principal object of the exercise. It was a very long time before there evolved from these functional beginnings anything resembling concert music, defining this as music performed for a non-participatory audience by an assemblage of trained instrumentalists working from a musical score which has been composed and written down beforehand.

As Western civilisation emerged from the dark ages, musical historians are able to recognise the separate existence of folk music and church music and identify differences between the two as well as similarities. Apart from the fact that one was sacred and the other secular, church music was beginning to exhibit some of the characteristics of concert music. It was still functional in its objectives, being an integral part of religious ceremonial, but the monks who performed it were already semi-professionals in that some of the music could involve ensemble singing of sufficient complexity to ensure the need for a written score plus, of course, the ability to read it and the time to rehearse, while the other worshippers, precluded by these demands from joining in, assumed the role of a passive audience. On the other hand, not all church music was the exclusive preserve of the monks, and there is evidence that the same tunes were used in both sacred and secular contexts, with different words, and, no doubt, a less inhibited performance in the latter case.

It is to the royal courts that we must look for the true origins of concert music. Although the music of the post-medieval church continued to develop in richness and splendour, requiring more professionalism from its performers and less participation from the congregation, it was always a part of the ritual. The growing wealth of princes, however, and the amount of entertainment required to enhance their reputations for filling the leisure time of their guests and hangers-on agreeably, led to the hiring of musical servants to provide them with appropriate music for all manner of court occasions. A certain amount of this music continued to serve merely as an accompaniment to royal activities of special, but secular, significance - such as parades, processions and banquets - but the courtly predilection for singing and dancing coupled with a lively appetite for theatricals and for novelties of all kinds gave the royal musician both the opportunity to develop his technical skills and the incentive to enlarge the range of their application.

People have been sitting quietly in large numbers listening to bands of actors playing with words for far longer than audiences have been giving the same undivided attention to bands of musicians playing with sounds. This is not surprising given that words are the common currency of human communication and music is not. A couple of thousand adults sitting motionless and in perfect silence for long periods of time listening to a group of musicians performing instrumental music from the written score is something we take for granted nowadays, but the spectacle would have astonished our forbears of three centuries ago. The orchestral concert, in its earliest manifestation as a new form of entertainment, simply pulled together the threads of functional instrumental music from a number of existing sources. From the church, where instrumental interludes between the liturgical elements of the ritual had become common in the wealthier metropolitan establishments; from the theatre, where the musical accompaniment to songs and mime had been extended to become overtures and instrumental interludes; and from the parades, processions and dances of the court where the evolving technical expertise of the servant/musicians had been developing and embroidering the music to an extent which made it interesting in its own right.

Let us pause here and examine this concert music as it emerged in the seventeenth century, before it began its irresistible evolution into the phenomenon confronting us at the turn of the twentieth century. The first thing to note is that the ages-long primacy of the singing human voice was drawing to a close as musical instruments of various kinds developed in audibility, range, versatility and reliability, and that it was the production and development of these instruments by a nascent music industry which made all else possible.

Note also that many of these instruments were now being grouped together in consorts, or sections, as we would call them. This major step significantly reduced, and finally put an end to, the possibilities for improvisation, which had hitherto been open to bands of musicians where each played a different instrument. From now on, the music would have to be written down in ways which could be understood by all musicians and, to this end, conventions would have to be agreed. Thus, a music publishing industry became possible, composers could earn fame and fortune from their work, and orchestras were free to grow in size.

There enters, at this point, also, the fully professional musician. Not only a virtuoso instrumentalist, but also a composer, conductor and leader of the orchestra - a master craftsman, in fact, and, also, a music manager, not unlike (for example) the estate manager, a rather superior servant of whatever institution it was that employed him, be it court or church, corporation or chapel. It seems likely, however, that, apart from these master music makers and a few gifted soloists, the mass of anonymous musicians who made up the orchestras were mostly, at this stage, amateurs still, or, at best, part-timers. There was little reason why they should not be, since the concert music they were playing was, by the standards of later years, relatively uncomplicated and the amount of it being written and performed unlikely to encourage a full-time commitment to it as a career on the part of many.

Although early concert music appears today to have a distinctive and easily recognisable style of its own, it was, at the time it was written, an experimental amalgam of the various elements of the functional music - folk, church and state - which had preceded it, and this ancestry is clearly discernible in those of its characteristics which are of particular interest to us here. Dance rhythms, for example, are very much in evidence, and a great deal of this music is written in the form of Suites made up of several pieces taken at contrasting speeds and differing rhythms based on popular dances of the time. Other movements are recognisably of a processional or march-like nature, and some are obviously chorales. More importantly, however, there was little variation of speed and rhythm within each separate component piece, so there was no need for an "interpretive" conductor of the modern type. In fact, the concertmaster usually ran the whole show from either the keyboard or the lead violin. Not only that, but it was still, at this stage, common practice for the keyboard accompaniment and even the bass line of the music to be improvised around what were, in effect, an early manifestation of the chord symbols we examined in the previous chapter.

Another noteworthy feature of the music was the prevalence of repeats or reprises. Whole sections of a piece would be marked by the composer to be played over twice, with some differences, where appropriate, in the closing bars of the repeat to take it on to a contrasting next section, which might be followed, even, by a further repeat of the first section. Apart from these essential markings, however, written indications about the composer's intentions with regard to speed, volume and expression were few and far between. The composer would, quite often, be overseeing, even participating in, the performance of his own work and well able to make his wishes clear to the rest of the performers, and the use of so many popular dance rhythms would be of considerable help when setting the pace. The music was thus repetitious and monorhythmic enough still to generate a palpable incantatory effect.

Although early concert music had much in common with the functional music from which it was, in such large part, derived (and which continued to be played and sung outside the palaces and concert halls), the early masters were able to erect, on this basic infrastructure, a music much richer in form and texture

than had been possible before. Texture, because they were free to write for various combinations of an increasing range of available instruments in both consort and counterpoint; form, because of their freedom to breach the constraints of their functional inheritance and write music in shapes and sequences which was entertaining and interesting in their own right.

Unsurprisingly, one of the most enduringly popular of the new forms to emerge was the Theme and Variations. What could be simpler - or, on the other hand, more complicated? What could be easier - or, at the same time, more difficult? The composer states a tune, melody or theme, repeats it a couple of times to make sure the listeners have identified it, and then proceeds to produce version after version of it, each one more ingeniously wrought than the last. The possibilities are infinite, and all the other available musical forms - from dances to fugues - can be used to create variations on the original theme. Not only have composers been attracted to this most basic of musical exercises, but instrumental virtuosi, of the keyboard in particular, have, through the centuries, entertained their fans by using extensive and apparently spontaneous improvisation on some familiar theme as an excuse for dazzling displays of their superior musical skills. There is nothing new about the improvisation of variations on a theme on a single instrument.

All in all, then, this was a music which was easy to listen to and undemanding to play (except for the occasional solo part, written with the abilities of a particular virtuoso in mind); a music produced to order, often for a specific social occasion and a given combination of instruments. A music written to please and even enchant an audience who would not consider it bad manners, if suitably bewitched, to tap their feet in time to the rhythm, hum along with the tunes, walk about, and even exchange pleasantries among themselves during the proceedings. A music, above all, which anyone with the time to spare, the means to make or acquire an instrument, a modicum of natural ability and a reasonable amount of application could learn to play sufficiently well to perform in public without too much pain to himself and others.

Taken simply as representative examples, the orchestral music of Antonio Vivaldi (1675-1741), Johan Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) and George Frederic Handel (1685-1759) provides ample evidence of the easy accessibility of this early concert music to untutored listeners and amateur performers. And let us not forget that the folk music and the church music from which this concert music had been so recently derived, continued vigorously to thrive in the experience of the same audiences and performers, outside the concert hall.

By the early years of the twentieth century, all this had changed almost beyond recognition. In the hands successively of composers like Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, Berlioz and Wagner, Liszt and Tchaikovsky, Debussy and Ravel, Mahler and Bruckner (to name but a few), concert music had evolved over two centuries in ways which put it increasingly beyond the reach of the amateur performer - and even the untutored listener. Technical innovation in the musical instrument industry made it possible for these composers to write music of such ever-increasing complexity that, in the end, it could be performed with any real competence only by highly trained musicians.

Orchestras got bigger, concert halls got bigger (and more numerous), audiences got bigger, and as the music became more complex, it also became more adventurous, both intellectually and emotionally. The search for greater extravagance of expression gave rise to the use of hitherto unheard of combinations of instrumental colours, and to a need for tempo or even time signature changes every few bars. These developments led to an inescapable

requirement for performances to be controlled by a professional music director or conductor; someone who had not necessarily written the music, and did not play in the band, but who was capable of, first making sense of the composer's score, and then imposing this vision on the orchestra by rehearsing them carefully beforehand and conducting them through the public performance - during which, incidentally, an audience of thousands would sit in frozen silence, concentrating entirely on the music, each individual locked into his own unique experience of the composer's thoughts as interpreted by the conductor through the orchestra.

For sound commercial reasons, these composers would, from time to time, turn aside from their major works to write smaller scale pieces more suitable for performance by small groups of amateurs. But these minor works - mainly for solo piano, voice and piano, violin and piano or chamber music combinations such as the string quartet - were still held to be "serious" music of undoubted genius to be performed with dedicated competence and listened to in respectful silence. This was still therefore concert music on a smaller scale, and although there was "popular" music of a distinctly non-serious nature to be found elsewhere, the respect in which concert music was held by the educated classes affected the manner in which all other kinds of music were written and performed right down the social scale.

As with the folk music, which still persisted in corners of the countryside remote from the ever-expanding conurbations, the heart of popular music lay in song and dance, and these, by the end of the nineteenth century, were to be found, almost exclusively, in theatres and ballrooms, respectively, in towns and cities (most of which also boasted concert halls and opera houses), where they were the almost exclusive province of the professional performer. The ballroom was still dominated by the all-conquering waltz and its relatives in three/four time, punctuated by an occasional novelty, like the military two-step, in a marching two/four time - unconscious harbinger of things to come! These dances were played by appropriately scaled down versions, depending on the money available, of the concert hall symphony orchestra, with strings predominating and the ubiquitous piano very much in evidence.

The popular songs, whistled and sung in workplace, street and home, came from the musical theatre, either operetta or pantomime, or, more commonly, and in an earthier vein, from the music hall. But, in spite of the vernacular lyrics, the musical language was all too obviously derived from the concert hall, often via the ballroom, and so, again, the instrumentation was that of the concert orchestra, with violin, piano and drums, played by full-time professionals, as the irreducible minimum. Popular music, as music, was oh so respectable - and this at a time when revolution and class war were in the air, and composers of concert music were straining every nerve to break with all the conventions.

So, what were the amateur musicians doing? Well, the middle class ones, whose parents had ensured that they were properly instructed from an early age (piano and violin, mostly), were playing their favourite pieces in each others' parlours at musical evenings (these being the days before gramophone, radio and television), or trying their hands at chamber music with like-minded friends in the privacy of their own homes, or even forming amateur concert orchestras to practice hard for months on end with the object of giving one performance of an imitation symphony concert which could hardly ever be mistaken for the real thing by the long-suffering families and friends who had been coerced into attending. The working class amateurs, starting later, and with less active encouragement from their parents (but, hence, more individual motivation and freedom of choice), found their way, not infrequently, into one of the many

brass bands that were sponsored by a variety of institutions (collieries, factories, mills, churches and chapels) for reasons of enlightened self-interest.

This brass band culture is worth a closer look. Unlike the amateur symphony orchestras, which could never be anything but a pale imitation of the real thing, brass bands were *sui generis*. They were a living part of the institutions and, hence, the communities sponsoring them, their instrumentation was (as the name implies) more uniform than that of the concert orchestra, favouring a closer integration of the ensemble and forging a stronger common bond between the players. They were much more adaptable to circumstances, in that they could perform, without difficulty, and with little loss of tone quality and balance, in the open air, even on the march, and although the music they played was couched in the language of the concert hall and they rarely played for dancing, their objectives were closer to those of folk or functional music than to concert music. They laboured together in order to be able to compete with other brass bands at national brass band contests, or to accompany the singing of hymns in the street services of the Salvation Army, or to lead the processions and marches that were such a feature of the civic and political scene, or simply to provide a euphonious and undemanding background to various routine social activities on high days and holidays in parks and at picnics where, however, nobody was expected to sit still and listen to them in silence. But their playing, whenever they did perform in public, was of a standard leaving little to be desired, being virtually professional when within their own repertoire.

Finally, we come to a category of musicians who were neither amateur nor professional in the accepted sense, but whose particular instrumentation was to have a more specific relevance for jazz music, when it came along, than anything we have touched on so far. In its fullest Edwardian flower, the military band was, in effect, a concert orchestra adapted for the specific purpose of making itself heard while marching about in the open air. Out, therefore, went the inaudible string sections (violins, cellos and basses), the cumbersome keyboard instruments, the harps, and the tympani, and in came full sections of portable and penetrating reeds (clarinets and saxophones) to add to the augmented brass sections (trumpets, trombones and tubas) and the traditional percussion (snare drums and bass drum). These instrumentalists were soldiers first and musicians second, well-trained and well-drilled, but rather badly paid. They did not, however, have to buy their own instruments.

On the other hand, all amateur musicians were net consumers of the products of the music industry - unlike the professionals who were employed to produce more than they consumed. In order to perform at all, amateur instrumentalists were obliged to purchase, first, the wares of the instrument manufacturers, and then the products of those publishers who were in the business of marketing the output of composers and arrangers. As we have seen, at the dawn of the twentieth century, the entire urban musical scene, amateur and professional alike, was dominated by the conventions of concert music (as filtered down through layers of exigency from art to utility, from posh to popular), and was totally dependent, therefore, on what the composers composed, the arrangers arranged, and the publishers published. The role of the musician was to play the music exactly as it was written, in order to do which with unhesitating competence required a serious commitment to the chosen instrument, and a great deal of practice. There was little urban folk music around until jazz came along.

Not surprisingly, it was through the functional music of the urban poor - the marching, the dancing and the worshipping - that jazz made its way into the world. It could not have happened without the marching bands and their "free" instruments, offered as a distraction to delinquent youth; it could not have happened without the outdoor dancing, without the incantatory rhythm of the ragtime two-step played interminably in makeshift ensemble on the instruments of the marching band; and it could not have happened without the spontaneous, do-it-yourself extravagances of communal choral singing in praise of the Lord. And could it possibly have happened without the blues? Difficult to imagine! The blues may have grown up in the country as a genuine folk music form for solo voice and guitar, but it was the one truly original element in the rich brew of cross-cultural influences which went into the creation of jazz.

Throughout the western world, then, there were musically disenfranchised masses waiting to be fed. And there were all those enthusiastic, but frustrated amateur musicians waiting for something suitable to come along with which to feed them, a music they could play without having to buy the score and practise for years, a music they could play to the limits of their current competence without sounding inadequate and without being shunned by their friends, a music which, on the contrary, many of their contemporaries would positively admire them for playing, and which, above all, would allow them to extemporise their own individual variations on whatever theme attracted them, but yet which several of them could play together, without too much rehearsal, for pleasure and even profit.

If, however, jazz was born in the backstreets of certain southern cities in the USA during the first years of the century, and if it was concocted by musical illiterates to meet their own ephemeral social needs, how did they get to hear about it in London, Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Paris, Berlin and Stockholm, not to mention Manchester, Hilversum, Glasgow, Lyons, Munich, Malmo and all the other cities of Western Europe? The answer to that question calls for another chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR. (How did it spread?)

1

The jazz music which had invaded most of the civilised world by the 1930's did not spring fully formed from the heads of a few street musicians in the southern USA in the early 1900's. The basic elements of the jazz idiom and the jazz method were in place by then (although the music was not even given the name of jazz until the second decade of the century), but a number of further developments were required before dissemination could begin in earnest. Some of these developments were intrinsic to the music, but some took place outside it, and these latter may have been the more significant in the longer term.

As for the music itself, this fortuitous amalgam of marching band, ragtime and the blues moved, in the first instance, out of the backstreets, backyards and brothels, and into the dance halls of its country of origin. It would be difficult to imagine the development and dissemination of jazz without the parallel evolution of that great social institution of the first half of the twentieth century, the public dance hall - a place where men and women were permitted to meet, get hold of each other, and move their bodies around, in intimate contact, to what many of their contemporaries referred to as "jungle rhythms" or even "nigger music". This was where the dance bands of the time absorbed, and then began to develop and disseminate the jazz idiom, one of the main features of which was, after all, the potent incantatory effect it generated.

For the originating dance bands, the jazz method had been simply part and parcel of the jazz idiom. The musicians involved were from the bottom of the social heap, and they were playing for dancers who were little better off than themselves, so they did the best they could with the means available. They taught themselves to play whatever instruments they could get hold of, and they played by ear. They formed themselves into groups that could memorise simple tunes and play them to a suitably incantatory four/four rhythm for long periods of time at an adequate volume. The instruments that were most suitable for this purpose, and most readily available turned out to be the clarinet, cornet, trombone, tuba and drums from the marching bands, augmented by the banjo from the minstrel shows - an instrument capable of producing a loud metallic four-note chord with a very useful rhythmic effect. As the dance bands moved up market (and indoors) this basic ensemble was joined by the then ubiquitous, but more softly spoken and sophisticated piano, while the tuba gave way to the string bass and the banjo to the guitar, but these were later refinements on the original prototype.

The music produced by these very early bands was undoubtedly jazz, but it had more in common with the folk music of the past than with the jazz of the future - it exhibited, in fact, virtually all the characteristics of folk music. It was strictly functional, being produced for specific social occasions, such as funerals, street parades and dances; the music was simple, undemanding and repetitious, but its incantatory effect was very strong. The performers were members of the local community who often worked in other capacities when not performing, and although many of the tunes they used had been handed on to the musicians, in effect, from the professionals, rather than down to them through the ages, there was plenty of scope for improvisation in the way they were played. Improvisation was, in fact, one way of relieving the undeniable

monotony of playing these simple tunes for long periods of time but, as with traditional folk music, there were, at this stage, few if any solos, just a continuous ensemble with an occasional short interjection, or break, or lick, from a single instrument.

There were, however, two noteworthy differences between this early jazz and traditional European folk music. The first was, of course, the rhythm - that infamous drumming beat which gave jazz music its most distinctive flavour, with four beats in each and every bar from beginning to end, emphasising the downbeats, one and three, or the upbeats, two and four, depending on the kind of lift required to maximise the compulsion to dance (or get out of earshot) in all those who heard it. There was nothing quite like it in any previous folk music outside Africa.

The second difference lay, less obviously, in the musical characteristics of the melody instruments. Such traditional European folk music as had survived into the twentieth century, relied for its repetitive melody line on instruments such as the guitar, violin, flute, and shawm (a primitive ancestor of the oboe, still used in Catalonia), even the bagpipes and accordion, all of them instruments which it was difficult if not impossible for the individual musician to voice expressively - to sing with. In their different ways, however, the clarinet, the cornet and the trombone were capable of producing effects which, although anathema to the music schools, were much closer to the sound of the open-throated, untrained, human voice raised in uninhibited exultation or despair. By using their lips, teeth, tongue, and fingers to manipulate the physical characteristics of their different instruments in unconventional ways, these untrained early musicians found they could superimpose the kinds of slurs, slides and quarter tones, which had hitherto been regarded as vulgar and comic effects, on the familiar cadences of ragtime and blues, and create a musical language of singular personal expressiveness.

And, clearly, the fact that there could be three or more melody instruments in these prototype jazz/dance bands was of great significance for the development of both the idiom and the method. In a style derived from the music of the marching bands, the cornet could take the lead with the tune, while the clarinet improvised decorations in the form of an obligato above it and the trombone did the same in a more declamatory style below it, to produce, between them, the primitive rolling counterpoint which is the unmistakable sound of early jazz. It was not to be long before the attractions and the possibilities of this unique and very effective urban folkdance music were recognised and began to be developed by a better class of dance band altogether.

The question of whether jazz was born in New Orleans and then exported by riverboat up the Mississippi to St. Louis, Memphis, Kansas City, and Chicago, and from there to the rest of the USA, or whether it appeared simultaneously in a number of Southern cities of which New Orleans was simply the most prolific, has been exhaustively researched and discussed elsewhere. Of more interest to us, here, is the fact that, apart from a few music hall acts, the music was disseminated, at this stage, largely as dance music and was, therefore, still entirely functional; and that the first step in its development was the incorporation of the jazz idiom and the jazz method into musical forms better suited to the more sophisticated dance hall clientele for whom the bands now found themselves playing.

This led to two important innovations. The first, and most significant, was the emergence from the ensemble of the individual virtuoso jazz performer, and the consequent appearance in the music of the solo instrumental chorus. There is an

extent to which it might be true to say that it was the exploration, by the more adventurous (and gifted) early jazz musicians, of the opportunities the music offered them for individual improvisation on the given theme which represented the true beginning of jazz - and even, in certain important respects, the beginning of the end. Certainly, it was the growing proficiency with which individual performers were able to express themselves by improvising in the idiom which led to the recognition of jazz as new art form. On a more mundane level, it also resulted in the appearance of what was to become the standard format for a chosen number in ad hoc jazz performances, as adopted by our Hypothetical Jazz Band: an opening section of collective improvisation on the given theme by the whole ensemble, followed by a sequence of solos from the individual performers, ending with final section of collective improvisation by the whole band.

But the second development, although resulting from the first, saw a trend in the opposite direction. As jazz moved upmarket away from its humble origins, it was absorbed into the vocabulary of the professional musician. Admittedly, only the professional dance band musician, at this stage, but still a pro with the full range of technical accomplishments necessary to earn his living by playing in a professional dance band in a public dance hall as a full time job. It was these musicians, with their superior technical skills, who were to develop the jazz solo to a level of virtuosity, which made a number of them into household names throughout the world. Already, by producing their solos in the jazz idiom and using the jazz method to spectacular effect, they were becoming the stars and featured attractions of the dance bands they played in, but it soon became apparent that the supporting musical framework could not rely, for its effectiveness, night after night, on the same kind of spontaneous collective inspiration visiting the rest of the band. In any case, the bands were becoming too big for this to be feasible. The result was the deliberate pre-orchestration of the ensemble to enable it to deliver a reliably interesting and exciting performance every time, especially at the beginning and end of each number, leaving plenty of space in between for solos to be taken ad lib by the featured individuals.

At first, this orchestration took the elementary form of what is known in the business as a head arrangement, meaning that the musicians, usually under the direction of the bandleader, worked out in advance, at rehearsal, how they would play each number, particularly the opening and closing sections, and simply committed the outcome to memory. But it was only a matter of time before the fully written out orchestration (still leaving space for ad lib solos, of course) would become the norm for any professional dance band committed to delivering performances to a guaranteed standard at frequent intervals, and whose personnel might be expected to change from time to time without much warning. This led to the appearance on the scene of the professional arranger who soon bid fair to become the single most important member of the band after the bandleader (if, indeed, it were not he who filled both roles), since it was soon recognised that the arrangements it played could be just as important as the skills of its featured soloists in establishing a band's special character and appeal.

So here we have the beginnings of a paradox. On the one hand, individual jazz musicians developing the jazz idiom by using the jazz method to produce solo performances of ever-increasing virtuosity; on the other, collective improvisation (the unique methodological contribution made by jazz to the music scene) losing ground to the compositional techniques of concert music - applied now, of course, to the organised expression of musical thought in the jazz idiom. This is not to denigrate the contribution made to the growing vocabulary

of jazz by the early jazz composer/arrangers, as opposed to the inspired improvisations of the jazz soloists. Some of them were bandleaders, producing arrangements of tunes they had written themselves for their own bands, others were simply arrangers exploring the possibilities of the idiom in search of novelty and excitement, and many of their innovations, like those of the improvisers, were so rapidly absorbed into the language that their individual contributions are often overlooked. Whatever the compensations, however, there is no denying that, at this stage in the development of jazz, collective improvisation was becoming, in a functional sense, surplus to requirements.

There is no denying either that, at this stage too, jazz music was, by its very nature, totally ephemeral, leaving no permanent evidence of its existence. Being jazz, in other words, it was produced extemporaneously by groups of musicians, improvising together in certain places at certain times. This meant that, however inspired the solos, however ingenious the head arrangements, they could be appreciated only by the members of whatever audiences happened to be in those places at those times - bearing in mind that these customers had almost certainly come along to be stimulated into physical activity by this exciting music, rather than simply to listen to it. Their enthusiastic appreciation of it might have been enough to disseminate jazz throughout the dance halls of the USA by encouraging the dispersal of the bands who played it, but it certainly would not have been enough to project it onto the world stage, hailed as a new art form, within the space of not much more than two decades. For that achievement we have to thank the inventor of the gramophone.

2

With hindsight, it is evident that, not only was the development and marketing of the gramophone record crucial to the rapid dissemination of jazz music throughout the whole of Western civilisation, but also that the new medium exerted a much greater effect on jazz than it brought to bear on the pre-existing body of "straight" music, all of which was written down, and could, therefore, be played by orchestras of adequate competence, to audiences of the appropriate size, anywhere in the world, without the agency of the gramophone. Also, the limitations of the technology, in its early stages, placed quite significant obstacles in the way of its application to most of the available concert music; the quality of the sound was poor and the discs could accommodate only a few minutes of recording on each side. For jazz, however, these constraints were of little account when set against the inestimable advantage of being able to capture, for the first time, the unique experience of the music actually being made.

As it turned out, the limitations of the early gramophone technology even worked to the advantage of jazz by giving it a significant competitive edge over serious concert music in the drive for new audiences that the gramophone had made possible. It is no insult to jazz to say that, for those early listeners to appreciate it, the quality of the reproduction was relatively unimportant. What mattered to them was the sheer exciting novelty of it all - the primitive rhythm with its powerful incantatory effect, the catchy tunes and the wild, uninhibited ways in which the instrumentalists expounded and expanded on them. These factors, plus the modest size of the forces required to produce the bewitching sounds in question, added up to a much easier proposition for the early recording techniques to cope with.

Not only that, but the miserly three and a half minutes of recording time conceded by one side of a gramophone record, 10" in diameter, revolving 78 times a minute, imposed no real hardship on jazz. Quite the reverse. Three and a half

minutes was long enough to accommodate a beginning, a middle and an end; long enough for a 12 or 32-bar theme to be stated by an ensemble of between five and eight musicians, even long enough for this to be followed by a number of solo variations on the tune by the individual members, and still leave time for a final chorus by the ensemble. Those three and a half minutes concentrated the minds of the musicians wonderfully, resulting in many a masterpiece of compression, which, if it gave pleasure, could be played again and again until it was either committed to memory, or the record wore out. Also, three and a half minutes was just about long enough for two young people to dance around the room in each others arms without needing to stop for a breather. For the world at large, thanks to the gramophone, three and a half minutes became one of the natural parameters of jazz.

The most profound effect of the gramophone on jazz, however, was to transform it, virtually at a stroke, from a functional music into a concert music. Initially, of course, those individuals who bought gramophone records of jazz to enjoy in the privacy of their own homes did not constitute an audience in the hitherto accepted sense. Many of them bought the records to dance to, but then, growing numbers began listening to the jazz, as opposed to using it, and, eventually, some were listening to it with the kind of reverent attention normally afforded to the serious compositions of conventional concert music. It was the beginning of a departure that was to lead, in the end, to the curious spectacle of real audiences congregating in real concert halls to listen in silence to live musicians playing jazz. But, this development was some way in the future, and, in the meantime, there is another dimension to this fortuitous, fruitful and fateful marriage of jazz to the gramophone record, which is of more immediate interest.

It may have seemed like the most natural thing in the world for jazz to make the transition from being a local, functional, and ephemeral phenomenon to being a permanent feature of the concert music scene with a world-wide audience, simply by striking up a symbiotic relationship with the gramophone, but it should not escape attention that, in order to do this, jazz had to come to terms with an institution with which it had no natural affinity at all - the international music industry - and this led it into a situation even more paradoxical, for the integrity of the music, than that created by the move into the more up-market public dance halls.

3

Not surprisingly, the existing music industry was slow to see the opportunities presented by the recording of sound, perceiving it, first, as a curiosity and then as a threat, before recognising its golden potential. We have seen that, before the advent of the gramophone, the industry consisted of four interrelated parts: the musical instrument makers, the composers, the publishers, and the professional musicians. The industry's customers fell into two broad categories: one, the audiences for the various types of concert and functional music being produced by the performers working at the "coal face" of the industry; and two, the amateur musicians who bought (direct from the factory, as it were), first, their musical instruments, then the tuition needed to play them, and, finally, the music scores to perform for their own amusement, or for that of such audiences as they could persuade to listen to them. Of course, professional musicians bought musical instruments, tuition, and music scores, too, but, in their case, these were simply the raw materials they needed in order to supply the services they themselves would eventually sell.

Thus, in the early 1900's, innovation and marketing in the music industry was aimed at (i) promoting the music of dead composers, (ii) encouraging living composers to produce new and interesting pieces of music, (iii) increasing the size of the audiences for performances of all forms of publishable music, and (iv) increasing direct public demand for musical instruments, musical tuition, and music scores. Before the advent of the gramophone, there was no way that jazz, in its natural state, could find a place in this system - except, perhaps, as a consumer of second-hand musical instruments! We have seen that, by the time it became possible for it to enter the system, via the gramophone, jazz had begun to modify its natural state to meet the requirements of the local public dance halls. When, however, it finally entered the system, it was not as a newly developed art form, but as just one novelty among the many, many novelties that were being offered to the owners of gramophones for their delectation.

To put it another way: jazz may have needed the gramophone to fulfil its destiny, but the gramophone certainly did not need jazz. The three and a half minutes of poor quality sound which proved to be so little of a drawback to jazz, were equally well-suited to a wide range of other non-serious musical forms, some of which were already popular at the time, and there were growing armies of gramophone owners who simply wanted to be amused and entertained by the records they bought - even though, given the repetitious nature of the format, they could all too soon have had enough of them. Although, therefore, there was no market for jazz, (how could there be?), there was a big demand for novelties of all kinds, of a more or less frivolous nature, hailing from not too far outside the normal experience of the record-buyers. Since, however, none of the record producers knew, for sure, what would catch on, there was a powerful incentive for the early studios to experiment widely with anything new and different in their immediate vicinity. Anything, that is, which could be recorded cheaply.

It was in this way that the musicians who, at the time, were steadily disseminating jazz throughout the major cities of its native land, via the dance-halls, met up with those new outposts of the music industry, the recording studios, where their performances could be captured in a form which made it possible for them to be sold throughout the world. There was no certainty, at first, that customers would be found for them, but, given the nature of the market, it was definitely worth a try. And, in keeping with the spirit of the enterprise, those early jazz records were of a pretty frenetic nature, characterised at the time by the words "hot" and "rhythm". Early jazz was hot rhythm jazz, featuring fast tempos, a pounding beat, and everybody playing as many notes as possible, as loudly as possible, in order to force it up the needle, through the sound box and out of the horn of the gramophone as affectingly as possible. Only thus could it hope to compete for attention with all those comic songs, serious songs, yodellers, whistlers, and instrumental combinations of every conceivable shape and size, playing every other form of music that could be made to fit the format. As we now know, jazz made its way, but it was never a foregone conclusion.

There will be more about the actual tunes those early jazz bands played in the next chapter, but, in the meantime, we need only note that they sounded novel and exciting, and that they were conceived in the early jazz idiom, or lent themselves to the early hot rhythm treatment, because there was one further development to come before jazz was really ready to take off, a development which, although an essential ingredient in the ultimate success of jazz, could not have taken place without the pioneering activities of the early jazz/dance bands and the missionary effect of the gramophone. This development involved

nothing less than the wholesale takeover, in the early 1920s, of the popular song department of the music industry by the jazz idiom.

4

As the name implies, there has always been a market for popular songs, and they were a staple fare of the growing numbers of amateur performers (and a major source of income for the music industry) before ever jazz evolved. Apart from having words and music, the only qualifications a song needed to be popular were that (i) the words (or lyrics) should be comprehensible to, and pronounceable by, the vast majority of the adult population, (ii) the music (or tune) should fall within the range of the average, untrained human voice, and (iii) the combination should be easy to memorise and almost impossible to forget.

Before about 1920, these songs could come from anywhere, but mainly they came from some branch of the musical theatre, from operetta (even, very occasionally, grand opera), from musical shows of all types, and especially from the music hall, where they had been popularised by performers who were to some degree famous for singing a particular kind of song. Since these stars of the musical stage needed a steady supply of songs which were both suitable showcases for their own inimitable talents and seemed likely to possess a modicum of popular appeal in their own right, and since this was a market which had little attraction for, and was little understood by, the professional composers of either heavy or light concert music, the demand was met by the evolution of a new species - the songwriter. These were individuals with, often, little formal musical or even, in the case of the lyricists, literary education, but with a special talent for writing songs, occasionally of an almost ludicrously simple nature, which nevertheless had enormous public appeal.

In the pre-jazz age, these tunes, however simple, were written in a style that fell well within the musical conventions of the concert hall, and the lyrics, although often in the vernacular, were in pretty much the same respectable tradition. Once promoted to popularity by the singing celebrity, the songs relied for their dissemination on the fact that there stood, in every home in the Western World with any pretensions to affluence, an instrument which almost every child of almost every family thus endowed would be coerced into attempting to learn to play - the piano. Even though pretensions often tended to outstrip achievement, leaving many a piano behind as an ornament rather than an instrument, this still ensured that there were an awful lot of pianists around who could manage the relatively undemanding technicalities of a popular song, if they had the sheet music in front of them. And this meant that, at a few pence a copy, publishing piano music for popular songs was quite big business for the music industry at the time - these being the days before television, before radio, and even before the gramophone, when singing round the piano was the only way of bringing the popular song into the home.

At the end of World War One, however, a number of ingredients came together in the popular song industry to generate an explosion of creativity, which lifted its output onto a significantly higher plane, in terms of both quality and quantity. There seems little doubt that the jazz idiom acted as a catalyst in this process by completely catching the post-war mood, particularly in the USA - it was unconventional to the point of being subversive, uninhibited to the point of being permissive, and the incantatory effect offered a narcotic and addictive anaesthetic which was more than welcome at the time. The jazz method helped, too, or the public perception of the jazz method, with its sense of inspired musical improvisation by untutored free spirits, playing outside the rules. In reaction to the horrors of the recent war, and in response to a steady growth in

disposable incomes across the board, the demand for entertainment of a non-serious, but not too unsophisticated nature, increased almost exponentially. The dance halls and ballrooms throbbed, and the musical theatre blossomed with "shows" of all kinds, but principally musical comedies and reviews - both of which were simply strings of song and dance numbers held together by a tenuous thread of plot.

The effect was to produce an almost insatiable demand for songs, which caught the spirit of the age, and were easy to sing and dance to, songs in the "hot rhythm" jazz mode for the quick dances, and songs in the "moody blues" jazz mode for the slower ones. There was money to be made, and fame to be earned, by the songwriter who could find and fill the elusive formula which made a song a "hit" with the song-consuming public. To exploit this lucrative market, a whole new breed of songwriters sprang up, some of whom became very famous indeed, and even wealthy, but, here, a lot depended on the individual business acumen exhibited in dealing with publishers. The main interest, here, is that, of the thousands of songs produced in this way during the 1920s and 30s, several hundred were written that have survived to this day, and will probably survive, if not for ever, then for as long as civilisation as we know it survives, certainly as long as jazz continues to be played.

Each of these inherited songs, which are usually given the typically prosaic collective name of "standards", has about it some special quality, which seems to guarantee its undying appeal, not just to jazz musicians, but to most of the population of the civilised world. Sometimes the reason for this attraction is obvious to anyone with even half an ear for words and music, the song is beautifully crafted, both words and music having instant appeal; sometimes only the tune is attractive, easily recognisable as a melody of distinction to which, alas, words of unrelieved banality have been set; and there are some whose appeal is more difficult to define, the melody seems undistinguished, the lyrics puerile, but together they produce an effect of sufficient power to lodge the song in the listener's memory for ever. Finally, in addition to these "all time favourites", there is quite a large body of songs which have been retained in the jazz repertoire because, although superficially commonplace they have some distinctive feature, a cadence in the melody, perhaps, reflecting some rather unusual underlying chord sequence, or some seminal rhythmic phrase, which has set them apart from the thousands of songs churned out by what became known as the "Tin Pan Alley" branch of the music industry over the years, and which are now forgotten.

So, the jazz idiom fed into the popular song, and the popular song repaid the debt by providing the jazz musician with, not only endless raw material for the exercise of his talents, but also a door through which jazz could enter the mainstream of popular culture. Not for nothing were the 1920s called the Jazz Age. By 1925, both the jazz idiom and the jazz method were firmly established, albeit in varying combinations, in dance halls and on gramophone records, in the USA and Europe, and the spirit of jazz was permeating song and dance throughout a whole new world of popular entertainment. But, before following it through to the point at which our Hypothetical Jazz Band were able to play together with such assured competence on such a casual acquaintance, let us take time off to look a little more closely at the vital statistics of this body of simple compositions which became such an essential ingredient in the making of jazz.

CHAPTER FIVE (Which tunes? What words?)

1

When the members of our Hypothetical Jazz Band got together for the first time, we found that, before they could exercise their combined talents for our imaginary delectation, they had to agree among themselves on three things: the tune to play, the key to play it in, and the tempo to play it at, of which the first was by far the most important. Admittedly, it was what the musicians did with the tune, once they had agreed on it, that mattered most, but so much in jazz depends on the improvisation of variations on a chosen theme, that the tune selected as a source of inspiration in each case cannot be without its own significance.

More difficult to explain is why, if the tune comes from a song (as it very often does), the words, too, are of consequence - even though they may not be actually sung by anyone present when the tune is being used. It may be that the musicians know the words (or some of them), and are influenced by them in their treatment of the tune, or, if they cannot remember the actual words, there may be something about the sentiments expressed in them which clings like a fragrance to the title of the song, or to the tune itself. It may even be that the song has been given a memorable interpretation (on gramophone record, of course) by some long dead jazz singer, much revered by the current performers. Whatever the reason, it seems to ensure that, for jazz musicians, the tune may be separated from the words, but can never be finally divorced from them without suffering some loss of appeal - bearing in mind that, for a tune to form the basis of a jazz performance, it has to be chosen by the musicians themselves from all the other tunes available.

These tunes, or songs, can be of equal importance, also, to those who simply consume jazz by listening or dancing to it, if only because they form such a large part of the common heritage which both jazz consumer and jazz producer share. They are the familiar and the reassuring from which the unfamiliar and the astonishing are to be created. The chosen tune provides the golden thread that guides the listener through whatever labyrinthine complexities the performer may care to construct for him. A further element of continuity is provided by an awareness that jazzmen may come and jazzmen may go, but the tunes they use can go on for ever. And, here again, the words, however imperfectly remembered, however infrequently performed, have their part to play. The sentiments expressed in them may be trite and hackneyed, the words themselves mediocre to the point of meaninglessness, but, when fitted to the right tune, they can resonate in the mind in a way which easily transcends their apparent face value - particularly if chanted in some dear one's ear while dancing together to the music. Sight must never be lost of the fact that jazz had its origins in song and dance.

With so many hundreds of these numbers to go at, and no means of demonstrating what they actually sound like here, the best we can hope to achieve is an examination of representative examples of the whole sub-species of jazz standards to see whether we can identify any of the factors which account for their survival in such a highly competitive environment. Since, also, we have already met "Sweet Georgia Brown", when it was selected (after some discussion) by our Hypothetical Jazz Band as the vehicle for their first ever foray into collective improvisation, why not start with this song, which (not surprisingly under the circumstances) exhibits a number of very typical features?

For example, it was published in 1925, in the first half of a vintage period of about twenty years during which most of the popular songs which have ended up as jazz standards were produced, so it can safely be taken as representative of all but the very earliest jazz tunes, and these latter, for completeness, we will look at later. Like so many of its fellows, Sweet Georgia Brown was written with a verse and a chorus, but, although the verse survives in the published piano and song sheet, it is rarely used in jazz. Why have a verse at all, then? Well, these were, after all, songs, and, when originally published, the words may have been just as important as the tune - occasionally, more so. The function of the verse in a song has traditionally been to set the scene for what follows, to tell the story that provides the excuse for the sentiments expressed in the chorus. Many of these songs were written for musical shows in which the verse may have carried forward some tenuous thread of the plot. It may, on the other hand, be just another example of old habits dying hard - a verse there had always been, so a verse there must be! Whatever the reason, it imposed little obligation on the songwriter to put the kind of effort into the verse that went into the chorus, as a consequence of which only a very few of these songs survived to be used by jazz musicians with their verses intact, and Sweet Georgia Brown was not one of them.

Next, the chorus of Sweet GB was typical in conforming to the convention of the 32-bar format, divided into four 8-bar phrases. There is, it seems, some atavistic predilection in the human psyche which accounts for the enduring appeal of the 8-bar melodic phrase, since it occurs in popular song and dance as far back in time as records exist - the well-known pre-Elizabethan song "Greensleeves" is just one of many examples - and it is probably true to say that over 90% of jazz standards are made up of four 8-bar phrases. The big exception is, of course, the blues, which comes, traditionally, in a 12-bar form, consisting of three 4-bar phrases, but more about that later.

The basic elements of musical form are usually given in the textbooks as (i) repetition, (ii) variation and (iii) contrast, and even the four 8-bar phrases of a popular song like Sweet GB can be expected to exhibit these characteristics to some small extent. Not surprisingly, the repetition is easiest to spot. As we already know from our analysis of the tune in Chapter Two, the first and third of the 8-bar phrases of the melody are identical. Contrast is supplied by phrases two and four being different from one and three, and also different from each other. This gives the four 8-bar phrases what is known as an ABAC format. Believe it or not, this is only the second most common format to be found in the genre. There are marginally more songs in the even more basic AABA format than there are in ABAC, which makes Sweet GB rather more sophisticated and slightly less typical than might, at first sight, have seemed likely.

But where is the other basic element of musical form - variation? Not in the melody, it seems. Not, that is, until the jazzmen get their hands on it. Generally speaking, in a popular song, the only scope for variation between one statement of the theme and another is to be found in the lyrics, where the same 8- or even 4-bar musical phrase can be repeated again and again as a setting for different words. As in the case of Sweet Georgia Brown:

- 1.(A) No gal made has got a shade on Sweet Georgia Brown.
 ::A7 / / / : / / / / : / / / / : / / / / :
- Two left feet, but oh so neat, has Sweet Georgia Brown.
 :D7 / / / : / / / / : / / / / : / / / / :
- 2.(B)They all sigh and want to die for Sweet Georgia Brown.
 :G7 / / / : / / / / : / / / / : /

!I'll-tell-you-just why !You-know-I-don't lie (not much)
 / / / :C/// :G7 / / / :E7/ / /: / / /:
 3.(A)It's been said, she knocks 'em dead when she lands in town
 :A7 / / / : / / / / : / / / / : / / / / :
 Since she came why it's a shame how she cools'em down
 :D7 / / / : / / / / : / / / / : / / / / :
 4.(C)Fel-lers she can't get are fel-lers she ain't met.
 :Am/ / / :E7 / / / :Am/ / / :E7 / / / :
 Geor-gia claimed her, Geor-gia named her, Sweet Georgia Brown
 :C / / / / : E7 / A7 / : D7 / G7 / :C / / /::

Nothing very profound, there. Nothing too obscure, either. A bit unusual, perhaps, to find a lyric in which the young lady whose name has given the song its title is not the putative beloved of the songwriter but simply an object of admiration. Also, there are one or two ambiguities in the sense of the lyrics that beg questions about the sincerity of the songwriter's admiration. "Two left feet..." for example, and the words "(not much)" (which have the direction "spoken ad lib." against them on the song sheet) after "you know I don't lie". Furthermore, why is it that those of whom it had been said that she would knock them dead when she landed in town, have been cooled down by her since she arrived? Perhaps "knocks 'em dead" and "cools 'em down" were synonymous in 1925? But these are trifles that may simply indicate that Messrs. Ben Bernie, Maceo Pinkard and Kenneth Casey, who are credited with having written the song, produced the melody first, and then cast around for words to fit it, sacrificing absolute coherence on the altar of convenience.

There can be no doubt that, compared with the lyrics of some of its contemporaries, those of Sweet GB exhibit an almost Tennysonian elegance, with their use of simple monosyllabic words to create internal rhymes which fall on the third beat in the first two bars of each of the eight 4-bar phrases - except, of course, for the fourth of these, where the internal rhyme switches to the first beat of the second and fourth bars. The words are certainly a real pleasure to sing, and lend themselves to an ample degree of offbeat rhythmic subtlety in their delivery without giving rise to the need to distort the sound of the words or the sense of their simple message to achieve these effects. And, when sung in A flat (four flats), the key in which the number is usually "taken" by jazzmen, the melody falls well within the range of the untrained singing voice. No wonder Sweet Georgia Brown has survived the ravages of time so well.

Many other ABAC numbers are popular with jazzmen ("Tea for Two", also referred to in Chapter Two, is another example) but, as already noted, tunes in this format are not quite as numerous, nor as frequently used by the general run of jazzmen as are those written in the simpler AABA configuration, for the obvious reason that, in the latter case, with only two different 8-bar phrases to cope with instead of three, there is less chance of getting lost while improvising a solo on the basis of the chord sequences. As an example, here are the chords and lyrics for a song in this format called "Oh, Lady be Good":

1.(A) Oh, sweet and love-ly lady be good.
 ::C / / / :F9/ / /:C / / / : / / /
 Oh, lady be good to me.
 Gdim/:G7 / / / :G7 / / / :C///:C///:
 2.(A) I am so awf'lly misunderstood,
 :C / / / :F9/ / / :C / / / : / / /
 So, lady be good to me.
 Gdim/:G7 / / / :G7 / / / :C///:C///:
 3.(B) Oh, please have some pi-ty,

:F///:G9 / / / :F/ //:C///:
 I'm all a-lone in this big ci-ty.
 :Am / / / :Am7 / D9 / :G7///:G7///:
 4.(A) I'm just a lone-some babe in the wood,
 :C / / / :F9/ / / :C / / / : / /
 So, lady be good to me
 Gdim/:G7 / / / :G7 / / / :C///:C///:

This simple song was written by George and Ira Gershwin in 1924 in the key of G major (one sharp) for a musical comedy of the same name, and went on to become virtually world famous - it has a melody which is readily recognisable, and lyrics of which nearly everybody knows a snatch or two - the words of the title occurring no less than four times in eight short lines. Needless to say, it was produced complete with a verse - two verses, in fact - which are never used, and even two choruses, although the only difference between the second and the first of these is to be found in the wording of the contrasting third (B) sequence where, instead of the words "Oh, please have some pity / I'm all alone in this big city." there appears "This is tulip weather / so let's put two and two together". Incidentally, the odd-man out (B) sequence in songs with this configuration is known among jazzmen as either the middle eight (sic) or the bridge, the latter term being more common in the USA. Examined in the cold light of day, a song like this looks almost like an insult to the intelligence. All one can say in its defence is that it works. By hooking itself quickly and ineradicably into the cerebral cortex, it fulfils the purpose for which it was intended, and, in so doing, has given a lot of pleasure to a lot of people; it has also made a lot of money for the Gershwins and probably even more for their publishers.

Even "Oh, Lady be Good" is not the simplest AABA song ever written, as regards either its melody or its lyrics, but there are, on the other hand, many songs which can lay claim to much more subtlety and sophistication, in both these respects, without exhibiting the slightest sign of discomfort with the limitations of this simple format. And if it seems a little unadventurous of jazz musicians to be using, as a basis for improvisation, some tune in which three 8-bar phrases out of four are identical, please remember that it still requires them to produce three different variations on the same 8-bar theme plus one variation on a contrasting 8-bar theme in a period of time which is often less than a minute - a feat not to be underestimated, particularly when tackling a song like, for example, "Smoke gets in your eyes":

1.(A)They asked me how I knew - my true love was true - -
 ::C / Am / :Dm7/ G7 / :C / C+ / :F7 /
 I, of course, replied - "Something here inside cannot be denied"
 Cdim / :Cmaj7/ C6 / :Dm7/ G7 / :C///:////:
 2.(A)They said "Someday you'll find - all who love are blind - -
 When your heart's on fire - you must realise, Smoke gets
 in your eyes".
 3.(B)So I chaffed them as I gaily laughed to-think- they-could
 :Ab / / / :Abmaj7 / / / :
 doubt my love
 :Eb7 / Fdim //:Eb7///:
 Yet, today my love has flown away, and I'm without my love
 :Ab / / / :Fm7 / G7 / :C/ Am/:Dm7/G7/:
 4.(A)Now, laughing friends deride - tears I cannot hide - -,
 So I smile and say "When-a-lovely-flame dies - smoke gets
 in your eyes".

Although, as written, this song starts off in the fairly undemanding key (for jazz) of Eb major (three flats), the middle eight is not only in a different key, which is not uncommon, but is in the relatively remote key (for a popular song) of B major (five sharps). Not surprisingly, this makes it a rather difficult tune to play about with, particularly for Bb instruments which, although happily in F major (one flat) for the main tune, find themselves in C sharp major (seven sharps) for the middle eight - which is just about as sharp as you can get! This does not prevent the tune (fortunately, a slow one) from being well liked by jazz musicians, but it does tend to militate against its frequent selection for use as a basis for collective improvisation during impromptu sessions by so-called pick-up groups - of which our Hypothetical Jazz Band was an extreme example.

At least as popular as "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" and possibly even more difficult to cope with, is another AABA song called "Body and Soul" which starts off in the simple key of C major, but has a middle eight with four bars in Db major (five flats) and four bars in E major (four sharps). "Body and Soul" was written in 1930, [tune by John Green, words by Robert Sour, Edward Heyman and Frank Eyton], and "Smoke Gets in your Eyes" in 1933, [tune by Jerome Kern, words by Otto Harbach] and the dates are significant.

Generally speaking the songs of the 1920s reflected the spirit of the decade by being extravert, optimistic, and simple - this being the period of Prohibition in the USA and reconstruction in Europe after the horrors of World War One. The songs of the 1930s, on the other hand, were more introspective, pessimistic, and complicated, reflecting the aftermath of the 1929 stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression. There was also a natural progression away from the instinctive early simplicities of the Twenties towards the more technically sophisticated complexities of the Thirties as the songwriters became more articulate and the consumers more discerning, but the 4 x 8 = 32-bar sequence in either AABA or ABAC format continued to dominate. A number of songs were written, however, which were not only exceptions to this rule, but were so attractive that they made their way into the jazz repertoire, in spite of the intrinsic obstacle which their "irregular" shape presented to the improvisations of the jazzmen. These mavericks are well worth a glance.

To take the simplest deviations first, there are songs which adhere to the normal AABA format in every respect except for one small but telling variation in the last 8-bar sequence - the third repetition of the main (A) tune (where better?) - usually by the introduction of a rising cadence in the melody line to point up some final "twist" in the lyric. Well-known examples of this are "Lover come back to me" [words by Oscar Hammerstein, music by Sigmund Romberg] where the 4th and 5th bars of the final eight move into Fdim and Am respectively instead of A7 and G; and "Crazy Rhythm" [words by Irving Caesar, music by Joseph Meyer and Roger Wolfe Kahn], where the same two bars use A9 and Amaj7 instead of Gmaj9 and G6; both songs written in 1928.

Then, there are songs in the AABA format, but with a couple of extra bars simply added to the final eight, usually to accompany some closing repetition of words in the lyric. Probably the best known example of this is in "I got rhythm" [tune George Gershwin, lyrics Ira Gershwin in 1930] in which the words "Who could ask for anything more?" that occur in the lyric at the end of each of the three statements of the main (A) theme, are repeated in the last one, over an appropriate adjustment to the underlying chord sequence. The two bar tag at the end of the last eight is not uncommon in the AABA format and is quite easily coped with, but, generally speaking, any other additions or subtractions from the standard eight bars present a trap for the unwary. The very popular "I'm

getting sentimental over you" [music Geo. Bassman; words Ned Washington, 1933], for example, has an extra four bars inserted between the first four bars and the last four bars of the final (A) section and this can prove distinctly disconcerting when encountered by an unsuspecting improvising soloist.

Turning to the ABAC format, there are a very small number of songs that simply rearrange the three different sections to repeat the A section last - ABCA, in fact. Wellknown examples of this are "Me and my shadow" [music Al Jolson and Dave Dreyer, words Billy Rose, 1927] and "Angry" [music Cassard and Brunies, words Dudley Mecum, 1925]. Nothing too demanding there. But rather more difficult to cope with are those tunes in the ABAC format which have extra bars added on to the final (C) section, for the obvious reason that, here, a melody and chord sequence which is already different from anything that has gone before is further complicated by being extended to ten or more bars - a move which just about doubles the risk, for the inexperienced performer, of getting lost when improvising on the tune. There are, nevertheless, a number of great favourites in this group, of which "There'll be some changes made" [tune by Benton Overstreet, words by Billy Higgins in 1923], springs immediately to mind. Another example, is "A foggy day" [tune George Gershwin, words Ira Gershwin in 1936] - very tricky, this one, in the way the tune appears to pick up speed, in bars 5 and 6 of the last (C) section, to accommodate an extra lyric, and then to slow down again in bars 7 and 8 in a way that requires bars 9 and 10 for a satisfactory resolution.

More irregular than these two, but much more popular with jazzmen than either of them, is "After you've gone" [words and music by Creamer & Layton in 1929]. This tune is unusual in a number of ways. First, it is one of the very few tunes which is traditionally introduced by playing its verse; second, the tune, as written, is only $8+12=20$ bars long, but is really in an ABAC format of $4+4+4+8$ bars which can seriously disconcert the unwary; and, third, like "There'll be some changes made" it is often taken at twice its written speed, substituting crochets for quavers, and doubling the number of bars. Even more extreme cases of ABAC irregularity are to be found in the two old-timers "Somebody stole my gal" [Leo Wood 1918], and "Nobody's Sweetheart" [music Ernest Erdman and Elmer Schoebel, words Gus Kahn and Billy Meyers in 1924], both of which sport final sections running to sixteen bars, and might, perhaps, be better described as having an ABACD format.

Not surprisingly, there are a group of tunes with irregularities in the so-called middle eight. That very well-known song "These foolish things" [music Jack S rachey, words Eric Maschwitz in 1936] is in AABA form, but with a four-bar middle eight(!) which many who tackle it extemporaneously for the first time find a little hard to take; it then compounds the offence by introducing a melodic (and harmonic) variation into the last three bars of the last (A) eight. The even better known "The lady is a tramp" [music Richard Rodgers, words Lorenz Hart in 1937] is in a version of AABA which turns out on closer acquaintance to be (AB)(AB) CD, that's $16+16+8+8=48$ bars, the last eight being an amalgam of the first four bars of A with the last four bars of B. On the other hand, "Zing, went the strings of my heart" [words and music James F. Hanley 1935] is in strict AABA format, except that the A's are all 16 bars and the B only 8 bars long - total 56 bars.

Finally, there are the genuine oddities, the songs which are popular with jazzmen and sound reasonably normal when heard for the first time, but simply do not conform to either the AABA or ABAC patterns, nor even to the commoner deviations from these norms already listed above. Perhaps the best known of these is the deceptively simple sounding "I'm coming Virginia" [words Will

Marion Cook, music Donald Heywood in 1927] which has an 8+8+8=24-bar ABC format as follows:

1. (A) G7+ :C C7 Cdim Fm:C///:A9/D9/:G6/C7 C+:F//C+ Cm:
D7/G9 G13:C///:G7+///:
2. (B):C C7 Cdim Fm:C/Am6 B7:Em///://B7 Em:Am6/B7/:Gm6/A7/:
Fm/G7/:Cmaj7/C7/:
3. (C):F6///:Fm6///:D7/D7b5/:G7/G7+:Dm7///://Fmaj7 G13:
:C/F7/:C6///::

The lyrics to this attractive but quite difficult (to improvise around, that is) tune are disappointingly banal, recruiting such tired old veterans as "...neath your bright southern moon - once more I'll croon - a dear old Mammy tune..." and even, at one point, rhyming "Virginia" with "can win ya". Less well-known, however, but equally attractive is "It all depends on you" [Words and music by B.G. De Sylva, Lew Brown and Ray Henderson] which has the conventional 4 x 8 = 32 bars, and, again, sounds quite normal, but each of the eight bars phrases is sufficiently different from any of the others to give it a rather tricky ABCD format. The words are simple, but sing well:

- 1.(A)I can be happy, I can be sad, I can be good or
:Cmaj7 / / / : C6 / / / :Cmaj7 / / / :
I can be bad. It all de-pends on you - - -
:C6 / / / :Em / C / :Ebdim/ / / :Dm7///:G7///:
- 2.(B)I can be lonely out in a crowd, I can be humble,
: Dm / A+ / :Dm7 / G7 / : Dm / A+ / :
I can be proud. It all de-pends on you - - -
: Dm7 / G7 / :Em / G7 /G9 / G+ /:C///:///:
- 3.(C)I can save money / or spend it, go right on living
: C / Cmaj9/:C7 / / / : F / F6 / :
/or end it.You're to blame honey / for what I do - - -
:Fm/ Cm / : D7 / Am7/:D7 / / / :G9///:G7///:
- 4.(D)I can be beggar, I can be king, I can be almost
:Cmaj7 / / / : C6 / / / : Cm7 / Gm6 / :
any old thing. It all de-pends on you - - -
:A7 / / / :D7 / / / :G7/ / / :C///:///::

Even more aberrant is a song called "What a little moonlight can do" [words and music by Harry Woods in 1934] which has 8 x 8 = 64 bars in a mind-boggling ABCDAEFG format. This attractive little number, though well-known to jazz lovers, is, for obvious reasons, rarely attempted, and only then with dots and chords either up front, or very firmly committed to the memory. But perhaps the most extreme dislocation occurs in tunes in the basic AABA format which have either more or less than the usual eight bars in the (A) sections i.e. "This year's kisses" [Irving Berlin, 1937] and the later "Moonlight in Vermont" [words John Blackburn, music Karl Suessdorf, 1944] both of which have 6+6+8+8=28 bars, and "My Very Good Friend the Milkman" [words Johnny Burke, music Harold Spina, 1935] with 10+10+8+10=38 bars. Only by actually playing these tunes is it possible to appreciate the disorientating effect of those two missing or extra bars. There are many other oddities, such as "My heart belongs to Daddy" (Cole Porter), which has the standard 4 x 8 = 32 but in an AABC format, but none of them is sufficiently popular with jazz musicians to be worth dwelling on here.

But the popular songs of the 20s and 30s, no matter how irregular they became in shape (and disconcerting, therefore, to the jazz tyro in practice), never approached the formal complexity of some of the compositions which were used by

the jazz pioneers before the jazz idiom invaded Tin Pan Alley, and which still survived in the jazz repertoire. It has to be remembered that, as jazz emerged from the mists which shroud its unrecorded origins, it was still exhibiting a number of characteristics deriving from pre-existing forms of dance music (ragtime, in particular) and from military marches, taking shape as a more or less continuous stream of collective improvisation in the jazz idiom on the basis of these earlier forms, and not arriving at the idea of solo variations on a chosen 32-bar theme (whether in AABA or ABAC format) until later.

These earlier forms, being closer to the concert music tradition, were more elaborately constructed than the later ones in order to achieve the degree of repetition, contrast and variation that was thought to be required of them. Also, they were not, for the most part, songs. They may have had alternate sections which were not dissimilar from the verse and chorus of the popular song, but they were, in essence, orchestral pieces designed to maximise the incantatory effect for the dancers and minimise the monotony for the listeners - and, of course, for the musicians. To this end, although they consisted of quite simple tunes over relatively undemanding harmonic progressions (like so many of the later popular songs), these early pieces often featured key changes between the different sections - something that became, as we have seen, virtually unheard of in the later jazz standards.

A typical example is the aptly titled and still popular "Original Dixieland One-step" [Jordan, Larocca & Rob 1917], which begins with an introductory section of $2 \times 8 = 16$ bars in the key of G (one sharp), followed by an 8-bar bridge passage in the key of C, then the main section of $4 \times 8 = 32$ bars in the key of F (one flat). That's a total of $7 \times 8 = 56$ bars in an AABCDCE format. The better known "That's a-plenty" [Words Ray Gilbert, tune Lew Pollack, 1914] is in only two keys, but has a more elaborate structure, boasting three distinct sections. As written, Section One is 8+8 bars in the key of F (one flat), Section Two is 8+8 bars in the same key, Section One is then repeated before the key changes to Bb (two flats) for Section Three which has 8+10 bars. Both these tunes have distinct march-like characteristics, the more ragtime-like tune, "At a Georgia Camp Meeting" [Kerry Mills: 1897], is in five sections and two keys. As written, Section One, 16 bars long, is played twice; Section Two, also 16 bars, is played twice; then Section One is played once; Section Three, 16 bars, is played once; Section Four is a bridge passage of only 4 bars leading into Section Five of 16 bars, played twice. Sections One and Two are in the key of Bb (two flats) and Sections Three to Five are in Eb (three flats).

There are several tunes like these, dating from the early years of the century and instantly recognizable as archetypal jazz music, but, simple as they may sound in performance, they are too elaborate in their structure to be tackled by jazzmen who do not play regularly together, or have not arranged, at rehearsal beforehand, how they intend to deal with the various sections and the key changes between them (particularly on repeat choruses), and whether and, if so, when any solos are to be taken. Attractive though they are, in other words, these are not the sort of tunes our Hypothetical Jazz Band would have chosen to play at their first meeting, or even their second, but they might subsequently have decided to "work up" one or two of them for performance in public, if such an occasion ever arose. Another point worth making about tunes in this category is that they need a full band to do them justice, with a minimum of clarinet, cornet and trombone in the front line - the kind of band they were written for, in fact. This puts them at a competitive disadvantage with the later, simpler songs, as vehicles for collective improvisation by smaller or less traditionally constituted groups.

While, however, the other tunes of jazz got simpler in form (if more complex harmonically) with the passage of time, The Blues (to which we may now turn our attention) got more complicated - it being difficult to see how this unique medium, the one clearly identifiable progenitor of both the jazz idiom and the jazz method, could have got any simpler, since the basic blues form, as we have seen, uses only three common chords in a 4+4+4=12-bar sequence:

- 1.(A): C / / / : / / / / : / / / / : / / / / :
 2.(B): F / / / : / / / / : C / / / : / / / / :
 3.(C): G7/ / / : / / / / : C / / / : / / / / :

There is nothing unusual about these chords. Quite the reverse, in fact. They consist of the tonic (C), subdominant (F) and dominant seventh (G7) of the key of C major, and, as such, form the basis, in different combinations, of literally hundreds of traditional and folk songs, ranging from "The bonny banks of Loch Lomond" to "Red River Valley" by way of "Botany Bay" and "Swanee River". So it was not the chords that made the blues into something really seminal - although, as we shall see, they turned out to be capable of inexhaustible development. Nor was it entirely due to the distinctive twelve bar form, although there is no denying that, even if played through using these basic chords, it begins to taste like the blues. No, it was the vocal line, with its use of blue notes, which gave the blues its unique appeal. We have seen that a blue note is one that deliberately "bends" the vocal line away from the chord to produce a passing dissonance which is used aggressively rather than regressively by the singer. In the following exaggeratedly skeletal blues melody (when played over the above chord sequence), for example,

- A. : G F Eb C : G F Eb C : C / / / : / / / / :
 B. : F Gb G C : F Gb G C : C / / / : / / / / :
 C. : F E F G : G F Eb C : C / / / : / / / / :

The blue notes may be F and Eb in the first line, Gb and G in the second line, and E and Eb (and, possibly, the C in the second bar where one might expect a D) in the third line - a lot would depend on "pressure" put on the notes by the singer. It may be that some blue notes are bluer than others, and there is a widely-expressed view that the only true blue notes in the C major scale are the flattened third, Eb, and the flattened seventh, Bb. But even the above crude example indicates that the fourth (the F against the C chord), the second (the G - and even the flattened second, Gb - against the F chord), and the sixth (the E - and even the flattened sixth, Eb - against the G7 chord), could be used to produce the desired effect; and the same applies, in certain other circumstances, to the true seventh (a B against a C chord). But let us not get too technical about this, since it is better, perhaps, for blue notes to be heard (and felt) and not seen. Blue notes are, after all, where you find them, and, since the blues started life as a vocal form, it is the way the words were hung on the blue notes that gave them their essential significance.

Which brings us to another odd thing about the blues. Although, harmonically and melodically, its 4+4+4=12 bars are in an ABC format (however simple the chords), the vocal line of the basic blues adheres to an even simpler AAB configuration. This means that the singer is obliged to come up with only two lines to every verse:

Words

Music

- (A) (Oh, I'll) go down the river until I reaches the sea, (A)
 (A) (Yes, I'll) go down the river until I reaches the sea, (B)
 (B) (And) when I'm there I'll end my mis-er-ee. (C)

Provided that he sticks to the basic 12-bar chord structure the singer is free to choose his own melody line and fit as many syllables into it as he needs to make his point, with little regard for grammatical correctness. To take a better known example:

(You're) beautiful now but I know you're gonna die some day
 A. ::C / / / : / / / / :C///:C7///:
 (You're) beautiful now but I know you're gonna die some day
 B. :F / / / : / / / / :C///:C///:
 (All I) wanna do is love ya be-fore you pass a-way
 C. :G7 / / / : / / / / /:C///:C///::

Another verse re-distributes the syllables in two different ways to fit them into the format:

A. (If ya) talk me to death, I know I'm gonna die,
 B. (If ya) talk me to death, I know I'm gonna die,
 C. If ya keep on talkin', I know you're gonna tell me a lie.

Given this freedom from any formal metrical constraints, there is literally no limit to the number of two-line verses, sacred or profane, comic or tragic, which may be (if they have not already been) concocted in this way. And this is only the simplest of the generic 12-bar blues formulae, there are at least two other distinctly different ways of singing the blues above the basic chord sequence. There is the declamatory, or shouting blues, usually in slow time:

(Now) listen all you people! (Just) listen here to me!
 A. :: C / / / : / / / /
 (You've) got to hear the story (of the) life I spent at sea
 / : C / / / : C7 / / /
 (where I) ran around the miz-zen mast until it made me
 B. / : F / / / : / / / / :
 sick - - - - -
 : C / / / : / / /
 (and I) couldn't eat the custard tart because it was so
 C. / : G7 / / / : / / / / :
 thick - - - - -
 : C / / / 1 / / / / ::

And so on for chorus after chorus. The above "lyrics", having been devised on the spur of the moment when a more authentic example failed to come readily to mind, have the advantage of coming more easily off the page than would the more irregular genuine article, and have therefore been retained.

The other basic form is the more high-spirited or jumping blues, usually in quick time, involving quite a lot of simple riffing:

(I) don't play a clarinet or sax-o-phone,
 A.:: C / / / : / / / /
 (I) don't play a trumpet or an old trombone,
 / : C / / / : / / / /
 (I) don't play pi-an-o or a sweet guitar,
 B. / : F / / / : / / / /
 (But) I know where-my-baby's blue notes are.
 / : C / / / : / / / /
 (That's) jazz (boom, boom), that's jazz (boom boom),
 C. / : G7 / / / : / / / /
 (that's) jazz (boom, boom, boom, BOOM) - - -

/ : C / / / 1 / / / / ::

These words have also been dreamt up on the spot to assist with the exposition, but may already exist in some obscure corner of the vast blues repertoire. There was a move in the 1920's to label this up-tempo, up-beat version, for which the term "blues" seemed inappropriate, the joys - as in "Milenberg Joys" [Ferd Morton, Leon Roppopo and Paul Mares: 1925] but it failed to catch on. Thus, the rather fast and cheerful, but incongruously named, blues remain with us, as do many other variations, developments and hybrids of all three versions of this apparently inexhaustible source of jazz inspiration.

The blues developed as jazz developed, and, once their potential had been recognised, there was no shortage of composers who were willing and able to exploit the situation. A chord sequence cannot be copyrighted, but a melody can, and there were traditional blues melodies lying around, waiting to be written down and published. There was also, to be fair, plenty of scope, given the endless fecundity of the form, for the invention of new and different blues tunes, and for the devising of ingenious permutations on the original varieties, but it was often difficult to know whether a blues tune had been invented by the individual who laid claim to it, or simply appropriated from some particularly fruitful occasion on which jazz musicians had gathered to extemporise together on the blues and came up with something worth preserving.

Apart from the increase in complexity already referred to, there are two other aspects to the development of the blues worth noting briefly before we leave the subject. The first is the early evolution of a purely instrumental blues from what was originally, above all else, a vocal form. This was probably due to the fact that, as we have seen, jazz was spread mainly by bands playing in dance halls (an environment which, before the advent of the microphone and its attendant technology, was less than friendly to the human voice), and "Milenberg Joys", referred to above, was an example of this. Not that the production of good new vocal blues was entirely discontinued - one of the best known blues of all time, "St. Louis Blues" by W.C.Handy dates from 1914 - but singing the blues on the bandstand did not really come back into its own until the 1920s as part of the boom in the popular song.

By that time there was a legacy of famous blues numbers from the early days of jazz which were both fairly complicated in form (an introduction, and two or more contrasting sections in different keys), and purely instrumental in nature. Words were usually added to them when they were published, but these were mostly pretty dire, and very rarely used. A good example of the instrumental blues is to be found in "Royal Garden Blues" [Words and music by Clarence Williams and Spencer Williams (no relation): 1919] which starts off in the key of F major with a four bar introduction into a 12-bar fast blues theme, which is repeated and followed by another 12-bar fast blues theme, which is also repeated; then comes a 4-bar bridge passage, modulating into the key of Bb major and leading into a final 12-bar fast blues theme, labelled "Chorus", which can be repeated ad.lib.

Finally, we cannot leave the subject without mentioning the eight-bar blues, which has probably been around for quite as long as its more famous 12-bar counterpart, but which, due perhaps to its more conventional shape, has attracted less attention to itself, and even tended, unless clearly labelled "blues", to merge into the background and escape notice altogether. It does not help that there seems to be no single prototypical chord sequence for the 8-bar blues. If we start with something simple like this:

::C///:////:////:G7///:C7///:F///:C///:////::

we have the first part, or "verse", of "Beale Street Blues" [W.C.Handy, 1916], which is undoubtedly an 8-bar blues - even though this section then goes on, after changing key, into a 12-bar blues "chorus". But we find that other famous 8-bar blues have quite different chords - "Buddy Bolden's Blues" [Ferd Morton, when?], for example, goes:

::C/Cdim/:C7///:F/Cdim:C/C7/:F/F7/:C/A7:D7/G7/:C///::

Not too dissimilar. But "Winin' Boy Blues" and "Sweet Substitute" also by Ferd Morton, and also in an 8-bar format, are different again; and the very famous "Basin Street Blues" (Spencer Williams, 1929) goes:

::C///:E7///:A7///:////:D7///:Em///:C/Cdim/:Dm7/G7/:
:C///:E7///:A7///:////:D7///:G7///:C///:////::

Hardly any similarity at all. The even better known, and frequently sung "St. Louis Blues", already mentioned, begins with a repeated 12-bar blues theme ("I hate to see// that ev'nin' sun go down...") and ends with a different 12-bar theme ("Got the Saint Louis Blues, just as blue as I can be...") but, in between the two, there is a repeated 8-bar blues theme ("St. Louis woman/ with her diamond rings...") which acts as a bridge between the two:

::Cm///:Fm7/Cdim/:G7////:////:////:Cm///:////::

All three sections have the same key signature but, if the two 12-bar sections are in C major, the 8-bar bridge, as can be seen from the chords, is in C minor - the relative minor to the key, not of C, but of Eb major. The introduction of the minor key is interesting. One of the oldest tunes in the jazz repertoire is "St. James Infirmary", an 8-bar theme which is often referred to as a blues, even though it seems to have come down to us from the past as an authentic American folk song [to which, further research will no doubt reveal, some opportunist eventually put his name]:

(I went) down to the Saint James Infirmary
 ::Am / E7 / : Am / /
 (and I) found my baby there
 / : Am / Dm / : Am / /
 (laid) out on a long white table
 / : Am / E7 / : Am / /
 (so) white, so cold, so bare.
 / : Am / E7 / : Am / / / ::

Very sad, but is it a blues? It certainly sounds pretty bluesy, but that may be because it is in a minor key - most tunes in minor keys sound a bit blue. Look at this tune, for example:

E7::Am/E7/:Am/E7/:Am/E7/:Am/E7/:Dm///:Dm/Adim/:E/B7/:E/E7/:
 :Am/E7/:Am/E7/:Am/E7/:Am/Dm/:C/Am/:D/Dm7/:Am///:////::

These are the chords for one of the most popular songs ever written - "Summertime" from George Gershwin's opera in the jazz idiom, "Porgy and Bess" - a tune which is sufficiently similar in character (as the chords indicate) to "St. James Infirmary" to qualify, if the latter does, as an 8-bar blues.

On the other hand, a good example of a more conventional, but "hidden", 8-bar blues is to be found in the vintage popular song "One Sweet Letter from You" [Words Lew Brown, Sidney Clare, music Harry Warren]. The tune is in the standard 32-bar AABA format but the eight bars that contain the main theme have the following unmistakably blues chord sequence:

G7::C///:////:////:C7///:F///1:Dm7/G7::C///:////::
 and even the middle eight has a blues feel to it:
 C7:F/C7::F///:C/G7::C/C7::F/C7::F/D7::G/G7:::

There are numerous other examples of the blues invading the 4 x 8 = 32 bar format anonymously, and this is hardly surprising, since there is (after all) an extent to which the language of the blues becomes indistinguishable from the jazz idiom as it permeates the popular song. Let us leave the 8-bar blues, then, with one final specimen which seamlessly combines the blues tradition with the 4 x 8 = 32-bar formula - "Davenport Blues" written by Bix Beiderbeck in 1925:

- 1.(A)::C/F::C/G7::C///://G7::C/F::C/G7::C///:C7///:
- 2.(B)::F7///:Fm6///:C///:A7///:Am6///:D7///:G+/A7::Cm/G7::
- 3.(C)::C/F::C/G7::C///:C7///:F7///:////:E7///: ////:
- 4.(D)::C///:E7///:Am///:Cdim///:C/F::C/G7::C///:////::

This beautiful instrumental blues (to which the usual mediocre words were, of course, added for publication) is a work of real distinction. Not only does it combine the 8-bar blues with the 4 x 8 = 32-bar ballad form, but it does so using the rare ABCD format, with the added subtlety that the distinctive four bar phrase in the melody, which is repeated in the first eight, occurs again at the beginning of the third eight, and again, like a dying fall, at the end of the fourth eight. All of which makes it a fitting conclusion to this brief examination of the range of compositions - simple, simpler and simplest - upon which the complexities of jazz improvisation have been built.

By the end of the thirties there was a large and varied repertoire of tunes available to subsequent generations of jazz musicians as the raw material on which to practice their individual and collective skills. Other tunes were added during subsequent decades, of course, but at nothing like the same rate, and, in any case, it could be argued that, given the nature of the jazz method, there is a limit to the number of tunes which jazzmen, purely as jazzmen, need. Surely, the whole point about jazz, the feature that differentiates it most clearly from other music, is the originality, the uniqueness, of what the performers produce when they meet together on a specific occasion to extemporise on a familiar theme, rather than the originality and uniqueness, of the chosen theme itself?

But the world, particularly the commercial world, does not stand still. For one thing, the popular song industry has a life of its own, in which the jazz idiom, seminal though it continued to be, became but one of many musical influences recruited, more or less indiscriminately, to meet the voracious appetite of an over-arching and ever-expanding entertainments industry for novelty at all costs. For another thing, although jazz had been cobbled together originally by non-professionals in the USA for their own use, and would be welcomed by amateur musicians all over the world as a precious gift for their own use, the distribution of that largesse was in the hands, as we have seen, of the very music industry which jazz might initially have threatened to subvert. The penalty for this was that there developed, as we shall see, an off-shoot of the music and entertainments industries, a sort of jazz industry, in which many

people became profitably engaged in conventional commercial ways, but which carried within itself a sufficient number of uncomfortable anomalies to ensure, if not its own eventual bankruptcy, then a rather unhealthy balance sheet in the lifestyle of any musician who tried to make a living out of playing nothing but jazz.

But however they fared in the future, the jazzmen would never be short of tunes to play and songs to sing...

CHAPTER SIX. (Why did the bigger do better?)

1

If we are to pick our way through the tangle of ambiguities and confusions which complicate the story of jazz from the early 1920s, where we left it, with all the essential elements for its development and dissemination in place, to the point at which, twenty or more years later, the eight members of our Hypothetical Jazz Band were able to meet as perfect strangers and improvise so seamlessly together, we must to take our fingerposts from such insights as have already been granted us.

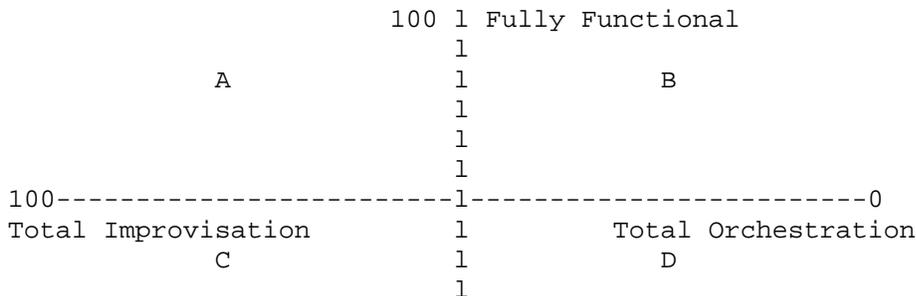
First, the separate identities of the jazz idiom and the jazz method, and the observation that, even though the distinctive musical language of jazz came from the same stable as the collective improvisation which was its other contribution to the world of music, the jazz idiom lent itself far more readily to commercial exploitation by the international music industry than did the method.

Second, the primary importance of the incantatory effect generated by that steady and unvarying beat which is such a defining characteristic of jazz.

Third, the developing tension between jazz, the unpretentious, but highly original and very effective functional music of its origins, and jazz, the more technically innovative, but highly exhibitionistic and ultimately more conventional concert music which circumstances were pushing it to become.

And finally, the economic and artistic pressures on the professional jazz musician, or, to describe him more accurately, the professional musician trying to earn a living playing jazz, who found himself compelled, on the one hand, to compete in virtuosity and originality with his fellows for a share in the limited market available, and, on the other, to act as a conduit between the fons et origo of jazz and those amateur jazz musicians all over the world who were to be the true beneficiaries of the jazz revolution's subversion of the international music industry .

Any attempt to anatomise a growing organic entity like jazz is almost certain to find a good deal of messy interaction between its constituent parts, but we cannot hope to examine the developments taking place in the whole body of jazz from about 1920 to about 1950, without making some attempt to break the subject down into elements of more manageable proportions. The problem is that jazz proliferated at such a speed and, initially, in such subterranean and unconventional ways that the interrelationships between, say, dance hall jazz, gramophone jazz, professional jazz, amateur jazz, New Orleans jazz, Chicago jazz, New York jazz, European jazz, "pure" jazz and "commercial" jazz, to use but a few of the possible sub-headings, are so complex that it is difficult to know where to start. Perhaps, the following diagram will help:



1
 1
 0 1 Fully Concert

No matter where our exploration takes us, this simple matrix can be used to examine any performance in the jazz idiom, wherever it occurs, by assessing its position, first, on the horizontal axis between collective improvisation and orchestration, and then, on the vertical axis between functional jazz and concert jazz, to place it finally, by cross-referencing these two points, somewhere in one of the four quadrants. It would even be possible, by adding the two assessments together, to award the piece a numerical score of something between 0 and 200, as a sort of Jazz Authenticity Index. This might, at least, say something about the essential "jazzness" of the piece, even though it would not tell us anything about the quality of the performance.

On the basis of what has gone before, it would seem reasonable to assume that performances which fell into quadrant A would rate higher, simply as jazz, than those falling into quadrants B and C, regardless of their merits when measured against other criteria; and that B and C jazz would score higher than D. The performance of "Sweet Georgia Brown" by our Hypothetical Jazz Band, for example, would certainly fall somewhere in Quadrant A - it was undoubtedly total collective improvisation, and clearly functional to the extent that it was performed by the musicians for their own pleasure without an audience. But might it not have rated higher as functional jazz if the performance had taken place at some gathering where numbers of people were socializing together - drinking and talking, or, better still, dancing to the music? And would the status of the members of the HJB as jazz musicians have changed if, under these circumstances, they had been paid for their performance? These are the kinds of questions that, if they arise, the graph may help us to consider.

On the other hand, a concert hall performance of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" for piano and orchestra (1924) would seem to qualify for a position at the bottom right hand corner of Quadrant D as being fully orchestrated and fully concert. But, hold it! There's something missing. What about the incantatory effect - that steady and unvarying beat which is a primary defining characteristic of jazz? As a total entity, Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" has no more incantatory effect than a Mozart, or even a Beethoven, piano concerto, and probably less than one by Bach or Vivaldi. Perhaps we need a third axis to our graph, rising vertically out of the page to assess, on a scale of 0 to 100, the degree of incantatory effect produced by a performance? Fortunately, no such feat of the imagination will be necessary, since there is no practical way in which graduations could be attributed to the incantatory effect. It is either present throughout the piece or it is not, and, since it is an essential feature of jazz, we can conclude that, if it isn't present, then it isn't jazz. So, "Rhapsody in Blue", as a piece of music in the jazz idiom, is not jazz - although parts of it, taken out of context, might qualify. However, we will certainly encounter performances which, while still qualifying as jazz (just), will position themselves, on assessment, in the bottom right hand corner of Quadrant D.

Bearing all this in mind, we can now re-examine the possibility of breaking the subject down into its more manageable constituent parts; and if, to this end, we start with the functional origins of jazz, we find that there is really only one distinctive, unbroken thread running through the complex fabric of development and dissemination which unfolded through the 20s, 30s, and 40s. Not surprisingly, given the potency of its incantatory effect, this common denominator was the use of jazz as dance music. And we can underline the truth

of this by pointing to the fact that, during the period in question, with very few exceptions, those jazz musicians who pioneered and developed the idiom and method, and who eventually became world-famous for doing so, earned most of their daily bread, if any, by playing in dance bands. To put it another way, it was never possible to earn a decent living by just playing nothing but jazz for the pleasure of exploring its possibilities for personal self-expression, even when sharing the outcome with paying customers. But these are matters to be more fully explored later. Let us begin by looking at the development of the jazz band as dance band.

2

We have already seen that, before the advent of gramophone recording, the earliest jazz bands were unequivocally dance bands, and that they played, originally, in places that were less than respectable, for a kind of dancing which was considered by polite society to be crude and degenerate. In the traditional ballrooms of the period, the more fashionable members of society were still dancing what we would now categorise as Old Time Dances, such as the waltz, the polka, and the two-step, to the strains of conventional bands relying heavily on strings and piano - instruments which, incidentally, are relatively difficult to learn to play to an adequate standard. The early jazz bands, on the other hand, were made up of instruments drawn from the wind bands of those institutions, military and religious, which were closer to the ethos of the underclass - cornet, trombone, clarinet, tuba, banjo and drums - instruments which were not only better suited to playing outdoors, where a lot of the dancing originally took place, but also relatively easy to learn to play to a level of competence which was adequate for the purpose.

Precise details about the actual dances are hard to come by, but we can tell from the titles of the tunes handed down to us that they involved a good deal of strutting and stomping (and, from the lyrics, a measure of inter-sexual flaunting in fairly close proximity), and we know that, for the incantatory effect to work its magic, they had to be in two/four or four/four time. We also know that the first of the genuinely early jazz/dance bands to emerge from the mists of pre-recorded time, little knowing that they were playing themselves into the pages of history, consisted, almost entirely of black musicians. This was due, not so much to the 'African' strain in the music, important though that was, but to the nature of the work involved and the environment in which it took place.

Jazz for dancing was, in its origins, an underclass phenomenon, and the underclass, at that time, in that place, was predominantly black. It is all too easy to forget, looking back at the skills developed and deployed by these musicians, and the appreciation eventually bestowed upon them by the world at large, that playing for those dances was extremely hard work, involving long hours of sweated labour at low rates of pay in unhealthy surroundings. Not a task that any self-respecting professional white musician would willingly undertake - even if he could. For the black musicians, however, it was less arduous, and more rewarding, than most other work they were qualified to do, and it elevated them above the anonymous mass, giving them local fame and status, not unlike that of the sports heroes of later days. That it might also offer them the future possibility of escape from the second-class citizenship that was their birthright, almost certainly never occurred to them.

Even when the bands they had formed to play the music they had created began to move upmarket and further afield, the work remained pretty hard. They were still blacks, still members of the underclass, and, as such, still servants of

whatever expectations had been raised in the minds of the paying customers by the entrepreneurs who employed them. To generate the excitement that was their stock in trade, hour after hour, night after night, they were expected to play their hearts out, and many of them did. Only those who were not only gifted musicians but also of sound physique, and sufficiently dedicated to their calling to possess or acquire the necessary degree of professional self-discipline, were able to survive. Many of them succumbed, either physically or mentally, to the pressures created by the existence they had chosen to lead - helped along, in all too many cases, by the drink and drugs to which they had resorted for short-term relief. Others simply couldn't stand the pace, or didn't like the rackets, uncertain existence, and opted for steadier jobs, out of the limelight.

On the way, as we have seen, the jazz itself was changing, becoming less demanding in some ways and more demanding in others. As the jazz idiom began to permeate the well-springs of popular music, jazz dancing became more formalised and socially acceptable, invading private ballroom and public dance hall alike, sweeping the older dances into virtual oblivion. For better or for worse, the incantatory effect became respectable, and, by the early 1920's the stomps and struts had become quicksteps and foxtrots with an admixture of novelty "hot" dances like the Charleston and Black Bottom - all in two/four or four/four time with lots of fashionable syncopation in the melody line. During the course of these developments the jazz band was evolving into the dance band, or even the dance orchestra, and changing in a number of quite significant ways to meet the practical demands of this lucrative and rapidly expanding market.

The replacement of collective improvisation, first, by head arrangements (agreed verbally in advance between the musicians), and then by written arrangements punctuated by short, more exhibitionistic solos, may have gone some way towards reducing the physical (and emotional?) demands on musicians who were required to churn the dance music out for many an hour on many a night; but it also increased the technical demands made on them by requiring a greater facility in reading music. More importantly, however, the advent of written arrangements made possible the introduction of choirs (or consorts) of instruments - just as it had all those centuries before in the development stage of early concert music - and the instrument best suited to take advantage of this opportunity was the one which had been invented by Monsieur Adolphe Sax about 60 years previously, and only sparingly utilised, in the meantime, by the composers of concert music (outside military bands), but which now seems, looking back, to have been simply waiting around for jazz to come along.

There were a number of reasons why the saxophone section became to the jazz music orchestra what the violin section was to the concert music orchestra. First, there was the unsuitability for this role of the other likely candidates. The trumpet and clarinet both have characteristics that made them suitable for solo work but difficult to play with any degree of real virtuosity for long periods of time. The problem is partly to do with the embouchure (the way in which the mouth is used to produce the sound from the instrument) which requires an amount of pressure inside the mouthpiece of brass instruments which can be particularly difficult to sustain, but which, in their case, can be solved by using them in pairs and writing them into the score more economically - for emphasis, in short bursts, and for the shouting climaxes to which they are so well suited.

The clarinet, being a reed instrument like the saxophone, might seem, on the face of it, to have fewer drawbacks as a maid-of-all-work for the evolving dance band than the trumpet, but this is not the case. The embouchure may be easier

to produce and activate in the first instance, but the clarinet's cylindrical construction, while giving it an enormous range for a wind instrument (three and a half octaves), has rendered many of its notes difficult to voice and pitch correctly without making the kinds of constant minute adjustments to the embouchure which can result in muscle fatigue around the lips after a lengthy period of more or less continuous playing. Another result, which all the skill in the world can hardly disguise, is that the tone quality of the notes lying at the top end of the lower register (and, thus, in the crucial middle octave) is significantly inferior to that of most of the rest. Equally unfortunate is the virtual impossibility of varying the pitch of the whole instrument by lengthening or shortening the tube without throwing the whole thing out of tune. In the absence of a piano, the other instruments of the early jazz bands - cornet, trombone, tuba and banjo - could, if they wished, tune to the clarinet, but, once the piano arrived on the scene, this was no longer possible. As anyone who has ever played in a dance band will know, the piano was part of the furniture of the dance hall, and, as such, could not be relied upon to be in concert pitch - or even close to it. Finally, the fact that the clarinet has seven open holes in it, which must be fully covered by finger ends at the appropriate times without fail, makes it a rather unsympathetic instrument to play when fatigue sets in, and concentration wanders.

Few, if any, of these difficulties arise with the saxophone, which was devised, from scratch, using the relatively advanced technology of the mid-nineteenth century, to be the perfect wind instrument. Perfect, that is, in a purely functional sense, because not even the clever Monsieur Sax could ensure that the sound that came out of it relied on anything but the listener's taste for its appreciation. Without going into too much detail, let us note that the main attractions of the saxophone, apart from its sturdy metal construction and clarinet-like mouthpiece, are that, first, it is conical in shape, which means that its upper register is a perfect octave above the lower one (unlike the clarinet, which, being a cylinder, has an upper register which is an octave and a fourth above the lower), in other words, the fingering for, say, low D on a sax is the same as for middle D, once the octave key has been activated, and so on, up the scale to C. The conical shape also makes it easier to vary in overall pitch without penalty, by simply pushing the mouthpiece in, or pulling it out. Next, all the holes in the saxophone, even those operated directly with the finger ends, are covered by pads, which means that the size of the hole does not have to be limited by the size of the human fingertip (an enormous design benefit, acoustically), and that the musicians' fingers, unfettered by the need to cover the actual holes every time, can move with greater speed and freedom over the notes. Finally, thanks to these factors, and to an ingenious arrangement of the holes and keys at the upper end of the instrument, there is little variation in the nature of the sound it produces (for better or for worse) throughout the whole of its two and a half octave range, thus eliminating any wear and tear on the embouchure due to idiosyncratic variations in the pitch and quality of notes in different parts of the instrument.

Better still, the saxophone is not just one, but a whole family of instruments which come in progressively larger sizes, pitched alternately in Eb and Bb, from the diminutive sopranino in Eb, through the soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass, to the gigantic contrabass, all with the same fingering. The sopranino and the contrabass have always been pretty rare birds, however, and, nowadays, so is the bass sax, but it was quite widely used in the jazz dance bands of the 1920s, possibly because it came through on the early acoustic records better than the string bass, and was much more agile than the tuba. The alto, tenor, baritone and bass became the standard components of the saxophone sections in the larger dance orchestras of the 1920s, with each of the musicians "doubling"

on soprano or clarinet, or even flute, if required. Photographs of these bands show the members of the reed section smirking from behind a veritable battery of instruments, and there can be no doubt that, for range, reliability and sheer long-winded stamina, Monsieur Sax's family was a godsend to performers and arrangers alike of big band music in the jazz idiom.

It has to be admitted, however, that the sound made by the saxophone, as originally inherited in its pristine state from the European music schools, was rather bland and featureless. It was as if, in ironing out the idiosyncrasies, Monsieur Sax had taken away all traces of character, and it was some time before the jazz musicians found ways of putting it back again. In the meantime, the sinuous and syrupy sound of the saxophone section became a distinctive feature of the 1920s dance band, together with the variety of novel and arresting tone colours produced by the trumpets and trombones using a growing selection of mutes. All of this was interspersed, accentuated and reinforced, of course, by the noises emanating from an ever-expanding drum kit, resembling, as it increasingly did, the shrine of some primitive jungle god, complete with war trophies.

The photographs indicate a typical front line of four saxes (two altos, tenor and baritone - all doubling on other reeds such as clarinet, soprano and bass sax), two trumpets, one trombone (sometimes two), plus one or two violins (relics from the past); with piano, drums, banjo (doubling guitar) and brass bass (often doubling string bass) in the rhythm section. It is important to bear in mind, when contemplating this line-up and the range of instrumental combinations it was equipped to produce, that, in the days before the electric amplification of sound became an everyday possibility, these bands had to make themselves heard at the back of the hall, through the sound of dancing feet, the chatter of the customers, and even the clatter of crockery, by their own unaided efforts. And, also, that they were playing not only the quicksteps and slow trots which were the likeliest vehicles for the jazz idiom, but also the slow waltzes, latin-american, and even old time dances, which soon became a settled feature of ballroom dancing, as these activities came collectively to be known.

The most significant development revealed by the photographs, however, must be the extent to which the dance band business - the most socially acceptable manifestation, at that time, of both the jazz idiom and the jazz method - had been taken over by white musicians. This appropriation of the early commercial fruits of the jazz idiom, which seems to have taken place with quite astonishing speed between about 1915 and the early 1920s, is, on reflection, hardly surprising. Given the socio-economic circumstances prevailing in the USA at the time, it was virtually inevitable, once jazz had been identified as an exploitable raw material by the established music industry, that the overclass (mainly white) would take over the production and marketing of it from the underclass (mainly black).

It wasn't that the white musicians came along and stole jazz from the blacks, not the real jazz - that inspired amalgam of idiom and method which falls into Quadrant A of our matrix - not the jazz eventually played by our Hypothetical Jazz Band. What happened, in that seam, was that young American musicians from the white overclass simply fell in love with the music, and set about learning to play it, giving full credit, wherever it was due, to their mentors, regardless of their colour or social origins. The business takeover occurred only where the jazz idiom, and, to a lesser extent, the jazz method, took over the popular music industry, and, with it, the dance music industry, since not only the dance halls, but also the dance bands, were obliged by the prevailing social mores in the USA to practice total racial segregation. So, in the

motherland of jazz, there had to be white dance halls and black dance halls, and white dance bands and black dance bands. And there are no prizes for guessing which dance halls were the most numerous, the most prestigious and, hence, the most commercially lucrative, and which dance bands got hired to play in them.

For these reasons, even though there were such things as whites-only nightclubs that featured all-black bands, the white dance bands came to dominate the national scene in the USA. In the meantime, however, on the other side of the Atlantic - where, of course, the indigenous musicians had little alternative but to be white - there were already what might be called jazz-derived dance bands playing in the major cities of all the European countries by the very early 1920s - the gramophone record and the fox-trot, between them, had seen to that! But, throughout the 1920s, above all else, it was the steady development of radio broadcasting that inaugurated what we now think of as the Dance Band Era of the 30s and 40s by increasing the potential audience for dance music at such an exponential rate that it eventually included virtually every household in the western world.

By the mid-1930s, thanks largely to radio broadcasting, the dance music industry was doing so well that it had become virtually coterminous with the popular music industry, and dance bands, usually under the names of their leaders, had become nationally famous. The public's appetite for dance band music, whetted by outside broadcasts from fashionable night spots which were often situated in glamorous metropolitan hotels, had grown with the size of the radio audience until every network was featuring regular and frequent broadcasts by the best dance bands they could hire, and many of them had formed their own in-house dance orchestras.

Public dance halls, too, had proliferated in every town of any size, and, soon, there were dance floors in all the hotels and nightclubs, in village halls, church halls, and even school halls, throughout the land. There was dancing every night of the week at city-centre dance halls to professional bands of various sizes, and a Saturday Night Hop at the local hall (or a "Whist Drive and Dance" as it often became in provincial England) to the strains of, at the barest minimum, a trio consisting of alto sax, piano and drums. Not only did this activity provide a lot of employment for dance band musicians, professional and semi-professional alike, but it became perhaps the single most easily identified common denominator in the social lives of young people of both sexes throughout the whole of Western Civilisation.

But where was the jazz in all this? Well, as we have seen, the jazz idiom and the incantatory effect were present, to a greater or lesser degree, in the tunes which were played as quick steps and slow trots by the dance bands. These elements could be enhanced or attenuated, according to taste, by the arranger, who was now the key figure in developing an individual character for a band. The extent to which the jazz method was present was also a matter for the arranger in close consultation with the band leader (if the two were not the same), and, although there was a fundamental incompatibility between collective improvisation and the market's preference for product reliability and standardisation, there was nothing, in theory, to prevent a dance band using arrangements which consisted of ensemble passages scored for the full band at the beginning and end of a number, with a succession of ad lib improvised choruses by individual soloists in between. Not surprisingly, however, one effect of the growth in the radio audience for dance band music was an erosion of its jazz content.

It cannot be denied that, in spite of the all-pervading influence of the jazz idiom and the incantatory effect on 20th century popular music, "hot" jazz, or raw jazz, as we might, for the time being, call it (to exclude the more processed and packaged varieties), has never been other than a minority taste. As a form of spontaneous musical self-expression by the instrumentalists themselves, raw jazz cannot help but be physically exciting, emotionally stimulating, and somewhat unpredictable in both quality and effect - this is its unique appeal - but these propensities can make it rather disturbing, even irritating, to listeners of a more conservative and conventional disposition. In the USA, therefore, where the radio networks were commercially driven, and the sponsors of programmes featuring dance bands were looking for music which would appeal to the widest possible audience, giving offence to no-one, the new medium favoured white bands playing unadventurous arrangements of popular songs with a minimum of individual extemporisation by the featured soloists - even though many of them were capable of great things in that direction. In the U.K., similarly, in spite of the fact that public service broadcasting prevailed, the statutory obligation to entertain the general public engendered an anxiety to avoid giving offence, which produced pretty much the same result.

Many of the broadcasting bands were capable of playing more exciting arrangements (if they could get them, and if they were allowed to), and most of them featured so-called hot numbers from time to time, but these tended to be of a rather frenetic nature, not unlike the behaviour of kids let out of school, and did little to further the cause of raw jazz - which continued to flourish, as we shall see, elsewhere. The dance halls, not surprisingly, offered more scope for raising the excitement level of the music, and a certain amount of tension developed in the marketplace between the demands of a younger generation which patronised the dance halls and bought gramophone records, and an older one which relied more on the radio for entertainment and went out dancing only occasionally, if at all, to private functions of one kind or another. This tension was largely resolved in favour of the former in the second half of the 1930s by a fresh infusion of jazz from a hitherto under-exploited source. But, before pushing on into the next decade, let us pause to consider the longer term consequences, now becoming apparent, of the absorption of jazz (whether as raw jazz on gramophone records, or as the packaged and processed variety on sheet music, in dance halls and on the radio) into the international music industry.

3

The music industry consists, like any other industry, of a number of separate enterprises of varying sizes that, either compete with, or feed off, each other. In order to survive and grow, these enterprises must, like those in any other industry, direct their main energies into the core activities of innovation and marketing, both of which are so crucial to commercial success that they can be regarded as virtually inseparable - two sides of the same coin. Generally speaking, however, there is a tendency for the consumer to underestimate the extent to which innovation is not only market driven, but also dependent on positive marketing effort (involving financial investment with all its attendant risks) for its ultimate acceptance by the consumer.

We have seen that, in the music industry, before the advent of recorded sound, innovation could manifest itself in a limited number of ways, and resulted mainly from composers writing new music which the consumers would either pay to hear performed, or would buy in its published form to play for themselves. But once the feasibility of recording sound had been demonstrated, followed by the revelation that it was even possible to broadcast sound over the invisible air waves, a great deal of the music industry's innovatory and marketing energies

went into perfecting and promoting the technology of the new media, relying on the existing machinery to produce new music, as required, right across the spectrum from heavy concert to popular functional. As far as heavy concert music was concerned, the mass domestic audience, which the gramophone and the radio now made possible, gave rise to little demand for innovation in the actual music, since there was a vast body of existing works, which was largely unfamiliar to the new potential consumers, simply waiting to be exploited. But with popular functional music, such as dance music and even raw jazz, the position was different.

In these parts of the music industry, once technical improvements in the new media had made it possible to reach the mass domestic audience, consumer demand could only be stimulated, or even maintained, by product innovation. For the popular music industry as a whole, this meant only that a requirement for a constant supply of new songs and tunes became an accepted part of the system. No real problem here, since there was no shortage of tunesmiths and wordsmiths willing and able to meet this need. For the dance bands, however, it wasn't quite that easy, and even less so for the jazz bands. Each new song emerging from Tin Pan Alley could, of course, become a vehicle for either dance band arrangement or collective improvisation, as appropriate, but that was hardly the kind of competitive innovation likely to excite young dancers and attract listeners to, or even stimulate the purchase of new gramophone records by, any particular group of musicians. And so, the dance bands, and, more seriously, the jazz bands, found themselves locked into a situation that required them, in order to earn a living, constantly to innovate competitively.

This was, initially, a challenge that many of the professional musicians involved were not unhappy to meet; in fact, the best of them rather welcomed it as an opportunity to exhibit their ability to produce what they firmly believed to be a superior product. And who can blame them? Even if they had foreseen where these market forces were leading, there was nothing they could do about it and still stay in the industry. Also, in the shorter term, the results were gratifyingly good, and not only when judged by commercial standards. At worst, of course, there was a propensity towards pleasing the mass audience by producing, on the one hand, meretricious "novelty numbers", and, on the other, instrumental virtuosity of a crudely exhibitionistic nature. At best, however, a fillip was given to the genuine creativity and superior musicianship already resulting from the growing status of the composer-arranger in the big band, and from the growth of a discerning, mainly record-buying public, for raw jazz; and if we return to the dance band scene with these considerations in mind, we can observe the effect of this interplay between market and creative forces on the development of the music - particularly as regards its jazz content.

By the early thirties, the white bands which dominated the national scene in the USA, were playing a dance music which, thanks largely to the demands of the radio audience, as interpreted by the networks, had moved inexorably down the vertical axis of our Jazz Authenticity Index from "functional" to "concert" and across the horizontal axis from "improvisation" to "orchestration", and was heading towards the outer bottom corner of Quadrant D. All it had left to commend it was a rather upper class dialect of the jazz idiom and an anaemic version of the incantatory effect, both of which were of diminishing appeal to the young people who constituted such a large part of the dance hall market. To be fair, the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the subsequent economic depression had put an end to the wilder excesses of the dance crazy Twenties and encouraged the growth of the sedentary domestic audience for free radio. In the face of this double onslaught, gramophone record sales had slumped and several companies

had gone out of business. Small wonder, then, that the white dance bands were playing it safe, and their music had taken a conservative turn.

Fortunately, however, the black dance bands (prevented by their colour from competing on equal terms for the more glittering prizes available during the first decade of the dance band era, and labouring, therefore, under different commercial constraints) had been left freer to follow their own inclinations and create a dance music which was altogether more acceptable to black dancers and more exciting to the less conventional of the whites - meaning, mainly, the younger generation. Putting it another way, the black bands had been encouraged, by the exigencies of a rigged market, to be more innovative and experimental, the end result of which was a big band music with a much higher jazz content - idiom, method, and incantatory effect - owing its development to the emergence of a small number of gifted black composer-arrangers, most of whom were, at some time, band-leaders served by a large number of talented black instrumentalists capable of both improvising brilliantly and mastering quite complicated scores.

The big band jazz developed by the black dance bands in the late 20s and early 30s differed from the commercially more successful dance music being played by the white bands in at least three ways. First, the rhythm section, which had now settled down to comprise drums, string bass, guitar and piano, had melded together to produce a steady beat in which the individual components were virtually indistinguishable and the whole seemed somehow greater than the sum of its parts,. This beat was all the more powerful for being, if anything, understated - as if the rhythm was holding its breath and pulling the band along by controlled tension rather than driving it along with a piston engine. It was the epitome of the incantatory effect, and there was certainly something trancelike about the way in which, in order to extrude this beat, the members of these rhythm sections sank their often not uncomplicated individualities into the common cause. So powerful and uplifting was it, in spite of its essential lightness, that the composer-arrangers were able write for the frontline sections in ways which took them off the beat (ahead of the beat, across the beat, or against the beat - depending on how you look at it) in ways that could not fail to generate a mounting excitement in the listening dancers.

This leads into the second difference, that the section writing was both more architectural in form and more fluent in the jazz idiom. The black composer-arrangers developed a more contrapuntal, or, if you like, a more adversarial, style of writing by, first, devising, or adapting, tunes which had much in common with riffs (those short, repeated, rhythmic figures which retain their shape while changing notes to fit movements in the harmonies), and then arranging for the brass and sax sections to shout them back and forth at each other in a variety of different ways. They also appropriated and incorporated into their compositions any jazz phraseology currently being invented by the most creative exponents of raw jazz (whose seminal performances, as preserved on gramophone records, we have yet to consider), many of whom were also black, and obliged, therefore, to play for a living in the very bands in question. Which brings us to the third point: the black composer-arrangers left much more room in their works for these gifted individual soloists to have their say, not only by featuring them, but often by building new pieces around them. The object of the exercise was to intoxicate and astonish the listeners rather than to tranquillise and re-assure them...and to involve the entire band in the whole-hearted pursuit of these objectives.

The colour bar did not, however, prevent the best of the black bands from performing, often with stunning effect, in all-white dance halls (for

significantly less money, of course, than comparable white bands), and even, occasionally, on the radio, provided that they undertook to play nothing too disturbing, and there was always the ubiquitous gramophone record, which had been blessed from its birth by colour blindness - so, the music was able to make its way, even if the black bands couldn't. There were even one or two white bands already pioneering similar stylistic pathways, acquiring a certain amount of popularity with young dancers in the process, and, needless to say, there were plenty of white musicians who admired the black bands, and would have preferred to play that way, but were unable to do so for commercial reasons. More importantly, however, although the colour bar could keep black and white musicians from appearing on the same bandstand, it could not prevent the black composer-arrangers from selling their wares to the white bands, nor even from joining the payroll, provided that they didn't play in the band in public, and when the breakthrough came in the mid-thirties it was made by white bands using orchestrations provided by the black composer-arrangers, or by the white arrangers who had been influenced by them.

It was as if, quite suddenly, the market was ready for a change. It may have been that the worst of the economic recession was over, putting innovation back on the agenda; it may have been that a new generation of consumers was coming into its own; it may have been that the socio-economic power of the public dance halls had reached some kind of critical mass. Whatever the reasons, there is no denying that, in 1935 in the USA, a watershed was reached, after which the mainstream of what had become a rather conventional dance music, metamorphosed into a species of big band jazz, which was even given its own name. It was called swing, and it grew to be so popular throughout the Western world during the next decade that, compared with anything we have so far encountered, it became very big business indeed.

The salient features of the music itself were those already delineated by the black composer-arrangers, but the white bandleaders brought their own musical and managerial skills to bear on it - and it has to be conceded that, in this branch of the music industry, at least, the latter proved to be hardly less important than the former. To take the musical skills first, however: virtually all the most successful swing bands were led by individuals who had already made a name for themselves, during the previous decade, as jazz soloists on the clarinet, trumpet, trombone, piano, saxophone, or even drums, so, not only did they lead from the front, playing their own solos, but some of them were skilled arrangers in their own right, and those that were not possessed a keen ear for the talents of others, and strong views about the kind of music they wanted to make.

4

Once the breakthrough into swing had been made, there was a great deal of experimentation by the composer-arrangers with instrumentation and ensemble writing aimed at achieving a distinctive sound and style which would be instantly recognisable as the band's individual signature. Even so, the basic characteristics of swing dictated the need for a big band divided into different frontline sections, each large enough to play the more complicated and astringent harmonies increasingly demanded by the composer-arrangers. This meant that, in addition to the rhythm section of four or five, there could be, in various permutations, up to five saxes and four trumpets, and even four trombones, with trumpets and trombones used as separate sections. Add to this a musical director (or staff arranger), two vocalists (one male, one female) and, not unusually, a back-up singing group of three or four, and it is little wonder that the managerial skills of the leader were often decisive, not so much in forming a band, as in ensuring its survival in the longer term.

In the halcyon years of the swing era, many big bands were formed under the leadership, in turn, of most of the established instrumental virtuosi of jazz, but only about half a dozen of these went on to achieve the national and international fame that was necessary to sustain them through the whole decade. Given the size of the organization, to be economically viable it had to be in virtually continuous employment, primarily as a dance band, but also as a broadcasting band, a recording band, and even a concert band - success in one breeding success in another, and another, and so on, back round the loop again. To play for dancing, the band needed, first, a "book" of arrangements sufficient to see them through about two to three hours of performance time (the long nights of sweated labour endured by the early jazz/dance bands being, mercifully, a thing of the past); next, the number and calibre of musicians to produce the sound and style dictated by the book, recruited and assembled; and, finally, enough rehearsal time to drill the band into shape - and, with swing music, "drill" was undoubtedly the operative term, since so much depended on the absolute precision of the section work that even experienced professionals had to be worked hard and repetitiously to get the ensemble playing exactly right. And all this before a penny could be earned.

While the band was getting ready to make its debut, the initial aim of the booking agent would be to obtain as long a residency as possible for it in some large metropolitan dance hall or hotel. Apart from the obvious desirability of such an engagement in its own right, there were a number of secondary advantages: the musicians could build their domestic (and other) arrangements around regular hours in the same workplace; the all-important radio broadcasts could easily be made, either as outside broadcasts from the ballroom, or from the nearby radio stations; and the possibly-even-more-important recording studios would be equally handy. But, even with all this in place, once the initial excitement of forming the band, rehearsing the new book, and launching it successfully on the uncertain sea of consumer choice had worn off, it was not as easy as might be thought to deliver the goods to a consistently high standard over a period of time.

Considerable managerial skill would be required to ensure that the twenty-odd performers (some of whom might be celebrities in their own right, and many of whom might be inclined, as we shall see, to play raw jazz in all-night clubs after hours, and all of whom might be good enough to be in demand for other paid work outside their commitment to the band) honoured their contracts by turning up on time for all the engagements, reasonably sober, properly dressed, and observing sufficient discipline on the bandstand (when playing and when not playing), to maintain the hard-earned corporate image of the band. Even so, testing as it may be, this would be the easy part, because, sooner or later, in order to cash in on any reputation it had earned from its metropolitan residency, its broadcasts and its recordings, the band would almost certainly be obliged to embark on a tour of as many as possible of all the other cities with dance halls big enough to be able to afford them - and there were plenty of those in the USA, and quite a few in Europe.

There can be little doubt that going on tour was the ultimate test of the bandleader's character and ability, not to mention his physical stamina. The logistics were challenging enough: travel and accommodation for the whole company, plus instruments and even spouses, advance publicity for the engagements, some of which might be the dreaded one-night stands, and the technical problems encountered on arrival at each alien bandstand, but at least these would remain par for the course throughout the whole of the tour. It was the cumulative effect of all this on what little self-discipline the musicians had started out with which would produce the biggest headaches for the

bandleader. Any difficulties he may have experienced beforehand, in holding the musicians to a consistent enough level of professional behaviour to underpin the quality of musical performance on which the band's reputation was based, would increase exponentially as the tour progressed. When the strains and stresses of travelling away from home with a group of not necessarily congruent fellow musicians were added to the distractions and diversions available in each one of the towns and cities through which they were passing, it is hardly surprising that even the best-run of bands could fray at the edges and even disintegrate completely as the tour progressed.

There was, it seems, a fundamental incompatibility between the jazz musician as free creative spirit - spontaneous, unconventional, even subversive - and the mould into which the swing band, to be successful, had to force him. For all its potency as a force for good in the promulgation of the jazz idiom, and even the jazz method, to the four corners of the earth (and in providing a good deal of lucrative employment for a lot of jazz musicians) the swing band was essentially a music machine. Although ostensibly a jazz dance band, it had less in common with the early jazz dance bands than with the military bands from which the former had derived their instrumentation. The premium placed on power and precision in the section playing, and the discipline necessary to achieve it, has already been mentioned, also the need for a high enough standard of bandstand behaviour and appearance to reinforce the band's musical image. There were the uniforms, naturally, and even physical antics of a synchronised nature which closely resembled military drill - individual sections standing up together, waving their instruments about in time to the music, and sitting down together as dictated by the orchestration. All the disadvantages of a military band, in fact, without even the benefit of regular exercise in the fresh air!

Of course, there were the individual solos for which generous space was often allowed by the composer-arranger, but even these, once created, tended to become stereotyped by frequent repetition, plus the fact that, if the piece had been recorded, the solos in it needed to be virtually set in concrete to satisfy any fans present who were familiar with the record. Also, no matter where they went, the fans took it for granted that the band would play the numbers for which they were nationally famous, and it was this constant repetition of the same numbers, in the same arrangements with the same solos, night after night, that got to all but the most cynically professional of the musicians in the end. It was the very antithesis of the jazz that many of them felt sure they would be happier playing, if only they could get paid for doing so. This "book fatigue", when added to all the other pressures and distractions, plus the market's never ending demand for innovation, seems to have ensured that, although the best of the bandleaders outlasted the decade, the life of each of the bands assembled under their names was rarely more than two years, after which, given the will and the financial backing, the whole process could begin again.

The gramophone records went marching on, however, thanks to the international music industry - as did the composer-arrangers' orchestrations, thus ensuring that, all over the world, swing music would be played, not only by bands of a size comparable to that of the great protagonists performing in the huge dance-halls of the capital cities and holiday resorts, but also by bands of diminishing size, right down the scale of dance-halls more appropriate to the smaller cities and towns, back to those village halls, already mentioned, with their Saturday hops. The band parts, you see, were all conveniently cross-cued to make it possible for these numbers to be performed, however inadequately, with progressively reducing forces, ending up with the basic trio of alto sax, piano and drums. Curiously enough however, the closer swing music got to the smaller bands in the remoter towns, the closer it got to reuniting with the raw

jazz of its roots, which, as we shall see, had made its own way there in the meantime.

The point to be made here, meanwhile, is that the musicians in the smaller bands which served the remoter provincial, suburban and even rural communities, were invariably amateurs, or semi-pros as they preferred to call themselves (since they did not shrink from charging what the market would bear for their services), who, like the members of our Hypothetical Jazz Band, earned their livings in other ways, and played in local dance bands only in their spare time, as much for pleasure as for profit. Consequently, apart from the fact that they were consumers of musical instruments, gramophone records, radio broadcasts, band parts, and the like, they stood outside the music industry, and were unaffected by the economic exigencies bearing down on the professional musicians, who were now enmeshed in a commercial machine, which, for all its uncomfortable internal contradictions, had become (with its high-profile metropolitan residencies, provincial tours, recording contracts, broadcasting agreements, royalties, and even film appearances) a bigger money-spinner than anything before it in jazz. In order to compete for their share of the spoils against what they saw as the increasing power and complexity of commercial interests intent on exploiting the bands' earning capacity, the professional musicians felt compelled to support a countervailing growth in the power and influence of the musicians' trade unions.

There must be something either sad or risible about the sight of the jazz musician (free creative spirit) becoming a card-carrying member of a trade union, insisting on agreed union rates of pay, declining to play in bands which employed non-union labour, or even withdrawing his labour collectively when instructed to do so, but, the way things were going, if he wanted to earn his living as a full-time professional, he could not afford to be without whatever present or future protection unionisation might give him, because, even at the height of the swing band boom, his livelihood was coming under threat from the very technology which had made it all possible.

Ever since the introduction of electrical sound recording in 1926, the techniques, not just of sound recording, but, more importantly, of sound reproduction (and amplification) had been improving steadily, as had the quality of sound broadcasting, until a point would inevitably be reached at which, given the right equipment, performances by even the biggest of the swing bands could be simulated without the band itself being present. In the meantime, a close approximation of this could be achieved by playing a gramophone record over the airwaves, or on any gramophone that incorporated the electronically amplified sound resources developed for radio and was called a radiogram. So, as the swing bands were exploiting their existing market opportunities, and the industrialisation process, to become more and more expensive and exclusive, their recorded sound images were getting cheaper and more accessible, until, in the end, the bubble burst, as bubbles do, quite suddenly.

But that was in the future. Let us take our leave of big band jazz for the time being, at the height of its power and prestige towards the end of World War Two, just a few years before it went into precipitate decline - but only, let it be said, from the highest pinnacle of popular esteem. The big swing band did not, like the dinosaur, just disappear, since it is still with us today as a concert band, but it did become unviable as a commercial entity when the market moved in ways that precluded it from fulfilling its basic function as a dance band. At this point, however, we will dwell only on those dear dead days when entire generations swung around the dance floors of the Western World (when not prevented from doing so by the consequences of enemy action) to an instrumental

dance music of a quality and range which had probably not been equalled before, and certainly has not since.

It seems unarguable that, while playing for dancing, the big swing bands qualified for a rating at the top end of Quadrant B in our jazz authenticity index, and, because of the sheer vitality of their use of the idiom, the irresistible force of the swinging beat they were able to generate, and the scope they allowed for individual improvisation, they were never far (for all their size and their reliance on the written score) from the median line with Quadrant A. They carried the incantatory effect to new heights of subtlety and compulsiveness, while dressing it up in the most elaborate, intriguing, and almost always festive, musical clothing.

Furthermore, the jazz thus produced was a useful social lubricant - it not only made one want to dance, but, once on the floor with the chosen partner, left a number of options open to the pair of you. The sound of even the biggest band was never loud enough to make conversation impossible, and this could range from the polite, through the interesting, to the intimate. The movements of the dances, involving as they did a form of heterosexual physical embrace, could progress from the conventional, through the consensual, to the sexually congressional - all fuelled by the potency of the music. And, if it turned out that the chemistry wasn't quite right, well, the pair of you could simply dance around in silence, enjoying the music and inspecting the passing throng, and go your separate ways at the end of the set, without regret. You could even applaud the band after each number, if you wished, and encourage them, by direct personal exhortation, as you circulated past the bandstand, to keep the quality up. It was all very interactive, and quite civilised.

Such social considerations are not without their importance when assessing the merits or otherwise of the music generated by this core function of jazz, which stretched in an unbroken line from the beginning of the century to its halfway mark. No matter how ineffectively it explored the idiom or utilised the method, big band jazz could never, by definition, separate itself from the incantatory effect, nor from the original functional role of jazz. For the rawer jazz which hung suspended from this lifeline, and which we shall now examine, its place in the larger scheme of things was never to be quite so assured.

CHAPTER SEVEN (How did the smaller survive?)

1

Having established a continuous bottom line, as it were, for functional jazz by tracing the evolution of the jazz dance band from its humble origins in the early decades of the century to its ultimate commercial apotheosis as the all-conquering swing band of the late 1940s, we can now go back to the mid-1920s and look again, this time for connections and common factors among that more randomly occurring and, at first sight, more disparate cluster of phenomena which we have hitherto referred to as raw jazz, but which is usually thought of as real jazz. Since, however, the use of such a term would beg so many of the questions we are seeking to explore here, a better portmanteau label, for our present purposes, might be small band jazz. Better, because the bands in question, whatever the extent to which they practised collective improvisation or used composed arrangements in their ensemble playing, consisted essentially of groups of soloists (rather than the sections or choirs of instruments used in big band jazz), and, as we have seen from our Hypothetical Jazz Band, the practical upper limit to such a combination is about eight players - four rhythm and four front line.

We are not concerned here with any small band jazz played primarily for dancing during this period, because that will already have been dealt with in the last chapter. In any case, although there may have been a lot of it about, and although we can feel confident that, what there was of it, would surely have earned high marks in Quadrant A of our jazz authenticity index, it has, alas, being jazz, left little trace behind. The sad fact is that, given the essential ephemerality of improvisation, the only evidence we have about the small band jazz of the past is that provided at first hand by gramophone records, or at second hand by the memories of those who either played it or heard it played. Memory, however, is so much at the mercy of hindsight (which is rarely disinterested), that, even though they were produced in the artificial surroundings of the recording studios for a purpose which represented a significant departure from the original function of the music, it is on the gramophone records that we must rely for any hard information about the development of small band jazz during the period in question, turning to anecdotal evidence only for confirmation of its existence in other forms.

Fortunately, the gramophone recordings are there in abundance to provide hours of pleasure, in thousands of three-minute shots of small band jazz, frozen for ever in time for anyone willing to listen. Very large numbers of words have already been written and spoken (and will, no doubt, continue to be written and spoken) about the performances enshrined on these discs, and about the musicians responsible for them - virtually all of whom are now dead. To millions of people the world over, these gramophone records have a qualitatively different provenance from past recordings of that other, much more extensive body of Western music which has been conceived by individual composers and written down in a code to be interpreted by skilled musicians for the delectation of audiences anywhere, at any time, long after its creators are dead. It follows from this, that any small band jazz which was not recorded as it was being played, cannot exist for anyone who was not present to hear it, and also that the very best small band jazz ever produced might never have been recorded, and is thus, alas, lost forever.

Ultimately, this rather adventitious relationship between early small band jazz (the ephemeral product of occasional handfuls of semi-itinerant and often self-taught musicians) and the gramophone record (the enduring product of innovation and marketing by the international music industry) led to distortions in the perception of the nature of jazz by consumers and producers alike which affected the course of its development in ways which were not always for the best. In the beginning, however, there seemed to be no other way for small band jazz to go (if it was to go anywhere at all), and it is difficult to imagine either the idiom or the method achieving anything like the dissemination and development they enjoyed between 1920 and 1950 without the assistance of the gramophone. Looking back now on the golden treasury of recordings made between those dates, the developments which took place in small band jazz seem quite natural, even pre-ordained, and it requires a very considerable effort of the imagination to go back to square one and examine these events from the other end.

We have already observed, however, that small band jazz was first recorded by a budding gramophone industry as a novelty among many other novelties to see whether it would sell or not (there being no known demand for it at the time), and that the performers chosen for this rather crude (but cheap and effective) market testing were pre-existing bands already enjoying some degree of popularity, or even notoriety, in the American cities where the recording studios were situated. The bands had to be small because the recording techniques of the time could not easily accommodate more than a handful of players performing together, and they were most likely to be found in some local dance hall, drawing bigger crowds than usual with the "hot" music they were playing. But it must be remembered that there was then, and has been since, a very fine line between the bandstand of the dance hall and the stage of the music hall, or vaudeville, as it was called in the USA.

It was not uncommon for early jazz bands to be featured as a novelty on the stage of the local theatre, and to proceed from there to the recording studio. There was also traffic in the other direction, of course. If a band became more widely known through its gramophone records, it could cash in on its fame while it lasted by appearing as an "act" on the music hall circuit. The point of interest here being that, although they were in the process of creating a musical form which was later to be treated with great respect and even reverence by others, many of the early jazzmen, in their search for a living, had few qualms about being seen as popular entertainers first, dance band musicians next, and jazzmen only subsequently. This was a natural consequence of jazz having developed as an offshoot of a popular culture of great vigour, adaptability and good humour, in which song and dance were key elements, and of which the main objective was to find out what the public would pay for and then provide it.

It follows that, the itinerant musician as all-round popular entertainer is not to be underestimated as an element in the development of jazz, nor is this early tendency for the music to perform a number of useful social functions (albeit in ways which still left room for a great deal of originality and creativity), without taking itself too seriously. What made jazz unique, remember, was that it was not a product of the existing music establishment, that it was everything that conventional music was not, that it came up from below rather than down from above, and that it made its way by using anything in the existing popular culture which came to hand. This made for a musical vernacular which was not only histrionic, extravert and even ingratiating, but could also be subversive, disrespectful and even vulgar, while always remaining modestly pragmatic in its efforts to provide a different kind of musical experience from anything else

available. Almost by definition, these qualities could also be ascribed to many of the early jazzmen, who could afford to be really serious about only one thing: the need to find and tickle the collective G-spot of whichever customers were paying their wages at the time - by playing jazz, if possible, by singing and dancing, if required, but by clowning around, if necessary. It was no accident that so many of the great jazzmen to emerge from this school were also great showmen.

These, then, were the readymade bands that first went into the studios to record three minute snatches of the music they had already been playing elsewhere. Since, however, it might not be uncommon for a single number to last for up to half an hour in the dance hall (where the objective was to generate and maintain an adequate level of excitement among the dancers by a combination of the incantatory effect and frequent repetition of the tune with increasingly elaborate ornamentation if possible), a considerable amount of editing and abbreviation would be necessary to adapt it to the 10"x 78 rpm format. This was not necessarily a bad thing, since there was a world of difference between the needs and perceptions of the dancer in the dance hall, and those of the listener in the home. The three and a half minute limit focussed the minds of the musicians and the recording managers on picking out the best bits from the band's usual treatment of a tune and moulding them into as coherent and attractive a package as possible for the occasion. It can safely be assumed, therefore, that a great deal of what was repetitious, mediocre and uninteresting was left out.

Whatever the process leading to this outcome, there is no denying that certain choices had to be made, and it would not be stretching the point too far to conclude that the best records were made by those bands which not only played the best jazz, but also exercised the best judgement regarding what to put in and what to leave out. How much ensemble playing to include, for example, and where to position it; which individual soloists to feature, and when. And although, on the face of it, these were marketing decisions, it could be argued that this was the first overt application of the critical musical intelligence to jazz. True or not, the ideal three-minute concoction would have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and unfold a sequence of musical events designed to engage and hold the purchaser's interest, even after repeated hearings of the record - all of which tended to favour the emergence of the instrumental soloist. Obviously, if you end up listening to a record rather than dancing to it, there will be less of interest in a continuous full band ensemble, whether collectively improvised or previously composed, than in also hearing what an individual soloist can make of the tune, if given his head.

Thus, when the distinctive voice of small band jazz (as reconstituted in thousands of homes from those early records) began to make itself heard above the background noise of the marketplace and generate a demand for more of the same, there was a growth of interest in, not only the names of the bands, but also the identities of the individual soloists. This led to the eventual recognition of a number of jazz virtuosi whose technical command of their chosen instrument and innate musical abilities, coupled with their complete mastery of the jazz idiom and jazz method, made it possible for them to improvise with such fluency that they seemed to be extending the vocabulary of jazz with virtually every performance they gave. It was thanks to the impact of this rare combination of creativity and technique on the material already being produced to exploit the opportunities presented by the gramophone record that these individuals came eventually to be seen as the de facto creators of jazz.

And if the appearance of the jazz instrumental virtuoso on gramophone record is seen as a watershed from which a number of fateful consequences (many of them still discernable around us today) can be traced, the fact that it coincided, more or less, with the great leap forward from acoustic to electrical recording techniques which began in 1926 was particularly fortunate. This advance made it possible for the many miniature masterpieces which then ensued (and which have given, and will continue to give, such pleasure to generations of jazz lovers not yet born when they were made) to be captured at a level of sound quality which would, at least, no longer actively intrude between the music and the listener. Along with this came the realisation that, rather than extracting it from pieces of greater length which had originally been designed for a different purpose, small band jazz could be created from scratch and tailor-made to fit the exigencies of the recording studio. In other words, instead of picking the best bits out of a performance by an existing band, why not pick the best musicians available in the vicinity of the studio and put them together specifically for recording purposes?

This simple step may seem, in retrospect, to have been a stunningly obvious one to take, but, at the time, it marked a significant and quite risky departure from the accepted way of doing things, both commercially and musically. Its effect was to open up a whole new world of opportunities for the emergent jazz virtuosi, and also, less obviously at the time but of almost equal future moment, to nourish the growth of a hitherto obscure offshoot of the music industry which we will call, for want of a better term, the jazz appreciation department - bearing in mind that, in the beginning, it was a very makeshift affair, and would remain so for some time to come. But no matter how humble and homespun its origins, there is an extent to which the true birth of jazz, as we understand it today, can be dated just as accurately from the appearance on the scene of the jazz appreciation department as it can from the emergence of the professional jazz virtuosi - in fact, the two phenomena may even be opposite sides of the same coin.

2

As we have seen, the earliest jazz records had been left to make their own missionary way, in more or less random fashion, to the four corners of the earth in search of a market, but, by the late 1920s, there was a growing band of converts perceptive enough to recognise the unique properties of the music they contained, and sufficiently intrigued by it to want to buy more of the same - if they could find it. This incipient consumer demand was met by the same kind of crude market forces which had produced it. Already, a new sub-species of hack journalist (hardly a critic at this stage) had evolved to fill the widely felt need for someone to listen to the ever-increasing numbers of new gramophone records of all kinds flooding onto the market, and describe them (as favourably as possible, of course) for the benefit of any interested parties, initially in the pages of those trade publications which (with the hardly disinterested support of advertising from the music publishers and the gramophone companies) were already part of the scene. Inevitably, one or two of these pundits began to get hooked on, and specialise in, jazz.

In the beginning, as we have also seen, there was a great deal of confusion about everything to do with the newly emerging entity which we are here calling small band jazz, but which went under all manner of other names at the time, and for some years to come. Things were not helped by the fact that, although virtually all the records which eventually came to be recognised as jazz classics were made in the USA, the first positive signs of a developing appreciation of jazz emerged in Europe - mainly in Britain and France - where the records were issued under a bewildering variety of labels. Until quite late

in the 1920s, before the Wall Street Crash ushered in the Depression, there was a plethora of small companies producing gramophone records in Europe, many with American connections, and, in those days, the amount of information it was thought fit to print on the record label (the only space available for this purpose) was absolutely minimal. This, however, was not as great a drawback as it might have been, since the information actually conceded could often be quite deliberately misleading. There was a good chance, for example, that, even if the title of the tune being played was given correctly, or nearly so, the name of the band might have been dreamed up from nowhere by some bright spark in the sales department of the record company in the hope of tickling what was thought to be the potential customer's fancy. And as for naming the individual musicians... what on earth for?

There was also the rather awkward fact that these early examples of small band jazz were categorised by the producers and reviewers alike as a type of dance music, thus requiring some assessment always to be made of this aspect of their appeal. This may account for the obvious reluctance to describe the music as jazz - a generic term then seen as covering all music which spoke some version, however refined, of the jazz idiom (dance music, popular songs and even some concert music) - and the tendency for our small band jazz to be distinguished from the rest by using terms like "hot" "rhythm" and "swing". It was only when big band jazz became known as swing in the late 1930s that small band jazz could become, unequivocally, jazz - although the arguments about what was, and was not jazz, have never quite been laid to rest. Starting as they were from scratch, therefore, the discerning record buyer and the emergent jazz appreciation department of the industry had a formidable task ahead of them as they strove, first, to define the characteristics of what some of them saw as a new and quite distinctive art form, and then to identify and discriminate between the artists who were creating it.

Although the first tentative reviews of what we would now call jazz records began to appear in the mid-1920s, they were to found initially only in the back pages of specialist journals like the "Melody Maker", first published in Britain as a monthly in January 1926 with the declared aim of appealing to "...All Directly or Indirectly Interested in the Production of Popular Music" (*italics added*). This was a market which was much more substantial in the mid-1920s than it would be today, even if we include only those parts of it invaded by the jazz idiom, thus excluding most of light concert music. It has to be remembered that, in those days, there would be, in every city and major town, very large numbers of musicians gainfully employed in the proliferating dance bands, in the pit orchestras of the numerous musical theatres, and even in the larger cinemas before the advent of the film sound track. The Melody Maker and similar magazines existed primarily to cater for the mundane professional interests of this veritable army of functional musicians, as well as for those of the music publishers, gramophone makers, and gramophone record producers who advertised in them.

From the beginning, then, the jazz appreciation department was lumbered with several different objectives which were not always mutually supportive. First, it was trying to promote the sale of a relatively small group of gramophone records by pointing to their irresistible functional appeal as dance music - hence the hot, rhythm, and swing terminology to convey the superiority of their incantatory effect. Second, it was groping towards an appreciation of the developing improvisatory skills of the instrumentalists involved, and, third, coming to terms with the subsequent realisation that these performances represented a radical new departure in popular music that might be deserving of the kind of critical study hitherto afforded only to serious concert music.

Finally, it was desperately trying to identify, and collect information about, the musicians who were creating the music which emerged, to such novel effect, from the horns of their gramophones.

Not surprisingly, in pursuing the second, third and fourth of these aims, sight was soon lost of the first of them. By the mid 1930s, thanks to the gramophone and the efforts of jazz appreciation department, small band jazz had lost virtually all contact with its functional origins and become music to be listened to, even studied (concert music, in effect), and, in making this transition, had given, as we shall see, a number of hostages to fortune. Throughout this period, however, while the ambiguities and inconsistencies inherent in the production and promotion of early small band jazz on gramophone records were being pretty well documented for our future consideration by the jazz appreciation department of the day, little was being noted about the characteristics, peculiar or otherwise, of that all-important component of the market for this new product, the consumers. When we come to ask ourselves who was actually buying these records, we can, in the absence of the kind of market research data that would be available in similar circumstances today, only speculate.

3

Obviously, a large group of consumers would be buying those records since identified as jazz classics simply in order to dance to them in private, either at home or at informal gatherings of one kind or another which were too small, or too impromptu, to warrant a live dance band. There are strong reasons for assuming that these consumers would be both young and predominantly middle class (or aspiring to be). Young, since, from the start, small band jazz was seen (quite rightly) as subversive of established conventions, atavistic in its appeal, and disinhibiting in its effect - a phenomenon, therefore, to be fulminated against from the pulpit and in the pages of the respectable press, where it was regularly reviled as decadent, primitive, and (worst of all) aphrodisiac, all of which terms are commonly used to castigate any new social stimulant discovered by the young.

And middle-class, because, in the 1920s, who but they would be emancipated enough to risk experimentation with the dangerous pleasures of dancing in the arms of a member of the opposite sex to the "jungle" sounds of "nigger" music - to give small band jazz two of its most frequently applied contemporary labels? And who but they would be affluent enough to afford the domestic circumstances which made this possible? Working class houses simply did not have enough room in them for dance parties, so the working class youngsters had to make do with the more conventional ballroom dancing in public dance halls where the dance "orchestras" of the day were purveying what was, after all, a more homogenised and glossily packaged version of the incantatory effect in the jazz idiom.

There was also the question of booze - a substance with which small band jazz seems always to have had an affinity. Between the wars, public dance halls in the UK were never licensed to sell alcoholic drinks, nor, even, were the private dance clubs. In today's permissive climate it is hard to imagine just how difficult it was, in those days, to get a liquor licence for any premises which did not already have one. In the USA there was, of course, complete Prohibition from 1920 to 1933 - crucial years for small band jazz - and this ensured that most of the illicit drinking which inevitably took place during that time would be confined, for obvious reasons, to the private domain, where the gramophone record flourished. In both countries, therefore, in spite of the potentially inflammatory nature of the intersexual physical proximity encouraged by the fox-trot, public dance-halls were dens of respectability.

All of which favoured the consumption of small band jazz on gramophone record by the better educated and more affluent classes of society in the privacy of their own homes and clubhouses, and also, given that it was the younger ones who were its most enthusiastic users, in their colleges and universities. Since these were the same people whose cultural environment was most likely to have exposed them to, and given them some understanding and appreciation of, heavy concert music (as I prefer to call it, rather than "classical", "serious", or even "straight", all of which beg questions), it was not long before a number of them began to listen to the records more attentively, and analyse what it was about them that made them so appealing. It was a short step from there to becoming a student of jazz, a discriminating collector of records, and a customer of the jazz appreciation department. Some of these initiates, as is so often the case with converts, became dedicated evangelists in the cause of small band jazz (or of their own personal vision of it), and soon began to dogmatise and pontificate about a subject which now stood revealed to them as a virgin field for scholarly exegesis and its inseparable companion, argument.

The growth of this jazz intelligentsia was, not unnaturally, a welcome development for the jazz appreciation department of the industry, but it was largely irrelevant to the concerns of the jazz virtuosi, which lay more in the direction of practice than theory, and who, in any case, had a living to earn and tended to resent what soon became a rather purist tendency at the more academic end of the market. Fortunately for them, until the advent of big band jazz, there continued to exist a more pragmatic, less articulate majority of young middle-class consumers who bought small band jazz on gramophone records because they enjoyed the effect it had on their own high spirits (and lower extremities), and on those of their friends and partners, but were too distracted by the many other things that life had to offer to enquire too closely into how this was being done, and by whom.

It seems likely, however, that our second group of likely customers for small band jazz on gramophone record would be much less middle-class in its origins than the first, since it consisted of the large and, at that stage, still growing numbers of professional musicians working in the booming dance band industry, many of whom had their own practical reasons, in addition to the obvious one of liking the music, for buying the records. To many of these rank and file bandsmen, particularly, again, the younger ones, the performances enshrined in the records came, not just as a revelation, but also as a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge was to their ability to learn to improvise well enough to play small band jazz themselves, bearing in mind that its musical language was basically the same idiom they were using (albeit in a sanitised and de-natured form) every day of their working lives, and that the instruments upon which the jazz virtuosi worked their wonders were the very ones used by themselves to churn out the daily quota of tightly orchestrated dance music which was their stock in trade. The opportunity, therefore, was to escape from the tyranny of the composer-arranger and the regimentation of the band leader to sing their own original songs, and, in so doing, to rise above the anonymous mass of the instrumental proletariat to become jazz virtuosi themselves, and earn perchance, fame and fortune - or, at least, fame!

In the circumstances prevailing at the time, however, very few of these aspirants were ever given the opportunity of hearing their exemplars in the flesh, and even those who did, still needed to study the gramophone records in order to copy what had already been invented before going on to make any personal contribution of which they might become capable - there being no practical way of conveying, by means of traditional musical notation, the

unconventional and idiosyncratic use to which the jazz virtuosi were putting their instruments. We know that significant numbers of professional dance-band musicians were consumers of small band jazz on gramophone record in this way, because some of them did, in fact, go on to become jazz virtuosi in their own right, eventually to tell their stories and even earn their livings in the jazz appreciation department where the breadth of their experience, coupled with an ability to identify the playing of other jazzmen on obscure gramophone records (and to recount amusing anecdotes about them) became, with the passage of time, quite bankable assets.

But there must have been a third group of consumers, falling somewhere between the first two, about which little can be known. These would be the youngsters, probably middle class or educated working class, who, in addition to being captivated by small band jazz, were also amateur musicians, and bought the records, first to dance to or listen to, but then to learn from, for their own pleasure, to the best of their ability, which, in some cases, might be not inconsiderable. For the members of this group, some of whose activities are to be examined in greater detail in the next chapter, small band jazz possessed at least two of the same attractions it had for the professional dance band musicians in our second group - namely, freedom from the dictatorship of the written notes, and the opportunity, through improvisation, for personal self-expression. But it also had at least two other advantages.

The first of these was that, once the idiom was mastered, it was perfectly possible for an amateur instrumentalist to play quite authentic jazz without having to step outside the limits of his existing level of competence. This should not be taken as meaning that it was easy to play jazz badly (even though that may be true), but rather as a reminder that, in spite of the way jazz was developing in the music industry during the period in question, neither the jazz idiom nor the jazz method were dependent on instrumental virtuosity for their proper and effective exploitation. We need only look back at the origins of jazz to see the truth of this. To put it another way, once a certain basic level of instrumental dexterity had been achieved, the jazz produced by the tyro, improvising on a familiar tune in a congenial key, could be just as affecting as that of a jazz virtuoso using the same material. The difference between the two performers would reside in the jazz virtuoso's superior ability to improvise fluently and confidently over a much greater range of tunes and keys - ultimately, any tune in any key! It followed that, provided he could use the jazz idiom and keep within his own technical limitations when improvising his variations on a theme, the amateur would certainly be able to produce a more assured, articulate and "virtuoso" performance than by reading the same notes from a written score. In short, it is easier to play authentic jazz acceptably well than to play authentic concert music acceptably well - certainly, as a solo performer.

This brings us to the second attraction which small band jazz had for the amateur musician - the speedy access it could offer to the dangerous but intoxicating thrills of performing in public. There were other pleasures to be enjoyed before that one, of course, but these were not peculiar to jazz. The pleasure of getting together with other like-minded individuals to make music in private, was, for example, one with which amateur musicians had been familiar for centuries - hence the enormous body of instrumental and vocal concert music called chamber music. But, for the reasons already given above, the distance between the quiet enjoyment of practising together in private and the high excitement of exposing one's best artistic endeavours, for better or for worse, to a real live audience, could be much shorter with jazz than with concert music.

But, earning as they did their often quite ample livings in a wide variety of more or less fulfilling and time-consuming other ways, not all amateur musicians were attracted by the prospect of performing in concert, where the penalties for getting it wrong can seem, in some eyes, to far outweigh the rewards for getting it right. The risk is particularly high for jazz musicians, of course, who are not only coaxing music from an inanimate instrument, but also, in effect, composing as they go. When an amateur plays heavy concert music in public, he will at least have had the benefit of as much prior rehearsal as is deemed to be necessary to enable him to reproduce the composer's notes from the written score correctly on the night. The amateur jazzman, on the other hand, has only his knowledge of the tune (and, possibly, the underlying chord sequence) and such confidence as he can muster in his own ability to produce a variation on it which will run from beginning to end without either collapsing into incoherence, or, if he is playing a wind instrument, suffering from a loss of control over the sound he is making.

The rewards for bringing it off, however, in terms of the personal satisfaction engendered by the approbation of fellow jazzmen and a live audience, can be very, very great, but it takes a special kind of temperament first to attempt to play jazz in public and then to persist in the face of any flaws in the ability to do so which will, initially, almost certainly stand revealed. Incidentally, this postulates a need, which it might not always be easy to meet, for budding jazzmen to be given the opportunity of playing less than adequately in public, if they are ever to play well, but this is something, too, for later consideration. In the meantime, we can be sure that, for the amateur musician wanting to become a jazzman, as for the professional musician, the gramophone records were virtually the only tuition available, since the chances of hearing any of the jazz virtuosi in the flesh, let alone receiving lessons from one of them, were very small indeed.

The emergence of the jazz record consumer to patronise both the jazz appreciation industry and the jazz virtuosi, meant that all the key elements were in place by the early 1930s for the commercial exploitation of small band jazz by what was now, in effect, a fledgling jazz industry. Thanks to the gramophone record, there seemed to be no reason why, given time, jazz should not take its place alongside heavy concert music, light concert music, and popular song & dance music as a separate and financially viable division of the international music industry. And through the next two decades, until about the midpoint of the century, the market for small band jazz on gramophone record (we have yet to consider any other kind) went through a fruitful period of development and rationalisation. This was largely thanks to the jazz appreciation department which acted, in effect, as a branch of the marketing department of the international music industry to prevail upon the record producers to supply more and more information about the individual musicians involved in the making of each record, and even about the recording dates.

Once it was a part of the international music industry, however, it was taken for granted that small band jazz on gramophone record would endeavour, like the other divisions of the industry, to increase the size of its market by employing such innovation and marketing techniques as were available to it, and thus it was that small band jazz embarked upon a course which was to lead it into very strange waters indeed. As an urban folk music which owed its unique position in the world of music, not only to the jazz idiom, but also, and more specifically, to the jazz method of collective and individual improvisation, there was much less scope for innovation in small band jazz than there was in other divisions of the music industry where the composer-arranger and the musical director

exercised their joint sway by means of the written notes. Nor, given the functional origins of the music and its dependence on the individual performances (if not the physical presence) of the jazz virtuosi for its production, did there seem to be much scope for the wider marketing of the genuine article.

Nevertheless, to sell more records, innovation and marketing there had to be, and the impetus given to small band jazz by its recognition as a new and distinct art form in the 20s and the developments in gramophone technology and radio broadcasting which took place during the 30s and 40s, were enough to carry it along through a period of what looked, at the time, like experimentation and development, but which can be seen in retrospect to have been a very thorough and detailed exploration of the possibilities (including, by inference, the limitations) of small band jazz, while it was being disseminated to a steadily widening audience. Such innovations as there were during this period relied heavily on increases in sheer technical virtuosity on the part of the instrumentalists as they competed with each other to take the jazz idiom they had inherited (or, in some cases, helped to invent) into realms of invention, pace and fluency which had been well beyond the reach of the pioneers.

There was also, as with all popular music, a purely commercial emphasis on novelty for its own sake, either in the choice of the tune to be used as a vehicle, or in the type of treatment it was accorded by the band, but before turning a critical eye on the small band jazz enshrined in the records produced during this period, we should perhaps look a little more closely at the jazz virtuosi and the jazz appreciation department of the industry for clues as to why the music took the forms it did.

4

The single most important fact about the jazz virtuosi was that they were professional musicians who aspired to earn a living by playing jazz music as a full time job. The second most important fact about them was that, for reasons which we have yet to explore, very, very few of them were ever able to earn a living by playing small band jazz exclusively. This meant that, to survive as professional musicians, they had to be either technically competent enough to work in dance bands (later, swing bands), or theatre pit, or even concert orchestras - whatever was available; or, if not (and this often meant they were unable to read music well enough), able and willing, like "resting" actors, to earn their daily bread in other, less glamorous ways between engagements. In either case, to work at all as professional musicians, they were obliged to be fully paid up members of a musicians' trade union which would not allow its members to play even jazz for less than the agreed union rates.

This was not the only means by which the trade unions made life difficult for the jazz virtuosi. In the UK, for example, the Musicians Union exerted every effort to prevent "foreign" jazzmen from obtaining the necessary permission to play here, taking the mundane view that any alien musician performing in the UK would be depriving a native musician of a job. The fact that, in small band jazz, the singer was the song to an extent which could never be the case in any of the composer-arranger varieties of music, was not seen as relevant. There was also the vexed question of reciprocity, and it was this which was finally used, in 1935, by the British Ministry of Labour, under pressure from the Musicians' Union, to ban US musicians from performing in this country at all, until such a time as the American Federation of Musicians would agree to reciprocity of access to work in the US for British musicians. This ban lasted, believe it or not, for 20 years. During all that time, the uncomfortable fact that budding jazzmen in the UK had far more cogent reasons (certainly until the

end of World War Two) for wanting to hear the American jazz virtuosi performing live than vice versa, was not allowed to enter the equation.

All this was good for the sale of gramophone records, of course, which meant that the jazz virtuosi could count on some kind of money from this source. In those days, however, this was not very much, and it was not very regular, and even that source of income fell foul of the unions when, for reasons which we will examine in greater detail later, the Federation of American Musicians imposed a recording ban lasting from 1942 to 1944. Since, as we have seen, small band jazz was far more dependent on the gramophone record for its dissemination than was composer-arranger music, this ban hit the jazz virtuosi particularly hard, providing further evidence that, in spite of the unique nature of their skills and the clear indications that an exploitable market for them did exist, there might be some kind of fundamental incompatibility between small band jazz and the commercial machinery of the music industry.

In the meantime, in order to cash in on any fame he had achieved through the sale of his records, it became obvious that the jazz virtuoso needed both a very good agent and the ability to produce a crowd-pleasing performance, usually as a featured soloist, on any available stage, at any time. The few of them who made it to the UK before the ban, did so by touring as novelty acts on the music-hall stage, where they received, not surprisingly, a rather mixed reception. Naturally, the jazz record consumers packed in to see them in the flesh, and, after waiting impatiently through the other acts on the bill, duly gave them an enthusiastic welcome, but there were those in the jazz appreciation department of the industry who found these performances disappointingly stereotypical, banal and exhibitionistic. And to the uninitiated remainder of the music hall audience, the regulars, it was all a bit noisy, and not always easy to take in. Even without the ban, it was evident that, away from the gramophone record and detached from its functional roots, small band jazz might have some difficulty in finding a role for itself in the world of concert music.

On records, however, in spite of all the difficulties, the jazz virtuosi were able to thrive as part of an orderly distribution network which originated in the cloistered calm of the recording studio and terminated in the domestic quiet of a thousand front parlours - a far cry from the noise and bustle of the sweaty social intercourse in which small band jazz had originally been spawned and which was still considered by many of its consumers to be its true home. But, within these constraints, the jazz virtuosi were free to strive for the creation of better small band jazz while continuing to play, for the most part, composer-arranger music for a living elsewhere. But what, in this context, was better small band jazz? The principal objective of making a gramophone record, was to produce a commodity which would sell well, but the feed-back from the jazz appreciation department as to what kind of jazz might achieve this objective, was, as we shall see, rather confused, and such machinery as existed at the time for "plugging" records (over the airwaves, for example) were extremely primitive by present day standards, and could find no room in it for such a minority cult as small band jazz.

For the gramophone record company management, the basic selling points of any small band jazz recording would be the name of the tune to be played and the reputations of the jazzmen involved, particularly the leader of the group. Once these were established, all their efforts would be concentrated, first, on the technical quality of the recording, and, then, on the cost-effectiveness of their production and distribution systems. For the jazz virtuosi, on the other hand, the objectives were a lot less clear-cut, and the constraints imposed by

what was, after all, a quite artificial environment for small band jazz, were palpable.

In spite of the technical advances in the recording of sound, there was still a 3.5 minute limit on the time available on a 10 inch record, and, as we have seen, the jazz virtuosi who gathered in the studio would be less and less likely to be the members of an established band and more and more likely to have been hand-picked for the occasion, and all of them would expect to be given an opportunity of displaying the skills on which their reputations were based, otherwise why include them? Some rehearsal time would therefore be necessary, but, for sound commercial reasons, its duration would be limited.

These circumstances placed a high premium on a mature musical craftsmanship, leaving no room for fumbling around on anyone's part and sparing little patience on anyone who did. The result was a small world in which keen competition for primacy was mediated by the need to be smoothly co-operative at crucial times, and which tended, therefore, given all the other constraints we have noted, to be rather more exclusive than was appropriate to the free, generous and all-embracing spirit of true jazz, as commonly perceived. It is hardly surprising, then, that during the 30s and 40s, for each of the eight instruments played by the members of our Hypothetical Jazz Band, only a handful of virtuosi emerged who regularly recorded small band jazz in different combinations, under different leaders.

Nor is it surprising that the jazz virtuosi took a great pride in their superior musicianship, and even spoke disparagingly of the deficiencies in this respect of the early jazzmen, as revealed by their recordings. They regarded themselves as having risen above all that crudity and being engaged in perfecting the medium. For all these reasons, their main concerns, as exhibited by the records they themselves made during this period, seem to have been to develop the superior technical expertise and singularity of tone which would not only attract the consumer of small band jazz on record, but would also be instantly recognisable as their very own, thus further enhancing their individual reputations and increasing their earning power as jazz musicians. Unfortunately for them, however, once a gramophone record had been made it became, in jazz terms, an established masterwork for all time, available to anyone with the money to buy it and the machinery to play it on. It could never be re-interpreted or re-worked to explore different aspects of its construction, as could composer-arranger music; it could never be improved upon, it could only be added to by doing something new and different.

Meanwhile, the jazz appreciation department of the industry was struggling to make sense of its chosen subject and resolve the internal contradictions resulting from its incorporation into the international music industry. This activity produced two distinct schools of thought about the appreciation of jazz - let us call them the purist and the progressive - which, in the beginning, had much in common, in that both of them acknowledged and applauded the unique contribution to the world of music which had been made by the evolution of the jazz idiom and the jazz method, and both saw jazz as something distinctly different from both light and heavy concert music on the one hand, and popular song & dance music on the other. The differences between them arose out of their conflicting views on what it was about jazz that made it uniquely valuable, and the extent to which this could, or should, be developed or preserved.

The purist school saw jazz as unique in being the spontaneous invention of an underprivileged and untutored black underclass, a music which had sprung

naturally out of a social soil watered by blood, sweat and tears, and which had broken completely free from the intellectual refinements and commercial concerns of the overclass, as manifested more specifically in the products of the international music industry. They saw it as a sort of functional urban folk music which depended for its appeal on the fact that its original producers were completely untrained, could not read music, and played and sang it "from the heart" for its original consumers - the families, friends and neighbours of the producers who simply used the music on social occasions, like food and drink, and could, indeed, share in its production by chanting and clapping if they felt so inclined. For a performance to be approved of by members of this camp, it had to be small band jazz (as opposed to big band jazz), it had to be improvised (preferably by musicians who played entirely by ear), and it had to be "sincere" and "honest" - which meant completely unsullied by any financial, or even social considerations which were extrinsic to the original function of the music. For the purist, the word "commercial" was the ultimate term of abuse.

Obviously, the purists were in an invidious position right from the start, since (with very, very few exceptions) their own acquaintanceship with jazz would have been impossible without its translation into gramophone recordings, which meant that the object of their appreciation was already a part of the international music industry when they first encountered it, and well on the way, therefore, to that very commercialisation which they nevertheless continued to deplore. Their position was not entirely illogical, however, since it was based on a perception of the inescapable truth that the further jazz moved away from the distinguishing characteristics which made it so different from the conventional music of its time, the more it would come to resemble the latter and tend to devalue its own assets and lose its individual identity.

Where the purists were idealists, however, the progressive school of jazz appreciation were pragmatists. They did not disagree with the purists about the origins of jazz, but they saw the invention of the jazz idiom and the jazz method as something akin to those serendipitous but seminal discoveries of pure science which needed the more worldly skills of applied science to make them work for the benefit of all. And given the success with which the jazz idiom had permeated popular music and the jazz method had penetrated the international music industry, via the gramophone record, the progressives could hardly fail to have the best of the argument in the short and medium term. With the whole weight of the industry behind them - professional musicians, their managers, their agents, gramophone record producers, even concert organisers - how could they be wrong? It was to be some time before the uncomfortable side-effects of this regime began to undermine their position and raise doubts as to the superiority of their views over those of the purists.

In the meantime, flushed with their achievements, a number of quite extreme positions were taken up in the progressive camp, and claims were made for jazz, as a revolutionary new departure in music, which it could not possibly sustain in the real world. Using the jazz idiom, there would be "symphonic" jazz, challenging traditional concert music on its own ground; using the jazz method, there would be "progressive" jazz, evolving in much the same way as traditional concert music had, from the contrapuntal simplicities of Bach to the harmonic complexities of Ravel and Debussy. A lot of this was what would nowadays be called "media hype" or "PR" and arose from the fact that, given their orientation, the progressive school of jazz appreciation had become a much more integral part of the jazz industry than the purists, and more inclined, therefore, to indulge in promotional excess. This is not to deny that, in the

holding of these views, there was an underlying element of that genuine sincerity which so often arises out of self-deception.

It has to be remembered, too, that, during this period, the earlier crudities of the jazz method and the seemingly unstoppable incursions of the jazz idiom into the world of music were taking a fair amount of critical stick from some of the more reactionary members of the conventional music establishment, and that both the purist and progressive schools of jazz appreciation were as one in fighting for the recognition of jazz as a new and unique species of music, even though they disagreed about its potential for development. It became an axiom of popular culture at the time, in fact, that there was indeed a battle going on, which was commonly referred to as "Jazz versus the Classics" and it was taken for granted by the majority of the general public that the two were somehow mutually exclusive, and that one side had to be preferred to the other. This was a time, after all, when the riches of the heavy concert music repertoire (arguably the jewel in the crown of the western world's artistic heritage), were virtually inaccessible to the average wage earner, who did not, therefore, take much persuading that the mental and financial effort required to appreciate heavy concert music was beyond him, or, alternatively, that much of it was pretentious nonsense patronised by a social elite in order to underline its own exclusiveness.

These attitudes had as much to do with the social mores of the time as with any paucity of the available means for acquiring a minimum of musical self-education, and they look decidedly quaint today when the world market for heavy concert music, both live and recorded, is almost as big as, and certainly more stable than that for so-called popular music (of which jazz is, after all, but a very small part), and is still growing at a gratifying rate. Given this perspective, however, it is not too difficult to understand why even those cultivated music lovers who were well-disposed towards jazz found it difficult to respond with anything but embarrassed silence to claims that jazz was worthy of serious consideration as an alternative line of development to the centuries-old mainstream of western music. This left the field free for those extremists on both sides who had vested interests in, on the one hand, condemning jazz outright as subversive of civilised musical values, or, on the other, promoting the more populist, and commercially lucrative, view that it was the music of the future.

There was thus a powerful community of interest between (i) the marketing imperatives prevailing in the music industry, (ii) the well-meaning but not entirely disinterested exhortations of the progressive camp in the jazz appreciation department (reinforced, at times, by the small, but needling voice of the purist camp), and (iii) the professional ambitions of the jazz virtuosi themselves, which effectively determined the shape and direction of small band jazz on gramophone records from the late 20s onwards. Other influences, particularly as far as content was concerned, came from the adjacent compartments of popular song & dance music and, later, swing - all of them driven by commercial pressures to pursue the same objectives: make it new, make it different, make it better if possible, but, above all, make it sell. Bearing all this in mind, we can examine the distinguishing characteristics of the small band jazz recorded during this period with a better understanding of how and why they came about.

The first thing we can say is that there was little room, if any, for spontaneous collective improvisation on these records. With only three minutes to go at, and some kind of perfection to aim at, this may not be surprising,

but, coupled with the tendency towards using pick-up groups of jazz virtuosi, as opposed to regular pre-existing bands, it meant that ensembles had to be worked out beforehand (together with the precise sequence of events throughout the entire three minutes), either by agreement among the musicians in the studio, or in an arrangement written by the leader or musical director, and then rehearsed to some extent before the recording could begin. This, in turn, reinforced the trend, already favoured by the jazz virtuosi, away from ensemble playing, towards solo performances which, of their very nature, required less pre-arrangement and group practice. In spite of this, however, in the quicker numbers at least, some kind of full band opening statement of the selected tune was required to get things going, and, more importantly, an all-in closing chorus to raise the temperature to a final peak.

The simpler the tune, of course, the easier the ride, so there was a natural tendency towards the more straightforward 32-bar, AABA or ABAC tunes with relatively undemanding chord sequences, or the 12-bar blues. The least demanding vehicle of all was a tune that was, in effect, a riff - a simple two or four bar figure repeated through a familiar eight or twelve bar chord sequence, which was easy to learn, could be played in either unison or harmony, according to the line-up, and had the added advantage, if original, of being copyrightable by the musicians who invented it, thus providing an additional source of income from the recording. But, although the use of a riff reduced rehearsal time and left plenty of room for solos, the practice was not too well received by the jazz appreciation department, nor by the more discerning consumers, who recognised it for the minor cop out that it undoubtedly was. Also, this was one area in which the competition of the big swing bands, using riff tunes frequently and to much greater effect, was impossible to beat.

Whatever the tune, however, the solos inserted between the first and last choruses became, as we have seen, the more important thing, and there is no reason to believe that these, at least, could not be spontaneously improvised to fill the space provided. On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that the virtuosi in question had not given some little thought to them in advance, particularly if the tune was a familiar one, as it very often was. The question of spontaneity and inspiration in the improvisation of jazz will be better considered when we come to look at the small band jazz performed outside the recording studio during this period, but, in the meantime, the assumption must be that the solos were neither completely impromptu nor completely rehearsed but a judicious mixture of the two. Such evidence as exists from what are called "alternative takes" of these performances which were recorded and rejected at the time in favour of the chosen version, but retained and issued in later years, bears this view out. For the virtuosi involved, these records were, after all, showcases set in concrete, as it were, for all to hear. Who can blame them for cultivating their inspiration and polishing up their solos beforehand, either "in the woodshed" or "on the hoof"?

Of more immediate interest is the question of how much time there was left (given the requirement for opening and closing ensembles) for the assembled soloists to display their talents, and how this scarce resource was to be allocated. Obviously, much depended here on the size and composition of the band. The optimum number seems to have been about six - three front line and three rhythm, with the piano counting as both - it being only later that the full octet of our Hypothetical Jazz Band began to make its appearance. This is not to deny that there were, throughout this whole period, some notable duos, trios and quartets, but quintets, sextets and septets were more common. There was also the question of how much precious time should be invested in putting together some kind of original introduction to the opening ensemble. As every

salesman knows, the most important part of any presentation (apart from closing the sale) is an opening statement which engages the customer's interest and whets his appetite for what is to follow. This point was not lost on the record makers and gave rise to many quite elaborate, ingenious, and often quite fetching full band intros which extended the traditional "four bars piano" to eight bars and even beyond.

The net result could often be that there was insufficient time left for each of the soloists to take a full chorus - an outcome which, on the face of it, was fraught with ample potential for dissention in the ranks. But, fortunately for posterity, this turned out to be less of a drawback than it might at first sight have seemed, in that it placed a obligation on the assembled virtuosi to work together for the common good by arranging the distribution of the solos among themselves within the choruses, and this acted as a kind of substitute for the collective improvisation which was no longer readily admitted to the studios. A rather small matter, it may seem, but anything that compelled the virtuosi to sink their individual egos in the collective psyche of the group was good for jazz, which is, or should be, a music of co-operation rather than competition. The result, in this case, was the production of some very agreeable musical tapestries in which individual solos were interwoven, one with another, or tossed from hand to hand after taking sixteen, eight, or even four bars apiece within the customary thirty-two bar chorus. But the need which this imposed for the smooth and felicitous integration of the individual talents present in the recording studio, reinforced the trend towards exclusivity in the ranks of the jazz virtuosi, making it even more difficult for aspirants, however gifted, to gain entry to them.

Nevertheless, in spite of the many apparent constraints on its freedom to flourish in such circumstances, the story of small band jazz on gramophone records during the late 20s, 30s and 40s (apart from a not insignificant hiatus in the early 30s, when, following the Wall Street Crash in 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression, many of the smaller record companies went out of business) can be seen as one of a steady, almost methodical, but nonetheless fruitful exploration of all the possibilities available within the limitations of the format. These experiments were successful to the extent that they inspired a growing appreciation of the product among the record-buying public of the Western World and fuelled a commensurate expansion in all the departments of the jazz industry. We can sum up the more obvious trends observable in the music itself during this period as being:

- from the rough towards the smooth,
- from the collective towards the individual,
- from complex forms towards simpler ones, but,
- from simplicity of expression towards complexity,
- from extemporisation towards premeditation, and,
- from co-operation towards competition.

Not quite so obvious at the time, but of equal significance in the longer term was the trend away from vocal jazz towards purely instrumental numbers. There were two main reasons for this, one of them quite predictable, the other less so, perhaps. It should come as no surprise, for example, that the time constraints imposed by the three minute format were inimical to the inclusion of a vocal chorus which, of its nature, could hardly be abbreviated or sliced up and shared out in the interests of equity (as could the instrumental solos), and which, therefore, might bid fair to become the dominating feature of the record, giving rise to problems of precedence, credits, and royalties. But there was more to it than that.

In the parallel world of dance band music, which tended to overlap with jazz to some extent in the public mind, the vocal chorus was an accepted and expected feature of most of the numbers performed, since a majority of the customers were just as interested in the words as in the tune, if not more so. This, and the development of radio broadcasting and electronic amplification, led to the emergence of a species of vocalist whose technique was totally dependant on the use of the microphone and tailored to meet a public taste which inclined increasingly towards the smooth, the sweet, and the ingratiating - characteristics to which jazz singing, like jazz itself, had never aspired. With its origins in the blues and other folk traditions, some of which still survive in their natural state today (such as Spanish gypsy flamenco), jazz singing was designed to be heard at the back of a crowded room, above whatever instrumental accompaniment was available, without the benefit of artificial aids (not unlike opera singing, in fact). Thus, to ears which had grown accustomed to the "crooning" of popular songs on the radio and gramophone, traditional jazz singing could come across as rather raucous and unattractive. As a result, it tended to become an acquired taste, and some of those customers who were the most enthusiastic converts to small band jazz on gramophone records in the 30s and 40s found it difficult to like.

Fortunately, jazz singing survived in the less commercially successful (at the time) black swing bands, and there was a very small number of singers, virtually all of them black, and many of them also instrumental virtuosi, who made records with small jazz bands, which were mainly intended for the coloured market in the USA, but were then made available in Europe where they enjoyed a certain amount of success with the more perceptive consumer. But these were the exceptions to the main thrust of small band jazz on gramophone records which was clearly towards the strictly instrumental. This meant that, by the late 1930s, small band jazz on gramophone records appeared to be so far out of touch with its origins in both song and dance that it had become a sort of completely non-functional instrumental concert music. Not only that, but the technical and commercial exigencies of the medium had brought about the virtual elimination from it of collective improvisation, the single most innovative contribution made by jazz to the world of music, in favour of pre-arrangement and solo improvisation, both of which had been present on the musical scene long before the jazz idiom emerged, and were current features of big band jazz.

All was not lost, however, and help of a sort was at hand from those very forces of innovation and marketing in the jazz industry which were leading small band jazz on gramophone records into such an ultimately false position. Towards the end of the 1930s, the unremitting search for something new and different led a number of jazz virtuosi to resurrect a style of ensemble playing which was based, not on the pre-arranged patterns of big band jazz, but on the polyphonic style of collective improvisation used by the original progenitors of the music in the Southern States of the USA and which consequently became known as the Dixieland style. Based on the clarinet, cornet, and trombone front line, and the banjo, tuba, and drums rhythm section of the New Orleans street bands of the early decades of the century, it had never been allowed to disappear from the scene outside the jazz industry, if only because it was a style which lent itself so well to spontaneous collective improvisation whenever an appropriate number of instrumentalists were gathered together to play jazz for their own amusement. Also, in addition to the original pre-1920s jazz band numbers, most of the show tunes and popular songs written in the first half of the century which had survived as jazz standards seemed to lend themselves to this kind of treatment.

But the Dixieland jazz which emerged on gramophone records in the late 1930s, to be disseminated during the 1940s, was a far cry, in some ways, from its forbears. The basic style was recognisably the same, but the jazz virtuosi, with two decades of professional experience behind them, and bringing their well-honed superior skills to bear, were able to produce a version of the ensemble which was smoother, more elegant and altogether more "classical" than the prototype - together with, of course, the elaborate solos which had been so conspicuously absent from the original. Recording techniques, too, had come a long way in twenty years, as had the jazz idiom itself, and thus it was that the latter day Dixieland Octet was able to emerge in all its glory, comprising (as in the case of our Hypothetical Jazz Band) clarinet, trumpet, tenor sax, and trombone; piano, string bass, guitar and drums - every instrument a potential soloist with its own individual voice and each with its own clearly distinct and separate contribution to make to the ensemble.

It is at least arguable that the Dixieland Octet, as it emerged in the late 1930s, was the ne plus ultra of small band jazz. On the one hand, it operated within a set of conventions which allowed the greatest number of different instruments to improvise together comfortably without previous rehearsal, while leaving all the options open for solos by the individual participants between the ensembles. On the other hand, it was flexible enough to accommodate the widest range of jazz virtuosity on the part of the performers - or, to put it another way, the musical tapestry it wove could be as simple or as complex (within pretty broad limits) as the jazzmen wished, or were able, to make it - without departing from its essential nature or becoming less authentic as jazz. And it could cope with the broadest spectrum of tunes from every decade of the first half of the century - ragtime, music hall, Tin Pan Alley, show tunes, dance tunes, marches and hymns - without any sense of strain.

Outside the recording studio, the Dixieland Octet could become a fully functional band, playing for dancing, if required, over a wide range of tempi (including, even, latin-american and waltzes), and although not as potentially perambulatory as its ancestor in New Orleans, it was eminently suited to the provision of musical wallpaper for a broad range of social functions both indoors and outdoors. The music it made was firmly based on the diatonic scale but left plenty of scope for unostentatious chromaticism in the solos and even in the counterpoint - resembling, in this respect, the music of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, to name but a few earlier musicians, who were also, coincidentally, noted for their ability to improvise, albeit on only the single instrument. Best of all, provided that there was a reasonable balance in numbers between rhythm section and front line, the style was readily adaptable to seven, six, five and even four players where it eventually became known as Traditional Jazz. The only fault to be found with it was that this style of playing, particularly as regards the ensembles, was based on a set of conventions which could not be broken without losing most of its benefits. This meant that, from a commercial point of view, it could not be seen as lending itself to further innovation of a lucrative nature. For the jazz industry, in other words, its perfection was an evolutionary dead-end.

In the meantime, however, the arrival on the scene of the Dixieland Octet had a tonic effect on the market for recorded small band jazz. In addition to their intrinsic appeal to jazz lovers everywhere, the discs were given a reasonably fair wind by critics of both the progressive and purist persuasions. The former could hardly fail to appreciate the sheer quality of the performances of the jazz virtuosi involved, and the latter were compelled to acknowledge the traditionalism of the style and the effectiveness of its implementation, even if deploring the technical polish and the fact that the musicians involved were,

almost without exception, white, and that very few of them hailed from the Southern States of the USA, let alone New Orleans. Considering that World War Two was by now in full swing, the records sold very well indeed, and this commercial success enabled a couple of the bands in question to stay together long enough to produce a whole series of recordings which have since become undisputed classics, to be re-issued in different formats at regular intervals over subsequent years, and it is fitting that we should end our account of the small band jazz recorded during this period on such a high plateau of excellence.

But in passing judgement on these recordings, particularly as regards their position in our jazz authenticity index, it cannot be overlooked that they were made in the cloistered calm of a recording studio, mainly for armchair listening in the privacy of the customer's own home, nor that the jazz they contained was not quite as spontaneous as it might seem. This does not mean, however, that they can be categorised as orchestrated concert jazz and consigned to Quadrant D of the index. Outside the recording studio, the amount of premeditation needed by these same virtuosi to produce jazz ensemble playing in a range of styles, and in the Dixieland style in particular, would have been negligible, and for the solos, nil. It was only the fact that these performances were to be set down imperishably in wax within such rigid parameters that made a quantum of prearrangement and rehearsal unavoidable. On these grounds, then, they can surely be awarded high enough marks for collective improvisation to earn them a place in Quadrant C.

Their position on the functional-concert axis is more problematical. On the face of it, small band jazz on gramophone records, certainly from the 1930s onwards, was made to be consumed by a mass of separate and solitary individuals, predominantly male, arranged in a variety of sedentary, even recumbent, postures which, even if disrupted from time to time by a few impromptu dance-steps of an uncoordinated nature when the incantatory effect of the music became too potent, could only be seen as constituting them collectively into a concert audience. It may have been a new type of concert audience, but it was definitely an audience rather than a social gathering for which the music could perform some kind of useful function. No marks there, then. But although this was undoubtedly their primary role, we have also seen that it was not the only purpose served by these records. In the absence of any other viable means, they performed the vital function of disseminating throughout the whole of Western civilisation, not only the latest developments in the jazz idiom, but also the essential components of the jazz method, thus making it possible for those consumers who were so disposed to use them as blueprints for making their own jazz.

Like any other folk music, in other words, jazz was heavily dependant for its survival on direct aural transmission from one performer to the next, and from one generation to the next. Given that so much of its appeal lay in the improvisations of each individual performer and, more particularly, in the unique phenomenon of collective improvisation by several such performers, there was no way an aspiring musician could learn to play jazz except by listening to and copying the playing of those who were already adepts. It is possible that, without the gramophone record, jazz might eventually have made its way from its birthplace in the Southern States of the USA to the four corners of the earth by surface transport (just as it did from there to Chicago and New York in the first place), but it would have been a painfully slow process, and, even when accomplished, it is difficult to imagine that the spontaneous proliferation of local jazz talent which occurred in so many countries would have been just as likely if all those ardent students of the idiom and the method had been solely

dependent for their instruction on hearing visiting jazzmen performing in the flesh.

Undeniably, the gramophone records did it. They provided those who wanted to learn to play jazz, rather than merely to listen to it, with a do-it-yourself instruction kit. All that was needed in addition, for a start to be made, was a gramophone, the chosen musical instrument, and whatever the local equivalent was of the archetypal woodshed. The next step was to find a few like-minded individuals to play with. By the end of the 1930s, thanks, ironically, to the efforts of the international jazz music industry, a whole generation of professional and amateur musicians all over the world had mastered enough of the rudiments of both the idiom and the method to play quite authentic jazz whenever a suitable opportunity presented itself, as in the case of our own Hypothetical Jazz Band. But before going on to find out what can be said about this unrecorded jazz, let us acknowledge that, by making it possible, the recorded small band jazz of this period, although made and marketed with completely different objectives in mind, performed such a useful and irreplaceable function that it deserves an honoured place in Quadrant A.

CHAPTER EIGHT (Where else did it go?)

1

Any examination of the small band jazz created outside the recording studio before the middle of the century (when the portable tape recorder appeared on the scene) is bound to be hampered by the absence of objective evidence as to what it actually sounded like - always assuming that it was improvised on the spot by the musicians involved without the intervention of some composer-arranger whose musical score might still be available for inspection. Since, however, we are not concerned, here, with any kind of sound that cannot be mediated by the printed word, and since, in any case, we are not seeking to evaluate these performances on some subjective scale of inspirational and technical excellence, this cannot be seen as a serious drawback. There is enough anecdotal evidence available for the necessary dotted lines to be drawn between jazz on the record and jazz off the record to enable judgements to be made about the role played by the latter in the developing story of jazz during this period, and even on its likely place in our jazz authenticity index.

Not surprisingly, in view of its functional origins, the idea of jazz, particularly small band jazz, as something set apart from the dance hall, the gramophone record, and the music hall stage, evolved rather hesitantly, even reluctantly, there being no other recognised place for its performance in the existing scheme of things. The realisation that a group of musicians could simply get together outside the confines of the established music industry in order to make their own music for their own pleasure by collective improvisation, dawned only very slowly during the late 1920s and early 30s. Given, also, that this combination of the jazz idiom and the jazz method was, in its essential nature, non-conformist, irreverent and even subversive, it was left with little alternative but to seed itself and grow wherever it fell in the interstices of the pre-existing commercial structures. In the USA, for example, it was the timely imposition of Prohibition in 1920, which, by effectively driving the public consumption of alcohol underground into a proliferation of illegal drinking parlours, or speakeasies, provided a fertile soil for small band jazz (albeit of a strictly utilitarian nature) to flourish.

Since they existed, by definition, outside the law, these establishments were owned and run by criminals who had little regard for union rules and rates, and less for the contractual and accounting conventions of polite society. What they wanted was exactly what basic small band jazz could provide - a lively, good-natured and decorative kind of music, based on the popular tunes of the day, suitable for drinking and dancing to, and capable of responding quickly to the changing moods and expectations of the customers; a music which required little, if any, of the presentational impedimenta of the conventional dance band for its production by a largely anonymous (and readily interchangeable) group of musicians who had no pretensions to be heading for the big time, and were happy to accept payment in cash, plus tips from satisfied customers. Circumstances not too far removed, in fact, from those prevailing in the brothels, bars, and dance-halls of early-century New Orleans, where the music was originally spawned.

By the time Prohibition ended in 1933, however, the public dance-hall had become almost as well-established as the church and the cinema as a focus for

respectable social intercourse, particularly among the young, and big band jazz, which was largely dance-hall based, was just about to come into its own. In addition to which, when the speakeasies either closed or went legitimate, only the possibility of small band jazz being played in nightclubs and bars had been recognised and accepted - bearing in mind that this music was still, and would always remain, a minority taste, with the majority preferring to take its jazz idiom, if at all, in forms unleavened by the jazz method. There were, also, at least two fundamental difficulties in the way of using small band jazz to attract paying customers into the kinds of communal watering holes that seemed to be most suited to its performance. Both arose from the nature of the genre, and, in particular, the uncertainties that must always attend upon any art which relies on the spontaneous inspiration of the performers, individually and collectively, for its elaboration. One was an economic constraint, the other an artistic one, but the two were, as is so often the case, interrelated.

To take the economics first, since this is something which all commercial enterprises have in common, there was an obvious requirement for any bar or nightclub, let us call it a nightspot, where small band jazz might regularly be played for the delectation of its customers, to balance income with expenditure in order to survive. We know, from the sale of the gramophone records and the published effusions of the jazz appreciation department of the industry at the time, that there was a thriving market for small band jazz, but we also know that, compared with the demand for heavy concert music, light concert music, dance music, and even big band jazz, it was not only pretty small, but also rather unfocussed, consisting as it did of a number of seemingly disparate elements - professional and amateur musicians, on the one hand, who simply wanted to play jazz, and, on the other, laymen who merely wished to consume it, with many of these latter in chronic disagreement among themselves about what was, and was not, jazz and what the relative merits of the various jazz producers were.

So, the first question the nightspot owner was obliged to ask himself was "If I feature small band jazz in my establishment, will it attract more customers than it drives away?" The second question was, "Will those who come for the small band jazz spend enough money on my other wares to make it possible for me to pay for the jazz and still make a profit?" There was little point in going to all that trouble just to break even - unless, of course, you were a jazz lover yourself, in which case, other than purely commercial considerations might apply. Nor was it a bad thing that they occasionally should, since there is little evidence to indicate that jazz consumers have ever been either able or willing to put their money where their mouth is, when it comes to supporting live small band jazz with any consistency over a period of time. It is only fair to add, however, that there appears always to have been a pretty steep financial gradient between the kind of lifestyle which permitted the purchase of, say, a weekly gramophone record and a monthly jazz magazine, and one which could afford to seek out and patronise, with any regularity, the sort of nightspots where small band jazz might be found, if not prevented from doing so by other pressures of a business and domestic nature.

Even if, on the basis of what has gone before, we set at only a modest five or six the optimum number of jazzmen required to make the collective improvisation sound exciting enough and the individual solos sufficiently varied and distinctive to attract a moderately wide spectrum of jazz consumers, the financial implications for the nightspot owner of featuring jazz every night of the week are not difficult to work out, and can be seen to be pretty daunting. He would have to sell a lot more food and drink, or impose inordinately high prices, or a cover charge, or even an admission fee, or any two or three of

these, to pay the jazzmen a living wage. And although the temptation might be strong to minimise the risk by featuring small band jazz on only one or two nights a week, the negative effect of this uncertainty factor on the nightspot's reputation as a live jazz venue would be considerable, and the jazzmen would be left with a financial gap to bridge by looking elsewhere for other work, which might not be easy to find within a convenient distance. Little wonder, then, that so very few establishments, even in the major cities of the USA, ever found it possible to answer our two key economic questions in the affirmative for any significant period of time.

In the UK and the rest of Europe, the situation was even worse. Here, since small band jazz was an exotic fruit which could only be obtained, at first, by importing it on gramophone records from the land of its origin, live small band jazz could only be heard in a public place by either travelling to the USA or bringing the jazz virtuosi over here on "concert" tours to give exhibition performances, occasionally in a dance hall but usually on the music hall stage. It was a long time before the requisite number of indigenous jazzmen were able to get together on anything like a regular enough basis to play small band jazz in some kind of nightspot (be it only a basement in the seediest part of a city) for financial reward. In the UK, not unexpectedly, the draconian licensing laws exerted completely the opposite effect to that of Prohibition in the States, acting as an effective deterrent to any entrepreneur inclined towards opening a jazz cafe or developing a jazz pub. And it was not only the liquor license that was difficult, there was also the music license to be negotiated through the local byelaws in the teeth of likely opposition from existing places of entertainment, and, finally, the Musicians' Union to be placated by paying the approved union rates for the job. Small wonder, then, that in the UK, live small band jazz was obliged to live underground, as we shall see, for so long.

For the aspiring professional jazzman, then, with a few notable exceptions, the economics of playing small band jazz for a living consisted of a number of sums which it was always difficult, if not impossible, to add up. But, even if the seemingly impossible happened and he found himself ensconced, together with a few other kindred spirits, in what promised to be a fulltime job in some congenial nightspot with a sufficient number of patrons to make the production of genuine small band jazz there financially worthwhile, this blissful state of affairs could all too often, and all too quickly, give way to a purgatory of personal and artistic self-flagellation which might be just as effective as any purely economic constraint in frustrating his hopes of making a career exclusively in small band jazz. The best way of comprehending how such a reversal in his fortunes might come to pass is to imagine ourselves into the working life of such a musician - one of three frontline soloists, let us say, backed up by a rhythm section, also numbering three.

2

All six of them would almost certainly have arrived at their present station by way of working for money in dance bands, although one or two of their number may have made some kind of name for themselves playing small band jazz on gramophone records - if so, the band would probably be billed under one of their names. The others would have been picked for their ability, of course, but also for their availability, because the one thing they would all have in common was a preference for earning a living, however precarious, by playing small band jazz rather than anything else. Generally speaking, this could also be taken to mean that they were better at playing jazz than doing anything else, but it might also mean that playing jazz was the only thing they were any good at all at, in

which case, they might be rather vulnerable to any pressures in the working environment which affected their self-confidence.

And this would be bad news indeed, because, apart from the necessary technical ability, the two qualities which seem to be indispensable to jazz improvisation are a good musical imagination and the confidence to use it, and, of these, it is at least arguable that the confidence is the more important. Anyone attempting to improvise in the jazz idiom in public is risking the possibility of the most explicit and abject failure to get from one end of a 32-bar chorus to the other without becoming hopelessly lost, so it takes courage even to try. It should go without saying, however, that only a musician who had demonstrated an ability to produce a cogent and reasonably imaginative variation on the chosen theme whenever it had previously been required of him, could expect to be invited to play small band jazz for a living. In the beginning, therefore, confidence in the quality of their imagination, and in their ability to use it, were unlikely to be lacking in the front line soloists of the group. They had come together, as did our Hypothetical Jazz Band, to play small band jazz, improvising collectively and individually, for pleasure, but also, in this case, for profit.

Problems in this area would begin to arise only with the passage of time, and, paradoxically, with any continuing success enjoyed by the venture. It is in the very nature of small band jazz, that, if it is to be genuinely improvised, collectively and individually, then it has to be fashioned anew from the musical imaginations of the participating musicians each time it is played, ideally without the benefit of rehearsal or the assistance of a written score. This freedom to be his own composer-arranger is its great gift to the individual musician, of course, and, once the grammar, syntax and vocabulary of the language have been mastered, can be the source of unmatched exhilaration to the performer, and also, by proxy as it were, to the listener. But, this pristine pleasure in performance, and the spontaneity of the inspiration which informs it, may be lost if the music has to be manufactured, to order, on a specific occasion, for an audience of paying customers, and the more frequently this has to be done, the greater the loss can be.

Analogies may be drawn, here, with other activities which, like jazz, are self-expressive and spontaneously creative within conventional structures but which are less exactly prescriptive than those of the traditional performing arts - with sport, for example, or even with sexual intercourse. If the latter is entered into as part of lovemaking between willing volunteers when the circumstances are propitious it can be a transcendental experience for both partners during which the imagination is allowed free rein to improvise and experiment, with the joint aim of maximising mutual enjoyment. How very different a transaction the same activity can be when bought by one partner and sold, as one of many such sales, by the other, is a fact often attested to, particularly by the vendors. Even the pleasures of playing a well-loved ball game have been known to pall, and the performance grow stale, when participation becomes compulsory and is called upon too frequently. It would be the lot of a professional jazz musician to have to respond to the expectations of a paying audience by producing from within himself whatever it is they have come to hear, whether he feels like it or not, whether his imagination is working well or not, whether his adrenalin is circulating at a high enough level or not, and whether his fellow musicians are stimulating enough company or not.

And what will the audience expect? It seems reasonable to assume that, having come to this specific nightspot, they will be there to listen to small band jazz, rather than to use it in some other way. Admittedly, unlike listeners to

conventional concert music, they will feel free to chat among themselves, eat and drink, when their attention is not quite totally engaged by what they see and hear, just as they would when listening to small band jazz on gramophone records at home, but they will nevertheless have come in the hope and expectation of being entertained, delighted and possibly, at some point, transported, by the music and the way in which it is played. So, this is undoubtedly concert jazz with little room in it for the kinds of utilitarian performance that would be quite acceptable if it were functional jazz for either dancing to, or simply socialising against, as a kind of musical wallpaper. There will, in consequence, be an almost inevitable tendency for the band to minimise the amount of collective improvisation in the numbers and place a greater emphasis on the solos, secure in the knowledge that what the audience has come to hear is a virtuoso display from the individual performers, a kind of exhibition jazz which requires the soloists to show just what each of them can do with a familiar tune if given his head.

These are not the only expectations to which a professional jazz musician would feel constrained upon to respond on a regular basis. There might even be a conflict of interests among the audience, depending on the frequency of their individual patronage of the establishment and the degree of sophistication in their taste for jazz. On the one hand there could be a demand from the casual visitor for the band to play numbers selected from a rather short list of "old favourite" jazz standards which have been hallowed into universal familiarity by the passage of time and frequent repetition, or with which the band or some member of it has been associated in the past, possibly on a gramophone record - in which latter case, it may be expected of them that they play the number, including even the solos, note for note, as already immortalised on wax, and in the same sequence every time! Than which there can be nothing more boring for the committed jazz musician, but such can be the price of fame.

On the other hand, regular customers (cognoscenti to a man), will almost certainly be expecting the band to attempt something new and different every night, listening with critical attention to each episode in the performance, individual or collective, not only for any felicities (or infelicities) in intonation and delivery, but also for the reassurance they continually seem to need that the springs of artistic inspiration in those jazzmen on whom they have bestowed their personal seal of approval (and, by so doing, wagered, as it were, any reputation they may enjoy among fellow enthusiasts for connoisseurship) is not running dry. To these expectations, since they coincide so closely with their own aspirations, the musicians will genuinely wish to respond, and can choose to do so in one or both of two different ways, either by striving for genuine originality in their solos every time familiar numbers are repeated, or by playing numbers they have not attempted here before. Both these courses, being innovative, carry with them some risk of failure, the awareness of which can stimulate the band's adrenalin and produce an increase in the emotional temperature all round, and although this is something that, where inspiration is needed, can work for the good of the enterprise, it can also, if things do not quite work out, have the opposite effect.

Certainly, tackling new numbers in front of paying customers can generate strains and stresses within the band which were not in evidence when our Hypothetical Jazz Band met to play together for pleasure in private. Assuming that this is authentic small band jazz, improvised on the spot with no prior rehearsal and without the intervention of a composer-arranger, the first question it will raise has to be "Who makes the decisions?" or, in the language of group dynamics, "Who controls the agenda?" This may be extemporisation, and there may be only six in the band, each with a different role to play, but

somehow someone has to decide which tunes to attempt, in what key and at what tempo, and these are all matters which can be of crucial importance to the individual jazzmen, the front-line soloists in particular, in determining the quality of the performance they are able to deliver. The world of jazz would be an easier (and happier? but duller?) place to live in if all its inhabitants could improvise with equal felicity around any tune, in any key, at any tempo, but until such an unlikely day dawns, there will almost certainly exist a hierarchy of abilities in one or more of these respects among any six musicians who are gathered together for improvisational purposes.

Obviously, there is a soft core of jazz standards in accepted keys, which every tyro can be expected to know - "Honeysuckle in F", "Lady be Good in G", "Sunny Side in C", "Undecided in Bb" ("Can't make my mind up about that one"), "Blue Heaven in Eb", and so on. This repertoire can consist of as little as twenty tunes and still be adequate for the purposes of playing small band jazz occasionally, for fun, and could surely be expanded (given time, effort and experience), to embrace a sufficient enough number, even for the kind of professional small band jazz envisaged here. But, nothing in jazz is ever quite as straightforward as it may seem, and, outside a basic memory bank of about a hundred tunes, one jazzman's certainties in this area will hardly ever coincide with another's, a circumstance which can only add further complications to the task of fulfilling the apparently simple expectation that, where jazz is being offered routinely for sale, there should be an element of innovation (or novelty) built into the process - a view, as already noted, which is shared by many jazzmen who find less and less stimulation in tunes they have played too often before, and positively need the risks involved in attempting something new and different to hold their interest and fuel their inspiration.

One such complication, for example, might be the additional expectation on the part of the customers that, even when the band is attempting new numbers, there should be no sheet music in evidence at all, and, hence, no music stands available to the front line soloists. This attitude, too, will be shared by many jazzmen, although their motives for doing so may be a little less innocent than those of the audience, and not entirely unrelated to the power-play involved in setting the agenda. Obviously, this convention can trace its origins back to the very earliest days of functional jazz, but it was later on, when the jazz appreciation department of the fledgling jazz industry was using its best endeavours to promote those rare manifestations of collective improvisation in the jazz idiom which actually took place in front of a paying audience, and which were then called "public jam sessions", that great play came to be made with the fact that these musicians were coming on to the stage to perform with no sheet music at all. The implication being that this was to be authentic jazz, the genuine article, the absence of sheet music being the one visible sign that real jazz was different from all the other music in the jazz idiom.

Thus it came about, as part of the marketing of concert jazz, that the general public was encouraged to believe that the musicians were playing entirely by ear and making it up as they went along, with only their nodding familiarity with whatever tune they were using as a basis for their flights of fancy at the time to help them. It will come as no surprise to learn that this line was supported even by the purist school in the jazz appreciation department (to whom the commercialisation of jazz was, strictly speaking, anathema) on the grounds that the best jazz had been produced by untutored (black) musicians who could not read music anyway. But in any real world of professional small band jazz, such as the one we are envisaging here, there would inevitably be a conflict between this tradition and the pressures of consumer demand (and even performer

demand) for innovation. Any resulting debate between the musicians about what new numbers to play and in which keys to play them would, in its turn, beg crucial questions about the extent to which those members of the band who were less familiar with the new tune, and, more importantly, its underlying chord sequence, might be permitted to refresh their memories by consulting a sheet of paper on which these were displayed.

Looked at objectively, it is difficult to see why there should be any problem here at all, since, in spite of the convention, it had very soon become accepted practice for the pianist, guitarist and even the bass player in a band improvising together regularly, to have open and easy access to the written chord sequence of any tune which was in any way out of the common run, bearing in mind that the further the band moved away from the soft core of jazz standards the more complicated that chord sequence was likely to be. The reasons behind this apparent breach in tradition were overwhelmingly practical, in that, firstly, a chord sequence is much more difficult to improvise correctly than is the tune which is based upon it, and, secondly, for the front line soloists to have any chance at all of producing coherent variations on an unfamiliar theme (without themselves having the correct chord sequence either committed to memory or in front of them in writing), they must be able to hear it being played quite clearly behind them by the rhythm section. To this end, no pianist or guitarist who had any pretensions to being a dependable participant could be expected to attend an open-ended session of collective improvisation without bringing with him his "chord book" (the fruits of many years of assiduous research, borrowing, and even theft) and feeling free to consult it whenever necessary.

So, why could not the front-line soloists in our small jazz band have access to the chords for themselves? No reason, really, just the rather inchoate expectations of the customers, the traditional absence of music stands, the extent of the musicians' own ability actually to read the chords, their own pre-conditioning as to the propriety of doing so (if they could), or of others doing so (if they couldn't), and, in the former case, the practical feasibility of doing it without the music stands... and so on, round the loop again. All a bit too messily complicated for comfort, but inclined to favour an uneasy and potentially stressful status quo, unless someone with the power to set the agenda took positive action to impose a solution - there will be music stands/ there will not be music stands: there will be chords available to all/ there will not be chords available to all: there will be prior agreement on the tunes to be used/ there will not be prior agreement, and so on. Understandably, there would be a tendency for whoever had this power to set an agenda which suited their own book best, so, whatever the decision, it would almost certainly prove unpopular in some quarters, giving rise to further tensions within the group.

There is a comparison to be made here, perhaps, with those circus acrobats who earn a living by performing difficult and dangerous feats on the high wire, but who, in order to demonstrate sublime confidence in their own superior abilities, and, incidentally, screw the audience's excitement up to a higher pitch, choose ostentatiously to dispense with a safety net. Small band jazz involved little physical danger, of course, (not in the short term, at least) but the risk of professional injury, when improvising from scratch (either collectively or solo) in front of paying customers, was so much greater without the safety net of the chords that only those performers who (i) were supremely gifted in their ability to dispense with them, or, (ii) needed the extra adrenalin generated by the increased risk involved in order to perform to their own satisfaction, or (iii) simply could not read them, or (iv) felt that learning to read them would somehow undermine the spontaneity of their performances, or, (v) suffered from

some confused combination of all the above, would, given the choice, favour doing without the chords when attempting new numbers.

As for the customers, it seems reasonable to assume that, although there would always be an element among them whose enjoyment, like that of the circus audience, was increased by the absence of a safety net (their attention having been drawn, by one means or another, to the fact that it was missing), most of them would be far too intent on savouring any musical acrobatics on display to care too much about how and at what risk the spectacle was being achieved. And it would certainly (and more to the present point) figure higher on the list of the audience's expectations that musical acrobatics, preferably of an aggressively spectacular nature, should figure somewhere on the evening's menu than that the safety net should be dispensed with. In the milieu we are here attempting to construct, in other words, it would hardly be seen as giving value for money if, as the evening progressed, the individual members of the band, the front line soloists in particular, did not appear to "take off" into the musical empyrean in an increasingly uninhibited and exhibitionistic fashion, regardless of the physical and emotional strains involved in performing these acrobatics as a regular part of the show.

Here, again, we encounter one of the less fortunate legacies of the past promotional activities of the jazz appreciation department of the industry - this expectation that the pure essence of jazz, having sprung from the collective inspiration of the members of the group (sparked off between them as if by spontaneous combustion), would be fanned into flame by the beating wings of the incantatory effect and the audience's applause, to produce a conflagration that would feed on itself, and grow, as the session progressed, until the all-consuming excitement of a unique occasion had fuelled the individual imaginations of the participants to a point at which they could scale heights of extemporisation and instrumental virtuosity they had never before attempted (phew!). And, here once again, the jazzmen themselves could not but conspire with the audience to encourage and then attempt to fulfil their expectation of what would, after all, have been a perfectly natural sequence of events at the kind of occasional informal jamboree of collective improvisation we envisaged for our Hypothetical Jazz Band back in Chapter One, where no limits needed to be set on the physical and mental commitment involved. But that was a special occasion, and not something lightly to become involved in every night.

There emerges, it seems, the outline of a scenario already capable, if acted out in real life, of generating the kinds of pressures on the members of our small jazz band that could produce a whole range of what are nowadays called stress related diseases or even repetitive strain injuries. And it may still be incomplete, because, if there ever was a nightspot in which small band jazz was produced nightly in this way by the collective improvisations of a resident band of professional musicians, then it would certainly have become an irresistible attraction to all those other professional musicians in the vicinity who were condemned nightly to perform under the machine-like constraints of the composer-arranger, but who would much rather be playing jazz for a living if they could - or so they tended to believe! The resulting phenomenon (so dear to the romantic heart of Hollywood) would involve the casual "dropping in" of these frustrated jazzmen with a view to "sitting in" with the boys of the band at the establishment in question for "a bit of a blow" after their own evening's work was done, and become known, in consequence, as "after hours" jazz.

The customers could not but welcome such a development, of course, because, whatever else happened, it was bound to increase the quantity and variety, if not necessarily the quality, of the small band jazz on offer, and prolong the

unique experience they were enjoying into the early hours of the morning, opening up the possibility that the rising curve of excitement already generated by the resident jazzmen would be extended still further. The owner of the nightspot would welcome it, too, if the customers liked it enough to patronise his establishment in greater numbers, stay longer, and purchase more of his other wares. It would, after all, cost him nothing (apart from a few free drinks, perhaps), although the musicians' unions would strongly disapprove of their members playing even after hours jazz for anything less than the recommended rates.

For the resident jazzmen, however, this influx of new blood would come as a rather mixed blessing - on the one hand, either giving a fresh stimulus to their inspiration at a time when it might be flagging a little, or, if they chose to rest on their laurels and take the weight off their creative feet as it were, offering the option of sitting out for a while; but, on the other hand, either pressurising them into trying to out-perform the newcomers at a time of night when they may already have given their best, or, if standing aside, giving rise to the suspicion that they may not be able to cope with the competition. Because, welcome or not, competition of one kind or another could never now be entirely absent from the scene, it being one of the penalties of professionalism that individual jazzmen were compelled by the realities of the marketplace to turn away from the comfortable, co-operative mores of collective improvisation, and embrace the more individualistic and adversarial outlook of the virtuoso soloist.

Thus, playing small band jazz for a living inevitably implied competing with any other jazzmen so employed for the favours of the limited number of paying customers available (and even for the favourable opinions of other jazzmen) to an extent which would not have arisen when playing functional jazz, and went further even than that associated with big band jazz. Obviously, the jazz appreciation department of the industry bore, once again, some responsibility for this development, but, given its inescapable commitment to promoting the sale of jazz, it is difficult to see how it could have acted otherwise than by comparing the relative merits of one jazz virtuoso with those of another to the disadvantage of at least one of them. The enthusiasts who bought the gramophone records, too, tended to develop very strong views, not only about what was, and was not, jazz, but also about who could and could not play it well.

The very words "jazz appreciation" have a judgemental ring about them, and once the indicators of critical approval began to highlight technical virtuosity and originality in the recorded performances of individual jazz virtuosos, comparisons between them became impossible to avoid. And, once customers start making comparisons between products, competition between producers becomes inevitable, although this rather unpalatable fact was often disguised, outside the recording studio, by the use of sporting, or even military, metaphors to describe the more competitive aspects of the jazz scene. There is anecdotal evidence, for example, that "cutting contests", or "duels", even "battles" would take place on occasions when two or more of the jazz virtuosos were juxtaposed on the same bandstand by accident or design, and during which each of them, egged on by rival fans, would seek to establish superiority over the others - to "blow them off the stand" - by taking alternating solos until one or other succumbed to the pressure.

And who could blame the jazzmen? This was not the only part of the animal kingdom, where an individual's standing in the hierarchy determined his share of the available spoils, which could be improved upon only by displacing someone higher up, but had to be defended at all costs against similarly inclined

interlopers from below. Once a living wage was at stake in the jazz arena, there would be a tendency for any small band jazz played in front of a paying audience to exhibit some of the less endearing characteristics of a spectator sport, not least in the circumstances of any after hours jazz, where the supply of challengers to the resident jazzmen would increase with the success of the venture until the whole thing, if not regulated could easily get out of hand. Someone, once again, would have step in and set the agenda, someone would have to take control and make unpalatable decisions as to who should and should not be admitted to the session, who should or should not take solos, and when, what numbers should be played, in what keys, and at what tempos, and so on.

Discipline, in a word, would have to be imposed, and discipline is something which dedicated jazzmen tend not to enjoy, and to react rather strongly against. It is felt by many of them to be contrary to the spirit of jazz, smacking of the composer-arranger and the conductor, of regular hours and repetition, inhibiting the individual creative spirit when it might be in its fullest and most fruitful flow. The imposition of discipline, even in circumstances where the alternative might be chaos, would, therefore, give rise to feelings of discomfort and resentment, adding a further quantum of emotional stress to the not inconsiderable sum of it already generated by the other demands of the occasion. But, without discipline of some kind imposed by someone, it seems clear that the kind of small band jazz that might be played for a living in the sort of nightspot envisaged here would be impossible to deliver on a regular commercial basis. It also seems clear that producing small band jazz under these circumstances would not be such a rewarding experience, in the longer term, for the jazzmen involved in it, as they might have anticipated at the onset, and would certainly not be a healthy one.

Such evidence as exists bears out these rather downbeat conclusions. Any attempt to provide the circumstances under which genuine small band jazz could be created by spontaneous, unrehearsed improvisation in a specific nightspot by professional musicians for the delectation of paying customers on a regular basis seemed doomed to early failure, if not from lack of commercial viability, then from a lack of the professional self-discipline required to avoid the progressive disintegration of the band, both collectively and individually, as the stresses and strains which seemed to be inseparable from the attempt, took their toll - or from some combination of the two. And very few of those musicians who strove, for one reason or another, to play nothing but this kind of jazz for a living seemed able to avoid resorting to artificial stimulants, disinhibitors, mood elevators, or sedatives, to cope with the demands made upon them by the work, if they could get it, or by the anxiety or depression they suffered when they could not. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the popular image of the jazz musician of the period is that of the gifted, but self-destructive, wayward genius, producing uniquely inspired music of great originality from the very core of his being, but drinking and drugging himself to an all too early grave in the process.

There was, it seems, a fundamental incompatibility between the basic ingredients required for the spontaneous creation of small band jazz, and the circumstances which might make it possible to play it exclusively for a living. This conflict between the ideal and the reality, resulted in the concept of the professional jazz musician becoming virtually a contradiction in terms, except in a few very exceptional cases, and even they, for all their current fame, would probably, if still alive, agree that the living they made from jazz would not look too good if compared over a lifetime with that of, say, any competent professional

instrumentalist in a reasonably well-established provincial concert orchestra. However, this was not quite the end of the story. There was no shortage of professional musicians in the USA who could and would play small band jazz for paying customers whenever a suitably rewarding opportunity presented itself. These "professional musicians playing jazz", as distinct from "professional jazz musicians", were to be found, as already noted, in other parts of the music industry - in the dance bands, the swing bands, the show bands, and even the concert orchestras of the day, earning a reasonable living playing composer-arranger music, some of which gave them the occasional opportunity for a few bars ad.lib. solo improvisation.

Whenever these musicians came together to play small band jazz outside the recording studio, it would be under controlled conditions within the existing commercial framework of the established music and entertainments industries. The product would be packaged and marketed by entrepreneurs, dealing through agents, drawing up contracts, and making all the necessary arrangements in advance for it to be delivered in a certain place, at a certain time, to a certain set of specifications, much like any other type of concert music. It would, thus, have much in common with the big band jazz described in a previous chapter - organization and discipline under some clearly designated leader/manager, pre-determined agreements about the numbers, keys, and tempos, and enough prior rehearsal to work out a programme, structure the ensembles (however loosely), and determine the sequences of solos. This small band jazz would normally feature jazz virtuosi who were sufficiently well known nationally from their gramophone records to be billed in advance as a special attraction at some nightspot big enough or expensive enough to bear the cost, for a short season, or even for a one-night stand as part of a tour.

Although frequently festooned with showbiz trappings of a crudely presentational nature, the music on these occasions, once underway, could not help but sound authentic, bearing, as it so clearly must, such a close resemblance to that with which the audience would be familiar from the gramophone records. There would be no music stands, of course, since everyone would know exactly what they were doing on the night (no risk, so no safety nets), and many other characteristics of spontaneously improvised small band jazz, as envisaged in our hypothetical nightspot with its putative professional jazz musicians, would be recognisably present - the rising curve of excitement, for example, as the improvisatory sallies of the virtuosi warmed each other up during the course of the evening, the exotic flights of individual and collective fancy as they strove to excel themselves, and each other, uniquely for the occasion, and so on. And, to be fair, in spite of the artificiality of the proceedings, this being jazz, there would always be the possibility of something new and astonishingly different emerging in the solos.

For the most part, however, given the commercial pressures weighing on these jazzmen, the term "fake orgasms" (to fall back on sexual imagery once again) might best be used to convey the flavour of their performances on these occasions - bearing in mind that, given their level of technical skill (they being hardened professionals all), this would beg the time-honoured question of whether the customers were able to tell the difference? The answer to which, in this case, must surely be that, at the time, only adherents to the purist school of jazz appreciation would even understand the question, and they were on the horns of their usual dilemma, valuing jazz, as they did, for those unique qualities which placed it firmly outside the purview of the international music industry, but able to gain access to it only through the good offices of that very same industry. As with small band jazz on gramophone records, the live variety was as much a creature of the established commercial machinery, it

seems, as were its blood relatives, big band jazz and dance band music, with the added disadvantage that it was not as functional even as they were, but already merely another brand of concert music.

For the rest of the customers, many of whom would be drawn from the same interest groups that bought the gramophone records, the goods on offer would be unequivocally the real thing. How could it be otherwise? This was the small band jazz they had come to know and love from the gramophone records; these were the jazz virtuosi whose playing they so admired (even, in many cases, sought to emulate), and here they were, in the flesh, blowing up a perfect storm of what was, to all intents and purposes, spontaneous collective and individual improvisation in the jazz idiom of the highest possible order, combining technical excellence, inspirational acrobatics, and emotional fervour. The fact that they might be dispensing this in carefully measured and pre-programmed doses, and using every rhetorical device in the showbiz book to hype up the excitement, having produced virtually the same performance the night before for a different audience, was of little or no concern to the great majority of the fans. This was the only live jazz available, and, to most of them, it was not in the least bit artificial, and to many it was not so much a concert of small band jazz, as an exhibition of it, a lesson, even, in how to do it.

The last point is important. As with the gramophone records, it was a saving grace of even the most meretricious, even synthetic, manifestation of live small band jazz, that it offered a practical and, in this case, visible demonstration of its possibilities for the aspiring musician (professional, semi-professional, or amateur), of whom there were many, many more around, particularly in the closely related field of dance music, than it might be possible to imagine today. By the end of the 1930s, as already noted, ballroom dancing had become a major social pastime in North America, the UK, and most of western civilisation, with public dancehalls featuring professional dance-bands in every town and city of any reasonable size. And it did not end there, because, away from the town centres, in the suburbs and outlying villages, there were numerous church halls, memorial halls, institutes and clubs, in which dances were held for social and fund-raising purpose at regular and frequent intervals. Since this was before the advances were made in the technology of sound recording and its amplified reproduction which have become such a mixed blessing today, the result was an enormous demand for the services of smallish, cheapish dance bands.

This, in turn, presented any young person who could master one of the appropriate instruments, with a wealth of opportunities for making music with a number of like-minded contemporaries, using a close relative of the jazz idiom, if not, initially, the jazz method itself, for pleasure and profit, outside normal working hours. But before going on to consider this extensive amateur underworld with its obvious potential for producing small band jazz, we should conclude our speculations about the professional variety and its attempts to find a role for itself outside the recording studio which would be distinctively different from those enjoyed by big band jazz and dance band music, both of them the province of the composer-arranger, both already functioning well in the dance hall, and established, even, to a limited extent, on the concert platform.

It seems obvious, from contemporary accounts, that, even under the circumstances outlined above, only those jazz virtuosi who had made some kind of name for themselves playing small band jazz on gramophone records, but who were also able, when necessary, to live professionally in the world of big band jazz (having learned to cope with the commercial disciplines involved), could be relied upon to make a success of such a risky venture as playing small band

jazz, to order, in one or other of the limited number of milieux available, at frequent enough intervals to make the venture profitable. And even they found it hard to keep the same band together and maintain enough artistic momentum to perform on a regular basis for very long. The difficulties they faced were not too far removed from those encountered by the big swing bands under similar circumstances - the physical and mental wear and tear of touring, the uncertainties besetting extended bookings away from home which could collapse around them for any one of a dozen sordid reasons, including the premature departure of key personnel to greener pastures, to more congenial company, to the local hospital, or even to the graveyard - to name but a few of the possibilities.

There were additional problems, too, with small band jazz, such as those arising, ironically, from that very absence of written orchestrations which was its most distinctive feature, because this meant that, when defections did occur, replacements could not be relied upon to fit smoothly into place on grounds of technical expertise alone, given that personal compatibility with the other members of the group is of such importance when playing jazz. It also meant that, while the jazz virtuosi were free to create their own variations on whatever theme they had chosen as the inspiration moved them, there was no safety net for them to fall back on when the Muse, as was bound to happen in such a workaday world, failed to speak to them - unless, of course, they had the message all worked out in advance and could, if necessary, retail pretty much the same goods to different customers every night from memory, fake orgasms and all - in which case, where was the difference between this and big band jazz? Thus, even those "professional musicians playing jazz" wherever and whenever their marketing manager could make it profitable for them to do so, found the same dilemma facing them as the one already envisaged for any "professional jazz musicians" fortunate enough to be given the chance to play nothing but jazz in some dedicated nightspot. They could strive to make it new and different every night, and pay the price in stress related diseases and repetitive strain injuries of both a physical and mental nature, or they could fake it every night by re-cycling the same material with mock exhibitionistic fervour, and suffer a different kind of stress from boredom, or sustain a more insidious type of injury to their self-esteem as jazzmen.

Damage of this latter nature is not to be underestimated. There is no reason to assume otherwise than that these musicians genuinely aspired to creating authentic small band jazz whenever possible by giving free rein to their individual and collective imaginations in order to mint it afresh to the best of their abilities every time - for their own enjoyment as much as anyone else's. When, therefore, the unnatural commercial demands of frequent concert performances pushed them into pre-packaging, pretence and routine repetition, the resulting outpourings may have satisfied most of the customers, but they did not fool the musicians themselves. The pressures of competition and of the innovation that went with it had led to the development, in many of their natures, of either a strong perfectionist streak, or a sense of personal commitment, or both, which had been responsible for making them the jazz virtuosi they were, but which could become a curse when forced to compromise with the crude commercial forces they encountered outside the recording studios. Feelings of personal dissatisfaction with the performances they found themselves obliged to deliver could lead to loss of confidence in themselves, and in their gift, and this was just about the worst thing, other than physical injury, that could happen to a jazzman. Little wonder that so many of them grew to rely on drink and drugs to keep them going, with such disastrous results.

There is no escaping the conclusion that, until the end of the 1940s at least, there was some kind of irreconcilable conflict between the essential characteristics of small band jazz and the salient features of the environment it encountered whenever it forsook its functional and subcultural origins for the concert platform. A flaw in the genes, as it were, which rendered it incapable of surviving for long as a commercially viable separate entity without mutating into something else - something that, either could not find a niche in the market, or did not suit the musicians. It was as if, having become a part of the international music industry via the gramophone, it could never break the umbilical chord between the recording studio and the concert platform. To make any kind of income out of small band jazz, it seemed, the professional musician had, first to make a name for himself on a gramophone record, and then cash in on this advance publicity, as it were, for a limited period by giving live exhibitions of his prowess, before going back to make another record in the hope of repeating the process again. In those days, there simply was not enough money in gramophone records alone, or in live small band jazz alone, to make either of them pay a living wage.

Because of this, many of the constraints and virtually all the commercial imperatives imposed on small band jazz by the gramophone record were transmitted to the live performances. The three and a half minute time limit on each number was, of course, gone (not a totally unalloyed benefit, as it turned out), but the emphasis on solo virtuosity and pre-packaging at the expense of collective (and even individual) improvisation remained, leading to mere exhibitionism, "showcasing", and the invariable "featuring", if at somewhat greater length, of those performances already popular with the audiences from their familiarity with the records. In addition to this, the inevitable premium placed by all markets everywhere on innovation ensured that a demand for novelty was built into the whole relationship. Although this exigency, as we have seen, led initially to much creative exploration of the possibilities, as well as the limitations, of small band jazz, and eventually to the "novelty" of a re-discovered Dixieland style (as exemplified by our eight-piece Hypothetical Jazz Band, with all its possibilities for collective and individual improvisation), this was only one of several varieties of the basic bloom which were proffered to the record-buying public at the time - most of them more closely related to trends in big band jazz, or more deliberately "progressive" in their intention.

There was no reason, on the other hand, why the small band jazz which sat so uneasily in the recording studio, and so uncomfortably on the concert platform, could not feel at home in many of the down-market, provincial, suburban, and strictly utilitarian dance halls we have already identified as existing in their thousands at the time, all of them serviced by small dance bands made up of musicians who called themselves part-timers or semi-professionals, although many of them could more accurately be described as enthusiastic amateurs. Little in the way of direct evidence exists to substantiate any claim that might be lodged regarding the contribution made by these bands to the story of jazz, even though some of the music they played, and the places in which they played it, may have been closer to true spirit of jazz, by any credible definition of what that might be, than much that is enshrined in the recordings. This is because they were amateurs, and history has little to say about amateur music making. But there is enough circumstantial evidence available, and enough individuals still alive who were active participants, to make it possible for us to piece together some account of their activities.

Let us, therefore, again hypothesise, and imagine ourselves, this time, into the lives of a group of these enthusiastic amateurs, as they feel their way towards the not always clearly defined goal of playing small band jazz for pleasure and profit, and let us begin by taking certain of their common denominators for granted. First, that they live in the UK, in some provincial town (or outer suburb of the capital city), and that they are all young men in their late teens who have left school, but still live at home. Then, that they are gainfully employed during normal working hours in acquiring the skills and knowledge which will enable them to earn a comfortable living eventually in some respectable occupation, but that this commitment currently leaves them with a fair amount of time and energy available to devote to spare time activities of a more exciting nature - all of which would tend to rule out their being in full time further education, which was, in any case, the prerogative of the privileged few in those days. Finally, that whatever the level of their individual musical education and instrumental abilities at the onset, their common primary objective is to play the kind of music which they and their contemporaries really like, in the manner of the famous performers they admire.

The simplest and most obvious way of doing this, at the time, was to form a dance band, bearing in mind that, although we may have found it expedient here (the better to understand what was going on) to differentiate between the jazz idiom and the jazz method, and between dance music, big band jazz, and small band jazz, these distinctions, even if perceived, were not taken too seriously by the teenagers of the 1930s and 40s. In those days, all but the most purist of small band jazz enthusiasts would buy big band gramophone records without a qualm if the swing was right and the featured soloists were hot enough, and, in any case, it all came together in the dance hall. Nor was it in any way difficult to form a dance band - all it needed, for a start to be made, was access to a piano, a set of drums, one or two front line instruments, and somewhere to practice. As with any venture, of course, the real beginning would be in the minds of two or three committed individuals who, in this case, had somehow acquired the necessary instruments and set about learning to play them - for their own pleasure, initially, but with the ultimate, and possibly secret, intention of emulating the virtuosity of some personal idol, and thus becoming the object of the kind of admiration, for their own performances, which he enjoyed for his.

Practising alone is an inevitable part of learning to play a musical instrument, but, for speeding up the process, there is nothing like playing together with a few acquaintances of a similar disposition. Once two or three of these like-minded enthusiasts had gathered together, therefore, it would not be long before sufficient progress had been made for them to begin actively recruiting from outside their circle to fill any gaps in the quorum. A basic rhythm section of piano and drums would, as noted, be an essential requirement (with string bass and guitar as optional extras), but, since most of these bands would be built around a nucleus of earlier friendships made at school, or in the workplace, or both, some rather odd front lines might initially result - violin, clarinet and trombone, for example. But when, eventually, the clarinettist had acquired an alto sax, the violinist, a tenor sax, and the trombonist had persuaded a fellow member of his local brass band to join the party on trumpet, all would be well.

It seems likely that, once rehearsals had begun, some of the protagonists might prefer the band to play, like themselves, entirely by ear - in the best traditions of the founding fathers of jazz (as dimly perceived) - but it would be highly unlikely that all of them would be so inclined in the first instance, particularly those, and there would almost certainly be some, who had been taught to play their instruments in the conventional way - the pianist, at

least. In addition to which, the demands of the dance hall, however distant as a goal at this stage, would, in the end, impose their own discipline on the budding band by requiring of them the ability to deliver, in those days, not only the more congenial quick-steps and slow foxtrots in adequate quantities, but also slow and schmaltzy waltzes, Latin American sets, even the dreaded Old Time Medleys, and, worst of all, communal dances like the Palais Glide, the Conga, and the Hokey Cokey. So, sheet music of some kind there would have to be - and music stands, of course, to be graced eventually with the band's carefully selected name or logo, initially as an embroidered valance (courtesy of some female relative) hanging from each one, but painted finally on to the collapsible plywood desks which would certainly be acquired once the band had become established.

To begin with, however, these "band parts" would probably be contrived by begging, borrowing, stealing, or (if all else failed) buying for the sum of one shilling, the published song copies of the chosen numbers, which, in addition to the words, the melody line, and the piano accompaniment, usually carried the chord symbols "for banjo, guitar and piano accordion" (and even those funny little diagrams showing where to put your fingers on the strings of a ukulele). This information, once the melody line had been transposed (on manuscript paper) into the appropriate key for the front-line instruments, would enable enough of a start to be made for the band to appear to be actually playing together, even if only just, because it would tend to be in something pretty close to unison at first, unless, by some remote chance, one of their number had a gift for writing simple harmonic arrangements.

Usually, each number would consist of a four bar piano intro, followed by a near-unison all-in chorus, then a string of solo choruses from each of the front line in turn (all sticking pretty closely to the melody at this stage), rounded off by a final all-in chorus, still in unison, and still in the same key. Pretty dreadful stuff to the discerning ear, admittedly, but with the compensatory advantage that young people could, if nothing better was available, actually dance to it. This meant that it might not be impossible, particularly with the benefit of parental influence, to persuade one of the private clubs or institutes in the town, of which there were so very many in those days, to allow the new band to play for dancing at the occasional Saturday night hop, and even pay them a few shillings each for doing so! And, since playing together in public, however inadequately, to a modicum of applause, however small, comes next only to playing together in the first place as a spur to improvement, the band could now be expected to enter a period of significant development in a number of overlapping areas, best dealt with, perhaps, under the separate headings of (i) personnel, (ii) instrumentation, and (iii) orchestration.

Developments affecting the personnel would arise, principally, from the extent to which the instrumentalists recruited by the original nucleus of chums to form the necessary quorum, felt at home with, or, if not, could assimilate to, the jazz idiom. Because, even with the best will in the world (alas) not everybody did, or could. Every effort would be made, of course, not only at band practice, but also at Sunday afternoon gatherings around the gramophone, and by constantly singing at the wayward ones, wordlessly, in the cadences of the masters, during long walks in town and country, through streets and woods, or in any other more or less convenient place, in an attempt to familiarise them with a musical vernacular which seemed to come so naturally to some but could prove, in the end, quite inaccessible to others. Gently, but inexorably, for the greater good of the band, any of these latter would have to be disposed of, one way or another, in the course of time, and, if absolutely essential to the

ensemble (like drums and piano), replaced by others who could understand and speak the language of jazz, however imperfectly at first.

The other ways in which individuals could disqualify themselves from membership of the band are of less relevance here since they touch on personal commitments of a possibly too demanding nature to activities or relationships outside the group. The most likely of these would involve, not to put too fine a point on it, girls. With an average age of about eighteen, all the boys in the band could hardly fail to be deeply interested (in those days) in the opposite sex, nor to strive to place themselves in as close a proximity as possible to carefully selected representatives of it whenever a suitable opportunity presented itself. Indeed, many of them were propelled to no small extent, in their efforts to become jazz virtuosi, by phantasies about the ways in which such a status might improve their prospects with at least one or two of these objects of their desire. But a susceptibility to these healthy urges, and a somewhat opportunistic approach to satisfying them, was, in the practical terms which really counted with the band, a very different matter from assuming the burden of responsibilities which went (in those days) with being reciprocally besotted with just one young lady.

In the milieu of what was now, in effect, an all-male gang going gigging together on Saturday nights (sacred to the Goddess of Coupling), rehearsing together at least one night a week, listening to jazz records together in somebody's "front room" on Sunday afternoon, and wandering off to the cinema together, talking music all the time, on a Sunday evening (all this in addition to, in some cases, nightschool during the week, and even, once the war had started, Home Guard and firewatching duties), there was little room for permanently intruded young females, however desirable they may be in every other respect. There was, in consequence, little need for positive action to be taken by the rest of the band when one of their number succumbed to the fatal attractions of the pair bond. The two commitments were so utterly and obviously incompatible that one or the other of them would have to be forsworn, and the decision as to which it should be could safely be left in the capable hands of the other party.

By a strange (but fortunate) coincidence, it was often those brethren who were least comfortable with the jazz idiom who were most likely to become otherwise engaged elsewhere in matters, if not of the heart, then of the mind, or even the body - since the possibility, however remote, of other distractions apart from sex should not be entirely overlooked. Thus would it come to pass, however, in one way or another, that the language of jazz became the common currency of the band, and a dedicated commitment to mastering its syntax and vocabulary, a common bond. During this process, also, the instrumentation of the band would be sorting itself out, and moving away, as already noted, from the first fruits of serendipity towards something more in keeping with maturing abilities and ambitions. The aims here would be conditioned by exemplars observed in both small band jazz and big band jazz, but, although each was suitable for dancing to, the former was accessible only on gramophone records, whereas the latter, being a product of the composer-arranger, had the inestimable advantage of being actually available in the flesh, as it were, in the form of published written arrangements.

Throughout this period, in addition to producing the gramophone records, the international music industry had been busily engaged in supplying the lucrative market of which our own band (let us call them The Tyros) was now a part, with everything it could possibly need to satisfy its own and its customers' requirements. And, apart from the musical instruments, the one thing, of which

the hundreds of dance bands active throughout the country stood in need, was, as we already know, suitable orchestrations. The song copies which The Tyros had used (quite illegally) to get themselves off the ground, were on sale in music shops and even market stalls everywhere, but, in certain more specialised shops in the main provincial centres, waiting to be discovered by The Tyros in their hour of need, there reposed a whole library of full orchestral arrangements of popular numbers as played by famous big bands. Very professional and, hence, strictly utilitarian in every respect, these arrangements consisted of all the separate instrumental parts, each in a handy fold-out format (no page turning necessary), often on the cheapest possible paper (a different tune on each side of the sheet) and in print which made few concessions to poor eyesight, but the whole thing costing, amazingly, only a few shillings.

In addition to the main piano part, which usually ran to four pages of two-handed rhythm accompaniment with all the leading melody lines from the other parts cued in above it, there would be a 1st trumpet, 2nd trumpet (even 3rd trumpet), 1st trombone and 2nd trombone; 1st alto sax, 2nd alto, 1st tenor, 2nd tenor, even baritone sax, plus, of course, guitar, string bass and drum parts. In addition to the piano part, the 1st alto and 1st trumpet parts would have as many of the other parts cued in as was necessary to enable a band to manage with a front line of only one or two, and, although these arrangements were often genuine reproductions of famous big band numbers, embracing quite complicated passages and modulating into sometimes difficult keys, there would usually be a central section of the arrangement dealing with the basic tune in a manner which made it fairly plain sailing for The Tyros. In any case, the band was in no danger of buying arrangements which they could not be expected, even by dint of much practice, to cope with, because most of them, certainly the whole of the front line, would be there in the music shop, en masse, usually on a Saturday afternoon when many of them would normally have been gathered in the booth of some record shop listening to the latest jazz issues, to inspect their individual parts before taking a vote on whether to purchase.

Although a basic line-up of trumpet, alto, piano and drums would probably have been enough to keep most of the dancers happy at the sort of dances under consideration here, and would certainly have been more financially rewarding for the players, The Tyros were not, as we know, in the game solely for the money, nor did they see themselves as just another part-time dance band. They would consequently have set their sights on a more ambitious line-up of, ideally, alto, tenor, trumpet, trombone, piano, guitar, bass and drums, because, this particular instrumentation would provide them with, on the one hand, a rhythm section capable of delivering the kind of impetus they craved, and, on the other, a front line properly equipped to deal, at least adequately, with those big band arrangements they so admired (with their contrapuntal sectional riffs and generous provision for ad lib solos) without having to substitute one instrument for another. But the biggest advantage of such a line-up was to be found in the simple fact that, when the lead alto laid down that instrument and took up his clarinet, the band would instantly be transformed into the classic Dixieland Octet, that epitome of small band jazz which we first encountered in our Hypothetical Jazz Band.

This eminently practical arrangement enabled The Tyros to make the best of both worlds to the fullest extent of their developing abilities. Rehearsing together regularly in private and playing together frequently in public would increase their fluency in the jazz idiom almost exponentially, bearing in mind that not only was the language common to both small and big band jazz, but that most of the (let us call them) idiomatic expressions invented by the distant jazz virtuosi would find their way eventually into the arrangements written for

the big bands. This meant that mastering these arrangements would, in turn, place a growing fund of the appropriate phraseology at the fingertips of The Tyros, if and when they attempted to improvise. The same hard experience in practice and performance would also supply that other essential ingredient for success in this field, namely, enough self-confidence to take the risks involved in any attempt to improvise in the jazz idiom, first in private, and then in public.

Many of the dancers would neither know nor care whether they were dancing their quickstep to a jazz band improvising collectively and individually around some well-known tune like "Who's Sorry Now" (Music: Ted Snyder, Words Bert Kalmar & Harry Ruby, 1923), or to a dance band playing a scaled down version of a famous big band arrangement of, say, "Cherokee" (words and music by Ray Noble, 1938), provided that the tempo was right and the "rhythm" was "hot" enough to propel them, without any apparent effort on their own part, around the dance floor. But some of them, the younger ones, their own contemporaries, would recognise The Tyros for what they were and begin to show their appreciation, not only by their applause, but also by taking the trouble to find out where they would be playing next, and following them around. Once this began to happen, the success of the band, in its own terms, would be assured - regular Saturday night gigs, and even some on Fridays, during which a constant stream of enthusiastic young dancers, circulating round the hall (as they did in those days) would pass in front of the bandstand, glancing up at them as they passed with pleasure, appreciation, and even admiration, and all this on top of a deep absorption in a common interest with a small group of friends, not to mention a developing ability to actually play jazz.

Nor was that all. With their growing competence as jazzmen, might come the opening up of other possibilities outside the band, but before going on to explore these, let us remind ourselves of just how much The Tyros had achieved thus far. Starting virtually from scratch, with little but their enthusiasm, their spare time, and varying degrees of proficiency on a random assortment of instruments, they had, in only a couple of years, arrived at a point where they were a reasonably well experienced and tolerably accomplished jazz ensemble who could expect to perform regularly in public for an enthusiastic audience of paying customers, some of whom would almost certainly be consumers of jazz on gramophone records. The music they were playing was undoubtedly small band jazz, some of it, admittedly, a scaled down version of big band jazz (but, then, so was a good deal of the small band jazz being sold at the time on gramophone records), but a lot of it, as much as they chose to insinuate into their programme, was the genuine article - collective improvisations around a chosen theme with solo improvisations in between.

Although there is no evidence as to the quality of the jazz they played (whatever that might be taken to mean), we can be pretty certain that their technical limitations would render any serious comparisons between them and the professional jazz virtuosi (whom they themselves so much admired) quite invidious, but there is no reason to believe that, when playing familiar tunes in congenial keys on their own ground, they would not have been well worth listening to. And they had one enormous advantage over the jazz virtuosi, in that they were not playing primarily to be listened to, they were playing for paying customers who had come to dance, and to whom the listening was simply the icing on the cake. This was not concert jazz, in other words, but fully functional small band jazz, and, as such, entitled to an honoured place in the upper limits of Quadrant A in our jazz authenticity index.

Other advantages The Tyros enjoyed were that, as amateurs, gainfully employed elsewhere and making music together for pleasure at least as much as for profit, there was a strong enough recreational element in their jazz to ensure that, unlike their professional counterparts, they would approach each performance with an eager anticipation which never grew stale. And since, also, there were no commercial pressures on them to work technical wonders whenever they took a solo, or to exhibit the uniquely innovatory quality of their musical imaginations every time they performed, they felt no need for artificial stimulants, or disinhibitors of any kind, not even alcohol. Their own high spirits were quite enough to sustain them throughout the one or two performances they gave each week, and although most of them, as was the fashion then, smoked more cigarettes than were good for them, they did not, as a rule, allow smoking on the bandstand.

It may also be worth noting, at this point, that The Tyros did not find it necessary to enhance their performance by donning outlandish attire of any kind, their invariable uniform being as close an approximation as possible to the black bow tie and dinner jacket of formal evening dress - all too frequently worn, however, in their case (thanks to the screening provided by the music desks), with the ubiquitous baggy flannel trousers and brown shoes of the period. Nor could they, even had they wanted to, amplify the sounds they made to an extent which rendered conversation (and even logical thought) impossible to all those within the same four walls, since the sum total of their PA system was one mike, one portable four-valve amplifier and one ditto speaker, for use when announcing the dances or essaying the occasional vocal. Needless to say, there were no flashing lights, either. Furthermore, since none of them owned a car, they had to rely on public transport, which was admittedly very good in those days, to get to and from the gigs, augmented by the services of a single taxi owned and driven by an individual unaffectionally known by a disparaging alias because of his unreliability in picking up, at the appointed time, the stands, equipment, drum kit, double bass, and those Tyros who either played them, took care of them, or lived farthest from the gig. More inconveniently, none of them was even on the telephone at home.

The biggest cross they had to bear was the constant uncertainty surrounding the piano - an item that, before the advent of the portable electronic keyboard, was routinely provided by the hall in which the band was booked to play. Not only could this instrument (almost always an elderly upright) be of extremely variable quality as regards tone, tuning, and pitch, but it was not unusual for the band to find, on arrival, that it was currently situated in a different part of the building altogether, and that, before the proceedings could begin, they would have to manhandle the thing, possibly up flights of stairs, onto the stage. This notwithstanding, it was the pitch of the piano that was the more serious problem (particularly for the clarinettist, the acoustics of whose instrument allowed him so little scope for adjustment), because nothing at all could be done about that - unless, by some remote (but not totally improbable chance), the pianist happened also to be a trained piano tuner whom bitter experience had taught never to leave home on a gig without going equipped with the tools of his trade. Otherwise, it could often be the case that the piano was a quarter tone flat, occasionally as much as a semitone, making it difficult if not impossible for even the brass and saxes to tune down to it. But The Tyros, being jazzmen, took all this in their stride, and simply made the most of those memorable occasions when everything went their way, and they could walk home under the stars afterwards, as they often did (having sent the gear on ahead with Bloody Sid, the taxi driver), feeling incomparably exhilarated and wonderfully fulfilled.

Although they had now reached the point at which, given the skills and knowledge they had acquired by playing regularly together, the individual members of the band might feel able and willing to take advantage of any other opportunities available in their immediate vicinity for playing impromptu small band jazz (a la Hypothetical Jazz Band), it will be evident from what has gone before that these occasions would be rather few and far between. If their home town was big enough, there might be other dance bands with similar motivations to their own which would accept, on a reciprocal basis, a little discreet sitting-in for a couple of numbers during their gigs, or, more likely, agree (in advance) to a short, quite separate session by a another group of musicians during the customary half-hour interval at the dance while they vacated the bandstand. But this was all rather small-time stuff which could be of real interest only to those budding jazzmen who had not yet found a place for themselves in a band of their own, or who disdained to do so, on the purist grounds that this would have meant learning to read music in order also to play the kinds of commercial rubbish that were anathema to votaries of the true faith. The only other social gatherings outside the dance halls, certainly in the UK, at which small band jazz might be played by amateur musicians (or even by professionals, for that matter) were those organised by local jazz clubs, or rhythm clubs as they were more commonly called, and it is to these that we must now, for completeness, finally turn our attention.

5

Nothing testified more eloquently to the uncomfortable internal contradictions that arose in the jazz industry as it strove to find a niche for itself in the international music market, than the character and behaviour of that curiously British institution, the rhythm club, the first example of which appeared in London in 1933, soon to be replicated in virtually every town of any size in the rest of the country to fill what appeared to be a deeply felt, even if (as it turned out) rather unfocussed, need. At the height of their popularity there were dozens of these clubs in the UK, most of them holding weekly meetings, many of them generating their own newsletters or, if not, lending their support to one of the briefly proliferating specialist jazz appreciation magazines of the period. There was even a point at which they managed to form themselves into a national federation, but not for very long.

Since this is not a history of jazz, and the life cycle of the British rhythm club movement has been quite adequately chronicled elsewhere, these organizations are only of interest to us here in respect of any opportunities they provided, or failed to provide, for the performance of small band jazz off the record, particularly by those growing numbers of amateur jazzmen, like The Tyros, who are our present concern. The sad fact is that, in spite of the genuinely altruistic motivation and burning enthusiasm of many of their founders, who were often highly critical of the machinations of the international music industry, and made outspoken assaults on the contemporary musical establishment for its resistance to the charms of jazz, they themselves, by their obsessive concern with the relative merits of the professional jazz virtuosi, and their almost exclusive concentration on, first, the study of gramophone records and then the promotion of jazz as concert music, were guilty of pursuing, however unwittingly, objectives which could only make them, in the end, the agents of the marketing department of the music industry, and pretenders to the role of an alternative musical establishment.

A typical meeting of a provincial rhythm club might be held on a Sunday afternoon on the premises of some secular establishment, such as the Mechanics Institute or the Masonic Rooms, which hired out premises for private functions.

The room in question would probably be of a type suited to chamber music concerts, sporting possibly a piano, even a dais, and there would certainly be rows of straight-backed chairs for the expected audience. Standing on a table on the dais would be the principal focus of interest for the occasion - a gramophone of, probably, the portable clockwork variety, since the more up-to-date and efficient electric radiogram of the day was far too heavy (and fragile) to be easily transportable, and it is unlikely that the club would have a room and a radiogram dedicated to its own exclusive use. The first part of the proceedings would consist largely of one or more of the earnest young men who were the driving force behind the club playing their favourite jazz records, lecturing the audience before and after doing so on the finer points of the performances enshrined therein, and regaling them with as much information as possible about the jazz virtuosi involved. The audience would be expected, and could indeed be relied on, to listen to these records with the kind of rapt attention that would elsewhere be afforded the string quartets of Ludwig van Beethoven.

There was, in fact, a recognisable tendency for the whole of this part of the meeting to be conducted in a manner virtually indistinguishable from that prevailing at the other, far more numerous, gramophone circles or societies then in existence which were devoted to the appreciation of heavy concert music. The contrast could not have been more stark, therefore, between this assembly and the Sunday afternoon gatherings of The Tyros at which the participants lolled about in somebody's front room, smoking each other's cigarettes, drinking interminable mugs of tea (yes, tea), listening to possibly those very same gramophone records, but commenting loudly and even argumentatively (while the music was still in progress) on what they saw as the finer points of the performances, even singing along with their favourite solos and jiggling compulsively round the room from time to time.

Meanwhile, back at the rhythm club, a well-meaning attempt would quite often be made, later in the programme, to proffer the members a live performance of some kind, if only by one of their own leading lights attempting a boogie woogie solo on the piano. On a good day, however, other musicians might present themselves (usually amateurs of mature years, possibly academics from the local university or technical college, playing, typically, piano, drums and reeds) who possessed the ability but, more importantly, the confidence, to take the stand - nerves of steel being a minimum requirement for anyone, especially a front line soloist, who undertook to improvise in the jazz idiom in such clinical surroundings. Obviously, any jazz produced on these occasions could not but reflect the glacial environment in which it had been created. But the audience, after listening to each number with the same concentration they had afforded the gramophone records, could again be relied on to applaud politely, notwithstanding any unfavourable comparisons they may secretly have drawn between the two types of concert jazz on offer to the detriment of the one now living and breathing before them.

It should be pretty obvious that there would be little chance of The Tyros, either individually or collectively, being persuaded to perform in such manifestly uncongenial circumstances, but this reticence was rarely, if ever, put to the test, since there was even less likelihood of their ever being invited to do so. It was not in the elitist nature of the rhythm clubs to see locally emergent amateur dance bands like The Tyros as a possible source of the kind of live small band jazz that would stand up to the scrutiny of its members, and, given the differences in the two parties' terms of reference, who could blame them? It is difficult to imagine The Tyros, in such a cold, inhospitable climate, feeling comfortable enough to be confident enough to produce an

ensemble that was robust enough to generate a sufficient rise in the creative temperature to melt their technical limitations away and allow their collective inspiration to take wings.

As far as the weekly meetings went, then, the local rhythm club, while welcoming The Tyros to membership for the value of their much-needed subscriptions, offered them little direct encouragement as amateur jazzmen; The Tyros, on the other hand, with their regular Saturday night gigs, and their own informal jazz record appreciation society, saw little in the local rhythm club to make parting with their hard-earned cash worthwhile, and were, in any case, already nurturing the beginnings of a lifelong reluctance to shell out real money simply to listen to jazz. Once a year, however, the rhythm club would attempt to justify its existence (and even raise funds) by organising an event which took the ostensible form of a private dance at the largest commercial dance hall in the town, but was really intended to create the right kind of circumstances and atmosphere for a public jam session to develop during the later stages of the event - a fact which was made known to everyone who was offered tickets.

In order to make this as likely and attractive an outcome as possible, the club, would not only book the best professional local swing band it could afford to play for the dancing, but cunningly arrange for the event to take place when one or other of the big nationally-known dance bands would be topping the variety bill on the stage at the local theatre (a fairly common occurrence in those days), and then make sure that an awareness of the possibility and location of the jam session was communicated to the members of this band in advance. The end result of all this planning could be quite spectacular - a feast of jazz virtuosity, first from the local band, encouraged by those present to produce the most exciting big band jazz it could muster, extracting hotter and hotter solos from its members as the evening progressed, and then from those celebrities in the visiting band who chose to come and sit in after their stage performance had ended. By the last hour of the evening any pretence at dancing would have been abandoned by all but the most intrepid, and the fans would be crowding round the bandstand more than a dozen deep, as the up to twenty instrumentalists by now assembled on it, took turns at showing what they could do with whichever tune had been chosen as a vehicle for the purpose.

This would qualify as a truly memorable occasion for all those present, as there could be little doubt that this was genuine jazz, spontaneously improvised on the spot by the instrumentalists involved, many of whom had never played together before, and all of whom, being professionals, would exhibit high degrees of technical accomplishment and impressive, if varying, amounts of musical imagination. For some of the jazz lovers in the audience there might, however, be certain negative features marring the occasion, even if only dimly perceived at the time, since many of the worst aspects of concert jazz would be in evidence. There would, for example, be very little collective improvisation, since most of the emphasis would be on the individual solos, many, if not all of which would take on a blatantly exhibitionistic character as each of the instrumentalists in turn seized this rare opportunity to show off the fullest range of their technical capabilities in the shortest possible time. A large part of what had now become the audience would encourage this tendency by applauding individual solos, particularly when moved to do so by their pyrotechnical nature (although this practice, once started, can be, like the standing ovations awarded to leaders at party conferences, rather difficult to fine tune up or down), thus fostering competition rather than cooperation between the jazzmen, and creating the possibility of winners and losers.

Another drawback, with so many musicians involved, would be the length of time which had to be spent on each number in order to accommodate all the soloists present - there being no likelihood, under the circumstances, that any of them would willingly forgo this opportunity of taking a full chorus. Some of them, indeed, would feel unable to do themselves justice without proving that they could take several choruses in a row and make them all different. It has to be conceded, however, that thirty successive choruses of even the best-loved tune, in the same key at the same tempo, from three trumpets, three trombones, three clarinets, half a dozen assorted saxes and the four members of the rhythm section, one at a time, in no particular order, can be just a bit too much of a good thing. Such extravaganzas may make for of a good story in retrospect, but at the time, for all but the individual currently soloing, the eyes of those present could show a distinct tendency to start glazing over after the first twenty minutes - a phenomenon which only served to stimulate further freneticism on the part of the next soloist in a determined effort to reverse this trend. Conversely, not the least of the penalties incurred at a public jam session was the length of time spent by the participating musicians not actually playing.

There would be no place for The Tyros at these affairs, except, of course, in the audience, even though the tunes selected as a basis for improvisation would almost certainly be those universal standards in easy keys with which they were sufficiently familiar to have coped quite well. This exclusion from the high table would not prevent The Tyros from being there and thoroughly enjoying themselves, first, by dancing with members of the opposite sex (a pleasure for which they did not mind buying tickets), and then learning all they could, by watching and listening, at the jam session. It would never have occurred to them to feel left out of things when so many better known and better qualified performers than they were competing for applause. Given their own experience, they would be fully alive to the pressures and penalties involved, and grateful for this rare opportunity to acquire from these live performances, possibly, something which they could not get from the gramophone records, secure in the knowledge that they would still be having their own fun, albeit in relative obscurity, once a week, long after all this was over.

We can only conclude that, certainly until the end of the 1930s, in the UK at least, there would be very little scope for amateurs like The Tyros to play small band jazz anywhere else but among themselves, unless they were sufficiently obsessed with the idea of doing so to turn professional and head for the "big time", which usually meant London in those days, and even that could be a big disappointment, in jazz terms, as we have seen. But turning professional was another thought which rarely, if ever, occurred to these amateurs, since virtually all of them were, as we have seen, already embarked on careers holding out significantly more promise of long-term material reward and domestic comfort than did that of a professional dance band musician - the only avenue to jazz which was realistically open to them at the time. Fortuitously, however, the outbreak of World War Two in 1939 had the effect, in some cases, of prolonging and extending their active life in jazz beyond the point at which the demands of family and career might otherwise have brought it to a close.

Between 1940 and 1950, thanks to conscription, most of those Tyros deemed fit enough to do so would be obliged to leave home and serve in the armed forces for at least two years, and wherever they went, when not actually in the front line, they would almost certainly find kindred spirits who were only too willing to form ad hoc dance-bands and even, if possible, play jazz with them for their own delectation and that of their comrades. Given its pragmatic origins, collective improvisation in the jazz idiom was ideally suited to the circumstances prevailing during the war and its aftermath: shifting populations, emergency

restrictions, temporary measures, lack of normal amenities, interruptions in the supply of non-essential goods, and a desperate hunger for entertainment which could no longer be met by the international music industry. All over the globe, wherever members of the armed services were gathered together in sufficient numbers away from the actual conflict, unit welfare officers could work wonders in the acquisition of the necessary musical instruments, once persuaded that there were those in the vicinity, however temporarily, who could play them. The result would be a kind of utilitarian small band jazz not too dissimilar from that created in the speakeasies of USA twenty years earlier during Prohibition - anonymous, unpretentious and strictly functional. But also, undoubtedly, Quadrant A.

When the USA entered the war in 1943, conscripted American musicians, both amateur and professional, began to appear on the UK scene, some of them as fulltime members of official armed forces swing bands whose wartime mission was to boost morale by playing some of the best big band jazz available at the time. There was no way in which these ambassadors from the homeland of jazz could be prevented by the Musician's Union and the Ministry of Labour's ban from playing small band jazz with those British musicians who were so inclined whenever and wherever the opportunity presented itself. At the same time, a combination of conscription and the air raids on London had resulted in the dispersal of many of the professional musicians from the best British bands into the provinces, sometimes free-lancing as civilians in the bigger professional dance bands, sometimes as members of established regimental bands which were all too readily convertible into dance bands by order of the Commanding Officer. As a result of this general ferment, by the end of the war, small band jazz was being played in mess halls, drill halls, aircraft hangers and between decks all over the country, mainly for dancing but often simply for parties and social gatherings of various kinds at which collective improvisation by a small jazz band would not intrude on the proceedings - solos of an exhibitionistic nature which demanded to be listened being supererogatory - thus pointing the way to a possible future home for small band jazz off the record outside the dance hall and away from the concert platform.

If, by the end of the war, small band jazz, both on and off the record, seemed to be in marginally better shape in the USA and the UK than at the beginning, but still not sure where it was going, big band jazz seemed all set to conquer the world. Looking back from the end of the century, it may be difficult for anyone who was not around at the time to imagine just how triumphant a progress this music appeared to be making then. But this was a time when the entire world and its partner seemed to be rotating round a dance floor to the slow and smoochy, or fast and swingy sounds of big band jazz. These bands were on the radio, they were on the stage at the local variety theatre, they were in the films at the local cinema, they were everywhere. If one particular image is needed to represent popular culture in the 1940s it must surely be that of the big swing dance band, with its gleaming instruments, serried ranks of uniformed musicians, featured soloists (instrumental and vocal) and its famous leader out front, dominating the scene in some enormous ballroom where the lights were turned down low and hundreds of couples were packed together but revolving in an orderly fashion round the dance floor. But, within a few years it had all gone, to be replaced by something so completely different that even to explain how it happened may be difficult. Small band jazz survived, as we shall see, but only after some remarkable adventures.

CHAPTER NINE (What went wrong?)

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The changes that occurred in the world of jazz around the mid point of the 20th century were so profound, and took place at such a speed, that they seemed like minor acts of God to many of those affected by them at the time. But, as is so often the case with such apparently random turns in the wheel of fortune, these upheavals can now be seen to have resulted from a number of predisposing factors, some clearly discernable beforehand, none sufficiently weighty in itself to start a revolution, but the convergence of which around the outbreak of peace at the end of World War II generated enough turbulence to subvert the established order of things in only a single decade. Some of these factors have already been identified in earlier chapters as being intrinsic to the nature of jazz and its uneasy relationship with the international music industry (on which it was nevertheless so totally dependent for its dissemination); others, of a more extrinsic nature, such as the technical advances in recording and reproduction techniques and the attitudes of the musicians' trade unions to these developments, have also been touched on, but there were so many different forces in play at the same time that a certain amount of recapitulation is advisable if sense is now to be made of the confusion.

We can begin by reminding ourselves that the kinds of music available to consumers in the Western World at that particular time have been categorised as follows:

HEAVY CONCERT MUSIC
 Light Concert Music
POPULAR SONG & DANCE MUSIC
 Big Band Jazz
SMALL BAND JAZZ

Heavy Concert Music (often misleadingly referred to as classical music, serious music or even straight music) can be seen as the highest form of musical art, and one of the crowning glories of western civilisation. It attracts the best endeavours of, first, the most creative professional composer-musicians to conceive it and write it down, and, then, the most skilful professional performer-musicians to interpret it for audiences of appreciative consumers, who gather together to listen to it in a state of still and silent concentration - a condition which does not come naturally to all, and must often, therefore, be acquired by practice. Other distinctive features of interest to us here are that, although heavy concert music is progressive, in that each generation of composers strives to make, and is expected to make, music which is new and different from (although still related to, and even derived from) that which has gone before, the audiences expect, and are expected, to listen to programmes made up almost entirely of the works of dead composers. Generally speaking, as the century progressed, consumers of heavy concert music found the music of contemporary composers increasingly impenetrable and have grown more reluctant to pay to hear it. Finally, heavy concert music relies more on the composer than the performer for its creation and development.

Popular Song & Dance Music (commonly referred to simply as Popular Music), has a long and honourable history stretching back beyond the birth of concert music

(of which it was one of the progenitors), and might best be described as music of the people, by the people, and for the people, since its tunes and lyrics are couched in the contemporary local vernacular, and are intended, at the time of their production, for immediate consumption and everyday use by the general public of the day. Although, historically, popular music has had much in common with concert music, using the same basic musical language, but in simpler forms and with stronger rhythms, it has not been intrinsically progressive, relying more on tradition and function for its appeal. To be popular, however, this music has always found it necessary to innovate to some extent in response to any changes in the demands made upon it by the community it serves. During the twentieth century, these demands have grown increasingly importunate as the production and consumption of popular music has become more systematic and industrialised.

Innovation of this kind resembles that in the clothing fashion industry, in being more superficial than substantive, and more cyclical than progressive, a matter less of art than of craft, concerning itself with the ingenious rearrangement of a relatively small number of elements into patterns which are easily recognisable as being novel and intriguing by even the most casual of observers. It would not be unfair, therefore, to say that the popular music industry (which, by 1950 was on its way to becoming very big business indeed) was concerned with the mass-production of commercial artefacts designed, on the basis of market research, to be of instant appeal to as many potential consumers as possible. Other distinctive features of interest to us here are that, although popular music of this sort had been written and performed by professionals since at least the beginning of the 20th century, it had also been seen as the legitimate province of the amateur performer, and had evolved with that in mind. Generally speaking, popular song & dance music relies equally on the composer and the performer for its creation and development.

We have already seen how Small Band Jazz, like heavy concert music before it, was originally an offspring of the popular music of its time and place, and how the jazz idiom, once a local dialect, as it were, quickly came up from below to permeate and then itself become the common vernacular of popular song & dance music in the Western World - without, however, subverting the basic musical grammar which it shared with the concert music of the pre-jazz era. Since the other distinctive features of small band jazz have been the subject of preceding chapters, there is no need to repeat them here, except to round off the comparison with heavy concert music and popular song & dance by pointing out that small band jazz has exhibited both progressive and traditional characteristics (with, as we have seen, a not inconsiderable tension between the two), and relies more on the performer than the composer for its creation and development.

If heavy concert music, popular song & dance, and small band jazz are accepted as being generic entities in their own right, then Light Concert Music can be seen as a hybrid form derived from crossing heavy concert with popular song & dance music, and Big Band Jazz as a hybrid of popular song & dance and small band jazz. Enough has surely been said about big band jazz already to obviate the need for any further description of it at this point, and the characteristics of light concert music are either common enough knowledge, or can sufficiently be inferred from its parentage, to make the spending of time on it here unnecessary - except, perhaps, by pointing out that, just as the term heavy concert music embraces works composed for performance on the theatre stage, such as operas, so light concert music can include, not only operettas, but also musical plays or "musicals" as they are more usually called, and that this form of entertainment had been a particularly fruitful source of material

for popular song & dance music and, through it, for both big band jazz and small band jazz during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s.

In the hope that this relatively simple system of classification will prove a useful addition to the jazz authenticity index in finding our way through the thickets of uncertainty we are about to enter, and pausing only to note that it begs the question (for later consideration, perhaps) of whether there might not be another hybrid form lurking somewhere between small band jazz and heavy concert music, let us take as our starting point the observation that, until the 1950s, there was a strong common bond between popular song & dance music, big band jazz, small band jazz, and even light concert music in the shape of the typical dance band playing in the conventional dance hall. Until the 1940s, even small band jazz on gramophone records was marketed under the heading of "Dance & Popular" (when not under "Novelty") by the record companies. To put it another way, virtually all the popular songs written between the end of World War One and the end of World War Two, whether they came from musical shows or direct from Tin Pan Alley, were written as either quicksteps, slow foxtrots, slow waltzes, or in latin-american rhythms for potential use in the dance hall.

And these popular songs were played, not only in dance halls by dance bands, but also over the airwaves by dance bands, on gramophone records by dance bands, in films, on the music hall stage, in the theatre pit, in the cinema between films, on the bandstand in the local park on Sundays, all by dance bands. They were also arranged and re-arranged by the swing bands as vehicles for big band jazz, and they were used as the raw material for small band jazz. Since, also, the words were considered by many consumers to be just as important as the tune, they were sung by all the popular vocalists (or "crooners") of the day, using all the above media, but almost invariably to the accompaniment of a dance band. It seems reasonable to infer from this that, whatever it was that befell jazz at the mid-point in the century, must have been affected by what was happening to popular song & dance music at that time, and that the key to what happened to popular music could lie in finding out what befell the basic dance band in the common dance hall, both of which had virtually disappeared by the end of the 1950s. It also seems likely that, given its hold on the popular taste at the height of its power, it would have to be a pretty extraordinary combination of technological development and social trends in the world at large, and changes in the economic facts of life in the international music industry, to bring the dance band down. And it was.

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Taking technological developments first, the two most significant of these were not, perhaps, the ones which might spring most readily to mind today, and they certainly seemed quite unrelated to each other at the time, although both occurred in the mid-1930s, and both originated in the USA. They were (1) the jukebox, and (2) the electric guitar. The jukebox was a logical extension of the advances in the electronic amplification of sound which produced the electric gramophone - it was a coin-operated, automatic, mechanical record player of robust enough construction to stand in any cafe, bar or brothel (from the last of which, in the best traditions of jazz, it is said to have derived its name) and provide popular song and dance music on demand from a large selection of 10" x 78rpm records which could be replaced at regular intervals by more recent issues. In the beginning, juke boxes played quite a large part in the dissemination of jazz to the remoter parts of the USA, and many records, now considered to be classics of small band jazz are said to have been made (particularly by black artists) with the downmarket juke box in mind.

On the other hand, however, the jukebox had an unfortunate tendency to displace any live local musicians who might have been providing the same kind of music (of a possibly inferior quality) in the cafe, bar or brothel, prior to its arrival on the scene. One has only to imagine what might have happened if the juke box had been available for use in the speakeasies during the Prohibition Era, to appreciate the impact that the availability of such high quality sound reproduction at the touch of a button might have had, not only on the livelihood of professional musicians, but also on the development of popular music in general, and jazz in particular. In 1939 there were about 225,000 juke boxes in the USA (playing 13 million records), and by 1942 the number had risen to 400,000. It was as if, with the arrival of the jukebox, the gramophone record had come of age and stepped into the public arena as a force to be reckoned with in its own right.

It certainly brought matters to a head in the popular music industry where the musicians' trade unions had been watching developments in the technology of sound recording and broadcasting since the early 1920s with increasing alarm and taking such steps as they could to protect their members' jobs in the face of what they rightly saw as the ultimate threat - a world full of canned and piped music produced by a mere handful of live musicians. In 1942 the American Federation of Musicians, claiming rising unemployment among its members, demanded that the recording companies should, in addition to paying the usual recording and copyright fees to the musicians directly involved, make pro rata contributions to a fund for recompensing those musicians who found themselves out of work as a result of the increasing use of gramophone records by juke boxes and radio stations. Not surprisingly, the gramophone companies formed a united front to refuse this demand, and the AFoM responded by imposing a recording ban on its members, which lasted until 1944 when the major companies, which had held out the longest, finally gave in. For the AFoM, however, this turned out to be not quite the victory it appeared to be.

A two-year recording ban was long enough for the mix of ingredients shaping the popular music of the day around the dance band to be given a vigorous shake up. The smaller record companies had capitulated first, of course, having much less to lose by doing so, and some of them profited sufficiently from the situation to become much bigger. Having acceded to the union's demands, however, they were obliged to look around, not only for music to record that might prove popular enough to sell well, but also for performers who were not already under contract to the big companies still fighting the ban. As it happened, the popular music pot had already been given a preliminary stir just one year before the AFoM recording ban by an earlier "industrial dispute" concerning the renewal of the contract between the rather grandly titled American Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers and the burgeoning radio networks. The gist of this one was that the ASCP, which controlled most of the music written and published in the USA, sought to use its position to virtually double the fees it charged the radio networks for the use of the music of its members, a demand which the radio networks resisted by setting up a rival organization called the Broadcasting Music Inc and banning the use of all ASCP material on radio broadcasts for the duration of the dispute.

Although this altercation lasted only ten months before a settlement was reached, it meant that, during the period in question, the dance bands were unable to use their usual material on the air, and, more importantly, that the BMI was actively seeking to recruit, not only existing composers and publishers, by poaching them from the ASCP, but also potentially popular songwriters from any other hitherto unexploited source. Strange to relate, there still existed in the USA, outside the highly commercialised world of popular song & dance

music known as Tin Pan Alley - out in "the sticks", as it were - that primeval soup of folk music, country & western, hill-billy music, call it what you will, from which one of the principal elements in jazz had originally sprung in the form of The Blues. And, while the jazz idiom and the jazz method had been elaborated upon during the preceding thirty years and exported to the ends of the earth as a largely instrumental music, this basic blues had still retained its popularity with the rural populations of the Southern States, particularly the blacks, of course, but also the poor whites, as a vocal music accompanied by the cheapest and most portable instrument available, namely the acoustic guitar.

Since few composers of this music were members of the ASCP and the performers of it (often, in this field, the same individuals) were not members of the AFoM, the combined effect of the ASCP music ban and AFoM recording ban was to make it possible for these rural amateurs, hitherto despised and derided by the urban professionals of Tin Pan Alley to be introduced to a much wider audience via the juke box and the airwaves. What emerged from this clear demonstration of the propensity of popular music to renew itself from below, if give half a chance, was a synthesis of the rural blues, country dance music, and the all-pervading urban jazz idiom, which came to be known as Rhythm & Blues. Essentially, it was a primitive form of jazz using the twelve bar blues as its basic form, the voice and guitar as its principal instruments, and the squarer rhythms of country dancing for its incantatory effect, thus breaking clean away from the instrumentalism and instrumentation of the traditional dance band and the rhythms of the conventional dance hall.

It is worth noting, at this point, that, even in the world of popular song and dance, there was a clearly observable trend, encouraged by the dispute between the AFoM and the record companies, away from the dance and the band, towards the song and the singer. As a result, vocalists who had hitherto been seen as mere appendages of the big bands were breaking free to become recording stars in their own right.

In order, however, to follow Rhythm & Blues to the point at which it finally took over the jukebox completely as something called Rock & Roll, we need to look briefly at the other component in this revolution in popular taste - the electric guitar. We have seen how, as jazz developed through the 1920s and 30s, the tuba and banjo of the original street jazz band rhythm section had been replaced by the more sophisticated and versatile string bass and guitar, first in the recording studio and then on the bandstand. During this period, the acoustic guitar found itself in the rather invidious position of being potentially a soloist with centuries of experience as a melody instrument behind it, but lacking the volume in sound production to compete in this mode with the other front line instruments in the band - except, of course, in the recording studio, where the guitar could get closer to the microphone. As the technology of electronic amplification improved, however, it became feasible for the guitar to be given its own mike, amplifier and loudspeaker on the bandstand, but the big breakthrough came in the mid 1930s when it was found that a microphone could actually be built into the instrument, and the electric guitar was born.

The advent of this exciting new voice in jazz (quite distinctively different from that of the acoustic guitar, even prior to the multiplicity of later distortions to which it was unmercifully subjected), and its promotion from rhythm section to front line instrument, was simply the beginning of what must surely be the major musical phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century, during which the progeny of that first marriage of metal guitar string to electromagnet went on to multiply and grow until they had conquered the whole world of popular music. There is no need to dwell on the details here, since

the basic facts are all we need in order to make our present point, and even these are so well known to most inhabitants of our global village that only three salient features of this rise to universal dominance need to be touched upon.

First, the development, during the 1950s, of the solid guitar when it became obvious that, in the fully electric guitar, the hollow sound box of the traditional acoustic guitar could be dispensed with in favour of a narrow plank of wood, or plastic, to which the strings and the still essential fretted fingerboard could be attached. Second, the replacement, during the 1960s, of the relatively large and fragile electronic valve hitherto used in sound amplification, by the tiny, robust, solid state transistor to bring about an exponential increase in the volume of sound that it was possible to produce via a portable amplifier. And, third, the extension of the same technology to the production of a bass guitar with virtually the same range as the double bass fiddle.

The end result was the all-too-familiar "pop group" of the 1960s consisting of one or two electric guitars, an electric bass guitar, and a drum kit - plus, of course, an electronic PA (short for public address sound system) which made it perfectly feasible for this small ensemble to be heard all too clearly from up to a mile away. There were other features of this equipment that could be exploited by the performers upon it. If, for example, the solid guitars were worn suspended at waist level from a neck strap, they could readily be played when standing up, or even while dancing about the bandstand. Also, the instrument left the performers free to sing and play simultaneously, provided that each one had a microphone at mouth level that was plugged into the PA system. Best of all, since the guitar, although difficult to play well, is an instrument on which it is quite easy to strum basic chords or pick out simple melodies, and since the rhythm & blues material being performed upon it was nothing if not basic (relying heavily on the rhythmic repetition of the three chord harmonies and four bar phrases of the traditional blues), almost anyone could learn to play it, to some small extent, very quickly. The only obstacle in the way of the aspiring performer, therefore, was the cost of the necessary apparatus, which could be quite considerable.

Needless to say, a whole new department of the international music industry came into being to exploit the enormous world market for this paraphernalia which, by the 1960s, had turned the relatively innocent simplicities of Rhythm & Blues into the rather more primitive crudities of Rock & Roll, a sub-species of jazz best described here, perhaps, as the apotheosis of the incantatory effect - a sort of lowest common denominator of song and dance, which, under a musical version of Gresham's Law, and with the whole-hearted cooperation of the gramophone record industry, eventually succeeded in driving practically all other currency from the popular music scene. By this time, also, the dance hall of the pre-fifties with its swirling couples locked in supple embrace exchanging intimate chat, had given way to something called a discotheque or disco in which dancers, not necessarily of the opposite sex, faced each other at arms length and swayed around on the spot to recorded rock and roll music amplified to such a volume that conversation was impossible.

Not only that, but the already mind-numbing sounds of the disco music were reinforced by a variety of stroboscopic lighting effects to give a total experience which owed absolutely nothing to the presence of live musicians, or to the simple pleasures of social intercourse. Before we leave the 1960s pop scene and return to follow the other threads in our main story from the late 1940s, the extent should not pass unnoticed to which, by this time, popular song

and dance music had come to rely on visual spectacle for its appeal, particularly as regards the appearance and behaviour of the performers on the increasingly rare occasions when they emerged from the recording studio to sing and play in public. It may perhaps have been the banality of the music and the uniformity of the instrumentation that inspired pop groups, as the century progressed, to wear clothing, adopt hairstyles, and even apply facial make-up that was increasingly distinctive and original (to put it mildly). On the other hand, it may have been due to the advent of television and the growth of a video culture at the expense of the audio culture of radio.

Whatever the cause, the effect was to move the live performance of popular music more and more in the direction of theatrical exhibitionism, turning pop groups into stage or even circus acts, and leaving the provision of dance music to the discos and the disc jockeys (or DJs) who operated the increasingly elaborate and versatile sound and lighting equipment within often inadequately soundproofed walls. In this way, the very worst fears of the pre-war musicians' trade unions were realised as both the dancehall and the dance band moved, in effect, inside the jukebox. But all this was twenty years in the future, when World War Two ended and the dance bands of the Western World were still employing large numbers of live musicians, far more of whom were brass and reed players than were guitarists, bassists and drummers. Ironically, in spite of the 1942 musicians recording ban and the preceding Tin Pan Alley broadcasting ban, the big American swing bands, which were by now at the cutting edge of popular song and dance music, seemed never to have had it so good. With the entry of the USA into the war in 1943, they had become, in effect, the voice of America, and, on gramophone records, on the air, in films and in the flesh, were an integral part of the war effort.

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It was not to be long after the war ended, however, before the socio-economic circumstances of peacetime brought big band jazz down to earth with a jolt. We have already seen that, in order to exploit their popularity and cover the cost of their inflated wages bills and operational overheads, the swing bands had not only to make records and radio broadcasts, but also to perform regularly in public for their fans, and that the only feasible way of doing this across the country was to play in large provincial dance halls as dance bands. It was here that their nemesis awaited them when the booking fees they were obliged, and even, on the strength of their fame and standing (and that of their featured instrumental and vocal soloists), felt entitled to demand, finally became more than the dance hall operators could recover from their customers on the night. Further debits were incurred by the extent to which these bands had ceased to be dance bands and become, in effect, concert orchestras, with elaborate arrangements, resident composer-arrangers, featured soloists, inflated numbers of instruments, and, in some cases, delusions of grandeur, playing music which, for all its swing, was increasingly unsuitable for actually dancing to - in the conventional ballroom style, that is.

The other forms of dancing which were already on the way did not help matters much. The rise in popularity of the big swing band had been largely due to the enthusiasm for it of the youth of the day (the first sign, incidentally, of developing economic muscle in a consumer group which later became known as the teenagers), and they responded to the more compulsive incantatory effect of big band jazz by developing a new style of jazz dancing, which, because it was characterised by acrobatic gyrations of a somewhat jerky nature during the course of which the couple pranced around (and, in extreme cases, even over and under) each other on the spot, rather than moving about the dance floor in the

conventional manner, was given the rather derogatory name of "jitterbugging". This kind of activity had a quite disruptive effect on a crowded dance floor, where order depended on all the couples circulating with the flow of the traffic at more or less the same speed, and determined attempts were made by dance hall managers to stamp the practice out for the common good by displaying "No Jitterbugging" signs and reserving the right to evict anyone who ignored them - always supposing that the miscreants could be caught in the act.

It was all in vain. The tide of history, as we now know, was running too strongly in the direction of free-style dancing (and the teenage market) for the youngsters to be seriously deterred for long. When it came to pass that half the youngsters present were crowding round the bandstand like an audience at a concert performance, drinking in the big band sound, and the other half were defiantly jitterbugging (or jiving, to use its less uncomplimentary name) at various points around what was left of the dance floor, the older patrons, who still saw dancing to however good a band as a form of civilised social intercourse between the two sexes, began to vote against the presence of the swing bands in their dance halls by simply staying away - an early sign of the opening up of a generation gap in the market for popular song & dance music the like of which had not been seen since the 1920s, but which grew wider during the next twenty years than anything experienced even then.

At the same time, other forces were at work in the western world as the outbreak of peace brought with it a marked change in social behaviour and spending habits, particularly among the younger married couples, who had themselves been teenagers before and during the war and were now reunited by the demobilisation of the armed forces. With objectives changing on the domestic front, family life reasserted its priorities, and there was less money available to spend on entertainment outside the home, as a result of which the dance halls rapidly lost the universal attraction, spanning barriers of class and age, they had exercised during the war years. The cumulative effect of all these changes on the public dance halls and their resident dance bands was not to make them disappear overnight, of course, but to bring about a sudden reversal in the upward trend in their popularity which had lasted for more than twenty years and put them into a steady, irreversible decline. The effect on big band jazz, however, was immediate and disastrous, since the outsize swing bands were quite suddenly a luxury, which a shrinking market could no longer afford. By 1950 the only ones left in the USA were those which were so famous that they could survive on recordings and concert appearances only, and often consisted of black musicians whose wages were not, and never had been, as high as those demanded by their white counterparts.

In the UK, where similar circumstances prevailed, the position of big band jazz was not quite so desperate at first. The struggle to survive the six long years of wartime had prevented the British bands from aspiring to the ambitious heights scaled by the Americans, from whom they had therefore been content to take the lead and subsist as basic 12 to 16-piece dance bands, playing swing orchestrations whenever the opportunity presented itself, and augmenting their instrumentation on special occasions, such as recordings and broadcasts. They emerged, therefore, from the war in better shape than their US counterparts to cope with the vicissitudes of peace and the decline in popularity of the public dance hall, but, if their fall from grace was not quite so precipitate, it was none the less inevitable for all that. And with them went those twin pillars of popular song and dance, the quick-step and the slow foxtrot, which had provided such a solid foundation for both big and small band jazz since World War One, but were now discarded by the post-war generation in favour of, first, jive, and then rock & roll, to be relegated to the timewarp of Ballroom Dancing - a

thriving, but minority cult which is still alive and well throughout the civilised world today, but only as a kind of indoor competitive sport.

It seemed possible, at first, that the forces which had conspired to undermine the cost-effectiveness of big band jazz might favour the survival and even growth of small band jazz in, for example, smaller dance halls full of jiving teenagers, and there was a time during the 1950s when this seemed a possible outcome, but, before turning our full attention to small band jazz - which, is, after all, our main concern - there are, for the sake of completeness, other developments in the field of popular song and dance to consider which made some contribution, however small, to the demise of the traditional dance band and the conventional dance hall and thus affected the course of events in small band jazz.

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The resurgence of the vocalist in reaction to, among other things, the instrumental bias in both big and small band jazz, and even in the dance bands, has already been touched upon. This was an unsurprising trend, even without the effects of the 1942 musicians strike in the USA, since the vast majority of listeners, not being instrumentalists themselves, could relate as readily to the words as to the tune of a popular song, and there can be little doubt that the big swing bands in particular had carried the cult of the instrumentalist-leader and the art of the composer-arranger to such extremelengths that some readjustment of the balance was overdue. On both sides of the Atlantic, vocalists who had begun their careers as mere appendages of the big bands, began to break free from their masters and compete with them for popularity in their own right, with the result that popular song, assisted by the general decline of both the swing bands and the dance hall culture of the 1940s, began to outstrip popular dance music in the increasingly important gramophone record sales.

A final desperate attempt by the AFoM to stem the tide by imposing a second recording ban in 1948, for which the record companies were this time all too well prepared, was enough to tip the balance and ensure that the big showbiz names of the 1950s would be vocalists rather than bandleaders. Unsurprisingly, the whole weight of the international music industry was thrown behind the promotion of these new idols of the teenage market, not only on stage, screen and radio, but also, now, on the new and soon to be all-powerful medium of television, which loved the single singer far more than it could ever love the cohorts of the swing band. The process was given additional momentum by the re-emergence, after the cinema-dominated years of wartime, of the spectacular stage musical as the principal showcase for all the popular performing arts, bearing in mind that, in those days, a musical consisted of little more than a sequence of separate songs (each designed to stand alone as a hit song if it caught the public's fickle fancy), threaded on to a storyline whose primary function was to provide suitable excuses for these songs to be sung. During the 1950s and 60s, a succession of well crafted musicals furnished the star vocalists of the day with a steady supply of highly singable songs, and the success of each musical was judged, in its turn, by the number of songs it contained which reached the Top Twenty in the well publicised gramophone record Hit Parade.

By the end of this period, the number of records sold had become, in effect, the measure of the success or failure of any piece of new music or the performance of it, and the marketing machinery of the burgeoning post-war international music industry had increasingly geared itself to the making and selling of gramophone records. In terms of total sales volume and profit, both current and projected, it would not be going too far to say that, the international music industry had become, to all intents and purposes, the international recorded

music industry. The old music industry was still there, of course, with its composers and songwriters, music publishers and musicians, concerts, operas and musical shows, but had become, as it were, simply grist to the mills of the huge and growing market for "canned" entertainment, a commodity which, thanks to the wartime advances made in the technology of recording and reproducing sound, could now be made available for domestic consumption at a level of quality worlds away from that enjoyed by the record buying public before the war.

One of the two most significant of these technical innovations was the long playing gramophone record, or LP, rotating at 33 1/3 instead of 78 revolutions per minute, made of tough and flexible vinyl instead of fragile and brittle shellac, and with many more grooves to the surface inch than its predecessor, developments which made it possible for over half an hour's music to be recorded on one side of a 12" disc. The companion to the LP was the high fidelity equipment, or HiFi, developed and marketed at the same time, to reproduce the much fuller frequency range of sound recorded on the new records to the best possible effect. The first 33 1/3 LP appeared as early as 1946, to be followed in 1949 by the extended play record, or EP, which rotated at 45rpm, measured 5" across, played for about as long as the old 12" x 78rpm record, and was better suited to what became known as pop singles, and, of course, to the ubiquitous juke box. Since the 12"LP could accommodate several pop single tracks per side, it was used initially for compilations, or albums, of those popular songs which had already made it into the hit parade as singles. Needless to say, all HiFi gramophone turntables were adjustable to rotate at either 33 1/3, 45, or 78 rpm, as required.

In relative terms, however, the greatest beneficiary of the LP and hifi revolution was not popular music, nor (as we shall see) was it jazz, but that vast body of music which had been so uniquely disadvantaged under the old Lo-Fi 78rpm regime by the salami-slicing of its best endeavours into 5 minute bursts requiring the all-too-frequent attendance of the listener at the turntable to restore them to any semblance of continuity - heavy concert music. Now, for the very first time, it became possible to record a whole work by a great composer on just one side of a 12" LP or, in longer pieces, to use the natural breaks provided by the separate sections of the masterpiece (movements of a symphony, say) to move from one side of the record to another at a more civilised pace. In addition to which, the relative complexities of heavy concert music, and the greater size and variety of the orchestral forces required for its realisation, meant that it also benefited disproportionately from hifi reproduction, particularly when stereophonic recording was introduced in the late 1950s.

These improvements significantly increased the market competitiveness of heavy concert vis a vis the other categories of music (including jazz), and led to an upsurge in the appreciation of its merits by new customers, now that the profundities and complexities of these works could be studied in much greater detail by having them delivered, on demand, at heavenly length and in good concert hall condition, to the privacy of one's own armchair - through padded earphones, even, if maximum concentration was the aim. In addition to all this, as an intriguing technical phenomenon in its own right, hifi served to enlarge the overall size of the potential market for recorded music of all kinds simply by ensuring that no household with any pretensions to being affluent could afford to be without the latest equipment. Here, however, an offsetting tendency must be discounted for a great deal of money to be spent in pursuit of the very best in realistic sound reproduction for its own sake by enthusiasts who then found themselves with little real interest in the musical riches available on the LPs, or, in less extreme cases, with sufficient time to spare

from their other concerns to afford the recordings the kind of attention they demanded if their full value was to be realised.

But the quantities of expensive hi-fi equipment and LPs, which, once the initial novelty had worn off, sat silently in so many homes paying dividends to nobody but their original manufacturers, cannot be allowed to detract from the benefits these advances bestowed on the consumers of music. With the appearance, in the mid-1960s, of the compact long-playing tape cassette and its small, easily portable, battery-powered player, the post-war transformation of the international music market was complete, and patterns of development, production and distribution had been established which were to last for the rest of the century.

In this new order, popular song & dance music had its own well-oiled commercial machinery for designing, manufacturing and selling a product which was now almost entirely recorded on either disc or tape for reproduction, on demand, to any degree of amplification (alas), in private or in public, and which needed only the occasional live performance (using the same elaborate sound equipment) to promote or exploit it. At the other end of the spectrum, heavy concert music was well-positioned to make the best of both worlds, with an inexhaustible repertoire of compositions by the many composers who had lived and died during three previous centuries to interpret and perform, then re-interpret and re-perform, endlessly, for each new generation of consumers, not only in the concert hall, as before, but also, now, in the recording studio, with both activities capable of supporting, supplementing, and subsidising the other. It was in this keenly competitive environment - not unlike the space between two millstones - that small band jazz, to which we can now (thankfully) return, was obliged to make its way, and the first thing that happened to it after World War Two was an internal split which divided it acrimoniously against itself.

5

This Great Schism, about which so much has been written in the histories of jazz, was brought about by the arrival on the scene of a strain of small band jazz, which sounded so different from anything heard before that it had to be given its own name. The name which emerged - bebop - may not have been intended as a compliment by those who coined it, supposedly in imitation of what they perceived as an unattractive, staccato, hiccupping honk in any melody line produced by the new approach to improvisation, but it was adopted with defiant pride by its practitioners, who saw themselves, not only as pioneers exploring new territory, but also as revolutionaries releasing jazz from the constraints of its origins in popular song and dance music. Viewed in perspective, however, although it was unusual in being deliberately iconoclastic and uningratiating, bebop, or rebop, or simply bop as it soon came to be known, can be seen as a fairly logical extension of a number of tendencies already noted in the development and dissemination of jazz during the previous three decades.

Ever since jazz had first appeared on the international scene and been recognised as something quite different from anything that had gone before, differences of opinion had existed among producers and consumers alike about which of its qualities to value the highest and the extent to which these special qualities were compatible with the circumstances of their commercial exploitation. These opposing points of view had been characterised at various times by their supporters as being:
the genuine versus the artificial,
the original versus the derivative,
the artistic versus the commercial,

the instinctive versus the sophisticated, the crude versus the elegant, the conventional versus the experimental, and even the sincere versus the cynical, but mainly (as in these pages) as the traditional versus the progressive, with progressive jazz getting much the best of the argument, largely due to the symbiotic relationship which developed between jazz and the international music industry (via the gramophone record), imposing the same demands for regular innovation (or novelty) on jazz as on popular song & dance music.

During the 1920s, 30s, and early 40s, the response of small band jazz to these exigencies had been a vigorous and wide-ranging exploration of all the possibilities opened up by the jazz idiom and the jazz method, within the limitations imposed by the musical and functional conventions of the popular song & dance music of the day. This odyssey had carried small band jazz away from the continuous, collective improvisation of its origins through every possible permutation on the composer-arranger/solo-virtuoso relationship more appropriate to big band jazz, towards what looked like an ultima thule of both collective and solo improvisation in the so-called Dixieland Octet of our Hypothetical Jazz Band, where the maximum number of different instruments were able to improvise together in the widest range of possible ways with the minimum amount of pre-arrangement. It would have been quite feasible, at this point, to envisage a world outside the international music industry, a world devoid of professional musicians, perhaps, in which the kind of small band jazz produced by our Hypothetical Jazz Band could be continuously re-invented, in virtual perpetuity, by similar groups of amateur musicians at suitable social gatherings in different parts of the world, without any need being felt for its further development.

In the real world, however, the importunate demands for innovation in the marketplace were reinforced, in the case of small band jazz, by the special nature of its dependence, not only on the gramophone record for its dissemination, but also on the individual performer for its exposition and development. The effect of this was to ensure that, when a group of jazz virtuosi inscribed their unique creations on a gramophone record, they produced a performance which was definitive to an extent which could never be said of any interpretation, however insightful it may seem at the time, of a piece of composer-arranger concert music. This meant that, once one of these recorded essays in collective and solo improvisation had been afforded the accolade of being bought and enjoyed by an optimum number of contemporary consumers, no re-making, re-working or re-interpretation of it was feasible without inviting unfavourable comparisons, and also that subsequent generations of consumers would accept no substitute for the original. Even the makers of the masterwork themselves could only repeat their success by producing another oeuvre which was sufficiently different from the first to satisfy the demands of a market which rated complete originality as a primary qualification for greatness.

For the professional musicians who were committed to seeking fame and fortune by playing small band jazz, especially those who had a reputation still to make, there was no real alternative but to produce something which sounded sufficiently different from whatever had gone before to attract the favourable attention of the jazz appreciation department of the industry and the record-buying public. A logical corollary of this was that there would be an added advantage if anything the aspiring jazz virtuoso succeeded in producing along these lines could also be rather difficult for other jazzmen to do, thus establishing the ultimate in artistic copyrights. Since the most obvious route to this objective, all other things being equal, lay through sheer instrumental

virtuosity, it will come as no surprise to learn that extremes of instrumental virtuosity on the part of the individual soloists were a distinctive feature of bop, and that this was the culmination of a trend which had been clearly observable during the previous decades.

All other things being equal meant, of course, that the musical imagination had to be available to exploit the technical proficiency, and there is no reason to believe that the musical imaginations of the bop virtuosi were in any way inferior to those of their predecessors. The interesting question, however, is whether they were, as was certainly maintained by admirers at the time, to any significant degree, superior. This claim was based on a perception of the principal distinguishing feature of bop - its use of what were claimed to be the sort of advanced harmonics previously explored only by composers of contemporary heavy concert music.

Much was made by the promoters of bop of this apparent expansion of the possibilities of small band jazz into a more exotic harmonic domain, but its detractors - and there were, as we shall see, many of them - pointed out that these effects were produced by simply extending the fast chromatic runs that were such a feature of the style into the notes which occur as natural overtones when the harmonics of a common chord are followed up the register. Certainly, the use of 9th, 11th and 13th chords, and of the flattened 5th (or "flatted 5th" as it was often called), which is frequently quoted in the literature as the distinguishing feature of bop, was nothing new. The flattened 5th, for example, even figured in the humble diminished chord (two minor thirds, such as C-Eb-Gb), which was, as we have seen in Chapter Two, such a commonplace of popular music long before bop came along.

It was not the exploration of the remoter harmonics of the chords underlying the tune which characterised bop, since excursions of this nature had already been made by earlier jazz virtuosi, but rather the dwelling on discord and the deliberate exclusion of any of the more conventional progressions and resolutions with which these forays had hitherto been bracketed, and by which the listener's ear expected to be mollified after being teased. The effect of this was to produce a melody line bearing no apparent relation to any underlying singable song - or even, for that matter, to any danceable dance, since the final distinguishing feature of bop lay in its idiosyncratic use of the rhythm section, of the drums in particular. These latter, while not departing from the 4/4 time in which the incantatory effect of jazz was so firmly rooted, deliberately eschewed any regular rhythmic emphasis on, say, the 1st and 3rd, or 2nd and 4th, beats in the bar, and not only gave each beat equal value (something which had also been done before), but often kept time with only a cymbal, using the drums, even the bass drum, for imaginative interjections of a more or less explosive nature to anticipate, reinforce or reiterate phrases occurring in the instrumental solos.

No word picture of bop would be complete without some reference to the legend that it was developed by a small number of young professional black American musicians in New York in the early 1940s, not simply to be different enough to attract the interest of the consumers and the attention of the industry, but as a deliberate challenge to the abilities of what had become a predominantly white jazz establishment, at least as far as the more lucrative jobs in the industry were concerned. It is also put about that the new music had to make its way into the outside world on sheer merit in the teeth of opposition from an international music industry which had a vested interest in promoting only existing (mainly white) jazz forms. It is possible that a certain amount of romantic confusion between the controversial nature of bop and the

confrontational nature of race relations in the post-war USA (encouraged, with the best of intentions no doubt, by the sales promotion department of that very same industry), may have contributed something to this story. The invention of bop, certainly by a small number of professional black musicians who were, however, mostly members of quite famous big black bands, coincided, first, with the 1942-44 AFM recording ban, and then, of course, with the entry of the USA into World War Two and the virtual conscription of jazz, along with almost everything else into the war effort. But, once the war was over, bop was free to compete in the marketplace on equal terms with any of the other innovations in jazz, which, as we have seen had always been a regular feature of the jazz record industry.

Whatever questions may hang over its origins, there can be no doubt that bop was a breakthrough of some kind, in practice, at least, if not in theory, and carried with it the clear implication, from the start that, unlike the kinds of jazz which had preceded it, bop required intense concentration, if not special gifts, on the part of the performer to put it into practice, plus an equally intense concentration, coupled with an unprejudiced receptiveness of mind on the part of the listener, to appreciate it. This meant that bop was essentially and unequivocally an instrumental concert music - too fast to dance to, and too erratic to put singable words to - which demanded to be judged as such. One of the great ironies of the twentieth century must surely be that a musical form whose unique appeal lay in its possession of so many admirable properties not shared by the conventional forms of music which dominated the scene when jazz emerged blinking into the spotlight during the early decades, should, by half way through the century, have persuaded itself to become just another type of concert music, actually laying claim to being difficult to understand, and to having an intellectual rather than an emotional appeal. A sort of deliberate anti-jazz, in fact.

Nevertheless, in the UK, many of the professional musicians who aspired to playing jazz for a living found themselves fascinated by bop for these very reasons, plus the fact that, in their case, not only was bop difficult to play and understand, but it was also very difficult to actually get hold of during the immediate post-war period. Recordings of it were slow to appear, as we have seen, and the Ministry of Labour's ban on the importation of live American jazz musicians was still in force and remained so for some years to come. Initially, the only way to hear bop was to go to New York, visit the shrine, as it were, and bring back accounts of the esoteric rites being performed there. The fortunate few who were able to make this pilgrimage (usually by playing in the professional dance bands on the transatlantic liners) tended, not unnaturally, to make the most of this advantage by enlarging upon the impact on them of their experiences on 52nd Street, N.Y., and then, when attempting to demonstrate the new style, exaggerating its unperformability by ordinary mortals. The furore this created, particularly among London jazzmen, was considerable, and provided an early demonstration of the extent to which the idea of bop could often be more seductive than the reality.

Because, for all its revolutionary pretensions, once it became readily available and could be viewed more dispassionately, bop was found to suffer from a number of quite significant disabilities as a consequence of the innovations it introduced. In examining these, we can discount the chorus of disapprobation it attracted for sounding so melodically, harmonically and rhythmically repulsive to the vast majority of those traditional jazz lovers whose sensibilities had been nurtured by performances of small band jazz during the preceding decades, on the grounds that this reaction might be based on a compulsive affection for the very conventions which bop was a deliberate attempt to subvert. Criticism

of this sort was taken as a compliment by bop lovers and countered with the claim that it resulted from a simple inability to understand the new complexities and thus appreciate the riches that were there to be discovered. Such is the power of the idea of bop, that any evaluation of it, particularly one which seeks to explore its more negative aspects, can only succeed by accepting bop on its own terms as progressive jazz which has taken the next logical step forward, before attempting to weigh the benefits of this development against the cost to the whole constituency of jazz, and to its place in the larger world of music.

Viewed objectively, there can be little doubt that the most serious casualty of the bop revolution was collective improvisation. This was an inevitable result of the use by bop's exponents of those fast, continuous, chromatic runs to explore the outer reaches of whatever chord sequence was being used for the purpose. It was obvious from the start that, if attempted by two or more front line instruments simultaneously, these feats of instrumental virtuosity would result in nothing but discordant confusion, and it followed from this that, in practice, the requirements of the style could only be met by solo improvisation with rhythm section backing. As a consequence, the typical bop performance consisted of little more than a carefully rehearsed opening chorus to allow the theme to be stated by the full band, often with the front line playing in unison, followed by a series of solo choruses, rounded off, in due course, by a repeat of the opening chorus.

This incapacity for collective improvisation must be seen as a serious deficiency in bop's account, since, apart from the jazz idiom itself (which it had also been instrumental in evolving), the development of this capability had been the single most important contribution made by jazz to twentieth century music. Solo improvisation, for all its attractions when handled by the jazz virtuosi, was, after all, nothing new. It had been practised in public, to stunning effect by all accounts - on the organ, the piano and the violin, in particular - by some of the greatest composers and performers of heavy concert music in the past, and there will always be gifted musicians in any period who are capable of extended feats of coherent solo improvisation in their chosen musical idiom. But there had never been anything quite like the collective improvisation practised by groups such as our Hypothetical Jazz Band. The only collective improvisation possible in bop was between the front line soloist and the rhythm section, the drums in particular, and although much was made of this interplay by enthusiasts, it could never be anything but a pale shadow of the luxuriant multi-coloured counterpoint which could be woven by the full four front-line instruments within the conventions of traditional jazz.

Not only did the emphasis, in bop, move decisively onto the soloist, but, of the front line instruments it inherited from traditional jazz, the technicalities of the style proved more congenial to the trumpet and the saxophone than to the clarinet and the trombone, and of the former pair, it was the sax which tended, in the end, to predominate, with the tenor ultimately winning out over the alto. A typical bop group consisted, therefore, of trumpet, sax, guitar, string bass and drums, with the trumpet more readily dispensed with when artistic push came to financial shove. A notable side-effect of this slimming process (exacerbated by the developments, already noted, in the technology of sound amplification) was the emergence of the string bass as a front-line soloist in its own right, and it soon became accepted that, for better or for worse, no bop number could be regarded as complete without a pizzicato string bass solo (the bow was rarely if ever used) of some considerable length.

Another casualty of bop was that element in jazz, which had inspired its use as an inexpensive social lubricant across the whole spectrum of human intercourse - over and above, that is, its specific function as a dance music. This can best be described, perhaps, as the utilitarian aspect of small band jazz - fundamentalist, even, in that it is easily traceable right back to its origins - which enables it to decorate any informal, celebratory gathering of family, friends, neighbours, colleagues or merely fellow citizens with a good quality of musical wallpaper, to be enjoyed or ignored according to individual inclination, but always to be relied upon to bring a general sense of festivity to the occasion. Bop, as we have seen, demanded to be listened to with some degree of concentration, and was, for the best of motives, too discordant (in the popular sense of the term) to be ignored, all of which made it pretty useless as anything other than concert music.

Even when taken seriously, however, and listened to in silence, bop attracted what was possibly the most serious criticism of all from discriminating members of the wider musical audience who took an interest in jazz. Their complaint was that, when compared with the rewards to be earned by spending the same amount of time and effort on listening to other forms of concert music, the pleasures to be gained from following the bop virtuosi in their exploration of even the most distant of the harmonic realms adjacent to the relatively simple chord sequences which they tended to use for the purpose, could seem rather insubstantial. To put it bluntly, and keep it, for the sake of argument, in the twentieth century: if a choice had to be made between spending half an hour listening carefully to either a typical bop group playing a typical bop number, or a typical heavy concert music band of similar size, such as a string quartet, playing, say, any one of the six string quartets composed by Bela Bartok (1881-1945) between 1908 and 1939, it was difficult to see how any unprejudiced assessment of costs and benefits could find the former to be the better value.

Admittedly, the members of the string quartet would be interpreting a composer's score after rehearsing together beforehand, but the rich complexity of musical thought - melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic - thus revealed would be guaranteed to repay every scrap of attention the listener could give it, even through many repeated hearings. The bop virtuosi, on the other hand, would be, in effect, both composers and performers, and, although this cannot claim to be of objective benefit to the quality of the music actually heard, the listener's awareness of the fact would undoubtedly increase his initial appreciation of their efforts. But, even with the best talent in the world, the constraints imposed by this methodology on the band's ability to reward the listener's extended attention by revealing a progressively more interesting heavens of invention, would be palpable. In most cases, the only observable development in the second half of the piece would be provided by a different soloist (possibly, by this time, the bassist) exploring the same chord sequence used in the first half, at the same tempo. And, given the absence, already noted, of any real possibility of collective improvisation in bop, there could be no exhilarating climax to look forward to at the end.

As if to complete the alienation of the traditional jazz consumer, the bop virtuosi carried their revolution further by eliminating from their playing much of the warmth of expression and variety of tone which jazz had originally introduced into the actual sound produced by the instruments. Out went, not only vibrato, but also rubato, portamento and virtually all the other idiosyncratic dynamics which jazz instrumentalists had adopted in their original endeavours to reproduce the uninhibited personal expressiveness in the untrained human voice of the folk, blues and gospel singers. But, here, a virtue may have been made of necessity to some extent, since the rather featureless sound which

resulted was better suited to the fluent acrobatics demanded by the bop melody line and more reflective of its alleged intellectual content. This studied rejection of much that was "hot" in early jazz, led, before very long, and not very surprisingly, to the adoption, by the promoters of bop, of the word "cool" to characterise its essence, and soon a whole new ethos had developed around this new concept of jazz, affecting the manners, clothing, attitudes and even modes of speech of its adherents.

Because, in spite of its obvious limitations, there can be no denying that bop and its derivatives, while repelling the majority of traditional jazz consumers, inspired an almost fanatical devotion in a minority who, having once been bitten by the bop bug, found earlier forms of jazz to be crude and unexciting. One possible explanation for this addiction may be that, in spite of its unsuitability for dancing, bop was capable of producing in some listeners a more enhanced incantatory effect than traditional jazz by reinforcing the hypnotic input from the underlying, throbbing rhythm with that from a weaving, continuous, ululating melody line more akin to the sinuous modalities of Eastern folk music than the diatonic harmonies of Western European music from which traditional jazz, apart from its rhythmic pulse, was originally derived. This doubling up of the incantatory effect can easily be observed in the folk music of the Moslem countries along the North African coast of the Mediterranean where the drum and pipe bands can have an effect on the listener which cannot be too far removed from that which the traditional snake charmer appears to produce in his snakes. True or not, bop and its derivatives certainly sound more like this kind of folk music than any other, and some of the bop virtuosi have made this connection and been drawn to experiment directly with the genre, even adopting the Muslim religion.

Outside of the constraints imposed by the style itself, the most significant drawback to bop was the extent to which it excluded the amateur jazz musician from its territory. This was a side-effect, primarily, of its being more difficult to play (given the circumstances of its birth) than traditional jazz, and even, in the absence of any warm protective bosom of collective improvisation where the beginner could nurture his inspiration before attempting a solo, more difficult to learn, but also of its deliberate uselessness as dance music at any of the declining numbers of provincial, suburban and rural dance halls in which the amateurs were still able to exercise their skills. Here again, although this was not seen as any great loss at the time by the international music industry, and certainly not by those professional musicians who sought to make a living out of playing bop, the sidelining of so many potential members of amateur groups like our Hypothetical Jazz Band, and The Tyros, cannot count as anything but a serious diminution in the relevance of jazz to the world of music as a whole. Fortunately for the amateurs, however, bop was not the whole story of the Great Schism, because this parting of the ways was not, in fact, a two-way, but a three-way split in the mainstream of traditional jazz, with something we shall call revivalist jazz constituting the other leg of the tripod.

Although revivalist jazz came to be seen as standing in direct opposition to bop in the open warfare which broke out in the 1950s, and was, as we shall see, virtually everything that bop was not, there is no reason to believe that either of these offshoots from the mainstream of traditional jazz owed anything to, or was in any way a reaction against, the other, even though they both came into being at about the same time in the 1940s. The clearest evidence for this is that they came from such obviously unrelated sources at the opposite poles of

different worlds. Bop, as we have seen, originated with a small number of young black professional musicians in metropolitan New York, whereas revivalist jazz seems to have erupted spontaneously among random numbers of young white amateur musicians in suburban and provincial centres mostly outside the USA, in countries as far apart as Britain and Australia. In their different ways, however, both were reacting against the existing jazz establishment, as embodied in the international music industry, but, where bop was deliberately progressive, revivalism, as the name implies, was deliberately regressive, harking back to the very earliest days of jazz.

They may have known about it only from old gramophone records and the history books, and may even have been making (as was claimed by some of their detractors) a virtue out of the necessity of their own limitations, but the revivalists were animated by the belief that the music devised by an unschooled underclass of mainly black musicians during the early decades of the century in the southern states of the USA (and in New Orleans, Louisiana, in particular) was the only jazz worthy of the name. It followed from this that any jazz developed since then was, in their eyes, merely a perversion of the original creation by professional musicians for commercial purposes, and, as such, was seriously deficient in that special appeal which distinguishes jazz from all other types of music. There should be no difficulty in recognising this view as a latter day version of the gospel according to the purist school of jazz appreciation, dating all the way back to the time when jazz first began to appear on the international scene. The crucial difference was, however, that the revivalists actually practised what the critics had simply preached, going back to basics in their own backyards, as it were, away from the nightspots, highspots, and hotspots of the existing music industry, and playing, like The Tyros and The Hypothetical Jazz Band, mainly for their own pleasure and for that of as many of their fellow citizens as could find a use for the music they were making.

Before going on to examine the subsequent adventures of revivalist jazz, we should perhaps be a little more specific about its principal distinguishing features, although many of these could easily be deduced from its pedigree. The main differences between a typical revivalist band and The Tyros, for example, were that, first, the saxophone was banished from the front line as being a later, and therefore decadent, accretion, leaving the holy trinity of clarinet, trumpet and trombone free to play their clearly differentiated contrapuntal roles in the collective ensemble. Next, and more remarkably, the banjo, a virtually extinct species by then, was resurrected to replace the guitar in the rhythm section and give the music its distinctive New Orleans flavour. In some bands, even the tuba reappeared to displace the string bass and make the connection with the original marching bands complete. Curiously, however, the piano was retained, at least for a while, possibly because, in those days, pianos were everywhere, in every dance hall, club house and many pubs, and had featured in many of the earliest jazz records. In due course, however, the piano was found to be as superfluous as the saxophone, and the line-up reverted to the "classical" sextet of clarinet, trumpet, trombone, drums, banjo and bass (or tuba) which is still in evidence today.

The pioneers of the New Orleans revival were not only amateur musicians, but many of them were also completely self-taught and quite unable to read music. They did not, however, see this as a disadvantage, claiming that it put them more in touch with the spirit of those original founding fathers they were seeking to emulate. And anything they lacked in technical accomplishment, they more than made up for in their dogged enthusiasm and single-minded dedication to the idea of the band as an organic whole made up of like-minded individuals with

a firm commitment to playing together frequently and regularly in order to work up the ensemble and extend their repertoire without the need for written arrangements. In addition to which, having turned their backs on what they saw as the commercially competitive individualism of the intervening period, they reverted to those tunes which pre-dated the invasion of popular song & dance music by the jazz idiom and which relied more on collective than on solo improvisation for their realisation. Even when taking solos, they eschewed technical exhibitionism (whether capable of it or not!) in favour of a simplicity of expression which reflected, in their view, an appropriate humility and sincerity.

To achieve the desired effect they coaxed as fruity a sound as possible out of their instruments, with plenty of vibrato and glissando, but less concern for the niceties of intonation and pitch. In further contrast to what they perceived to be the effete practices of the professional musicians who played commercial jazz, they tended, when playing in public, to disclaim any formality of dress and behaviour in favour of an almost aggressively plebeian take-it-or-leave-it manner, appearing often jacketless and tieless, but graduating, perhaps, with success, as far as matching cotton sweatshirts and jeans. They did not, of course, use music stands, and, as if to emphasise this fact, or possibly in unspoken tribute to the marching bands of yore, or simply because they found they played better that way, or even due to the fact that the space they usually had at their disposal was too small for them all to sit down in at once, their one concession to histrionics was that the front line played standing up all the time, a practice which continues to this day.

Also worthy of note here, is that the tempi that resulted from their efforts to revive the stomps, struts and blues of early New Orleans jazz were not entirely unsuitable for dancing. They approximated closely enough to the quickstep and slow foxtrot of contemporary ballroom fashion to make it possible for anybody conversant with the basic steps of these two dances (which meant just about everyone over the age of 16 at the time) to make use of the music for this purpose if enough floor space was available to do so. Obviously, this was not a consideration in the minds of the revivalists at the time, but it may have played some part in what was to follow, because, amazingly, this (on the face of it) strictly unprofessional, non-commercial, off-the-beaten-track, personal-hobby-horse kind of music, began to attract far bigger audiences wherever it was played than anyone, even its perpetrators, had ever dreamed it could. The New Orleans revival certainly took the music industry by surprise in a way that bop did not, because bop, after all, was simply a rather extreme form of that innovation by professional musicians, which had been common practice in the industry for years. This, on the other hand, was news from nowhere played by nobodies.

It took the professionals in the industry some time to come to terms with the unpalatable fact that a kind of jazz which they could only see as being, at best, crude, repetitious and backward looking, and, at worst, inadequately performed by a bunch of musically illiterate amateurs in makeshift locations, had something about it which appealed to the post-war generation of consumers in ways which their own best endeavours did not. But when it finally became evident that, in spite of all their distaste for it, the revival was gathering momentum, the commercial establishment had little choice but to clamber on the bandwagon and try to cash in as best it could. As a first tentative step in this direction, the more passably cohesive of the pioneering revivalist bands were invited out of their suburban or provincial obscurity on to the national stage by promoters who either believed in what they were doing or could simply recognise a coming thing when they saw it.

Once these bands began to accept bookings away from their home turf on a regular basis, however, they were faced with a number of difficult decisions, not the least of which was whether to turn professional or not. They were enmeshed, in fact, in the same dilemmas confronting the members of our Hypothetical Jazz Band when the question arose of their moving from the private to the public domain in Chapter One, or those 1930s American musicians in Chapter Eight who aspired to being professional jazz musicians rather than simply professional musicians playing jazz. On this occasion, however, they seemed some grounds for hoping that it might be possible for at least a few of these bands to make a living by playing the kind of jazz they wanted to play without making undue concessions to those commercial considerations which had, in their own view, polluted that precious stream to whose original source they were seeking to return. The main justification for this hope was that, as already noted, in addition to being easy to listen to, revivalist jazz was also easy to dance to, after a fashion, and there were plenty of small dance halls up and down the country prepared to offer one night stands to any band that could bring in the punters.

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There followed, in the UK at least, a period (coinciding roughly with the 1950s) of intense ferment in the jazz community during which the elements created by the three-way split in jazz began to react with each other and with the backwash from developments, already referred to above, in the larger world of popular song & dance music. It has to be remembered that the big band jazz which had dominated the 1940s was still very much in evidence during the 1950s in the shape of those British dance bands which had survived the war and continued to figure prominently, albeit in a downward curve, on the airwaves and in the all-important gramophone record Hit Parade during this period, occupying the major metropolitan dance halls and touring the country at regular intervals, even if less and less successfully, until they finally expired in the 1960s. These bands were manned by professional musicians, the more talented of whom were still aspiring, as ever, either to play their own small band jazz - in many cases, now, however, in the bop idiom - or to form their own bigger bands to experiment with more advanced compositions and arrangements in a similarly progressive vein.

In spite of the undoubted musicianship of these modern jazzmen and their willingness, when the chips were down, often to put the fulfilment of their musical ambitions before their financial well-being, very few of their ventures into what was undoubtedly concert music in design and intention (even though it was performed in the same kinds of dance halls and clubs as the revivalists were playing in), ever enjoyed other than critical success. What a painful irony it must have seemed to these well-trained professional musicians that, at a time when their own carefully conceived and brilliantly executed, innovative jazz was struggling in the marketplace to find an audience prepared to pay for it, so many rough and ready, amateur versions of the primitive jazz of nearly half a century before were showing every sign of becoming commercially viable. But it may, perhaps, have been some consolation to them to observe that, as the relationship between the New Orleans revival and the music industry began to flourish, a number of penalties were already being incurred of the sort which seem destined, by some inexorable law, to be imposed on any initial commercial success enjoyed by any fully improvisational small band jazz played anywhere at any time.

Under this unwritten rule, it seemed inevitable that those amateur revivalist bands which had been tempted into turning professional would quickly find

themselves confronted by the harsh realities of producing a genuine article at frequent intervals in different places, often many miles apart, to order. At first, of course, it would be great fun to be earning a living, however precarious, from playing the very music they loved for a roomful of paying punters who showed every sign of enjoying it, either by dancing to it, listening to it, or both. But, as others before them had found, there is more to turning professional than simply deciding to exercise a hitherto amateur skill for a living. Apart from the physical and mental wear and tear of doing one night stands in different parts of the country, there is a range of technical disciplines which must be accepted, and techniques, which have to be acquired by the professional, if the same standard of performance is to be guaranteed on every working day (or night) for months on end without the risk of succumbing to some stress related disease or, in a musician's case, repetitive strain injury.

On the face of it, the revivalist jazzmen should have enjoyed a number of advantages (arising from the nature of their music) over any of their predecessors who had attempted to tread a similar path to fame and fortune. With its emphasis on co-operation rather than competition, and on collective rather than solo improvisation, there was nothing too frenetic about revivalist jazz, there was little striving for stunning effect, and less personal exhibitionism, since everything depended on the ensemble and on the group's commitment to ensuring that the separate components of the band had been fitted together in such a way that the whole thing would chug along like clockwork, creating, not so much a jazz spectacle as a jazz atmosphere to which the customers could respond in a number of individual ways - by dancing, listening, or simply socialising to the uplifting but relatively undemanding sound of the music. This deliberately laid back approach to the delivery of the New Orleans entertainment package was highly commendable as an ideal, but, as we have seen, in the real world of the music industry, practice has a tendency to deviate rather widely from theory.

For one thing, by turning fully professional, any previously amateur revivalist band would almost certainly lose one or more of its original members, for whom the kind of life offered by such a move would, for a variety of personal reasons, be either unappealing or simply insupportable. Some of these drop-outs could have survived as semi-pros playing evening gigs within a thirty mile radius of home, but found a full-time commitment involving travel to more distant parts of the country incompatible with their other commitments and responsibilities. They chose instead to live on, in relative obscurity, playing jazz in their spare time, mainly for pleasure, but also for profit, for many years to come - hardly a fate worse than death. Their defection, on the other hand, would cause bigger problems in a revivalist band than might have been the case in other kinds of small band jazz. With so much depending on collective improvisation and co-operative ensemble work, and, therefore, on the attitudes of the individual members to the genre and to each other, there would be plenty of scope for friction, both personal and stylistic, between any new recruits and the remaining incumbents.

Even without this kind of fragmentation, however, even in a band that was working well together from the onset, the novel experience of performing the same twenty or thirty numbers in the same old way, night after night, for weeks on end would tend to generate its own kind of dissention within the ranks. These were not, after all, professional musicians playing occasional jazz as a pleasant change from their other duties, but self-taught, often musically illiterate amateurs, who had started out to revive the music of a bygone age because (a) they believed in it, (b) it was within the scope of their limited abilities to play it, and (c) they enjoyed doing it. After turning

professional, some of these jazzmen would begin to develop, with practice, but possibly at different speeds, into genuine pros, and acquire the kinds of skills and knowledge they had originally lacked. With greater technical expertise would almost certainly come a wish to extend the band's repertoire in directions which other members of the band might, either not find easy, or not approve of, or both.

At their worst, these tendencies could lead to disruptive personnel changes, or even the break-up of the band for temperamental or even ideological reasons - many revivalists being just as doctrinaire in their approach to jazz as were the modernists. At their best, however, they could generate an all round improvement in the brilliance of the sound and the articulation of the ensemble - and, of course, the fluency of the soloists - which the purists might condemn as commercialism, but the market find more attractive. In the event, as long as the basic New Orleans formula was adhered to, the more accomplished the musicians became, the better the consumers seemed to like it, although there were still adherents to the true faith who continued to prefer the dirtier sound and rougher edges of the original. Also, when they saw how the revivalist boom was developing, a number of professional musicians from the declining world of big band jazz made successful bids to join the movement, and their presence in it further increased the general level of technical proficiency and reliability with which the product could be delivered to the customers.

Once this polished up version of the New Orleans revival began spilling over into the established pop scene, it was given the more convenient label of traditional jazz, or trad for short, thus inconveniently requiring all other current manifestations of a small band jazz tradition, which stretched back in an unbroken line to the 1920s, now to be called mainstream jazz - unless, of course, it was recognisably bop. And by the end of the 1950s, trad had become a very considerable commercial success, both in the UK and on the continent, with a number of British bands achieving national, even international status, and making a pretty good living, not only from their regular gigs, but also from appearances on radio and TV shows, and even on gramophone records in the Top Twenty of the Hit Parade. Not surprisingly, this unprecedented financial bonanza led to a steady increase in competition for the spoils, to the cloning of more and more trad bands for this purpose, and to the consequent adoption of such showbiz trappings as distinctive uniforms (bowler hats and fancy waistcoats, straw hats and blazers, for example), jocular chat when announcing the numbers, and a certain amount of amiable character-acting on the bandstand, much of which was more reminiscent of metropolitan New York in the Roarin' Twenties than the Deep South of the preceding decade.

Of more significance here, perhaps, is that, under this new dispensation, it soon became perfectly acceptable for popular songs unheard of in New Orleans to be given the full trad treatment (and even end up in the Hit Parade), a practice which had been a commonplace of jazz in the past, but which now gave rise to the use of a new term of abuse - traddypop - by serious jazz connoisseurs. Viewed dispassionately, however, apart from the sanitisation and standardisation of the genre for the popular music market, the only thing that clearly distinguished commercial trad from the more sophisticated so-called Dixieland style of small band jazz favoured by both our Hypothetical Jazz Band and The Tyros, was the use of the banjo. The revivalists' anathematisation of the saxophone had been on a point of dogma which was lost on most of the youngsters who made up the new market for trad, even though they were happy to join in the booing whenever a sax had the temerity to put in an appearance at a trad gig. They liked the banjo, in other words, far more than they disliked the sax. But, if the metallic clanging of the banjo was the bottom line for the tradsters, it was the

ultimate sticking point for the mainstreamers who simply could not take it seriously as a musical instrument.

The opposing passions it aroused in the two camps had the unfortunate effect of elevating the banjo to an emblematic status out of all proportion to its actual contribution to the music of New Orleans. This, in turn, tended to exaggerate the depth of the split between trad and mainstream jazz - which was, by any objective standard, much less profound than that between mainstream and bop - and disguise the fact that, for all its commercial success, the trad revival was of more lasting significance to the relationship between amateur and professional jazz than to the competitive popularity of the different performance styles. It is another of those paradoxes so characteristic of jazz that, although the trad boom made it possible, for the first time ever, for relatively large numbers of professional musicians to earn a living playing nothing but small band jazz (a great deal of which, incidentally, was both functional and improvisational enough to score high marks in our jazz authenticity index), by the time it expired in the 60s under the sheer weight of competition from rock & roll, it had accomplished two things which were to be of lasting benefit to amateur small band jazz.

The first of these was the firm implantation into some part of the public psyche of the sound of trad as the one recognisably authentic and universally acceptable voice of jazz. Even when its immediate novelty had worn off and all trace of the 50s trad boom seemed to have been erased from the pop music scene by successive tidal waves of rock and its derivatives, there was a residual effect. It was as if all the consumers of popular music who had been around at the time (few of whom knew or cared anything about the facts of the matter), had been inoculated with a generic strain of small band jazz which was hardy enough to survive in those nooks and crannies of the market which the rock bands could not reach, emerging fully equipped, whenever an appropriate opportunity presented itself, to meet a felt need which none of the other forms of music available could satisfy. Whatever the reasons (for later consideration, perhaps), it is observably true that, since then, throughout the Western world, the standard trad band has been used to enliven the proceedings at social gatherings of every kind - at carnivals and fetes, in amusement parks, on boats and barges, at weddings, anniversaries, birthday parties - on any occasion, in other words, of a festive or celebratory nature, where the generations intermingle in public or private.

The second achievement of the 1950s commercial trad boom was to leave behind it, scattered throughout the length and breadth of any country in which it had flourished, a relatively large number of musicians who were quite capable of playing trad jazz for pleasure and profit, if ever called upon to do so. Some of these practitioners might be ex-Tyros, beached by the de-commissioning of the dance halls, some might be ex-professionals in much the same boat, compelled now to pursue alternative careers for their daily bread, but happy to keep their hands in and earn the occasional spoonful of jam. Some might even be new recruits to jazz, inspired by the recent popularity of the trad bands, and hoping, initially, to emulate their commercial success. But the important point is that all of them would now be available to play trad jazz as semi-pros, and most of them would still be young enough to carry on playing it locally, in their spare time, whenever circumstances permitted, for the next thirty years. Another point is that any such activity would take place quite outside the purview of the international music industry, and be free, therefore, from the pressures of innovation and marketing which would continue to bear down on any professional musicians who were still trying to make a living out of jazz.

This meant that amateur jazz emerged from the upheavals of the 1950s and 60s (the decline of the dance band, the rise of the rock band, the technological advances in sound recording, and the Great Schism) in a stronger position, relative to professional jazz, than it had enjoyed at the start. While professional jazz (mostly bop and mainstream) was obliged to compete for paying customers with the powerful attractions of its two giant relatives (heavy concert music and whatever derivative of rock happened to be popular at the time) by striving always after the new and the different on both concert platform and gramophone record, amateur jazz (mostly trad) was free to keep the sacred flame alive of collective improvisation, and fulfil any of the traditional social functions of small band jazz that might be required of it in the second half of the century. In this respect, at least, it could be said that jazz was showing some indication of a willingness to return to its pragmatic roots and become a sort of all-purpose, do-it-yourself, urban folk music with no ambitions to be anything else. So, some of the news was good.

CHAPTER TEN (How much is left?)

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Looking back, now, at the jazz produced since the turbulent 50s subsided, through the swinging 60s, into the sedimentary 70s, it is evident that the landscape left behind by the upheavals of the post-war years has remained recognisably the same until the present day. This is not to say that nothing in the world of jazz has changed since then, but rather that any developments have been along lines which were implicit in the orientation of the different factions in the aftermath of the Great Schism. There have been, in other words, few real surprises and no startling new departures, in spite of the efforts expended in the search for such by those commercial interests in jazz, which depend for their survival on innovation and marketing. With this general picture in mind, then, and remembering also that there will now be very little big band jazz to consider, and that small band jazz has conveniently divided itself into the three fairly distinctive strands of bop, mainstream, and trad, we can conclude our investigation by looking into the jazz produced in the final third of century.

Before going into any detail, however, there are a number of general points to be made. The first and most obvious one is that, although completely dwarfed by its giant relatives - heavy concert music on one side, and pop music on the other - jazz has somehow managed to survive the demise of its parental dance band and eviction from its ancestral home, the dancehall, to become accepted as a category of concert music in its own right. The fact that some of the concert halls it is performed in are clubs or theatres does not subtract from this achievement since these are also places where the customers can make use of the music only by listening to it.

At the same time, jazz has become a respectable subject to study, and even to teach, in our centres of learning, and has somehow contrived to do this without entirely discarding the streetwise mannerisms, which are such a valuable part of its stock-in-trade. There was a period, even, in the late 1970s when jazz, trading on its lowly origins, attempted to pass itself off as a product of the multi-cultural society which Britain was alleged, by then, to have become, and, as such, deserving of official recognition and a share in the grant aid being disbursed at the time, for political reasons, to the art forms of ethnic minorities. A certain amount of difficulty was experienced, however, in deciding, for administrative purposes, what was and was not jazz and to which minority's culture it belonged, but the funds petered out before these matters could be resolved.

All this has been welcome grist to the mills of the jazz industry, which has blossomed, during these years, at a rate out of all proportion to the amount of live jazz actually being produced commercially. Of course, recorded jazz has always been bigger business than live jazz (the industry having virtually been built on gramophone records) and there has rarely been a time, since the very earliest days, when the amount of jazz being played live was anything other than a fraction of the total amount being heard, but this disparity began to increase dramatically following the hi-fi LP revolution. In addition to any new

recordings by contemporary bands (whether bop, mainstream or trad), there was a rush to reissue selections and collections of the earlier 10"x78rpms in the novel format. The New Orleans revival, by generating a particular interest in early jazz, reinforced a natural entrepreneurial tendency to cash in on copyrights already owned, and led to a thorough ransacking of the archives by record companies in search of anything of value that might have survived the ravages of time, particularly when it turned out that many of the original master recordings contained better quality sound than it had been possible to transfer to the primitive grooves of the old 78s.

The steady increase in the size of the available library of recorded jazz, relative to the amount of live jazz being produced, has been mirrored, also, during these years, by a growth in the volume of writing about jazz. We have seen that the jazz appreciation department of the industry had been writing about jazz since the very earliest days, first to promote, and then to compare and evaluate the gramophone records as they were released, to be followed, as regular jazz consumers began to develop a curiosity about the individual performers responsible for the exciting sounds emerging from the horns of their gramophones, by the compilation of facts and figures about jazzmen and their activities - mainly, of course, those related to the recordings, and for which, therefore, the generic term of Discography was invented. A small number of magazine articles, and an even smaller number of books, had been published between the wars which attempted to deal seriously with jazz as a newly emergent art form worth studying in its own right, but the intellectual climate of the time seemed to be inimical to a recognition of the achievements of the individual jazz virtuosi, many of whom were still in the process of developing jazz, often in ways which did not quite suit those writing about it, and to most of whom, as members of what were then seen as the lower orders, it was difficult for the largely middle class authors to relate comfortably.

Whatever else it may, or may not, have achieved, the emergence of bop and the New Orleans revival, certainly inspired a good deal of argument, debate and discussion about jazz among a much bigger audience than hitherto. This, in turn, sparked off an appetite for information about the wider aspects of the subject - its origins, its development, its theory (if any) and its practice, but, above all, and not surprisingly (given the fundamental importance of the performer in jazz), about the musicians responsible for it. To meet this demand the biographies and even autobiographies (mostly ghosted) of the early pioneers and later jazz virtuosi have been put together, one by one, and published to reveal a story so apparently rich in character and incident, embracing so many aspects of human experience, and encompassing such a range of human emotion, that a whole new department of the jazz industry has come into being in order to exploit a body of material which bids fair to develop a life of its own quite separate from the music itself.

Of course, jazz has not been the only one of the performing arts to be affected by the phenomenal growth, over the past fifty years, of the mass media monster which feeds, and is fed by, the public's apparently insatiable appetite for gossip about the seemingly more colourful lives of actors, entertainers, musicians and artists of all kinds, living and dead - anyone, in fact, to whom the term "celebrity" or "media personality" might be applied. Given this incestuous relationship between publicity and publishing, and the lack of contemporaneous information about its first fifty years, other than the gramophone records and the rather unreliable memories of those who were present at the time, it is hardly surprising that the story of jazz has become the legend of jazz, and eventually - as those of the founding fathers whose physical constitutions were robust enough to enable them to survive (against all the

odds) into late maturity, began inevitably to die off - even the mythology of jazz. One has only to look through the titles of the several hundred books, all of them published since the 1950s, which are catalogued in the average UK county library under the heading Jazz, to appreciate the extent to which, like the performances on the old 78s, the available material has been re-cycled.

Writing about jazz has not been confined to books and magazines. The hifi LP record, being a more expensive item than the old 78, brought with it a more robust and protective record sleeve. This, in turn, provided an unmissable opportunity for the representation on it of decorative, and even informative, promotional material, usually in the form of a pictorial headline display on the front and several columns of small print on the back, and, in this way, a new medium for comment, the sleeve note, was born. At 12"x12", the amount of space to be filled by the sleeve note was enough to accommodate, not only basic information, but also a short essay on the subject of whatever was recorded within, an essay, moreover, which was destined in many cases to be more widely and frequently read, and with even closer attention, than anything published in a book or magazine.

For heavy concert music, the sleeve note could approximate quite closely to the programme note which had always been available to concertgoers to help them through the relative complexities of the extended musical forms used by composers to express and explore the profundities of musical thought of which they were capable. For pop music, on the other hand, the sleeve note needed only to be an extension of the factitious blurb and hype which would already have been pumped out through other media channels in copious quantities to promote the record. The jazz sleeve note, however, presented a new challenge to the record industry since, although it demanded to be taken more seriously than pop, jazz could lay no valid claim to exhibiting the carefully pre-conceived and sometimes labyrinthine intricacies of form and colour used in heavy concert music. Not surprisingly, the style evolved for the jazz record sleeve has fallen somewhere between the two extremes, partaking, to some extent, of the uncritical adulation of the pop fan, but attempting, wherever possible, to emulate the informative approach of heavy concert music scholarship. The required effect has been achieved by combining a familiarity with every known detail in the lives of the jazz virtuosi with the fruits of an extensive study of jazz discography to produce a form of learned exposition that obviates the need to say anything much about the actual music.

The sad truth is, that it is much easier to write interestingly about the performers of jazz, individually and collectively, than it is to write about their performances, even when these have been recorded and could, theoretically therefore, be analysed and commented on in detail. This is because it is in the very nature of these flights of fancy, intended as they were to inspire immediate and spontaneous pleasure, excitement, admiration, and even astonishment in the listener, to speak unequivocally for themselves, and this is something which, if not at first succeeded in, repeated hearings, but no amount of exegesis, may make it possible for them to do. And it is even more difficult to write about live jazz than about recorded jazz - one need only compare any newspaper account of a jazz concert (another form of writing about jazz which has proliferated in recent years) with an adjacent one on a live performance of heavy concert music, or even with any jazz sleeve note, to appreciate how little straw this particular brick has had to be made with. The sleeve note will, at least, have a modicum of historical material about the circumstances of the recording and the musicians involved to fall back upon, whereas comment on live jazz performances, having little of substance to bite on, tends invariably to

resort to uncritical hyperbole, emotional self-exposure (on the part of the author), winks and nods about the performers, and/or exhortation.

Along with the increase in writing about jazz has come, not surprisingly, more talking about jazz - talking professionally that is, since talking about jazz among jazz lovers is certainly nothing new. Radio broadcasting, although overshadowed by the spectacular increase in television viewing, has managed to thrive in range and reach if not in sheer audience size since the 1960s, making it possible for additional space to be found on the airwaves, if so desired, for programmes featuring minority interests such as live jazz, but the numbers of such events have been relatively tiny when compared with the overall increase in the total volume of music transmitted. The amount of recorded jazz broadcast has increased, of course, quite considerably, and this in itself has led to a significant growth in the amount of talk about jazz, since every recording has to be introduced, and expatiated upon (a la sleeve note) to a greater or lesser extent depending on the context. And, not unnaturally, all the jazzmen taking part in the recording have to be named, either before or after each record is played, or both, and the recording date given, and even the geographical location of the recording studio, since all these things may be regarded as being of importance for the proper appreciation of the performances.

Thus, the undeniable fact that every piece of jazz improvisation on record is the unique product of one or more individual jazzmen (each with his own potentially colourful life story), performing in a particular place at a particular time, has led to the accumulation of an enormous body of peripheral information about these matters. This data bank has tended to create its own opportunities for the demonstration of quite a different kind of expertise from the actual playing of jazz, possibly to the detriment of the living article, which, although it is the tap root of the fruit-bearing tree, does not lend itself so easily to exploitation by non-performers. And this may explain why, as the century drew to a close, there seemed to be more professionals in the music industry talking and writing about jazz, than there were new jazz virtuosi emerging who are capable of playing the kind of jazz which is sufficiently new and different to make the prospect of recording it, and thereby starting the whole cycle again, commercially attractive. We may, perhaps, when examining the kinds of jazz being played during this period, find other reasons for this apparent dwindling away of the seed corn, but, in the meantime, we can only note that the arrival of the compact cassette and then, in the 1980s, the compact disc, or CD presented the industry with further opportunities to re-cycle and re-issue all the jazz already recorded, and, of course, to produce more sleeve notes, but this time in a more appropriately compact form.

It was not always thus. The prospects for live jazz had been made to look quite promising in the 1950s by the gradual erosion of the Ministry of Labour's ban on the admission of American jazz musicians into the UK. This barrier had been erected, remember, in 1935 at the instigation of Britain's Musicians' Union in an attempt to force their equally reactionary counterparts, the American Federation of Musicians, to accept the principle of full reciprocity of exchange. In other words, their jazz musicians could come over here to take the bread out of the mouths of our jazz musicians, if an equal number of ours could go over there to do the same to theirs! To make any sense of this apparent oxymoron, it has to be remembered that, at the time of its inception, jazz was still regarded by the popular music establishment, and even classified by the industry, as a rather extreme (and even degenerate!) form of dance music. And, since there were certainly plenty of perfectly competent dance bands in the UK, the view was taken, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary that there was nothing the Yanks could do that these bands could not.

There was also, even before the Iron Curtain came down heralding the onset of the Cold War, a certain amount of ideological anti-Americanism on the part of many trade union officials in Britain from which the MU was not immune, and in those days, too, the power of the union to take away the livelihood of any member who, in defiance of its authority, appeared on the same platform as a banned foreign musician, was absolute. So, the ban went virtually unchallenged before the war. But, by the 1950s, British jazz enthusiasts, producers and consumers alike, had become more numerous, better organised and certainly more vociferous (through arguing among themselves, perhaps, in the wake of the Great Schism!), and their repeated assaults on the Kremlin walls of MU headquarters, ably assisted by those entrepreneurs and impresarios who were prepared to speculate in order to accumulate, finally began to produce results.

At first, elaborate arrangements had to be made to ensure that some kind of exchange took place between British and American bands before the necessary work permits could be issued - with results that could range from farce to tragedy on either side of the Atlantic - but the currents were running too strongly against the old order from too many different directions for the charade to continue. For one thing, the precipitate decline, for reasons already noted, in the numbers of its members working as professional dance band and theatre pit musicians, was seriously weakening their influence in the union; for another, the rising international demand for British pop groups and their music was operating in the opposite direction. Added to which, and of more significance here, the improving ability of the British jazzmen to provide the required support was making it possible for individual American virtuosi to tour the UK without importing backup bands of their own. One way or another, the ban was breached in time for most of the surviving founding fathers of jazz to be allowed into the UK to perform in the flesh for the delectation of those many fans who had hitherto worshipped them only from afar by buying their recordings.

Not surprisingly, given the extent and eagerness of the anticipation, and the all-too-human fallibility of the participants (performers, organisers and audience alike), the results of this welcome invasion were rather mixed. Big band jazz, with its uniforms and discipline, had always been as much at home on the concert platform as on the band stand, so when the best of what was left of the American big bands came over - being highly organised, fully orchestrated, and reasonably well drilled - they were better able to fulfil the customers' expectations. With small band jazz, on the other hand, the outcome was much more uncertain, since even the groups which had improvised together regularly were at the mercy of those intrinsic factors identified in earlier chapters as having bedevilled small band jazz on the concert platform from the very beginning. Added to which, there were the extrinsic factors arising out of the specific circumstances encountered when they finally arrived, over many of which the visiting jazzmen had little control. These ranged from inappropriately sized concert halls, poor acoustics, and inadequate amplification, through inept programming, off-hand presentation, and incompetent billing, to over-indulgence in stimulating or disinhibiting substances, and lack of professional discipline, leading to disappointing performances.

Given the, often conflicting demands of the jazz consumers and the organisational and artistic problems inherent in producing small band jazz of truly inspirational quality for paying customers in a specified place at a stated time, it is difficult to see how it could have been otherwise. But, on balance, the benefits of the influx, taken as a whole, outweighed the disappointments, since many British jazz lovers got a great deal of pleasure out of seeing and hearing, in the flesh, some of those American jazz virtuosi whose

recorded performances had been for so many years, not only the fons et origo of small band jazz, but also a golden treasury, continually expanding and always available at the drop of a needle, of its very best practice.

The main beneficiaries of these activities, therefore, once the initial furore had subsided and the visits had become more customised, were the British jazz musicians, who were now able to study their former mentors at the very closest of quarters, often, even, on the same concert platform, since they were, by this time, better able to hold a candle to these living legends than they would have been before the war. It would not be long, in fact, before the transatlantic traffic was flowing in both directions, and American and European professional musicians were playing small band jazz together as uninhibitedly as the amateurs in our Hypothetical Jazz Band might have been doing at any time since the 1930s, except that those few American jazz giants who had survived from the 30s were always regarded with a certain awe and treated with a special respect, regardless of their failings, until, one by one, they finally passed away - leaving behind, of course, recordings of their once-seminal performances to be listened to, talked about, written about, and re-issued in whatever new formats become available... for ever, presumably?

Finally, it would be difficult to do justice to any new jazz produced since the 1970s, without saying something more about the popular music of the period, and about the Rock & Roll phenomenon in particular, if only because its effect on contemporary small band jazz has been so largely negative, in spite of their having at least one progenitor (rhythm & blues) in common. This has not been entirely due to the overwhelming commercial success of rock (and its derivatives), or the size and power of the industry which manufactures and markets it, or even the extent to which it has blanketed the globe, but rather to the nature of its actual musical and lyrical content, and to the way this has developed (or, depending on the point of view, degenerated) over the years.

From the 1920s until the demise of the dance hall/dance band culture in the 60s, the relationship between popular music and jazz had been largely supportive, in that, not only were the rhythms of the two recognisably contiguous, but many of the tunes and songs produced for the popular music market of the day were readily adaptable to jazz. There was a fruitful two-way traffic, in other words, not only in musicians, but also in musical material, between the dance band and the jazz band, whether small or big. With the evolution of the disco/rock band culture, however, all this began to change. At first, it seemed as if only the instrumentation and the modes of presentation were mutating, but it soon became apparent that a number of influences were at work on the content of the songs, which affected both the music and the lyrics adversely from a jazz viewpoint.

The dominance of the guitar, of course, was not without its effect, if only on the key signatures and chord sequences favoured by the new song smiths, but the prominence given by the rock bands to the human voice, and, hence, to the words that were shaping the songs, might have been expected to compensate, to some extent, for this. The demands of the disco also made themselves felt in the prominence afforded to the means of producing the incantatory effect, but, again, the aggressively primitive beat of rock was a direct descendant of the immutable 4/4 time of jazz, and could probably, therefore, have been accommodated by it. What seems more likely is that the divergence of the pop song from the more jazz-friendly product of the dance band era began with the phenomenal success, which certain of the early rock bands enjoyed with recordings of songs they had composed for themselves. In achieving this feat, the members of the band in question were translated, with one bound, to a

significantly higher plane, not only in respect of financial reward (as both composers and performers), but also in popular esteem.

Until then, generally speaking, the songs performed by pop groups had been in the simple forms inherited from rhythm & blues and Tin Pan Alley - the traditional twelve bar blues, or the well-worn $4 \times 8 = 32$ bar sequence in either AABA or ABAC format so widely used, for improvisational purposes, by jazzmen - but so many of their members, being completely self-taught, were unable to read music, let alone write it, that irregularities began to appear in the numbers as soon as they began composing for themselves. The songs written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney in the 1960s, are the earliest and best examples of the various ways in which gifted but untutored performers, in devising their own songs, literally from scratch, may sometimes ignore the rules and break with existing conventions, but succeed in fashioning something quite new and different, which can yet have instant and lasting appeal to consumers of all ages. Lennon and McCartney seem to have approached each new song with a completely fresh and open mind, with the result that very few of their many hits conformed to any of the traditional patterns. This applied from the simplest of them, like "All my Loving" (1963), with its $5 \times 8 = 40$ bars in an A'A'A'A'B format, to the more complex, like "Strawberry Fields for Ever" (1967) with $9+8+9+8+9 = 51$ bars in an ABABA format, and Eleanor Rigby (1966) with $4+4+5+5+4+4(5) = 26(27)$ bars in AABBC format, to name but three selected almost at random.

There is an interesting parallel here with the output of the great Irving Berlin (1888-1989) who began writing popular songs more than half a century before Lennon and McCartney, but who was also self-taught. Several of Berlin's biggest hits were irregular in form by contemporary standards, although not quite as far out as Lennon and McCartney's, and many of these have stood the test of time well enough still to be popular today, of which "This Year's Kisses" (1937), already mentioned in Chapter Five as having $6+6+8+8 = 28$ bars, albeit in a simple A'A'B A" format, "Change Partners" (1938) with $7 \times 8 = 56$ bars in an ABABCAD format, "Let's Face the Music" (1936) with $14+16+8+18 = 56$ bars in an ABCD format, "Cheek to Cheek" (1935) with $16+16+24+16$ in an ABABCCDAB format, and "Top Hat" (1935) with its 10 bar "middle eight", come most readily to mind. Fortunately, however, during the course of a long and productive life, Berlin wrote many equally attractive songs of the more usual, and useful (jazzwise) $4 \times 8 = 32$ bars length, which were quickly adapted by the jazzmen of the day and soon became the jazz standards of the future.

But the originality exhibited by the likes of Lennon and McCartney has become, in progressively less talented hands, a licence for uninhibited self-expression on the part of subsequent rock composer-performers, leading, inevitably, to a degree of self-indulgence in which both the form and content of the songs have become so wildly idiosyncratic as to be, not only virtually incomprehensible to the uninitiated, but also totally personalised to the bands concocting them, and of little use, therefore, to any other performer, let alone a jazz band looking for suitable material to improvise around. And although the farther shores of rock do not concern us here, it is worth noting, in passing, that these developments have not made the path of any novice rock band seeking a place in the sun any easier by depriving them, on the one hand, of a standard repertoire of "neutral" pop songs on which to hone their skills, and requiring them, on the other, to exhibit originality in both style and substance from the very onset.

Not only that, but The Tyros of the disco/rockband era, in the sharpest possible contrast to those of the dancehall/danceband days, have laboured under the double disadvantage of having to work up their own material by a sort of

solitary self-abuse, since there is nothing like the old network of rural, suburban, urban and metropolitan dance halls available, in which to perform in public for paying customers with varying degrees of competence. The route from obscurity to fame, in their case, has come to rely on using the "demo tape" and the occasional local rock concert to canvass the remote possibility of their being talent-spotted and taken up by the professional promotional machinery of the record industry. There has been little scope for the kind of rewarding semi-professionalism enjoyed by their predecessors, but this has not deterred large numbers of them from buying all the necessary gear and practising hard and often (to the commercial benefit of the equipment manufacturers and the not infrequent distress, alas, of their family and neighbours) in the hope of achieving the desired apotheosis. But who can blame them, given the adulation and financial reward they have seen heaped upon the members of rock bands that have made it into the charts on the strength of such modest musical talents?

For completeness, it has to be said that not all the pop songs written since the 60s have been hard and heavy rock; there has been a parallel stream of softer pop with more conventional features, produced by skilled professionals (in much the same way as journalists devise and assemble the content of a tabloid newspaper from whatever news happens to be available in order to meet a daily deadline), and packaged up for presentation, if not by purpose-built pop groups, then by one of the few remaining established solo vocalists, or any new singing talent to emerge from the provincial club circuits with the help of television. Best exemplified, in fact, by the entrants in the annual Eurovision Song Contest, the tunes and lyrics of these numbers, in striving for mass-appeal without in any way taxing the limits of the public's taste, have become so featureless in form, texture and colour as to be virtually indistinguishable one from another, once their moment in the record charts has passed. Evidence of this is provided, in the 1990s, by the spectacle of song writers suing each other for plagiarism on the basis of alleged similarities between nondescript tunes which sound, even to the attentive listener, like the synthetic products of the popular song machine imagined by George Orwell in his futuristic novel "1984".

Our only concern here, however, is to record the neutral fact that very few of the many commercial hit songs produced since the 1960s have exhibited the personality traits and vital statistics which would have made them attractive to a small band of improvising jazz musicians seeking fresh raw material to work on. Even the stage musical (from which so many songs have in the past gone directly into the permanent jazz repertoire regardless of what befell the show itself after opening night), has changed its character, moving steadily away from the "string of beads" format of separate numbers linked by a thread of plot, towards a more operatic "seamless web" construction. This form of continuous melody, carrying the dialogue rather tunelessly forward over punctuating harmonic sonorities may be a more effective way of articulating the sort of weighty romantic drama which the modern musical tends to favour as a vehicle, but, as with post-Wagnerian opera, it tends to generate very few numbers per hour which are capable of standing alone as recognisable songs in the traditional sense. "One Fine Day" may not be the only aria in Puccini's opera "Madame Butterfly", nor "Nessum Dorma" the whole of his "Turandot", but these are the comparisons that spring most readily to mind.

The bad news does not end there, alas, because the jazz community has suffered, not only from a dearth in new and usable tunes to play with, but also, thanks to the overwhelming popularity of the guitar among budding performers on the pop scene, from a marked reduction in the numbers of budding musicians mastering the traditional front line wind instruments well enough to play jazz on them, even

if they wanted to. For the future of jazz, this development may turn out to have been far more harmful than the undernourishment of its repertoire of viable tunes. The latter was probably fat enough, in any case, by the end of the 50s, to carry jazz forward over as many lean years as it might take before the ever-turning wheel of public taste in popular song throws up a mutation which is more conducive to collective improvisation in the jazz idiom (and even to singing and dancing!) than the present one. Much more questionable, however, is whether, if that day ever dawns, there will be future versions of our Hypothetical Jazz Band or The Tyros around to take advantage of the opportunity.

But this is to speculate about the future before drawing fully abreast with the present. It may be that, if we now move from the general to the particular, from charting the environmental factors affecting the jazz of the last forty years to studying its entrails in more detail, that insights will be granted to us, which give greater cause for optimism about its future.

2

If we start with bop, however, or progressive jazz, as we should now, perhaps, begin to call it, we find little to enthuse about, even accepting the genre on its own terms as the avant-garde of jazz. Once the innovations of the 40s had been assimilated and the marketing frenzy of the 50s had run its course, the limitations of bop soon became apparent to all but the most committed of its adherents. Having (i) discarded the interactive disciplines of collective improvisation in favour of unfettered flights of individual fancy bounded only by pre-arranged "bookends" of tutti, (ii) exchanged the comfortable clothing of traditional song and dance for the more formal attire of serious concert music, and (iii) deserted the fruitful loins of diatonic harmonics for the seductive but ultimately sterile embrace of chromatic dissonance, bop had left itself with little choice but either to settle for a new set of cliches, even more restrictive than those of mainstream jazz, or to just keep going farther and farther out, man.

Within the space of a few years, the small number of young, mostly black, musicians who had virtually invented bop from scratch became very famous in the world of jazz, and even outside it. The bands they formed amongst themselves produced a sequence of recordings which not only elaborated and defined the new style but also earned them quite a lot of money, since, by this time, thanks largely to the machinations of the pop groups and their agents, but also to the exponential growth in the world record market, the royalties accruing to successful recording artists had become more substantial than in the past. There was also, because of their fame, a ready market for their services in such nightspots as could afford to hire a sufficient number of them to form the sort of band that might bring in enough paying customers to make a profit. So, even though past experience had indicated that the economics of playing nothing but concert jazz for a living could be decidedly shaky, the future seemed bright, at last, with the possibility of their forging viable careers for themselves as professional jazz musicians, rather than professional musicians playing jazz.

Unfortunately, however, money was not the whole story. There are, as already noted, additional mental and physical pressures bearing down on any musician, however gifted, who attempts to engage in the production, to order, of authentic improvisational jazz at frequent intervals; and when, to these, was added the fact that, whatever its limitations, the distinctive characteristics of bop were the extreme technical and inspirational demands it could make on the individual soloist, the outlook began to look much less rosy. In the event, with few

exceptions, the biographies of the founding fathers of bop testify to their apparent inability to cope with the demands their success made upon them without the aid of various artificial stimulants and disinhibitors, all of which were poisonous enough ultimately to create more problems than they solved. Most of those who survived the excesses of their early fame, found themselves engaged in a lifelong struggle on two fronts - one, with a working environment which both encouraged the drug habit and made it difficult to kick, and, two, with the constant requirement to reinforce their reputations as technical and artistic innovators by excelling themselves in public.

This latter exigency was the all too predictable result of those market forces in the jazz industry, which, having engendered bop in the first place, had not then obligingly gone away. How could they? They were an integral part of a system, which had evolved over nearly half a century to insist, among other things, that, once the novelty of bop had worn off, progressive jazz must continue, somehow, to progress. On past experience, it could be seen as inevitable that the innovations of bop, so startling when they first appeared, would all too quickly be analysed and assimilated by other professional musicians, attracted by the possibilities they offered for their own self-expression, and, it has to be admitted, for their own self-advancement in the industry. The global market for live bop, outside the concert performances of the relatively small numbers of the original virtuosi, may have been rather limited in comparison with that of other forms of concert music, but it was by no means insubstantial, and, throughout the jazz world, there soon existed enough indigenous musicians with the technical ability to take advantage of any available opportunity to produce performances which bore all the hallmarks of authenticity.

The effect of these developments was to demystify bop and reduce it to a set of manageable constituents or conventions which, once mastered and adhered to, could be relied on to carry the soloist along through the relatively simple chord sequences normally used as a basis for the high-speed exploration of their extended harmonics which was the object of the exercise. This domestication and pasturing among the common herd of what had once been the wild excesses of their original inspiration, left the front runners with only two alternatives - either to cash in on their fame and carry on repeating themselves, straining, perhaps, for ever greater technical polish in their concert performances, or to try and push the frontiers of innovation out still further. The political, artistic, and commercial attractions of pursuing the latter course made the choice almost a forgone conclusion for many of the black musicians who had found a more congenial place for themselves in the sun playing bop than had their predecessors playing mainstream jazz.

But, where was there left to go? The essential elements of jazz had already been whittled down, in bop, to the bare bones of solo improvisation plus incantatory effect which needed only a single front line instrument and a rhythm section to animate them. Since, also, the distinctive features of bop were its technical and artistic adventurousness in exploring the farthest possible reaches of the overtones at the highest possible speed, the choice of potential future pathways away from the mainstream was extremely limited. The one obvious direction left for progressive jazz to take was towards more and more individual self-expression (or self-indulgence, depending on the point of view), and the casting of all remaining traditional constraints to the winds. It was the sax players, tenors in particular, who led the way down this ever-narrowing track, producing sounds from their instruments that could only be described as deliberately ugly, and stringing these noises together in ways which became

increasingly idiosyncratic as their desperation to produce something new and different grew.

The resulting performances, which, in keeping with the seriousness of their intention, were soon being described as "statements" in the promotional literature of the industry, were not without their admirers, and it is not too difficult to see why. They were, after all, the lineal descendants of that progressive strain in jazz which had been cultivated by the industry since its very beginnings, and all the usual arguments could be trotted out in their defence - the past proven skills of the musicians, the seminal role of the avant garde in the other arts, the fact that these effusions, although incoherent, were fully improvised, totally spontaneous, and, above all, sincere, and the usual claim that careful listening would reveal hidden delights. But it grew increasingly difficult to persuade even some of the customers, some of the time, that these particular new clothes were worthy of their admiration, and when the pursuit of this line of least resistance finally led to free form jazz, which, as the name implies, was something produced by a group of musicians ad libbing together with no common ground in melody, harmony or rhythm, even the most willingly self-deluded members of the jazz appreciation department found words of praise failing them.

In the end, the best that could be said for free form jazz was that, in addition to making the wilder extravagances of earlier bop seem quite lucid, it ensured a sympathetic hearing for any other form of progressive jazz which was less extemporaneous and more compositional. This was just as well, perhaps, because the only alternative to following the route that led to free form was to go in the opposite direction and exploit the advanced harmonics and instrumental virtuosity of bop by the use of prior orchestration and rehearsal. What emerged from this process was the sort of progressive jazz which is still with us today (if sounding, now, in spite of its name, a little conventional), where solo improvisation, while still a feature, took second place to the overall concept (a favourite word) of any new piece. This meant that the structural role of collective improvisation in traditional jazz, and the "bookend" choruses in bop, could be taken over by an all-through arrangement deploying the full band to its best effect in a variety of interesting ways while still leaving plenty of room for intermittent solos from its individual members.

This was a small band jazz, in other words, which applied the techniques developed in the past by the composer-arrangers of mainstream jazz to what were now, almost exclusively, original compositions in a late twentieth century idiom from which the elements of popular song and dance, so fruitful a source of inspiration to jazzmen in the past, had been virtually eliminated. The incantatory effect was retained, of course, because, without it, in however attenuated a form, there would be little left to differentiate this music from other forms of concert music. There were even controlled experiments, from time to time (since experiment is the essence of progressive jazz), with latin-american and caribbean dance rhythms, but the results bore the same relation to the original models as did compositions such as Maurice Ravel's "Rapsodie espagnole" (1907) to the traditional folk music of Spain. Gone, also, was any semblance of the raw passion which had earned jazz the alternative name of "hot rhythm", to be replaced by the species of emotional detachment from the music (and even from the audience) which led to the coining of the name cool jazz for the first post-bop strain.

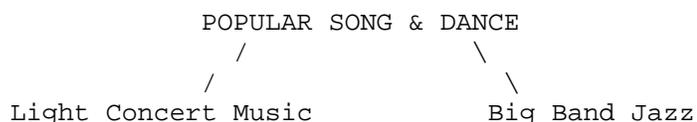
Since then, other names have been devised by the jazz appreciation department for the various experiments conducted in the name of progress by the professionals in the jazz industry - in addition to free form jazz we have had,

for example, fusion, third stream and crossover jazz, to name but a few - but none of them seems appropriate for the categorisation of a whole sub-species of concert jazz which is basically compositional and deliberately innovative in its ensemble writing, however bop-conventional the solo improvisation may be. This jazz has more in common with the traditions of heavy concert music than it has with the spontaneous music-making of the uneducated underclass that originated both the jazz idiom and the jazz method, but to call it heavy concert jazz would be to flatter and disparage it simultaneously, since it continues to be an intellectual lightweight in comparison to contemporary heavy concert music, and is still, for all its pretensions, aimed at a market which the latter is too uncompromising to reach.

To call it, simply, progressive jazz would also be invidious, because all the indications are that any further progress can only be made, either by increasing its compositional element to the extent of finally abandoning the incantatory effect, and thus crossing the fine line which separates it from heavy concert music, or by increasing the incantatory effect and reducing the compositional element, which would move it decisively back towards heavy pop, in either case diminishing its claim any longer to be jazz. Other names that come to mind, such as experimental jazz, academic jazz, or just modern jazz, turn out on closer inspection to be either too narrow or too ambiguous, leaving us with no alternative, here, but to invent a new label for the genre. Given that our principal objective in doing this is to differentiate this class of jazz from mainstream jazz, we could call it downstream jazz, deepstream jazz, or offstream jazz, but all these names have mildly negative implications. They do, however, point us in the direction of the more positive and reasonably unequivocal term, extreme jazz, so, let us settle for this, faux de mieux, and conclude by summarising its main characteristics, most of which have already been touched upon.

We have seen, for example, that extreme jazz is both concert and composer-arranger jazz, but so, to a large extent, is mainstream jazz. What differentiates the two, then, is less a matter of form than of content, since it is here that extreme jazz strives for the novelty that is the principal justification for its existence, using original themes, advanced harmonies, and complex orchestration which often calls for unusual instrumentation - many of the trappings, in fact, of heavy concert music. As a consequence of this, the ensemble writing of extreme jazz is often more difficult to play than that of mainstream, even though the solo improvisation may be no more demanding than the bop from which it is ultimately derived, and this, in turn, ensures that extreme jazz is the almost exclusive province of the fully-trained professional, and has little to offer the amateur musician for whom jazz came originally as such a wonderful opportunity to perform in public on social occasions.

We can only conclude from this that extreme jazz, having such a high compositional element and fulfilling no functional purpose, may safely be relegated to a position somewhere between the middle and outer limits of Quadrant D in our jazz authenticity index. As an entity in its own right, however, extreme jazz may merit classification as a distinctive hybrid form of music produced by crossing small band jazz with heavy concert music, thus filling the empty space in the taxonomy put forward earlier, which can now be completed, as follows:



/ / \ \
 HEAVY CONCERT MUSIC----- Extreme Jazz----- SMALL BAND JAZZ

So where, today, can extreme jazz be found? The short answer is that there is not a lot of it about, and little of what there is of it, is live. This is because extreme jazz thrives best in a recording studio where musicians can come together and concentrate on realising the composer-arranger's intentions (which often involve quite intricate interactions between scored ensemble and solo improvisation) without the distraction of an audience. The process of "putting together an album" of enough suitable items to fill a CD is a time-consuming process, even using the full armamentarium of modern technology available for mixing and splicing the different elements into a final version, but, once completed, the album can be marketed throughout the world for promotion, via the various specialist media channels, as home entertainment.

Depending on the success of the album, live concerts may then follow, but these will probably be few and far between, since local markets are relatively small - as is the number of performers who are famous enough to attract an audience of a sufficient size to make such an enterprise pay. A major problem, with this kind of jazz, is the difficulty in assembling on a concert platform, either the band that made the original recordings (other than the leader by whose name it is usually known), or a band of substitute musicians capable of realising the composer's intentions without a good deal of prior rehearsal. It has to be borne in mind, too, that, by its very nature, there is little room in extreme jazz for the sort of extemporaneous "faking" to cover up potentially embarrassing cracks in the musical edifice being unveiled, which is such a commonplace of mainstream jazz. These concerts tend, therefore, to be rather solemn affairs, at which, as with heavy concert music, there is little interaction between musicians and audience during the actual performance.

Probably because of its affinity with heavy concert music (the avant-garde of which itself experiments, from time to time, with improvisational [or aleatoric] forms of composition), extreme jazz appears to be quite popular with advanced music students, and is even taught at some academies. It is here, in consequence, that it may most conveniently be heard performed live by other than the few professional studio bands. This institutional activity has the advantage, at least, of ensuring that a number of young instrumentalists, other than guitarists, are learning to use both the jazz idiom and the jazz method (in however extreme a form initially), and could thus be available, at some time in the future, to play mainstream, or even trad jazz, on more convivial social occasions, once the limitations of extreme jazz have become apparent to them, and provided always that these older forms survive in the public domain.

Whatever the final outcome, it seems safe to predict that mainstream jazz, to which we can now turn, will, at the very least, outlive its more progressive offspring, because, even though it, too, survived into the 1970s only in concert and composer-arranger form, its affinities were clearly inclined to the stage and the arranger, rather than the concert platform and the composer. The mainstream of jazz, it seems, can never completely sever the umbilical chord connecting it to the songs and dances of popular culture without completely changing its nature, and is compelled, therefore, to remain a part of common or garden show business for as long as that very broad church will accommodate it.

It would be convenient, at this stage, if we could continue to categorise the mainstream jazz of the last three decades as being any jazz that was neither trad nor bop, but this would be rather too much of an oversimplification to fit

the observable facts. Mainstream is, after all, descended from trad, and was itself the parent of bop, so, once the initial furore of the Great Schism had subsided and the war of words between trad and bop had run out of steam, mainstream simply continued on its own pragmatic way, using elements drawn from both sources whenever it seemed expedient to do so in the interests of its own survival. The difference between mainstream jazz and extreme jazz, as we have already noted, is more a matter of content than form, so there was bound to be a certain amount of overlap at the edges, but the difference between mainstream and trad jazz can be less to do with form and content than with function and context, and this can be a rather more difficult line to draw.

By the 1970s, the eclipse of the ballroom/danceband by the disco/rockband was virtually complete, but although mainstream jazz was living in much reduced circumstances, the decline of the late 60s seemed finally to have bottomed out. The main reason for this was the existence of a residual market for mainstream among those jazz consumers of the 30s and 40s who were still around - older, but more affluent (in many cases), and better able to patronise any entertainment of their choice now that the demands of job and family had become, with the passage of time, less exigent. Many of these customers had nurtured little enthusiasm for the doctrinaire extremes of either bop or revivalist trad, and felt even less affinity with the contemporary pop scene, but they retained a liking for anything resembling the jazz of their youth, and were prepared to put their money where their heart was. This expenditure was mainly on recorded jazz, of course, much of it in the shape of LP and cassette re-issues of old 78s which could now be brought to new and larger life on the hifi equipment without which, by then, no home was complete. But there was a willingness to invest in new issues, if the jazz they contained met the mainstream criteria, and even to attend live performances, if the opportunity presented itself.

The criteria in question were, as we know, extremely broad, but not indefinitely so. The rich inheritance of mainstream jazz embraces everything written and played as jazz before the Great Schism and a great deal of that created since, but certain common factors are discernable in each quantum of it, deriving mainly from those links, already noted, with the popular song & dance of the first half of the century and from show business in general. If you can't sing to it, and you can't dance to it, in other words, it isn't mainstream jazz, and, although collective improvisation is not entirely ruled out, we also know that this is essentially a composer-arranger music built round solo virtuosity, so the size of the band can be anything from a couple to a couple of dozen, and there is no bar to having the sax and brass playing in sections. Whatever the combination, the instruments used are still those of the original ballroom/danceband, except that the electronic keyboard now substitutes for the piano, and the horizontal electric bass guitar is (unlike the banjo) frequently admitted, when nothing big, acoustic and vertical is available.

There were enough competent performers on all these instruments still available in the 70s and 80s to satisfy the demands of the mainstream market, by forming bands, making records and giving concerts, if enlisted to do so. They were mostly mature professionals, who had survived the death of the danceband by dint of either their outstanding instrumental prowess or their commitment to jazz, or a mixture of both. Many made a major part of their livings as anonymous "session" musicians, playing in backing bands on recordings and/or broadcasts made by some featured singing star (or pop group, even), or in "showbands" under the eponymous batons of more celebrated names than theirs - a very exacting career which was only open to those who could "read flyshit", as their less able fellow jazzmen were wont, with grudging admiration, to put it. Others (these latter perhaps?), had managed to survive in one of the small number of bands to

come out of the trad revival, via traddypop, with a marketable name intact and the willingness and ability to adapt to changed circumstances by re-joining the mainstream.

This readiness to compromise in order to be able to play as much jazz as possible while still making a living - a kind of dedicated opportunism mixed with pragmatic professionalism - can be seen, perhaps, as one of the principal distinguishing features of mainstream jazz, and is not too far removed from the attitude adopted in earlier days by many of the founding fathers of jazz, some of the very greatest of whom saw themselves as paid entertainers first and creative artists only second. Across the broad range of this later mainstream, however, there was a certain amount of variation in the above approach, with bands from the traddier end of the spectrum exhibiting a greater readiness than those from the boppier end to play to the gallery rather than to the stalls. But, under the general law of markets, if mainstream jazz consumers were out there, jazz producers would be willing and able to provide for them. All that was needed to bring the two together into living and breathing proximity, was a modicum of entrepreneurial skill.

Fortunately, the mini-boom in concert jazz which had resulted from the cumulative effects of the trad revival, the bop revolution, and the breaching of the union ban, had bred a species of promoter-cum-booking agent who specialised in this line of business, and enough of them had survived into the 70s to be capable of exploiting what was still a small but perceptible niche in the massive popular music market. By now, of course, the use of urban dancehalls for this purpose was pretty much a thing of the past, but, to compensate for this, numerous little theatres, community arts centres, and municipal halls had sprung up throughout the UK, as part of post-war re-construction, to meet the entertainment needs of an increasingly affluent society, and most of these, in addition to enjoying helpful subsidies from local authorities, were of an adequate size to meet the modest demands of concert jazz. A pattern was thus established, which has persisted to the present day, of one-night stands by small bands giving concerts of mainstream jazz at more or less infrequent intervals in any such location where the demand was sufficient to make the venture pay.

This last was the prime consideration, of course, underlining the fact that, although the atmosphere at these mainstream concerts was informal and relaxed with plenty of amiable interplay between performers and audience (more like music hall than concert hall), they had become a mainstay of the jazz industry, second in importance only to the sale of recordings, and, as such, a significant source of income to the musicians involved, all of whom were fulltime professionals, or aspiring to be. And this meant that, with the passage of time, the old dilemma, which had dogged the industry from the very start, would inevitably resurface in what must surely, this time, be its final form. Given that this latter day mainstream jazz, whatever else it might be, was certainly not progressive jazz, there was simply no way that it could continue for long to thrive and prosper in the bosom of an industry which, like all industries, was dependant for its survival on innovation and marketing.

In making this point yet again, it is important to stress that there was nothing wrong with the quality of the professional mainstream jazz product then, and there is nothing wrong with it now - its repertoire of tunes and songs is virtually inexhaustible, the ingenuity of its composer-arrangers is undimmed, and the skills of its musicians in exploiting both the jazz idiom and the jazz method are as good as they have ever been - the problem lies in persuading customers to buy it, and to keep on buying it, year after year, in the face of

competition from other, superficially glossier musical products. The sad fact is that the commercial success of live jazz is almost totally dependant on that of recorded jazz, and, in the late twentieth century, commercial success in the recorded popular music market has come to depend on extrinsic (i.e presentational and promotional) factors rather than intrinsic merit, to a greater extent than ever before.

In the 1980s, therefore, as the beneficial effects of the 60s mini-boom in jazz (which had seen several jazz records climb into the pop charts) finally wore off and the surviving customers from the 30s and 40s gradually expired (along with the very last of the world-famous jazz virtuosi from that era), the next generation of jazz musicians found themselves excluded from the personal fame bestowed by success in the mass market, and in unequal competition with their dead, but far more illustrious, forbears for what was left of the market for mainstream jazz. To put it another way, there is no effective machinery available in the jazz industry for creating new customers for contemporary mainstream jazz, let alone new customers for live mainstream jazz, and, given (i) the huge library already in existence of recorded mainstream jazz by the "all time greats", (ii) the inherent resistance of the genre to either formal development or presentational novelty, and (iii) the growing unsuitability of contemporary popular song and dance music for jazz treatment, there was little incentive for the music industry to remedy this deficiency. The result has been a steady decline, through the 80s and 90s, in the commercial viability, and hence the availability, of professional mainstream jazz.

All of which should make the answer to our next question - where can mainstream jazz be found today? - fairly obvious. There is lots of it (80 years of it!) available for purchase on disc and tape; there is quite a lot to be heard on the radio (most of it reconstituted from recordings, of course), virtually none on TV, and only small amounts of it, anywhere, live. It is, nevertheless, in better shape than live extreme jazz, since there are, at the time of writing, still a few mainstream bands doing one-night stands up and down the country, fronted by ageing names made famous by popular successes in the 60s and burnished, since then, by a modest amount of regular exposure in the media, but their audiences are dwindling and, like themselves, alas, seem set to disappear in the not too distant future. Any new commercial initiatives in mainstream jazz appear to be based upon the exploitation of its more illustrious past by issuing compilation albums of old material, reverently strung together in what it is hoped will be new and appealing ways, or quarried from increasingly obscure sources.

These marketing exercises may be keeping the financial flame flickering for the jazz industry, but they make little contribution to the essential task of keeping alive the actual playing of jazz - quite the reverse, in fact, since the evidence appears to indicate that it is the jazz industry which is in terminal decline, and the only remaining question is whether it will take live jazz down with it. It is not to decry, in any way, the quality of the product, nor the abilities of those who produce it, to point out that professional concert mainstream jazz, by becoming an accepted part of the musical establishment, has painted itself into a corner (just as extreme jazz has worked itself up an evolutionary cul de sac), and that, in becoming a respectable career for responsible musicians, it has renounced any claims to having a uniquely valuable role to play in the larger world of music. Thus, as the century drew to a close, jazz found itself facing what may be its Final Dilemma - extreme jazz unable to progress any further without becoming non-jazz, and mainstream jazz unable to stand still without becoming moribund.

Fortunately, as we have seen from the beginning, there is an extent to which the true home of jazz lies outside the jazz industry, in the social undergrowth from whence both the idiom and the method originally emerged, and where it may still be possible for jazz to make the kind of contribution to the life of the community which other forms of music are unable, for one reason or another, to do. This is the domain of the relatively untutored (but not, therefore, ungifted) amateur musician playing spare time jazz, mainly for pleasure but also for profit, and the good news is that, while professional jazz may be collapsing under the weight of its own internal contradictions, amateur, or semi-pro, jazz appears to have found the conditions which have brought this about to be much less inimical to its own survival.

We already know that trad jazz, to which we may now finally address ourselves, has a greater appeal to spare time jazzmen than either mainstream or bop, largely because, all other things being equal, it is more suited to informal occasions, is easier to play passably well, and allows fuller scope for collective improvisation, the most revolutionary feature of the jazz method. The post-war New Orleans revival resulted from, among other things, a deliberate attempt by a number of amateur musicians to reproduce in public what they believed to be the authentic sound of the original product, warts and all. At first, the professionals were dismissive, even contemptuous, of these efforts, claiming that the performers' own technical inadequacies were their only motivation for pursuing this course, but attitudes changed when the public were seen to be patronising what soon became known as trad jazz and the pop music industry began to take an interest in it. During the subsequent mini-boom in trad, although the professionals were much in evidence, some of the originating amateurs, after polishing up their act a bit, themselves turned professional. But many of them chose not to do so, preferring instead, for a variety of personal reasons, to pursue other careers - a decision which did not, of course, preclude them from playing jazz in their spare time for pleasure and profit whenever the opportunity presented itself.

By the end of the 1960s, the small vein of trad, which had so enriched the popular music scene during the past decade, had petered out, and the jazz industry was left to fossick for a livelihood in the niche markets of mainstream and progressive jazz. In the meantime, however, substantial numbers of aspiring, sparetime trad bands had surfaced throughout the land, in what seemed to be a direct response to a passing fashion in popular demand, but proved, in the event, to be more of a testimony to the underlying vitality of amateur trad. The truth was that many of these bands had existed beforehand, in one form or another, outside the pop music industry, and were able to survive the passing of traddypop, and the apparently unstoppable rise and rise of commercial rock, by simply going back underground, as it were, into the black economy of jazz where they and their successors have found it possible to thrive until the present day.

It is not too difficult to discern, in these sparetime trad bands, the familiar features of our own Hypothetical Jazz Band, and even those of The Tyros (older now and no longer needed at the dance), but they exist to such a large extent outside the purview of the various organizations which together constitute the international musical establishment (of which the jazz industry is a small part), and they seem to be so fundamentally incongruent with the contemporary pop music scene, that it becomes a matter of more than passing interest to find out just how and why these groups have contrived, not only to stay alive, but even to flourish, against all the apparent odds. There is even the possibility that, in unravelling this puzzle, we may find the various threads of our

investigation coming together into a more optimistic prognosis for the future of live jazz than has hitherto seemed possible.

The short answer to the question of why amateur trad has continued to blossom while the more professional mainstream and extreme jazz are in such relatively poor shape, must be that there is a market for it of some kind, somewhere. A corollary would seem to be that, wherever this trafficking is taking place, it is outside the usual channels of the visible pop music economy, and, more to the point, arises from a consumer demand which is not being met by the apparently all-pervading commercial disco/rockband music of the day. In view of what has gone before, it should come as no surprise to learn that a fuller explanation can be arrived at by recalling the traditional role performed by popular song & dance music at social functions of every kind from the beginning of recorded time. Even today, most communal activities of a celebratory nature are either private family parties (such as christenings, birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries), or public gatherings (such as carnivals and fetes) at which a number of local families congregate. It follows from this, that there will be several generations present on these occasions, and that this crucial fact needs to be taken into account when providing any entertainment, such as live music, for the captive audience. What is required at these functions is, ideally, a type of cross-generational folk music, which has the capacity to please the many, while offending the few.

There can be little doubt that this need is not being met by present day pop music, which, in its aggressive pursuit of the youth market, has become far too specialised, idiosyncratic and histrionic - particularly when performed live - to fit comfortably into any situation where a representative cross-section of the population is engaged in social intercourse of the more conventional sort. In addition to which, having been nurtured in the recording studio and grown increasingly dependent on cumbersome and complicated electronic equipment, this music is now quite difficult to actually produce live in the circumstances normally prevailing at private parties and local community functions. The only form of modern pop music readily available at an affordable price on these occasions is the ubiquitous mobile disco with its, admittedly live, but only for verbalising purposes, disc jockey, and the socially divisive effect produced by the introduction of this device into a family gathering, such as, for example, a wedding reception, is a matter of all too common knowledge.

In a healthy society, there will always be a certain amount of cultural tension between offspring and parents, but there cannot have been a time before this when such a dysfunctional gap has opened up in the market for incidental music at social functions where the generations meet. This is the space which was so effectively filled, in most recent times, by the ballroom/dance band, with its all-round flexibility as regards size, repertoire, volume, and beat, and, best of all, its affordability with a human face; and it is this role which the sparetime trad band of today is so well-equipped to inherit, possessing as it does all the above advantages plus at least one more - genuine collective improvisation in the jazz idiom. Obviously, any jazz purists present might resent the fact that the authentic instrumentation of the Dixieland Band cannot be in evidence when anything less than a quintet is called for, but trad jazz is so much a matter of style and function that trad played by four instruments - even violin, clarinet, guitar and string bass - can be almost as effective as that produced by clarinet, trumpet, trombone, banjo and tuba, although the latter will always be the more perambulatory.

But, useful though it may be for social functions of all kinds, this is not a full answer to what must be our final question - where, today, can live trad

jazz be found? For that we must look to one of the greatest of our national institutions - the British public house, or pub. This may not be the place to eulogise upon the unique qualities of that happiest of historical accidents, now such a valuable part of our common heritage, but no opportunity should be lost of reminding ourselves that the world outside these islands is a poorer place for not enjoying the blessings which, in their beneficent ubiquity and infinite variety, our pubs bestow upon us. Not the least of these is the congenial environment many of them provide for the performance of live trad jazz, free of charge to customers in exchange only for their patronage of the bar. The economics of this arrangement, however, require that the costs incurred do not exceed by too wide a margin the profit on any consumables which would have remained unsold if the jazz had not been on offer, and this means that the sum available to pay the band is usually of such modest proportions that only sparetime musicians can afford to accept it.

What we have here, in effect, is an ideal set of circumstances for the creation of a species of live jazz which is virtually unaffected by the negative commercial and artistic pressures bearing down on the professionals in the jazz industry. This is because the demand for it has been generated by market forces within the pub trade itself, where the rising popularity of home entertainment has combined with the increasing severity of the drink/driving laws to ensure that the UK now has just about twice as many pubs as the country can comfortably support, and a struggle is on for the survival of the fittest.

In competing with each other for a dwindling number of customers, the pubs have found themselves pursuing the two main options open to them (other than booze) of food and entertainment, and, in the latter case, tending to favour the use of live performers, where they can afford them, as offering stronger competition to what is available to the customer at home. Not surprisingly, some pubs have gone all out for the same youth market as the pop industry and accepted the penalties involved, such as the alienation of older customers (and the neighbours), but others have cast their nets wider, in an attempt to attract all the members of the family.

Obviously, the qualities that make the sparetime trad band so useful for oiling the wheels of social intercourse at private parties and public functions where the generations mingle will also commend themselves to any pub wishing to provide live music for as wide a potential audience as possible. Pubs come in all shapes and sizes, of course, but so do sparetime trad bands, and pubs that are too small or oddly proportioned to accommodate a trad quartet and still leave room for a few dozen customers are very few and far between. At one extreme, there are a number of relatively large jazz pubs that promote themselves quite extensively, featuring jazz once or even twice a week by rotating possibly half-a-dozen bands on a regular basis; but many more prefer to offer jazz once or twice a month without advertising the fact too widely, other than by word of mouth through regular customers, or to passing traffic by displaying an often near-illegible chalk board outside proclaiming some such message as "LIVE JAZZ SUN LUNCH; and even more pubs will host jazz occasionally for some special event, such as an outdoor barbecue during the summer months.

The truth is that jazz in pubs is very like an iceberg, with far more of it below the surface than is visible above, and the reason for this is to be found in the peculiarities of the UK licensing laws. To quote the rather convoluted prose of Section 182 of the Licensing Act of 1964, "No statutory regulations for music and dancing shall apply to licensed premises...for the provision...of public entertainment by way of music and singing...which is provided solely by the reproduction of recorded sound, or by not more than two performers, or

sometimes in one of these ways and sometimes in another." If more than two live performers, in other words, the statutory regulations shall apply, which means, in effect, that a Public Entertainments License is required, and not only does this license have to be sought and paid for every year, but, under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1982, the conditions to be met before it may be issued run to 46 separate items under 6 headings which include Means of Escape, Fire Precautions, Lighting and Heating, and Sanitary Accommodation And Welfare. Given that so many pubs are struggling to make ends meet, it should come as no surprise to find that only a few can afford to make the capital investment necessary to obtain such a license.

The regulations are there, of course, for the protection of the public, but, in embracing all premises of whatever size where people forgather to be entertained, they certainly discriminate against live jazz in pubs. They allow, for example, the operation of a disco in an overcrowded dive where the sanitary arrangements are rudimentary, and the means of escape would be quite inadequate in case of fire, while at the same time forbidding a handful of musicians from playing a little gentle jazz to a few score local inhabitants engaged in what would be seen, in other circumstances, as normal pub activities in a fairly full house. In addition to which, thanks to the doubtful blessings of modern technology, the two live musicians actually permitted without a license would nowadays be perfectly capable of producing the sound of a very large band performing on several different instruments at a volume sufficient to fill a football stadium. Little wonder, then, that there is a tendency for the law, in this case, to be observed more in the spirit than letter, and for illicit pub jazz to flourish wherever it can do so without attracting unfavourable attention from the authorities.

Needless to say, the bulk of this clandestine jazz is played by sparetime musicians who are not members of the Musicians' Union, and in this, as in so many other respects, it can claim to be closer to the essential nature of jazz than anything produced by the jazz industry. The British pubs of today may seem a far cry from the bordellos and street parties of the Mississippi Delta at the beginning of the century, or even from the speakeasies of Prohibition USA, but they provide a setting which is more appropriate to all that is unique in jazz than anything else available now. But circumstances vary so much from pub to pub, and from band to band, that further generalisation is difficult about a phenomenon whose main feature is its rich variety (albeit within a traditional framework), so let us end as we began by painting an imaginary picture of what is, in effect, a theme with variations...like so much else in jazz.

3

Once again, then, we are looking into a room, but this time it is fully furnished, probably with numerous small tables and an assortment of chairs, stools and benches, some of which are already occupied by customers who may or may not have come for the promised entertainment; for this is a room in a public house and somewhere in it there will be a bar selling drinks and possibly food to all comers. Elsewhere in the room there may be a small stage or dais, but it is more likely that a minimal amount of ordinary floorspace has been set aside (and even, perhaps, already cleared!) for what is to follow.

One by one, over a period of about half-an-hour, a number of individuals enter, carrying instrument cases and other paraphernalia which they begin to unpack and set up in the designated area while conversing among themselves, and possibly with some of the customers, in a more or less leisurely fashion, depending on the timeliness of their arrival. There may be as few as three of them but there

are unlikely to be as many as eight - four, five or six being the more likely number. There may be women among them, but they are more likely to be men; they may belong to all adult age groups but they are more likely to be older than younger; they may be wearing some kind of uniform, such as matching shirts, but they are just as likely to be casually dressed according to a variety of individual tastes. This is the jazz band.

Eventually, the preliminaries are over and all are in their pre-determined positions, the front line standing up, or sitting down, with music stands in front of them, or not, according to predilection. What follows is a sequence of events very like the one which unfolded when our Hypothetical Jazz Band played "Sweet Georgia Brown" in the opening chapter, and which, therefore, need no further description here, except to observe that the rendition of whatever tune this band has chosen to sign on with is neither as protracted nor as tentative as that one was. It seems obvious that the members of this band (let us call them The Tradsters) have, unlike our Hypothetical Jazz Band, played together previously, and may even have rehearsed together beforehand, but, in this respect, as in so many others in jazz, appearances can be deceptive. While it is unlikely that all the Tradsters here today are strangers to each other, it is perfectly possible that there are at least two of them who have never met before. This is because the members actually present will, in all probability, have been drawn from an available pool of sparetime jazzmen much bigger than the nominal size of the band.

Like any other band of its type, the Tradsters will, of course, have its regular members, a sort of "A Team", but it is in the nature of this activity that, for any one of a dozen different reasons, some of these regulars may have been unavailable for today's gig, and although their replacements on this occasion, (or "deps" as they are sometimes called) will almost certainly have played in the band before, it may not have been on the same occasion. Little of this will be evident to the customers, however, since the great strength of jazz, particularly trad jazz, is the easy interchangability of its constituent parts within the benign conventions of collective improvisation. But it would be wrong to assume from this that what we are experiencing here is the result of a series of happy accidents which have brought the appropriate combination of instrumentalists together in the right place at the right time to play trad jazz for our delectation. Somewhere in the Tradsters there will an organisational core, however soft, which is responsible for (i) booking the gigs, and (ii) ensuring that the band honours each engagement with a full complement.

Although this may, in other words, be merely a sparetime band of amateur musicians operating outside the normal commercial channels of the industry to produce a kind of music which requires no previous rehearsal or written arrangements, it is, nevertheless, a small business which, like all businesses, needs a modicum of intelligent direction to survive. And whoever fills this role is likely to be the one fixed point around which the other members of the band revolve because, even at this level, a business is only as effective as its management. The Tradsters may, therefore, be the creation of just one of their number, and have no corporate existence outside the scope of that individual's activities in pursuit of the two objectives set out above, the second of which could readily be achieved by anyone possessing a telephone and a wide enough knowledge of the other sparetime jazzmen in the vicinity, since they are all, in effect, self-employed, and come complete with their own instruments, accessories, and transport.

Getting the gigs can be rather more difficult, and calls for skills which are of insufficient relevance here to require further investigation, but, once a date,

time and place are fixed, there will rarely be a need for more than twice the number of phone calls as there are prospective members in the band to ensure that the appointment is kept - bearing in mind that, the bigger the band, the more complicated this operation becomes. Another consideration is that all the band's members, even the regulars, remain free to accept gigs with other bands when not already booked to play with the Tradsters, and, all other things being equal, the more accomplished performers are likely to be in greater demand elsewhere. In spite of which, since all of them are playing sparetime jazz for pleasure as well as profit, the internal cohesion of the band, and, indeed, the quality of its performance, will tend ultimately to depend, not only on the numbers of gigs they play together, but also on the enjoyment they get from playing with each other. Maximising the latter can, therefore, be seen as the third objective of the enterprise.

Fortunately, given the voluntary nature of the activity and the self-motivation of the participants, this end can best be pursued by simply removing any obstacles in the way of its achievement, remembering always that, whatever these impediments may be, they will only become apparent if the band meets regularly. In other words - no gigs, no band, no problems! But, in a thriving group like the Tradsters, the sources of potential friction are likely to be the two most common ones of personnel and programming. This time, it is the first of these which is relatively easy to deal with, using the simple expedient of not soliciting the services of any jazzman who, however accomplished as a performer, has been shown by a process of trial and error to be temperamentally incompatible with the other members of the band. It would serve no useful purpose here to enlarge upon what these individual failings might be, other than to categorise them under the general heading of Making Waves, and note that the propensities in question are not difficult to recognise when they emerge during the course of a gig.

The second problem area, programming, may overlap to some extent with the first, as it did when we encountered it in an earlier guise as the vexed question of setting the agenda on any occasion when collective improvisation in the jazz idiom was being attempted by an informal gathering of musicians. It arises now from the not entirely dissimilar circumstances of sparetime trad, and, in particular, from the simple fact that the Tradsters, for example, during the course of the current gig, will need to choose as many as twenty different tunes (and their keys) on which to exercise their skills. They could, of course, reach these decisions on the spot by discussion and debate, as did our Hypothetical Jazz Band, and even, by so doing, encroach upon the time available to such an extent that the number of tunes needed is significantly reduced! This procedure runs the risk, however, of wasting so much time and generating such friction within the group, that evidence of it tends to irritate the customers. A less potentially injurious arrangement is for someone to be given, or assume the responsibility of working out, in advance, a provisional list of jazz standards (in their customary keys), which are so well-known that a programme can be selected from it, during the gig, with little risk of dissent.

For the Tradsters, however, the question of programming is complicated by the fact that they now perform at regular intervals, maybe once or twice a month, in certain pubs. This means that their repertoire has had to be continually enlarged to avoid playing the same tunes to the same audiences too often. In addition to which, as already noted, when the same musicians play jazz together frequently, they feel a pressing need to experiment with new numbers at regular intervals in order to keep their own interest fully engaged. The ultimate solution to this problem is for the leading light (or lights) in the band to keep a suitably indexed chord book of all the numbers in its ever-expanding

repertoire, and then ensure that there are enough copies of this available for those requiring them at the gigs - thus obviating the need for individual members to ransack their own works of reference (such as they are) for the necessary information at frequent intervals during the engagement. A compilation of this sort is the only common resource a sparetime trad band really needs, and can be worth its weight in gold for the service it performs in avoiding confusion, on the one hand, and boredom, on the other, in both band and audience.

In this way, by investing quite small amounts of forethought along the above lines, the Tradsters have ensured that they suffer a minimum of distraction from their collective purpose of making jazz together for pleasure and profit, and this has made it possible for all who play with them, however infrequently, to extract a maximum of enjoyment from each and every gig. A great deal of the satisfaction they get from simply interacting with each other in this relatively carefree manner is reflected in the pleasure they give the customers, and this, in turn, increases, not only their popularity with the licensees, but also the number of private gigs they pick up while playing in pubs - a not inconsiderable bonus, this, since the Tradsters do not advertise their wares by other means, and private gigs can be very rewarding in a number of ways. So, before we leave them to work through the rest of their programme at the current gig, we should, perhaps, make some attempt to assess their impact on the audience they are presently seeking to entertain.

The most remarkable feature of this gathering is that, although the occasion could be rated a success from the pub's point of view (the room being fairly full of consumers, some of whom must have come to hear the jazz) few of those present appear to be giving the music their undivided attention. Most of them seem to be preoccupied with some combination of eating, drinking, smoking, and talking, which leaves them with little opportunity to give any indication that they are also listening to the jazz - other than by casting an occasional glance in the band's direction, or joining in a perfunctory handclap at the end of a number. This does not mean that they are not enjoying the performance, or that they feel the music to be unworthy of their attention; it simply means that this is functional jazz rather than concert jazz. Its basic objective, on this, as on those other more specifically festive occasions already touched upon, is to generate a little of that same party spirit by injecting enough live music into the social mix to enhance the flavour of the other activities without interfering with them. Its loftier purpose is to provide an alternative focus of interest, and even a source of enjoyment, for anyone who may be eating, drinking, and smoking, but not actually talking to someone else at the same time.

The Tradsters are fully aware of the ambiguity of their role, and do what they can to tailor their approach to the individual circumstances of each gig, taking due account of any feedback they get from the customers. When playing in a regular jazz pub, for example, they may become more overtly presentational than they would in a pub which has live music only occasionally as an added attraction - announcing the numbers in more detail, introducing the band's members by name, and even trundling out a few of the rarer vintage trad jazz vehicles for another run. Edging their performance, in other words, a little more in the direction of concert jazz, depending on what proportion of the audience appears to be attending to the band rather than to each other. But this is entirely a question of fine-tuning (bearing in mind that some sparetime trad bands are, as a matter of policy, more ambitious in their presentational style than others), and leaves unaltered the underlying principle of pub jazz, which is that the band is free to play what it wants to play, the customer is

free to either take it or leave it, and the success of the venture depends on the extent to which a profitable balance can be struck between the two.

There are other aspects of sparetime trad that can best be appreciated as a species of balancing act between alternative options. From a commercial point of view, for example, the Tradsters may look like nobodies going nowhere (which they are), but this is not because there is nowhere for them to go in the world of jazz outside their own backyard, or that they are not clever enough to compete in the concert halls and recording studios of the jazz industry, true though this may be. It is rather that they see the penalties of attempting to pursue such goals as far outweighing the benefits they derive from their present level of activity, which can average out at about two gigs a week within a twenty mile radius of home. To achieve this, however, they may find themselves doing four gigs in some weeks and none in others, even four gigs in three days, occasionally, so an average of two a week gives them as much action as they want. Beyond this point, their fame and fortune might increase, but their quality of life would be put at risk, and the enjoyment they get from playing jazz would almost certainly be reduced. The whole thing might become a bit too much like work, and require the sacrifice of other pleasures they hold equally dear.

The fact that they are in this state of happy equilibrium does not mean that the Tradsters are simply standing still, devoid of all aspiration. Far from it. Collectively and individually they are committed to improving their fluency in the jazz idiom and their mastery of the jazz method to the best of their abilities, bearing in mind that the limitations they have placed on their commercial ambitions have, paradoxically, left them free to please themselves in most other respects. Fortunately, the conventions of traditional jazz, allied to the inexhaustible repertoire of useable tunes they have inherited from the past, give them ample scope for as much virtuosity of expression as they are likely to achieve in the time they are able to devote to it. They have before them the imperishable examples of the founding fathers of jazz - those all-time-great performances on record, which they can emulate, but never hope to equal, except, possibly, on some rare occasion when the spirit moves them to excel themselves. For the most part, they are simply exercising their skills in the company of other adepts, playing (rather like golfers) always against themselves but gaining inspiration, perhaps, from the efforts of their companions.

There are scores of bands like the Tradsters performing regularly in the UK - mainly in and around the major conurbations, of course, because that is where most of the pubs occur, as well as the weddings, the parties, and all the other private and public functions which benefit from their services. Although they are practising what is arguably a living art form, they receive no subsidy from any of the worthy bodies responsible for disbursing taxpayers money in the hope of encouraging artistic talent. They themselves, on the other hand, pay dues to nobody, and are un beholden to any of the organizations which make up the regular (and regulated) musical establishment. But this, surely, is how it should be, since all the available evidence seems to indicate that, for jazz to really thrive, it must be outside the international music industry, embedded in some congenial, local, social context. It may follow from this that the sparetime trad bands are the best hope for the future of jazz. They have, it seems, inherited a formula which enables them to play fully functional, fully improvised, Quadrant A jazz at regular intervals for pleasure and profit, unconstrained by the painful pressures of professionalism, free to make music which can be new and different every time without changing its traditional shape to meet the quotidian demands of the global market place for the superficially new and different.

There seems to be no valid reason why these modern minstrels should not go on playing their urban folk music for the foreseeable future, provided that an adequate supply of replacements can be maintained for the ones who expire. And even here they have a unique contribution to make, since, unlike their counterparts playing mainstream and extreme jazz professionally in the industry, the sparetime trad bands are doing valuable missionary work in preaching largely to the unconverted. By performing, as they do, at public and private parties where all the generations mingle, they are introducing the sound of authentic jazz to youngsters who have been raised almost entirely on a diet of commercial disco/pop and heavy rock, and, at the same time, showing them real live musicians playing a diversity of traditional musical instruments in a number of interesting and even exciting ways without the use of artificial stimulants or disinhibitors - other, that is, than the wholesome beverages with which trad jazz has always been associated. Can all this seed be falling on stony ground?

In the meantime, however, for as long as it lasts - seek, find, and enjoy it!

March 1997.(October 2006)

A PERSONAL POSTSCRIPT ON PERSONNEL

In exploring how and why jazz was first cobbled together and then tested virtually to destruction by a few generations of musical artisans, there has been no real need to give any of these talented individuals a name. The principal objective has been to find reliable pathways through the tangled undergrowth of what has become, with the passage of time, a veritable jungle of jazz, pausing only to scale any heights on the way which might look out beyond the vast amount of recorded jazz left over from the past, towards the living jazz still to be found, often quite close at hand, in the present. With the main features of the terrain now charted and bearings taken, there are numerous other sources of information available to anyone curious about finer details, particularly as regards historical, biographical and discographical data on the performers who made it all possible. In spite of which, it has to be accepted that no book on jazz can be seen as complete which does not pay some tribute, by name, to those of the pioneers and subsequent innovators whose contributions have been immortalised in recordings of various kinds. This, alas, is the only sure way in which the author of a book about jazz, however determinedly different it may be in every respect from other books on the subject, can establish his credentials to be taken seriously.

There is, however, a twofold problem. Thanks to the amount of scholarly research invested in it over the years, the field is now so extensive that a further volume would be needed to do justice to it, while adding nothing of interest to the many other books about these individuals already in existence. The alternative is to attempt some kind of selection from the host of available contenders for a place in the pantheon, and, by so doing, guarantee the omission of individuals whose inclusion might be thought by some to be sufficiently mandatory to bring the criteria for selection into disrepute. Since there is no escaping this dilemma, and since this is merely a personal postscript to a main thesis which must stand or fall on its own merits, and since I have, in any case, no reputation in the jazz industry to lose, I propose to take the easy way out and adopt the second course, making my choice on the basis of the sixty years I have spent listening to, and even playing jazz for pleasure, as well as on the insights obtained in the preceding chapters, keeping the list as short as possible to minimise effort for myself, even at the risk of maximising the pain felt by my critics.

With these contingencies in mind, I propose to include jazzmen, on the grounds not only of their own virtuosity, or even originality, but also of the extent to which they have consorted with and catalysed their contemporaries in the knowledge that, if further explored, each one of them will lead to other important figures not mentioned here, with whom they played their jazz, and these, in turn, will lead to others until the coverage is complete. Here goes:

Traditional and Mainstream

Ferdinand "Jellyroll" Morton (b.1885, USA): piano, composer, small band leader.

Edward "Duke" Ellington (b.1889, USA): piano, composer, band leader.

Bessie Smith (b.1892,USA): singer.

Fletcher Henderson (b.1897, USA): piano, arranger, big band leader.

Sydney Bechet (b.1897, USA): clarinet, soprano sax, small band leader.

Louis Armstrong (b.1900,USA): trumpet, singer, band leader.

Jimmy Rushing (b.1901,USA): singer.

Eddie Lang (b.1902): acoustic guitar.

Joe Venuti (b.1903,USA): violin.
 Leon "Bix" Beiderbecke (b.1903, USA): cornet, trumpet, piano.
 Adrian Rollini (b.1903, USA): bass sax, vibraphone.
 Thomas "Fats" Waller (b.1904, USA): piano, singer, composer, small band leader.
 Coleman Hawkins (b.1904,USA): Tenor sax.
 William "Count" Basie (b.1904): piano, big band leader.
 Jack Teagarden (b.1905, USA): trombone, singer.
 Eddie Condon (b.1905,USA) acoustic guitar, jazz organiser.
 Nat Gonella (b.1908, England): trumpet, singer, bandleader.
 Stephane Grapelli (b.1908, France): violin.
 Lionel Hampton (b.1908, USA): vibraphone, drums, big band leader.
 Gene Krupa (b.1909,USA): drums, big band leader
 Benny Goodman (b.1909,USA): clarinet, small and big band leader.
 Django Rheinhardt (b.1910,Belgium): acoustic guitar.
 Teddy Wilson (b.1912,USA): piano, small band leader.
 Leroy "Slam" Stewart (b.1914,USA): double bass.
 Graeme Bell (b.1914, Australia): piano, bandleader.
 Billie Holiday (b.1915,USA) singer.
 George Chisholm (b.1915,Scotland): trombone.
 The Original Dixieland Jazz Band (1917-1924) earliest recorded small band jazz.
 Charlie Christian (b.1919,USA): electric guitar.
 Humphrey Lyttleton (b.1921, England) trumpet, small band leader, broadcaster.
 George Melly (b.1926,England): singer.
 Ken Colyer (b.1928, England): cornet, revivalist band leader.
 Bob Crosby's Bobcats: "Dixieland octet" (USA,1938-42)
 Muggsy Spanier's Ragtimers: "Dixieland octet" (USA 1939-40)

 Modern Progressive.

John "Dizzie" Gillespie (b.1917,USA) trumpet, big band leader.
 Charlie Parker (b.1920,USA) alto sax.
 Miles Davies (b.1926,USA): trumpet, small band leader.
 John Coltrane (b.1926,USA): tenor sax.

 Extremely Modern

Wynton Marsalis (b.1961, USA) trumpet, band leader.

 That's all there is, there ain't no mo'

Ballina, New South Wales, October 2006.