

**BLACK
MUSIC**



LeRoi Jones

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1966

The Changing Same (R&B and New Black Music)

centralism
THE BLUES IMPULSE transferred . . . containing a race, and its expression. *Primal* (mixtures . . . transfers and imitations). Through its many changes, it remained the exact replication of The Black Man In The West.

not Ad 10
An expression of the culture at its most un-self- (therefore showing the larger consciousness of a *one self*, immune to bullshit) conscious. The direct expression of a place . . . jazz seeks another place as it weakens, a middle-class place. Except the consciously separate from those aspirations. Hence the so-called avant-garde or new music, the new Black Music, is separate because it seeks to be equally separate, equally unself-conscious . . . meaning more conscious of the real weights of existence as the straightest R&B. There are simply more temptations for the middle-class Negro because he can make believe in America more, cop out easier, become whiter and slighter with less trouble, than most R&B people. Simply because he is closer to begin with.

Jazz, too often, becomes a music of special, not necessarily emotional, occasion. But R&B now, with the same help from white America in its exploitation of energy for profit, the same as if it was a gold mine, strings that music out along a similar weakening line. Beginning with their own vacuous "understanding" of what Black music is, or how it acts upon you, they believe, from the Beatles on down, that it is about white life.

The Blues, its "kinds" and diversity, its identifying parent styles. The phenomenon of jazz is another way of specifying cultural influences. The jazz that is most European, popular or avant, or the jazz that is Blackest, (still makes reference to a central body of cultural experience). The impulse, the force that pushes you to sing . . . all up in there . . . is one thing . . . what it produces is another. It can be expressive of the entire force, or make it the occasion of some special pleading. Or it is all equal . . . we simply identify the part of the world in which we are most responsive. It is all there. We are exact (even in our lies). The elements that turn our singing into direction reflections of our selves are heavy and palpable as weather.

We are moved and directed by our total response to the possibility of all effects.

We are bodies responding differently, a (total) force, like against you. You react to push it, re-create it, resist it. It is the opposite pressure producing (in this case) the sound, the music.

The City Blues tradition is called that by me only to recognize different elements active in its creation. The slick city people we become after the exodus, the unleashing of an energy into the Northern urban situation. Wholesale.

The line we could trace, as musical "tradition," is what we as a people dig and pass on, as best we can. The call and response form of Africa (lead and chorus) has never left us, as a mode of (musical) expression. (It has come down both as vocal and instrumental form.)

The rhythm quartet of the last thirty years is a very obvious continuation of Black vocal tradition, and a condensation in the form from the larger tribal singing units . . . through the form of the large religious choirs (chorus) which were initially *dancers and singers*, of religious and/or ritual purpose.

Indeed, to go back in any historical (or emotional) line of ascent in Black music leads us inevitably to religion, i.e.,

*religion & spirit
worship*

spirit worship. This phenomenon is always at the root in Black art, the worship of spirit—or at least the summoning of or by such force. As even the music itself was that, a reflection of, or the no thing itself.

The slave ship destroyed a great many formal art traditions of the Black man. The white man enforced such cultural rape. A “cultureless” people is a people without a memory. No history. This is the best state for slaves; to be objects, just like the rest of massa’s possessions.

The breakdown of Black cultural tradition meant finally the destruction of most formal art and social tradition. Including the breakdown of the Black pre-American religious forms. Forcibly so. Christianity replaced African religions as the outlet for spirit worship. And Christian forms were traded, consciously and unconsciously, for their own. Christian forms were emphasized under threat of death. What resulted were Afro-Christian forms. These are forms which persist today.

The stripping away, gradual erosion, of the pure African form as means of expression by Black people, and the gradual embracing of mixed Afro-Christian, Afro-American forms is an initial reference to the cultural philosophy of Black People, Black Art.

Another such reference, or such stripping, is an American phenomenon, i.e., it is something that affected all of America, in fact the entire West. This, of course, is the loss of religiosity in the West, in general.

Black Music is African in origin, African-American in its totality, and its various forms (especially the vocal) show just how the African impulses were redistributed in its expression, and the expression itself became Christianized and post-Christianized.

Even today a great many of the best known R&B groups, quartets, etc., have church backgrounds, and the music itself is as churchified as it has ever been . . . in varying degrees of its complete emotional identification with the Black African-

American culture (Sam and Dave, etc. at one end . . . Dionne Warwick in the middle . . . Leslie Uggams, the other end . . . and fading).

The church continues, but not the devotion (at no level of its existence is it as large, though in the poorest, most abstractly altruistic levels of churchgoing, the emotion is the devotion, and the God, the God of that feeling and movement, remains as powerful though “redistributed” somewhat).

But the kind of church Black people belonged to usually connected them with the society as a whole . . . identified them, their aspirations, their culture: because the church was one of the few places complete fullness of expression by the Black was not constantly censored by the white man. Even the asking of freedom, though in terms veiled with the biblical references of “The Jews,” went down in church.

It was only those arts and cultural practices that were less obviously capable of “alien” social statement that could survive during slavery. (And even today in contemporary America, it is much the same . . . though instead of out and out murder there are hardly more merciful ways of limiting Black protest or simple statement . . . in the arts just as in any other aspect of American life.)

Blues (Lyric) its song quality is, it seems, the deepest expression of memory. Experience re/feeling. It is the racial memory. It is the “abstract” design of racial character that is evident, would be evident, in creation carrying the force of that racial memory. essential

Just as the God spoken about in the Black songs is not the same one in the white songs. Though the words might look the same. (They are not even pronounced alike.) But it is a different quality of energy they summon. It is the simple tone of varying evolution by which we distinguish the races. The peoples. The body is directly figured in it. “The life of the organs.”

But evolution is not merely physical: yet if you can un-

derstand what the physical alludes to, is reflect of, then it will be understood that each process in "life" is duplicated at all levels.

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

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

For instance, a white man could box like Muhammad Ali, only *after* seeing Muhammad Ali box. He could not initiate that style (It is no description, it *is* the culture.) (AD 1966)

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

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

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

The closer the church was to Africa, the Blacker the God. (The Blacker the spirit.) The closer to the will (and meaning) of the West, the whiter the God, the whiter the spirit worshipped. The whiter the worshippers. This is still so. And the hard Black core of America is African.

From the different churches, the different Gods, the different versions of Earth. The different weights and "classic"

versions of reality. And the different singing. Different expressions (of a whole). A whole people . . . a nation, in captivity.

Rhythm and Blues is part of "the national genius," of the Black man, of the Black nation. It is the direct, no monkey business expression of urban and rural (in its various stylistic variations) Black America. } R
B

The hard, driving shouting of James Brown identifies a place and image in America. A people and an energy, harnessed and not harnessed by America. JB is straight out, open, and speaking from the most deeply religious people on this continent.

The energy is harnessed because what JB does has to go down in a system governed by "aliens," and he will probably never become, say, as wealthy, etc., that is he will never reap the *material* benefits that several bunches of white folks will, from his own efforts. But the will of the expression transcends the physical-mental "material," finally alien system-world it has to go through to allow any "benefits" in it. Because the will of the expression is spiritual, and as such it must transcend its mineral, vegetable, animal, environment.

Form and content are both mutually expressive of the whole. And they are both equally expressive . . . each have an identifying motif and function. In Black music, both identify place and direction. We want different contents and different forms because we have different feelings. We are different peoples. } (D)

James Brown's form and content identify an entire group of people in America. However these may be transmuted and reused, reappear in other areas, in other musics for different purposes in the society, (the initial energy and image are about a specific grouping of people, Black People.) +

Music makes an image. What image? What environment

(in that word's most extended meaning, i.e., total, external and internal, environment)? I mean there is a world powered by that image. The world James Brown's images power is the lowest placement (the most alien) in the white American social order. Therefore, it is the Blackest and potentially the strongest.

It is not simply "the strongest" because of the transmutation and harnessing I spoke of earlier. This is social, but it is total. The world is a total. (And in this sense, the total function of "free music" can be understood. See, especially, H. Dumas' story in *Negro Digest* "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" and understand the implications of music as an autonomous *judge* of civilizations, etc. Wow!)

By image, I mean that music (art for that matter . . . or any thing else if analyzed) summons and describes where its energies were gotten. The blinking lights and shiny heads, or the gray concrete and endless dreams. But the description is of a total environment. The content speaks of this environment, as does the form.

The "whitened" Negro and white man want a different content from the people James Brown "describes." They are different peoples. The softness and so-called "well being" of the white man's environment is described in his music (art) . . . in all expressions of his self. All people's are.

If you play James Brown (say, "Money Won't Change You . . . but time will take you out") in a bank, the total environment is changed. Not only the sardonic comment of the lyrics, but the total emotional placement of the rhythm, instrumentation and sound. An energy is released in the bank, a summoning of images that take the bank, and everybody in it, on a trip. That is, they visit another place. A place where Black People live.

But dig, not only is it a place where Black People live, it is a place, in the spiritual precincts of its emotional telling, where Black People move in almost absolute openness and

strength. (For instance, what is a white person who walks into a James Brown or Sam and Dave song? How would he function? What would be the social metaphor for his existence in that world? What would he be doing?)

This is as true, finally, with the John Coltrane world or the Sun-Ra world. In the Albert Ayler world, or Ornette Coleman world, you would say, "well, they might just be playing away furiously at some stringed instrument." You understand?

In the Leslie Uggams world? ^{the new thing} They would be marrying a half-white singer and directing the show . . . maybe even whispering lyrics and stuff from the wings. You understand? The song and the people is the same.

The reaction to any expression moves the deepest part of the psyche and makes its identifications throughout. The middle-class Negro wants a different content (image) from James Brown, because he has come from a different place, and wants a different thing (he thinks). The something you want to hear is the thing you already are or move toward.

We feel, Where is the expression going? What will it lead to? What does it characterize? What does it make us feel like? What is its image? (Jazz content, of course, is as pregnant.)

The implications of content.

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

against term "avant-garde"

means a lot of quacks and quackers, too.

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

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

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

R&B is about emotion, issues purely out of emotion. New Black Music is also about emotion, but from a different

place, and, finally, towards a different end. What these musicians feel is a more complete existence. That is, the digging of everything. What the wisdom religion preaches.

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

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

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

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

The songs of R&B, for instance, what are they about? What are the people, for the most part, singing about? Their lives. That's what the New Musicians are playing about, and the projection of forms for those lives. (And I think any analysis will immediately show, as I pointed out in *Blues People*, that the songs, the music, changed, as the people did.) Mainly, I think the songs are about what is known as "love," requited and un. But the most popular songs are al-

intent of songs of D. Brown

ways a little sad, in tune with the temper of the people's lives. The extremes. Wild Joy—Deep Hurt.

The songs about unrequited, incompleated, obstructed, etc., love probably outnumber the others very easily. Thinking very quickly of just the songs that come readily to my mind, generally current, and favorites of mine (and on that other *top ten*, which is, you bet, the indication of where the minds, the people, are). "Walk On By" "Where Did Our Love Go?" "What Becomes of the Broken Hearted?" "The Tracks of My Tears," high poetry in the final character of their delivery . . . but to a very large extent, the songs are about love affairs which do not, did not, come off. For God knows how many reasons. Infidelity, not enough dough, incredibly "secret" reasons where the loved and the lover or the lovers are already separated and longing one for the other, according to who's singing, male or female. And all more precise and specific than the Moynihan Report, e.g., listen to Jr. Walker's "Road Runner." And this missed love that runs through these songs is exactly reflect of what is the term of love and loving in the Black world of America Twentieth Century.

The miss-understanding, nay, gap . . . abyss, that separates Black man and Black woman is always, over and over, again and again, told about and cried about. And it's old, in this country, to us. "Come back baby, Baby, please don't go . . . Cause the way I love you, Baby, you will never know . . . So come back, Baby, let's talk it over . . . one more time." A blues which bees older than Ray Charles or Lightnin' Hopkins, for that matter. "I got to laugh to keep from cryin," which The Miracles make, "I got to dance to keep from cryin," is not only a song but the culture itself. It is finally the same cry, the same people. You really got a hold on me. As old as our breath here.

But there are many songs about love triumphant. "I feel good . . . I got you . . . Hey!" the score, the together self, at

one and in love and swinging, flying God-like. But a differently realized life-triumph than in the older more formally religious songs. The Jordans, the Promised Lands, now be cars and women-flesh, and especially dough. (Like, *power*.) There are many many songs about Money, e.g., Barrett Deems "Money," J.B.'s "I Got Money . . . now all I need is love," among so many others. But the songs are dealing with the everyday, and how to get through it and to the other side (or maybe not) which for the most part still bees that world, but on top of it, power full, and beauty full.

The older religiosity falls away from the music, but the deepest feel of spirit worship always remains, as the music's emotional patterns continue to make reference to. The new jazz people are usually much more self-consciously concerned about "God" than the R&B folks. But most of the R&B people were *really* in the church at one time, and sang there first, only to drift or rush away later.

Even the poorest, Blackest, Black people drifted away from the church. Away from a church, usually corrupted, Europeanized, or both, that could no longer provide for their complete vision of what this world ought to be, or the next. The refuge the church had provided during the early days of the Black man's captivity in America, when it was really the one place he could completely unleash his emotions and hear words of encouragement for his life here on earth. Now the world had opened up, and the church had not. But the emotionalism the church contained, and the spirit it signified, would always demand the animating life of the Black man, and as Frazier says, "The masses of Negroes may increasingly criticize their church and their ministers, but they cannot escape from their heritage. They may develop a more secular outlook on life and complain that the church and the ministers are not sufficiently concerned with the problems of the Negro race, yet they find in their religious heritage an opportunity to satisfy their deepest emotional yearnings."

(*The Negro Church in America*, E. Franklin Frazier, Shocken, 1963, p. 73.)

It was the more emotional Blacker churches that the blues people were members of, rather than the usually whiter, more middle-class churches the jazz people went to. The church, as I said, carries directly over into the secular music, which is really not secular at all. It's an old cliché that if you just change the lyrics of the spirituals they are R&B songs. That's true by and large, though there are more brazen, even whiter, strings and echo effects the blues people use that most of the spiritual and gospel people don't use. But that's changed and changing, too, and in the straight city jamup gospel, echo chambers, strings, electric guitars, all are in evidence, and Jesus is jamup contemporary, with a process and silk suit too, my man.

But the gospel singers have always had a more direct connection with the blues than the other religious singers. In fact, gospel singing is a city blues phenomenon, and Professor Thomas Dorsey, who is generally credited with popularizing the gospel form back in Chicago in the late twenties and thirties was once a blues singer-piano player named Georgia Tom, and even worked with Ma Rainey. (He was last known to be arranging for Mahalia Jackson, who with Ray Charles at another much more legitimate and powerful level, were the popularizers of Black church sound in "popular" music during the 50's.) But then so many of them, from G.T., and even before that to J.B., have all come that way.

The meeting of the practical God (i.e., of the existent American idiom) and the mystical (abstract) God is also the meeting of the tones, of the moods, of the knowledge, the different musics and the emergence of the new music, the really new music, the all-inclusive whole. The emergence also of the new people, the Black people conscious of all their strength, in a unified portrait of strength, beauty and contemplation.

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

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

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

The titles of Trane's tunes, "A Love Supreme," "Meditations," "Ascension," imply a strong religious will, conscious of the religious evolution the pure mind seeks. The music is a way into (God. The absolute open expression of everything.) Coltrane

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

Albert's music, which he characterizes as "spiritual," has much in common with older Black-American religious forms. An openness that characterizes the "shouts" and "hollers." But having the instruments shout and holler, say a saxophone, which was made by a German, and played, as

white folks call it, "legitimately" sounds like dead Lily Pons at a funeral, is changed by Ayler, or by members of any Sanctified or Holy Roller church (the blacker churches) into howling spirit summoner tied around the "mad" Black man's neck. The Daddy Grace band on 125th Street and 8th Avenue in Harlem, in the Grace Temple, is a brass band, with somewhat the same instrumentation as a European brass choir, but at the lips of Daddy's summoners, the band is "free" and makes sounds to tear down the walls of anywhere. The instruments shout and holler just like the folks. It is their lives being projected then, and they are different from the lives Telemann, or Vivaldi sought to reanimate with their music.

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

Ayler
Al.
improv.

Albert Ayler has talked about his music as a contemporary form of collective improvisation (Sun-Ra and John Coltrane are working in this area as well). Which is where our music was when we arrived on these shores, a collective expression. And to my mind, the *solo*, in the sense it came to be repre-

solo = west

sented on these Western shores, and as first exemplified by Louis Armstrong, is very plain indication of the changed sensibility the West enforced.

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

The Ornette Coleman *Double Quartet* which was called *Free Jazz* was one breakthrough to open the 60's. (It seems now to me that some of bassist Charlie Mingus' earlier efforts, e.g., *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, provide a still earlier version of this kind of massive orchestral breakthrough. And called rightly, too, I think. *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, the first man to stand. As what we are, a first people, and the first people, the primitives, now evolving, to recivilize the world. And all these and Sun-Ra who seems to me to have made the most moving orchestral statements with the New Music, all seem not so curiously joined to Duke Ellington. Ellington's "KoKo" and "Diminuendo and Crescendo . . ." can provide some immediate reference to freed orchestral form.)

The secular voice seeking clarity, or seeking religion (a spirit worship) compatible with itself. They are both pushed by an emotionalism that seeks freedom. Its answering category, the definition of the freedom sought, is equally descriptive of who is playing what? If we say we want social freedom, i.e., we do not want to be exploited or have our lives obstructed, there are roots now spreading everywhere. People even carry signs, etc. There is also the "freedom" to be a white man, which, for the most part is denied the majority of people on the earth, which includes jazz players, or for that matter, blues people. The freedom to want your own particular hip self is a freedom of a somewhat different and more difficult nature.

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

Archie Shepp is a tenor man of the new jazz, who came out (see *Archie Shepp, New Tenor*) of an American background of Black slums and white palaces. He is a Marxist playwrighting tenor-saxophone player now. His music sounds like a peculiar barrelhouse whore tip. It wavers chunks of vibrato Ben Webster Kansas City style, but turns that character actor wail into a kind of polished cry. Which, finally, if you have ever heard him speak at some public social gathering, is articulate at a very definite place in America.

Archie's is a secular music, that remains, demands secularity, as its insistence. He probably even has theories explaining why there is no God. But he makes obeisances to the spirits of ancient, "traditional," colored people ("Ham-bone," "The Mac Man," "The Picaninny") and what has happened to them from ancient times, traditionally, here (*Rufus, Swung, his face at last to the wind. Then his neck snapped or Malcolm or picked clean.*).

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

Cecil Taylor is also secular. He is very much an *artist*. His references determinedly Western and modern, contemporary in the most Western sense. One hears Europe and the influence of French poets on America and the world of "pure

art" in Cecil's total approach to his playing. Cecil's is perhaps the most European sounding of the New Music, but his music is moving because he is still Black, still has imposed an emotional sensibility on the music that knows of actual beauty beyond "what is given."

Even though Cecil is close to what's been called Third Stream, an "integrated" Western modernism, he is always *hotter, sassier* and newer than that music. But the Black artist is most often always hip to European art, often at his jeopardy.

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

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

But the device of their asking for this freedom remains a device for asking if the actual is not achieved. Literary Negro-ness, the exotic instance of abstract cultural resource, say in one's head, is not the Black Life Force for long if we are isolated from the real force itself, and, in effect, cooled

freedom

off. Cool Jazz was the abstraction of these life forces. There can be a cool avant, in fact there is, already. The isolation of the Black artist relating to, performing and accommodating his expression for aliens. Where is the returned energy the artist demands to go on? His battery (guns and engines)?

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

The New Music (any Black Music) is cooled off when it begins to reflect blank, any place "universal" humbug. It is this fag or that kook, and not the fire and promise and need for evolution into a higher species. The artist's resources must be of the strongest, purest possible caliber. They must be truest and straightest and deepest. Where is the deepest feeling in our lives? There is the deepest and most meaningful art and life. Beware "the golden touch," it will kill everything you useta (used to) love.

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

Sun-Ra is spiritually oriented. He understands "the future" as an ever widening comprehension of what space is,

Sun Ra

even to the "physical" travel between the planets as we do anyway in the long human chain of progress. Sun-Ra's Arkestra sings in one of his songs, "We travel the spaceways, from planet to planet." It is science-fact that Sun-Ra is interested in, not science-fiction. It is evolution itself, and its fruits. God as evolution. The flow of *is*.

So the future revealed is man explained to himself. The travel through inner space as well as outer. Sun-Ra's is a new content for jazz, for Black music, but it is merely, again, the spiritual defining itself. ("Love in Outer Space," "Ankh," "Outer Nothingness," "The Heliocentric World," "When Angels Speak of Love," "Other Worlds," "The Infinity of the Universe," "Of Heavenly Things," etc., etc.) And the mortal seeking, the human knowing spiritual, and willing the evolution. Which is the Wisdom Religion.

But the content of The New Music, or The New Black Music, is toward change. It is change. It wants to change forms. From physical to physical (social to social) or from physical to mental, or from physical-mental to spiritual. Soon essences. Albert Ayler no longer wants notes. He says he wants sound. The total articulation. Ra's music changes places, like Duke's "jungle music." Duke took people to a spiritual past, Ra to a spiritual future (which also contains "Little Sally Walker . . . sitting in a saucer . . . what kind'a saucer? . . . a flying saucer").

African sounds, too; the beginnings of our sensibility. The new, the "primitive," meaning *first*, new. Just as Picasso's borrowings were Western avant-garde and "the new" from centuries ago, and Stravinsky's borrowings were new and "savage," centuries old and brand new.

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

Change

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

What are the qualitative meanings and implications of these words?

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

Essence

How does this content differ from that of R&B.

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

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

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

Sometimes through Archie Shepp's wailing comes a dark yowl of desire in the place we are at, and for that place, to love him. And of actual flesh, that also comes through, that it is a man, perhaps crying. But he will reason it (logic as

popping fingers, a hip chorus with arcane reference) down to what you hear.

Otis Redding will sing "You Don't Miss Your Water," and it is love asked for. Some warm man begging to be with a woman. Or The Temptations' "If It's Love That You're Running From" . . . there's no hiding place. . . . But the cry in Shepp's sound is not for a woman, it is a cry, a wail. But not so freed from the object, the specific, as say Trane's.

Content Analysis, total content. Musical, Poetic, Dramatic, Literary, is the analysis in total, which must come, too. But, briefly, the R&B content is usually about this world in a very practical, where we literally are, approach. Spiritual Concern, in big letters, or "Other World" would be corn or maudlin, would not serve, in most R&B, because to the performers it would mean a formal church thing. But this will change, too. Again, "I got money, now all I need is love," and that insistence will demand a clearer vision of a *new* spiritual life.

The Black Man in R&B is the Black Man you can readily see. Maybe Sadder or Happier or Swifter or Slower than the actual, as with all poetry, but that average is still where the real is to be seen. (Even the "process" on the hair is practical in a turned around way, to say, "I'monna get me some hair like that . . . blow stuff." Badge of power, etc. The more literary or bourgeois Black man would never wear his badge (of oppression) so openly. His is more hidden (he thinks). He will tell you about Mozart and Kafka, or he will tell you about Frank Sinatra and James Michener. It works out the same, to the same obstruction to self. And, finally, the conk is easier to get rid of. If you can dig that.

R&B is straight on and from straight back out of traditional Black spirit feeling. It has the feeling of an actual spontaneity and *happiness*, or at least *mastery*, at the time. Even so, as the arrangements get more complicated in a

useless sense, or whitened, this spontaneity and mastery is reduced. The R&B presents expression and spontaneity, but can be taken off by the same subjection to whitening influences. A performer like Dionne Warwick (and The Supremes sometimes as well among others) with something of the light quickness of the "Detroit (Motown) Sound," treads a center line with something like grace. The strings and softness of her arrangements, and of many of her songs, are like white torch singers' delight, but her beat (she used to be a gospel singer in New Jersey) and sound take her most times into a warmth undreamed of by the whites. Though as the \$\$\$ come in, and she leans for a "bigger audience," traveling in them circles, too, etc., then she may get even whiter perhaps. (It is a social phenomenon and a spiritual-artistic phenomenon as well.)

The New Black Music people, by and large, have been exposed to more white influences than the R&B people. Most of the new musicians have had to break through these whiteners to get at the sound and music they play now. That is, there is more "formal" training among the jazz people. Hence a doctrinaire whitening.

It is easier to whiten a Cecil Taylor form than a James Brown form because the Taylor form proposes to take in more influences in the first place. It sets itself up as more inclusive of what the world is. Many times it is. But this is true with any of the new forms. Finally, it depends on the activating energy and vision, where that is, how it can be got to. The new forms are many times the result of contemplation and reflection. Through these and the natural emotional outline of the performer, the new music hopes to arrive at expression and spontaneity. The R&B begins with expression and spontaneity as its ends. Which are the ends of any Black music. Though this is not to say that this is always the result. Much R&B sounds contrived and simple-minded (much of any form, for sure) because that's what is working

with the sounds and forms, but what R&B proposes to be about is more readily available to us from where we are, with just what materials the world immediately has given us. The "widening" and extension, the more intellectual, new music people want many times is just funny-time shit, very very boring. That is, it may *just* be about something intellectual. The R&B might just be about something small and contrived, which is the same thing.

But the new music is consciously said to be about the mind and the spirit, as well as the heart. The beauty of an older hence "simpler" form is that it will be about the mind (and the spirit) if it is *really* about the heart. "Money won't change you . . . but time will take you out." Which can be said some other ways, but then get to them.

And Rhythm and Blues music is "new" as well. It is contemporary and has changed, (as jazz has remained the changing same.) Fresh Life. R&B has gone through evolution, as its singers have, gotten "modern," taken things from jazz, as jazz has taken things from R&B. New R&B takes things from old blues, gospel, white popular music, instrumentation, harmonies (just as these musics have in turn borrowed) and made these diverse elements its own.

But the Black religious roots are still held on to conspicuously in the most moving of the music. That Black emotionalism which came directly out of, and from as far back as, pre-church religious gatherings, the music of which might just be preacher to congregation, in an antiphonal rhythmic chant-poem-moan which is the form of most of the Black group vocal music that followed: Preacher-Congregation/Leader-Chorus. It is the oldest and still most common jazz form as well.

The old collective improvisation that was supposed to come out of New Orleans, with lead trumpet and clarinet weaving and trombone stunting and signifying and rhythm pounding, this form is as old as Black religious gatherings in

the forests of the West . . . and connects straight on into Black free-Africa.

But the two Black musics—religious and secular—have always cross-fertilized each other, because the musicians and singers have drifted back and forth between the two categories, with whatever music they finally came to make being largely the result of both influences. During the Depression, a lot of blues people, probably most of whom had once been in the church, “got religion” and went back (as I’ve said, the church was always looked upon by Black People as a refuge, from the alien white world . . . the less it got to be a refuge, i.e., the more it got integrated, the less hold it had on colored people). That was a whole church era in jazz and blues.

In the 50’s during the funk-groove-soul revival, the church music, more specifically, Gospel music, was the strongest and healthiest influence on jazz, and R&B, too. (Grays even opened a nightclub, The Sweet Chariot with robed hostesses to make them bux off another people’s ultimate concern. But nightclub, or not, they still managed to take the music off to their own advantage.)

In fact it was the Gospel and soul-funk influence, especially as sung by Ray Charles and played by people like Horace Silver, that “rescued” the music from the icebox of cool jazz, which finally turned out to be a white music for elevators, college students, and TV backgrounds. (The last mentioned have recently got the rhythm and blues tint via Rock’n’Roll or “Pop,” i.e., the soft white “cool” forms, versions, of Gospel-derived rhythm and blues music. Which is the way it goes.)

The cool was a whitened degenerative form of bebop. And when mainline America was vaguely hipped, the TV people (wizards of total communication) began to use it to make people buy cigarettes and deodorants . . . or put life into effeminate dicks (uhh, detectives). Then the white boys slid

into all the studio gigs, playing “their” music, for sure.

So-called “pop,” which is a citified version of Rock’n’Roll (just as the Detroit-Motown Sound is a slick citified version of older R&B-Gospel influenced forms) also sees to it that those TV jobs, indeed that dollar-popularity, remains white. Not only the Beatles, but any group of Myddle-class white boys who need a haircut and male hormones can be a pop group. That’s what pop means. Which is exactly what “cool” was, and even clearer, exactly what Dixieland was, complete with funny hats and funny names . . . white boys, in lieu of the initial passion, will always make it about funny hats . . . which be their constant minstrel need, the derogation of the real, come out again.

Stealing Music . . . stealing energy (lives): with their own concerns and lives finally, making it White Music (like influenzaing a shrill rites group). From anyplace, anytime to “We all live in a yellow submarine,” with all their fiends, etc., the exclusive white . . . *exclusive* meaning *isolated* from the rest of humanity . . . in the yellow submarine, which shoots nuclear weapons. (Content analysis . . . lyrics of white music show equally their concerns, lives, places, ways, to death.) In the yellow submarine. Chances are it will never come up.

They steals, minstrelizes (but here a minstrelsy that “hippens” with cats like Stones and Beatles saying, “Yeh, I got everything I know from Chuck Berry,” is a scream dropping the final . . . “But I got all the dough . . .”) named Animals, Zombies, in imitation (minstrel-hip) of a life style as names which go to show just what they think we are . . . Animals, Zombies, or where they finally be, trying to be that, i.e., Animals, Zombies, Beatles or Stones or Sam the Sham for that matter, and not ever Ravens, Orioles, Swallows, Spaniels or the contemporary desired excellence of Supremes, Miracles, Imperials, Impressions, Temptations, etc., . . . get to them names.

Actually, the more intelligent the white, the more the

realization he has to steal from niggers. They take from us all the way up the line. Finally, what is the difference between Beatles, Stones, etc., and Minstrelsey. Minstrels never convinced anybody they were Black either.

The more adventurous bohemian white groups sing songs with lyric content into where white bohemian poets moved long ago, as say the so-called psychedelic tunes, which may talk about drugs (LSD, Psilocybin, etc.) experience, and may be also shaped by so-called RagaRock (Indian-influenced) or Folk-Rock (i.e., Rock songs with more socially conscious content). Bob Dylan, Fugs, Blues Project, Mothers, etc. But in awe of the poetic-psychedelic and LSD, the chemical saviour of grays. They hope to evolve (as the rest of us) "thru chemistry," which sounds like Dupont. The "widening of the consciousness" type action into a higher sense of existent life, and thereafter, maybe stop stealing and killing, etc., etc., etc.

The Black tip for them is a super-live life thing as well. To "Get more than we got" kind of thing. The music . . . lyrics, with instructions to "tune in, turn on, drop out" and sound an Electronic Indian Raga . . . as a meditative eclipse of present reality, a yoga saddhu pop. But in play will still drop out of their society like new Beat thing. Out of it! Yeh. But what to do about what ain't out of it. Like there are people dying, etc. Bullshit.

But the content of some anti-Viet anti-Bad stuff is a generalizing in passionate luxurious ego demonstration to be good anyway though they exists as super-feelers of their evil cement head brothers, and as flexible copout, to be anything, finally, anything but what they patently are. That is, Fugs, Freaks, Mothers, Dylan, etc. Yet it still bees white kids playing around. Dylan's "Blowin in the Wind," which is abstract and luxury playing around stuff with him, is immediately transformed when Stevie Wonder sings it because it becomes about something that is actual in the world and is

substantiated by the life of the man singing it. That is, with Dylan it seems just an idea. A sentiment. But with Wonder (dig the name! and his life-style and singing is, of course, more emotional, too) you dig that it is life meant. In life.

The "new content" of white pop was protest, and with that "widening consciousness" as opposed to jes' love. But it is just this love that the white pop cannot sing about because it is not only sweet, stupid, maudlin, but now, frankly cannot be believed. Nobody can be made to believe they could love anybody. So the move.

The superficial advance. The liberal cool protest. Viet. Oh. Viet-Rock. Yeh. LBJ ain't no good. Yeh. But what, what? will happen \$\$\$\$\$\$. . . stealin' all from the niggers and they bees starvin' all the time. While crooks is good and hates war, for dough. (Wins either way!)

But the "protest" is not new. Black people's songs have carried the fire and struggle of their lives since they first opened their mouths in this part of the world. They have always wanted a better day. During the socially-conscious thirties, after the city and the social sophistication of white protest movements was acquired, so-called Folk Music was the most ubiquitous Black or near-Black music in the American mainstream. This is the reason "Folk" has been associated with protest. White people saddled that horse with trade unionism, IWW, Spanish Civil War, in the same way the folk-rockers, etc. do today.

Black religious music has always had an element of protest in it. In the so-called "invisible institution," or pre-church worship of the Black slaves, the songs were about freedom, though most times couched in the metaphorical language of the Bible, substituting Jews, etc. for themselves, to escape massa's understanding.

But with secular music, integration (meaning the harnessing of Black energy for dollars by white folks, in this case in the music bizness) spilled the content open to a generaliz-

ing that took the bite of specific protest out. ("You know you can't sell that to white folks.")

Early blues is full of talk about Black people and their exact up-hill lives. In fact you can tell an early blues tune if the word "Black" is even mentioned. Or "white" for that matter. The slickening money process shaved a lot of exactness in one area. They talk of love, and that is exact, but as a preacher said, "Today we're gonna talk about Love. I was gonna talk about Truth, but I figured I might offend somebody. So today we're gonna talk about Love." If you can dig that.

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

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

Note: *Let the new people take care of some practical bizness and the R&B take care of some new bizness and*

the unity musick, the people-leap, can begin in earnest.

Social consciousness in jazz is something again because it is largely a purely instrumental music . . . though there have always been musicians who have been deeply conscious of their exact placement in the social world, or at least there was a kind of race pride or consciousness that animated the musicians and their music (again, here, Ellington is a giant. "Black Beauty," "Black, Brown and Beige," "For My People" and so many many others).

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

Also, of course, the music is finally most musicians' strongest statement re: any placement of themselves socially. And the new music, as I have stated before about Black music, is "radical" within the context of mainstream America. Just as the new music begins by being free. That is, freed of the popular song. Freed of American white cocktail droop, tinkle, etc. The strait jacket of American expression sans blackness . . . it wants to be freed of that temper, that scale. That life. It screams. It yearns. It pleads. It breaks out (the best of it). But its practitioners sometimes do not. But then the vibrations of a feeling, of a particular place, a conjunction of world spirit, some of everybody can pick up

