

## Of Sunshine and Happy Endings: Jazz, Parody, and the Limits of Interpretation

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Broadway show tunes and popular songs have been an integral part of the jazz repertoire since the music's earliest days. In particular, the bop musicians of the 1940s and 1950s revelled in the harmonic sophistication of the songs written by Broadway's classic composers – Gershwin, Kern, Berlin, Porter, and Rodgers – drawing heavily and repeatedly on this popular canon.<sup>1</sup> In addition to playing standard songs, it was also common bebop practice to alter the melody of standards while retaining the basic chord sequence, offering the instrumentalist a familiar set of “changes” upon which to improvise. Of the 35 recorded performances on Charlie Parker's famous Dial sessions of 1946-47,<sup>2</sup> for example, 14 are variations on standard songs, of which 6 are based on the changes of Gershwin's “I Got Rhythm.”<sup>3</sup>

The technical sophistication of harmonically-based improvisation on chord changes developed by bebop musicians reached its apogee in John Coltrane's work of the late 1950s, especially in his composition “Giant Steps,”<sup>4</sup> in which, at an extremely fast tempo, the improviser must negotiate a complex series of harmonic “hurdles.” Contemporaneous with these developments, Miles Davis's modal experiments on the 1959 album *Kind of Blue*<sup>5</sup> indicated another avenue for jazz improvisation, releasing the improviser from what Jimmy Giuffre has characterized as the “vertical prisons” of traditional harmony (qtd. in Harrison et al. 106). In addition to his modal explorations, Davis also continued to play standards, although by the mid-1960s he had “taken the technical and emotional exploration of standard song structures as far as was possible before they disintegrated completely and metamorphosed into something else” (Carr 139). In Davis's case, the “something else” that his music ultimately metamorphosed into was fusion; for another group of musicians, it was free jazz; but, for many jazz musicians, improvisation on standard songs – or models based on standard songs – remained common practice, as it still does today.

Given the technical complexity and sophistication of the musical developments in jazz from the 1940s to the 1960s, it is perhaps hardly surprising that it was a primarily text-based mode of analysis and criticism which emerged in tandem with these developments. Indeed, as jazz began to be assimilated into the academy in the 1960s, it was most often on the basis of the familiar modernist notions of aesthetic autonomy and transcendence, focusing on formalist, decontextualized readings of musical texts, and the valorization of individual artists and their exemplary contributions.<sup>6</sup> Although such forms of analysis have undoubtedly been the source of considerable musical insight, there is also little doubt that the charges of modernist ideology levelled by much revisionist jazz scholarship are largely warranted.<sup>7</sup> In turn, however, the primarily contextualist focus of some forms of revisionist work can often be equally problematic. Moreover, although some scholars have identified the incompatibility of jazz and

modernist aesthetics, the understanding of postmodernism has remained largely underdeveloped in jazz scholarship.<sup>8</sup>

In this paper, highlighting the shortcomings of both traditionalist and revisionist perspectives, I examine the 1962 and 1965 recordings of “You Are My Sunshine” by the composer, band-leader, and music theorist George Russell, suggesting that an exclusive focus on issues of either text or context fails to illuminate the complex meanings and implications inherent in these performances. I argue that the use of parody, irony, and reappropriation in these pieces demands a mode of analysis which addresses the elaborate interplay of text and context, suggesting an understanding of musical meaning which is richly intertextual but radically unstable, thereby denying the tendency towards the categorical fixity of meaning which is characteristic of both traditionalist and revisionist approaches.<sup>9</sup>

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“You Are My Sunshine” was written in 1940 by Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell. Although Mitchell remains a less well-known figure, Davis led a long and varied career during which he was a songwriter, country music performer, film star, college professor, police commissioner, and twice Governor of Louisiana (1944-48 and 1960-64). He died in 2000, at the age of 101. Davis used “You Are My Sunshine” as a campaign song, and it was eventually adopted as an official state song of Louisiana. Elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1972, Davis wrote many other popular country songs, including “Nobody’s Darling But Mine” (1935) and “It Makes No Difference Now” (1937). Davis’s 1940 recording of “You Are My Sunshine” sold over a million copies in the United States, and the song was later recorded and widely popularized by Bing Crosby and Gene Autry, among many others; Autry’s 1941 recording of the song won him a Gold Record.

Autry, of course, was the archetype of the “singing cowboy,”<sup>10</sup> a musical form which Philip Furia (author of Ira Gershwin’s biography) has characterized as a “Hollywood monstrosity” (74), a “monstrosity” which was anticipated – and mercilessly parodied – in the song “I’m Bidin’ My Time” from the Gershwins’ *Girl Crazy* of 1930, in which a quartet of cowboys sing, “while other folks grow dizzy I keep busy – bidin’ my time” (qtd. in Furia 74). Rodgers and Hart were on similarly satirical form in *Babes in Arms* (1937); in a “wicked lampoon upon the current craze [for] cowboy songs” (Nolan 105), the song-writing team penned “Way Out West” for Baby Rose, the sixteen year old star of the production’s show-within-a-show. Stranded in Long Island, Baby Rose pines for New York, “Way out west on West End Avenue,” and in the opening verse sings, “I’ve roamed o’er the range with the herd, Where seldom is heard an intelligent word” (Hart and Kimball 229).

Given Ira Gershwin’s and Larry Hart’s urbane – not to say urban – parodies of the singing cowboy and his simple country songs, and in light of the jazz predilection for the sophisticated harmonies and melodies of Broadway composers such as Gershwin and

Rodgers, the choice of “You Are My Sunshine” for a jazz performance might seem like a curious one indeed. The song has been given a number of different readings over the years – including Ray Charles’s R&B treatment and Aretha Franklin’s soul version<sup>11</sup> – but with the exception of Errol Garner’s 1954 trio recording and a minor-key ballad performance by Mose Allison, the song has been largely ignored by jazz musicians.<sup>12</sup> The reason for the neglect is not difficult to fathom: given its harmonically simple, rhythmically four-square character, “You Are My Sunshine” has little to offer the improviser more accustomed to Broadway sophistication, the “down-home” folksiness of Crosby’s and Autry’s canonical performances simply serving to highlight the song’s distance from the polished complexities of the typical jazz standard.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, the song occupies a similar position in the critical pantheon; commenting on Jimmy van Heusen’s “Imagination” (first recorded by Frank Sinatra with Tommy Dorsey’s orchestra in 1940, and something of a Sinatra standby), Allen Forte has observed, “In a year (1940) that saw only a small number of noteworthy songs published, it stands with the best [. . .] It is definitely superior to ‘You Are My Sunshine,’ a three-chord encomium with lyrics to match” (301).<sup>13</sup> Against this background, then, George Russell’s complex, multi-faceted arrangement of the song stands as a somewhat unusual entry in the jazz canon. First recorded in 1962, the 12-minute performance of “You Are My Sunshine” featured Russell’s working sextet of the period, augmented by the vocalist Sheila Jordan, making only her second recording.<sup>14</sup> Russell subsequently recorded an instrumental version of a similar arrangement at a live concert in Stuttgart’s Beethoven Hall in 1965.<sup>15</sup> Before considering these recordings, some brief background on Russell is appropriate.

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George Russell is a highly regarded figure in jazz circles, known not only as a composer and band-leader, but also as a music theorist, and author of *The Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*, first published in 1953. Although this is no place for a detailed exposition of Russell’s concept, he has helpfully summarized it as “a way of exploring the chromatic possibilities that exist within the traditional chord-based jazz frame” (qtd. in Jones 65). The concept was influential in John Coltrane’s harmonic explorations and in Miles Davis’s modal work in the late 1950s, and has been widely celebrated: the composer Gunther Schuller has described it as a “monumental achievement” (qtd. in Russell, “George”); Ornette Coleman has commented that “it surpasses any musical knowledge I have been exposed to” (Jones 65); and the Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu claimed to have been strongly influenced by the concept (qtd. in Russell, “Home”). Despite such ringing testimonials, and notwithstanding numerous awards (including the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1989), Russell has remained a somewhat peripheral figure in jazz history, never achieving the canonical centrality of some of his contemporaries.

Over the years, Russell’s work has embraced small group jazz, big bands, choral pieces, and early experiments with tape and electronics, most notably in his 1968 piece

“Electronic Sonata for Souls Loved by Nature,”<sup>16</sup> which blended tape recordings of African music and singing with Russell’s sextet. In an interview in 1960, Russell suggested that “you might characterize the whole era as the decline and fall of the chord” (Russell and Williams 7), although he describes his musical approach not as atonal but rather as “pan-tonal” (Russell and Williams 7) and “pan-stylistic” (qtd. in Jones 67) – musical qualities which are also evident in the liberal humanism of his social philosophy, as expressed in his liner notes to the recording of the “Electronic Sonata”:

The wedding of non-electronic pan-stylism to electronic pan-stylism was meant to convey the cultural implosion occurring among the earth’s population, their coming together. Also it is meant to suggest that man, in the face of encroaching technology, must confront technology and attempt to humanize it: using it to enrich his collective soul [. . .] not only his purse [. . .] to explore inner, as well as outer space. (Russell, “Liner Notes”)<sup>17</sup>

An African-American, although mistaken for white in Wilfred Mellers’s *Music in a New Found Land* (365), Russell remained ambivalent about the free jazz of the 1960s – “I don’t believe in freedom” (qtd. in Jones 68) – and chose not to subscribe to the radical black politics which accompanied much of the movement. In a discussion forum in *Down Beat* magazine in 1964, in response to the proposition that “the ‘new thing’ reflects the era we’re in” (DeMichael 16), Russell commented,

I don’t think some of the people in the “new thing” really know what it’s all about [. . .] I don’t think the seeds of this new music lie in a racial protest alone [. . .] it’s a cry against the whole social structure. It’s a cry for truth. It transcends race – and that can be done, you know. As much as the racial thing is pushed, there are problems that transcend it, which have to do with all of us as human beings. (qtd. in DeMichael 16-17)

Russell’s liberal, “ecumenical” views were less than popular among some of his more politicized contemporaries, and he was among the “bigots” and “chauvinists” to whom Archie Shepp addressed his 1965 *Down Beat* essay “An Artist Speaks Bluntly”: “I address myself to George Russell, a man whose work I have always respected and admired, who in an inopportune moment with an ill-chosen phrase threw himself squarely into the enemy camp” (qtd. in Porter 212).

In more recent years, Russell has found himself in another kind of “enemy camp”: his current working big band, the Living Time Orchestra, employs a wide range of acoustic and electric instruments, drawing freely on jazz and rock techniques, and – in a gesture which highlights the narrow musical chauvinism of the Wynton Marsalis-Stanley Crouch circle at Lincoln Center – a commission to Russell from Jazz at Lincoln Center was withdrawn after the organizers discovered that Russell’s band included electric instruments.<sup>18</sup>

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Given the complexities of his musical thought, Russell has been a prime target for formalist, textualist analysis, exemplified in Max Harrison's various writings on the composer, which emphasize Russell's use of polytonality, his intricate rhythmic schemes, and his unique instrumental textures.<sup>19</sup> Harrison's elegant criticism has been invaluable in clarifying the structural aspects of Russell's music, and, indeed, played a significant part in my own early appreciation of Russell's *oeuvre*. But Russell's reading of "You Are My Sunshine" presents itself as something of a conundrum to Harrison's formalism, and in his review of the later Beethoven Hall recording of the piece he characterizes it simply as a "many-voiced meditation on [. . .] seemingly the least appropriate melody possible" ("George Russell" 21). The alternative contextualist view of the piece is usually based on the background information contained in the 1962 album's original liner notes by Joe Goldberg:

The arrangement [. . .] had its genesis when Russell and [Sheila] Jordan were singing and playing for their own amusement in a small tavern in her home area, the coal-mining region of Pennsylvania. Someone at the bar asked to hear "Sunshine" ("It's really a folk song there," Russell says, "a drinking song"), and Russell began to experiment with it. The resulting treatment mirrors his impression of the humanity of the people pitted against the cold, bleak, often brutal demands of the region.

Sheila Jordan tells a similar story in her interview with Francis Davis:

[Russell] wanted to know, "Where do you come from to sing that way?" So I took him back to Pennsylvania and showed him the mines. A miner asked me to sing "You Are My Sunshine." I said, "Oh, I don't sing that anymore." He said, "Well, you used to." ... My grandmother said, "Well, let's all sing it." So she played it on the piano, and we all sang it, and George got an idea, and that's how "You Are My Sunshine" came about on *The Outer View*. (qtd. in Davis 163)

These accounts of the origins of Russell's arrangement have become a standard part of its critical reception, and Jordan's vocal performance is typically described as "eerie" (Porter, Ullman, and Hazell 435) or "haunting" (Erlewine et al. 636). Similarly, Max Harrison characterizes Jordan's vocal as "highly introspective" ("George Russell" 21), while Bob Palmer suggests that "Sheila's three choruses build to a pitch of guileless emotion which is unlike anything else in the jazz of the period, and the shifting voicings and rhythms of the arrangement [. . .] are so evocative you can see and feel the Appalachian landscape."

Although these descriptions are all arguably appropriate, I want to suggest here that such descriptions, whether textually or contextually biased, ultimately fail to address the full range of potential musical meanings inherent in the piece: a range which is indicated in the sharp conflict between Goldberg's more positive recounting of Russell's

motivations and Russell's own more ambivalent rationale, as outlined in the original liner notes to the 1965 Beethoven Hall recording:<sup>20</sup>

I visited Pennsylvania and saw the mines on the hills [. . .] and then you see these simple people living in this "You-are-my-sunshine-world." It was there that I decided to play this tune. I think that playing it the way we do is the only way you can play it today. Otherwise it would be a lie [. . .] People of our times living in a world of computers and H-bombs, of Vietnam wars and astronauts, and singing "You Are My Sunshine" – it's impossible to believe in a happy ending to all of this.<sup>21</sup> (qtd. in Berendt)

Hence, contrary to Harrison's formalist contention that "You Are My Sunshine" represented "the least appropriate melody possible," Russell's own observations suggest that the song was perhaps the "only" appropriate melody to express the meanings he had in mind: meanings that embody the equivocal tension between Russell's liberal humanist social philosophy, noted above in his comments on "pan-stylism," and his cynicism with regard to what he characterizes as the "brainwashing" of contemporary society (qtd. in DeMichael 16), which is clearly expressed in the liner notes for the later recording. Furthermore, although Jordan's vocal may indeed be "eerie," "haunting," "introspective," or "guileless," a closer examination of her performance suggests a potentially broader range of interpretations.

My key point here is that the complex "double-coding" inherent in Russell's parody of the original song can only be interpreted on the basis of a fuller understanding of the dialogical interrelationship of the musical texts – the song's earlier canonical versions, and Russell's contemporary readings – and their respective contexts.<sup>22</sup> Notwithstanding the forceful cynicism underlying Russell's own description of the motivation behind the piece, I will argue that the earlier recorded performance embodies an ambivalent tension which refuses a univocal reading.

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An initial point to make in considering the 1962 recording is that the unusualness of the choice of song could not have been lost on Russell: the early 1960s was a period of considerable musical innovation in jazz (of which Russell's sextet work was a significant part), and the selection of a country song popularized by a singing cowboy must have seemed to his audience to be little short of perverse. As Goldberg suggested in his liner notes: "Probably, the idea of Russell playing 'Sunshine' will cause some wisecracks among the hippies, before they hear it." But the "hipness" of Russell's arrangement, and its manifest musical sophistication, perhaps served to dispel any such fears. Moreover, this was not the first time that Russell had incorporated "unusual" pieces into his musical repertoire. In his 1956 piece "The Day John Brown Was Hanged,"<sup>23</sup> stark quotes from "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" are juxtaposed with dense quartet textures: hence, as Harrison suggests, "the melody's diatonic squareness throws into relief the emotional and technical complexity of the surroundings" (*Jazz* 60). In Russell's

“Sunshine,” however, the “diatonic squareness” of the melody becomes the focus of the piece, and the song is subjected to a series of fascinating melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic variations.

The piece opens with sparse piano and imitative horn statements over a martial drum beat, the piano making brief allusions to the theme; a dissonant ensemble passage leads to a gentle “jazz-style” statement of the theme on the horns, accompanied by powerful bass counterpoint; this gives way to a stark chorus of dissonant piano chords, backed by held tones on the horns, and bass and brushes.<sup>24</sup> A gently swinging series of chorus-long horn solos follows – muted trombone, muted trumpet, tenor, and muted trombone again – the players fashioning brief improvised statements from the simple harmonic material, which is extended and elaborated by Russell’s chordal accompaniment. In the opening six minutes of the piece, then, the treatment of the theme alternates between spare dissonance and more “conventional” jazz readings, generating equivocal episodes of musical tension and relaxation. Following the horn solos, a 15-second up-tempo passage in the rhythm section, with the horns spelling out the opening phrase of the theme at a contrastingly languid tempo, offers a brief foreshadowing of the ending of the piece.

This leads, in turn – by way of a parodic Vegas-style piano flourish (and a rather clumsy edit) – to Sheila Jordan’s entrance. Her *a cappella*, rubato reading of the chorus does little to recall either Bing or singing cowboys: a chorus which takes Crosby and Autry a perfunctory 20-25 seconds is expanded by Jordan to a 2-minute meditation, her vocal variations suggesting a new range of meanings for this somewhat hackneyed ditty. In contrast to the vulnerability of the opening lines, Jordan’s subtle change in the lyric – from “You’ll never know dear how much I love you” to “...how much I want you” – introduces an element of eroticism to the song which is totally absent in its more masculine country incarnations. Francis Davis is one of the few critics to have noted this aspect of Jordan’s performance, suggesting that she sings “the beery, unlovely melody as sweetly as a child intones a prayer – yet the words acquire an unaccountable erotic chill” (163).<sup>25</sup>

After Jordan’s unaccompanied chorus, the horns re-enter with their imitative statements, underpinned by a more forceful return to the martial drumming from the song’s opening. Again, subtle changes to the lyric generate new connotations, the shift from “I dreamed I held you in my arms” to “I dreamed you held me in your arms” emphasizing the child-like vulnerability of the solo chorus, and the change from “I hung my head and cried” to “I bowed my head and cried” suggesting the prayerful tone which Davis identifies. The start of a new chorus signals a quickening of tempo and a key change which, as Davis notes, “forces [Jordan] above her natural range [. . .] Although she makes the notes, it sounds like she’s straining” (163). Half way through the chorus a walking bass line and a shift to a more swinging rhythmic accompaniment dispels the tense mood, the closing eight bars of this chorus relocating the listener – briefly and somewhat uncomfortably, perhaps – in “jazz” territory, returning to the mood of the earlier horn solos, with Jordan’s more “conventional” singing momentarily invoking the style of a Betty Carter or a Sarah Vaughan.

But perhaps the most striking aspect of Russell's arrangement is the final chorus, which had been hinted at in "gentler" fashion in the brief section that preceded Jordan's entrance. This time, however, the piano is even more agitated, and the horns highly dissonant – a "negating three-horn raspberry," as Davis describes it (163) – giving the piece a rug-pulling, pie-in-the-face ending that casts doubt on all that has gone before: were the dissonant passages really as tense as they first appeared? Was the band really swinging the tune, or was it all tongue in cheek? Was Jordan's solo chorus really as erotically-charged as it seemed, or was she just kidding? Were the lyric changes really as meaningful as one thought, or merely absent-minded gestures? Was this piece really "about" – in Joe Goldberg's words – the "humanity of the people pitted against the brutal demands of the region" or was it actually "about" – in Russell's own terms – the impossibility of believing in a happy ending?

After thirty years of listening to Russell's "Sunshine," I am convinced of two things: the need to keep asking these questions; and the refusal of the piece to succumb to a single, univocal "meaning." Perhaps, then, the purpose of cultural analysis might not be that of finding definitive answers to a finite number of questions, but rather that of posing an ever-expanding number of questions, based on an ever-widening understanding of the interrelationship of texts and contexts. Such an approach therefore privileges neither text nor context; indeed, it suggests that a close reading of the musical text is a necessary adjunct to an analysis of musical context.

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This latter point is well illustrated in a brief analysis of Russell's instrumental recording of "You Are My Sunshine," at Stuttgart's Beethoven Hall in 1965. In this later arrangement, Sheila Jordan's vocal part is replaced by Don Cherry's solo trumpet and Russell's solo piano, perhaps offering a clearer statement of the satirical nature of Russell's parody, and confirming his own more cynical observations on the song. Here, Margaret Rose's distinction between satiric and ironic parody is helpful in understanding the somewhat more delimited range of meanings implied by the instrumental version. Rose proposes that, "In all cases parody may be said to have 'double-coded' one text with another, although in the case of satiric parody one text (or code) will generally be the target of the other, while in ironic parody the different codes embedded in the parody may reflect on each other to modify or change the meaning of both, or simply add a variety or complexity of codes to the parody text" (270).

What I want to suggest here is that Jordan's vocal performance in the earlier version is pivotal in ameliorating the strong satirical nature of Russell's intent, generating an ironic ambivalence and ambiguity in which the resulting "complexity of codes" in the piece resists either a straightforwardly satirical reading, or an equally untenable "evocative" reading, in which the listener is apparently able to "see and feel the Appalachian landscape" (Palmer).

The opening sections of the Beethoven Hall arrangement are broadly similar to those of the 1962 recording, replicating the alternation of “stark” and “swinging” choruses, and duplicating the order of horn solos. In sharp contrast to the equivocal “sincerity” of Jordan’s unaccompanied chorus, however, Cherry’s solo trumpet aims straight for the satirical funny-bone: in this case, the earlier text is very much a parodic “target.” Cherry bends the simple tune out of shape, his low fart in the fifth bar (“You make me hap-py”) and the abrupt, expectation-cheating ending to his solo (“Please don’t take my...”) drawing laughs from the live audience.

Russell takes the next chorus (without the accompaniment of the horns and martial drumming from the Jordan arrangement), similarly transforming the tune with melodic variations and dissonant chord substitutions. Russell also ends his explorations abruptly (“Please don’t take my sun ...”), but proceeds immediately to a series of extravagant avant-garde flourishes, totally – and deliberately – at odds with the song’s basic diatonicism. He finishes his solo with a mocking perfect cadence, briefly restoring the simple harmonic framework. Following an ensemble chorus – the equivalent of Jordan’s third chorus, in which Russell’s piano now takes a more active role – the final, dissonant theme statement is perhaps even more frantic than in the earlier version, prompting a two-minute ovation from the crowd.<sup>26</sup> The original liner notes record the contrast between the enthusiastic big-city audience response in Stuttgart and the distinctly cool reception of the piece in the smaller town of Koblenz the following evening: whistles from the Koblenz audience prompted Russell to stop the performance and tell the audience, “If you know it better, why don’t you finish the concert?” (qtd. in Berendt; Knauer 5-6).

One could speculate that a less “sophisticated,” small-town audience was more likely to take offence at the more delimited range of musical meanings inherent in Russell’s 1965 arrangement of the piece, an arrangement which perhaps displays less ambivalence than the earlier recording with Jordan. Contrary to Wolfram Knauer’s contention that “the Stuttgart version is even livelier, more adventurous in its improvisation, more convincing in its overall development” (6) than the earlier 1962 recording, it might be argued, then, that the former’s mode of satiric parody denies the latter’s intertextual richness and musical ambiguity: rather than simply employing the original text as a “target,” Jordan’s affecting performance enters into a complex dialogue with its canonical predecessors, offering a new and radically unstable series of meanings and connotations, and denying definitive or categorical interpretation.

I would suggest, therefore, that a comparative analysis of these two Russell texts, and of their complex interrelationship both with each other and with the canonical texts that served as their inspiration, not only confirms the impossibility of believing in analytical “happy endings,” but also highlights the potential musical richness of a postmodern engagement with – in Umberto Eco’s terms – “the challenge of the past, of the already said” (67). Perhaps, then, the cultural analyst can no longer claim an authoritative position from which to pronounce on questions of meaning and value: rather, the analyst must forego the “verities” of traditional scholarly interpretation and focus instead

on constructing a broader and deeper understanding of the elaborate textual and contextual “interrelationship” of contemporary cultural forms and practices.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> It is fascinating to note that the feeling was sometimes far from mutual; even in its earlier swing incarnation, the practice of jazz musicians improvising on his songs was one that incensed Richard Rodgers. In response, he and Lorenz Hart penned “I Like to Recognize the Tune” (1939), which includes the immortal lines, “A guy named Krupa plays the drums like thunder; But the melody is six feet under” (Hart and Kimball 260). In his autobiography, Rodgers noted that he and Hart “really had nothing against swing bands *per se*, but as songwriters we felt it was tough enough for new numbers to catch on as written without being subjected to all kinds of interpretive manhandling that obscured their melodies and lyrics. To me, this was the musical equivalent of bad grammar” (Rodgers 193).

<sup>2</sup> On *The Legendary Dial Masters*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Jazz Classics 5003).

<sup>3</sup> As Will Friedwald notes, “The Dials include the original and definitive recordings of the records that first pronounced Gershwin’s ‘I Got Rhythm’ as the basic framework for uptempo bebop flagwavers.” In addition to the fourteen standard variations, the sessions include performances of eight standards (by Kern, Gershwin, and others), four originals in 32-bar AABA format, and nine blues.

<sup>4</sup> On the CD *Giant Steps* (Atlantic A21311).

<sup>5</sup> Columbia/Legacy CK64935.

<sup>6</sup> For examples of this formalist approach, see Schuller, “Sonny,” *Early Jazz*, and *Swing Era*, and Gioia.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Gabbard 1-28, and Walser 165-188.

<sup>8</sup> These are issues I have addressed elsewhere; see Stanbridge 81-99.

<sup>9</sup> The work of Ingrid Monson (*Saying*, “Oh Freedom”) is a notable exception here, adopting an analytical approach that is highly sensitive to both textual and contextual issues, and to questions of musical meaning.

<sup>10</sup> Autry made his Hollywood debut in 1934, scoring a huge success the following year with the Saturday afternoon Western/sci-fi serial *The Phantom Empire*. By the late 1930s, Autry was one of Hollywood’s biggest box-office attractions, and was voted number one Western Star by American theatre exhibitors in 1937.

<sup>11</sup> Ray Charles’ version is on the 1961 album *Modern Sounds in Country & Western Music* (Rhino 70099), and the Aretha Franklin recording is on the 1967 album *Aretha Arrives* (Rhino 71274).

<sup>12</sup> Garner’s recording is on *The Original Misty* (Mercury 834910) and Allison’s on the 1972 album *Mose In Your Ear* (Atlantic 40460). The saxophonist Dave Liebman has also recorded the piece on his 1995 CD *Songs for My Daughter* (Soul Note 121295), and Ben Monder included a solo version of the song on his 2000 CD *Excavation* (Arabesque AJ0148).

<sup>13</sup> Having summarily dispatched “You Are My Sunshine,” Forte then proceeds with a detailed technical analysis of the harmonic structure of Van Heusen’s “Imagination.”

<sup>14</sup> On the album *The Outer View* (Riverside/Original Jazz Classics 616-2). “You Are My Sunshine” is regularly referred to as the recording debut by the 33-year-old vocalist, although Jordan recorded the song “Yesterdays” a year earlier with the bassist Peter Ind (on the album *Looking Out, Wave WS1*). See Davis 157-67 for a brief account of Jordan’s career.

<sup>15</sup> Previously available only on two rather obscure vinyl albums, the concert can now be heard on the 1998 CD *At Beethoven Hall: Complete Recordings* (MPS 539084).

<sup>16</sup> Available on Soul Note records (SN1034).

<sup>17</sup> Ingrid Monson has noted the integration of theory and philosophy in Russell’s work, suggesting that, “Russell’s relationship to music theory, systematicity, and unity is better placed in the context of a pan-denominational spirituality merging elements of religion, science, self-knowledge, and mysticism” (“Oh Freedom” 154).

<sup>18</sup> See Nisenson 239, and Lees 234. See also Stanbridge 89-90.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Harrison “George Russell,” and the relevant sections in Harrison *Jazz* and Harrison *et al.*

<sup>20</sup> On the record album *At Beethoven Hall II: Guest Don Cherry* (SABA 15060).

<sup>21</sup> The English version of the liner note is hampered by a rather cumbersome translation from the German, and I have taken the liberty of making modest revisions to the English text.

<sup>22</sup> The use of parody and irony is central to the architectural critic Charles Jencks’s notion of postmodern “double-coding,” in which cultural forms are understood in terms of the hybridity and juxtaposition of a range of competing, contrasting, and complementary “codes.” See Jencks *What is Post-Modernism?* and *Language*. See also Rose.

<sup>23</sup> On the Hal McKusick album *Jazz Workshop* (RCA 43637).

<sup>24</sup> The sextet consists of piano, trumpet, trombone, tenor saxophone, bass, and drums, plus Sheila Jordan on vocals.

<sup>25</sup> The fact that, in more recent decades, “You Are My Sunshine” has become firmly ensconced in the public imagination as a children’s song only further widens the potential range of intertextual reference. See, for example, the 1990 CD *Children’s Favorite Songs, Vol 4* (Disney 60608) and the 1998 CD *Mommy and Me: Rock-a-Bye Baby* (Madacy 124).

<sup>26</sup> Although present on the original vinyl recording, the ovation has been edited from the CD re-issue.

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