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Introduction

Migrating Jazz People and Identities

At ninety-five years old Hal Singer could still seduce with his saxophone. The measured steps to the raised stage . . . the near misses when sitting on his stool . . . the misheard shout out of the next tune . . . nothing could alter his firm hold on the saxophone. On that fifth day of October in 2014 Singer's saxophone blurted just a bit off sync, though still lilting. But it did not take long for him to mesmerize the audience.

As this master of rock 'n' roll, R&B, and jazz performed, visions of poodle skirt–laden girls flipping and spinning with intricate steps took over my imagination. His music transported me back in time. In 1948 Singer recorded "Cornbread" on the Savoy label. The song quickly hit number one on the R&B charts. Riding the waves of his success, he turned down the opportunity to retain his spot in Duke Ellington's reed section; even though he'd only just secured this esteemed role, Singer had enough recognition then to lead his own band (B. Dahl; Felin).

On that still summery day in October 2014 Hal Singer created a mood of nostalgia and blood memories in the cozy community center of Belleville, Les ateliers du Chaudron (The studios of Chaudron).[1] The lucky ones were sitting upright in chairs against the wall and beside the stage. Most of us were crouched on wooden bleacher-like levels, holding our knees in, sitting on our jackets, and trying not to take up too much space so that everyone could fit in. We were a mixed crowd: Singer's family; Americans long having resided in France; international tourists just passing through; French residents of the tenth arrondissement (neighborhood); and their accompanying friends. We were white, black, and mixed; teens and elders; men and women. Despite the differences, everyone sat in awe as Singer created a bond among us. For he connected us and transported us to times past.

Easing into his flow, Singer led the band with "Freddy Freeloader"—a twelve-bar blues tune that is recognized on one of the best-selling and most well-known albums of all time, Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue*. The 1959 album became a pinnacle point in jazz history, an epic contribution from Columbia Records and its 30th Street studio, and one last spark of bop coolness before free jazz spawned a new avant-garde jazz scene. Based in New York City since 1941, Singer enjoyed plenty of opportunities to collaborate there. He played with saxophonist Don Byas, trumpeter Roy Eldridge, and pianist Wynton Kelly, and that was after he had made his way across the country from his hometown of Tulsa, Oklahoma (B. Dahl). In a 2005 interview he described the intensity of jazz production in postwar New York to me: ". . . the Fats Wallers and Charlie Parkers. They had more musicians working in one block than any other city. New York was the messiah for jazz."

But Hal Singer migrated to Paris in 1965—despite his success, forthcoming job opportunities, and potential for collaboration with so many great jazz musicians working in New York. Having settled in Chatou, a western suburb of Paris, he had resided in Paris for nearly fifty years by the time of his 2014 concert. Marrying a French woman, one of his fans in those early days of playing at clubs like Les Trois Maillets (The three mallets), he raised a family with two girls (Felin). His daughter Stéphanie recognized the sacrifices he had made and his desire for them to have a better life: "In any case, he lived in the United States at a time when it wasn't good to be black; that affected him enormously, I think. And compared to his education, it was like a tiny bit of revenge: 'I couldn't do it, but my girls, they will do it'" (Felin).[2] Singer's perspective was not so different from many a parent's, but he migrated across the ocean to remake his life for himself.

His songs did not hit the pop charts much after his migration, but he kept jazz alive in France—one mentee, band, and audience at a time. He mentored French kids on the bandstand and veterans who became well-known musicians in France, like Steve Potts. On that day in 2014 Steve Potts and The All Stars accompanied Singer. Potts organized this birthday concert, just as he had five years before in celebration of Singer's ninetieth birthday. Potts reminded the audience of the impact of Hal Singer and so many African American jazz musicians who had played in France, the United States, and beyond. For me Singer's vamp that kept going and going and his still urgent vibrato after more than seventy-five years of performing symbolized the enduring journey of jazz and African American jazz musicians in the United States and France.

Hal Singer represented a "critical mass" of African American artists that constituted a recurring artistic presence in Paris from the early 1900s until

the present day (Stovall, *Paris Noir* xv). Termed *Paris Noir* (Black Paris), the groups of African Americans residing in Paris were small but influential. Their presence in Paris demonstrated the French desire for African American cultural expression and forged continued connections between their experiences in Paris and the music, literature, art, and politics growing out of U.S. metropolitan hubs like New York City and Chicago. The community of African American artists in the 1920s may be the most well-known. Performers such as Josephine Baker resided in Paris then and created the community that William Shack calls "Harlem in Montmartre" (Shack 10). The group of African American jazz musicians who migrated to Paris after World War II added to this history of Parisian migration. By 1964, more than fifteen hundred African American artists (including other prominent artists like writer Richard Wright and artist/writer Barbara Chase-Riboud) had migrated to Paris (Fabre, "Cultural " 45).

In *Jazz Diasporas* the postwar migrations of vocalist Inez Cavanaugh, saxophonist Sidney Bechet, drummer Kenny Clarke, and the community of artists with whom they collaborated take center stage. This book explores reasons for the migration of African American jazz musicians, strategies they used to thrive in Paris yet maintain relations with the United States, their mentorship of and collaboration with white French musicians, and their transformations in personal identity that paralleled the music's own evolving racial and national identity. In this period jazz helped forward illusions of Paris as color-blind, and some African American musicians willfully but not blindly made use of jazz to achieve success in Paris. Some musicians and jazzophiles subtly used jazz as a tool to critique racialized oppression prevalent in the United States and blur racial boundaries in France.

The 1999 documentary film *Hal Singer: Keep the Music Going*, compared Singer's life in the United States and France. Singer identified differing perceptions and treatment of African Americans as a deciding factor for staying in France:

> I made a good living in America, and I didn't, I wasn't never happy with the system. But when I came here I found that, my life was a little more relaxed. I was given more respect. I found people that had read about this music, knew the history of it, liked it very much. In America, I had not had people that really knew the history of this music and neither were giving the musicians the respect. . . . This is some time the thing that you don't always get being a black musician in America, is respect. (Felin)

Singer's comments reaffirm an oft-asserted narrative that privileges Paris as a place that is more accepting of racialized difference. As we will see, this

narrative of Paris as a haven for African Americans builds on exoticized perceptions of and desire for African art, a nostalgic passing down of stories from those who had once lived in Paris, and experiences of African American soldiers stationed in France in World War I and World War II.

The testimonies from musicians touring Europe also portrayed Paris as offering more creative freedom and respect for jazz. Hal Singer described this mystique of European appreciation to me: "A lot of people here read books and knew the life of the people. . . . European fans could recite to you all the records a person had made." In his opinion European fans showed not only appreciation but also intellectual awareness of jazz.[3] The attention French jazz fans paid to his music demonstrated the respect he believed was lacking in the United States. In France Singer felt respected and valued for the contribution he could make to French culture.

Many African American jazz musicians shared Singer's perspective of Paris, but some musicians' feelings of welcome and respect were challenged in the period from 1945 to 1963. Two influential veterans of this period, Sidney Bechet (the French-adopted king of jazz) and writer Richard Wright (the head of the *Paris Noir* community), died in 1959 and 1960 respectively. Mainstream jazz, in many countries, was on its way out—giving way to rock 'n' roll and the newer free jazz genre ushered in by saxophonist Ornette Coleman in 1960. Civil rights tensions exploded in the United States, and the reverberations were felt in France, prompting supportive protests and dialogue, particularly in 1968. Still, the French had their own complexities of race and ethnicity to address. The French republic's universal policy did not recognize difference but purported to include all. A mid-century influx of citizens from French overseas departments in the Caribbean and former African and Asian colonies put this policy to the test.

In response some African Americans returned home, despairing over racial prejudice they saw against French of African descent or motivated by a responsibility to join civil rights protests at home. A steady stream of African Americans flowed through Paris despite it all. The Paris they entered was a much more racially mixed, tense, and threatened city. The opportunities for jazz, and for African American jazz musicians in particular, prevailed for a time in France. By the time Hal Singer migrated in 1965, the perception and the experiences of African American jazz musicians in Paris had begun to take a big turn. Still, traces and hauntings of those post–World War II days remained.

Kenny Clarke had settled down in Paris in 1956 and remained there until his death in 1985. Clarke was one of the key African American jazz veterans who had become too "local" (Zwerin, "Jazz in Europe" 541). He

began to tour more outside of France, while French jazz bands increased their performance opportunities, exposure, and confidence in their own land. In fact, I first interviewed Hal Singer to learn more about Kenny Clarke's life and musical production in Paris. Singer and Clarke shared similar reasons for staying, and both fully assimilated into France, raising their families there and never returning to live in the United States.

Listening to Hal Singer in this modern moment, I could hear the blood memories of civil rights injustice and strife he had left behind in the 1960s. While "Freddy Freeloader" ushered in waves of nostalgia for a bygone, jazz-rich era of production in New York, Singer's concluding song spoke of the segregated world of prejudice he'd lived through in the United States. He sat down, held his horn close, and picked up the microphone with his other hand. "Georgia," he spoke-sang out. Even at ninety-five years old, the standard's lyrics came quickly to him. "Georgia on My Mind" was written by Stuart Gorrell (lyrics) and Hoagy Carmichael (music) in 1930, but the interpretation by Ray Charles on his 1960 album *The Genius Hits the Road* is the most popular version. Though it is now the state song of Georgia, "Georgia on My Mind" stood for more than fifteen years as a symbol of Charles's refusal to perform for a white, segregated audience in 1961 Augusta, Georgia (Charles and Ritz 164–65). The state would not apologize to Charles until 1979, when it invited him to perform in honor of naming "Georgia on My Mind" the state song.

I could almost imagine Singer's gravelly yet rich voicings of "Georgia" tracing along grooves and pits of a bumpy journey to equal rights in the mid-twentieth-century United States. He performed jazz to express that condition of life. In *Hal Singer: Keep the Music Going*, he said: "But all of the hardship, but all of the lack of respect that were received, we still kept a positive attitude. We played good and we enjoyed life. And I think that's something that people couldn't understand, you know—how we could get on the bandstand and still make beautiful music" (Felin). As Singer walked off the stage, I recognized jazz as his tool to survive that very existence and to create new opportunities.

"Jazz diasporas" offer just such possibilities. I have conceived this phrase to describe geographically, historically situated cultural spaces that support and spur flexibility, negotiation, and shifting of racial and national identities for migrating African American jazz musicians and communities of jazzophiles with whom they collaborate. There are two types of jazz diasporas: in one sense jazz diasporas involve those who thrive and shape individual identity through musical collaboration outside of their homeland. In the second type of jazz diaspora the music travels and through its interactions alters

who performs, represents, and claims the music. I explore both types here. The case studies of Sidney Bechet, with his negotiation of subjectivities as a survival strategy, and Inez Cavanaugh, in her role of nurturing local and global jazz communities, exemplify the first perspective. The relationships between French sidemen like Claude Luter and René Urtreger with African American musicians and my analysis of Kenny Clarke as a connector between perceptions of jazz as "black" and "universal" music illustrate the second type. Chapter 4 represents both types as it puts in dialogue French and African American literature as sites of articulation of African American identity, protest, and liberation through the marriage of music and word.

WHY "JAZZ DIASPORA"? JAZZ AND JAZZ PEOPLE AS TRANSNATIONAL AND HYBRID

Jazz Diasporas commences with two epigraphs that encapsulate the two types of jazz diaspora. Presenting two epigraphs hints at the equal weight and coexistence of both points in the structure, research, and writing of this book. In the first, Albert Murray portrays "black music" as representative of American life and culture and of African American culture within it. He describes African American people as inherently linked to the music. Murray's link claims jazz as black and American music.

With *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* Amiri Baraka, formerly known as Leroi Jones, extended and distinguished this claim on "black music."[4] Fueled by black art and nascent Black Nationalist motivations, Baraka cautioned against the white appropriation of music originated by African Americans and promoted the contributions African Americans have made to U.S. culture. He described the migration of African Americans from south to north, from countryside to urban center, and from underground to mainstream culture. Baraka detailed how the music grew out of struggle, migration, and assimilation. What he ignored, however, was the signal contribution to "black music" by nonblacks and non-Americans.

This is where I intervene. I conceive jazz people as influenced by the transnational and interracial trafficking of music first originated and primarily developed by African Americans. *Jazz Diasporas* extends Amiri Baraka's community of blues people to a jazz people who thrive on cultural interrelation just like jazz's melding of African, Caribbean, and European elements. I do focus primarily on African Americans in this book and discuss jazz as "black music." To me jazz will always be connected to people of African descent and the American land on which it was created. But my position is also founded on an expanded notion of black, American, and jazz cultures.

Jazz is both black and global music. *Jazz Diasporas* demonstrates how this refashioning of jazz's identity (as French and universal) and musicians' identities (as potentially global citizens, transnational negotiators, and exiled rather than American-identified and -situated people) commences and takes shape after World War II. In this way *Jazz Diasporas* continues the work of Paul Gilroy and others who have followed him. The book considers music of the "black Atlantic" as not racially essentialized and pure but rather hybrid and evolving (*The Black Atlantic* 80, 101). Alongside this attention to African American jazz musicians as case studies, *Jazz Diasporas* presents collaborations and relationships forged with non-African Americans; it analyzes how these bonds affected the identities of African Americans and jazz.

In his essay "The Jazz Diaspora" Bruce Johnson tracks the globalization of jazz (33). His essay provides one of the rare uses of the term *jazz diaspora*. By exploring the evolutions and new forms created out of jazz's travels, Johnson's work illustrates the recent turn toward investigations of jazz outside the United States in Anglophone jazz scholarship. Books like Jeffrey Jackson's *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris*, Colin Nettelbeck's *Dancing with DeBeauvoir: Jazz and the French*, Jeremy Lane's *Jazz and Machine-Age Imperialism: Music, "Race" and Intellectuals in France*, and Tom Perchard's *After Django: Making Jazz in Postwar France* continue to educate the Anglophone jazz public on the participation in and representation of jazz by French musicians and jazzophiles. My focus on jazz diasporas, with emphasis on African Americans and their interracial and international interactions, differs from (but is very much in conversation with) these French jazz texts.

Jazz Diasporas also rests on the premise that jazz and jazz people are inherently transnational. The second epigraph of the book hints at this overarching claim. Michelle Wright analyzes the work of the African American writer James Baldwin, who spent decades living in and in-between France and the United States. Wright argues that James Baldwin and African Americans at large were always already transnational. Her analysis revolutionized my ideas about African American identity. Certainly the journey through the Middle Passage resonated in blood memories, folklore, and African American cultural expressions. But a long line of key African American intellectuals and artists had also migrated to Europe, from writer William Wells Brown in England to activist and sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois in Germany. The impact of their migratory experiences was felt back in the United States. Their travels offered education, artistic experience, and a sense of global consciousness that contributed to African American culture and society.

In the transatlantic journeys of African Americans Paris has been a recurring hot spot. It has served as an intellectual meeting place in which French leaders, writers, and artists of African descent would come and dialogue. As Brent Hayes Edwards has discussed in *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, Paris was a site at which campaigns, propaganda, and literary initiatives were built to forward black solidarity. Meetings for proponents of Pan-Africanism in the early twentieth century, African literary journals positing "negritude" in the interwar period, and the International Congress for Black Writers and Artists in 1956—Paris has housed them all. Throughout history Paris remained a site of debate, formation, and articulation of transnational black consciousness.

Yet Paris did not stand alone; rather, it was in dialogue with other key sites of black solidarity. Edwards's consideration of Paris as a unique site of "boundary crossing, conversations, and collaborations" that remains in dialogue with its American counterparts informs my work (*Practice* 4). For jazz in Paris is a site through which cultures and powers are exchanged, performed, and articulated. James Baldwin put it well when he described Paris as a space where he came to reflect on, grapple with, and understand his African American identity better; his reflection and writing led to greater awareness of the possibilities of ethnic identity and the recognition of new limitations in this non-American setting (*Nobody* 137–42). Jazz diasporas create space for just this type of negotiation and questioning of identities. They exemplify Paul Gilroy's notion of the African diaspora: "Diaspora accentuates becoming rather than being and identity conceived diasporically, along these lines, resists reification" ("'. . . To Be Real'" 24). In the nonstatic, growing and "becoming" spaces of a jazz diaspora the identities of jazz musicians, jazzophiles, and jazz itself are always in process while also being tied to national and racial roots. Jazz diasporas support these personal and artistic, collective and individual performances of musical identity. Post–World War II Paris is one of the historically and geographically situated jazz diasporas in which these negotiations of identity proliferated.

JAZZ-AGE SAFE HAVEN

A wealth of scholarship exists on jazz in France during this interwar period. Only recently have scholars begun to showcase the period after World War II. *Jazz Diasporas* contributes to the latter period but also highlights themes, perceptions, and uses of jazz prevalent since the music first traveled abroad. The book also overlaps audiences and fields as it shows jazz in a range of

ways, as musical practice, political statement, source of propaganda, tool for community building, site of identity negotiation, and subject of this intellectual project.

Jazz first shocked Paris in 1918. Louis Mitchell and his Jazz Kings played several concerts in Paris to astonished and booing responses, but the all–African American band quickly settled into playing regularly in Parisian clubs such as Casino de Paris (Stovall, *Paris* 37; Shack 24, 77). Concurrently, James Reese Europe led the 369th Infantry Regiment,[5] a segregated African American military band, to tour through France; the French couldn't imagine how to replicate the sounds and even thought the instruments must be engineered differently (Badger 194). In the 1920s, jazz experienced a golden age, primarily in Montmartre, a northeastern quartier in Paris. This development firmly established Montmartre as a trendy jazz hot spot of the era. It seemed that everyone was there. Ada "Bricktop" Smith opened her own eponymous club, where she, the dancer and singer Josephine Baker, and singer Alberta Hunter helped draw in crowds with their spectacular shows (Moody 18–21). Bricktop's club shared the limelight with Le Grand Duc's, where the former pilot and boxer Eugene Bullard was manager. In 1925 Josephine Baker danced in *La revue nègre* (The Black Revue), and she was accompanied by a jazz orchestra that included Sidney Bechet (Shack 35–36).

Baker's success, as well as the period of *l'art nègre* (black art), exemplified French negrophilia (an exoticizing and objectifying desire for African and African-diasporic culture). In *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s*, Petrine Archer-Straw argues that negrophilia advanced the marketing of products and supported resistance against modernity (35–53). In the 1920s and 1930s many art collectors and various artists from Europe and the United States foregrounded a primitivist ideology that portrayed Africans and African Americans as having an exotic and childlike nature. Archer-Straw recounts how this primitivist mentality seeped through various artistic forms, such as the paintings of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, the fabric of Sonia Delaunay, and the art collection of Paul Guillaume. Moreover, artist Guillaume Apollinaire and collector Nancy Cunard sought representations of African bodies, most notably masks (53). They wore these masks to abandon what they considered a staid and complicated Western tradition. African art was a means to easier expression and certain freedoms unavailable elsewhere. Sculptor George Braques relayed that the African masks literally "opened a new horizon" for him and allowed him to "contact more instinctive things" (53).

The French consumption of *l'art nègre* and Baker was motivated by a desire for an exotic "other." Brett Berliner, author of *Ambivalent Desire:*

The Exotic Black Other in Jazz-Age France, defines this term to mean foreign, serving fantasies and acting as a site of escape or fulfillment of cultural dearth; he also links the exotic to the primitive, the savage, and the hypersexual (4–7). Among Baker's most memorable performances was the *danse sauvage* (savage dance) in the *Folies bergère* production of "Un vent de folie" (A wave of madness). Baker wore a skirt of bananas and danced like an animal from the jungle (Martin 313). In this performance French fans perceived her as an exotic figure, noticing her large butt and wild contortions (Dayal 38).

African American jazz musicians were especially prized owing to the French history of negrophilia. In *Le tumulte noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris, 1900–1930,* Jody Blake elaborates on what specifically about jazz performance seduced the French public: "Jazz-age entertainment carried the influence of *art nègre* beyond avant-garde galleries. . . . Indeed, the factors that drew the French to popular music halls and nightclubs—their desire for new modes of self-expression and social interaction and their urge to escape from and exult in the pressures and possibilities of the modern world—offer uniquely valuable clues" (8). Blake's statement—like Berliner's—explains one role of jazz and African art in France, as a means for escape. Jazz, especially with its danceable beats, allowed listeners to distance themselves from the stresses, fears, and challenges of modern European life. Jeremy Lane discusses how white French intellectuals, artists, and performance critics perceived jazz as offering a primitive alternative to the modern world. In *Jazz and Machine-Age Imperialism* Lane puts poet and politician Léopold Senghor (who would become the first president of Senegal in 1960) in dialogue with Hugues Panassié, the renowned jazz critic and president of Hot Club of France. Lane argues that, in contrast to other French writers of African descent, Senghor's views of jazz absorbed Panassié's purist, primitivist perception of the music and drew on it to support his own connotations of negritude; for Senghor jazz was a tool for racial solidarity that created divisions between the modern, rational West and the primitive, authentic Africa (122). Lane adds that "for Senghor, as for Panassié, jazz's ability to play this role of antidote to the machine age rested on certain ethnocentric and primitivist assumptions rooted in the ideology and practice of French imperialism" (124).

In *Making Jazz French* Jeffrey Jackson departs from scholarship on jazz in France that primarily emphasizes themes of exoticization, primitivism, and appropriation. Jackson positions jazz not as solely an American export but also as a French import that the French made their own. His book gives credibility to white French jazz production, countering a norm that had

portrayed the French as imitators of Americans. He points to the music's assimilation into the very fabric of French culture and identifies several artists that represent a Frenchification of jazz. Describing the process of remaking, Jackson elaborates on the transition from French artists who did not "believe that they could play nearly as well as Americans" to a shift in the 1930s, when musicians such as Andre Ekyan, Stephane Mougin, and Alix Combelle became stars (Jackson 103, 127). Jackson adds that these musicians "had thoroughly imbibed its rhythms in the dance halls and from records," after years of studying American jazz production (127–28).

Though Jackson's argument is intriguing, I do not fully agree. Present-day France has, indeed, incorporated jazz so much into its culture that the festivals, radio programs, and concerts do not seem strange to the French citizen. Yet during the interwar period French critics, fans, and musicians still compared American and French jazz culture, with French jazz production often coming out on bottom. The fact that French artists rarely considered themselves the equals of African American musicians challenges the idea that the French made jazz their own. The strength of *Making Jazz French* is that it reveals an assumption that only American, and primarily African American, jazz musicians are worthy of scholastic attention. Since the publication of *Making Jazz French* in 2003, a wealth of scholars have followed Jackson's lead. They have plunged into studies of French musicianship, as well as French public reception and jazz criticism.

Media-studies scholar Matthew Jordan addresses the role that jazz played in serving French modernity. Jordan traces through jazz criticism and literature ways that jazz shifted from being a foreign threat to being an acceptable part of French culture. In *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity* Jordan argues that "characteristics or qualities initially heard and seen in jazz as markers of otherness against which Frenchness gained coherence went through a historical process of transvaluation, so that those traits once seen and heard as un-French came to be recognized as internal markers or normal, commonsense conceptions of an emerging modern sense of Frenchness" (3). Not until after World War II was there more recognizable assimilation and transculturation of jazz into French culture. After the war, enjoying jazz and even seeing it as part of (rather than foreign to) French culture became the norm (3). Jordan pushes the time line forward a bit from Jackson, who argues that jazz became French in the interwar period. The war was particularly important for French intellectuals like Jean-Paul Sartre, in his disavowal of purists like Hugues Panassié, who would claim that modernist styles like bebop were not actually jazz; Sartre identified Panassié's staunch clinging to New Orleans–style jazz as representative of the fanaticism and realism that thrived during World

War II and from which they had thankfully been liberated (Jordan 236). Sartre's distinction places jazz, in all its evolutions, as representative of France's fight for freedom.

World War II and the postwar period witnessed important events in the acculturation of jazz in France. Whereas Jordan investigates French jazz and cultural criticism as representative agents of change in societal discourse, I hone in on African American jazz musicians' experiences, perspectives, and collaborations to explore changes in the perception and uses of jazz in the postwar era—specifically in the ways jazz performs ideologies of race and nation. One of the most influential and still pervasive ideologies that jazz helped support was the narrative that Paris was a color-blind haven, in which African Americans would be free (or freer than in the United States) from racial prejudice. This narrative has a long genealogy, extending as far back as the first dissemination of jazz abroad.

After World War I, African American soldiers returned to the United States regaling their families with stories of France. These stories were passed down from generation to generation and created an illusion that was absorbed into African American folklore. They were stories of beauty, freedom, and equality. Artists and musicians also shared stories about Paris with friends and family back home. Films like *Paris Blues* furthered this narrative by depicting black musicians as receiving respect and honor as they worked alongside white musicians in Paris. The American-produced film brought African American performers together while also maintaining onscreen the illusion of Paris as a color-blind place for African American musicians. *Paris Blues* also unwittingly foregrounded issues such as racial differences in France, the codependence of France on the United States, and the relationship of jazz musicians to racial politics. The folklore of Paris as color-blind contributed to a broadening perception of racial open-mindedness and liberty in France. But it was an illusion.

COLD WAR JAZZ DIASPORAS

Contemporary scholarship on jazz in France after World War II discounts and demystifies several commonly held myths. In *Paris Blues: African American Music and French Popular Culture, 1920–1960* musicologist Andy Fry works to disprove the myth that the French were more accepting and knowledgeable about jazz than Americans, who often had the reputation of not fully appreciating their native art form. Investigating multiple works of Ernest Ansermet, the Swiss composer credited with writing the first jazz review and with recognizing the brilliance of Sidney Bechet as

early as 1919, Fry critiques the privileging of Ansermet as a supporter of jazz and the nostalgic remembering in French jazz history that performs foreknowledge of Bechet's stardom (23, 220–40).

French jazz historians Gérard Régnier and Ludovic Tournès discount another commonly held myth—that jazz was forced out of Europe during World War II. The Nazis forwarded an antijazz regime, positioning it as a "degenerative" music that was produced by an inferior race and threatened Aryan purity (Archer-Straw 114; Tournès 60). They were ultravigilant and tried to stomp out what they perceived as the negative influence of jazz. A 1946 report in *Down Beat* magazine translated a particularly traumatizing moment that Hot Club of France cofounder and *Jazz Hot* magazine founder Charles Delaunay shared: "In October 1943, British soldiers and Hot Club of France personnel, such as Delaunay himself, were arrested and held at Fresnes Prison. Delaunay was questioned for five hours and apparently one of the secretaries was sent to an extermination camp and murdered" (J. Jackson, *Making* 193).[6]

Despite scholarship that claims that live jazz performance was banned under the occupation, Ludovic Tournès notes that it was only in the zones annexed by the Reich—for example, L'Alsace and Lorraine—that jazz was actually banned (60). In fact jazz enjoyed a golden age during the war; even though the Hot Club of France temporarily closed in late 1943, before that time it hosted radio shows out of its bases in Paris and Toulouse (60).

Gérard Régnier augments Tournès's research, demonstrating that it was jazz performed and recorded by Americans that most threatened the Nazis. He discusses ways the French sidestepped the suppression of jazz during the occupation. In some cases the Nazis tweaked their interpretation of the law to bypass exceptional jazz musicians whom they admired, like the Belgian-born French guitarist Django Reinhardt (Régnier 180–81).[7] French fans listened to jazz on radio stations, and there were some festivals organized by the Hot Club, but jazz organizers had to take extra steps to disguise the Americanness of the music and promote French stars and songs instead. American jazz standards were changed to French as they were submitted for approval and authorization from representatives of the Ministry of Culture: "Honeysuckle Rose" was changed to "Rose de miel," and "Tiger Rag" became "La rage du buggle" (Régnier 145). French concert organizers such as Frank Ténot in Bordeaux and Jacques Souplet in Rennes submitted programs before each concert, and they withheld American song names or Jewish artists until approval was confirmed (144).

After years of surreptitious record listening and concertgoing, the French were enthusiastic to catch up with recordings they'd missed out on

during the war and the return of touring American musicians—most of whom had escaped Paris in time.[8] In 1946 the Don Redman orchestra, which included Inez Cavanaugh, was the first American big band to tour in Paris after the war. The following years were monumental in the history of jazz in France. In 1947 the Hot Club of France split in two, one side advocating New Orleans–style jazz and the other promoting bebop. Hugues Panassié would espouse the purist former position, and Charles Delaunay would expand attention to bebop, particularly with his record label, *Vogue.* In 1948 Louis Armstrong and his band performed at the first international jazz festival after the war, in Nice. In the same year Dizzy Gillespie toured in Nice and Paris with a seventeen-piece big band that included Kenny Clarke and pianist John Lewis among others. The concerts would change the lives of several young French musicians, inspiring them and cementing their plans to play jazz. In 1949 the Paris International Jazz Festival hosted performers from seven countries and brought mega stars from Charlie Parker to Sidney Bechet.

After the festivals, gigs were plentiful. Touring jazz musicians reported more opportunity and pay at concerts abroad. The enthusiasm for jazz was so great that, in several cases, fans protested sellouts and pushed their way in (Ehrlich 94). The Blue Note, Club Saint-Germain, and Vieux Colombier in the Latin Quarter and Saint-Germain-des-Prés headlined visiting stars like Miles Davis and linked young French stars with African American veterans. Pairings included New Orleans–style veteran Sidney Bechet with French clarinetist Claude Luter and bebop-style cofounder Kenny Clarke with French pianist René Urtreger. In contrast to the jazz age, at midcentury the jazz scene moved south of the Seine to the Latin Quarter and Saint-Germain-des-Prés. But just like the interwar period, the jazz scene was rowdy, joyful, interracial, international, and diverse, with intellectuals, artists, and musicians. African Americans again flocked to Paris, and many stayed for a time. Whether prompted by the need to escape racial inequality in the United States, drawn by possibilities of interracial interactions and collaborations, or seduced by more job opportunities in France, the migration of African Americans increased after World War II.

But as we will see, the idea that Paris was a safe haven for these musicians was an illusion. Chapter 3 responds to and deconstructs multiple reasons for migration and strategies for assimilation in Paris. The narrative of Paris as a color-blind haven was and continues to be the most persistent reason. Several factors contributed to this illusion. The narrative persisted because lived experience did not disprove it, and word of mouth did not discount it.

Some African Americans, such as Inez Cavanaugh and Richard Wright, believed there was more equality in Paris. Others, like Sidney Bechet, resonated with the idyllic vision of Paris but only paid it lip service. Still others kept mum to protect their right to live in France. Tyler Stovall, author of *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light*, explains: "Black expatriates were acutely aware of their status as guests of the French. Throughout the twentieth century, the French government had welcomed foreign political exiles on the implicit assumption that they abstain from involvement in French politics" (254). In this cold war period, when a collection of French literati and politicians were protesting the spread of American culture in France, African Americans had enjoyed distinction from anti-Americanism. But by making themselves more present, by pointing out the hypocrisy of the French, they could easily lose that privilege.

Cold war competition between France and the United States further fueled the narrative of Paris as respecting and having greater appreciation for jazz and African American jazz musicians, in particular. As a result of the devastating effects of World War II on the French economy, France's chance for greater power, independence, and modernization hinged on financial aid from the United States (Costigliola 51–54). While the United States loaned $650 million of the $3 billion France requested, the French agreed to encourage free trade in its markets and stand behind the plans of the United States to rebuild Germany (Stovall, *France* 21–22). In this agreement the French were forced to resume importation of U.S. films despite attempts to cut the influence of U.S. imports. They perceived American films as a threat to "'French genius,' cultural independence, and world prestige" (Costigliola 55). Not so with jazz, however. The French government and public might have participated in commercial activities and supported the United States, but French jazz critics and intellectuals emphasized their long-held knowledge of jazz in distinct contrast to what it considered ignorance from the United States.

In this postwar era the U.S. media still marginalized jazz music, particularly African American jazz musicians. In his 1948 history of jazz Sidney Finkelstein detailed how the music had been maligned: "It is called 'primitive,' 'barbaric.' The fact that it was produced mainly by the Negro people of America has been held against it. The fact that it found a home sometimes in brothels or speakeasies, that in its atmosphere and communication it reflects the miserable conditions of life forced upon the Negro people, has also been held against it" (15). *Primitive* connoted interesting, different, and desirable for the French, but in the United States it was base and marginalized. Even though the 1920s and 1930s had introduced swing, and

American audiences embraced jazz musicians such as Benny Goodman and Paul Whiteman, it took some time for integrated bands to find acceptance. Even then, the "straight" music that white audiences favored in concert halls was quite different from the "hot" jazz played in juke joints, primarily for African American patrons (Stearns 124; J. Jackson, *Making* 154–57).

In contrast, French critics had a history of privileging African American musicians over their white American counterparts. In his 1942 revised edition of *The Real Jazz* Hugues Panassié wrote, "I did not realize until some years after the publication of my first book that, from the point of view of jazz, most white musicians were inferior to black musicians" (vii–viii).[9] Moreover, the French scoffed at American practices such as the unequal treatment of African Americans and actually used jazz to protest America, seeing themselves as "confreres" (brothers) of jazz musicians and African Americans (Vihlen 237–39; Lebovics 159). The support of jazz and African American jazz musicians gave French culture an advantage in cold war competition. Jazz critics played their part, throwing up French support of jazz in the face of the U.S. media and public. Jazz critic and musician Boris Vian proclaimed, "France had made more effort than any other country towards the diffusion and comprehension of black American jazz" (quoted in Willett 83).

Next, the acceptance of communism and the space that Paris played in hosting dialogue on different sociopolitical systems and frameworks drew African Americans like singer/actor Paul Robeson and Richard Wright. The censure and censorship of seemingly unpatriotic discourse was very rigid in this period of McCarthyism in the United States: Paul Robeson's passport was seized after the negative response to his activism against colonialism, but particularly after his speech at the Paris Peace Conference in 1949 was misquoted and seen as representative of African Americans' preference for communism (Von Eschen, *Race* 123). African American writer, activist, and sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois was also stripped of his right to travel and could not attend the First International Congress of Black Writers and Artists in 1956 Paris. For African American artists and intellectuals Paris proved a space for articulating dissent, strategizing, and collaborating on how to combat institutionalized injustices against people of African descent, not just in the United States but around the world.

But the illusion of Paris as a color-blind haven would also falter in these years after World War II. Rather than color-blind, France showed itself to be very race conscious after the war. The hypernationalist and color-conscious era of the 1950s and 1960s would complicate experiences of being African American in Paris and perceptions of jazz as a black and American music.

The settling down of key jazz veterans like Bechet in 1951 and Clarke in 1956 offered a foundation of jazz mentors for young French musicians and led to an increased white French jazz scene that began to compete more readily with American jazz musicians. Music journalist Mike Zwerin described the phenomenon as the "local musician"; when an American musician had been around and become familiar, gigs were offered less frequently—the French jazz industry and public seeking the fresher, touring, and therefore temporary musicians instead (Zwerin, "Jazz in Europe" 541). As a result African American jazz musicians were less often afforded a privileged status based on perceptions of exoticism that offered an alternative to French modernity. In the 1960s "local musicians" like Kenny Clarke began to travel more as gigs and wages diminished in Paris.

Though jazz still connoted the primitive, it and its musicians became tools in the cultural and political competition between the United States and France in the Cold War. The use of jazz as a political tool in cold war cultural battles prompted a shift in the perceptions of jazz or, more accurately, the discursive performance of it as a black and American music. In 1956 the State Department introduced the Goodwill Ambassador tours, showcasing famous African American athletes and musicians; initiating the jazz branch, Dizzy Gillespie visited Iran, Beirut, and Pakistan and attracted tremendous crowds in the process (Von Eschen, *Satchmo* 177). With these tours and other activities jazz served as a political tool for the American government, spreading an image of freedom and power to foreign lands (177). As the U.S. government drew on African American jazz musicians to represent democracy to foreign lands, it was accepting jazz and inherently African Americans as iconic of American culture.

While jazz had always been recognized as American music in its travels, it had primarily connoted African American culture. This move branded jazz nationally and not just racially. African American jazz musicians participating in the tours did resist this branding, however. Gillespie spoke out against the racism that continued in America, while Armstrong denied support for Eisenhower and refused to participate in the tours for several years (Von Eschen, *Satchmo* 178–80). But the majority of musicians worked with the government peaceably. Most relevant to the concept of a jazz diaspora is how musicians like Gillespie and Clarke began to collapse American national claims on the music and their personal identities. Gillespie once remarked that he did not want to be limited by only playing in the United States nor playing only American music, since the music, in his opinion, consisted of hybrid elements and had a global appeal (Porter 59). Similarly, Kenny Clarke adjusted his perspective in his time living and performing in

Europe. He began to support the mix of American and European musicians in his Clarke-Boland Big Band, and he suggested that their internationally produced music could compete with the best American music (Hennessey, "Clarke-Boland" 24). I foreground Clarke in chapter 5, exploring how he was an important channel through which perceptions of jazz altered from "black" music to "universal" music.

The word *universal* was particularly important in the mid-twentieth-century moment of widespread French decolonization, for it signified a policy in the French republic of universal humanity, in which all citizens were to be seen in terms of their common French experience rather than (or in addition to) their ethnic differences.[10] The universalist policy of the French was another reason for the breakdown of the illusion of Paris as a space of greater freedoms and racial equality. The editors of *Black France / France Noire*—Trica Keaton, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Tyler Stovall—explain the modern problem with French universalism:

> On the one hand, there is an evident constitutional and legal discourse of colorblindness in various spheres of French life whereby race has been rejected as a meaningful category, having been discredited as biology and rightly so. Thus, there are, in effect, no French "racial minorities," only French people; nor is there an officially recognized identity discourse as there is, for instance, in the United States or the United Kingdom, where one finds terms such as "Black Americans," "African Americans," and "Black British" to express such differentiation. On the other hand, the lived experience of race—more saliently, anti-blackness—belies the colorblind principle enshrined in the universalist-humanist thought upon which the Republic was forged. (2)

The French government's universalist approach was akin to the U.S. government's hypocrisy in advocating democracy with African American jazz spokespersons while punishing them for free speech abroad and resisting change to racist Jim Crow practices. For while the illusion of Paris as color-blind persisted, the French treatment of its own people of color proved oppressive and deadly in the litany of colonial battles for independence after World War II. The French imperial reach spanned from the Caribbean to Asia. The end of the war and reoccupation of Indochina (now Vietnam) prompted the Vietnamese to fight for independence in 1946, and it was not gained until 1954. The colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe became overseas departments with deputies representing them in the French National Assembly in 1946. Senegal and Mali gained independence in 1960. Poet and politician Léopold Senghor's sixteen-year stay in Paris as a student, soldier, and teacher would help him rise in the ranks and guide

Senegal's independence with the system of federalism he supported as its first president. In 1962 Algeria wrestled its independence from France, after battling since 1954 and enduring massive deaths. A gory massacre on October 17, 1961, would lead to deaths of Arabs in the streets of Paris and the Seine, demonstrating that violence and prejudice against people of African descent prevailed in France, too. During and after the war Algerian immigration increased. Estimated as 350,000 in 1962, the Algerian population would increase to 470,000 by 1968 (Hamilton, Simon, and Veniard).

In this postwar era of decolonization African Americans became part of a larger wave of immigrants in post–World War II France. Their foreignness had come to represent an ever-threatening migration and acculturation of the other. Covering the Algerian War had altered African American journalist William Gardner Smith's rose-colored perspective of Paris. During the Algerian War he saw the violence and prejudice against Arabs and described it in his 1963 fictional novel account, *The Stone Face.* James Baldwin had never worn rose-colored glasses in his estimation of Paris, but he too learned that one's experience of blackness in Paris depended on relation and ethnic difference. African Americans had a different relationship to the French than French colonists of African descent; he distinguished their needs as different from his own (*Nobody* 141; *No Name* 379). Film and African American cultural studies scholar Terri Francis connects the success of African Americans to this disparate treatment of African Americans and the French of African descent forwarded by universalism and colonialism. In her article on the significations of Josephine Baker, Francis writes:

> France's relationship to Africa and the conflict between its rhetorical humanism and active colonialism drove the phenomenon of black American success in Paris. African-American performers like Baker uniquely permitted the combination of (fantastical) references to ancient Africa and to modern black America—bypassing actual, contemporary Africa. This capacity for a number of readings made Baker and black American jazz compelling to Parisians throughout the twentieth century, but particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, the height of colonial wealth and expansion. True that the waves of immigration that have resulted in the cosmopolitan Paris of today are largely a postwar phenomenon, but France has always had their own *nègres* in a variety of forms and across a number of public and private spheres. (830)

Noting these distinctions, and not willing to support prejudice against other people of African descent, some African Americans were drawn back home. After staying a year in Paris, Maya Angelou had planned to settle there. But

she left when her Senegalese friends were discriminated against, while a blind eye was turned to her racial difference (Stovall, "Preface" 305; Angelou 185). The March on Washington led by Martin Luther King Jr. persuaded James Baldwin, who had fled racial prejudice in the United States, to rush back and join the nonviolent campaign for civil rights in 1963.

A good many African American artists also stayed in Paris. Josephine Baker would go on tour to support U.S. civil rights protests, but France had become her permanent home at that point. Such is the sentiment conveyed in her famed song "J'ai deux amours" (I have two loves).[11] Although many African American jazz musicians in Paris remained silent, they used their music to prompt integration through musical collaborations, articulate dissent through performance and interviews, and survive through evolving perceptions, expectations, and experiences of race and nation in the Cold War era.

COMPLEXITIES OF RACE, MUSIC, AND MIGRATION

Since I address different racial classifications in this book, a few notes on terminology may be helpful. I use the term *African American* instead of *black* to address the population of people descended from Africa and born in the United States. When I do use *black*, it is for the particular purpose of discussing the African-descended race in comparison to or in dialogue with American national identity within an African American experience. I also use the phrase *black music*, especially in chapter 5; I draw on this term because it signifies the racialized claims and power struggles that have taken place over the music. The perception of the word *black* or *noir* is different between African Americans and French of African descent; even mentioning the word has different significations and functions. Today, the use of the word *black* is strategic and draws on the resonance and impact of the American civil rights moment, since there was no such movement in France. It can also be politically problematic, assuming solidarity among people of different ethnic experiences (Mudimbe-Boyi 17).[12]

Literature on black culture in France speaks to multiple ethnic experiences, consisting of French from former African colonies and people of African descent in French overseas departments in the Caribbean. For this population I use the phrase *French of African descent*. In the midcentury period with which I am concerned, several terms were used to describe people of African descent. The most common terms for African Americans and French of African descent were *Negro* in English and *nègre* and *noir* in French. But even these terms were stratified owing to class. Gary Wilder reveals a distinction between black experiences undergone by Pan-Africanist intellectuals