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empire: jazz, race, and musical criticism in
mid-twentieth century Britain*

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“Imperial musicology” at the end of empire: jazz, race, and musical criticism in mid-twentieth century Britain

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ABSTRACT

Music, like every other aspect of the indigenous cultures encountered by British colonialists, was subjected to interpretations based on imperial racial hierarchies. Modes of understanding and analyzing music in colonial settings produced a kind of “imperial musicology” that went on to have a significant afterlife, not least by influencing musical criticism in Britain itself. After providing a historiographically-rooted overview of imperial musicology, this essay explores the parallels between it and elements of British jazz criticism in the last decades of Empire. By focusing specifically on the reception of a style with Black American origins, I show how writing on music in mid-twentieth century Britain could be shaped by colonial frameworks, making music a vehicle of racialization, despite its potential liberationist dimensions. The article thus offers a new assessment of the relationship between music and empire, enabling further research that explores these connections in additional depth.

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The lead essay of the 29 November 1957 edition of the *Times Literary Supplement* (*TLS*) focused on what was then an unusual subject for such a prestigious publication: jazz music. The *TLS*'s opening pages generally foregrounded literature or biography, analyses of major historical or contemporary events, or philosophical musings on religion, politics, or high art. For a form of popular music to take center stage was unheard of, a fact underlined by the essay's depiction of jazz as having “made its way in the world from the bottom upwards” and as maintaining a “remoteness from the orthodox world of culture and scholarship.”¹ This sense of remoteness had been apparent in the pages of the *TLS* before. One short essay on jazz from a February 1956 edition of the paper, for example, had chided fans of the style for discussing it as if it were “worthy of the higher learning,” distinguishing between moments in the genre's history as if they were anything more than “passing fashions.”² It speaks volumes about jazz's increased acceptance that, eighteen months later, the *TLS* was willing to devote its front page to the genre – but the fact that the music was edging its way into the cultural and intellectual establishment only tells us so much about what jazz *meant* in mid-twentieth century Britain.

The aforementioned cover essay certainly did not present jazz as British in any sense. In fact, the dominant theme was the genre's otherness. It was clearly defined as Black, the product of American “Negro city ghettos,” formulated first by “the poorest and least respected of a poor and unrespected people.”³ No less importantly, however, the essay also depicted the jazz audience as largely comprised of young white “Outsiders,” who not only appreciated the music but historicized it, analyzed it, and elevated it “to cultural respectability.” They even, in the case of traditional New Orleans-style jazz, “took over playing [the] music in view of the limited supply of middle-aged Louisiana negroes who played it naturally.” For all that, the essay did briefly acknowledge some of the problematic elements in play here – “a white public [...] created an image of ‘true jazz’ out of its desires and imposed on it the facts” – it also presented this element of jazz's ascent as a largely natural state of affairs. The agency afforded to Black musicians was relatively minimal, beyond crediting jazz's move towards the avant-garde to a “desire to beat the whites not only

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by playing a different game, but at their own game.” Nowhere in the piece were Black jazz musicians, critics, or fans assigned the power of defining the music for themselves. Jazz was instead presented as something that needed to be decoded, demystified, and intellectualized by white listeners.⁴

This essay typifies wider tendencies in the landscape of mid-century musical criticism in Britain thanks to its quasi-ethnographic presentation of jazz’s history and evolution, written from the vantage point of implicitly white expertise (in this case that of historian and spare time jazz critic Eric Hobsbawm, uncredited in print as per *TLS* policy at the time).⁵ The essay also betrays a particular vision of jazz’s history and relationship with the racial politics of the United States, a theme that was predictably commonplace throughout the genre’s reception in Britain. Jazz critics often held relatively progressive views on questions of race and empire, but – as further examples will make clear – their perspectives on music still reflected the racialized, colonial world they inhabited. More generally speaking, from the time of its first arrival in Britain, understandings of jazz were shaped by ideas about race drawn from other cultural sources. This included other American cultural sources, such as the minstrel show, that were imbued with racism and white supremacy.⁶ No less importantly, however, by the early decades of the twentieth century, a major imperial dimension was already in play, not least because – as an imperial nation – Britain (particularly, but not exclusively, London) was already home to plenty of Black musicians, predominantly from the Caribbean or West Africa.⁷ In this context, as George McKay has observed, negative reactions to jazz were frequently “articulated as a threat within the framework of the imperial experience.”⁸ A significant dimension of jazz’s initial reception in Britain thus “had less to do with America *per se* than with continuing white anxieties about the blackness of empire, and how to control it.”⁹

In the United States too, there was an imperial dimension to the rise of jazz. Fiona Ngô’s work on the racialized and sexualized geographies of jazz-age New York has highlighted how the “imperial logic” of primitivism enabled the simultaneous idealization and denigration of racialized others. By focusing on interwar Harlem, and its globalized production and reproduction as a modernist center that “drew heavily on European appropriations (and inventions of) African aesthetics,” Ngô demonstrates how jazz culture was simultaneously structured *by* and an agent *of* imperial formations of race.¹⁰ Of course, jazz (like many other racialized musical forms in the twentieth century) also had liberationist dimensions that travelled over oceans and thus stretched across the space now widely conceptualized, following Paul Gilroy, as the Black Atlantic.¹¹ Moreover, as Michael Denning has shown, the arrival of recorded sound would allow popular music to become the global soundtrack to decolonization.¹² The flipside to this important progressive narrative, however, is that imperial ways of thinking nonetheless influenced how popular music was constructed and understood.¹³ Recognizing this requires devoting new energy to exploring and historicizing the presence of imperial characteristics in music’s production, distribution, and reception.

This essay explores and assesses these underacknowledged connections by focusing on reception, and specifically by discussing music criticism in mid-twentieth century Britain. Focusing on jazz (and styles that were widely seen as related, such as blues and spirituals), it argues that British writing on popular music in this period was shaped by forms of analysis derived from imperial contexts. I assess this first by providing a historiographical commentary, drawing together examples from (the still relatively slim) body of work on music and the British Empire to outline some commonplace features of what I have chosen to call “imperial musicology”: the interpretation of indigenous musical cultures from the Empire within the broader context of imperial knowledge-making. I then go on to highlight continuities between this imperial musicology and mid-century British jazz criticism (very much outside the realm of formal musicology). I focus particularly on full-length books but also use contributions to music newspapers, journals, and broadcasts. In drawing this comparison, I aim less to make a definitive statement than to demonstrate the need for further in-depth interrogations of the relationship between popular musics and the post/colonial contexts in which they emerged, and in which racialized difference was firmly embedded. In my conclusion, I thus point to some possible directions for future analysis of these themes.

Imperial musicology from colony to metropole

It is now widely accepted that imperialisms come with their own politics of knowledge and expertise, not least in the British case. In fact, for Thomas Richards, “the British Empire was more productive of knowledge than any previous empire” and it was largely through “control of knowledge” that British imperialism was

constituted.¹⁴ Historiographical concern with the politics of imperial knowledge (in its making and distribution) has increasingly focused on the relationship between various forms of scientific (or quasi-scientific) enquiry and imperial power.¹⁵ The entanglements between empire and British historical writing itself have also been subject to sustained analysis, work that has occurred alongside more general theoretical interventions from Michel-Rolph Trouillot and Ann Laura Stoler that have pointed to the ongoing legacies of colonial epistemologies in shaping understandings of the imperial past.¹⁶

Considerations of the connection between music and the British Empire have played a walk-on part in this broader historiography. There has been some analysis of music's role in generating and reflecting popular and elite imperialist sentiments.¹⁷ Equally, there have been some useful interventions on the ways in which indigenous musical traditions were practiced before, during, and in the aftermath of colonial rule, particularly in South Asia.¹⁸ Some works of historical musicology have gestured towards the discipline's colonial past. Bennett Zon has pointed to racist and orientalist discourses within musicological work in the British Empire, albeit while ultimately subordinating this to his interest in the origins of ethnomusicology as a subfield, thus avoiding a more detailed interrogation of colonial dynamics.¹⁹ A new generation of scholars has recently led the way in calling for more in-depth research in this area.²⁰ In terms of regionally specific case studies, the extent of coverage varies dramatically. The literature on South Asia is once again comparably well developed. Scholars have ably historicized the trajectory by which Indian musical traditions went from being almost uniformly dismissed as in need of improvement and purification to becoming a relatively significant (albeit still problematically racialized) part of the imperial cultural imaginary.²¹ However, as the Ghanaian musicologist Kofi Agawu has emphasized, there is a paucity of work on African music and its representation.²² Mhoze Chikowero's work on Zimbabwe is an important exception, ably illustrating the differences that could exist between African and South Asian colonial contexts. In colonial Africa, he shows, the importance of music as an instrument of power was closely harnessed to white supremacist ideas, exercised as much through the consistent efforts of Christian missionaries as those of musicologists (both amateur and professional) or colonial administrators. There was, then, less of a move towards seriously attempting to understand and engage with indigenous African musics on their own terms and, by extension, there were more concerted attempts made to control and (ultimately) erase these traditions.²³

For all that the literature on music and the British Empire may have its limitations, it still enables us to identify several features commonly present in metropolitan interpretations of music from colonial settings. I suggest that these can be usefully gathered together under the term "imperial musicology," as a way of both recognizing major themes and of deploying this recognition to produce further historical analysis. I do, of course, acknowledge that much of the musical study that took place in imperial contexts was not musicological in any formal disciplinary sense of the term – although much of it more or less equated to a kind of proto-ethnomusicology. Like many ethnomusicological observations, the interpretations I draw together here often served a broader purpose than much musical criticism. Their conclusions were not confined to the music itself, but extended outwards into broader forms of cultural commentary on music's production, performance, and function.²⁴ Simply using the term ethnomusicology, however, would be a significant oversimplification. I thus propose the idea of imperial musicology as a way of situating the kinds of musical interpretation that occurred under empire within a broad framework of imperial knowledge-making.

There are three broad themes that I would suggest are particularly important. The first is most obvious: the need to impose value judgements and, more specifically, to place music in hierarchical Eurocentric frameworks. This was most explicit in the late nineteenth century when, as Zon has acknowledged, commentary on music frequently used frameworks like social Darwinism in order to explain differences between musical cultures in distinctly racialized terms. Various interpretations of music existed in this intellectual context but, to some degree, most drew distinctions between the *music* of metropolitan societies and what was seen as the primitive *sound* of less developed societies.²⁵ This emphasis on using music to hierarchize cultures existed outside the realm of formal criticism and enquiry. The presence of Chinese music as part of the 1884 London International Health Exhibition, for example, was met with squalls of ridicule from regular attendees as well as from journalists. The musicians' attempts at performing British music in Chinese style, including airings of "Rule Britannia" and "God Save the Queen," were met with a particular kind of opprobrium from exhibition visitors and critics.²⁶ Similar patterns – including critiques directly aimed at the ways in which British (or at least Western) musics were performed by colonial subjects –

continued in less obvious ways beyond the late nineteenth century. Erin Johnson-Williams and Roe-Min Kok have both explored the ways in which imperial notions of cultural superiority were circulated through music examinations in colonial and early postcolonial contexts, for example.²⁷ In Africa, a particular variant of these hierarchical dynamics came into being by the 1950s, thanks to what Agawu has branded as “The Invention of ‘African Rhythm’”: the homogenizing construction that presents all African music-making as rhythmic and Africans as “possess[ing] a unique rhythmic sensibility” that “makes them fundamentally different.”²⁸ As many readers will no doubt already be aware, this particular expression of imperial musicology would be particularly important in shaping jazz criticism.

The second theme of note concerns the assumption of expertise. Some individuals involved in analyzing indigenous musical cultures in colonial contexts did have relevant backgrounds. Even in such cases, however, it was often research on music in imperial contexts that kickstarted new careers as musicologists and critics. Former music teacher A. H. Fox Strangways, for instance, encountered indigenous music cultures in India during health-related visits there in 1910 and 1911. His resulting work, *The Music of Hindostan* (1914), was well-received enough to make him a leading newspaper music critic and to allow him to launch the academic musicology journal *Music & Letters*.²⁹ In Fox Strangways’ case, as in many others, interest in indigenous musics was essentially a by-product of exposure and expertise was simply the result of observation and listening. Such a pattern produced many self-appointed experts. Radha Kapuria relates, for instance, the story of Anne Wilson, who essentially became an ethnomusicologist while living in Punjab alongside her high-ranking civil servant husband from the 1870s to 1920s. Wilson’s observations on Punjabi musical culture (for which she gradually became a passionate advocate) were not typical of colonial commentators. Her initial forays into studying Punjabi music were, however, rooted in a commonplace colonial assumption: that her position in imperial society enabled her to exercise some form of judgment over indigenous cultures.³⁰ This attitude was perhaps most frequently found among missionaries, whose claims to expertise were rooted in the hierarchical structure of colonial societies, in their religious convictions, and in their paternalistic approach to imperialism. In colonial Zimbabwe, Chikowero stresses, it was missionaries who were most frequently involved in identifying the supposed ills of local musics. Their diagnoses led to sustained attempts at erasing (or at least reengineering) indigenous musical culture, by imposing hymns and brass bands, for example.³¹

The ways in which expertise was demonstrated in the imperial context frequently owed much to broader practices of collecting, classifying, and curating materials from the colonies. These materials could then, whether through publication or physical exhibition, be repurposed as part of a broader cultural project. The third noteworthy theme of imperial musicology, then, is the transference of these practices to music. Sarah Kirby has highlighted some of the ways in which imperial exhibitions enabled both genuine engagement with, and overtly racialized critique of, indigenous musical culture from around the Empire. The latter, she observes, was particularly common when music was performed to (and thus heard by) unreceptive audiences, as in the aforementioned case of the 1884 International Health Exhibition.³² Music was also catalogued and exhibited in other ways, however, such as through the display of instruments otherwise not seen in metropolitan contexts. These were frequently received as objects with a purely aesthetic value.³³ Performances at exhibitions, meanwhile, veered towards the nineteenth-century habit of displaying living people. As Sadiya Qureshi’s agenda-setting work on the relationship between anthropology and imperial exhibitions demonstrates, this tendency became central to the cultural expansion of imperialism and to the politics of consumerism, in terms of how exhibitions were both constructed and received.³⁴ Ultimately, Qureshi observes, “displayed people’s histories” speak to “the fascination, pleasure, and curiosity excited by human difference.”³⁵ A keen interest in delineating difference was also a core feature of the broader desire to collect, classify, and thus control, musics. As Agawu has emphasized with relation to the history of Africanist musicology, such focus reflects “a broader economy of representational practices” that have all too often betrayed a desire to establish racialized boundaries through sound.³⁶

This racialized representational economy passed directly from colony to metropole and was further cemented in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through a gradual increase in the presence of musicians of color in Britain, including Black American musicians. It is worth briefly touching on this pre-history before going on to discuss jazz. The Fisk Jubilee Singers toured in Britain in the 1870s, introducing many to spirituals and earning significant admiration from sizeable audiences in the process.³⁷ Gilroy rightly cites this as evidence that cross-cultural exchanges across the Black Atlantic predate the birth of a

recognizable transatlantic popular music industry, alongside noting the importance of the group's apparent impact on both working-class mass audiences and high society.³⁸ The success of these tours should not, however, entirely distract us from the layers of imperial race-thinking that still shaped many responses. Katie Graber's analysis clearly illustrates that even positive reactions to the group – including from Queen Victoria, for whom the Singers gave a private performance – were marked above all by a focus on difference. Reviews (whether by critics or audience members) tended to devote significant attention to the supposedly rudimentary (if nonetheless effective) qualities of the group's music. They also betrayed a lingering focus on the Singers' difference, not least on the varying complexions of the individual members.³⁹ Even in this landmark moment for the reception of Black musicianship in Britain, then, we can detect elements of imperial musicology.

It is also worth remembering that the prominence of the Jubilee Singers in Victorian Britain coincided with the increased popularity of blackface minstrelsy. Early American blackface performers in Britain were consciously transmitting their own politics of racial hierarchy from one post-slavery context to another.⁴⁰ Equally, however, the function of minstrelsy in Britain quickly became – as Michael Pickering's substantial work on the subject has indicated – to justify "colonial subjugation" and to give audiences access to the thrill of the disreputable, personified by blackface performers as stereotyped uncivilized "natives."⁴¹ This, for Pickering, set in motion trends that would continue into aspects of the reception afforded to jazz, blues, rock 'n' roll, and more as the twentieth century wore on.⁴² Matthew D. Morrison has recently argued that "the sonic complement and aesthetic legacy of blackface" (which he refers to as "Blacksound") has continued to have major "musical, political, structural, and proprietary legacies" in the later history of American popular music.⁴³ This conclusion could easily be applied to Britain too, not least given that minstrelsy remained a part of the mainstream cultural landscape into the late twentieth century, thanks to the BBC's extraordinarily offensive *Black and White Minstrel Show*, which aired on television from 1958 to 1978.⁴⁴

Adjacent to the American context of Jim Crow and the civil rights struggle, however, the long-running popularity of blackface minstrelsy in Britain also points to some of the ways in which imperial musicology had become embedded in British society. Minstrelsy embodied racialized, hierarchical views of music and culture that were doubled down upon by the decision (conscious or otherwise) to interpret blackface performance as a mirror of colonial Blackness, rather than as a crude exercise in racial stereotyping. This ease with which British audiences accepted the removal of agency from the African diaspora (inclusive of Black America) points to the ways in which knowledge of the other could be twisted to suit imperial contexts, just as the act of "blacking up" well into the late twentieth century betrayed an ongoing preoccupation with (and desire for) difference. Minstrelsy became just the first in a long line of music-related American imports that could be used to help maintain imperial constructions of race within Britain. Jazz became another, albeit less overtly, largely through the mass of critical observations that it inspired.

Debating the origins of jazz in late imperial Britain

To say that some early British reactions to jazz reeked of imperialism would be putting it mildly. This was as true of sympathetic responses to the genre as hostile attacks on it. "Upon superficial examination it might appear that [jazz] is nothing but the triumph of musical chaos and confusion," observed one critic in a 1925 issue of interwar music journal *The Sackbut*, before suggesting that (to the uninitiated) the style was barely "distinguishable from [...] the rude rhythm of savages beating sonorous gourds in an African forest, the most primitive inchoate adumbration of art."⁴⁵ This critic went on to mount a defense of the genre, explaining that jazz was slowly being "refined" by "skilled musicians."⁴⁶ Predictably, all of those named as such were white, and thus the saving grace identified for jazz was essentially its absorption into a European classical tradition.⁴⁷ The line of hierarchization here clearly posited that jazz, in its original form, may be considered not simply as Black but as specifically African music – or, more precisely, cacophony (i.e., *non-music*). For all that, this particular critic recognized potential value in such sound, described later in the article using an explicitly sexual language of enjoyment ("the primitive pleasure of naked rhythm and [...] its barbaric, voluptuous orgasms"), they still cast a shadow on its musicality. It was only through "the evolution of [...] genuine jazz composers" that the style might live up to its potential to "characterize a future species of music."⁴⁸

Elements of this viewpoint were mirrored across various aspects of jazz's reception in late imperial Britain. Significant emphasis was given to the genre's origins, and indeed to the origins of other styles that were

understood (largely because of their Blackness) as part of the wider jazz landscape. Things were similar in the United States, perhaps most of all among those that feared jazz and its influence.⁴⁹ In the context of segregation, however, even many positive white American assessments of the genre tended to ignore the music's Black originators and pioneers altogether. Henry Osgood's *So This is Jazz* (1926), one of the most influential early American jazz books, failed to discuss even a single Black jazz musician. Only one footnote acknowledged that any even existed.⁵⁰ This was despite the book's suggestion that even the word "jazz" might have an "onomatopoeic" origin derived from "the muffled booming of the great African drum."⁵¹ Given the added imperial context, it is hardly surprising that the earliest book-length British studies of the style gave extra emphasis to the notion of jazz's African lineage. R. W. S. Mendl's *The Appeal of Jazz* (1927) was one of a number of British texts to define jazz largely around its use of syncopated rhythms, which were identified closely with the music of Africa. In typically generalizing fashion, Mendl treated African music as a homogenous bloc defined by rhythm rather than any other kind of musicality: "Rhythm seems to have been everything to them, while melody and harmony counted for next to nothing."⁵² Mendl, like many others writing about jazz in the early interwar period on both sides of the Atlantic, openly dismissed and disparaged the Black origins of the genre in explicitly racist terms, even as they defended it against those who saw its presence in Britain as a kind of social disorder.⁵³

Stanley R. Nelson's *All About Jazz* (1934) understood jazz's trajectory in terms of a journey: "From the jungle to the ballroom."⁵⁴ Nelson – jazz critic for the theatrically-focused *The Era* newspaper – was more open than many predecessors to acknowledging the contribution of Black musicians, even if he left readers in no doubt as to the importance of white performers in elevating the genre. "The oddly syncopated music of the Negroes has a bizarre quality which has developed into something of great artistic value," he observed, before crediting that development entirely to the work of white "Bands like those of [Jack] Hylton, [Paul] Whiteman, and Ambrose, [which] compete with the world's finest symphony orchestras in dynamic values."⁵⁵ Unlike some other jazz writers in Britain at this time, Nelson was willing to offer some credit to particular Black artists, although the way this was done left plenty to be desired. "Famous bands like Duke Ellington's, Fletcher Henderson's, Louis Armstrong's [...] were all very well in their way [...] but their jazz was a poor thing beside the refined product of the best white bands," he claimed, before going on to admit that these artists were becoming increasingly influential and that, because of this, it was "[his] belief that most of the future development of jazz will come from the coloured race."⁵⁶ This prediction, however, was rooted in a dogmatic belief that jazz had been "emancipat[ed]" from its original "crude form" by white musicians who were now straightjacketed by a "mania for order" that was not shared by Black performers, with their tendency towards "spontaneity" and to become "drunk with rhythm."⁵⁷ Despite this primitivizing rhetoric, Nelson's acknowledgement of Black artists has been cited by British jazz historian Catherine Parsonage as providing evidence that racialized narratives of cultural superiority and hierarchy were slowly crumbling during a period of national uncertainty between the wars.⁵⁸ This curious omission of ongoing imperial context in this interpretation elides the paternalist dimensions of Nelson's overall argument, which (however unconsciously) was infused with the race thinking that sat at the heart of British imperial doctrine. For all that *All About Jazz* expressed some positivity about Black musicians, it still asserted that genuinely artistic Black cultural expression through jazz had essentially been enabled by a "civilizing mission" undertaken by white jazz performers. If the future of jazz was to be Black, following Nelson's argument, then it was effectively by safely reintegrating some of the music's primitive elements into the "order" created by white translations of jazz.

Nelson was writing at a time when jazz criticism in Britain was rapidly expanding. It was not the musicological establishment who were taking jazz seriously at this moment; that would take several decades. Instead, it was most prominently those working as critics – whether in the national news media, the weekly music press (led at the time by the *Melody Maker*) or the specialist jazz press (including monthlies like *Swing Times* and *Tune Times*) – that set the tone for the many intensive years of British jazz writing to come. Many influential critics from these papers were increasingly joining forces with the wider British community of jazz enthusiasts by the late 1930s, further developing their fascination with the genre in what were often quasi-academic settings. Jazz societies, emerging as part of the Rhythm Club movement from the late 1920s, became a common feature of British popular music culture. Individuals in different parts of the country came together to listen to and discuss jazz in terms that, whilst not strictly musicological in the disciplinary sense, nevertheless elevated the music to an easily intellectualized art form.⁵⁹ This was also the

period in which many Black American jazz artists gained increased distribution and appreciation in Britain. As Parsonage has detailed, the demand provided by clubs and societies played an important role here. Still, she emphasizes, the fervent enthusiasm for the likes of Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington shown by the devotees who populated such groups was not always matched by the wider jazz audience or by critics, who often continued to frame their discontent in racialized terms.⁶⁰ The rise of serious-minded jazz appreciation in clubs and societies in this period did not, then, reset the dial in terms of the connections between jazz and empire in Britain.

This can be clearly seen by examining the outputs produced by such organizations. One of the more influential of such groups was the Jazz Sociological Society (JSS), based in North London and formed by a group of critics during the Second World War in the early 1940s. The JSS was created explicitly as a vehicle for in-depth, musicology-esque study rather than simply as a form for reviewing records or performances. The opening editorial of the JSS journal *Jazz Music* stated that the members had come together “with a view to investigating and surveying the New Orleans origins of jazz, the history of it, and its place in society.”⁶¹ On the question of origins, the JSS was particularly interested in pursuing research in four specific areas: “1. The urge to create jazz was purely coloured. 2. Development of the minstrel. 3. A reaction to the machine age. 4. Effect of the industrial development on slave-owners and subsequent reaction on Negroes.”⁶² These manifesto-like commitments were, at least in part, intended as a pushback against the kinds of civilizational rhetoric about jazz’s evolution that had circulated over the previous two decades. Reading early issues of *Jazz Music* makes clear, however, that those involved in the organization not only had different stances on this issue but also that they struggled to articulate their vision of jazz without reverting to some form of racialized essentialism.

One article in the first issue of *Jazz Music*, for instance, argued that “there is no such thing as ‘white jazz’ and ‘black jazz’ . There is only *jazz*,” but it then immediately undercut this claim by insisting that “jazz is basically negroid.”⁶³ Another piece, particularly explicit about its endorsement of Black jazz musicians, conciliatorily refused to “entirely condemn all white jazz” but also asserted, “without any hesitation that 100 percent of the best artists are coloured.”⁶⁴ This perspective came underpinned by a common imperialist analogy: “There may be head-hunters or Masai tribesmen who speak immaculate English but, if there are, you may be sure that they still don’t feel and think like Englishmen.”⁶⁵ Inverting this frequently used trope of impersonation and unbridgeable difference only, of course, had the effect of further othering Black musicians. In this narrative, jazz was fundamentally Black – but the gap inserted between Black and white still had strong overtones of colonial race-thinking, as expressed in imperial musicology’s accentuation of difference and its frequent emphasis on classification and categorization. Predictably, of course, some of those in the JSS still clung to older patterns of jazz-based racialization and hierarchization, despite the society’s stated aims. One early contribution underlined jazz’s “ancient roots in Africa” and the role of white musicians in engineering “an advance to the growth of the jazz tree” through their “stronger melodic sense and wider musical background.”⁶⁶ The wider article, meanwhile, insisted there would “never be complete unity of purpose between the two races where jazz is concerned,” thus positioning “white jazz” and “black jazz” as more or less completely separate fields.⁶⁷

Another, admittedly less influential, jazz study society formed during the war was the Dewsbury-based Northern Society for Jazz Study (NSJS), which launched its own relatively short-lived journal in 1943. The NSJS initially focused heavily on identifying African elements in jazz’s musical makeup and in its history. Its first two journal issues, for instance, were dominated by lengthy essays on the importance of rhythmic African folk musics to jazz’s sonic palate.⁶⁸ Given these sentiments, it is perhaps unsurprising that the NSJS soon published an article focused specifically on the trope of African rhythmicity. The author, a Colonial Office public relations official in Nigeria with the unwieldy name of C. P. de S. Milner-Haigh, wrote of having been (officially or otherwise) “commission[ed] [...] TO REVIEW THE QUESTION OF WHETHER NATIVE WEST AFRICA MUSIC IS REALLY MUSIC, OR MERELY RHYTHM.”⁶⁹

Milner-Haigh’s status as an amateur in musical analysis was left in little doubt by the rather rudimentary nature of his observations. The article concluded with the assertion “that native African Negro music just simply, is not music. There is only rhythm!”⁷⁰ Crucially, however, this blanket verdict was prefaced by making a direct comparison to Black American jazz and folk musics (namely spirituals), with Duke Ellington even being namechecked in the piece to emphasize the difference between his compositions and the sounds Milner-Haigh was hearing in Africa. Thus, he concluded that, African music was not only distinct,

but also “that American Negro music owes its all to America,” by which he presumably meant the broad mix of musical traditions transplanted to the United States by European settler and immigrant populations.⁷¹ While seemingly uninfluential, even in the NSJS, Milner-Haigh’s article is worth highlighting for its use of the nominal study of African music-making to make a broader assessment of the relationship between jazz and the idea of an American music tradition. This tradition was not explicitly racialized, but the implication was nonetheless clear: if jazz’s roots did not lie in Africa, its origins may not be Black after all.

Claims of this nature did not come from nowhere. George Pullen Jackson, a white professor of German and amateur musician from Tennessee, had been arguing for a decade that spirituals had their origins in religious songs transplanted to the United States from Europe. Jackson’s methodology was flawed because he relied entirely on printed versions of songs, which tilted the scales overwhelmingly in favor of his preferred argument. Still, his “artificial history of white-to-black influence” did have an impact on popular understandings of American musical trajectories, including in Britain.⁷² One convert was the British communist folk singer and song collector A. L. Lloyd, who would go on to become one of the main driving forces of the folk revival in the 1950s. Writing for the left-wing postwar music journal *Keynote* in 1947, Lloyd sought to understand “How Negro” Black American music was by drawing a direct equation between Africanness and Blackness: “The worksongs, the blues, the spirituals, how African are they?” His conclusion – that “contrary to popular belief the theory of white derivation would seem to be nearer the truth than the theory of the Africanists” – therefore reasserted racial difference and hierarchy by simultaneously othering Black musical culture as intrinsically African and by positioning whiteness as the origin for the spiritual tradition.⁷³

Of course, Lloyd’s specialization in the British folk song tradition did not automatically grant him any great expertise over Black American musics, but he nevertheless repeated the argument for a mass audience when appearing as an invited expert on the BBC radio show *World of Jazz* in 1952.⁷⁴ His archive suggests that he also extended this argument into jazz itself, arguing in one set of shorthand lecture notes from the same period that it was “certn” that “most of melodic ideas and gen framewk jazz comes fm white music.”⁷⁵ It was partly this attitude, no doubt, that led him to complain (in the aforementioned *Keynote* article) that: “It is characteristic of academic folklorists that [...] they concerned themselves far more with [...] investigation of obscure (and often quite misunderstood) forms of African music, and despised or ignored entirely the folk music which flourished gaily in their own backyard.”⁷⁶ Lloyd’s politics and fervent belief in the importance of folkloric traditions makes it hard to believe that statements like this were conscious declarations of imperial values, but the sentiments they revealed were nevertheless uncomfortably reminiscent of forms of cultural erasure that were still occurring in late colonial Africa.

Between the mid-1920s and end of the 1940s, then, critical approaches to jazz in Britain regularly returned to focus on questions regarding the music’s origins and the nature of its relationship with over-homogenized conceptualizations of musical (or non-musical) “Africanness” or “Blackness.” Almost inevitably, given Britain’s ongoing imperial culture and identity in this period, these assessments of jazz tended to be framed around similar kinds of colonial thinking to those that had infused imperial musicology, including ideas of cultural superiority and the need for civilizing projects. As is clear from looking at the work of jazz societies or left-wing commentators like Lloyd, however, these tendencies also readily crept into the work of those whose approaches to music would appear to explicitly or implicitly reject racialized hierarchies and imperial frameworks. Similar debates over the origins of jazz did, of course, occur amongst American jazz writers too, albeit in a context in which making claims for or against jazz’s relationship to Africa also amounted to taking a clear position on the wider question of civil rights. Influential American jazz historian Rudi Blesh, in his 1946 history *Shining Trumpets*, even suggested that the significance of jazz’s Black heritage had already become “freely acknowledged in Europe” whilst remaining “discounted in America” as a result of slavery and its legacies.⁷⁷ What such observations missed was the fact that such free acknowledgements in European metropolises could still perpetuate elements of imperial thinking. Such a pattern may have been particularly obvious in assessments of jazz’s origins and Africanness, but it also applied through into the 1950s and beyond via discussions that focused on particular jazz forms as being distinctly American, or even as British.

White jazz and black blues at the end of empire

Speaking on American radio in 1940, the British jazz critic Leonard Feather dismissed the idea that jazz was more influential in Europe than in the United States. Citing a lack of representation for the genre in wider culture, as well as the absence of touring American musicians in Britain due to union-endorsed labor restrictions, Feather stressed that while there were “a number of rhythm clubs and similar organizations scattered through England and the Continent, [...] all they have produced is the class of person who listens to swing music without being able to create it.”⁷⁸ Feather’s observation pointed forward to the early 1950s, when debates on jazz in Britain were increasingly focused on the national context. Anxieties over the quality of homegrown jazz became commonplace, not least when contextualized by the Musicians Union’s (MU) opposition to international touring musicians, which translated into a government-enforced ban (albeit one with occasional exceptions) for twenty years from 1935 to 1955.⁷⁹ While the ban impacted white and Black musicians, race was explicitly invoked in some MU rhetoric on the issue and, as McKay argues, the result “is difficult not to see [as] a color bar.”⁸⁰ Despite the fact that there were Black jazz musicians (predominantly from the Caribbean) in Britain at this time, the ban made British jazz overwhelmingly white. Little wonder, then, that one British jazz book from 1945 explicitly referred to the nation’s jazz musicians as the “British white hope.”⁸¹

Concerns about the standard of British jazz reflected wider uncertainties in British society accompanying the slow collapse of the imperial project.⁸² In this context, musical hierarchy and discourses of cultural superiority naturally became increasingly nationalist, while retaining implicit and explicit focus on the ability of whiteness to interpret, subsume, and even perfect Black musical cultures. The MU was a participant here. When faced with criticism for its opposition to touring artists, it tended to stress what it presented as the incomparable strengths of British players. “British musicianship, whether in the symphony orchestra or in jazz, is second to none,” MU official Harry Francis insisted to *Melody Maker* readers in 1951, adding that “The best of British musicians are quite capable of producing new ideas in jazz when it is made perfectly clear to them that these are expected.”⁸³ The response Francis received ranged from mild disagreement to ridicule. One reader sardonically argued that Francis’ suggestion made the official “either prejudiced – or tin-eared!”⁸⁴

Complicating the situation was the fact that Britain’s contribution to jazz would be increasingly dominated by (white) British groups devoting themselves to reproductions of traditional New Orleans style jazz, shorn of any of the genre’s subsequent commercialized developments and attempts at experimentation. This phenomenon, which later became known as “trad jazz” in the 1960s, was often dramatically out of step with wider developments in the jazz world, but it nevertheless had plenty of admirers. Prominent British jazz critic, David Boulton, writing in 1958, cited the movement as the leading light of a “European jazz renaissance.”⁸⁵ Other writers, perhaps more conscious of the enormous gulfs in context behind Black innovators in early twentieth-century New Orleans and white imitators in mid twentieth-century Britain, saw in the revival an opportunity for British jazz to develop its own voice. This music, one *Keynote* contributor claimed in 1947, was important because it reflected “the lives of common people.”⁸⁶ Less sympathetic voices were, predictably, fairly abundant. For Hobsbawm, writing under his jazz critic pseudonym of Francis Newton, the problem with much British playing was its strictly imitative nature, rooted in attempts at reproducing a mythologized New Orleans past. This, he argued, meant that a substantial portion of Britain’s “jazz public” by the 1950s were increasingly intellectually disconnected from the music, becoming overly absorbed in a largely second-hand phenomenon dominated by a white British impersonation of Black American innovation.⁸⁷ Even some of those more sympathetic to this revivalist tradition, such as critic and broadcaster Rex Harris, could not help but admit that – for much of its existence – British jazz had been “At worse [...] an abuse of the true Folk Music of New Orleans,” characterized by “anaemia and [being] devoid of ideas.”⁸⁸

The prominence of traditional jazz in Britain from the mid-1940s through into the 1960s ensured that the very idea of British jazz became tied up in complex discourses of authenticity. Jazz historians have already gestured to the idea that this white British desire to perform a resolutely traditional (and almost fundamentally Black) variant of jazz can be read as a particular response to a postcolonial crisis of whiteness.⁸⁹ This context can, however, be expanded upon with reference to imperial musicology. Certainly, on one level, traditional jazz revivalism in Britain overlapped with ongoing attempts to define jazz and related styles as

African music. Some critics (such as influential *Melody Maker* columnist Ernest Borneman) even used this in order to suggest that jazz somehow “belonged” to the Empire-turned-Commonwealth. As Hilary Moore has concluded, this can be read as just one part of a wider process in which “Britain began to assert itself not only as curator of traditional jazz, but as owner and innovator.”⁹⁰ As well as a typically colonial assertion of ownership, however, the consistent prominence of this traditional jazz scene gave new energy to particular conceptions of musical hierarchy that cemented conceptions of white expertise within British jazz culture. This can be seen most clearly in the ways that pro-traditional jazz writers married the now-typical emphasis on jazz’s African roots to their accounts of the British jazz scene.

The aforementioned Harris overcame some early doubts to become one of the keenest supporters of British traditional jazz. He appeared regularly on the BBC and, in 1952, was given the opportunity to access the kind of extensive and non-specialist reading audience that other jazz critics could seldom reach when he was commissioned to write a book called *Jazz* for Penguin Books’ successful mass market paperback imprint Pelican. The book ostensibly fitted into earlier traditions of British jazz writing, with the cover promising to take the reader on a journey “from the early drum rhythms of Africa to the highly developed Western music of the present day.”⁹¹ Harris, like many of the performers who became central to Britain’s traditional jazz revival, was clearly heavily influenced by the visions of jazz history presented by particular American writers, including the aforementioned Rudi Blesh as well as Charles Edward Smith and Frederic Ramsey, Jr, the editors of 1939’s widely read *Jazzmen*.⁹² Harris’ commitment to crediting the work of Black American artists thus had American models, even if his approach also placed extra emphasis on colonially infused tropes about African origins and the precise nature of Black musicianship.⁹³ Naturally, given Harris’ inclinations towards revivalist jazz, his history placed the traditional New Orleans style variant of the genre very much front and center. Hobsbawm noted not only that Harris had a “marked preference” for Black performers but also complained that *Jazz* showed him to be emblematic of those “purists” guilty of “New Orleans fanaticism.”⁹⁴ This perhaps made the effective culmination of Harris’ account, a chapter devoted to the return of traditional New Orleans style playing, inevitable. Rather less inevitable, and certainly less predictable for those who had also read histories penned by American critics, was the chapter’s emphasis on British talent.

It was, Harris suggested, white British jazz players – often amateurs from various suburban areas – who were best able (alongside the white Australian Graeme Bell and his band, also singled out for praise) to recapture the traditional Black New Orleans sound. George Webb’s Dixielanders were, Harris insisted, so authentic sounding that many of those who heard the group on BBC radio “were prepared to swear that they were listening to some carefully processed discs of [early New Orleans jazz pioneer] King Oliver himself.”⁹⁵ Eton-educated trumpeter Humphrey Lyttleton, who had started in Webb’s band, was praised by Harris for his ability “to produce the sort of music King Oliver might have played had he been alive today.” Such talent, Harris emphasized, stemmed almost entirely from careful listening to imported records of the New Orleans greats.⁹⁶ However unintentionally, this presentation of white British (and, at least in the Bell band’s case, Australian) players as the pinnacle of traditional jazz revivalism reinforced several of the hierarchical dynamics of imperial musicology. Most important of all, however, was what it said about the nature of musical expertise. The logical conclusion of Harris’ argument, after all, was that it was merely through careful listening and analysis that white enthusiasts in Britain like Webb and his Dixielanders (who formed via the Bexleyheath Rhythm Club) could learn how to capture and gain mastery over Black musical innovations from across the Atlantic.

Harris’ own expertise was also a model here, even if he was a critic rather than a performer. As the back cover of *Jazz* explains, he did not work full-time in the jazz world but was instead “achieving the seemingly impossible by combining a professional career of consulting optician with that of a jazz authority.”⁹⁷ The book reflected the limitations of both Harris’ knowledge and, perhaps more importantly, interests. Skeptical about more modern forms of jazz (i.e., bop and its various offshoots), Harris largely chose to avoid discussing them. A chapter focusing on recent trends in the genre relied on a lengthy concluding quote from his fellow critic Steve Race to confirm that “Bop should be looked upon as a dialect of the jazz language” and that it shared the same Black roots as jazz more generally, but Harris’ lack of real enthusiasm would have been clear to any reader.⁹⁸ Unlike traditional jazz, bop and other more avant-garde variations on the genre – almost all of which were led by Black musicians – defied well-established frameworks by which white listeners and performers in Britain could demonstrate their superior understanding. By the late 1950s, as Boulton sharply

observed, bop was increasingly showing up the New Orleans revival as a drift into “stagnant traditionalism.”⁹⁹ British jazz reached a crossroads as a result and, while the trad jazz movement of the 1950s and 1960s remained surprisingly popular, it was largely through the constructed expertise of the critic that imperial musicology maintained a hold on British popular music writing.

Perhaps the most long-lasting of these was a renewed focus on blues as a central object of the kinds of critical analysis that had previously focused on traditional jazz. After all, blues was increasingly shaping popular music more broadly by the late 1950s, not least the incipient rock ‘n’ roll genre. Jazz revivalist musicians and critics had asserted a particular vision of cultural superiority by taking ownership over traditional jazz and making it white in 1940s and 1950s Britain, but acceptance of the music’s traditional structures and sounds restricted attempts to further analyze it. Few (if any) of the books or journals produced by British jazz writers in that period became truly canonical works deemed essential resources for understanding the genre. The same could not be said for the work of an architecture lecturer, spare-time record sleeve illustrator, and occasional amateur jazz (and skiffle) performer named Paul Oliver. In 1960, Oliver published *Blues Fell This Morning (BFTM)*, subtitled *The Meaning of the Blues*. The book showcased its author’s vast knowledge of Black American blues culture and – for one music historian – marked “the beginning of serious scholarship on the genre.”¹⁰⁰ This despite the fact that Oliver had never actually been to the United States at the time of writing the book, a point that earned some rebukes.¹⁰¹

BFTM also, however, attracted no little acclaim. The celebrated Black American author Richard Wright was so struck upon reading the manuscript in 1959 that he wrote to Oliver to praise his “amazing intuitions,” whilst also agreeing to write a glowing foreword for the published book.¹⁰² Wright also wrote on Oliver’s behalf to American Embassy officials in London, helping to ensure a first visit to the country in 1960. In this letter Wright not only praised Oliver’s book as “all but miraculous” but also “confess[ed] to a kind of agreeable racial jealousy that an Englishman rather than an American Negro made this unique contribution.”¹⁰³ Wright’s endorsement enhanced Oliver’s reputation and credibility. By 1964, he was being commissioned by the United States Information Agency to curate an exhibition on blues history at the American Embassy in London. Its display contents included items from Oliver’s own collection of blues artifacts.¹⁰⁴

Oliver’s book differed from books on jazz in so far as it amounted to a sympathetic social history that aimed to give voice to the lived realities and concerns of Black Americans. As such, in the book’s opening pages, Oliver carefully acknowledged both his “remoteness from the environment that nurtured the blues” and his belief that the style had “evolved from the particular dilemma” facing Black America.¹⁰⁵ He thus positioned himself as both a self-aware amateur (again a welcome change from many jazz critics that had preceded him) and as a writer conscious of the need to represent the harsh realities of racialized prejudice and discrimination. Despite this, Oliver’s organization of ideas betrayed the influence of a colonial worldview. His whiteness should never have disqualified him from writing on the blues, of course. However, it is typical of the imperial politics of expertise that Oliver simultaneously believed that “Only the American Negro [...] can sing the blues,” and that he, a white British admirer of the style, was best equipped to explain its meaning.¹⁰⁶

Like many others in the world of imperial musicology, Oliver also demonstrated an obsessive need to categorize, classify, and curate. In writing *BFTM* he packed notebooks full of carefully organized and transcribed lyrics, produced alphabetized lists of artists, topics, and releases – often replete with extra biographical or contextual detail so as to resemble encyclopedia entries – and began creating an index card database.¹⁰⁷ The structure of *BFTM* reflected this process. Oliver arranged the book in thematic chapters, each dealing with songs focused on particular themes and topics. Many of these also catered (no matter how unconsciously) to primitivizing imperial rhetorics about Black cultural inferiority that veered towards reasserting racialized difference. Chapter Four, for instance, focused on songs dealing with sex, and largely focused on trying to use blues to identify the roots of stereotyped perceptions of Black promiscuity.¹⁰⁸ Chapter Five, meanwhile, nominally focused on spirituality but largely dismissed Black engagement with Christianity in favor of focusing on superstitious practices and references to voodoo.¹⁰⁹

For all the good intentions behind his work, then, Oliver still epitomized the evolution of imperial musicology into (and beyond) the last days of empire. His vision of the blues, and its connection to wider patterns in Black American history, were rooted in an opposition to racialized segregation and inequality – but his position as blues expert maintained traces of colonial hierarchy just as his refusal to fully challenge racialized stereotypes indicated an attraction to primitivized constructions of difference. Perhaps inevitably, given the

trajectories discussed in this article, one of the topics this led him to explore further (in a short 1970 book) was the importance of “African retentions” in the blues.¹¹⁰ Oliver would continue to be an influential figure well into the late twentieth century, and his approach would develop somewhat over time, perhaps culminating in 1990 with his work to compile the first academically oriented collection on the history of Black musical cultures in Britain.¹¹¹ In many ways, however, the wider field changed little – perhaps beyond writers like Oliver becoming more accepted by a musicological establishment that had never embraced them or their subject matter. Elements of imperial musicology also, of course, still remained a part of British music criticism, not least in the continued emphasis on constructed white expertise, whether amongst critics or performers. It is to this broader picture that I turn in offering some brief conclusions.

Conclusion

The transatlantic popular music industry kicked into a new gear in the 1960s, thanks in no small part to the explosive popularity of rock, a genre that – like jazz – had Black origins. Unlike jazz, however, rock became almost definitively white. The mainstream of transatlantic rock culture became so dominated by white acts by the mid-1960s, in fact, that one historian even coined the term “white Atlantic” to summarize developments.¹¹² Given the blues orientation of many early British rock acts, who also often covered famous blues songs, it is unsurprising that some white critics took to casually reasserting racial difference in this period – albeit often while positioning themselves as defenders of Black musical heritage. “No one can accuse me of chauvinism when it comes to the numerous groups and white singers who endeavour to tell us what a hard time they have been having in the cotton fields,” claimed blues and jazz critic Derrick Stewart-Baxter in a 1969 issue of *Jazz Journal*, before affirming that the white artists in question “just do not sound right. How could they?”¹¹³

I have used this essay to demonstrate the overarching significance of race and empire to understanding the development of British popular music criticism, illustrating some of the ways in which aspects of imperial musicology have helped create and reinforce racialized difference through the analysis of music. Increased attention to whiteness in the jazz press by the late 1960s reflected an evolution of the practices I have highlighted, one that placed renewed emphasis on “white music” and “Black music.” The latter increasingly became presented as its own broad genre, catered for by specialist sections of Britain’s expanding music press. 1970 saw the launch of the most bluntly named of the new titles in this area: *Black Music*. Its (white) editor Alan Lewis opened the first issue by declaring that “BLACK MUSIC is the very foundation of pop culture. Where it all began. And where it’s at today. [It] has given birth to blues, jazz, and rock.”¹¹⁴ The new publication, he asserted, would be “the magazine the music deserves” thanks to its transatlantic coverage of “soul, reggae, blues, jazz, gospel and African music.”¹¹⁵ The list of genres here points to an evolution by which jazz had been replaced by Blackness as an umbrella term incorporating an increasingly wide array of styles, including those with direct origins in recently decolonized parts of the Caribbean and Africa. The existence of titles like *Black Music* spoke to the ongoing relevance of race as a structuring force in British music culture. In keeping with this reaffirmation of racialized difference, and indeed with the history of imperial musicology, the vast majority of writers for these papers were white men, even if some Black writers – like reggae expert and popular *Black Music* contributor Carl Gayle – gradually broke through.¹¹⁶ A relatively small number of women critics also gained prominence, several coming to specialize in the work of Black artists, such as the influential jazz photographer and writer Val Wilmer.¹¹⁷

Gradual diversification of the music critics ranks in the later twentieth century did not, of course, have the effect of automatically decolonizing music writing.¹¹⁸ Notions of white expertise persisted, and the division of British music culture into white and Black domains sadly remains relevant, not least in the ongoing struggle to secure long-term meaningful representation for Black British musical creativity in the national heritage sector.¹¹⁹ Many of the more egregiously colonial dimensions of imperial musicology may have receded since the mid-twentieth century, particularly the overt focus on hierarchy and discourses of cultural superiority that were once so prominent, but its underlying frameworks remain part of British musical life, just as the legacies of colonialism remain central to British culture and society more broadly. Further research is needed exploring these ongoing colonial dynamics, not least in the reception of diasporic African, Caribbean, and South Asian musical cultures in later twentieth century Britain.¹²⁰ This essay has tried to illustrate the relevance of “imperial musicology” as a potential tool for such work. It is, I suggest, partly through the

identification of continuities between interpretations of music in colonial and metropolitan contexts, and between imperial and nominally post-imperial periods, that we will be able to gain a fuller understanding of the influential racialized dynamics of music in modern British history.

Notes

1. "Cats' Bookshelf," 713.
2. "Fifty Years of Jazz," 64.
3. "Cats' Bookshelf," 713–714. Readers will note the presence of outdated racialized language in these quotes. I have endeavoured to keep these to a minimum.
4. *Ibid.*
5. The piece appears in the online Hobsbawm bibliography: "Jazz." At the time, he often wrote about jazz under the name Francis Newton.
6. Parsonage, "Early Jazz in Britain," 315–336.
7. Matera, *Black London*, 145–199. See also Kinsella, *Bebop Scene*, 45–102; McKay, *Circular Breathing*, 129–191. On Black British jazz history, see Toynbee, Tackley, and Doffman, eds., *Black British Jazz*.
8. McKay, *Circular Breathing*, 106–107.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Ngô, *Imperial Blues*, 14–16.
11. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*. On jazz and global liberationist politics see, for example, Braggs, *Jazz Diasporas*; Brent Turner, *Soundtrack to a Movement*; Day Moore, *Sounds of Liberation*; Kelley, *Africa Speaks*; Monson, *Freedom Sounds*; Putnam, *Radical Moves*.
12. Denning, *Noise Uprising*.
13. Related issues are discussed, with varying degrees of reference to imperial contexts, in Hagstrom Miller, *Segregating Sound*; Heter, *Sonic Gaze*; Horne, *Jazz and Justice*; von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up*.
14. Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, 3–5. For a classic account of information and power in the Empire, see Bayly, *Empire and Information*.
15. See, for example, Anker, *Imperial Ecology*; Deb Roy, *Malarial Subjects*; Drayton, *Nature's Government*; Foks, *Participant Observers*; Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*; Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory*.
16. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*; Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*. On the imperial dynamics of British history, see Behm, *Imperial History*; Hall, *Macaulay and Son*; Satia, *Time's Monster*.
17. Richards, *Imperialism and Music*; Summerfield, "Patriotism and Empire."
18. Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*; Butler Schofield, *Music and Musicians*; Kapuria, *Music in Colonial Punjab*.
19. Zon, *Representing Non-Western Music*. The same is true of Zon, *Evolution and Victorian Musical Culture*.
20. For an overview on this theme, see Burnett, Johnson-Williams, and Liao, "Music, Empire, Colonialism." For an archives-focused perspective, see Ajojitar and van Straaten, "Postcolonial Sound Archives."
21. Farrell, *Indian Music*; Ghuman, *Resonances of the Raj*; van der Linden, *Music and Empire*. See also many of the essays in Clayton and Zon, eds., *Music and Orientalism*.
22. Agawu, *Representing African Music*.
23. Chikowero, *African Music*.
24. For a readable definitional essay, see Nettle, *Study of Ethnomusicology*, 3–18.
25. Zon, *Evolution and Victorian Music Culture*, 78–114.
26. Kirby, *Exhibitions*, 196–201.
27. Johnson-Williams, "Examiner and the Evangelist," 317–350; Kok, "Imperial Music Examinations," 386–405.
28. Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 55.
29. Zon, *Representing Non-Western Music*, 262–264.
30. Kapuria, *Music in Colonial Punjab*, 136–151.
31. Chikowero, *African Music*, 19–111.
32. Kirby, *Exhibitions*, 170–185.
33. *Ibid.*, 186–208.
34. Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*.
35. *Ibid.*, 280.
36. Agawu, *Representing African Music*, 157.
37. On the positive reception for the group in Britain, see Seroff, "Fisk Jubilee."
38. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 88–90.
39. Graber, "'A Strange Weird Effect,'" 40–47.
40. Morrison, *Blacksound*, 23–24.
41. Pickering, "John Bull," 198.
42. *Ibid.* For more detail, see Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy*.
43. Morrison, *Blacksound*, 2.
44. For an analysis, see Grandy, "'This Show is Not About Race.'"

45. Clyne, "Jazz," 12–14.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., 13–14.
49. Anderson, "White Reception," 135–138. On Black critical constructions of jazz in the interwar period, see: Porter, *This Thing Called Jazz*, 1–53.
50. Osgood, *So This is Jazz*, 103.
51. Ibid., 13.
52. Mendl, *Appeal of Jazz*, 29.
53. Parsonage, *Evolution of Jazz*, 56–57.
54. Nelson, *All About Jazz*, 13.
55. Ibid., 161.
56. Ibid., 162–163.
57. Ibid.
58. Parsonage, *Evolution of Jazz*, 65–67.
59. For a useful summary of Rhythm Clubs and their importance, see Davies, "British Encounters," 31–66.
60. Parsonage, *Evolution of Jazz*, 221–260.
61. "Editorial," *Jazz Music*, 1–2.
62. Ibid.
63. Aldam, "Some Reflections," 11.
64. Dance, "Entre Nous," 11.
65. Ibid.
66. Venables, "The Old Argument," 15.
67. Ibid.
68. Thornes, "Folk Musics," unpaginated; Thornes and Jowett, "Effect of the Negro Folk Musics," unpaginated; Thornes, "Folk Musics," 1–10.
69. Milner-Haigh, "No Rhythm!," 2.
70. Ibid., 5.
71. Ibid., 2–5.
72. Graham, *Spirituals*, 31–32.
73. Lloyd, "Origins of Spirituals," 4.
74. Lloyd, in "World of Jazz." The actual script is undated but, by process of elimination, the episode must have been the 11 October 1952 edition: "Saturday 11 October," 43.
75. Lloyd, "Am FS Lecture." These lecture notes are undated but, given their archival location, it is reasonable to presume that they are from the late 1940s.
76. Lloyd, "Origins of Spirituals," 4.
77. Blesh, *Shining Trumpets*, 27.
78. Feather, in "Basin Street Chamber Music," 7.
79. Cloonan and Brennan, "Alien Invasions," 277–295.
80. McKay, *Circular Breathing*, 146–147.
81. Enefer, *Jazz in Black and White*, 44.
82. Aspects of the impact of imperial decline on British society in this period are identified in, amongst others, Bailkin, *Afterlife of Empire*; Linstrum, *Age of Emergency*; Perry, *London is the Place*; Schwarz, *White Man's World*; Webster, *Englishness and Empire*.
83. Francis, "Borneman is Wrong," 2. Francis was responding to Borneman, "A Mare's Nest," 2.
84. Mike Butcher, in "Melody Maker Mailbag," 11. See also, for Borneman's response, Borneman, "Mr Francis' Views," 2.
85. Boulton, *Jazz in Britain*, 74.
86. Dutton, "Jazz Alive-O," 16–17.
87. Newton, *Jazz Scene*, 251–253.
88. Harris, *Jazz*, 201.
89. McKay, *Circular Breathing*, 87–128; Moore, *Inside British Jazz*, 37–66.
90. Moore, *Inside British Jazz*, 66. For Borneman's wider perspective on African elements in jazz, see Borneman, *A Critic Looks at Jazz*.
91. Harris, *Jazz*, front cover.
92. Davies, "British Encounters," 70–85; Ramsey, Jr. and Smith, eds., *Jazzmen*.
93. Harris, *Jazz*, 13–76.
94. Newton, *Jazz Scene*, 250.
95. Harris, *Jazz*, 219–220.
96. Ibid., 224–225.
97. Ibid., back cover.
98. Race, quoted in Ibid., 187–188.
99. Boulton, *Jazz in Britain*, 80–85.

100. Schwartz, *How Britain Got the Blues*, 113.
101. For an overview of the book's writing and reception, see O'Connell, *Blues*, 56–90.
102. Wright to Oliver, 8 July 1959. For the foreword, see Wright, "Foreword," in Oliver, *Blues Fell*, vii–xii.
103. Wright to Weld, n.d.
104. Information Service, "'Story of the Blues.'"
105. Oliver, *Blues Fell*, xvii, 5.
106. *Ibid.*, 5. A similar point is hinted at, but not developed, in O'Connell, *Blues*, 68–69.
107. Oliver, "Blues Artist Card Index"; Oliver, "Lyric Transcription Notebooks"; Oliver, "Research Notebooks."
108. Oliver, *Blues Fell*, 108–131.
109. *Ibid.*, 132–150.
110. Oliver, *Savannah Syncopators*.
111. Oliver, ed., *Black Music*.
112. Hamilton, *Just Around Midnight*, 86–120.
113. Stewart-Baxter, "Black London Blues," 16.
114. Lewis, "Let's Get It On!," 3.
115. *Ibid.*
116. Gorman, *Totally Wired*, 150–154.
117. See, in particular, Wilmer, *Jazz People: Wilmer, As Serious*.
118. On the latter half of the twentieth century, see Gilroy, "Bohemians"; Bland, "'I Am Not Anti Black Music But ...'"
119. See, for example, "Petition."
120. Existing research includes Bakrania, *Bhangra*; Henry and Worley, eds., *Narratives*; Stratton and Zuberi, eds., *Black Popular Music*.

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