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Interaction as Freedom, Tradition, and Mentorship:

a performer-centred investigation into interaction in jazz performance

being a
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by

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is twofold: to construct a performer-centred autoethnographic methodology and to re-examine interaction in jazz performance utilising this methodology to recast interaction and position it as a means by which an ensemble's social aesthetic ideal is expressed. The ever-expanding body of scholarly work investigating interaction in jazz performance is filled with varied approaches but features little from the field of artistic research; thus, there is a clear need for a performer-centred perspective.

The questions posed by this thesis adopt distinct theoretically-based approaches. Firstly, I utilise the growing literature in Artistic Research to construct a performer-centred autoethnographic methodology. Secondly, the performer-centred perspective is deployed to re-examine interaction through reflexive writing drawn from the accompanying performance portfolio. Thirdly, both the reflexive writing and recast description of interaction is used as a touchstone to explore the role of freedom, tradition, and mentorship as social aesthetic ideals which inform and shepherd interaction in jazz performance.

Throughout this thesis, I demonstrate that the performer-centred perspective is highly beneficial for examining interaction and use this to develop a comprehensive body of theory. Resultantly, this thesis illustrates that an ensemble's collectively created and construed conception of the principles that inform their sonic landscape—their social aesthetic ideal—profoundly influences their interactions during performance. The significance of this thesis lies in its incorporation of the performer's voice into the discourse on interaction and the introduction of the concept of framing interaction as an expression of a social aesthetic ideal to the burgeoning literature on interaction in jazz performance.

Introduction

<u>Purpose of Research</u>

In nearly all regards, jazz is a highly collectivistic endeavour, with many performances featuring small ensembles navigating compositions that serve as vehicles for improvisation. Whether a product of the collectivism of an ensemble or the highly improvisatory nature of the process, jazz improvisation and performance are deeply pervaded by interaction. Givan notes that the study of interaction in jazz has 'greatly enriched our knowledge and understanding of this signal Afrodiasporic art form as both a musical and a social practice'.[1] Also, Monson states that 'good jazz improvisation is sociable and interactive like a conversation';[2] and, like a conversation, interaction can ebb and flow, converge and diverge, and be ordered or disorganised while also signalling and connecting to broader concerns situated in the social and cultural spheres.

The intentions of this thesis are twofold. Firstly, it aims to set out a research methodology—drawing from the growing body of literature on Artistic Research—which situates and highlights a performer's perspective. In this endeavour, I aim to explore and reframe musical phenomena from a performer-centred position. Utilising reflexive writing as a primary tool, alongside various theories which foreground the importance of learning and experiencing through handling a musical artefact, I look beyond the operational details of music performance to gain greater insight into the primary quarry of this thesis: interaction in jazz performance. Secondly, this thesis seeks to re-examine interaction in jazz performance. To do so, it leverages my performer-centred per-

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[1] Benjamin Givan, "Rethinking Interaction in Jazz Improvisation," *Music Theory Online* 22, no. 3 (2016): 1.

[2] Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: jazz improvisation and interaction* (United States: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1.

spective drawn from the accompanying portfolio to appraise existing ideas and synthesise new concepts. The examination starts by considering the surface-level manifestations of interaction and investigating the multifarious spectrum of interactive gestures and devices. Next, I examine how interactive episodes differ from context to context (or indeed, ensemble to ensemble) and how these are shaped by an ensemble's overarching social aesthetic ideal—that is, a collection of social, cultural, and contextual ideas which inform and guide the performance of jazz. I identify three forces influencing such ideals: freedom, tradition, and mentorship.

Given the above, this thesis will have two distinct but interconnected sections. While the first develops a performer-centred perspective and methodology, the second deploys the analytical tools developed in the first to investigate interaction. There are three fundamental research questions that the thesis intends to address:

- Drawing upon the existing literature, can a robust and effective performer-centred approach be constructed?

- What novel insights emerge when examining interaction in jazz performance through a performer-centred lens?

- How do these performer-centred considerations of interaction explore the idea that an ensemble's interactions express a social aesthetic ideal?

Thesis Structure

As previously noted, this thesis is divided into two primary sections (Part One: Performer-Centred Research, and Part Two: Interaction), each consisting of several smaller chapters.

The first section delves into the foundational philosophy and methodology of performer-centred research. It explicates how I intend to harness my performer-centred perspective, insights, and understanding. Integral to this section are references to the performance portfolio and the accompanying reflexive writing. It will also discuss my direct observations of interaction in jazz performance from my practice.

Following this foundational groundwork, the second section embarks on a detailed exploration and assessment of interaction in jazz performance. Initially this section will explore the germane literature pertaining to interaction in jazz performance, and then move to appraise existing relevant frameworks and synthesise new concepts in response to the observations drawn out of the portfolio. This section culminates in an analysis of how interaction in jazz is influenced by the social aesthetic ideals of freedom, tradition, and mentorship.

Part One: Performer-Centred Research

The Practitioner's Voice

Artistic Research in Jazz: practice-led research, research-led practice, and performer-centred research

Artistic Research is a mode of research that utilises, integrates, and assimilates practice (the act and / or production of an artistic artefact); more specifically, it is a form of research wherein a significant portion of a particular project is 'practice' (performance / creative writing / dance / musical composition).[3] Given the embryonic nature of the field, it is unsurprising to find an array of nomenclature and terminology, each with a differing emphasis on how research and practice interact. Bruce Barton and Ben Spatz, in their respective chapters in the book *Performance as Research*, detail the numerous forms of practice-orientated research: performance as research, practice as research, practiced-based research, practice-led research, arts-based research, research-led practice, research-based practice, research practice, research through practice, research-creation, creative research, and studio research. However, Barton suggests that a productive and valuable blanket designation would be Artistic Research (AR) or Artistic Research in Performance (ARP).[4]

Artistic Research is highly nascent, and supporting its endeavours is a blossoming and ever-expanding body of literature.[5] In the last few years, this body of literature has found its exploration of artistic research in jazz practice and per-

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[3] Robin Nelson, *Practice As Research in The Arts: principles, protocols, pedagogies, resistances* (UK & USA: Palgrave MacMillian, 2013), 8.

[4] Bruce Barton, "Introduction I: wherefore PAR? Discussions on "a line of flight"," in *Performance as Research: knowledge, methods, impact*, ed. Annette Arlander et al. (UK & USA: Routledge, 2018), 4–6; Ben Spatz, "Introduction III: Mad Lab — or why we can't do practice as research," in *Performance as Research: knowledge, methods, impact*, ed. Annette Arlander et al. (UK &USA: Routledge, 2018), 209–14.

[5] Nelson, *Practice As Research in The Arts: principles, protocols, pedagogies, resistances*, 4.

formance expand tremendously. More importantly, it has transformed a field of disparate and scattered jazz-orientated artistic research projects into a more fused and united endeavour. As noted by Michael Kahr in his introductory essay in *Artistic Research in Jazz*, the acknowledgement and recognition of artistic research in jazz by research communities such as the Rhythm Changes VI Conference in Graz in 2019, and the resultant formation of an international network of artistic jazz researchers, speaks to the gradual formation of this niche form of artistic research.[6] Needless to say, this project intends to add and contribute to this flourishing discourse in Artistic Research on jazz performance.

The ensuing section explores the methodology and research tools utilised in this thesis and is solidly grounded and orchestrated within a 'performer-centred' perspective and approach. The term 'performer-centred' represents a deliberate and strategic intention to amplify the unique voice of the performer amidst the vast expanse of musical phenomena. The methodology of this work facilitates the exploration of the diverse dimensions of musical phenomena as experienced, embodied, and empracticed by the performer. Reflexive writing emerges as a pivotal tool within this framework, not only for assessing musical phenomena as experienced by the performer but also as an active, dynamic, and iterative dialogue with the self, rather than a passive recording of events. This research is not embarked upon with the intent to extrapolate or evince insights drawn from the music of others. Instead, it stands as a steadfast commitment to examining musical phenomena through the prism of the performer-researcher, a nuanced, multifaceted, and profoundly personal exploration that seeks to contribute a textured, layered, and singular voice to the broader chorus of research and understanding on interaction in jazz performance.

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[6] Michael Kahr, "Artistic Research in Jazz: an introduction," in *Artistic Research in Jazz: positions, theories, methods*, ed. Michael Kahr (UK & USA: Routeledge, 2021); "Rhythm Changes 2019 Conference," 2019, accessed July 2021, https://rhythmchanges.net/2019-conference/; "Artistic Research in Jazz Website," accessed July 2021, https://artisticjazzresearch.com.

In his article 'Learning to Perform as a Research Technique in Ethnomusicology', John Baily notes that 'only as a performer does one acquire a certain essential kind of knowledge about music'.[7] Baily emphasises further the importance and value of the performer's perspective when he writes:

> The importance of this as a research technique, for direct investigation of the music itself, must be emphasized. One understands music from the "inside", so to speak. This means that the structure of the music comes to be apprehended operationally, in terms of what you do, and, by implication, of what you have to know. It is this operational aspect that distinguishes the musical knowledge of the performer from that of the listener without specific performance skills.[8]

Although Baily's observations are relevant and convincing, there is a difference between gaining operational knowledge and understanding through performance, and situating the process of research in practice. Barbara Bolt precisely articulates such a notion in her essay 'The Magic is in Handling' where she says, 'theorising out of practice is, I would argue, a very different way of thinking than applying theory to practice'.[9] As I see it, this suggests that building theory from one's practice is a distinct process compared to applying a disembodied theoretical idea to an external artistic artefact or phenomena outside of one's practice or, more importantly, experience. Bolt further augments this thought while quoting Paul Carter:

> It is not, as Carter maintains, about 'mastering the rhetorical game of theorising what artists do'. Rather it is much more concerned with articulating what has emerged or what has been realised through the process of handling materials, and ideas, and what this emergent knowledge brings to bear on the discipline.[10]

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[7] John Baily, "Learning to Perform as a Research Technique in Ethnomusicology," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 10, no. 2 (2001): 86.

[8] Ibid., 94.

[9] Barbara Bolt, "The Magic Is In Handling," in *Practice as Research: approaches to creative arts enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (UK & USA: Bloomsbury, 2007), 33.

[10] Ibid., 34.

In all regards, the above notion of searching and examining through the act of handling is the crux of my performer-centred perspective. Such a perspective utilises a unique vantage point and process, which in turn generates a form of knowledge that is quite singular. Manning explores the 'singularity of research-creation' in the opening chapters of her book, *The Minor Gesture*, and in the notes, states a neat and pointed proposal for what theorising from one's practice might entail:[11]

> What I am proposing here is quite different: an approach that takes the art process as generative of thought, and that transversally connects that thought-in-the-act to a writing practice, should the need arise for writing to accompany it.[12]

Considering the above, my approach in this project is to build and shape theoretical ideas from my practice as a performer; this may include generating new ideas born of my thoughts on interaction from the performer-centred perspective, or appraising external scholarship through my lens as a performer.

Turning to the logistics of examining my practice, I initially explored Dean and Smith's practice-led research and research-led practice model, *The Iterative Cyclic Web* (Figure 1) as a process for developing and refining ideas through practice. The most compelling element of this model is the 'many points of entry and transition within the cycle' and the fluidity and flexibility that this bestows on the artistic researcher.

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[11] Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 11.

[12] Ibid., 240.

Figure 1. Dean and Smith's Iterative Cyclic Web

However, it became clear that my path through this web needed to incorporate my experience as a performer more decidedly. Therefore, my amended trajectory through the web can be visualised thus (Figure 2):

Figure 2. My path through the Iterative Cyclic Web

Previous and concurrent performance experience

Practice: performance in the form of albums and gigs

Generation of ideas

Refinement via reflexive writing and thought

Develop, interpret, and document new ideas

Output: performance portfolio

Output: thesis, including the exploration of interaction utilising my performer-centred perspective
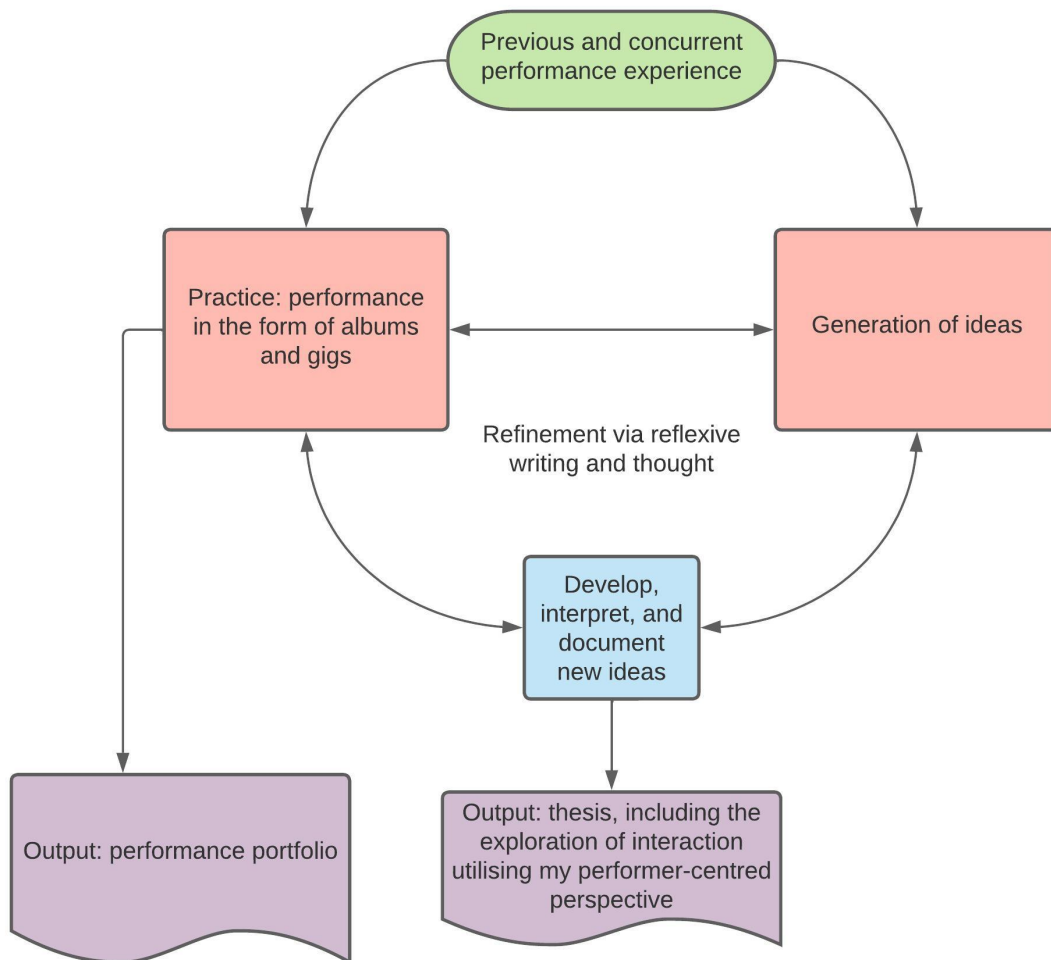
Upon considering the above, it became clear that the directionality of Dean and Smith's model did not best represent my process, with my path through the web being somewhat more distinct. Specifically, Dean, in his essay 'Silent Groove, Frames, and Applied Improvisation in Miles Davis' "Shhh/Peaceful" and austraLYSIS' "silent Waves": Practice-led Research Beckons to Research-led Practice' demonstrated that Practice-led-Research flows into Research-led-Practice, with each appearing to require distinct processes and perspectives.[13] Conversely, the bedrock of experience drawn upon to construct this project—my

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[13] Roger Dean, "Silent Groove, Frames, and Applied Improvisation in Miles Davis' "Shhh/Peaceful" and austraLYSIS' "silent Waves": Practice-led Research Beck-ons to Research-led Practice," in *Artistic Research in Jazz: positions, theories, methods*, ed. Michael Kahr (UK & USA: Routeledge, 2021), 124–25.

two decades of work as a gigging jazz musician in the UK—utilises one fundamental perspective: that of the performer. For that reason, although Dean and Smith's model was a starting point, ultimately, this project required a more performer-centred framework, and the above diagram represents that. As such, the most suitable terminology for the research contained in this thesis is Performer-centred Research. In other words, a mode of Artistic Research that aims to situate and locate the research firmly in the sphere and perspective of the performer, thus viewing all frameworks, theories, analyses, and narratives through that lens.

Looking further at the methodological specifics, autoethnography is replete with processes and methods for looking inward, and these could be in the form of self-narrative, auto-observation, self-reflection, narrative inquiry, confessional tales, reflexive ethnography, and many more.[14] To access and explore my performer-centred perspective and utilise this as a means and position from which to generate ideas, a more specific process is needed so that my practice can be critically considered. For this project, I have employed a system of reflexive writing aimed at drawing out my knowledge and insight regarding interaction. The term 'reflexive' is purposeful and concerns, as articulated by Nelson, 'not only reflecting on what is being achieved and how the specific work is taking shape but also being aware of where you stand'.[15] In an idealised process, the kind of 'reflection-in-action' defined by Donald Schön would be the most productive means of exploring interaction at the very point of creativity.[16] However, I am unconvinced that one can easily extract insight from experience situated at the very point of creativity. Therefore, the process utilised in this thesis is

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[14] Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: researcher as subject," in *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (USA: Sage, 2000), 739; "Autoethnography, Autobiography, and Creative Art as Academic Research in Music Studies: A Fugal Ethnodrama," 2019, accessed May 2020, 2020, http://act.maydaygroup.org/volume-18-issue-2/act-18-2-wiley/.

[15] Nelson, *Practice As Research in The Arts: principles, protocols, pedagogies, resistances*, 44.

[16] Donald A Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: how professionals think in action* (USA: Basic Books, Inc.), 55–56.

retrospective and acknowledges that 'a retrospective examination reveals a coherent interaction', and that in every moment of creativity, 'a performer has a range of creative options, any one of which could result in a radically different performance'.[17] In other words, when viewed retrospectively, a moment of interaction appears intelligible; however, in the moment of performance, the musician is placed amongst a multitude of possibilities, and the exact essence of that moment is in a state of flux and is experientially opaque. To that end, my focus is on retrospectively building a reflexive response to my performances to document and critically scrutinise my embodied and empracticed experience. The structure of each reflexive document is similar, starting with autobiographical context and then focusing on issues of interaction. As the intention is to access and assess my embodied and empracticed knowledge and insight, there is utility in defining these concepts before exploring the included performance portfolio.

Estelle Barrett's introduction to the book *Practice as Research* explores the notion of the subjective and personal in artistic research, focusing on tacit and embodied knowledge. She defines 'embodied knowledge or skill' as something which is 'developed and applied in practice and apprehended intuitively'.[18] In other words, knowledge, insight, or skill which is born and utilised in practice but understood instinctively or through direct personal perception and experience—or, indeed, as a gut *feeling*. Additionally, and in tandem with embodied knowledge, the term empracticed needs defining. Here I am using Georgina Born's definition, which presents the term empracticed as to fully put our embodied (and social) understanding, knowledge, and insight into practice.[19] Born also notes that empracticed is an alternative to enactment, where 'enactment

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17 Keith Sawyer, *Group Creativity: music, theatre, collaboration* (USA & UK: Routledge, 2003), 12.

18 Estelle Barrett, "Introduction," in *Practice as Research: approaches to creative arts enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (UK & USA: Bloomsbury, 2007), 3–4.

19 Georgina Born, Eric Lewis, and Will Straw, "Introduction: what is social aesthetics?," in *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics*, ed. Georgina Born, Eric Lewis, and Will Straw (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 29.

derives from a social theory focused on notions of "action," then, empracticed is practice-centred'.[20] In essence, these two interconnected notions manifest in my reflexive writing in the form of a pervading and fundamental question which serves as the primary reflexive apparatus: how does interaction, from my performer-centred perspective, *feel* and *appear* during performance?

Preferences and Location

Given the performer-centred perspective being accessed and utilised in this thesis, and the reflexivity defined above, there is also a need to consider the ideas, preferences, and values I hold as a jazz performer, and how these might impact and shape my thoughts on interaction. As argued by Peter Elsdon in his chapter 'Figuring Improvisation', there is an essential utility in viewing improvisation less as an absolute and essential entity but rather as an activity that emerges from the process and practice of music-making.[21] In his chapter, Elsdon uses Paul Steinbeck and Marian Guck's work as a touchstone, both of whom have considered the notion of 'Analytical Fictions' when writing about music. Steinbeck identifies three common fictions when writing about jazz improvisation: improvisation is like composition; improvisation is primarily a social practice; and improvisation is about critique and opposition.[22] These analytical fictions or 'figurings' speak to the idea that if music is participatory and social, footprints of these social and cultural interactions imprint upon the author's writings—which, in turn, reveal a great deal about an author's disposition, values, views, and preferences. Consequently, reflecting on interaction, improvisation, and jazz performance is arguably problematic without initially considering my preferences, views, and values as a jazz performer.

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[20] Georgina Born, "After Relational Aesthetics: Improvised Music, the Social, and (Re)Theorizing the Aesthetic," in *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics* ed. Georgina Born, Eric Lewis, and Will Straw (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 58.

[21] Peter Elsdon, "Figuring Improvisation," in *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies*, ed. Nicholas Gebhardt, Nichole Rustin-Paschal, and Tony Whyton (New York & London: Routeledge, 2019), 221–22.

[22] "Improvisational Fictions," Music Theory Online, 2013, accessed May 2020, https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.13.19.2/mto.13.19.2.steinbeck.php.

Firstly, and most fundamentally, I situate improvisation as the core musical ingredient in my formulations of jazz performance. In other words, for me, improvisation is the primary means—and indeed, process—of creating a jazz performance. Secondly, similar to Samuel A. Floyd, Jr in his book *The Power of Black Music*, I view referents, tunes, and arrangements as 'only materials on which a good performance can be built'.[23] Or rather, I view cyclic referents as vehicles or moderating entities which *can* act as a guide for improvisation, and therefore performance. This position purposefully excludes conceptions of jazz that feature largescale orchestrations, such as Big Bands and swing bands of the 1930s, but 'also brings the personalities of its players to the forefront'.[24] The forefronting of personalities leads to my third point: I view jazz performance as a highly social and collectivistic endeavour. Indeed, all the performances in the accompanying portfolio to this thesis feature musicians whom I consider personal friends, and this social connectedness unavoidably manifests whenever we create music together. Elsdon summarises this neatly when he writes:

> Improvisation is placed here at the moment of performance, and in terms of the effect it has, namely creating a sense of community through the way it encourages responses and draws in participants.[25]

Therefore, Steinbeck identified three commonly deployed fictions when examining jazz improvisation; although my figuring may seem to be *improvisation is primarily a social practice*, I believe a better formulation to be: *improvisation is the core of jazz performance and is inherently social and interactive.*

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[23] Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 228.

[24] Elsdon, "Figuring Improvisation," 224.

[25] Ibid., 227.

David Ake, in the introductory chapter of *Jazz Matters: Sound, Place, and Time since Bebop*, underscores that since jazz is crafted and consumed by people, all musical theorisation (be that, from the perspective of a music theorist or the auto-ethnographic analyses of a performer) should be placed within the experiences, understandings, and identities that envelop those involved.[26] Within the bounds of this thesis, this idea prompts an examination and locational illustration of my performances, surpassing a mere placement in physical space but a crucial endeavour to immerse and contextualise this research within my praxis. This investigation will spotlight four pivotal dimensions of the Essex jazz scene: performance locations, the demographic landscape of performers and audience, the manifestation of jazz and its myriad subsets within the local milieu, and the presence and nature of jazz education in the Essex jazz scene.

My performances (particularly during this project) are primarily in Essex, specifically in the towns of Southend, Chelmsford, and Colchester—as these are the primary urban hubs in which jazz performances happen in Essex. The venues hosting jazz performances in Essex tend to be of two forms: small live music establishments hosting jazz nights or medium-scale jazz nights hosted at a local pub or club, often run by committed jazz fans and enthusiasts. It should be noted that Essex has almost no dedicated jazz venues. However, one notable exception emerges in The Jazz Centre UK in Southend; this venue acts as an archive, museum, and thriving jazz performance space. Further enriching the landscape are the annual festivals, The Southend Jazz Festival (running in various formats since the early 90s) and the newer Writtle Jazz Festival (established in 2018), each adding distinct character to the vibrant Essex jazz scene.

Delving into the demographic landscape of jazz musicians within the Essex scene unveils a notably homogeneous profile. The musicians are predominantly

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[26] David Ake, *Jazz Matters: sound, place, and time since bebop* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2010), 9.

white, broadly middle-class men, a pattern not just casually observed but markedly evident in my extensive performance across the county. I can think of only three women and one Black British jazz performer who are partially active on the Essex jazz scene. Supplementing this observation, insights drawn from interviews conducted by Mark 'Snowboy' Cotgrove for The National Jazz Archive yield some albeit generalised statistics.[27] Of those interviewed from the Essex jazz scene—encompassing historical and active members—only 10% are women, and 6% are Black British performers. Importantly, this observation is not rendered as a critique of the jazz performers in Essex, who, in my experience, foster an exceptionally welcoming and supportive environment for all artists. Instead, it seeks to transparently portray the demographic composition of performers within my regular performing locale. Of course, such scant diversity and representation in any social or cultural context or community speak to underlying issues of inequality and the myriad of barriers which limit access for learners and performers; however, such a discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis and requires and invites a more detailed examination. Contrastingly, the audience features a broader spectrum, with more diversity and far greater representation of the communities in which these performance venues are located.

To further detail the Essex jazz scene, there is utility in detailing jazz's varied forms, manifestations, and subsets. I have noted three distinct threads of jazz found in Essex: straight-ahead gigs, experimental or European performances, and fusion or funk jazz. The Chelmsford Jazz Club and Brentwood Jazz Club (the most notable amongst others) predominantly host musicians playing standard repertoire, with many of these gigs featuring material drawn from the American Songbook and other Tin Pan-Alley and Broadway songs. The sonic landscapes and musical characteristics of performances hosted at these venues

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27 "Interviews - Jazz in Essex," 2013, accessed Sept 2023, https://nationaljazzarchive.org.uk/explore/jazz-in-essex?ipage=1.

feel distinctly 'jazz' to my ear, with repertoire and language closer situated with 'the tradition'. Additionally, it warrants mentioning that a robust current of 'Trad Jazz' permeates the Essex scene. However, as this particular sphere of jazz performance falls outside my experiential and performative purview, my capacity to consider it extends merely to acknowledging its palpable presence within the local scene.

In contrast, The Jazz Centre UK and Jazz825 present a broader spectrum, from conventional to experimental jazz. Jazz825 stands as a nexus for experimental or European-sounding jazz in Essex, infused by the influence of Trevor Taylor (CEO of the record label FMR). It is not uncommon to hear entirely free concerts at Jazz825, with these performances exploring the outer limits of jazz codex and canon—such a musical endeavour is not unique when situated in the broader international and historical context of free jazz; however, what is noteworthy here is that this venue is the only place in Essex (that I know of) where one might experience this particular form of jazz.

Lastly, the Essex jazz scene boasts a robust body of jazz fusion and jazz-funk performances. From my vantage point, the linchpin of this strand can arguably be traced to the profoundly influential weekly performances of The Fellowship—featuring the remarkable Zak Barrett on sax and Guthrie Govan on guitar—at the Bassment, Chelmsford. This ensemble garnered international attention, regularly drawing attendees who travelled across Europe to experience their performances. Concurrently and in dialogue with this, Southend supports a thriving jazz fusion movement, exemplified by a weekly gig, 'The Jazz Mix', which showcases a vibrant assortment of acts from the national Acid Jazz scene.

The above musical vista is enriched by the seamless movements among these threads and venues by many jazz musicians from the Essex scene, including myself. Such movement results in a complex interplay between these threads

and venues, characterised by the diverse performative approaches and aesthetics utilised by jazz performers based in Essex. However, this interplay is not just about approaches and aesthetics co-existing in various forms; it represents a substantive dialogue and exchange that enhances both the performer and the performance. From my performer-centred perspective, even though these venues and their hosted jazz performances have distinct sonic and aesthetic qualities, they do not appear to me as isolated or self-contained entities. Instead, their unique aesthetics and performance spaces coalesce to forge a vibrant and dynamic jazz scene in Essex, unquestionably shaped by the engaged and passionately supportive community (performers, promoters, and audience) central to the Essex jazz scene. Recognising and navigating these subtleties is essential for a comprehensive and layered engagement with the milieu at the core of the Essex jazz scene.

Although tangential to the direct discussion of performance venues and aesthetic threads, it is pertinent to consider the role and impact of jazz education within the Essex scene, given its integral function in guiding future generations through their journey toward the performance spaces discussed above. Similar to many UK counties outside larger urban centres, jazz education in Essex permeates through three primary channels: secondary schools, along with their peripatetic staff and ensembles (and, by extension, any private instrumental tuition occurring within the county); county ensembles; and various extra-curricular activities. While I am not ideally positioned to explore the exact nature of all secondary schools, peripatetic staff, and private instrumental tuition in Essex, it is recognisable that many jazz performers with whom I work also dedicate themselves to teaching, imbuing their instructional practice with their jazz performance and pedagogical experience and expertise. Notably, several former students of various Essex-based jazz performers have progressed to studying jazz at music colleges and subsequently crafted their own careers as jazz performers. Additionally, Essex is home to the EYJO (Essex Youth Jazz Orchestra),

under the leadership of Martin Hathaway, Professor of Jazz at the Guildhall School of Music, which has embraced many aforementioned students who have gone on to establish careers as jazz performers. Furthermore, a private educational organisation, The Jazz Fix, managed by local jazz musicians Marc Cecil and Tony Sandeman, enriches the scene by offering monthly jazz education live streams from guest artists and conducting an annual week-long jazz course in South Essex for young learners and adults.

In summary, the above depiction reveals the vibrant tableau of the Essex jazz scene, interpreting it not merely as isolated musical performances but as a vibrant interplay among place, people, pedagogy, and various forms of jazz practice. The reflexive insights outlined above go beyond just musical performance. They offer a deeper understanding of the contexts in which I practice, providing valuable insights and a contextual foundation for the praxis represented in this work. Having detailed the performer-centred perspective, considered the apparatus with which my embodied and empracticed knowledge will be accessed and analysed, explored my views and values which shape my perception of improvisation and jazz performance, and located my practice in the broader context in which I perform, the performance portfolio will now be presented.

The performance portfolio

To access and explore my performer-centred perspective and use this to generate and appraise ideas on interaction, a body of my work that I can draw upon and directly reference is needed. To that end, submitted alongside this thesis is a performance portfolio. The portfolio consists of various performance outputs created over the lifespan of this doctoral project and serves simultaneously as a musical touchstone and wellspring—a creative crucible if you will—and a cross-section of my practice. Studio-recorded performances, in the form of albums, are the primary constituent of the portfolio; however, in the name of

balance (and as required by the programme of study), a portion of the portfolio will include a complete capture of my final recital, a live performance at the University of Hull. Below is a summary of each output included in the portfolio, with links to the recordings and reflexive documents.

Simulated Cities (The Dan Banks Quintet)
[Available here](#).

The first output is my independently released album, *Simulated Cities*. The project was recorded over two days during the summer of 2018 and released in December of the same year. *Simulated Cities* is the second album for the quintet and features Roberto Manzin (saxophone), Paul Higgs (trumpet), José Canha (bass), and Josh Law (drums), with all of whom I have longstanding musical relationships. The album contains seven original compositions, all loosely reminiscent of the classic Blue Note sound, with flavours of more contemporary postbop ensembles such as the Kyle Eastwood Quintet and Christian McBride's 'Inside Straight'. To that end, the project had a very present postbop aesthetic, with strong ties to and influences from the tradition.

Sonifications: The Anthropocene Epoch (Banks, Taylor, and Canha)
[Available here](#).

The second output included in the portfolio is an exciting project released by the record label FMR. The project featured Trevor Taylor (drums & percussion) and José Canha (double bass) and explored the nexus between free jazz and sonification (the process of re-perceptualising data as sound). In this project, I used a selection of sonifications as non-normative moderators (that is, in place of a score or conductor) to provide a nominal framework for our freely improvised performances. I extracted the data used to generate these sonifications from various compelling lines of evidence for anthropogenic climate change,

such as sea-level rises, atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, ocean acidification, and many others. As artists and indeed concerned human beings, this project was an opportunity for us to express our solicitude and anger at the profound inaction of governments worldwide to tackle and, in some cases, even acknowledge the existence of anthropogenic climate change. As with the quintet project, I have a very longstanding musical relationship with Trevor and José, and for many years, we were the biweekly house band for Trevor's jazz gig at the Railway in Southend-on-Sea. However, unlike the quintet project, this endeavour had a clear, freer aesthetic, drawing firmly on a distinctly more European sound.

Luminos (Ison, Banks, Canha, Taylor)
[Available here](#).

The Luminos Quartet was a new project for 2019, and featured Josh Ison (saxophone), José Canha (double bass), and Trevor Taylor (drums). The quartet explored the intersection between freely improvised music and free jazz, utilising the full range of sonic possibilities and producing a kaleidoscope of moods and soundscapes. The resultant music was organic, experiential, and highly interactive. As with the previous projects, I had a longstanding musical relationship with the musicians involved, except for Josh Ison, with whom I had only worked several times before the recording. As with the sonifications album, this work was released by FMR.

Antares (Solar)
[Available here](#).

As a departure from the more acoustic-focused projects, Solar situates itself within the jazz-fusion aesthetic and, as such, has a more electronic sonic palette. *Antares* was the band's second album and featured original compositions pre-

dominately created by me. Like the other projects in the portfolio, Solar's members are longstanding musical colleagues.

In Trio (Banks, Cecil, Rickenberg)

[Available here](#).

The project titled 'In Trio' was recorded in June 2019 but is yet to be officially released—for no reason beyond the time required to prepare and manage the logistics behind such an endeavour. Much like the album from Solar, this project has some distinctive features which set it apart from the remainder of the portfolio:

- It was the only project not to contain original compositions but rather a selection of material from a more standardised jazz repertory (the American Song Book).
- The project featured musicians (Marc Cecil and Rob Rickenberg) with whom I have less performance experience.
- There was no rehearsal prior to the recording session or very little organisation beyond agreeing on set of tunes which we knew from memory.

Given the above, this project was the closest to the tradition (as I see and understand it) in terms of aesthetics, logistics, and sonic palette.

Lost at Sea (Banks, Canha, Porter, Taylor)

[Available here](#).

Lost at Sea was a project exploring the iconic soundscapes and compositions of the post-rock band Sigur Rós. Known for their ethereal, post-rock sound palette, evoking the combined aesthetics of rock, classical European music, and minimalism, they have become somewhat of a household name over the past twenty years. However, their increasing popularity has not diminished their experi-

mental spirit, and to this day, their highly atmospheric music captures Iceland's natural beauty and magnificence. This project intended to evoke, capture, explore, and recast the intricate sonic landscapes of Sigur Rós, utilising both free improvisation and more structured compositions (although all still a vehicle for improvisation). The core of this project was my regular trio featuring José Canha and Trevor Taylor; however, Robin Porter (a former pupil) joined the ensemble on saxophone, creating a slightly fresh sound and dialogue for us to interact and explore.

The Final Recital (Banks, Canha, Taylor)

[Available here](#).

The final recital should have showcased the various projects and ensembles featured in this portfolio. The intention here was twofold; firstly, it would have served as an excellent final cross-section of my practice. Secondly, it would have presented many of the studio-based outputs included in a live setting. However, due to the necessary ongoing restrictions resulting from COVID-19, it became apparent (both in 2020 and 2021) that such a large-scale event would be challenging to deliver and prepare. Therefore, rather than an event of this size and scope delivered at The Jazz Centre UK in Essex (initially planned for July 2020), I opted for a smaller event at the University of Hull, utilising just a trio (featuring José Canha and Trevor Taylor). However, so that the performance still touched and explored the numerous projects included in this portfolio, much of the repertoire for the recital was drawn from these projects but reconstituted or recast so that it would function in a trio setting.

Gig Diary

Acknowledging that the above portfolio is already rather expansive, I feel there is also some utility in pointing the reader to my practice outside of the reach of this thesis and project. Given that the space between 'researcher' and 'practi-

tioner' is not always cleanly demarked, some degree of spill from my activities as a performer is unavoidable, and indeed welcome. To that end, a full gig diary (which also includes links to rough audio recordings) of my external activities and performances is available [here].

Observations

Before turning to a more detailed consideration of interaction, there is use in summarising and exploring the themes and ideas drawn from the performance portfolio and accompanying reflexive writings.

First, the discussion will consider musical ingredients and sculpting of sonic landscapes. Throughout this project—and in my broader practice—I describe and conceive the sonic materials utilised to create a performance as existing along a continuum, ranging from smaller components to larger, overarching structures. More specifically, I view elemental sonic components as 'musical ingredients' (a term I use often), which form larger-scale structures, such as phrases, figures, and grooves. In turn, these coalesce to create the wider sonic landscape that is our collective performances. In addition, and as a likely outgrowth of this observation, there is a finite number of sonic resources one can utilise and deploy during a performance. In other words, if ensemble members allocate their energies toward manoeuvring through a complex referent or prioritise another moderating entity (such as groove or mood), their capability to engage in more conspicuous interactive gestures may be attenuated. An illustrative instance from the portfolio can be observed during my solo in 'Sleeping Angels', wherein Trevor and José prioritise sustaining both the ambient mood and the 5/4 meter of the referent, marginally sidelining other interactive interventions. Similarly, throughout my solo in 'Little Sunflower', from the In Trio project, Marc and Rob focus their attention almost singularly on the groove, ex-

hibiting minimal interactivity, even amidst the increasing intensity of my gestures—potentially a reflection of my endeavours to invoke a response.

Looking next at the surface-level manifestations of interaction. Commonly discussed devices such as call and response, fills, common motive, vamps and pedals, and responding to the peaks and troughs of the soloist are present in all of the performances included in the portfolio. Indeed, this suggests that these devices are highly malleable and are not as contingent upon the context of moderating forces (such as referents). For example, common motive is present in many of the tracks from *Simulated Cities* and *Luminos*, both of which have distinct sonic purposes and aesthetics. In comparison, devices such as emphasising a structural boundary or accentuating the hypermeter depend on the referent or moderating force having a defined structure and form. This dependency establishes a more contingent application of specific devices intimately tethered to an underlying referent, a facet exemplified in numerous performances encapsulated within both the Luminos and Sonifications projects. Given the prevalence of these commonplace interactive devices (call-and-response, fills, common motive, vamps, pedals, responding to peaks and troughs, and accenting hypermeter), there is utility in viewing all of these as a baseline for an ensemble, providing a helpful starting point for discussing the surface-level characteristics of interaction.

Beyond the above observations, there are moments of interaction in the portfolio which point to intersubjective definitions and shared conceptions of musical phenomena. In other words, although all members of a particular ensemble may share, for example, a conception of what intensity means, how this is manifested (interactively or otherwise) and what this represents for each musician can be markedly different. Resultantly, there are numerous ways in which an ensemble can respond to a soloist's peaks or troughs in intensity. For instance, I have a clear conception of an increase in the intensity of Roberto's solo on 'Sim-

ulated Cities', and I respond by increasing harmonic density and complexity; however, during his solo on 'Vistas of Shangri-la', I respond to the peaks in his solo by increasing the textural density and overall dynamic of my gestures. However, these intersubjective notions go beyond ideas of intensity and speak to how performers might respond to episodes of space, character, or even groove. Regarding space, our interactivity in the final moments of 'Cloud' from *Luminos* speaks to the ensemble's collective understanding of the concept, with us lessening the textural density. In 'Movement III: Human Catastrophe' from *Sonifications: The Anthropocene Epoch*, a shared conception of groove and its creation within the ensemble's aesthetic is demonstrated by its construction and deconstruction during the final segment of our improvisation. Finally, consider the mood and character shared and explored by Robin and me in the introduction of 'Son of Ole' from *Lost at Sea* and how this points to our intersubjective conception of mood.

The most subtle observation is the engagement with ideas of tradition, freeness or freedom, and mentorship. There is a vein of tradition in both *Simulated Cities* and *In Trio*, with each project engaging with the tradition in different but unquestionable ways. For *Simulated Cities*, the influence of tradition is primarily in the form of our collective syntax and language, as well as my positioning of the project as distinctly hardbop. Additionally, the In Trio project engages with the tradition concerning the choice of repertoire, featuring primarily standards from the American Song Book. In comparison, the Luminos and Sonifications projects, being undoubtedly situated in the sphere of free jazz, have an apparent connection to ideas of freeness and freedom. Although each project has a degree of moderation—especially the sonification album—the notion of freedom underpins our collectively improvised performances. Perhaps most subtle is the influence of mentorship. Although not overt, there is a distinct feeling of mentorship within all projects featuring Trevor Taylor. His considerable experience in the domain of free jazz is unques-

tionable, and when placed alongside slightly younger performers (such as myself), who are relatively unaccustomed to free improvisation, a palpable sense of stewardship (at least from my perspective) emerges. Furthermore, the *Lost at Sea* album had an additional dimension of mentorship, as it featured a former pupil, Robin Porter, for whom this was his first experience of creating a full studio album. Whereas many of the other observations have more direct utility and insight regarding interaction, this one is much more amorphous and generalised, but it will form the basis of a substantial theoretical component later in this section.

The last and most intriguing observation is in the varied scope and aesthetics of the projects contained within the portfolio. Our collectively constructed and construed ideas of how each project could, should, and might sound led us to formulate our interactive gestures in particular ways. For example, I find it very unlikely that the musicians of Solar would allow an episode of interaction to break or undermine the underlying groove. Alternatively, consider the extent to which Luminos are willing to explore a moment of common motive (looking here at the extended ostinato towards the end of 'Sky') and allow this to become a more prominent thematic element. Moreover, consider the differing interactivity between In Trio's 12-bar blues, 'Sandu', Solar's 'Down In The Dirt', and 'Second Line Sidestep' from *Simulated Cities*. Each of these tracks has a clear blues quality, and each referent has components evocative of the 12-bar blues, yet each ensemble has very different expectations and ideas of how their respective sonic landscapes might sound and, resultantly, how interaction is utilised and manifested. Evidently, an ensemble's 'sound', 'vibe' or aesthetic shapes and guides their interaction, while their interaction can also express their aesthetic ideal.

To summarise the above, I will highlight the five interconnected observations that will serve as a touchstone and launchpad for the ensuing discussion of in-

teraction. Firstly, in my observations from the portfolio, I have positioned the myriad of musical gestures within a performance as having scale, commencing with smaller musical ingredients, moving through larger-scale elements such as phrases, figures, and vamps, and finally arriving at the broader sonic landscape, which is our performance. Furthermore, as an outgrowth of this observation, there is a relationship between a referent or moderating entity and interactive capacity; in other words, if a musician is utilising their gestures to navigate and manifest a complex referent or to engage and express another moderating force, less capacity is available to instigate or overtly participate in interaction.

Secondly, the portfolio's performances ubiquitously employ surface-level interaction devices like call and response, fills, and common motives, underscoring their malleability and relatively low dependency on contextual moderating forces, as evidenced by their application across varied projects like Simulated Cities and Luminos. Contrastingly, specific devices, such as emphasising structural boundaries or accentuating hypermeter, exhibit a dependency on the defined structure and form of referents or moderating forces, thereby facilitating a more contingent application, particularly noticeable in the Luminos and Sonifications projects. Thus, the widespread use of these interactive devices serves as a foundational baseline, offering a pragmatic starting point for exploring interaction's surface-level dimensions within ensemble performances.

Thirdly, within the performance portfolio, moments of interaction reveal an ensemble's intersubjective understandings and distinct conceptions of musical phenomena like intensity, space, and groove. Although a shared baseline of these concepts exists among ensemble members, the manifestation and response to them, such as increasing harmonic or textural density in response to a soloist's intensity peaks, can significantly vary, reflecting individual interpretations and strategic choices. Moreover, collective musical endeavours, such as managing textural density in 'Cloud' or navigating groove in 'Movement III:

Human Catastrophe', underscore an ensemble's common yet uniquely expressed musical comprehension and conceptualisation.

Fourthly, navigating through themes of tradition, freedom, and mentorship, the projects included in the portfolio exhibit distinct intersections with these concepts, either through adherence to a collective musical language and repertoire choice, or in the subtle mentorship dynamics observed in collaborations with Trevor Taylor. These themes not only permeate the sonic and collaborative aspects of the projects but also provide a nuanced underpinning for ensuing theoretical explorations.

Lastly, the portfolio's varied aesthetics and project scopes reveal that our collective sonic expectations guide our interactive musical gestures. For instance, while Solar is unlikely to allow interaction to disturb the underlying groove, Luminos explores prominent thematic elements through extended ostinatos, and different ensembles like In Trio, Solar, and Simulated Cities interact diversely within their respective, blues-inspired tracks, each adhering to or exploring varied sonic landscapes and utilising interaction in distinct ways. Consequently, an ensemble's aesthetic shapes its interactive approaches and is reciprocally expressed through this interaction.

Part Two: Interaction

Defining and Documenting Interaction

Interaction & Jazz Performance

Since the seminal ethnographic work of Paul Berliner and Ingrid Monson in the mid-1990s, there has been a significant increase in academic works investigating the nature and presence of interaction in jazz.[28] The idea that 'good jazz improvisation is sociable and interactive just like a conversation' has become commonplace in scholarly discourse.[29] Additionally, numerous scholars contend that re-evaluating the study of jazz to emphasise collectivism, either equally or over individualism, is not only remarkably beneficial but perhaps essential. This shift in perspective assists in creating a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of any examined artifact or practice.[30] Also, Mark Dobson and Vijay Iyer argue that jazz is 'a music that demands interaction' and that the dialogical processes of interaction are 'constant throughout a performance'.[31] Resultantly, scholars and practitioners have a clear ambition to encourage closer examinations of jazz performances to utilise interaction as an analyt-

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[28] Monson, *Saying Something: jazz improvisation and interaction*; Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (United States: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Paul Rinzler, "Preliminary Thoughts on Analyzing Musical Interaction Among Jazz Performers," *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* 4 (1988); Garrett Michaelsen, "Analyzing Musical Interaction in Jazz Improvisations of the 1960s" (Doctoral Indiana University, 2013); Tor Dybo, "Analyzing Interaction During Jazz Improvisation," *Jazzforschung* 31 (1999); Fernando Benadon, "Slicing the Beat: Jazz Eighth-Notes as Expressive Microrhythm," *Ethnomusicology* 50, no. 1 (2006); Karim Al-Zand, "Improvisation as Continually Juggled Priorities: Julian "Cannonball" Adderley's "Straight, no Chaser"," *Journal of Music Theory* 49, no. 2 (2005); Paul Steinbeck, "Talking Back: Analyzing Performer–Audience Interaction in Roscoe Mitchell's Nonaah," *Music Theory Online* 22, no. 3 (2016); Paul Steinbeck, "Area by Area the Machine Unfolds': The Improvisational Practice of the Art Ensemble of Chicago," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 2, no. 3 (2008); Peter Reinholdsson, *Making Music Together: An Interactionist Perspective on Small-Group Performance in Jazz*, vol. 14, Nova Series, (Uppsala: Uppsala University Library, 1998); Givan, "Rethinking Interaction in Jazz Improvisation."; Robert Hodson, *Interaction, Improvisation, and Interplay in Jazz* (Routledge, 2007).

[29] Monson, *Saying Something: jazz improvisation and interaction*, 1.

[30] Michaelsen, "Analyzing Musical Interaction in Jazz Improvisations of the 1960s," 1–9.

[31] Vijay Iyer, "Exploding the Narrative in Jazz Improvisation," in *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies*, ed. Robert G. O'Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, and Farah Jasmine Griffin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 394.

ical tool.[32] The forefronting of interaction as a profitable analytical tool is highlighted by Hodson when he writes:

> Most technical writings on jazz focus on improvised lines and their underlying harmonic progressions. These writings often overlook the basic fact that when one listens to jazz, one almost never hears a single improvised line, but rather a texture, a musical fabric woven by several musicians in real time. While it is often pragmatic to single out an individual solo line…it is important at all times to remember that an improvised solo is but one thread in that fabric, and it is a thread supported by, responded to, and responsive of the parts being played by the other musicians in the group.[33]

The above notwithstanding, the study of interaction in jazz performance is rather inceptive and arguably under-theorised; however, a growing body of scholarly work explores this fascinating phenomenon.[34] The germane literature is dividable into two distinct categories: a) work from the field of ethnography and ethnomusicology, and b) works situated in the domain of jazz analysis. Garrett Michaelsen makes a similar division, noting that some works are 'psychological' (individual-centred) and some 'sociological' (group-centred).[35] However, categorising and presenting the literature in such a manner is relatively unproductive as most of the work—depending on one's definitions—is either in a space between individualism and collectivism or situated in the 'sociological' camp. Therefore, in the proceeding summary, I will tackle and consider the relevant literature in chronological order, giving the reader a better sense of how the field and discourse on interaction has evolved and developed.

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[32] Mark Doffman, "Jammin' an Ending: Creativity, Knowledge, and Conduct among Jazz Musicians," *Twentieth-Century Music* 8, no. 2 (2011): 213.

[33] Hodson, *Interaction, Improvisation, and Interplay in Jazz*, 1.

[34] Givan, "Rethinking Interaction in Jazz Improvisation."

[35] Michaelsen, "Analyzing Musical Interaction in Jazz Improvisations of the 1960s," 25–26.

Paul Rinzler's 'Preliminary Thoughts on Analysing Musical Interaction Among Jazz Performers' is the earliest academic work on interaction.[36] His article opens with a compelling illustration of interaction as an antidote to overtly positivistic and rationalistic analytical approaches to jazz. Rinzler then outlines five 'types' of interaction: call and response, fills, accenting the end of formal units, common motive, and responding to the peaks of the soloist. Rinzler then applies the above framework to a sequential examination of the Phil Woods Quartet performance of 'Along Came Betty'.

Shortly after Rinzler's article (and likely being in the making concurrently), Paul Berliner released his monumental book *Thinking In Jazz*. It is a vast exploration of the world of jazz, considering issues such as: musicians' earliest experiences of music; pedagogical concerns of learning harmony, rhythm, and melody; and interactional principles of performance. As a means of investigation, Berliner adopted the well-traversed role of participant-observer. He diligently refined his jazz trumpet skills and cultivated an insider's connection with the art throughout a fifteen-year period. Meanwhile, he interviewed fifty-two jazz musicians—some highly eminent while others were somewhat more obscure. The questions forming these interviews aim to explicate the intersection between musical sound and social interaction. Although criticisms of historical selectivity and essentialism are undoubtedly present, Berliner's work remains to represent a seismic shift in the tone, content, and scope of jazz scholarship.[37] In the chapter on interaction, Berliner presents two metaphors often cited by jazz musicians to discuss the 'give and take' of ensemble playing:

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[36] Rinzler, "Preliminary Thoughts on Analyzing Musical Interaction Among Jazz Performers."

[37] Scott DeVeaux, "Thinking In Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation by Paul Berliner; Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction by Ingrid Monson (review)," Review, *Journal of American Musicological Scoiety* 51, no. 2 (1998).

One metaphor likens group improvisation to a conversation that players carry on among themselves in the language of jazz. The second likens the experience of improvising to going on a demanding musical journey.[38]

Berliner does not develop an overt theoretical framework in these terms but instead outlines strategies used by musicians to respond to each other and generate collective conversation while performing. These strategies include establishing, maintaining and improvising within a groove, the relationship between soloists and accompanists, unexpected gestures and directions in collective improvisation, and utilising improvisation to attend to musical errors.

Ingrid Monson's pathbreaking book, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*, built on the ethnographic groundwork laid by Paul Berliner. In Burton Peretti's review of Monson's book, he states, 'Berliner's work lavishes extraordinary attention to pine needles; Monson's takes the whole forest into account.'[39] Although Peretti's language is somewhat poetic and romanticised, it is fair to say that Monson's thesis is extensive, far-reaching, and multidimensional. The book opens with a discussion of Monson's background and the 'megapragmatics' of interviewing; moves through a description of the musical role of each instrument in the rhythm section; and onto a network of theoretical, ethical, and methodological issues centred on race, African American culture, and musical meaning.

The allegorical trope, *music is like language, and improvisation is like a conversation*, bolsters much of Monson's thesis. This metaphor provides a sound bedrock from which Monson can cite, discuss, and examine numerous interdisciplinary threads moving between linguistics, literary theory, cultural studies, musicology, and ethnomusicology. Some of the ideas traversed by Monson include: a

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[38] Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, 348.

[39] Burton Peretti, "Reviewed Work: Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction by Ingrid Monson," *Notes Second Series* 55, no. 1 (1998).

distancing from the reductionist and logocentric pitfalls of viewing musical sound as 'text'; the introduction of the concept of 'intermusicality', a valuable rubric that redefines intertextuality with a more inclusive focus on music; a close analytical examination of 'Bass-ment Blues' by the Jaki Byard Quartet; and a discussion of poststructuralist thought concerning ethnomusicology.

Many of the criticisms levelled at Berliner's work could also be cast at Monson's. Issues of selectivity in her descriptions of the rhythm section are apparent, with her conceptions soundly grounded in the modus operandi of postbop jazz.[40] Furthermore, Michaelsen has suggested that the large-scale philosophical frameworks created by Monson do not prove overly profitable in a close musical inspection of an artefact, and therefore, detailed musical specifics are left under-theorised.[41] Such a claim is indeed fair, particularly when one considers that Monson's analysis focuses on a single performance of one work from a single ensemble. The above criticisms notwithstanding, *Saying Something* is a detailed, highly original thesis that intersects a wide range of fields to present a cogent consideration of interaction and interplay in jazz.

Published in 1998, Peter Reinholdsson's book, *Making Music Together* is an incredibly detailed exploration of musical interaction in small jazz ensembles. Although broadly situated under the purview of ethnomusicology, Reinholdsson's thesis is distinctly interdisciplinary, drawing theoretical content from symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology, dramaturgy, and jazz analysis. As a result, Reinholdsson navigates a rich, intricate, and voluminous journey through the above fields, exploring many theories and methodologies.

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[40] Frank Tirro, "Reviewed Work(s): Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction by Ingrid Monson," *The World of Music* 41, no. 1 (1999): 19–23.

[41] Michaelsen, "Analyzing Musical Interaction in Jazz Improvisations of the 1960s," 19–23.

Before outlining his detailed analysis of interaction in two ensembles, Reinholdsson thoroughly explores the 'World of Jazz Performance'. Here, he explores four crucial ideas, these being: the sociomusical symbols utilised by jazz musicians; the musical self in jazz performance, alongside self-awareness and role-playing; the nuances of self-interaction and interaction with others, tackling sociomusical acts, collective unification through flow, negotiation and decision making, cultural value and tradition in the eyes of a jazz musician, and storytelling and conversation; and the meanings and values ascribed to sociomusical interaction. After this chapter, Reinholdsson presents two highly detailed case studies, examining interaction in two contexts: a quintet performing an original composition and a trio playing a standard. These analyses are incredibly detailed, containing biographical information on each performer, intricate descriptions of the utilised compositions/heads, and an exhaustive narrative of various episodes of interaction.

Interestingly, when one begins to delve into Reinholdsson's analyses, familiar phenomena come into view—particularly when utilising my performer-centred perspective. At the heart of Reinholdsson's moment-to-moment descriptions of interaction, one sees devices such as: responding to a soloist's peak, call and response and common motive, interruption and interjection, shifting roles and functions, changing and manipulating the groove or time-feel, and negotiating structural entities (repeats, ending and solo order).

Robert Hodson's book *Interaction, Improvisation, and Interplay in Jazz* is an analytical consideration of interaction and interplay seated in the perspective of the jazz performer, but without direct recourse to any Artistic Research theory, framework, or method.[42] Hodson builds a processual model of analysis from semiological principles—specifically the work of Jean-Jacques Nattiez—placing and defining each performer as a real-time composer who simultaneously

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[42] Ibid., 23.

listens to, and composes with, their bandmates (Figure 3). Further, although tentatively seated in the performer's perspective, Hodson's methodology clearly theorises from the 'product' to investigate the interactive 'process'.[43]

Figure 3. Hodson's model of the improviser's perspective on improvisation
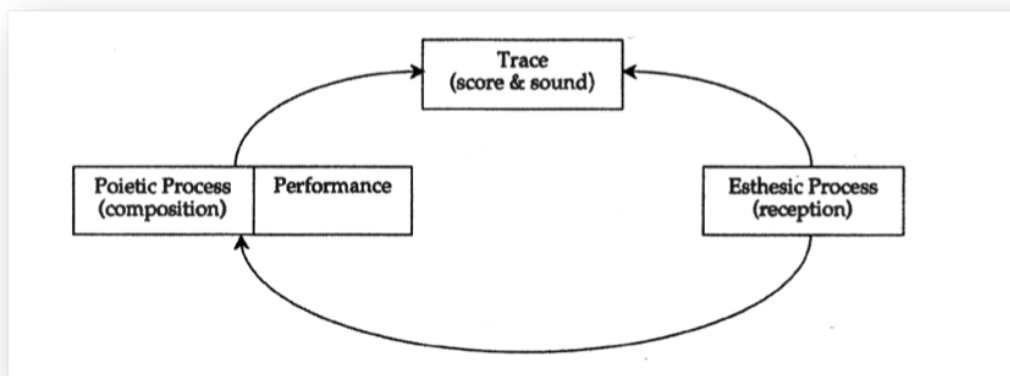
As a result, although Hodson's processual model provides an intriguing perceptual context to the phenomenon of interaction and interplay, it does little to extend or define its character as experienced from a performer-centred perspective. For example, the analyses found later in his book seem less concerned with interaction and somewhat more interested in generative considerations of how harmony and form manifest—albeit influenced by interaction—in performance. Furthermore, at times, Hodson appears to sideline the performer perspective in favour of a more traditional analytical viewpoint. As a result, Hodson makes some problematic analytical claims regarding how performers respond to what they hear. For instance, Hodson claims that Charlie Parker (on saxophone) has responded to Dizzy Gillespie (on piano) as both musicians play an improvised line and chord voicing, respectively. However, these gestures occur almost concurrently; drawing upon my performer-centred perspective, it is simply not possible for Gillespie to have heard and responded to Parker—and

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[43] Hodson, *Interaction, Improvisation, and Interplay in Jazz*, 23.

vice-versa—within such an infinitesimally small period of time.[44] What is more, Hodson's examination is sometimes grounded in the identification of consonance and musical concord as the primary manifestation of interaction; for example, the discussion of coherence to specific chord progressions in chapter two or the locking in or synchronisation examined in chapter three. Nonetheless, Hodson's book is a valuable and detailed account of the importance of situating analytical examinations of jazz within the sphere of interaction.

Building on the more analytical work of Robert Hodson, Garrett Michaelsen's 2013 doctoral thesis, 'Analyzing Musical Interaction in Jazz Improvisations of the 1960s', is an interesting extension of current thinking and posits a novel approach to examining group improvisation, placing interaction and exchange as crucial elements of music-making. Michaelsen opens his thesis with a detailed overview of current scholarship on interaction; he divides these into two categories: 'psychological' (individual-centred) and 'sociological' (group-centred). In the 'psychological' classification, Michaelsen discusses the work of Gunther Schuller and Steve Larson. Meanwhile, in the 'sociological' classification, Michaelsen considers the work of Ingrid Monson, Paul Berliner, Robert Hodson, and Keith Sawyer.[45]

Michaelsen then proceeds to develop a novel approach to examining interaction, combing several threads of thinking, and these include: holistic and atomistic listening; 'Stream Segregation' (at its most basic, this is a consideration of how we differentiate sounds while listening); thus defining interaction as '...moments of intervention in which the collision of two separate streams results in an alteration of either or both their paths'; and a discussion of 'projection', which is the manner in which streams can suggest their continuation.[46]

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[44] Matthew Butterfield, "Robert Hodson, Interaction, Improvisation, and Interplay in Jazz. New York and London: Routledge, 2007.," Review, *Jazz Research Journal* 1, no. 2 (2007): 242–45.

[45] Michaelsen, "Analyzing Musical Interaction in Jazz Improvisations of the 1960s," 25–6.

[46] Ibid., 49.

Michaelsen then combines these ideas with the work of Paul Steinbeck to formulate a framework that places interaction at the centre of improvisational theory.[47] Interestingly, Michaelsen then extends his conception of interaction from the moment-based, player-to-player level to three expanded domains, these being: musical referents; roles and functions within the ensemble; and styles of jazz, particularly the real-time demands of jazz and the uncertainty of its future state. The thesis concludes with several detailed examinations of pieces from the Duke Ellington album *Money Jungle*.

From my performer-centred perspective, I locate my criticisms of Michaelsen's thesis in his conception of the fundamental character of interaction. For example, I am not convinced it is possible (for performer or listener), or indeed practicable, to meaningfully 'predict' the continuation of an improvised line or 'stream'. Nor am I convinced that listeners have expectations concerning the complex future shape and trajectory of improvised lines. More fundamentally, it is doubtful that a performer experiences improvisation as having a substantive future state in the moment of performance. I would argue that such a framework loses touch with the underlying presentism (want for a better word)—particularly for a performer—of musical improvisation and the necessary focus on the moment-to-moment this produces.

The above notwithstanding, when Michaelsen utilises his framework to conduct a closer examination of *Money Jungle*, the resultant analysis often focuses on the identification of call and response (i.e., figure A from the pianist echoed by figure B from the bassist) and common motive, albeit framed in terms of convergence and divergence. Nonetheless, Michaelsen presents a detailed and novel approach to examining interaction, if not somewhat detached from the

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47 Steinbeck, "Area by Area the Machine Unfolds': The Improvisational Practice of the Art Ensemble of Chicago."; Paul Steinbeck, "Analyzing the Music of the Art Ensemble of Chicago," *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* 13, no. 1 (2008).

performer's experience of interaction.

Lastly, Benjamin Givan, in his article 'Rethinking Interaction in Jazz Improvisation', presents an excellent outline of contemporary thinking on interaction in jazz studies. His article initially discusses noninteractive performance—the venerable school of solo jazz piano, and improvisers who do not promote interaction.[48] Although the musical citations Givan calls upon are well-conceived, questions remain concerning his claim that:

> If we can better understand when and why jazz musicians sometimes claim to prefer noninteractive performance conditions, we will be able to recognize more clearly the nature and limits of improvisatory interaction itself, as well as to differentiate more precisely between some of its various manifestations.[49]

In support of the above, Givan recounts a story from Miles Davis in which Charlie Parker would playfully displace his improvisation over a twelve-bar blues in the hopes of confusing the rhythm section. As a result, the rhythm section would be forced to preserve the original referent, which Givan interprets as noninteraction; however, several criticisms emerge. Indeed, in many regards, the account Givan details of Parker and his quintet speaks quite directly to interaction. In other words, the conscious act of not overtly responding to a soloist and keeping a closer hold on the referent is itself a form of interaction. After all, noninteraction and interaction are not separate processes but rather two points on a spectrum of interactive manifestations and possibilities.

Nonetheless, Givan then posits three useful categorisations of interaction: micro-interaction (microscopic excitations of interaction including small adjustments in time, feel, pitch, and dynamics); macro-interaction (broadly defined as musical parameters meaningfully visualised through notation, i.e. changes in

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[48] Givan, "Rethinking Interaction in Jazz Improvisation," 2–7.

[49] Ibid., 2.

rhythm, intensity, dissonance); and motivic interaction (Givan states that this 'involves one musician playing a perceptible figure or gesture and others responding with gestures of their own'[50]). Givan then proceeds to apply this categorised interaction framework to consider interaction's presence in two iconic jazz works, Gerry Mulligan's 'Bernie's Tune' and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers performance of 'Moanin''. Givan concludes from this analysis that the character and presence of interaction, and its role in jazz (particularly as a response to a generation of post-war formalist critics) is possibly overstated.[51] Following this, Givan closes his article by articulating his concerns about overemphasising the presence and importance of interaction in jazz, and that such a stance could result in an 'overly narrow and homogeneous conception of the idiom'.[52] My concern with this final thought from Givan is undoubtedly born of my performer-centred perspective, in that from my experience of jazz performance and improvisation, interaction is almost entirely ubiquitous. That could be beneath the surface, manifesting as small adjustments to pulse and intonation, or on the surface emerging in the form of more overt gestures (call and response or fills), or indeed in a larger, more abstract space, arising through intertextual references or convergence on intersubjective ideas of intensity or dissonance; indeed, many (if not all) small-group jazz performances are replete with interaction.

Although the above review is not exhaustive, it does represent much of the relevant literature on interaction in jazz studies. It traverses an array of methods, theories, and thinking, but with some notable intersections in the descriptions of interaction. For instance, many of the above works (with the exception of Michaelsen) favour musical concord or convergence to indicate interaction. Therefore, devices suited to convergent episodes, such as call and response or common motive, can receive greater emphasis. However, there is an extensive col-

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[50] Ibid., 11.

[51] Ibid., 31–33.

[52] Ibid., 33.

lection of less overtly convergent musical and interactive gestures that warrant exploration. Similarly, there is a tendency in the above literature to categorise more divergent or discordant interactive moments and the navigation through these as 'error-correction'. Although possibly a simple framing issue, it lessens the value and capacity for performers to embrace and explore discordant episodes of interaction. Equally, there is a similar framing issue when considering non-interaction, insomuch that non-interaction is not distinct from interaction, but a position on the spectrum of interactive possibilities. Finally, much of the scholarly work reviewed above arguably focuses on a smaller portion of interactive manifestations. In other words, more measurable, overt interactive gestures can become the primary quarry of investigation without consideration of more abstract, extensive, or complex episodes of interaction.

Apart from the above criticisms, a voice (or perhaps rather methodology) that is evidently missing from the body of literature considered is that of Artistic Research, or indeed Performer-centred Research. Very little of the research reviewed utilises the direct perspective of the performer to appraise, review or synthesise the descriptions of interaction. Throughout the next section, utilising my performer-centred perspective, I will appraise and synthesise both a description of interaction and a set of tools for its analysis.

Interaction In Jazz Performance as African-American Practice

Before delving into the intricate nuances of interaction in jazz performance, rooting jazz within its African-American origins is imperative. In the opening address to the 2016 White House Jazz Festival, Barack Obama described jazz as a music that is 'forged in a crucible of cultures' and, more crucially, as being 'born out of the struggle of African Americans yearning for free-

dom'.[53] While Obama's initial remarks emphasise the music's rich cultural diversity and adaptability, his subsequent comments underscore jazz's unmistakable Afrodiasporic roots. Such statements bolster the understanding that jazz, beyond its inception, flourished as an art deeply intertwined with African-American heritage.

While my perspective, as a white European individual, might not encompass the profound lived experience of the freedom Obama signals, it remains critical for me to acknowledge and accentuate jazz's unambiguous Afrodiasporic musical lineage in this thesis. As Amiri Baraka, published as LeRoi Jones, compellingly discusses in his book *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*, jazz transcends mere operational musical details but instead serves as a potent expression of African American identity.[54] The interaction between jazz performers is not solely a musical conversation but mirrors broader cultural, societal, and historical dialogues. Therefore, even with its manifestation in a locale like Essex, jazz's pedagogy, practice, presentation, and performance must be anchored firmly in its African-American roots. In the following section, I aim to position interaction more precisely in jazz performance within this Afrodiasporic context, highlighting its connections to expansive cultural landscapes.

It is difficult to navigate a discussion on African-American cultural practices and heritage (particularly as a frame for a discussion of jazz performance) without considering Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s concept of 'Signifyin(g)'. In his seminal work, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*, Gates develops and explores the theory of Signifyin(g) as an analytical tool and framework to explore the interplay between prominent African-American

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[53] "Obama White House Archives: Remarks by the President at White House Jazz Festival," 2016, accessed Sept 2023, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/30/remarks-president-white-house-jazz-festival.

[54] Imamu Amiri Baraka, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: Morrow Quill, 1963), 152–55.

authors.[55] More specifically, Gates utilises the 'Signifying Monkey'—a figure from African-American folklore—as a metaphor to delve into the concept of Signifyin(g) as a unique form of discourse in African-American literature, culture, vernacular, and oral traditions.[56] Gate's Signifyin(g) is deeply connected to Ferdinand de Saussure's semiological concept of signification, wherein a signifier (sound object) interacts with the signified (concept) to formulate a complete linguistic sign.[57] In the domain of jazz performance, Signifyin(g) takes on a singular and distinct dimension. When jazz performers create and navigate a performance, they engage in a dynamic act of Signifyin(g), wherein they not only forge individual sonic gestures, but also respond to, formulate, and even challenge collective musical ideas from past and present performances. Employing Gates's concept of Signifyin(g) offers profound insights into the complexity of jazz as a quintessential African-American art form—a notion prominently explored in Ingrid Monson's work.

As previously discussed, Monson's seminal book, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction*, explores the conversational and interactive nature of jazz improvisation; however, it is when she juxtaposes this interactive nature with the concept of Signifyin(g) that the profound connection to African-American heritage becomes evident.[58] Moreover, just as Gates's notion of Signifyin(g) prompts a richer and more expansive examination of African-American literature, Monson's treatment of interaction in jazz performance unravels layers of cultural, historical, and societal intricacies. In essence, Monson is arguing that jazz is not just a musical genre, which can be understood and explored in logocentric and formalistic terms, but that it is an expression of the complex inter-

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55 Henry Louis Gates Jr, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

56 Ibid., 65–66.

57 Ibid., 50–55.

58 Monson, *Saying Something: jazz improvisation and interaction*, 86–90.

play of social, historical, and cultural dialogues—dialogues deeply embedded in the tapestry of African-American heritage.[59]

When we consider how jazz performers improvise, they are not just demonstrating their skills or building siloed gestures; instead, they are building collectivistic sonic landscapes and initiating a dialogue reminiscent of the African call-and-response tradition. This communal and social practice, having its origins in African musical traditions, was carried over to the Americas with enslaved Africans, with this form of interaction serving as a testament to the resilience of a community that used music as a medium to communicate, bond, and defy oppression.

Building on this idea, Gates's concept of 'Signifyin(g)' offers a more insightful layer to our understanding. Just as Gates identifies Signifyin(g) as a unique form of communication within African-American literary and cultural expressions, jazz performers, in their performances, often 'signify' on established musical forms, gestures, and landscapes. They engage with these musical elements and forms, playfully adapting and dialoguing with them in a manner reminiscent of how African-American authors and orators would engage with familiar texts or cultural narratives. Thus, when discussing interaction in jazz performance, it is pivotal to acknowledge its profound ties to African-American heritage and that the dynamism and depth of interaction in jazz are inextricably linked to this rich cultural tapestry.

In advancing the exploration of interaction, I will approach it from a performer-centred perspective. This approach will enable me to dissect the surface-level sonic elements and the deeper aspects of interaction in jazz performance. I will first scrutinise the essential components that form any particular musical landscape. From there, I will investigate jazz performers' surface-level structures

[59] Ibid., 185–91.

and conceptual strategies to stimulate and foster interaction. Subsequently, I will frame interaction as a reflection of a shared social-aesthetic vision. This examination will also explore the collective understanding of an ensemble's aesthetic and the milieu in which it is embedded, delving into how these shared perspectives sculpt our interactions on stage. To conclude this section, I will highlight three pivotal forces that I discern as influencing the collective social-aesthetic ideals within this portfolio and my overarching artistic practice.

Sonic Characteristics, Gestures, and Environments

Before turning directly to interaction, I will revisit the idea drawn from the performance portfolio of musical ingredients and sonic landscapes, and the implication of a scale of musical and sonic resources. Such a notion is highly evocative of details contained within Raymond Hickey's website, *Levels of Language*.[60] Naturally, Hickey's discussion situates the levels of language in the field of linguistics, moving from Phonetics (the study of all human sounds), through Morphology and Syntax (words and sentences), to Semantics and Pragmatics (meaning and use). While acknowledging the utility in positioning and locating an interface between linguistics and a discussion of interaction, drawing upon my performer-centred perspective, I situate the engagement with linguistics as purely allegorical. To put more simply, although jazz improvisation—when viewed from the field of neuroscience or neurology—might be comparable to conversation, phenomenologically, these experiences are undoubtedly distinct. Hence, evoking language and conversation in the discourse on interaction is simply an allegorical tool to better convey an experientially complex phenomenon. Therefore, there is a clear need to frame the notion of a scale of language in jazz performance in a more musically and sonically grounded manner. At this point, it would be helpful to draw upon Marc Hannaford's descriptions of sonic environments, sonic gestures, and sonic characteristics.

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[60] "Levels of Language," accessed May, 2020, https://www.uni-due.de/ELE/LevelsOfLanguage.pdf.

Hannaford grounds his descriptions of sonic environments, gestures, and characteristics with ecological psychologist J.J. Gibson's notion of affordances. Hannaford describes affordances thus, 'affordances are, in their basic form, opportunities for action that emerge from the interaction between organisms and their environment'.[61] Furthermore, Hannaford notes that his framework is primarily concerned with free jazz; however, I would argue that this framework can be equally profitable when considering moderated jazz performances that utilise more common cyclic referents. Hannaford goes on to outline and define sonic environments, gestures, and characteristics:

- *Sonic Environment*: this is a conceptual structure which facilitates and realises musical performance. Thus, it is the space, collectively created and construed, in which a specific musical artefact is generated. Of course, sonic gestures can reference previous or alternative sonic environments via the means of intertextual or intermusical reference. Furthermore, environments, although constructed via sonic means, can also be moderated by non-sonic entities, such as a score or a cyclic referent (or, indeed via many other forms of moderator, such as a conductor or text-based directions).

- *Sonic Gestures*: these are sounds which musicians regard as meaningful constituents of their sonic environment. Although usually the product of intention (as far as that is possible), they can also be the product of unintentional action, such as a drummer accidentally hitting their cymbal. Ultimately, it is for the musicians themselves to determine which gestures are meaningful and which are not, there is, of course, an element of cultural, social, and aesthetic conditioning. For example, it is imaginable

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[61] Marc Hannaford, "One Line, Many Views: Perspectives on Music Theory, Composition, and Improvisation through the Work of Muhal Richard Abrams" (PhD Columbia University, 2019), 39.

that there are certain neo-classicist or traditional sonic environments in jazz practice wherein the deployment of prepared piano techniques, or the assemblage of sonic gestures available via a synthesiser might not be considered 'meaningful'.

- *Sonic Characteristics*: simply put, these are the constituent properties of a sonic gesture. Hannaford assigns them two forms, elemental and referential. Elemental characteristics refer to the theoretically definable parameters of a characteristic, such as pitch, rhythm, texture, timbre, and others. Meanwhile, referential characteristics signpost stylistic conventions, or pieces of music or genres, attitudes, and musicians (and their music) not present in the performance. In this sense, these referential characteristics speak to Monson's notion of intermusicality.

From my performer-centred perspective, viewing the space within which performers create music as a sonic environment, which is conceptually and collectively created and construed, is a profound reflection of the fundamental ontology of improvised ensemble performance; it generates a space in which the performers can shape, forge, and meld their sonic gestures and characteristics in accordance with and in response to a shared understanding and expression of an underlying aesthetic. Indeed, in many regards, I view Hannaford's descriptions of sonic characteristics, gestures, and environments as mirroring my conceptions of musical ingredients and sonic landscapes. Hence, these descriptions are a profitable, performer-centred collection of tools with which to analyse and investigate performance. These descriptions will form the building blocks and fundamental terminology for further discussion and analysis.

Micro, Macro, and Conceptual Interaction

Although the methodological and philosophical positions of Rinzler, Monson, and Givan vary greatly, their descriptions detailing the sonic characteristics and gestures of interaction are a valuable starting point.[62] Drawing their descriptions together and utilising the observations drawn out from the performance portfolio, I will suggest three broad categories that detail various manifestations of interaction in jazz performance.

The diagram below (Figure 4), presents three broad categories of interaction: micro-interaction, macro-interaction, and conceptual-interaction. These groupings have been adopted from Givan's article, 'Rethinking Interaction in Jazz Improvisation', but have seen some refinement.

Figure 4. Three categories of interaction

Micro-interaction	Macro-interaction	Conceptual-interaction
Pitch / Intonation	Call & Response	Intertexural Reference
Tempo Adjustments	Common Motive	Thematic Reference
Pulse Placement	Fills	Intensity
Articulation	Vamps and/or Pedal Points	Groove
	Accenting Formal Units & Hypermeter	Space
	Responding to Peaks or Troughs	

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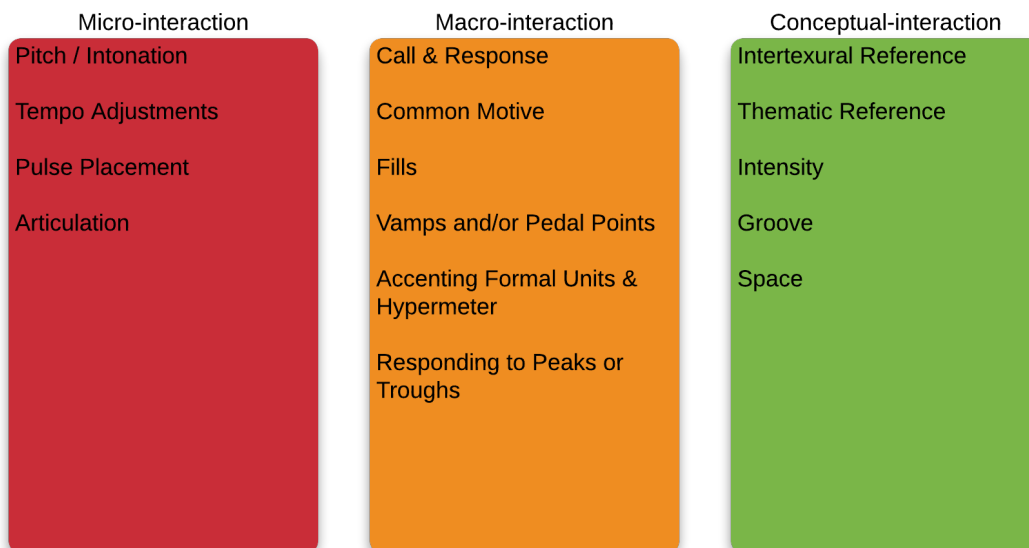
62 Givan, "Rethinking Interaction in Jazz Improvisation."; Monson, *Saying Something: jazz improvisation and interaction*; Rinzler, "Preliminary Thoughts on Analyzing Musical Interaction Among Jazz Performers."

However, the above diagram is misleading; it frames interaction as having three distinct classifications, and although having three neat categories is undoubtedly useful, the reality—specifically from the performer's perspective—is that interaction is an array of manifestations located on a spectrum. The diagram below (Figure 5) recasts the above as a spectrum of interactive gestures. Such a reframing may seem like a slight semantic shift; that said, from my performer-centred perspective, I feel it is crucial to see interaction in such a manner.

Figure 5. Continuum of interaction

Micro-interaction	Macro-interaction	Conceptual-interaction
		Intertexural Reference
Pitch / Intonation	Call & Response	Thematic Reference
Tempo Adjustments	Common Motive	Intensity
Pulse Placement	Fills	Groove
Articulation	Accenting Formal Units & Hypermeter	Space
	Responding to Peaks	
	Vamps & Pedal Points	
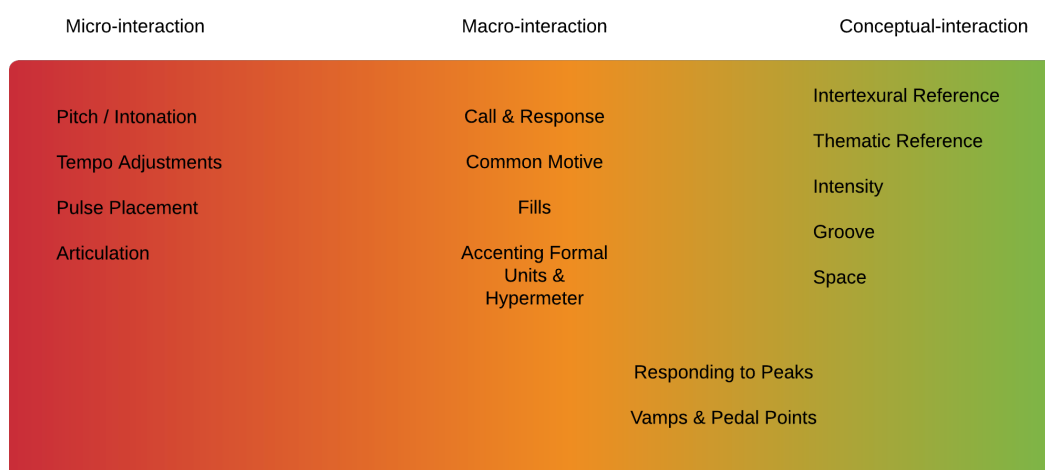
Like Givan, I have defined micro-interaction as small, almost imperceptible interactions concerning intonation, pitching, tempo flexibility and pulse placement, and, to a lesser extent, slight adjustments to articulation. These types of interaction can occur both consciously and unconsciously and arguably are continually present in all jazz performances—and possibly are a requirement for all musical performances.[63] Furthermore, such interactions occur on an incredibly small plane of musical detail, well beyond traditional Western notation's de-

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[63] Martin Clayton, "Entrainment, Ethnography, and Musical Interaction," in *Experience and Meaning in Music Performance*, ed. Martin Clayton, Byron Dueck, and Laura Leante (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 34.

scriptive or communicative capacity. Nonetheless, temporal micro-interaction is a fundamental component of ensemble performance, enabling a group of musicians to stay broadly synchronised and thus maintaining the underlying ictus of a performance where needed. The domain of micro-interaction—particularly temporal micro-interaction through synchronisation or entrainment—has been explored empirically and phenomenologically in contexts ranging from jazz to string quartet performance, and speaks to a wide range of fascinating scholarship.[64] Interestingly, the above definitions and micro-interaction descriptions sit below Hannaford's elemental sonic characteristics. Given the growing body of research in this space, the complexity of exploring a phenomenon located at such a small scale, and the separate experiential quality of these attributes, this thesis will not explore micro-interaction beyond this point.

Macro-interaction is the collection of interactive sonic gestures with the most significant surface and structural affinity to the commonly discussed attributes of interaction in jazz studies, and can be described thus:

- *Call and Response*: a dialogic interchange between two musicians, which is simplistically represented as *A* (call) and *B* (response). These sonic gestures often occur consecutively, with the second functioning as a reply, resolution, or extension of the first. Furthermore, the sonic gestures can be clearly demarked, featuring an unmistakable turn-taking quality, or messy with crosstalk and overlapping between gestures. A typical ex-

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[64] Ibid.; Nicholas Cook, "Making Music Together, or Improvisation and its Others," *The Source: Challenging Jazz Criticism* 1 (2004); Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Mark Doffman, "Feeling The Groove: shared time and its meanings for three jazz trios" (Doctor of Philosophy The Open University, 2008); Doffman, "Jammin' an Ending: Creativity, Knowledge, and Conduct among Jazz Musicians."; Mark Doffman, "Groove: Temporality, Awareness, and the Feeling of Entrainment in Jazz Performance," in *Experience and Meaning in Music Performance*, ed. Martin Clayton, Byron Dueck, and Laura Leante (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Elisabeth Le Guin, "One Says That One Weeps, But One Does Not Weep': Sensibile, Grotesque, and Mechanical Embodiments in Boccherini's Chamber Music.," *Journal of American Musicological Scoiety* 55, no. 2 (2002); Caroline Palmer, "Musical Performance," *Annual Review of Psychology* 48 (1997); Alfred Schütz, "Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationship," *Social Research* 18, no. 1 (1951); Frederick Seddon and Michele Biasutti, "A Comparison of Modes of Communication between Members of a String Quartet and a Jazz Quartet," *Psychology of Music* 37 (2009); Richard Sennett, *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

ample of larger-scale call and response in jazz performance is 'trading', whereby instrumentalists exchange improvised gestures or phrases with the drummer.

- *Common Motive*: similar to call and response, this is the exact—where practicable—repetition of a sonic gesture or characteristic by two or more performers and is usually instigated by the soloist. Additionally, the size and scope of episodes of common motive are markedly distinct from call and response, often featuring smaller, more overt gestures or characteristics which are more easily echoed. Furthermore, as one might expect, common motive is often used in two contexts: facilitating a passing exchange, with these moments being rather fleeting, and as an outgrowth or expression of heightened musical intensity. Also, like call-and-response, episodes can be neatly demarked or messy with a significant degree of crosstalk.

- *Fills*: defined as a textural reversal of the foreground and background. For instance, a musician whose function is currently situated in the background (i.e., an accompanying rhythm section player) interjects a gesture into the foreground. I define a fill as an interjection distinct from call and response and common motive. In other words, it is an unrelated interjection that does not directly respond to or echo the soloist's gesture or characteristics but instead fills a space left by the soloist (or interjects over a soloist) with new or unconnected sonic characteristics.

- *Vamp and/or Pedal Point*: a vamp is a repeated figure, accompaniment or groove, while a pedal point features a sustained note (often the tonic or dominant) usually executed by the bassist to create tension and an interactive launchpad for the soloist. As discussed by Monson, pedal points in jazz performance service a greater and more interactive purpose when

compared to Western classical music.[65] Rather than simply acting to prolong a significant or principal harmony (often as a precursor to an impending cadence), in jazz performance, a pedal point can act as an interactive and sonic ballast upon which the remainder of the ensemble can extend and extemporise. Moreover, pedal points can communicate directions and intentions between the ensemble, pointing to a structural boundary or conveying the end or beginning of a solo.

- *Accenting the End of Formal Units*: the tendency for soloist and rhythm section to highlight the end of four-bar or eight-bar phrases or structural boundaries (the end of a section or the end of the referent). The nature and extent of the 'accenting' are broad and multifaceted but can be achieved via fills, common motive, or pedal points.

- *Responding to The Peaks of The Soloist*: this relates to how the rhythm section might match the soloist's 'intensity' at any point. Again, this phenomenon's exact nature is fluid, but often, intensity could be defined as an increase in rhythmic or harmonic density, dissonance or chromaticism, or the overall dynamic of the ensemble.

In many respects, these descriptions are the starting point for much of the literature on interaction and often function as a launchpad to explore more contextually complex ideas or provide a downward touchstone from which more fundamental or processual details can be pinpointed and scrutinised. Nevertheless, drawing upon my performer-centred perspective, these devices are certainly those that a jazz performer might regularly deploy (often with conscious intention) to partake in or instigate interactive exchanges or episodes.

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[65] Monson, *Saying Something: jazz improvisation and interaction*, 34.

At this point, it would be beneficial to note a slight distinction between the six macro-interaction devices. As observed in the portfolio, these devices' malleability and deployability depend on the vehicle's moderating force utilised during any given performance. In other words, some of the above devices (accenting hypermeter or structural boundaries) require the vehicle or moderating entity to have a more defined structure or form—such as a 12-bar blues or AABA song form—and, as such, are less useable when the moderating entity is structurally less defined. However, common motive and call and response are much more malleable and can be utilised in various settings and contexts, being far less dependent on the features of the moderating or structural forces acting upon a performance. Meanwhile, pedal points and vamps point towards a more abstract interactive space. To put more simply, although a vamp or pedal may seem highly normative, the anchoring impact often enables performers to use these as a launchpad to explore far more complex and extemporised sonic gestures. As observed in the portfolio, responding to the peaks (or troughs) is equally abstract, insomuch that a 'peak' or 'trough' in intensity has multiple interpretations. Although unquestionably born of intersubjectivity shared by the ensemble, such gestures have great latitude in how an individual or group of performers might express them. For example, in response to a 'peak' from a soloist, a drummer might increase their rhythmic density, essentially playing more dense and complex rhythmic interjections; a pianist might increase the harmonic complexity while not necessarily increasing their harmonic rhythm or rhythmic density; while a bassist might create a pedal point, or possibly blur the underlying groove, giving the time feel a more elastic and tense quality. The interpretative and abstract anatomy of 'intensity' produced by peaks, pedals, vamps, and troughs leads us to the third set of devices.

For this final category, I have amalgamated numerous complex expressions of interaction, which point beyond the immediate sonic environment of a performance and speak to the interstices between musical interpretation, content,

and context. I appreciate that in categorising these far-reaching phenomena in one place, I have created an almost untenably broad group; however, such breadth points to the diverse spectrum of interactive gestures which signal a space beyond merely considering the more normative interactive devices. In this broader space, phenomena might include:

- *Intertextual and Intermusical Reference*: sound and sonic information representing and speaking to prior performance, pedagogy, and practice. This shared sonic lexicon is crucial in performers being able to collectively construe and construct sonic environments, within which characteristics and gestures have meaning beyond the initial intention of the performer. Such references could manifest as a quotation (playing a gesture that is shared or known by performers, which can generate reference or humour), or these gestures could be more nuanced, featuring grooves or characteristics pointing to a performance outside of the immediate sonic environment (such as playing an iconic groove or vamp or utilising another performer's 'sound' or technique).

- *Thematic Reference*: a reference to a cyclic referent pertinent to the current sonic environment. In other words, quoting thematic content from a piece or pieces that feature in the immediate performance. These devices are often utilised to communicate direction (the end of a solo, for example), but they can also be deployed to generate intensity or heighten interactivity.

- *Intensity*: an intersubjective conception that indicates an upwards (or downwards) change in energy, expressed by altering an array of sonic characteristics, such as rhythmic density, dynamic quality, dissonance and consonance, or textural density. Crucially, this concept embodies a fundamental shared subjectivity. While each individual might interpret

intensity in their way, a collective understanding typically emerges within an ensemble. This collective understanding encompasses the meaning of intensity and the extent to which it can be utilized.

- *Groove*: as defined by Monson, is a complicated collection of rhythmic and phraseological gestures and characteristics, but also something more conceptual situated between the individual and the collective, pointing to larger social and cultural forces and connections.[66] Groove can signal an ensemble's overarching aesthetic ideal while also—in the context of a jazz performance—can be a core musical ingredient of the sonic environment generated through improvisation and interaction. Also, on a more mechanistic level, groove can be created, maintained, suspended, or transformed through interaction; and again, such interactive processes can speak to an intersubjectivity shared by an ensemble.

- *Space*: space, much like groove, is both mechanistic with surface-level manifestations and conceptual, pointing again to an ensemble's shared aesthetic ideal. At the level of performance, space could manifest as a change in texture, facilitating a soloist to explore new territory, which in turn could result in accompanists lessening interjections and other macro-interactions to allow the soloist to speak. Meanwhile, on a more conceptual level, space could permeate a multitude of sonic characteristics and gestures, pointing to interactions in rhythmic density, phrasing, dynamic range, harmonic and tonal complexity, and a more fundamental aesthetic ideal regarding the nature of how the performers on stage may deploy and engage in interaction.

The above descriptions point to the intersubjective and interpretative nature of what I have categorised as conceptual-interaction. It highlights that interaction

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[66] Ibid., 26–29.

is, of course, a social and collective endeavour, shaped and forged by a shared conception of an ensemble's aesthetic ideal—a collection of ideas that shape, through improvisation, the character of performance while signalling associations, values, and meaning shared by the ensemble. Consequently, one must consider in what ways this broad spectrum of interactive manifestations, from the surface-level (macro-) to the abstract (conceptual-), is guided and informed by an ensemble's collectively construed and constructed aesthetic ideal. How do an ensemble's shared ideas of their collective sound, and what this represents and means, impact and shepherd their manifestations and utilisation of interaction?

Interaction as a Social Aesthetic Ideal

Within the field of musicology, the term 'aesthetics' has arguably fallen out of fashion, and perhaps quite reasonably. When one hears the term, it possibly evokes neo-Kantian or neo-Humean philosophies that detail the nature of beauty and artistic judgment. Although the value and utility of Kant's and Hume's aesthetics might still be a productive avenue for debate, it is fair to say that neither philosopher's theories sufficiently or convincingly situate the production, transmission, or consumption of art in the social assemblage from which it is forged. Georgina Born, in her introductory chapter to *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics* articulates this convincingly when she writes:

> …both theories, in different yet related ways, have neglected the ways in which one's location and embeddedness in a particular culture and social milieu affect one's aesthetic judgements, the role that such social location might play in aesthetics, and questions of whether and how social experience might itself be immanent in aesthetic experience.[67]

Born further articulates two reasons why Kantian and Humean schools preclude the social and, therefore, arguably, the interactive. Firstly, the Kantian pos-

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[67] Born, Lewis, and Straw, "Introduction: what is social aesthetics?," 1.

ition would claim that a pure judgement of aesthetic beauty is derived from a dispassionate and objective sense of pleasure, clasped with the purposelessness of art as art. In such a claim, there appears to be little room for the cultural, the social, or the interactive.[68] Secondly, Born notes that the Humean school claims that a complete theory of taste requires the objective judgement of an expert, and that such an expert is devoid of prejudice. Such a position presumes that any aesthetic discourse 'can and should be neutral with regard to the social status, position, history and function'.[69] Most significant is the difficulty in disentangling the social from the artistic and aesthetic. In other words, seeing an artistic artefact as an autonomous teleological entity (a product separated from its producer) is not profitable—or, at least, only profitable within a minimal scope of enquiry. However, situating aesthetic judgements and artistic value in the entire congregation of social and cultural action enables a more comprehensive discussion. Indeed, such a claim and argument are by no means new or original in musicological circles, and echo the concerns of Joseph Kerman.[70] Nevertheless, Born notes that the impetus behind her collection of essays is drawn from three overlapping movements:

> …the demand issued by scholarship in ethnomusicology, musicology, popular music studies, jazz studies, and sociology of music for progress in theorizing the heterogeneity and the different scales of music's social mediation; the drive in art theory and criticism to take seriously and analyze those facets of recent art practices in which the social features as a dimension of aesthetic experience; and the concern within anthropological and social theory to reconceptualize the social—or "sociality"—itself.[71]

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[68] Ibid., 2; Hannah Ginsberg, "Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology," *Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2019 Edition)* (2019), accessed May 2020. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/kant-aesthetics/.

[69] Born, Lewis, and Straw, "Introduction: what is social aesthetics?," 2; Theodore Gracyk, "Hume's Aesthetics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2020 Edition)* (2020), accessed May 2021. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/hume-aesthetics/.

[70] Joseph Kerman, *Musicology*, ed. Frank Kermode, Fontana Masterguides, (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1985), 72–73.

[71] Born, "After Relational Aesthetics: Improvised Music, the Social, and (Re)Theorizing the Aesthetic," 33.

In many respects, Born's description of social aesthetics can be seen both as an extension of the traditional subject matter of aesthetics (an individual's beliefs of art objects, the processual and cognitive processes instigating such beliefs, and the fundamental ontology of art that underpins such beliefs and attitudes), and a critique of traditional neo-Kantian and neo-Humean schools. Furthering this point, Born writes:

> A social aesthetics is, then, less concerned with demarcating a class of aesthetically valuable objects or experiences—those associated with, say, Beethoven or Bird, Brancusi or Beuys, Beach Boys or Blackalicious—is judged to be valuable, or its value contested, by some social group or other, or is taken to be the entangled locus of social-aesthetic experience. By rejecting what is often seen as a Kantian view of the functionlessness of art, a social aesthetics argues for, and investigates the details of, the many ways in which our interactions with art participate in or serve an array of political orientations and social and cultural processes: from signalling our membership in and commitment to particular social identities (Marxist, African American, queer, or so on) or culturally imagined communities (punk, psytrance, death metal, and so on), to reifying, contesting, or modelling alternatives to existing social formations.[72]

Bringing the above passage into view concerning interaction in jazz performance, one must consider what social identities, imagined communities, and broader canonised historical conventions impact and are expressed through our interactions on stage. For example, how does my identification as European impact the manifestation of interaction in my performances and the artistic and aesthetic value I place upon it? Consider the multitude of imagined communities under the umbrella of jazz and how fidelity to one might influence the nature and value of interaction during jazz performance. Suppose the members of Solar and I situate the project in the sphere of jazz fusion, or I purposefully shape the aesthetic of *Simulated Cities* to be located in the subgenre of hardbop. How might such placements and identities inform the nature and value of in-

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[72] Born, Lewis, and Straw, "Introduction: what is social aesthetics?," 3.

teraction during our respective performances? When interaction within an ensemble is positioned as an endeavour and process deeply entwined with the social, it also expresses the performers collectively created and construed social aesthetic ideal. In other words, an ensemble's shared social aesthetic principles and conception (which engages with and expresses their commitment, if only for that moment, to a particular imagined community, social identity, or broader contextual entity or force) inevitably emerge and are expressed through their interaction on stage.

Adding further detail to the notion of social aesthetics, Born, in her essay 'After Relational Aesthetics: Improvised Music, the Social, and (Re)Theorizing the Aesthetic', outlines four planes of social mediation which help locate social aesthetics:

- *The First Plane* is the space in which music performance occurs and speaks to the diverse socialities and microsocialities produced in the performance and practice of music. Furthermore, this plane considers the relational and embodied connectivity found within an ensemble and its associations.

- *The Second Plane* considers the wider imagined communities animated and formed by music performance and practice. In this plane, listeners are combined and amalgamated into virtual collectives or publics, with clear alliances based on musical and other identifications.

- *The Third Plane* is where music engages, refracts, and bends broader social connections and relations, whether concrete and established or amorphous and abstract; for example, music's representation and engagement with class, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality.

- *The Fourth Plane* engages and considers the larger scale, institutional forces and entities which provide the basis for music's production, re-production, transmission, and transformation. These could include patronage, market forces, capitalist entities, and publicly subsidised cultural institutions.

The first two planes directly produce and engage with musical practice and performance. Meanwhile, the last two planes relate to broader social phenomena and institutions that grant and render numerous forms of musical activities; these entities still maintain a powerful capacity to impact and influence the immediate musical experience and the associated communities.

Born makes three more valuable observations.[73] Firstly, the first two planes arguably have a degree of autonomy and are underdetermined by the latter two planes. This means that the first two planes could easily be considered separately from the latter two and that the interconnectivity between the first two planes and the last two planes is arguably complex and imprecise. Secondly, all four planes of social mediation enter and engage with the musical assemblage. Essentially, although perhaps treated differently, all four planes of social mediation outlined by Born exist in current discourse and discussion of music and its practice. Thirdly, Born notes that the four planes are irreducible to one another but are still present in contingent and nonlinear ways via conditioning, bestowing, and causality. In other words, one plane cannot be reduced to another; however, one plane can be considered separately, albeit contingently. Furthermore, the many interactions between these planes forge and facilitate various musical assemblages to instigate and engender specific socio-musical and aesthetic experiences.

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[73] Born, "After Relational Aesthetics: Improvised Music, the Social, and (Re)Theorizing the Aesthetic," 43–44.

Interaction as Freedom, Tradition, and Mentorship

Having explored the concept of social aesthetic ideals and the sonic environments, gestures and characteristics in which they may manifest while also constructing a set of devices and descriptions of interaction drawn from my performer-centred perspective, it is essential to consider some more specific forces which shape and guide an ensemble's social aesthetic ideals. Utilising my performer-centred perspective, I have identified three overarching concepts which manifest through a sonic environment and are in dialogue with social identities, imagined communities, wider historical conventions and canons, and performance contexts and practice: *Interaction as Freedom*, *Interaction as Tradition*, and *Interaction as Mentorship*. Although these three entities are incredibly present in my practice and have shaped my voice, views, and values within my jazz performance experience, they have also been widely discussed in the broader discourse of jazz and thus warrant further consideration and contextualisation. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that these concepts, while delineated as discrete entities, are not confined in isolation. Instead, they seamlessly weave through and resonate in, arguably, every jazz performance. My intention is not to dichotomise freedom, tradition, and mentorship as antithetical pillars but to present them as interconnected and dialogic concepts.

Interaction as Freedom: In the moment-to-moment of performance, interaction as freedom could indicate the capacity for musicians and performers to exert their maximum influence and individuality on the performance or, in the broader context, can speak to a myriad of social, historical and cultural narratives and discourses. As noted by Michael C. Heller, in his chapter 'Freedom' from his book *Loft Jazz: Improvising New York in the 1970s*, the notion of freedom has been exhaustively examined, recast, deconstructed, and reconstituted by a vast number of commentators.[74] That said, there are three dominant (but by no means

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[74] Michael C. Heller, "Freedom," in *Loft Jazz: Improvising New York in the 1970s* (USA: University of California Press, 2017), 65–66.

exhaustive) narratives on freedom within jazz. Firstly, those interested in American history might indicate the role of jazz as an emblem of American democracy (and the apparent freedom it might evoke), particularly during the Cold War.[75] Secondly, many social and cultural theorists, ethnomusicologists, and any concerned individual might position freedom in jazz as a vital touchstone for investigating and discussing African-American activism, the civil rights movement, and the profound racial discrimination experienced by many African-American artists and performers.[76] Thirdly, journalists, analysts, and musicologists might interrogate freedom in jazz concerning the surface details or the technical content of the music, particularly (but not exclusively) of the sub-genre, free jazz.[77]

Reflecting upon my personal perspective as a performer, I tread lightly when considering the idea of freedom, especially in its interface with American democracy or the fight against racial discrimination. My position as a white European precludes me from possessing and knowing the depth of lived experience necessary to delve into these profoundly challenging domains, and I am hesitant to comment on them as an external observer (especially given that the methodological framework utilised in this thesis is autoethnographic). In examining the nuances of freedom within my praxis—both in locale and practice—it becomes abundantly clear that my encounters with and experience of freedom align more with surface-level manifestations outlined in the third description detailed above. The performances presented in the accompanying portfolio, such as *Luminos* and *Sonifications: The Anthropocene Epoch*, serve as

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[75] Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassabors Play The Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Lisa E. Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009).

[76] Frank Kofsky, *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970); Imamu Amiri Baraka, *Black Music* (New York: Akashic, 1967); Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixities* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[77] John Litweiler, *The Freedom Principle: Jazz After 1958* (USA: Da Capo Press, 1990); Ekkehard Jost, *Free Jazz* (Hachette Book, 1975).

quintessential examples. The sonic characteristics, gestures, and environments exude a palpable sense of freedom, particularly as it relates to the musical and sonic elements of the music. These albums are constructed in dialogue with a clear social aesthetic ideal of freedom, encouraging the individual performers, through interaction, to bend and deconstruct frameworks such as form, structure, tonality, time and metre, and texture and space. However, suggesting that this surface-level freedom only resides in sonic environments defined as 'free jazz' is misleading. The *In Trio* album stands testament to this, showcasing extensive freeness and freedom in its interactivity and performance.

In navigating the intricate landscapes of my praxis, the social aesthetic ideal of freedom emerges as a paramount force shaping my interactions. During performances, I discern a palpable ability to elicit and catalyse heightened moments of interaction, unveiling a more intense body of interactive exchanges. This freedom ushers in a departure from conventional jazz language (as I perceive it), inviting the use of more abstract sonic characteristics and gestures. The resultant sonic environment feels distinct, challenging the standard modus operandi of jazz (again, as I perceive it) and bringing an abstract formulation of interaction to the fore. This landscape fosters heightened interactivity, where the macro-interactive concepts of space, groove, and intensity crystallise as more pronounced vehicles for interaction. Interestingly, as I move away from what I experience and perceive as traditional jazz language, echoes of my European musical lineage become more discernible. Sonic gestures and characteristics reminiscent of Bartok, Debussy, Shostakovich, and Stockhausen — integral to my formative piano training — surface more prominently, intertwining my past pedagogy with my present interactive and improvised performance.

Interaction as Tradition: In this context, tradition relates to the role and impact of canonised convention and practice on jazz performance. Such a notion could pertain to the use of established jazz language as a basis for improvisation,

whether that be the creation of a solo, the presentation of a theme, or indeed the broader processual elements and conventions which govern a performance (groove, structure, modus operandi, presentation, and performance platforms and venues). Additionally, the notion of tradition can also pertain to the choice of repertoire, such as favouring Tin Pan Alley compositions known as 'standards'. David Ake notes in his book *Jazz Cultures* that the relationship between 'tradition' and 'standards', particularly during the 80s and 90s, was profound:

> Over the course of those two decades, the understanding emerged that a musician's relationship to "the tradition" explicitly and consciously related to the history of the compositions he/she chose to play.[78]

I would also suggest that creating compositions that purposefully evoke standards or are highly reminiscent of a particular era or movement (bebop, hardbop, cool jazz, modal jazz) also generates dialogue with the tradition. Like freedom, tradition can also speak to a rich milieu of social, cultural, and historical concerns. More specifically, during the 80s and 90s (and arguably well into the 2000s), there was sustained pressure from larger-scale entities and institutions (record labels, record stores, music colleges) to maintain and develop the tradition-standard correlation. As Ake noted, an extreme, profit-orientated, musically conservative, and corporate mindset had a significant role in binding the notions of the tradition and the performance of 'standards'.[79] Additionally, tradition in jazz performance can also signal its Afrodiasporic roots that intertwine African musical practice with the lived experiences of African Americans in the southern USA. Originating from the blues, spirituals, and the vibrant musical synthesis in New Orleans, this tradition has continually evolved, absorbing influences from urban centres like Chicago and New York.[80] Tradition could also

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[78] David Ake, *Jazz Cultures* (United States: University of California Press, 2002), 151.

[79] Ibid., 151–52.

[80] Baraka, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*; Ted Gioia, *The History of Jazz* (USA: Oxford University Press, 1999); Scott DeVeaux and Gary Giddins, *Jazz* (USA: W.W. Norton, 2009).

point to rites of passage that function as a crucial element in the evolution and teaching of jazz, such as sitting in at jam sessions or performing alongside seasoned veterans.[81] Finally, tradition could also signal the use and purpose of historic recordings and the crucial role they play in the transmission of jazz tradition. They capture and document seminal moments in the art form's evolution and serve as touchstones for future generations.[82]

Drawing upon my performer-centred perspective, these interconnected ideas of repertoire and a codified lexicon of improvisatory language speak most directly to the influence of the tradition. However, embedded within the codified lexicon is also the notion of performance convention; in other words, how a jazz ensemble manages and conducts their performance (particularly concerning larger structures such as groove choice and treatment, and orchestration and arrangement).[83] While I am again cautious about commenting on tradition's ties to African American heritage, it is valuable to observe how tradition manifests within the Essex jazz scene. Without a doubt, the venerable jam session serves as a crucial hub for jazz performers in Essex, with these sessions serving as networking opportunities and places for experimentation and learning. Furthermore, certainly from my perspective, this is also a—albeit small—tradition of historic recordings in Essex. Several veteran jazz performers have released albums that engage fellow musicians, students, and the broader community alike. Delving into the tradition evident in the portfolio accompanying this thesis, performances featured in albums such as *Simulated Cities*, *In Trio*, and, to a degree, *Antares*, align closely with conventional practices and language. Both *In Trio* and *Simulated Cities* incorporate compositions that either directly relate to or evoke standard repertoires. While *Antares* might initially seem divergent, its use of commonly utilised forms and harmonic progressions suggests a codex

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[81] Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, 36–59.

[82] Ibid., 24 & 96

[83] Ibid., 336–47.

embedded in tradition to my ears. These albums resonate with a clear social aesthetic rooted in tradition, guiding individual performers to explore sonic features, gestures, and atmospheres that echo standard frameworks for improvisation, composition, and practice.

Several facets emerge when I examine how the social aesthetic ideal of tradition informs and shapes interaction within my praxis. First and foremost, I hold a distinctive conception of tradition—perhaps quite specific—that is deeply intertwined with codified language and convention. In translating this into specific sonic gestures, characteristics, and interactive devices, my interactivity often showcases more normative forms of macro-interaction, such as call-and-response, common motives, and fills, all under the guiding influence of tradition. Furthermore, the combination of tradition and repertoire selection paves the way for an ensemble to accentuate structural boundaries and place greater emphasis on hypermeter through interaction. This observation is particularly evident in performances from *Simulated Cities*, *In Trio*, and *Antares*; however, it is worth noting that the compositions used in these albums possess more distinctly defined forms, which facilitate the use of the above devices. Within an ensemble framework, tradition as a social aesthetic ideal also informs our conceptual interaction; concepts of space and groove remain largely fixed, and although these are generated through interactivity, they are not significantly bent or deconstructed. Meanwhile, intertextual and thematic references become conspicuously overt. Intriguingly, during my interactions and improvisations on these albums, I consistently find signals that hint at the extensive transcriptions and listening I have undertaken. Although subtle, there are gestures that suggest the language I have acquired from Jarrett, Hancock, or Corea. Such a feeling or observation is absent in my reflexive responses to many other albums included in the accompanying portfolio.

Interaction as Mentorship: Mentorship in this context concerns the role and importance of pedagogy, apprenticeship, and mentorship in jazz performance. Like in many settings, the roles of *master* and *student* in jazz are opaque and not well-demarked. Paul Berliner articulates such a notion when he writes:

> With respect to the technical aspects of jazz, mentors typically create a congenial atmosphere for learning by conveying the view that student and teacher alike are involved in an ongoing process of artistic development and that the exchange of knowledge is a mutual affair. Barry Harris jokes warmly with students in his workshops, insisting that he is simply "the oldest member of the class"; he takes obvious pride when he learns "something new" from another's musical discovery. He delights in quipping, "I try to steal as much as I can from my students. After I steal enough, I will refuse to be the teacher any longer." This is received as a great compliment by learners, who know Harris's own knowledge to be inexhaustible.[84]

The above points to the obfuscation of traditional definitions of learner and teacher and suggests that the flow of learning is often multidirectional. Further, the enaction of learning and the transmission of experience, knowledge, and understanding can be on stage during a performance.[85] Although much of the above points to traditional notions of jazz pedagogy (such as apprenticeship, learning through jam sessions and performing alongside more experienced practitioners, and an emphasis on oral/aural tradition and learning via a community), it should be acknowledged that the vast majority of learning (in the field of jazz, and certainly here in the UK) occurs in institutes, be that schools, universities, or music colleges.[86] In addition to the traditional descriptions of mentorship, jazz practice often emphasises learning through listening. Many jazz artists hone their skills by studying recordings of legendary performers,

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[84] Ibid., 41.

[85] David Ake, "Crossing The Street: Rethinking Jazz Education," in *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries*, ed. David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Ira Goldmark (USA & UK: University of California Press, 2012), 237–38; Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, 41–48.

[86] Ake, "Crossing The Street: Rethinking Jazz Education," 238; Tony Whyton, "Birth of The School: Discursive Methodologies in Jazz Education," *Music Education Research* 8, no. 1 (2006).

analysing their techniques, solos, and methodologies. This indirect form of mentorship enables performers to build on the legacies of past performers and immerse themselves in the oral tradition of their music.[87] Moreover, mentorship frequently goes beyond mere musical technique and often materialises as a networking endeavour. Established artists may introduce up-and-coming performers to recording professionals, club owners, and other pivotal personalities within their local music industry.[88] Lastly, one might view mentorship as a vehicle through which jazz progresses and flourishes. While mentorship allows jazz to evolve, it ensures a connection to its profound history. In simple terms, young musicians introduce fresh ideas, techniques, and influences, while veteran performers maintain a link with tradition.

Several observations are apparent in the concept of mentorship as experienced from my performer-centred perspective. Firstly, mentorship within jazz performance is a multifaceted and opaque entity. It is not a one-way street; performers often navigate a bi-directional and multi-generational mentorship process, whether on stage, at home, at a gig, or in the classroom. From my perspective, my experiences with mentorship have primarily been on the job, mirroring the essence of the apprenticeship model. My most profound learning, guidance, and insights have emerged from performing alongside and talking and working with seasoned jazz performers, primarily those based in Essex—of course, this does not negate the significant mentoring that unfolds within various institutions throughout the UK. The Essex jazz scene stands as a testament to the strong heritage of mentorship. Young aspiring performers and seasoned artists regularly share the stage, a synergy further enhanced by entities like the Essex Youth Jazz Orchestra and the myriad jam sessions peppered across the county. Surveying the accompanying portfolio, the albums that resonate most with the spirit of mentorship include *Luminos*, *Sonifications: The Anthropocene*

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[87] Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation*, 95–119.

[88] Ibid., 37.

Epoch, and *Lost at Sea*. At the heart of these musical ventures is Trevor Taylor; his profound expertise in the free jazz and improvised music serves not just as a touchstone, but also as a launchpad and inexhaustible wellspring of knowledge.

The social aesthetic ideal of mentorship plays a pivotal role in the numerous interactive jazz performances included in the portfolio and, indeed, my wider praxis. The complexities of mentorship as a social aesthetic ideal, with its abstract distance from the tangible surface-level details of performance, makes pinpointing its direct impact on interaction a challenging endeavour. However, its presence during performance can be observed through conceptual-interaction, especially in the generation of space for fellow performers. I have often observed that I intentionally create space in my gestures, whether as a soloist or accompanist, to promote moments of common motive, call-and-response, or fills and interjections. This deliberate interactive act aims to give others, often less experienced performers in jam sessions, an opportunity to engage and interact. Consider, from a tangential perspective, a broader understanding of mentorship. In this expanded view, mentorship could take the form of a situation where an experienced performer works behind the scenes, not just guiding but actively facilitating the success of a specific project or performance. Take, for instance, Trevor Taylor's role in the Luminos and Sonifications projects. Instead of taking on the traditional role of a band leader, he serves as a facilitator, empowering rather than directing the ensemble's creative outputs. While this may not be a direct act of interaction, it is a manifestation of mentorship that fosters the creation of richly interactive sonic environments. Mentorship's profoundest influence on my interaction emerges from the overarching guidance I have received. Without Trevor Taylor's insights and encouragement, I might never have delved into the realm of free jazz and improvised music. His recommendations, especially on influential recordings, have reshaped the very essence of the sonic characteristics and gestures I utilise, culminating in a fun-

damental transformation of my interactive approach and perspective, all thanks to his pivotal mentorship.

Conclusion

Interaction as Freedom, Tradition, and Mentorship

During the introduction to this thesis, I outlined two interconnected intentions, each exploring and examining interaction in jazz performance from the performer's perspective. Firstly, I formulated a reflexive, autoethnographic methodology grounded in a performer-centred perspective to explore and examine my embodied and empracticed insight, knowledge, and understanding of interaction in jazz performance. Subsequently, to better contextualise my praxis, I outlined and detailed my views on improvisation, situating my practice within the rich tapestry of the Essex jazz scene. I then detailed the performance portfolio, and outlined the broad observations I had drawn out, which served as a foundational touchstone for the proceeding discussion.

Secondly, I sought to re-examine interaction, utilising my performer-centred perspective to appraise existing ideas and synthesise new concepts. I subdivided this endeavour into three elements: re-examining and describing the surface-level manifestations of interaction; considering how an ensemble's overarching social aesthetic ideal shapes their interactive gestures; and outlining three underlying concepts that influence these social aesthetic ideals. To explore and navigate the above intentions, I formulated three interrelated questions:

- Drawing upon the existing literature, can a robust and effective performer-centred approach be constructed?

- What novel insights emerge when examining interaction in jazz performance through a performer-centred lens?

- How do these performer-centred considerations of interaction point to the idea that an ensemble's interactions express a social aesthetic ideal?

The first section of this thesis sought to answer the first question, while the second question was attended to coterminously by both sections, and the final question was answered in the second section. I will now consider how this thesis has answered and explored the above questions.

During the first section, I defined my performer-centred perspective and established tools and methodology for accessing and assessing my embodied and empracticed insight and knowledge (contained within the accompanying performance portfolio). Observations drawn from the reflexive writing pointed towards how and where interaction could be re-examined. What was crucial here is the acknowledgement that a performer's perspective is singular and unique and that theorising out of practice rather than theorising about practice is the fundamental tenet to a performer-centred perspective. Although not entirely novel, the utility of this methodology is that it foregrounds the performer and provides a valuable means to scrutinise both the operational and surface-level music details and deeper, far-reaching concerns and concepts. The robustness and effectiveness of this approach can be evidenced by the valuable and singular insights and knowledge it has enabled me to evince regarding interaction in jazz performance.

In utilising the above performer-centred approach, numerous novel insights were explicated from my performance portfolio pertaining to interaction. Firstly, my conceptions of musical ingredients and sonic landscapes were recast and focused, using Marc Hannaford's definitions of sonic characteristics, gestures, and environments, producing a set of sonically grounded tools to discuss and consider a jazz performance. Next, definitions from Monson, Rinzler, and Givan were recast and reformulated to produce a more definitive spectrum of interactive devices and manifestations, categorised as micro-, macro-, and con-

ceptual-interaction. I then utilised the concept of social aesthetics to frame and explore the notion that an ensemble's shared aesthetic ideals shape and forge their interactive gestures. Although these observations are theoretically varied and quite expansive, they provide a robust description of interaction as experienced by the performer. Sonic characteristics, gestures, and environments provide a flexible but ontologically authentic set of tools to examine and describe musical experience. Recasting the various devices and concepts of interaction as micro-, macro-, and conceptual- enables a broader and more complete (and again, performer-centred) description of interaction in jazz performance. Lastly, examining the numerous contexts in which I perform jazz, it became clear that framing interaction as a social aesthetic ideal offers a new and novel way of exploring the more profound social, cultural, and contextual influences on and meaning of interaction.

In positioning interaction as a manifestation of an ensemble's social aesthetic ideal, new (performer-centred) avenues for exploring interaction have emerged and demonstrated great utility. Clearly, not all interaction is universal, and it is profoundly contextual, embedded in an ensemble's collectively constructed and construed ideas of how they might, can, or should sound. Drawing on my performer-centred perspective and the observations gleaned from the performance portfolio, I identified three ideals which can influence and shepherd interaction: interaction as freedom, interaction as tradition, and interaction as mentorship. Although these ideals are dialogic and are by no means siloed, nonetheless, an ensemble's commitment or association (be that momentary or permanent) with a particular social identity or imagined community, expressed and signalled by one of the above social aesthetic ideals, unquestionably influences, impacts, and alters how the constituent's performers will interaction on stage. Consequently, it has been convincingly demonstrated that interaction is not universal or homogeneous. Instead, interaction is shaped and forged by the social aesthetic ideals that surround and encompass any given performance and is positioned

as a means by which these ideals are expressed, explored, and experienced during performance. Therefore, like a conversation, interaction ebbs and flows, is convergent and divergent, is ordered and disorganised, but crucially is a profound reflection of the multifarious and manifold social and performative crucibles in which it is assembled and situated.

Further research

Excitingly, there is a myriad of possible further research questions generated by this thesis. Firstly, I hope that integrating Givan, Monson, Rinzler, and my definitions of interaction into one more cohesive spectrum would enable further discourse on interaction. Moreover, utilising a performer-centred perspective to investigate and evince interaction in jazz performance and improvisation is particularly crucial. Accessing and deploying a performer's embodied and empracticed knowledge and insight is fundamental in understanding and exploring phenomena unquestionably born of performance, such as interaction. Most interestingly, I would welcome the idea of social aesthetic ideals as a novel means to frame interaction and thus utilise and build a more performer-centred discourse on broader social, cultural and historical domains as frames for interaction.

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