

## Indiana—the Jazz State: Learning to Listen

Good afternoon, Questers! When I was assigned my topic, Indiana—the Jazz State, I was certainly challenged because although I am a musician, I am not a jazz musician, so I felt that I had to learn as much as possible about the highly specialized musical language of jazz from an insider’s perspective. Additionally, I recognized I had a lot to learn because the only thing I did know about Indiana’s rich jazz history is that songwriters Hoagy Carmichael and Cole Porter were born here! Today, I can say I am astonished by the depth and complexity of Indiana’s jazz history, and I am immensely grateful to be able to offer a glimpse into the musical language of the American twentieth century, a language that Indiana played a significant role in disseminating, cultivating, and developing. I hope to share with you insights I have gained about music-making in the jazz idiom, as well as specific information about Indiana’s jazz heritage.

Today I take my subtitle from Anderson, Indiana jazz legend, vibraphonist Gary Burton, and from the title of his autobiography, Learning to Listen.<sup>1</sup> I borrow Burton’s phrase “learning to listen,” using it in two ways in this essay; one literally, and one philosophically. I use “learning to listen” in the literal sense because Indiana played a fundamental role in disseminating the “hot” new music from New Orleans by way of Chicago through sales of seminal Gennett Studios jazz recordings. In addition, I borrow Burton’s phrase “learning to listen,” using it in a metaphoric sense to refer to complex issues of musical thinking, learning, and performing in the jazz context. Opening these issues enables us to begin to understand the contributions, innovations, and achievements of Indiana, the jazz state.

### Part I. Learning to Listen, Learning to Create

In preparation for this essay, I interviewed Fort Wayne saxophonist and composer Matt Cashdollar, graduate of IPFW and IU’s Jacobs School of Music, where he was a student of Indiana jazz

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Burton, Learning to Listen: the Jazz Journey of Gary Burton, an Autobiography (Boston, MA: Berklee Press, 2013).

legend David Baker, the nationally-known composer and jazz pedagogue who established IU's jazz studies program in the 1960s. Cashdollar was also a student of local legend Ed King, Fort Wayne's North Side High School jazz band director who has turned out generations of fine young enthusiasts. Cashdollar, a jazz saxophone player who currently plays with Indy's Blue Water Kings, with the Fort Wayne Jazz Orchestra, and the Farmland Jazz Band, and who also subs with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, explains improvisation in terms of conversation and responsive listening, defining jazz as "a conversation that happens between musicians in real time."<sup>2</sup> Explaining further, he says:

When [I am] improvising at atomic speeds [for example at 270 or 280 beats per minute in eighth notes], what am I doing? I'm not thinking about what to play, [because] all the thinking happens [beforehand] in the practice room. In a good jazz performance you shouldn't be thinking, [because] you have this feedback loop where you listen and then respond [to the other performers] and then what you do elicits response [from them]. [Moreover,] there should be space. . . . I leave space so I can listen to what's going on around me. When you have a conversation with old friends—the appeal [of it] is that you can talk together all night. When you have a conversation you are improvising.

Real conversation, as opposed to the exchange of information, occurs only when the participants are prepared to speak and when they are prepared to listen. Real conversation occurs only among equals. Simply put, there is no true conversation without listening, no dialogue amongst equals without attention. So it is with jazz. And this is why jazz is America's own classical music language, and it is telling that the mission statement of Jazz at Lincoln Center states, in part, that "[w]e believe Jazz is a metaphor for Democracy. Because jazz is improvisational, it celebrates personal freedom and encourages individual expression."<sup>3</sup> Gary Burton compares a jazzer's ability to improvise in music to speech in this way: "You don't think about nouns and verbs and adjectives when you talk [with]. . . someone. Your brain has assimilated the rules of grammar and stored a sizeable vocabulary to draw from, so as you think of something you want to communicate,"<sup>4</sup> you speak. That is the truly miraculous thing about jazz.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Matt Cashdollar, in discussion with the author, February 13, 2017, Fort Wayne, IN.

<sup>3</sup>Jazz at Lincoln Center's website ([www.jazz.org/about/](http://www.jazz.org/about/) [accessed March 20, 2017]).

<sup>4</sup> Burton, *Leaning to Listen*, 334.

In jazz, several musicians speak with one another in conversation, and we outsiders eavesdrop. Let's eavesdrop on a jazz conversation between Indiana's Gary Burton and pianist Chick Corea in their 1972 hit recording, now regarded as a classic, *Crystal Silence*.<sup>5</sup> Listen as Corea speaks first, in a kind of greeting, a musical introduction to the conversation [of approximately 8 measures]. Next, we hear how Gary Burton<sup>6</sup> introduces the topic of conversation, otherwise known as the "head" or the song-structure. While Burton plays and then repeats the A section, Corea interjects comments, exclaims, and underscores important points of Burton's train of thought. What Corea is doing, in musicians' terms, is also called "comping," or playing the underlying harmonies. Finally, Corea takes over the conversation with the B section, and we will listen until the A section returns.

[PLAY CRYSTAL SILENCE FROM THE BEGINNING TO CA. 3:17]

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p99xxR\\_2FdY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p99xxR_2FdY)

As you can hear, jazz improvisers are not only great conversationalists, they are also creators. Improvisers may seem as if they are "picking notes out of thin air," as scholar Paul Berliner puts it.<sup>7</sup> They are not. Jazz musicians perform creatively in real time based on traditions and precedents. They perform creatively in the moment based on phenomenal memory-stores of musical patterns, formulae, and structures. Intellectual, physical, and emotional memory enables them to respond immediately to and simultaneously with fellow musicians. These phenomenal stores of memory are gathered by listening to others play on recordings or in live performance. In this way a jazz musician is able to open conversation with other musicians across time and space, not just in real time. Cashdollar remembers how he learned

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<sup>5</sup> Burton, an Anderson, Indiana native [b. 1943] is the vibraphone player, who along with Chick Corea on piano, made the 1972 hit recording of *Crystal Silence*, now regarded by jazz historians as a classic.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Tirro, *Jazz: A History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 419. Anderson's Gary Burton is 74 years old now, a pioneer in fusion jazz in which straight-ahead jazz improvisation is combined with more contemporary styles like rhythm and blues, rock, pop, funk, Latin. Burton is revered as the creator of the sound of the modern vibraphone, the use of four mallets to play in a manner that is pianistic, and a key developer of the improvisational duet. Burton, an Anderson, Indiana native [b. 1943] made the 1972 hit recording of *Crystal Silence*, now regarded by jazz historians as a classic, with pianist Chick Corea.

<sup>7</sup> Paul F. Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: the Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1-17.

in his first years, and his method replicates the kind of initiative possessed by every Indiana jazz legend that I read about for this paper. Cashdollar remembers:

My first heroes, my first sax sound was like David Sanborn's [even though] he wasn't straight ahead jazz. He was a pop player, but his ideas were achievable. I'd heard other players like Charlie Parker, but they were intimidating. Teachers had already told me to listen after I had shown interest in jazz—say middle school 8<sup>th</sup> grade. My mom had tapes of Kenny G and David Sanborn. I would borrow them. And when I was first learning, the tape ran fast, so I learned all the songs in a higher key! Later I had to transpose them all down a half step. I learned by ear. Any time I would get a [written] book [of melodies], it would take out all the fun. Brandon Renfro was one year older than me, a [Fort Wayne] sax player. He had gone to Jamey Aebersold jazz camps, and he told me who to listen to. [Aebersold is an Indiana jazz legend.] Brandon would give me people to listen to like Michael Brecker [a David Baker student] and Coltrane. I would take his suggestions and then go to ACPL and max out on cds—20 at a time—and I'd listen to all of them. From fusion to bebop.

How do jazz improvisers become creators? They listen. Having a mindset of openness, having the capacity to hear what is not easily grasped at first or what is not obviously connected to one's current agenda or mode of thinking, is part of a jazz creator's, or indeed, any creative person's mindset. This is why jazzers are lifelong learners: they are listeners. While listening is the means by which young players learn improvisation, whether by listening and memorizing or by listening and transcribing, it is also the means by which seasoned players make innovations.<sup>8</sup> What does it mean to "transcribe"? Listen, then write down what you hear.

What are jazzers listening for when they are learning to improvise? Many things, but the one I can discuss today is this: they are listening to precomposed structures or, as jazzers call them, heads. Heads are the melodies drawn from tradition, from a variety of jazz styles: swing, bebop, cool, fusion, and the American Songbook, to which Carmichael and Porter contributed so much. In addition, jazzers are listening for the chords of these structures, called "changes." Paul Berliner discusses this aspect of jazz calling it "ear music," since "the best way to learn is to take tunes off records. . . [and it] becomes so easy to hear pieces in their component parts if you actually do the work [of transcribing] yourself, . . .

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<sup>8</sup>David Baker's seventy books on jazz style, bebop, in particular, and on the individual styles of Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis, Cannonball Adderley, and John Coltrane are filled with transcriptions. All of his pedagogy books recommend transcribing from recordings as one of the tools toward improvisation.

[by] trying to write the changes out by ear.”<sup>9</sup> Spontaneity in improvisation springs, paradoxically enough, from repetition, memorization, and imitation, in short, from tradition. What is concrete or traditional at the onset of a jazz performer’s ongoing education provides the basis for development, exploration, transformation, variation, and expansion. Tradition is the springboard for true innovation or, as Paul Berliner puts it: tradition is the springboard for composition in the moment.<sup>10</sup> I’ll play an example of innovation from the discography of Indiana jazz legend, Freddie Hubbard.

Hubbard, one of jazz’s greatest trumpeters and jazz innovators reimagined Bobby Hebb’s sweet 1965 hit pop tune, *Sunny*, turning its sunniness into an earthier, more fiery tune called *Red Clay*, Hubbard’s, 1970 jazz hit. It became Hubbard’s signature piece. First, I’ll play an excerpt of *Sunny*. Next, I’ll play a stripped-down version of *Sunny*, just its underlying chord structure (or changes). Hubbard turned those chord changes into the structure for *Red Clay*.<sup>11</sup> Hubbard, a pioneer in fusion jazz, literally “hears” *Sunny*, in a new way. Hubbard’s funky *Red Clay* substitutes enriched chords and a funkier bassline for Hebb’s and expands his 12-bar form, and yet, if we listen hard enough, we can hear sweet *Sunny* behind Hubbard’s innovations. [See page 3 of your handouts.]

- a. Bobby Hebb’s 1966 “Sunny” 0-:30

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubvYQxTXO3U>

- b. Next, hear the changes of *Sunny*, intended for rehearsal purposes only 0-:48

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3foHqJ6owo&list=RDs3foHqJ6owo>

- c. Now hear how Freddie Hubbard invents “Red Clay” (1970), a song based on the *Sunny* changes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wA1ZellbUfl> 0-3:40

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<sup>9</sup> Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 92-93.

<sup>10</sup> Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 192-220.

<sup>11</sup> Hubbard’s *Red Clay* is also the title of the album. This tune signified a big shift in the jazz world. Hubbard, along with Miles Davis (in his controversial 1969 “Bitches Brew” album), were moving jazz toward a fusion with rock. Listening to newer, younger voices, and Hubbard asked the 20 year old rock drummer Lenny White to join his group on the *Red Clay* album [Freddie Hubbard (Trumpet), Joe Henderson (Sax), Herbie Hancock (Electric Piano), Ron Carter (Bass), Lenny White (Drums)]. The song became Hubbard’s signature tune.

If jazz players listen to recordings as one way of learning, then one of Indiana's great contributions to jazz is surely its Gennett Studios of Richmond, an important conveyor of the new music of the "jazz age" of the 1920s.<sup>12</sup> Gennett played a major role in teaching America to listen to jazz.

## **Part II. Gennett: Learning to Listen**

Begun as a division of Richmond, Indiana's Starr Piano Company, Gennett Studios made recordings from 1917 through the mid-1930s, among the earliest in the history of jazz.<sup>13</sup> As Brian Rust notes, Gennett produced a catalogue of recordings of "such abiding interest to jazz enthusiasts as to make its very name a byword among them,"<sup>14</sup> and were distributed in America, Canada, and finally, in Europe.<sup>15</sup> A David Baker pedagogy book notes that "[r]ecordings were the first jazz textbooks," and "... early recordings . . . spread the message of jazz across America, enabling student musicians to hear—and study and attempt to emulate—improvised music."<sup>16</sup> The recordings certainly promoted what Gennett historian Rick Kennedy has termed "jazz hysteria in the Hoosier State."<sup>17</sup> But why Richmond? Founded in the 1872, Richmond's Starr Piano Company in its heyday was one of the largest piano makers in the world, selling 50 styles of grand, upright, and player pianos made in their 35-acre factory

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<sup>12</sup> Musicologists Giddins and Deveaux explain: for musicians who learned from recordings (as opposed to living in places and times where it was local language, like New Orleans' Storyville district in the 1910s or in Indianapolis's Indiana Avenue in 1920s-50s or the Chicago jazz clubs of the 1920s-30s) there was the advantage of not having to sneak off to saloons (or worse) where the earliest jazz styles were created. Moreover, recordings meant that infinite and exact repetition was possible, facilitating individual study and the memorization that is critical to improvisation. Finally, records gave them the option of interpreting "jazz as they pleased" without having to bow to local tradition. See Gary Giddins and Scott DeVeaux, *Jazz*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 158.

<sup>13</sup> The best brief history of the Gennett recordings, 1917-1930, in terms of technology is to be found in Allen Sutton's *American Record Labels and Companies, An Encyclopedia, 1891-1943*, (Denver, CO: Mainspring Press, 2000), 86-88.

<sup>14</sup> Brian Rust, *The American Record Label Book* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House Publishers, 1978), 130.

<sup>15</sup> Rick Kennedy, *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy: Gennett Studios and the Birth of Recorded Jazz* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 141.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Suber, "Introduction," *David Baker's Jazz Pedagogy: A Comprehensive Method of Jazz Education for Teacher and Student* (New York: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1989).

<sup>17</sup> The first recording of jazz was by the white New Orleans band calling itself the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, fronted by cornetist Nick LaRocca in February of 1917 in New York by Victor. The band played *Livery Stable Blues* and *Dixie Jass [sic] Band One-Step*. By 1920, the phonograph industry was earning \$150 million (Kennedy, *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy*, 50-51).

along the Whitewater River. To sell the pianos, and finally phonographs in the 1910 and records in the 20s, Starr established a network of retail stores to sell their pianos in the major cities of Indiana, and in Detroit and Chicago. By 1920, Gennett annually produced 15,000 pianos, 3,000 phonographs, and 3,000,000 recordings<sup>18</sup> of classical, sacred, military band music, of political speeches, inspirational talks, popular music,<sup>19</sup> and Ku Klux Klan songs.<sup>20</sup> All were recorded at the Richmond factory's makeshift studio, and distributed through Starr.<sup>21</sup>

The only record label based in the rural midwest, Gennett capitalized on its location and its network of sales representatives to recruit talent into Richmond to record. Richmond's proximity to Chicago by train and its central location on US Route 40 facilitated the recording of early jazz giants<sup>22</sup> like Louisiana's Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver [and his Creole Jazz Band], the Friars Society Orchestra, later called the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, and recordings of midwest greats Hoagy Carmichael, Bix Beiderbecke, and Chicago's Earl "Fatha" Hines and hosts of others. These recordings created the first links between New Orleans and midwestern jazz musicians in August, 1922, with a series of 20 recorded sides with New Orleans Rhythm Kings.<sup>23</sup> In April, 1923, Gennett made jazz's first masterpiece recordings with nine sides by cornetist King Oliver and his Creole Jazz Band, a band that

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<sup>18</sup> Kennedy, Jelly Roll, Bix and Hoagy, 27.

<sup>19</sup> See Charlie B. Dahan and Linda Gennett Irmischer's "The Birth of a Record Company: 1916-1922" in Gennett Records and Starr Piano (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishers, 2016), 39-62 for pictures illustrating an astonishing variety of recordings beyond music that Gennett made in its early days, like exercise lessons, birdsongs, the 1896 Democratic Party Convention "Cross of Gold" speech of William Jennings Bryant, Christmas greetings of early film stars, and more.

<sup>20</sup>The paradoxes of music offered in Gennett's catalogue abound: while the company was breaking ground with its recordings of stellar black musicians, the first interracial band recordings, foreign language, and European music recordings, it was also releasing hosts of recordings of vicious KKK propaganda records. Indiana's close relationship with the Klan has been amply documented in terms of sheer numbers of citizens belonging to the Klan before 1925 (250,000) and political clout of the Klan. See James H. Madison's discussion of the relationship between jazz of the young and the reactions against it in "Flappers and Klansman Challenge Traditions," in Hoosiers, a New History of Indiana (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> Kennedy, Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy, 1-35.

<sup>22</sup>Moreover, many legendary performers like Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Alberta Hunter, and Sidney Bechet recorded at the New York studio of Indiana's Gennett Company during the 1920s.

<sup>23</sup> NORK was originally called the of the Friar's Society Orchestra.

featured second cornetist, Louis Armstrong.<sup>24</sup> These are the first recorded sessions of jazz made by black musicians and the first recorded solos of Armstrong<sup>25</sup> In addition, Gennett's recordings document the evolution of Jelly Roll Morton's "hot jazz" compositions,<sup>26</sup> marking the shift from ragtime to jazz.<sup>27</sup> Morton is jazz's first major composer, as well as its first master pianist,<sup>28</sup> and in 1923-24, Morton laid down fifteen solo piano recordings at Gennett, and participated in the first interracial jazz band recordings in July, 1923 with the white New Orleans Rhythm Kings. Because Morton was Creole, a white band colleague booked a room for him in Richmond in 1923, only by claiming he was Latin American.<sup>29</sup> None of the musicians over the decade of the 1920s, black or white, got rich from the recordings, nor did they expect to because recordings were seen as a way to promote live gigs. Musicians received a flat fee of, say \$15.00-\$50.00, and perhaps a penny royalty per released recording, if any at all, and black musicians were paid less than whites.<sup>30</sup>

Gennett recordings of 1922-23 immediately created a jazz music culture in the Midwest. Bands that could play in the New Orleans "hot" jazz style, now considered Chicago jazz style, were being booked all over the Midwest, especially at Indiana University, as well as at Notre Dame, Purdue, and DePauw. Jazz bands were booked at summer resorts in the northern part of the state, and at Indiana town and city venues, ballrooms, and roadhouses.<sup>31</sup> In this atmosphere, Ohio-born cornetist Bix Beiderbecke and Bloomington's Hoagy Carmichael thrived. Beiderbecke and the Wolverines, a group

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<sup>24</sup> Kennedy, *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy*, 66- 80. Armstrong played second cornet to King Oliver on the April 6, 1923 Richmond recordings.

<sup>25</sup> Kennedy, *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy*, 59-72.

<sup>26</sup> Kennedy, *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy*, 66- 80. Armstrong played second cornet to King Oliver on the April 6, 1923 Richmond recordings.

<sup>27</sup> Schuller argues that these recordings, including Morton's *King Porter Stomp* and *New Orleans Joys*, represent the actual shift from ragtime to jazz. Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 135-154.

<sup>28</sup> Tirro, *Jazz: A History*, 155-156. See also Giddins and DeVeaux, *Jazz*, 92-100.

<sup>29</sup> Kennedy, *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy*, 74.

<sup>30</sup> Black musicians were not allowed to rent rooms in white Richmond during the 1920s, so they either had to travel to and from the Starr/Gennett factory grounds by train after long sessions that could last 12-14 hours or they had to stay on the outskirts of town in local, welcoming black homes. (See Kennedy, *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy*, 33.)

<sup>31</sup> Duncan P. Schiedt, *The Jazz State of Indiana* (Pittsboro, IN: Duncan P. Schiedt), 217-249.



Beiderbecke joined in 1923, was the first band composed of northern white boys formed in imitation of the New Orleans style, and it participated in the creation of the Chicago style of jazz, along with the New Orleans players now based in Chicago, including Armstrong, King Oliver, and the New Orleans Rhythm Kings.<sup>32</sup> Beiderbecke introduced Carmichael to Louis Armstrong in 1923 in Chicago, while Armstrong was still with the Oliver band.<sup>33</sup> In turn, Carmichael invited the Wolverines to IU, who were first to record a Carmichael tune, the *Riverboat Shuffle* at Gennett (May, 1924).<sup>34</sup> On October, 1927, Carmichael himself recorded the first version of his classic *Star Dust* at Gennett. Carmichael's 1927 recording of *Star Dust* marked the beginning of the end of the hot jazz era, and with the onset of the Depression in the next few years, Gennett's business was hard hit. By 1934, Gennett stopped recording. The hot jazz chamber ensembles of the '20s gave way to a larger, swing band format.

#### Indiana: the Jazz State, a Brief Sketch

At this point, I'd like to offer a sketch of jazz culture in Indiana, a daunting task because of the sheer number of jazz innovators and the pervasiveness of live jazz performance in Indiana during the 1920s through the 1950s. Indiana has produced two of the greatest of the great American songwriters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Peru's Cole Porter and Bloomington's Hoagy Carmichael, composers whose songs have become American jazz standards<sup>35</sup> Perhaps less well-known, however, is that Indiana has produced a number of jazz giants, including six National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters, an award given only to those who have made a "significant impact on the art form."<sup>36</sup> Indiana's six include Jamey Aebersold and Gary Burton, and Indianapolis greats Slide Hampton, Freddie Hubbard, J.J. Johnson, and David

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<sup>32</sup> The New Orleans Rhythm Kings band was composed of white southerners.

<sup>33</sup> Hoagy Carmichael with Stephen Longstreet, *Sometimes I Wonder* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1965), 101-102.

<sup>34</sup> Richard M. Sudhalter, *Stardust Melody: The Life and Music of Hoagy Carmichael* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 70-71.

<sup>35</sup> A brief list includes Carmichael's *Lazy River*, *New Orleans*, *Heart and Soul*, *Georgia on My Mind*, *The Nearness of You*, the iconic *Stardust* and Porter's *Love for Sale*, *Night and Day*, *Begin the Beguine*, *Just One of Those Things*, and *You'd Be so Easy to Love*.

<sup>36</sup> Jane Chu, *National Endowment for the Arts Awards, 2016*, accessed March 28, 2017, <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2016%20Jazz%20Masters%20Final.pdf>

Baker. Perhaps less well-remembered today is Terre Haute's Claude Thornhill (1909-1965), a piano child prodigy who became an influential big band leader-composer-pianist during the 1930s-50s.<sup>37</sup> His band was known for its precision<sup>38</sup> and for its extraordinary instrumentation, including two French horns, six clarinets, and two tubas. His influence on cool or West Coast jazz of the 1950s is legendary<sup>39</sup> and can be heard in Miles Davis's seminal 1954 *The Birth of the Cool*.<sup>40</sup>

Indiana Avenue in Indianapolis may be where the story of Indiana jazz actually begins.<sup>41</sup> Indiana Avenue developed its own jazz community since the 1910s, because it was a significant venue on the "Chitlin Circuit," a loose network of entertainment venues throughout the Midwest and South that operated exclusively for African American audiences as a result of segregationist policies.<sup>42</sup> Indiana Avenue produced a number of jazz soloists who became nationally known megastars like the innovative crossover guitarist Wes Montgomery (1923-68), trombonists J.J. Johnson (1924-2001) and Slide Hampton (b. 1932), and trumpeter Freddie Hubbard (1938-2008), whose *Red Clay* we heard earlier. Indiana Avenue produced highly respected sidemen who also led bands, composed, and performed with the greats, including bassists Larry Ridley (b. 1937) and Leroy Vinnegar (1928-99), sax players James Spaulding (b. 1937) and Jimmy Coe (1921-2004), among many others.<sup>43</sup> The legendary clubs and theatres on Indiana Avenue in the 1920s through the 1950s produced musicians and music that

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<sup>37</sup> Thornhill worked with Judy Garland, Bob Hope, and others. His *I Wish I Had You* was recorded by Billie Holiday and others. Thornhill's ballad, the 1941 hit *Snowfall*, has been recorded by many artists.

<sup>38</sup> Tirro, *Jazz: a History*, 326.

<sup>39</sup> Gary Giddins and Scott DeVeaux, *Jazz: Essential Listening* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 238-239.

<sup>40</sup> Thornhill band members who worked with Davis in the Nonet were Gerry Mulligan and Lee Konitz (Tirro, *Jazz: a History*, 340).

<sup>41</sup>Contributing to the culture were several families of extraordinary musicians who grew up and played on Indiana Avenue. Slide Hampton came from a family of Indy musicians, including twelve children, all musicians. The Montgomery brothers included not only innovative guitarist Wes Montgomery, but his brothers Monk, the first to play electric bass in a jazz combo (1951); and Buddy Montgomery, vibes and piano player, who performed and recorded with his older brothers, as well as with Miles Davis and Slide Hampton. See David Leander Williams, *Indianapolis Jazz Legends: The Masters, Legends and Legacy of Indiana Avenue* (Charleston, SC & London: The History Press, 2014), 85-95.

<sup>42</sup>Williams. *Indianapolis Jazz Legends*, 31.

<sup>43</sup> See David Leander Williams' *Indianapolis Jazz Legends*.

constitute an American golden age of jazz. In its heyday, there were at least thirty clubs, and jazz was available six nights a week on Indiana Avenue,<sup>44</sup> which hosted national touring revues and vaudeville shows during the 1920s<sup>45</sup> and later stars like Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, and Charlie Parker and many others in the next decades.<sup>46</sup>

Indiana Avenue fostered an intense musical culture that served as a kind of Juilliard for younger generations of players, because locals not only heard, but sat in and played with famous visitors after shows in late night jam sessions. One of Duke Ellington's drummers remembers that "[t]he average musicians hated to go home in those days," and were always "seeking some place where someone was playing something he ought to hear."<sup>47</sup> After hours jam sessions offered travelling swing band players of the post-war (WWII) era, community and relaxation, freeing them from conventions of the bandstand.<sup>48</sup> In conjunction with Indiana Avenue, Indianapolis's Crispus Attucks High School educated many Indiana jazz legends, including Wes Montgomery, David Baker,<sup>49</sup> J.J. Johnson, Jimmy Spaulding. Attucks was built in 1927 in order to educate black children "separately, but equally"<sup>50</sup> from white children at a time

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<sup>44</sup>John DeRoss, "Celebrating Jazz History Month—The Jazz Legacy of Indiana Avenue" (April 16, 2014) *Music For All*, accessed March 12, 2017, <http://www.musicforall.org/blog/stories/celebrating-jazz-history-month-the-jazz-legacy-of-indiana-avenue>.

<sup>45</sup> Wilson, 19.

<sup>46</sup> Baker in *Lost Jazz Shrines*, 29-33. See also John DeRoss, "Celebrating Jazz History Month—The Jazz Legacy of Indiana Avenue" (April 16, 2014) *Music For All*.

<sup>47</sup>Giddens and DeVeaux, *Jazz*, 297.

<sup>48</sup> Players could jam (improvise) on a tune for half an hour rather than for the limited time of a dance, changing group personnel informally. In addition, cutting sessions (informal competitions) among players kept people sharp. Players who were not yet good enough to play with pros were kept out by offered obstacles, say, by counting off a tune at a ridiculously fast tempo or by choosing unusual keys for the tune or by not announcing the key at all. This offered musicians constant testing, and therefore, honing of skills (Giddens and DeVeaux, *Jazz*, 297).

<sup>49</sup> Lissa May, "Indiana Avenue and Crispus Attucks High School," in Monika Herzig's *David Baker: A Legacy in Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), 1-8.

<sup>50</sup> Social attitudes, circumstances, and laws regarding race, education, and Attucks are well-documented in Stanley Warren's *Crispus Attuck High School: "Hail to the Green, Hail to the Gold,"* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company/Publishers, 1998).

when the Ku Klux Klan dominated the Indianapolis school board, the police force, and much of the Indiana state government.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, there are Indiana jazzers who became legendary pedagogues. Towering figures like David Baker (1931-2016), the first chair of the young jazz studies program at Indiana University (hired 1966-67 school year), was nominated for a Pulitzer, a Grammy, and had a discography of 65 recordings. Baker wrote 400 articles, 70 books, and has 2,000 or so compositions to his name.<sup>52</sup> In addition, there is Gary Burton, fifty years associated with Berklee College of Music, first as teacher and finally as an executive administrator. Finally, there is Jamey Aebersold, himself a David Baker student, a pianist from New Albany, Indiana who is known for his jazz instructional books and techniques, jazz camps, and his “Play-A-Long” recordings accompanying the books. Along with Gennett recordings, these Indiana performer-educators and their students have literally taught Americans to play, and therefore, listen to jazz.

### **In Conclusion: Further Thoughts on Listening**

Jazz is an art form that has defined ways America has thought about itself, because it is an art form that demands individual achievement and independence, while at the same time requiring a democratic embrace of others who are equally independent. Today it is a truism that jazz reflects democratic thought and that democratic thought is reflected in jazz,<sup>53</sup> because jazz’s demands are both communal and personal. Award-winning jazz scholar Scott DeVeaux, puts it this way, “All music—all art,

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<sup>51</sup>See Frank Marquis Cates’ “The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana Politics: 1920-1925,” (PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 1970).

<sup>52</sup>Baker taught and mentored generations of extraordinary jazz stars, like Chris Botti, the Brecker brothers (Randy and Michael), Jamey Aebersold, Freddie Hubbard, and many others.

<sup>53</sup>See the mission statement of Jazz at Lincoln Center’s website ([www.jazz.org/about/](http://www.jazz.org/about/) [accessed March 20, 2017]), which says: “[w]e believe Jazz is a metaphor for Democracy. Because jazz is improvisational, it celebrates personal freedom and encourages individual expression. Because jazz is swinging, it dedicates that freedom to finding and maintaining common ground with others. Because jazz is rooted in the blues, it inspires us to face adversity with persistent optimism. This notion is pervasive in David Baker’s thought. For example, Baker presented a talk on “Jazz as a Metaphor for Democracy” at the White House, September 18, 1998, discussed in Monika Herzig’s David Baker: A Legacy in Music (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011).

. . .—requires empathy, but jazz requires empathy of a particular sort. . . . “ [because] we “have to follow the twists and turns of [an improviser’s] musical ideas while simultaneously registering their interaction with other musicians.”<sup>54</sup> It is now a given that jazz is America’s classical music. Christopher Guerin’s 1998 Quest Club paper “Riffs on Jazz” concludes with the question: what does jazz say about us as Americans? Guerin responds to his own question: “Something quite wonderful.” I would agree, but add that jazz is a musical art form that is as complex and contradictory as is America itself. Jazz reflects 20<sup>th</sup> century American values in that it thrives on both tradition and innovation; independence and cooperation; response and responsibility, and most importantly: “speaking” and “listening.”

I have described how jazz musicians listen to one another in real time and to the compositions and performances of those gone before. For those of us who are not jazzers, but who are potential listeners, I pose the question: Will we listen?

--Melanie Kronick Bookout  
Quest Club, FWCC  
April 7, 2017

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<sup>54</sup> Scott DeVaux & Gary Giddins, Jazz: Essential Listening (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), xiii.

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