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# Aspects of jazz and classical music in David N. Baker's Ethnic Variations on a Theme of Paganini

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ASPECTS OF JAZZ AND CLASSICAL MUSIC IN  
DAVID N. BAKER'S *ETHNIC VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF PAGANINI*

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
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## Abstract

David Baker's *Ethnic Variations on a Theme of Paganini* (1976) for violin and piano bring together stylistic elements of jazz and classical music, a synthesis for which Gunther Schuller in 1957 coined the term "third stream." In regard to classical aspects, Baker's work is modeled on Nicolò Paganini's Twenty-fourth Caprice for Solo Violin, itself a theme and variations. From Paganini, it borrows aspects of melody, harmony, and articulation, not only of the theme but also the variations. In regard to jazz, Baker transforms most variations (including the theme, which in comparison to Paganini's is already a variation) into distinct styles related to jazz, including spiritual, blues, swing, bebop, funk, and calypso. He alludes to these styles by imitating their melodic characteristics, rhythmic patterns, and harmonies.

## Introduction

In 1976 David N. Baker completed his *Ethnic Variations on a Theme of Paganini* for violin and piano. The work, commissioned by violinist Ruggiero Ricci, is characterized by a synthesis of styles derived from jazz and classical music. While attempts at such a synthesis date back to the early twentieth century, they reached their peak in compositions of the late 1950s. The American composer Gunther Schuller called the resulting style “third stream,” a unique style fed by the streams of jazz and classical music. Baker, who studied with composers of both classical music and jazz, who studied cello with Janos Starker, and who performed with such artists as Quincy Jones and Lionel Hampton, was in an ideal position to contribute to the third-stream repertory. His *Ethnic Variations*, the subject of this thesis, consist of a theme and nine variations that are based on the Twenty-fourth Caprice (itself a theme and variations) by Nicolò Paganini and that are treated in a variety of jazz styles.

The thesis will investigate the *Ethnic Variations* as a third-stream composition. Chapter 1 will provide a brief history of the confluence of jazz and classical music, and chapters 2 and 3 will analyze aspects of the two contributing streams. Chapter 2 will focus on the classical elements, comparing the variations by Paganini and Baker in terms of structure, harmony, melody, and articulation and determining how the *Ethnic Variations* are modeled on Paganini’s Caprice. Chapter 3 will discuss the jazz styles that characterize Baker’s variations. Drawing on standard reference works, the chapter will define each style and use the definitions for the analysis of the pertinent variation.

## Chapter 1

### The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music

Jazz, I regard as an American folk-music; not the only one, but a very powerful one which is probably in the blood and feeling of the American people more than any other style of folk-music. I believe that it can be made the basis of serious symphonic works of lasting value, in the hands of a composer with talent for both jazz and symphonic music.<sup>1</sup>

With his suggestion that a talented composer might draw on stylistic elements of jazz to enrich the “classical” tradition of symphonic music, George Gershwin pointed to a solution that is generally known as “confluent music.”<sup>2</sup> Confluent music combines in a single composition aspects of Western art music (henceforth called “classical music”) with those of one or more types of popular music—whether folk, gospel, rhythm and blues, or jazz. The performing forces of confluent works may vary accordingly, ranging from the symphony orchestra to jazz combos and anything in between.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of combining aspects of popular music and art music was not new to the twentieth century; it had already been an important part of classical music for centuries, as, for example, in the Medieval motet, the *L’Homme armé* Masses of the Renaissance, the “Hungarian” movements by Franz Joseph Haydn, Franz Liszt, and Johannes Brahms, and the “Turkish” style in works by Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven.<sup>4</sup> But the twentieth century saw the development of a new kind of popular music: jazz. Its

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<sup>1</sup>George Gershwin, “The Relation of Jazz to American Music,” in *American Composers on American Music: A Symposium*, ed. Henry Cowell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1933), 186-87; quoted in J. Heywood Alexander, ed., *To Stretch Our Ears: A Documentary History of American Music* (New York: Norton, 2002), 354.

<sup>2</sup>Clarence Joseph Stuessy Jr., “The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music from 1950 to 1970” (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 1977), x.

<sup>3</sup>Stuessy, “The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music,” 448.

<sup>4</sup>Stuessy, “The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music,” iv.

rhythmic vitality and potential for improvisation became the latest attraction for classical composers in search of an innovative style.

Jazz emerged around the turn of the century in New Orleans as a convergence of a variety of musical styles (marches, waltzes, polkas, ragtime, hymns, spirituals, slave work songs, the blues) from the United States, Africa, Brazil, and Cuba.<sup>5</sup> Even though jazz and several of its tributaries emerged in the Americas, it was the French who first recognized its potential for the development of classical music: Claude Debussy borrowed rhythmic elements from ragtime in “Golliwog’s Cakewalk” from *Children’s Corner* (1908); and Eric Satie drew on jazz band instrumentation and quoted Irving Berlin’s *That Mysterious Rag* in his ballet *Parade* (1917).<sup>6</sup> In the second decade of the century, Stravinsky (living in Paris from 1911 to 1914 and in French Switzerland from 1914 to 1920) joined his French colleagues with jazz-influenced compositions such as *Ragtime* (1918), *Ragtime for Eleven Instruments* (1918), *L’Histoire du soldat* (1918), and *Piano-Rag-Music* (1919).<sup>7</sup> But while these works incorporated jazz styles, they usually did so only in isolated passages or short movements.

Beginning with the 1920s, jazz styles increasingly affected entire compositions (as opposed to isolated passages or a movement of a composition). The resulting works began to be categorized as “symphonic jazz,” a general term referring to the fusion of jazz with classical forms<sup>8</sup> and thus a term that would have been just as appropriate to confluent works of the 1910s. French composers continued to make significant contributions to this category, most notably Darius Milhaud with *La Création du monde* (1923)

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<sup>5</sup>Stuessy, “The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music,” 11.

<sup>6</sup>Stuessy, “The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music,” 14 and 41.

<sup>7</sup>Stuessy, “The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music,” 17.

<sup>8</sup>Max Harrison, “Symphonic Jazz,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 2d ed., 29 vols. (London: Macmillan, 2001), 18:428.

and Maurice Ravel with his *Concerto for the Left Hand* (1925).<sup>9</sup> But Americans now began to assert themselves, most notably Cole Porter with *Within the Quota* (1923; revised as *Times Past*, 1970), George Antheil with his *Jazz Symphony* (1925; revised 1955), and George Gershwin with his one-act opera *Blue Monday* (1922) and *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924), commissioned by band leader Paul Whiteman and undoubtedly the most famous confluent work of the time.<sup>10</sup>

By the 1930s, European composers had virtually lost interest in confluent music. Their American colleagues, however, recognizing the value of jazz for the development of an unmistakably American style of art music, continued to write confluent works.<sup>11</sup> Still, interest in this style began to decrease, alongside the interest in jazz. As jazz entered the swing era, it seemed to offer classical composers insufficiently stimulating opportunities for borrowing; the possibilities seemed exhausted and confluent music seemed to have reached a dead end.<sup>12</sup> Neil Leonard summed up the situation as follows:

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<sup>9</sup>Other examples include Georges Auric's *Adieu, New York* (1920), Arthur Honegger's *Prelude and Blues* (1925), and Francis Poulenc's *Les Biches* (1924).

<sup>10</sup>For an analysis of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in light of jazz and classical aspects, see Willis Delony, "Gershwin's Use of Jazz Harmony in the *Rhapsody in Blue* and Other Selected Concert Works" (D.M.A. diss., Louisiana State University, 1985). German composers also contributed confluent works, especially Ernst Krenek (*Jonny spielt auf* [1927]) and Paul Hindemith (*Suite for Piano*, op. 26 [1922] and *Kammermusik*, Op. 24, No. 1 [1922]).

<sup>11</sup>See, for example, Aaron Copland with his *Dance Symphony* (1931), *The Second Hurricane* (1936–37), and *An Outdoor Overture* (1938) and Red Norvo's *Dance of the Octopus* (1933). The success of Dvořák's *Symphony No. 9* (1893), "From the New World," may have provided a certain legitimacy to the procedure of using American folk idioms in a serious composition. Stuessy, "The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music," 12.

<sup>12</sup>During the 1940s, only a few works of confluent music were written: Duke Ellington's *Blue Bells of Harlem* (1942), Stravinsky's *Scherzo à la russe* (1944), as well as occasional compositions by Hindemith, Louis Gruenberg, Gershwin, Randall Thompson, Aaron Copland, William Grant Still, Norman Dello Joio, William Howard Schuman, and Morton Gould.

Interest in symphonic jazz grew strong in the middle of the twenties but began to decline when the music failed to blossom into greatness as its advocates had predicted. By the Depression the issues of symphonic jazz no longer made headlines, and the talents of many of the practitioners were drained off by the growing radio and movie industries.<sup>13</sup>

Classical composers had consistently been borrowing the same two elements of “jazz”: syncopation and the harmony characterized by blue notes. They often did not borrow them from true jazz compositions, however, but from popular dances (such as the foxtrot, cakewalk, and ragtime) and the blues. Lacking the experience of jazz musicians, classical composers basically ignored the essence of jazz—improvisation in a unique rhythmic and harmonic context—relying instead on secondary aspects as represented in those genres that originally led to jazz.<sup>14</sup> Of the period between 1920 and 1950, the most successful contributions to confluent music—according to musicologist Clarence Stuessy—are:<sup>15</sup>

Darius Milhaud	<i>La Création du monde</i>	1923
Maurice Ravel	<i>Concerto for the Left Hand</i>	1925
George Gershwin	<i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>	1924
	<i>Porgy and Bess</i>	1933
Aaron Copland	<i>Music for the Theater</i>	1925
	<i>Piano Concerto</i>	1927
Morton Gould	<i>Interplay</i>	1943
Igor Stravinsky	<i>Ebony Concerto</i>	1945

Five of the nine works feature the piano, an instrument closely associated with both jazz and classical music. With its dual capability of

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<sup>13</sup>Neil Leonard, *Jazz and the White American* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 76.

<sup>14</sup>David Joyner (“Analyzing Third Stream,” *Contemporary Music Review* 19, no. 1 [2000]: 75–76) talks of a misrepresentation of jazz, including in this category Stravinsky’s *Ragtime for 11 Instruments* (1917), *Piano Rag Music* (1919), and *Histoire du soldat* (1918); Satie’s *Ragtime* from the ballet *Parade* (1919); Georges Auric’s *Adieu, New York* (1920); Milhaud’s *Caramel Mou* (1920) and *La Creation du monde* (1923); Hindemith’s *Kammermusik* (1921) and *Ragtime and Shimmy* (1922); and William Walton’s *Cakewalk* (1923). See also Stuessy, “The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music,” 40.

<sup>15</sup>Stuessy, “The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music,” 39.

providing harmonic and rhythmic support, the piano became an indispensable instrument of standard jazz.<sup>16</sup> But rhythm and harmony were also the most prominent jazz elements in early confluent works, and it is thus not surprising that early confluent works often feature the piano.

As a result of drastic changes in jazz styles during the mid 1940s, the 1950s saw a resurgence of interest in both jazz and confluent music. Early jazz had not been accepted as a serious art form worthy of scholarly study but rather as a type of music meant to entertain the masses.<sup>17</sup> After World War II, with the emergence of bebop, jazz achieved a level of modernity, seriousness, and thus prestige similar to that of classical music. In this new style, also called modern or mainstream jazz, the harmonies became more dissonant, phrases more irregular, accents sharper, and tempos more varied, parallel to the development of twentieth-century classical styles.<sup>18</sup> Bebop musicians were no longer entertainers or providers of dance music, they were serious artists creating thoughtful, well-crafted, and original works.<sup>19</sup>

Classical composers took a renewed interest in this new type of jazz, imitating its melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic language. Confluent works “[embodied] the notion that jazz was a serious art form of artistic expression and not solely meant to be relaxing, diverting, or danceable.”<sup>20</sup> They were now written not only by classically trained composers but also by jazz

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<sup>16</sup> To describe the function of the rhythm section or (of no other accompanying instruments are present) the piano, jazz musicians use the term “comping” (short for “accompanying” or “complement”). See chapter 3 for a detailed explanation.

<sup>17</sup>Mark Tucker, “Jazz,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 12:917.

<sup>18</sup>See Tucker, “Jazz,” 12:914.

<sup>19</sup>Tucker, “Jazz,” 12:913–15. Leonard Bernstein even suggested that bebop was “the real beginning of serious American music,” dismissing, in the words of biographer Humphrey Burton, “all American symphonic works up to 1955 (including, by inference, his own) as being no more than personalized imitations of the European symphonic tradition from Mozart to Mahler.” Both excerpts are quoted from Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 251.

<sup>20</sup>Tucker, “Jazz,” 12:917.

composers, who began to attend symphony concerts and discover the works of such towering figures as Stravinsky and Hindemith. Classical and jazz styles began to overlap to a degree to become indistinguishable, melding into a balanced fusion.<sup>21</sup>

One of the most important advocates of confluent music since the 1950s has been the American composer Gunther Schuller. Born in 1925 into a musical family that had emigrated from Germany, he eventually became the principal conductor of the Spokane Symphony Orchestra, a group he conducted in performances of numerous confluent works. Later, he used his positions as professor at the Tanglewood Music Center, the New England Conservatory of Music (where he was president, 1967–77), the Manhattan School of Music, and Yale University to promote confluent music, or, as he called it, “third-stream.”<sup>22</sup>

Schuller became interested in jazz around 1947, after having heard a Duke Ellington concert in Cincinnati. He began to transcribe old recordings he had collected and to study jazz history, becoming one of the first true scholars of the subject.<sup>23</sup> Schuller also had considerable expertise as a performer, having worked with such greats as Miles Davis, Gil Evans, Lalo Schifrin, and the Modern Jazz Quartet. He even founded and directed his own ensembles, the Ragtime Ensemble, the Jazz Repertory Orchestra, and the Country Fiddle Band.

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<sup>21</sup>Classically trained composers of confluent works included Gunther Schuller, Leonard Bernstein, Morton Gould, Rolf Liebermann, Samuel Barber, and Stefan Wolpe. Jazz composers of confluent works included Duke Ellington, Lalo Schifrin, John Lewis, Dave Brubeck, Don Ellis, Jimmy Guiffre, Dick Hyman, Peter Nero, Norman Symonds, Hank Levy, Oliver Nelson, Yusef Lateef, Robert Graettinger, and Charles Mingus.

<sup>22</sup>See Gunther Schuller, *Musings: The Musical World of Gunther Schuller* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 121.

<sup>23</sup>The two influential books resulting from his scholarly activities are *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); and its sequel, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

Gunther Schuller first used the musical term “third stream” in 1957, while giving a lecture as part of a music festival held at Brandeis University.<sup>24</sup> His lecture as well as the festival’s series of performances were meant to encourage musicians to explore new styles. The six works Schuller had commissioned from both jazz and classical composers specifically for this festival ranged from free improvisations to tightly organized compositions using serial technique and were performed by classical and jazz musicians side by side.<sup>25</sup> His own composition, *Transformation*, in which a twelve tone row “transforms” into a jazz-related genre, the twelve-bar blues,<sup>26</sup> was surely meant to serve as an paradigm of third stream.

Over the years, Schuller kept modifying the definition of third stream. In 1959, he defined it as “the fusion of the improvisatory spontaneity and rhythmic vitality of jazz with the compositional procedures and techniques acquired in Western music during its 700 years of development.”<sup>27</sup> He viewed third stream not only as the result of two tributaries, one from the “stream” of jazz, the other from the “stream” of classical music; he emphasized the improvisatory quality of jazz (as opposed to the “superficial” qualities of syncopation and blue notes discussed above). It is important to keep in mind, however, that he used the term “improvisatory quality” (which might refer to a passages giving an the impression of improvisation without being improvised) and not “improvisation,” unfortunately without providing further explanation. Two years later, the definition remained vague, but

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<sup>24</sup>Gunther Schuller, “Third Stream,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 25:401.

<sup>25</sup>Composers from the world of jazz included George Russell and Charles Mingus; those from the world of contemporary classical music Milton Babbitt, Harold Shapiro, and, of course, Schuller himself.

<sup>26</sup>Genevieve Sue Crane, “Jazz Elements and Formal Compositional Techniques in *Third Stream Music*” (M.M. thesis, Indiana University 1970), 8.

<sup>27</sup>Gunther Schuller, “Is Jazz Coming of Age?” *Musical America* 79 (February 1959): 166.

Schuller seemed to shift its focus to phrasing, calling for a “process of joining jazz inflections and phrasing to the more set phrases and techniques of non-jazz music.”<sup>28</sup> He further complicated the meaning of third stream by seemingly contradictory statements regarding the relationship of jazz and classical components: on the one hand, he claimed that they should not merge at the cost of losing their respective identity;<sup>29</sup> on the other hand, he made it clear that third-stream music was not supposed to preserve the purity of each contributing stream but to create a stylistic synthesis.<sup>30</sup> Schuller seems to have had in mind, for example, that William Grant Still’s *Afro-American Symphony* sounds neither like a blues nor like a classical symphony (i.e., it does not preserve the purity of each contributing stream but creates a new, distinct sound). But the blue notes (the flat thirds and seventh of the scale) do not lose their “bluesy” quality, and the work still develops according to symphonic procedures associated with classical music (i.e., the respective techniques do not lose their identity). Ideally, underlying relationships of the two streams should grow and take on new meaning as the work unfolds.<sup>31</sup> This concept, too, remains vague beyond the brief description of *Transformation* provided above.

Schuller’s evolving definition creates great difficulty in determining the essential characteristics of third stream. He was especially unclear regarding the degree to which elements of jazz and classical music combine to form a new style.<sup>32</sup> In 1959, he established three categories of third-stream

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<sup>28</sup>Gunther Schuller, “Third Stream Music,” *The New Yorker*, 9 December 1961, 42.

<sup>29</sup>Gunther Schuller, “Jazz and Classical Music,” in *Encyclopedia of Jazz*, ed. Leonard Feather (New York: Horizon Press, 1960), 497.

<sup>30</sup>Schuller, “Jazz and Classical Music,” 498.

<sup>31</sup>Crane, “Jazz Elements and Formal Compositional Techniques in *Third Stream Music*,” 5–6.

<sup>32</sup>Crane, “Jazz Elements and Formal Compositional Techniques in *Third Stream Music*,” 5.

compositions based on the balance between aspects of jazz and classical music but failed to explain his method of quantification.

1. Middle Style: Compositions that maintain an equilibrium between elements of jazz and classical music. Examples include John Lewis' *European Windows* (1957), William Russo's *An Image* (1955), John Brooks' *Alabama Concerto* (1954), André Hodeir's *Essais* (1954), and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924).
2. Jazz Emphasis: Compositions with a preponderance of jazz elements. Examples include the works of Modern Jazz Quartet, Giuffre's *Tangents in Jazz* (1955), J. J. Johnson's *Poem for Brass* (1957), Manny Albam and Ernie Wilkins' *Drum Suite* (1956), Duke Ellington's *Concerto for Cootie* (1935) and *Koto* (1940), and Bix Beiderbecke *In a Mist* (1928).
3. Classical Emphasis: Compositions with a preponderance of classical elements. Examples include Igor Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto* (1945), Rolf Liebermann's jazz sections of his *Concerto for Jazz Band and Orchestra* (1956), and the "classical" works of composers primarily known in jazz circles, such as Mel Powell and William Smith.<sup>33</sup>

Although incomplete, this list essentially indicates that in 1957, third stream was not a new concept. Several of the works previously labeled "confluent" reappear in one of Schuller's categories of third stream. To clarify his concept yet further, Schuller also made clear what third stream was not:

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<sup>33</sup>Gunther Schuller, "And Perhaps the Twain Shall Meet," *New York Times*, 15 November 1959, Section 11:9; quoted in Genevieve Sue Crane, "Jazz Elements and Formal Compositional Techniques," 6. Robert Loran Brown, Jr. ("A Study of Influences from Euro-American Art Music on Certain Types of Jazz with Analyses and Recital of Selected Demonstrative" [Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1974], 13) distinguishes four categories of hybrids of jazz and classical music: ragtime, jazzed classics, jazz performed on classical instruments, and jazz performed with classical elements. These categories at least in part contradict Schuller's list of what third stream was not supposed to be.

1. It is not jazz with strings.
  2. It is not jazz played on “classical instruments.”
  3. It is not classical music played by jazz players.
  4. It is not inserting a bit of Ravel or Schoenberg between be-bop changes—nor the reverse.
  5. It is not jazz in fugal form.
  6. It is not a fugue performed by jazz players.
  7. It is not designed to do away with jazz or classical music; it is just another option amongst many for today’s creative musicians.
- And there is no such thing as *Third Stream Jazz*.<sup>34</sup>

The list seems to confirm our conclusion above regarding the relationship of confluent and third-stream works.

Schuller’s early definitions of third stream had restricted the types of streams to jazz and classical music; but by 1981, he expanded the stream of jazz to include popular music of any kind and from any country, taking into account the increasing demands for diversity and the image of America as a “melting pot” of various civilizations: “Third stream is a way of composing, improvising, and performing that brings music together rather than segregating them [*sic*]. It is a way of making music which holds that *all musics are created equal*, coexisting in a beautiful brotherhood/sisterhood of musics that complement and fructify each other.”<sup>35</sup> The aspect of improvisation continues to linger but awaits clarification.

In his *New Grove* article on third stream, Schuller continues to insist on the inclusion of a great variety of popular styles:

Since the late 1950s the application of the term [third stream] has broadened to encompass fusions of classical music with elements drawn not only from African-American sources but also from other vernacular traditions, including Turkish, Greek, Hindustani, Russian and Cuban music, among others.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Schuller, *Musings*, 120.

<sup>35</sup>Schuller, *Musings*, 119.

<sup>36</sup>Schuller, “Third Stream,” in *The New Grove Dictionary*, 25:401.

But while in 1959 Schuller included Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* among third-stream works, he now excludes early types of confluent music by insisting on improvisation: "The third-stream movement attracted much controversy and has often erroneously been allied with the symphonic jazz movement of the 1920s [the *Rhapsody in Blue*, for example]; symphonic jazz, however, lacking the essential elements of improvisation."<sup>37</sup> For the first time in the history of Schuller's definitions, improvisation (in the literal sense, not in the sense of music that merely sounds improvised) becomes the quintessential contribution of the stream of jazz.<sup>38</sup> In his own *Visitation* (1967), for example, Schuller requires three types of improvisation (written music to sound like improvisation, real improvisation over traditional harmony, and real improvisation on atonal material), allowing the performer the type of freedom typical of works by progressive jazz musicians such as John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Don Ellis, and Ornette Coleman.<sup>39</sup> The emphasis on improvisation in third stream necessarily excludes most confluent works prior to 1957.<sup>40</sup> But whereas this latest definition clarifies the concept in regard to the contribution of jazz, it raises questions about the essential characteristics to be contributed by other types of popular music. It is

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<sup>37</sup>Schuller, "Third Stream," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 25:401.

<sup>38</sup>Schuller ("Third Stream," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 25:401) provides the following examples: Red Norvo's *Dance of the Octopus* (1933), Ralph Burn's *Summer Sequence* (1946), George Handy's *The Bloos* (1946), Robert Graettinger's *City of Glass* (1951), Alec Wilder's *Jazz Suite* (1951), and Rolf Liebermann's *Concerto for Jazz Band and Orchestra* (1956). Liebermann's *Concerto*, however, does not include improvisation, only solos that *sound* improvised. Such inconsistencies in Schuller's description of the "third stream" greatly contributes to the vagueness the term's meaning.

<sup>39</sup>Other examples including improvisation include the *Concertino for Jazz Quartet and Orchestra* (1959) and *Conversation* (1959), and *Abstraction* (1961). See Stuessy, "The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music," 129–39.

<sup>40</sup>A notable exception is Leonard Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs* for solo clarinet and jazz ensemble, completed 1949 and premiered 1955. The "Riffs" section includes *ad lib* repetitions aligning the work with the third stream of Schuller's most recent definition. See also Burton, *Leonard Bernstein*, 251.

thus unquestionable that third stream still remains an ambiguous term;<sup>41</sup> if it is used, the author must clarify to which one of Schuller's definitions he refers.

The merit of confluent music is still a controversial subject. David Joyner, for example, has recently criticized third stream for its failure to use improvisation correctly, claiming that classically trained composers do not have the necessary background to create the spontaneous environment for improvisation; that they are not familiar with the rhythmic subtleties of swing; and that a good swing is still impossible to achieve in an orchestral setting.<sup>42</sup> Joyner's criticism is flawed on all accounts, however. Third-stream compositions do not necessarily have to include improvisation—Schuller himself had not insisted on this aspect until recently. Neither do third-stream compositions necessarily have to be performed by classically trained musicians; and even if they were, the talented ones would surely be able to learn to swing. Finally, there is no reason why an orchestra should not be able to swing; such a task is hardly more challenging than for orchestras to perform Viennese waltzes with the proper rubato.

Joyner's criticism is not shared by a majority—authors have generally supported confluent music. Leonard, referring to symphonic jazz but clearly meaning to refer to confluent music in general, offers the following assessment:

In spite of their esthetic blunders and occasionally ridiculous statements, symphonic jazz advocates helped greatly to overcome

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<sup>41</sup>Even Claude Palisca, in his *History of Western Music*, does not clearly define "third stream" but implies that it is a style that self-consciously brings together aspects of jazz and classical music in an entire composition. See Donald J. Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 6th ed. (New York: Norton, 2001), 775.

<sup>42</sup>Joyner, "Analyzing Third Stream," 83–84. For additional critical essays, see also Lee Brown, "The Theory of Jazz Music: 'It Don't Mean a Thing,'" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 118–20; and Bob Blumenthal, "A Survey of Worldly Music, Don Byron and Uri Cane," *Jazz Times* 31, no. 1 (2001): 50–53.

formalism and highbrowism that had done much to constrict the development of music in the United States. Symphonic jazz enthusiasts encouraged composition and performance of music that departed from the European traditions. They were the first Americans with any prestige in official music circles to see that jazz should not be dismissed as vulgar dance music, that something in it deserved the attention due art. By reason and ridicule they helped to brush aside many prejudices and misconceptions that blocked the way for this recognition. In large measure, it was through their efforts that the term “jazz” became in the twenties and thirties associated less with the brothel and more with the concert hall as a native product of which Americans could be proud.<sup>43</sup>

Already in 1959, Schuller had reflected with satisfaction on the accomplishments of third-stream composers, who, in his eyes, had contributed and would continue to contribute significantly to a truly American art form:

[T]he interacting influences of jazz and classical music upon each other will in time produce—as a matter of fact already have produced—a great deal of stimulating music, a music, incidentally, which (for those who value this sort of thing) is or will be peculiar and special to American life and a reflection of our culture for better or worse.<sup>44</sup>

Music drawing on styles from classical and the broadest array of popular music is still going strong; in fact, it is often difficult to determine whether a composition belongs to the classical or popular camp. Confluent music as outlined in this chapter, however, seems to be on the decline, with a few notable exceptions such as David Baker (who is still active, both as a teacher and composer). His *Ethnic Variations on a Theme of Paganini* are the subject of the following investigation, first in regard to aspects of classical music, then in regard to those of jazz.

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<sup>43</sup>Leonard, *Jazz and the White American*, 83.

<sup>44</sup>Gunther Schuller, “We Start With Music,” *Newsletter of the American Symphony Orchestra League* 10, nos. 3–4 (1959): 5; quoted in Stuessy, “The Confluence of Jazz and Classical Music,” viii.

## Chapter 2

### Aspects of Modeling

David Baker's *Ethnic Variations on a Theme of Paganini* belong to the genre of "theme and variations," a form that first became popular during the Renaissance. Through the Baroque, composers built their variations around preexisting bass patterns, harmonic patterns, popular songs, and a mixture of the three; but beginning with the Classic period, popular songs and themes from operas superseded harmony and bass line as the main structural framework. This latter type of variation reached the peak of its popularity in the nineteenth century, especially with composers for whom a simple theme served as a vehicle for virtuosic display in the variations.<sup>45</sup> The theme generally had a binary structure, which the subsequent variations would follow to varying degrees.<sup>46</sup>

With numerous sets of variations to his credit, Nicolò Paganini was one of the major exponents of the genre, acting himself as the soloist and displaying his talent and showmanship to large audiences.<sup>47</sup> He was the most influential violinist of his time, setting a standard of virtuosity that to this day remains unsurpassed. His breathtaking tempos, spectacular multiple

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<sup>45</sup>Noteworthy contributors to the variation form include Charles Bériot (*Airs variés*), Henri Vieuxtemps (Variation on a Theme from Renato Bellini's *Il pirata*, Op. 6; *Souvenir d'Amérique* [On Yankee Doodle], Op. 17); Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (*Le Carnival de Venise*, Op. 18 and *Airs hongrois variés*, Op. 22); Henryk Wieniawski (*Souvenir de Moscou*, Op. 6, *Thème original varié*, Op. 15); Joseph Boehm (*Variations on a Theme of Beethoven*); Jenö Hubay (*Variations sur un thème hongrois*, Op. 72). Robin Stowell, "Other Solo Repertory," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, ed. Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 203. For a discussion of variation form, see Elaine Sisman, "Variations," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, especially 26:309–15.

<sup>46</sup>Peter Spencer and Peter M. Temko, *A Practical Approach to the Study of Form in Music* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1988), 133.

<sup>47</sup>His variations were based on many different themes, including arias (*Le streghe*, Variations on a Theme from Franz Xaver Süssmayr's *Il noce di Benevento*, Op. 12), national anthems (*God Save the King*, Op. 9), and dance tunes (*Polacca con variazioni*, Saint Patrick's Day). Stowell, "Other Solo Repertory," 202.

stops, mesmerizing harmonics, left-hand pizzicato, and single-stringed playing became legendary. Because of his popularity as a performer, his compositions gained recognition throughout Europe as showpieces for the violin.<sup>48</sup>

Paganini's Twenty-four Caprices for Solo Violin, Op. 1 were published in 1820 by the Milanese publisher Giovanni Ricordi. They are a compendium of stunning effects, including arpeggios, trills, octaves, harmonics, glissandos, left-hand pizzicato, and quadruple stops. But the caprices are also known for their originality, great stylistic variety, and unsophisticated beauty. They count among Paganini's most influential works, and the theme of the twenty-fourth caprice has become a favorite source for variations among nineteenth- and twentieth-century composers.<sup>49</sup>

Baker was attracted to both the simplicity of the theme (which he found "catchy and memorable") and the virtuosity of the variations.<sup>50</sup> He thus faced the questions whether he should borrow Paganini's theme unchanged, or whether he should merely use it as a model for his own theme; whether he should write an entirely independent set of variations, or whether his variations should make some kind of reference to Paganini's. In both cases, Baker chose the latter course, using Paganini's variations as a model for his own.

Paganini's Twenty-fourth Caprice belongs to the category of "fixed-harmony variations," in which both form and harmonic structure remain

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<sup>48</sup>Stowell, "Other Solo Repertory," 204.

<sup>49</sup>Numerous composers wrote variations on Paganini's Twenty-fourth Caprice: Boris Blacher, Hans Bottermund, Johannes Brahms, Keith Cole, Ignaz Friedman, Bryan Hesford, Franz Liszt, Witold Lutoslawski, Lorin Maazel, Nathan Milstein, Gregor Piatigorsky, Bronislaw Przybylski, Sergei Rachmaninoff, George Rochberg, Karol Szymanowski, Vincenzo Tommasini, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Kenneth Wilson, and Eugène Ysaÿe. Hokyung Yang, "Twelve Variations on Paganini's 24th Caprice" (D.M.A. diss., University of Washington 1993), 1.

<sup>50</sup>See Yang, "Twelve Variations on Paganini's 24th Caprice," 24.

constant while melody, rhythm, and tempo change from variation to variation.<sup>51</sup> The work consists of a theme (twelve measures), eleven variations (twelve measures each except for the eleventh variation, which consists of only eleven measures), and a finale (fifteen measures), totaling 158 measures. Baker treats his variations with greater freedom, greatly varying the length of his variations: the theme has ten measures and the variations ranges from twelve to thirty-nine measures, totaling 227 measures. In spite of these differences, Baker modeled the theme and several of his variations directly on Paganini's. The following analysis will uncover these aspects.<sup>52</sup>

Paganini cast his theme in binary form, in which a repeated A section of four measures is followed by a B section of eight measures. He built the theme around a single motive, the rhythm of which repeats in every measure except the cadential ones at the end of each section. The theme does not modulate, but its second half is harmonized by the circle of fifths beginning in A and returning by way of D, G, C, F, B, and E to its point of departure.

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<sup>51</sup>Kurt von Fischer, *Anthology of Music: A Collection of Complete Musical Examples Illustrating the History of Music* (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag Köln, 1962), 6.

<sup>52</sup>J. Peter Burkholder has classified the various types of borrowing into fourteen categories based on methods of adaptation, purpose for using an existing work, and musical forms. These categories include: (1) modeling, (2) variation, (3) paraphrasing, (4) arranging, (5) setting, (6) cantus firmus, (7) medley, (8) quodlibet, (9) stylistic allusion, (10) cumulative setting, (11) programmatic quotation, (12) collage, (13) patchwork, and (14) extended paraphrase. Modeling, the most pertinent category for the analysis of Baker's *Ethnic Variations*, is a type of musical borrowing in which a work or section of a work assumes the structure of another work, "incorporating part of its melodic material, imitating its form or procedures, or using it as a model in some other way." See J. Peter Burkholder, "The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field," *Notes* 50 (1994): 851 and 853-54.

Example 2.1: Paganini, Twenty-fourth Caprice, Theme<sup>53</sup>

Tema  
Quasi Presto

24 *p* 6 12  
G C F B E A

In relation to Paganini's theme, Baker's theme is already a variation.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, it preserves most of the thematic material, especially in the second half. Baker's first one-and-a-half measures correspond to Paganini's first three measures; Baker's fourth measure corresponds to Paganini's third and fourth measures; and Baker fifth to eighth measures correspond to Paganini's fifth to eleventh measures.

Example 2.2: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Theme

Stately  $\text{♩} = 100$

2 4

<sup>53</sup>Nicolò Paganini, *24 Capricci für Violine Solo* (Munich: Henle, 1990).

<sup>54</sup>See chapter 3.

In spite of the heavily dissonant chords, Baker maintains a clear sense of A minor, preserving the key of Paganini's theme and introducing a pedal on A. He even adapts the circle of fifths, reinforcing it by mostly strong root progressions (see mm. 5–7 of example 2.2).

Baker also preserves aspects of Paganini's slurring. Paganini was careful to clearly mark the bowing in all the variations except the ninth (which is played staccato or pizzicato throughout). In the theme, the first note must be played down-bow, the second up-bow, and the following sixteenth-note figure must be played with one down-bow. Although Baker does not provide instructions regarding the direction of the bowing, he does indicate that all the sixteenth-note figures, as in Paganini, must be played with one bow.

Baker modeled his first variation on Paganini's second. Both variations feature even note values in a fast tempo, sixteenth notes in 2/4 in the case of Paganini, eighth notes in 4/4 in the case of Baker. Paganini's first few measures all begin with oscillating notes a half step apart (a' and g-sharp'

in m. 1; e'' and d-sharp'' in m. 2, etc.)<sup>55</sup>. The second half of each measure veers upward or downward. Baker imitates these gestures, but only in odd measures (mm. 1, 3, and 5).<sup>56</sup>

Example 2.3a: Paganini, Twenty-fourth Caprice, Var. 2

Example 2.3b: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 1, mm. 1–15

<sup>55</sup>Pitch nomenclature follows the Helmholtz system as reproduced in Llewelyn S. Lloyd and Richard Rastall, "Pitch Nomenclature," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 19:806.

<sup>56</sup>Paganini provides specific fingerings that require bow changes in addition to those absolutely necessary. He writes an a' on the open A string followed by a g-sharp' on the D string. These fingerings force the performer to cross the strings rapidly back and forth from the A string to the D string, even though the notes actually lie very comfortably side by side on the D string. Baker does not require similar acrobatics; for him, it is more important that the variation be played "as fast as possible."

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Variation 6. Each system consists of a violin part (top staff) and a piano accompaniment (bottom staff).  
 - The first system (measures 7-10) shows a violin melody with eighth-note patterns and a piano accompaniment with chords and bass lines.  
 - The second system (measures 11-14) includes a 'gva. basso' marking in the bass line.  
 - The third system (measures 15-18) includes a 'gva.' marking and chord labels A, D, G, and C below the piano part.

In both the first notes of mm. 12–15 and, in a more disguised manner in the bass, Baker alludes to the circle of fifths. This harmonic sequence, although present also in subsequent variations, is increasingly drowned in the heavy chromaticism of the jazz harmonies.<sup>57</sup> Variation 6, which quotes Paganini's theme nearly note for note in the piano part also includes the clearest reference to the circle of fifths (see mm. 5–10 of example 2.5b below).

Baker modeled his third variation on Paganini's own third variation in that he set the violin in octaves throughout. In addition, he copied Paganini's rhythm of four consecutive eighth-notes, which stands in contrast to the immediately preceding dotted or triplet rhythm, respectively. But

<sup>57</sup>For remnants of the circle of fifths in subsequent variations, see, for example var. 2, mm. 9–14; var. 5, mm. 10–15; var. 6, mm. 5–10; var. 7, mm. 11–16; and var. 8, mm. 10–15.

whereas in Paganini the eighth-note rhythm varies the theme (mm. 4, 6, 8, and 11), in Baker it appears as a remnant of the theme.

Example 2.4a: Paganini, Twenty-fourth Caprice, Var. 3

Paganini's theme, m. 4

Var. 3

Example 2.4b: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 3, mm. 1–9

Funky groove  $\text{♩} = 92$

Baker's Theme m. 1

In variation 6, Baker once again copies the method of performance of one of Paganini's variations (no. 9). In both cases, the composers require the left hand to play pizzicato. But while Paganini clearly indicates what notes the left hand should pluck and what notes to bow, Baker seems to require that the left hand pluck all the notes. It is clearly impossible, however, for the left hand to pluck all notes at the required speed; the performer must decide when to draw on the right hand for help.

Example 2.5a: Paganini, Twenty-fourth Caprice, Var. 9

Example 2.5b: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 6, mm. 1-9

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled with a '6' at the end, consists of a treble clef staff and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The treble staff contains a complex sixteenth-note melody. The grand staff below it has a 'gva' (glissando) marking above the treble clef and 'gva basso' above the bass clef. A double bar line is present. The second system, labeled with a '9' at the end, continues the sixteenth-note melody in the treble staff and provides a piano accompaniment in the grand staff. The word '(as is)' is written in the bass staff of the first system.

Both variations consist of running sixteenth notes outlining broken triads and descending scales. In the first half of his variation, Baker predominantly develops the motive on beat 2 of m. 1 of Paganini's variation (a'-e''-c''-a'); in the second half, he predominantly develops the motive on beat 1 of m.1 (c'''-a''-e''-c''). In the latter case, Baker soon substitutes Paganini's consonant triads with triads encompassing a minor seventh. This rather dissonant harmonic style is derived from jazz and will be discussed in chapter 3.

Baker not only modeled his variations on compositional parameters of Paganini's Caprice; he also sought to adopt the concept of virtuosity. His extensive experience of writing for strings, his background as a cellist, and the awareness of writing for Ruggiero Ricci, a true virtuoso, encouraged Baker to take advantage of a wide range of technical effects.

## Chapter 3

### Jazz Influences

While the formal, melodic, and harmonic structure of the *Ethnic Variations* is to varying degrees modeled on Paganini's twenty-fourth caprice, the sounds—including the rhythms, the actual harmonies, and the impression of improvisation—are borrowed from jazz and related genres. Baker imitates jazz styles such as bebop and swing; but in agreement with Schuller's broadest definition of third stream, he also draws on other types of popular music, such as calypso, blues, gospel, and spiritual. Even in the variations influenced by the latter styles, however, jazz remains the primary source of inspiration.

Scholarly analysis of jazz poses problems not usually encountered in analysis of classical music. First, jazz encompasses a great variety of styles, many of which have never been confined to paper and thus survive only in recordings and performances; second, textbooks often fail to define these styles adequately. Baker identifies the popular genre or character of most of his variations by headings (bebop, swing, funky groove, calypso, bluesy, heavy rhythm and blues, and spiritual), leaving only two variations with generic headings (the sixth variation [pizzicato] and the ninth variation [finale]). But the lack of clear definitions of these styles causes considerable problems when we attempt to identify them in the music. Rhythm and related parameters (such as tempo and meter) are often the most reliable parameters in the analytical process,<sup>58</sup> even more so since Baker acknowledges the importance of rhythm in his compositions:

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<sup>58</sup>Rhythms is also one of the elements that most clearly distinguished jazz from classical music. Originating from African music, the rhythms of jazz have grown into complex and often subtle patterns that are rare in classical compositions. For example, emphases may fall on metrically weak beats (such as beats 2 and 4 of a 4/4 meter) and be slightly anticipated

[Rhythm] is the prime factor of my music. I think that I'm very much indebted to African music for the way I feel and the way I work with rhythm. I could never escape my debt to jazz. Also, on other levels, I think I have a strong debt to Charles Ives and probably Bartok [*sic*] as far as what I do with rhythm. I'm about the business very often of polyrhythmic and multimetric schemata. I'm also about the business ... of the use of rhythmic ostinato as a unifying factor in my pieces. I think *any* piece of mine will be typical.... But by and large, all my music will bear examination from the standpoint of what I do with rhythm.<sup>59</sup>

While rhythm will figure most prominently in the following analysis, other parameters, especially harmony, will also be considered. A self-professed eclectic, Baker draws on a wide vocabulary of jazz harmonies, especially quartal harmony, tertian extensions, blue notes, harmonies based on the octatonic scale, and chord substitutions.<sup>60</sup>

In his own theme, Baker does not quote Paganini's theme note for note. From the very beginning he colors it in jazz harmony and, from the second measure on, also with virtuosic double stops.<sup>61</sup> The theme begins in A minor; but already by the second measure the chromatic notes of the violin grate against the extended tertian chord on G in the piano (b-flat" against b-natural'; a-flat" against A-natural), which "resolves" to open octaves on A in the subsequent measure. On the last two beats of m. 2, the violin plays interlocking descending major seconds and rising fourths, outlining the octatonic scale on c-sharp (c-sharp–d–e–f–g–a-flat–b-flat–b).<sup>62</sup> In spite of the

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or delayed, leading to syncopation, "swung" notes, "comping" patterns, and polyrhythms. See Bert Ligon, *Jazz Theory Resources: Tonal, Harmonic, Melodic and Rhythmic Organizations of Jazz* (Milwaukee: Houston Publishing, 2001), 10.

<sup>59</sup>David N. Baker, Lida M. Belt, and Herman C. Hudson, ed., *The Black Composer Speaks* (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, 1978), 26.

<sup>60</sup>In a brief description of his harmonic language, Baker refers to himself as an eclectic. See Baker et al., *The Black Composer Speaks*, 26.

<sup>61</sup>After the presentation of the theme, fragments of the theme are literally quoted in m. 26 of the fourth variation (piano part), in m. 6 of the fifth variation (violin and piano parts); and clearly alluded to in mm. 15–17 of the finale. The entire theme is quoted in the sixth variation.

<sup>62</sup>Other passages based on the octatonic scale include the violin melody in mm. 14 and 15 of the first variation; in m. 14 of the third variation; and in m. 12 of the fifth variation.

tonally ambiguous harmonies that result from the octatonic scale, the persisting pedal tone on A (mm. 1–4) maintains a clear tonal focus.

Example 3.1: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Theme, mm. 1–10, Harmonic Jazz Analysis<sup>63</sup>

Chord symbols above the staff:

System 1: A- B<sup>b</sup>Δ A- A- FΔ A- GΔ<sup>2</sup>

System 2: A- A<sup>b</sup>Δ B<sup>b</sup>Δ A- D-9(no3) B<sup>b</sup>7+9<sub>4</sub>

System 3: A<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup>+<sup>9</sup> D- D-<sup>13</sup> G G<sup>13</sup> C C<sup>13</sup> B<sup>b</sup>7 E<sup>9</sup>b<sup>11</sup> A-<sup>11</sup> G7(s45)<sup>7</sup>

Bass line: *piano* C: ii V I a: ii V i

Final system: F<sup>9</sup> E<sup>7</sup>+<sup>9</sup> E<sup>7</sup>+<sup>9</sup> (no3)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>63</sup>For an explanation of the chords symbols, see appendix 1.

Beginning with m. 5, Paganini's theme is harmonized by the circle of fifths (A → D → G → C → F [only briefly and vaguely] → B → E → A; see chapter 2); but the original triads are greatly extended to include the ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth. These extended tertian chords, however, are often not voiced in stacked thirds, but in stacked fourths or a mixture of fourths and thirds. Chords voiced in fourths have the twin advantage of lying well for the fingers and of creating open sonorities, which less likely drown out the soloist. While extended tertian harmonies do not necessarily alter the essence of the harmonic function (as can be seen in the circle of fifths identified above), they add a color typical of jazz, which here is reinforced by the light syncopation on the fourth beats in the bass and on the first two beats of m. 7.

Extended tertian chords also appear in the ii–V–I progressions. This harmonic sequence appears commonly in both classical music and jazz and lies at the heart of the circle of fifths discussed above. Starting with the fourth beat of m. 5, Baker colored the progression, analyzed in C Major, first by stacked thirds (on the second scale degree), then by stacked fourths (on the dominant), and finally by a mixture of thirds and fourths (on the tonic; see example 3.1). In m. 7, the same progression recurs, now in A Minor, with a mixture of stacked thirds and fourths in all chords. The harmonic rhythm is somewhat faster than in jazz standards: in the first sequence (ii–V–I in C major), the harmonies change at the pace of a half note, in the second sequence every quarter note. In bebop compositions, by contrast, the harmonies tend to change every measure or every half measure.<sup>64</sup>

Baker's first variation is labeled "Bebop" because it imitates the sounds and rhythmic drive normally associated with the jazz style of the same name.

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<sup>64</sup>In John Coltrane's *Giant Steps*, for example, the harmonies change once but usually twice per measure. This is bebop composition with comparatively fast harmonic rhythm, which, however, is still a bit slower than that of Baker's second variation.

With the emergence of bebop, or simply bop, musicians were heard in combos that included the rhythm section of the big band but only one or two soloists.<sup>65</sup> This small group created an intimate environment, allowing the musicians to abandon the big band charts and to focus on the improvisational skills of the soloist. Baker's choice of instruments, a "combo" of violin and piano, seems to replicate the intimate setting of bebop: the violin acts as the frontman (i.e, the soloist in the combo), the piano provides the rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment.

Baker also imitates bebop's rapid tempo, syncopated piano accompaniment, and asymmetrical phrases.<sup>66</sup> While the left hand of the pianist can be interpreted as taking the role of the bass player, the right hand imitates the syncopations a bebop pianist would normally perform with both hands. Piano accompaniment in syncopated jazz harmonies is commonly known as "comping,"<sup>67</sup> a style that appears in almost every jazz composition (Baker uses it in several of his *Ethnic Variations*) but is a trademark especially of bebop.

Chords used in comping are often extended to include the ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth, voiced in a way that avoids placement of the root in the bass. For example, jazz pianists tend to build chords on the third or

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<sup>65</sup>The leading bebop musicians included Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, Kenny Clarke, and Max Roach.

<sup>66</sup>For characteristics of bebop, see Eric Porter, *What is This Thing Called Jazz: African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 54; and Henry Martin and Keith Waters, *Jazz: The First 100 Years* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2002), 176. Typically in bebop, the drummer creates, on the ride cymbal, a variety of patterns consisting of quarter notes and eighth notes, but primarily has to supply the quarter-note pulse. The bass player locks into that quarter note pulse, "walking" a quarter-note accompaniment. The pulse is emphasized by the bass player, who slightly stresses beats 2 and 4. Once the rhythmic "groove" is established, one or more contrasting rhythms may be added to create a complex layering of patterns. Ligon, *Jazz Theory Resources*, 15.

<sup>67</sup>"Comping" is an abbreviation for "accompanying" or "complement." See Mark C. Gridley, *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis*, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1994), 22. See also Martin and Waters, *Jazz: The First 100 Years*, 361.

seventh, followed by the sixth or thirteenth, the ninth, the fifth, and then the tonic. When voicing a B-flat 9 chord, for example, a jazz pianist might build the chord on a-flat' (the seventh), followed by c'' (the ninth), f'' (the fifth), and b-flat'' (the tonic). Assuming that the pianist's left hand imitates the bass player of the rhythm section and that the right hand plays the chords usually covered by both hands, a typical example of the jazz voicing just described appear in the two chords of m. 9:

Example 3.2: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 1, mm. 1–11

(Bebop)  
As fast as possible

3

mf

mf

7

11

$B^b 9(\text{no } 3)$   $C 7$   $D^b 13$   $E^b 13 b 9$

—ava basso—

Baker's voicing of the extended tertian chords (which usually involve multiple triads and thus questionable roots) easily leads to confusion

regarding their true root and thus their identity. In the B-flat chord just discussed, the lowest three notes form an augmented triad with the E as a possible root (at least as far as the ear is concerned), challenging the official root of b-flat".

With the continuous eighth-note pulse and the fast tempo (here marked "as fast as possible"), Baker seems to imitate the style of bebop musicians such as John Coltrane. In his the jazz standard *Countdown*, Coltrane improvised over a set of chord changes labeled in example 3.3, experimenting with a wide range of melodic patterns and their development.<sup>68</sup> Just as in Baker's variation, the melody consists of harmonic notes, their chromatic alterations and tertian extensions, and passing tones. The g-sharp" and b" over F#-7, for example, can be interpreted as both passing tones or as the ninth and eleventh of the chord, respectively; the f" over E<sup>b</sup>7 in the second measure is clearly the ninth of the chord.

Example 3.3: John Coltrane, *Countdown*, mm. 1–6 (Saxophone Solo Only)

As in Coltrane's *Countdown*, the chromatic notes in Baker's variation can be explained as a mixture of passing tones (the g-sharp' in m. 9 of example 3.2), auxiliary tones (the b-natural in m. 9), and extensions of a tertian chord (the a-flat' in m. 10).

<sup>68</sup>The harmonic analysis is taken from David Baker, *The Jazz Style of John Coltrane* (Miami: Warner Brothers Publications, 1980), 38.

The second variation is marked “Swing.” It seems, however, that Baker does not allude to the jazz style called swing, which was popular from the 1930s to the mid 1940s. Swing is characterized by big-band ensembles, seamless transitions from written sections (often arrangements) to improvised solo sections, and call-and-response patterns. In addition, the bass of the rhythm section plays on all four beats (as opposed to the first and third beats of earlier jazz) in the manner of a walking bass, thus freeing the pianist from keeping time and allowing him to play fewer notes and more syncopated figures.<sup>69</sup> None of these characteristics pertain to Baker’s second variation. Instead, Baker seems to allude to the type of swing that refers to the tension between the notated pulse and the pulse played by the performers.<sup>70</sup> In a sense, swing is the slight but regular shift of a rhythmic emphasis,<sup>71</sup> a principle Baker seems to replicate by continuous syncopation at the beginning of the second variation as well as in mm. 5, 9–10, and 11–13. In these passages, the melodic stress is shifted from the quarter note to the dotted quarter note, regularly submerging the stress on metrically strong positions. It is important to keep in mind that swing cannot be rationally quantified; at best, it can be circumscribed.<sup>72</sup> Baker’s notational replication may approximate the principle of swing, but true swing can only be achieved in performance.

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<sup>69</sup>See J. Bradford Robinson, “Swing,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, ed. Barry Kernfeld, 2d ed., 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 2002), 3:697; Martin and Waters, *Jazz: The First 100 Years*, 107–12; and Joachim Ernst Berendt, *Das Jazzbuch: Von Rag bis Rock* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1977), 24–25. Important jazz musicians of the swing era include Fletcher Henderson, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw, Chick Webb, Ella Fitzgerald, Gene Krupa, Coleman Hawkins, and Benny Carter. See Tucker, “Jazz,” 12:909–13.

<sup>70</sup>Robinson, “Swing,” 3:697.

<sup>71</sup>Berendt, *Das Jazzbuch*, 166–67.

<sup>72</sup>Berendt, *Das Jazzbuch*, 165; and Schuller, *The Swing Era*, 223.

Example 3.4: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 2, mm. 1–13

(Swing) Brightly ♩ = 200

detaché

8

8va basso

detaché

13

8va basso

The piano does not carry much rhythmic momentum; but its relatively slow and steady half-note pulse seems to allow the violinist maximum rhythmic freedom.

“Groove,” the noun in the title of the third variation, is slang and can have a wide variety of meanings, even in jazz.<sup>73</sup> The adjective “funky” is equally vague in meaning and probably refers to “the style and feeling of

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<sup>73</sup>“Groove” in reference to jazz can mean “style,” “something intensely enjoyable,” “rhythm” or “beat,” “performing exceptionally well,” “to enjoy oneself intensely,” “to make happy or ecstatic,” or even “to record (a piece) phonographically.” A phrase using “groove” in the latter sense is: “That’s the third date we’ve grooved half a dozen schmaltzy tunes for that wand-waver with never a swing item in the list.” *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang*, ed. J. E. Lighter, 3 vols. (New York: Random House, 1994): 1:974–75.

older black American music.”<sup>74</sup> Baker seems to use the term “groove” in the sense of a repeated bass pattern, which the violinist and pianist swing in perfect synchronization.<sup>75</sup> They establish a groove based on the rhythm of a triplet quarter note followed by a triplet eighth note (see example 3.5), which, with a few exceptions and modifications, persists throughout the entire variation. In the first half of the variation, only beat 2 of m. 1, beats 3–4 of m. 5, and beat 2 of m. 7 are incompatible with the groove; in all other instances, at least one of the two instruments articulates the groove, or both play a neutral rhythm. The rhythmic interest of the variation derives in part from the rhythms that are incompatible with the groove and, most importantly, from the rhythmic interaction of the two instruments. In mm. 6–8, for example, the piano alternates between playing on and off the beat, but the chords always coincide with a rhythmic event of the violin.<sup>76</sup> The accompanimental pattern gradually contracts in effective preparation of the shift to running sixteenth notes in m. 9.

Example 3.5: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 3, mm. 1–10

The musical score for Example 3.5 is titled "Funky groove" with a tempo marking of a quarter note equal to 92. It is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems of music. The first system contains measures 1 through 5, and the second system contains measures 6 through 10. The violin part (top staff) and piano part (bottom two staves) both play a repeating rhythmic pattern of a triplet quarter note followed by a triplet eighth note. The piano part includes chords and some dynamic markings. A measure rest is indicated in the second system, spanning measures 6 and 7.

<sup>74</sup>As defined in Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.  
<sup>75</sup>Paul F. Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 349.  
<sup>76</sup>The term “event” is borrowed from Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff. See Justin London, “Rhythm,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 21:297.

“Calypso,” the fourth variation, takes its name from a type of dance that originated from Trinidad and elsewhere in the Caribbean during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>77</sup> The calypso, typically played by steel drum bands or carnival street musicians, is characterized by a distinct rhythmic pattern based on the Afro-Cuban clave,<sup>78</sup> which often stresses beats 2 and 4.

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<sup>77</sup> Jan Fairley, “Calypso,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 4:849.  
<sup>78</sup> Birger Sulsbrück, *Latin-American Percussion: Rhythms and Rhythm Instruments from Cuba and Brazil*, trans. Ethan Weisgard (Copenhagen: Den Rytmske Aftenskoles Forlag, 1982), 17.

Example 3.6: Afro-Cuban Clave<sup>79</sup>



The calypso pattern takes its first measure from the clave and, like the clave, stresses a metrically weak beat in the second measure. But unlike the clave, the calypso consistently stresses the first and fourth beats of the measure.

Example 3.7: Basic Calypso Rhythm<sup>80</sup>



Baker draws on the calypso pattern in several ways. He begins with the violin playing syncopated triple and quadruple stops in imitation of a strummed guitar. The calypso rhythm appears both in varied and literal form. In m. 1, the violin stresses the downbeat, changes harmony on the fourth eighth note (thus accenting it), and omits any stress on the third beat. Only at the end of the measure does Baker depart from the calypso pattern by placing the final chord on the position of the last eighth note instead of the last quarter note. In the second half of the variation (mm. 9ff.), however, the bass imitates the calypso pattern in textbook form while the chords in the pianist's right hand add rhythmic interest.

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<sup>79</sup>Mark Levine, *The Jazz Theory Book* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music, 1995), 462. The same pattern also appears in Sulsbrück, *Latin-American Percussion*, 172.

<sup>80</sup>Sulsbrück, *Latin-American Percussion*, 172.

Example 3.8: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 4, mm. 1–9

Calypso ♩ = 138  
pizz.

3

6

arco

9

The calypso does not figure prominently in jazz and is generally not as well known as other Latin rhythms from Cuba or Brazil.<sup>81</sup> But in agreement with Schuller's broadest definition of third stream, Baker draws on types of popular music beyond those closely associated with jazz.

The fifth variation is titled "bluesy," in reference to the blues, one of the oldest genres of American popular music. The blues consist of a twelve-bar harmonic structure (I-I-I-I; IV-IV-I-I; V-V-I-I; each Roman numeral indicating the harmony for the duration of a quarter note) and is performed

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<sup>81</sup> Vernon W. Buggs, "Latin Jazz, Afro-Cuban Jazz or Just Plain ol' Jazz?" *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* 8 (1996): 205–9.

in slow tempo.<sup>82</sup> Of the characteristic features of the blues, Baker adopts only the slow tempo and the blue notes. But unlike the flattened notes in his other variations, the ones in the bluesy variation are not drowned in heavy chromaticism but are clearly recognizable as blue notes.

The first clear blue note appears in the measure making the transition from the fourth variation to the fifth. In this measure, which is heard in A minor, the fifth is flattened (e-flat"), resolving to its lower neighbor d". Baker soon abandons a clear tonal center but preserves the characteristically flattened notes that pull downward: in m. 3, the e-flat" descends to d"; in m. 4, the same sequence reappears in the bass; and in m. 5, the e-flat' "resolves" indirectly by way of the lower third (c'). A particularly obvious example of a blue note appears at the end of m. 6, where the violin descends from a" by way of g" to the bluesy e-flat". The e-flat" resolves to d' and finally to a', which once again is felt as a clear tonic.

Baker also replicates the mournful quality of the blues, albeit with a device normally associated with classical music. When expressing grief, classical composers (especially those of the Baroque), drew on a descending bass line, often as a repeated pattern. Baker's bass is also characterized by descending gestures, at least in the first half of the variation.

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<sup>82</sup>For a more thorough discussion of the blues, see Paul Oliver, "Blues," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 1:247–56.

Example 3.9: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 5, mm. 1–7

Bluesy  $\text{♩} = 100$   
(Swing)

2

5

7

*gva basso*

*f*

*mf*

*pp*

With the sixth variation, Baker interrupts his references to specific styles of jazz and other popular genres. While the piano quotes the original Paganini theme,<sup>83</sup> the violin adds a counter melody that is supposed to be played with left-hand pizzicato. It is technically impossible, however, to pluck all the notes with the left hand at the required tempo; the violinist must decide how to execute the part.

<sup>83</sup>Baker changed only one note: the e' in m. 11 replaces Paganini's f'.

Example 3.10: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 6, mm. 1–3 and 10–12

The image displays a musical score for two systems of piano music. The first system, labeled '3' at the end, covers measures 1-3. It features a tempo marking of quarter note = 132 and the instruction 'left hand pizz.'. The right hand part is marked 'secco' and 'gva', while the left hand part is marked 'gva basso'. The second system, labeled '12' at the end, covers measures 10-12. It includes a repeat sign '[..]' at the beginning. The right hand part is marked 'gva' and the left hand part is marked 'gva basso'. The score is written in a single system with two staves per system, using a treble and bass clef.

The term “rhythm and blues,” which appears in the heading of the seventh variation, was coined in 1949 as a catch-all term for the whole spectrum of African-American music, including blues, gospel, funk, jazz, and other popular genres. In a more narrow sense, the term also applies to “certain characteristic African-American musical styles prominent during the late 1940s and the 1950s,” especially the emphasis on blues, an insistent beat, and overt emotion in the solos.<sup>84</sup>

Of the many styles that can make up “Rhythm and Blues,” Baker makes reference to funk and (to a lesser degree) to gospel. A comparison of Baker’s bass line with that of Stevie Wonder’s *Too High* (see examples 3.11a and 3.11c) shows that both consist of a similar pattern of syncopated interlocking rhythms in basically the same tempo. Even though they usually

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<sup>84</sup> Howard Rye, “Rhythm and Blues,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 21:309; and David Brackett, “Soul Music,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 23:757.

appear in different order, the rhythmic elements are the same: the dotted figure (for example, m. 1, beat 2 in Baker and m. 1, beat 1 in Wonder); the syncopated figure, sometimes even with a descending leap of an octave (for example, m. 1, beat 3 in Baker and m. 1, beat 4 in Wonder).

Variation 7 also includes aspects of gospel. Gospel songs are usually performed in a slow or moderate tempo and include a rhythmic ostinato or short chord sequence (called “vamp”) over which the soloist improvises in long melismas.<sup>85</sup> The variation begins with a rhythmic and melodic pattern of two measures (mm. 1–2) that repeats three times (mm. 3–8), either in the original A minor or transposed to F-sharp minor (see example 3.11c). The chromatic “walkup” in the bass is clearly derived from the gospel pattern (see example 3.11b), and the broken octaves are more prominent in the gospel pattern than in the funk pattern discussed above.

Example 3.11a: Funk Bass Pattern in Stevie Wonder’s *Too High*<sup>86</sup>



Example 3.11b: Gospel Pattern<sup>87</sup>



<sup>85</sup>See H. C. Boyer, “Gospel Music,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 10:181.

<sup>86</sup>This example is taken from Chuck Sher, ed., *The New Real Book*, 3 vols. (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music, 1995), 3:395.

<sup>87</sup> The example is taken from Mark Harrison, *Gospel Keyboard Styles* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2002), 67.

Example 3.11c: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 7, mm. 1–10

Heavy rhythm & blues (♩ = 92)

8va basso -

8va basso

8va basso Continues

8va

2

5

8

10

12

In m. 9, the rhythmic patterning begins to break up: the accompaniment of m. 9, which consists of new material, is repeated in transposition in m. 10; the accompaniment of m. 11, a variation of m. 9, is repeated in transposition in m. 11; the accompaniment of the subsequent measures no longer repeats entire measures but only melodic and rhythmic fragments. Still, the highly florid violin part maintains a clear reference to gospel music.

The eighth variation, marked “spiritual,” continues the florid violin part of the seventh variation, possibly in imitation of a vocal soloist. Other characteristics, too, seem appropriate to the genre: the slow tempo reflects the melancholy of slow spirituals (also called “sorrow songs”),<sup>88</sup> and the extremely simple accompanimental pattern (a downbeat in the bass followed by a thick chord) allows the violinist maximum freedom to swing the syncopations, which are themselves typical of spirituals.<sup>89</sup> Finally, the instruction to use the mute, unique in the entire *Ethnic Variations*, may be intended to conjure up a feeling of religious reverence.

Example 3.12: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 8, mm. 1–9

(Spiritual)  
 Slow ♩ = 50  
 con sordino

<sup>88</sup>Paul Oliver, “Spiritual,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 24:192.

<sup>89</sup>The thick chords on the weak beats of the measure might reflect the off-beat hand clapping sometimes practiced by the choir in the performance of spirituals. See Oliver, “Spiritual,” 24:193. They are also typical of stride piano. See J. Bradford Robinson, “Stride,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 24:574.

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled with a '6' at the end, consists of a single melodic line in the upper voice and a piano accompaniment in two staves. The piano part features block chords and a bass line with a marking 'pva basso'. The second system, labeled with a '9' at the end, continues the melodic line and piano accompaniment, showing a transition in the piano part's meter.

As the sixth variation, the ninth lacks a heading that refers to a specific style of jazz (Baker provides only the generic label “Finale”); but unlike the sixth variation, the ninth is strongly influenced by jazz. Baker exploits the ambiguity between the 3/4 time signature and the superimposed duple meter, smoothly slipping from one to the other or combining them in a compound meter or polymeter. In mm. 9–11, for example, the piano makes a transition from compound duple meter to pure duple meter while the running sixteenth notes pass from the pianist’s right hand to the violin. Beginning with m. 11, the violin part makes a similar transition from compound meter (accents on every sixth sixteenth note) to a neutral meter (no accents) to triple meter (accents on every fourth sixteenth note), which now clashes with the duple meter in the piano. Although actual polymeters appear only rarely (as, for example, in mm. 13, 24, and 27), Baker creates a sense of a meter that is constantly in flux.

Example 3.13: Baker, *Ethnic Variations*, Var. 9, mm. 1–9

Finale ♩ = 52

3

6

9

12

15

[..]

Additional aspects of jazz include the complex harmonies with the characteristic mixture of thirds and fourths and, especially in the first half of the variation, the trading of the solo, that is, the running sixteenth notes.

Although this analysis has to some degree been able to relate Baker's stylistic headings to the score, the question remains whether the headings might not also relate to the way in which each variation should be performed. As interesting as a study of performance practice might be, it exceeds the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, if the headings also referred to the style of the performance, they would have truly taxed Ruggiero Ricci, the artist for whom the *Ethnic Variations* were composed. Ricci had occasionally been performing jazz, but his primary background was in classical music. It is questionable whether he would have been able to become intimately familiar with such a wide variety or distinct performing styles.

*Ethnic Variations* is a third-stream composition in the sense of Schuller's early definitions (which did not yet include improvisation as a obligatory feature). Even though Baker confessed "rarely [using]

improvisation in anything outside of jazz,” he still creates an impression of improvisation, especially in those violin passages with elaborate flourishes.<sup>90</sup> Having often been improvised by famous pianists, notably Mozart and Beethoven, variations are by nature closer to jazz than other classical genres. Baker’s elaborate “embellishments” of Paganini’s twenty-fourth caprice make it truly difficult for the listener to tell whether the violinist improvises or plays from a carefully notated score. It is not surprising, then, that Baker characterizes himself as a third-stream composer.<sup>91</sup> In fact, it is as if he carried his ideal of bridging jazz and classical music into his career as an educator: as a distinguished Professor at Indiana University, he introduces a large number of classical musicians to the treasures of jazz.

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<sup>90</sup> See Baker, et al., *The Black Composer Speaks*, 27.

<sup>91</sup> David Baker, interviewed by author, 17 October 2000, telephone conversation, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

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## Appendix 1

### Chord Symbols Used in Jazz Analysis (Levine, *Jazz Theory Book*, ix)

A C major 7th chord can be notated as Cmaj7, CM7, C6, C $\overset{9}{6}$ , or C $\Delta$ , and they all mean pretty much the same thing. Many jazz musicians just write C. In this book I'll write C major 7th as C $\Delta$ .

A D minor 7th chord can be notated as D-7, Dm7, or Dmi7. I like to use the minus sign, as in D-7.

The plus (+) symbol (C7+11) and the sharp (#) symbol (C7 $\sharp$ 11) both mean the same thing: Raise a note (the 11th, in this case) a half-step. I'll use the # symbol in this book.

The flat (b) symbol (C7 $\flat$ 9) and the minus (-) sign (C7-9) both mean the same thing: Lower a note (the 9th, in this case) a half-step. I prefer the flat symbol.

The 4th and 11th are the same note in a chord. I like to use 4 on major and sus chords (C $\Delta$  $\sharp$ 4, Csus4), and 11 on dominant and minor chords (C7 $\sharp$ 11, C-11).

The 6th and 13th are the same note within a chord. Standard practice is to use 6 on major and minor chords (C6, C-6), and 13 on dominant chords (C7 $\flat$ 13).

Many piano and guitar voicings for major 7th chords don't include the major 7th. You'll see an occasional "C $\Delta$ " chord in this book with no major 7th in the voicing shown.

## Appendix 2

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A native of Jackson, Tennessee, Heather Koren Pinson completed the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a concentration in music at Samford University in May 1998. In the fall of 1999, she entered the master's program in musicology at Louisiana State University. Upon completion of this program, she will enroll in the doctoral program in comparative arts at Ohio University to study the history of music, art, and drama.