***Jazz Diaspora: Music and Globalization*. By Bruce Johnson. London: Routledge 2020. 208 pp. ISBN: 978-1-138-57755-8**

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Australian academic Bruce Johnson sums up his intentions in *Jazz Diaspora: Music and Globalization* neatly on page 165 of this slim volume, 'What might we learn about jazz by escaping the gravitational pull of the US-centric canonical model which quarantines the music from certain broader fields of enquiry?' He argues, reasonably, for greater attention to how jazz developed in, and continues to do so in, countries beyond the USA. Broadly, his methodology draws sustenance from the 'New Jazz Studies' (p. 157), an approach that owes much to post-structuralism and post-modernism.

New Jazz Studies eschews the grand narrative of jazz history based on a canon of key figures and recordings. While he does not dispense with the idea of a canon *per se*, Johnson questions narratives based on the 'US-centred canon' (p. 156), elevating instead the particular or local against the dominant discourses of jazz history. He contends that 'jazz that doesn't sound like what we think of as jazz, music that by "canonical" standards is mediocre, corny, quaint and misconceived, but which has been presented under the name of jazz' can reveal 'more about the history of the music' and 'the various diasporic cultures with which it negotiated' (p. 3). The need, he suggests, is to shift the focus from 'texts' to 'the larger historical and cultural contexts' of the music (p. 159).

Jazz Diaspora is not so much about jazz as a music or its history but rather concerned with the researching and writing of jazz history. This begs the issue of 'who is writing what for whom and why'. Of course, context is crucial in understanding who did what, when, where and so forth – this is the very stuff of history. The danger with Johnson's approach, however, is that the "stuff" becomes merely a matter of one's position to be dissolved into its supposed explanatory context. Furthermore, Johnson seems less keen on examining the theoretical and ideological assumptions underpinning his argument or those of the authors he cites.

For example, Johnson references authors Richard Sudhalter (2001) and Stuart Nicholson (2005) on several occasions. Both writers address how canonical accounts have ignored the contributions of musicians falling outside the canon; in Sudhalter's case white American musicians, in Nicholson's case white European musicians. Johnson seems to accept their arguments at face value rather than interrogate the authors' ideological starting points. In contrast, a very different account emerges if one places both books in the context of debates concerning the ownership of jazz initiated in the 1980s by the triumvirate of African American critics Albert Murray and Stanley Crouch, and African American trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. Moreover, reading that debate against a mirror-image dispute between black American jazz musicians and white critics in the mid-1960s adds further resonances (Monson 2007, pp. 241–6). Examined in this way, these two books serve less as evidence of the exclusion of white musicians from the canon, and more as one-half of a war of words – the other led by the Murray/Crouch/Marsalis – with Bourdieuan, cultural capital overtones.

This is what historians do. They examine the "what, when, where, etc" of history by gathering the best possible information from the widest number of sources, being explicit regarding their assumptions and methodology and seeking first evidence to disprove those assumptions before placing the events in 'the larger historical and cultural contexts'. And they do so by drawing on liberal

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historiographical or critical theory approaches to produce highly readable accounts of jazz as music and as history.

Jazz Diaspora feels very much like a book written by a jazzademic for other jazzademics. Reading this book, the punchline – 'But what was the play like, Mrs. Lincoln?' – kept running through my mind. This failure to attend to the music itself – Johnson notes he has deliberately avoided 'attempting to legislate any particular definition of jazz in this enquiry' (p. 2) – is arguably the book's undoing. Imagine a lepidopterist describing a butterfly from various perspectives but failing to say what made it a thing of such rare beauty. Without talking about what musicians actually do and have done, any sense of history and its value disappears.

When Johnson turns to certain jazz shibboleths such as 'jazz exceptionalism' and 'authenticity', he again fails to examine these notions from a genuinely 'larger historical and cultural context'. As he argues, jazz is not alone in its use of improvisation; other musics improvise. However, there are other reasons for viewing jazz as exceptional – not least its origins under segregation, the relationship within it between form and improvisation and its unfinished nature. As for 'authenticity', read as the seeking of a distinctive, personal musical voice within the context of an evolving tradition, this hardly seems so very problematic.

I have similar concerns about *Jazz Diaspora* where Johnson turns to the stuff of history. I defer to Johnson's knowledge of antipodean jazz history. Nevertheless, the historical accounts offered by Johnson in respect of British jazz (pp. 96–7) and American jazz history (pp. 80–1, 94–5) raise issues.

In relation to the former, Johnson claims that by the late 1950s jazz outside the USA was 'for the most part … indistinguishable from US jazz' before proposing that the period that followed saw non-US musicians 'producing striking locally distinctive innovations' (p. 11). My own examinations of post-war British jazz history reveal this to have been a gradual process that began much earlier and resulted from a definable ongoing dialogue between musicians at the periphery with those at the centre. Moreover, this process continued at least into the 1990s. Young white and black musicians in Britain were strongly influenced by the so-called 'neo-cons' that emerged around Wynton Marsalis and others – musically, sartorially and in their performance practice.

For a quarter century, I have interviewed many of those British musicians who produced those 'striking local distinctive innovations' (p. 11) in British jazz – Mike Westbrook, Michael Garrick, Keith Tippett, Ian Carr, John Surman and many more. The process of dialogue between periphery and centre – here, I think Johnson has a point – has never flown just one way but with few exceptions it is to canonical figures that such British musicians refer – Ellington, Mingus, Miles Davis, Coltrane, Armstrong and so on.

Johnson's account of free jazz in the USA is also problematic. He suggests that while 'there were initiatives in the direction of free jazz in the US, as in the work of late Coltrane, and of Albert Ayler, it was largely a European phenomenon' (p. 95). In fact, the first noted experiments in this area took place with the group of white musicians around Italian American pianist Lennie Tristano in 1949. However, it was with the emergence of Ornette Coleman's quartet in the late 1950s that the 'new thing', as it became known, really began. Musicians involved included Cecil Taylor, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Archie Shepp, David Murray, Julius Hemphill, Anthony Braxton, Sam Rivers, Sun Ra, Marion Brown, Andrew Hill, Charles Gayle, Joe McPhee and many others. Some members of the US jazz public were alienated by

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the radical turn taken musically and politically, and these musicians responded by creating their own performance spaces. The New York 'Loft Jazz Scene' of the 1970s and 1980s was one such example. Such musicians have certainly found greater favour in mainland Europe than at home, but these African American musicians – and younger, often white American musicians – have continued to play free jazz.

The point is that failure to attend to the who, what, when, where, how and why makes for arid and even inaccurate history. Of course, historians may justifiably widen the scope of inquiry and must seek to understand and interpret the 'facts' in terms of the 'larger historical and cultural contexts'. However, context applies to one's own work, not just to writers outside one's own approach. As E.H. Carr (1987, p. 30) noted, history is 'a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past'. But Carr did not accept that all views of the past were equally valid: 'It does not follow that because a mountain appears to take on a different shape from different angles of vision, it has objectively no shape at all or an infinity of shapes' (Carr 1987, pp. 27–8). It is the mountain – the music and those who made it what it is and what we know of it – that is unfortunately missing from *Jazz Diaspora.*

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***A Philosophy of Cover Songs*. By P.D. Magnus. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022. 145 pp. ISBN 978-1-800-64422-9**
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This volume may well offer students of philosophy critical insights into how to think about and appreciate cover songs. By distinguishing between *aesthetic* and *etiological* modes of evaluation (i.e. without a consideration of an original song, or in reference to the original or canonical version, respectively), Magnus seeks to move debate away from the concern over what counts or does not count as a cover and towards a consideration of this question: 'Are there some covers which are not (versions of) the same *song* as the recordings they are covering?' (p. 102). In addition to this metaphysical concern with the individuation of songs, the author approaches covers through perspectives in semiotics and logic in order to support the assertion that questions about covers cannot begin with the formulation of a general rule regarding what can be considered a cover and/or how we are to go about evaluating one. Magnus posits instead that each song is a 'historical individual' (p. 111) that must be considered within the 'context of [its] creation and appreciation' (p. 46),

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