

factions. His inclusion of Mormons in the narrative of the rise of the religious right is an important contribution. Young's book is highly recommended for upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses in contemporary American religious history as well as religion and politics.

MARK S. MEDLEY

Baptist Seminary of Kentucky

Spirits Rejoice! Jazz and American Religion. By Jason C. Bivins. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. xvi + 369 pages. \$29.95.

doi: 10.1017/hor.2016.106

Readers of this book are in for a wild ride in jazz and studies in American religion. This is one of the most fun academic books I've read in a while, and the author, who is himself both a jazz musician and an American religious historian, clearly had a terrific time writing it. Best of all, the author provides a soundtrack on the book's blog (spiritsrejoice.wordpress.com) for each chapter; the recordings plus the author's notes are extraordinary.

Bivins' central argument is that "jazz makes sense in and also complicates known accounts of American religion, finding strangeness in the familiar and familiarity in the outside" (16). Both "jazz" and "religion" are inchoate words that describe things that can't quite be boxed in by linguistic expressions, but for brief moments in listening to the jazz, we can get some bits and pieces of the stories of American religious history, especially since 1920—and in attending to some of the moments of religious thought, we get some different senses of the jazz.

The book is divided into two parts, each with four chapters. The first chapter sets the main theme: words never quite suffice to describe the character of either jazz or American religion. This chapter also details several notes about Bivins' approach. One is the use of "'spirits rejoicing' throughout the book as a synonym for 'religion' or 'spirituality'" (15), a term that indicates the kind of permeability Bivins advocates. Another important note is that, often, Bivins wants us to "pause, and begin again," meaning to replay the refrain of his argument again, but in a different key or mode, in order to see a different aspect of the argument. Bivins finds that jazz gives "mobility" beyond the lies, to show multiple accounts of history and religion both.

In the second chapter, Bivins begins by challenging the standard understanding of the relationship between jazz and the black church. By chapter's end, Bivins shows that there is no "black church" as such, and that jazz musicians end up bringing multiple religious influences, including the Kabbalah and a variety of Islamic traditions, to their music. The third chapter likewise begins again with the supposedly standard theme of how jazz is intertwined

with American history. Yet here, history is narrated far beyond the standard stories we thought we knew. Bivins quotes Sun Ra: “When they started history, the truth couldn’t move, ’cause they put a lot of lies in there too” (111). The fourth chapter in this part begins yet again, to ask about institutions that support and sustain history and religion. Jazz has its institutions in communitarianism, so Bivins describes the array of communities that support and sustain multiple meanings of religion and history.

In part 2, entitled “Let us pause, and begin again,” Bivins now tries to take us even further into what cannot be spoken—the experiences of jazz and religion. Chapter 5 describes jazz and ritual, chapter 6 treats jazz and mysticism, and chapter 7 gets into cosmologies. In each chapter, the argument begins with what seems familiar, but quickly becomes strange. Chapter 8 sounds the refrain yet again: “Resistance to naming and representation is a register of jazz’s volatility, but it is one that is also a *part* of American religions” (264). Religion and jazz, neither one, can be essentialized—and yet “to write about religion is possibly to experience something that religious people themselves experience: the absence of language and the attempt to restore it” (272).

If you’re unfamiliar with jazz, as I am (while I am a musician, I had only some brief “teaching units” on jazz in music classes), it does take some intellectual energy to engage this book (the same may be true for those less familiar with American religious historical debates)—and I am quite sure that I missed some internal jokes and references. When I say the book took me for a wild ride, I mean at points I could scarcely understand what the author was trying to say about jazz, so I had to hang onto his theological/philosophical/historical discussions to get to the point. Other times, I’d hang onto the jazz recordings in the hopes of eventually getting it.

To those familiar with some of the current trajectories in how to do American religious history, the author’s method and descriptions of religion won’t be a surprise, but the subject should delight. Theologians interested in Christian practice may find the author’s method and discussions helpful.

JANA M. BENNETT
University of Dayton

Connected toward Communion: The Church and Social Communication in the Digital Age. By Daniella Zsupan-Jerome. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014. xi + 139 pages. \$17.95 (paper).

doi: 10.1017/hor.2016.116

Digital media are much more than just new, sophisticated tools for human communication. They are a culture that profoundly shapes how we