

## Review

**Damon J. Phillips, *Shaping Jazz: Cities, Labels, and the Global Emergence of an Art Form*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013. xi + 217 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-15088-8 (hbk). \$35.00/£24.95.**

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In this book, Damon Phillips deals with the circulation of jazz from its early recordings until 1933. Indeed, Phillips, who started his scholarly work in organizational theory on the consulting sector business models, has mobilized the exploratory power of network analysis in a creative manner within a conceptual framework inherited from the 'production of culture' perspective and sociological new institutionalism. As the author sums it up in the Acknowledgements section, this book represents a quite forceful and synoptic effort that synthesizes a number of years of thorough research.

On the basis of the Lord discography, which served as a database for noting, through the recordings' personnel, the travels of bandleaders between different cities (New Orleans and New York to Paris, Stockholm or Calcutta, for example), he has constructed a network that illuminates the degree of connection between cities. This allows Phillips to draw an accurate map of the dissemination of jazz through the world's main cities through this first and crucial phase of cultural globalization (1917–1933). Developing an analysis centred on the original concept of 'sociological congruence' and the link between innovation and centrality, Phillips makes an original and rigorous contribution to the sociology of cultural globalization, while shedding light in an innovative way on the classical problem of the legitimation process of jazz within different national cultures. Without being exhaustive, his analysis of the case of jazz in the Weimar Republic is particularly illuminating.

Phillips's ambition is not to define jazz per se. His approach is a historical analysis of the early days of the jazz recording industry and how its dynamics would enforce a definition of an art form that would soon become global. The value and meaning of jazz as a cultural product are socially constructed, at least in part, he modestly acknowledges. This well-known

anthropological and sociological claim is grounded here in the sense that value and meaning only exist when there is a congruence between the product's characteristics—the traits of the work of art for musicologists or art historians—and the geographical location of the recording and organizational models involved in record production. In short, 'jazz was shaped by a drive toward congruity between songs and their sources' (7).

Chapters 3 to 6 focus on this notion of sociological congruence. Chief among Phillips's insights is that,

Victorian-era firms' recording decisions were motivated by a need for identity preservation and that this need drove decisions on the type of music that was made available on the marketplace as jazz. That is, individual firms chose recordings that aligned with their identities. (142)

In these early days of jazz, stylistic diversity prevailed, with great variety in the combinations and number of instruments and musicians, and the racial composition of the bands, from the lone African American jazz singer to the all-white symphonic jazz orchestra. Phillips's analysis thus proves that jazz is a contingent category, as all social categories are. From this original diversity, selection, classification and legitimation processes took place in various places and gave birth to varying definitions of jazz over time and place. This particular consideration for social context and social networks, as well as for the salience of geography, allows Phillips to solve the puzzle of early German jazz. How does one explain why German symphonic jazz during the Weimar Republic (1918–1933) would fail to attain canonization—in the sense William Weber (1992) applied the concept to classical music—while Berlin was one of the hippest places on earth at the time? The historical explanation based on the arrival of Hitler and the Nazis doesn't explain it all; symphonic jazz and swing rather flourished during the Reich, as Michaël Kater (2003) showed, and Victorian-era firms tended to record white orchestras. The explanation is more to be found in the lack of congruence between the evolution of jazz in Germany (where it was in those days closely linked to the classical music tradition, leading to the appreciation of symphonic jazz), and the evolution of jazz everywhere else. German jazz was too closely linked to the 'classical music' cultural definition of German culture, and its market was certainly too local, even though symphonic jazz was considered as authentic as other forms of jazz in those days. It is only in retrospect that this hybridization of jazz and classical would be dismissed from the canonical jazz tradition. Weimar's jazz, then, is to be seen as a contingent success, entirely defined by a geographically

and historically limited context on the generational, cultural, economic and social levels.

Phillips solves other puzzles in *Shaping Jazz*: the questions of what he calls 'geographical disconnectedness' (chapter 1) and 'adoption narratives of cultural products' (chapter 6). Geographical disconnectedness is negatively associated with originality in jazz overall. In a city like Calcutta, where EMI established itself as early as 1901, a typical recording would be a re-recording of a tune from New York or London. For instance, a recording of 'Soho-Blues' was made by HMV in 1926 by a foreign band, Lequime's Grand Hotel Orchestra (Dorin 2010). But when an original music is produced in a distant city, without connection to the dense core network of jazz cities, it has a long-term appeal when it is music that is difficult to categorize. An element of explanation comes, according to Phillips, from the bandleaders who chose the repertoire—Teddy Weatherford in Calcutta played a major role in this—but also followed their audience's tastes: audiences in remote places, as new cultural consumers, were in fact attracted to novelty.

The paramount character of geography and the way it is understood and used by musicians themselves is better understood in chapter 2, especially with the analysis of the 'Milenburg Joys', a tune recorded in Richmond, Indiana in 1923. This tune, recorded in a highly disconnected city, had a very strong long-term appeal, being re-recorded 36 times by 1933. Statistically, Phillips shows that disconnectedness has a positive impact on the diffusion of tunes that would enter the discographical canon. But they always follow the same path: originating in a remote city, being re-recorded very early in a core city like Chicago and then attaining a broader appeal than those coming from places like New York. Core cities acted rather as 'engines'—with musicians eager to differentiate themselves with original tunes in a competitive job market—in the second stage of this three-step diffusion pattern, the third step being a broad multi-continent diffusion of re-recordings, accounting for a large parts of the jazz canon.

Chapter 6 broadens the reflection on authenticity and the narratives developed to foster adoption by fabricating identity and geographical origins. Phillips shows that tunes originally recorded by black musicians were adopted by white musicians through re-recordings, which gave them back exposure and inclusion in the canon. Legitimacy would then come from the interplay between supposedly black authentic roots, and narratives surrounding re-recordings in core jazz cities such as Chicago, London or New York. In this chapter, Phillips draws inspiration from Peterson's (1997) analysis of

the fabrication of an 'authentic' country music through certain patterns of adoption—white working-class narratives for instance. The difference lies in the fact that jazz, as a genre, is an example of an adoption narrative, as can be seen from the endless debates on its nature, origins and definition. The racial dimension of the jazz narrative is exemplified through Paul Whiteman's appearance in the movie *The King of Jazz* (1930), which shows jazz, as it should be performed, according to the elites. More generally, the recording by a white musician of a tune created by a black musician alters the audience's perception of this recording, as well as of its originator and adaptor. Phillips also points out the effects on audiences of the recording of blues tunes by the Rolling Stones: it changed forever the way these tunes and their creators (e.g. Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley) were viewed. One could also add that the Rolling Stones' concert with Muddy Waters at the Checkerboard Lounge in Chicago in 1981 (2012) changed the way local audiences perceived blues music, Muddy Waters and the Rolling Stones. The Stones gave that night exposure, and Muddy Waters authenticity, in a cultural trade where racial and musical boundaries were at the same time blurred and redrawn. Phillips's model helps us to understand this particular event.

But the book finishes by moving beyond the question of jazz. Phillips sees the market for jazz as having similarities with other markets where novelty is rewarded. To the extent that value is driven by novelty, and quality is difficult to determine objectively, social cues around the context of production become critical in assessing meaning (*What is it?*) and value (*How much do I like it?*). 'Constructing the meaning and value of jazz is impossible without social cues, and congruence is one way in which social cues are organized and represented. But this is not unique to jazz' (143). That is why Phillips applies his analytical model to three market categories that are unrelated to jazz or music: nanotechnology, green technology, and software. Nonetheless, it seems that Phillips, through this fascinating book, has made a major step in the sociological puzzle-solving effort—as he claims, as a scholar, to be trying to solve puzzles—to account at the same time for the reception of cultural works and the context of their production. Linking these two trends of cultural sociology, largely independent of one another since the early works of Bourdieu in the 1960s on the love of art (Bourdieu 1966; 1979), and on literary or art production in the 1990s (Bourdieu 1992), or DiMaggio on arts participation in the late 1970s and 2000s (DiMaggio and Unseem 1978; DiMaggio and Muktar 2004), and cultural entrepreneurship in the 1980s (DiMaggio 1982), is not the least of the rewards given by this book to the reader.

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