SWING INTO ACTION: THE POLITICAL AND AESTHETIC ROLE OF JAZZ IN NAZI GERMANY AND OCCUPIED FRANCE

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By Marie Elizabeth Wicks

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion
Of the Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies
Croft Institute for International Studies
(Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College)
The University of Mississippi

University, Mississippi

Spring 2011

Approved:

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Advisor: Dr. Kees Gispen

____
Reader: Dr. William Schenck

____
Reader: Dr. Anne Quinney

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

This endeavor would have been considerably more difficult without the invaluable advice and suggestions of the following individuals: I am extremely grateful to my advisor, Dr. Kees Gispen, whose enthusiasm and expertise helped me to find the harmony within all of the elements that compose this thesis. I extend thanks as well to my reader Dr. Anne Quinney, whose extensive background in French language and history proved beneficial, and whose patience was much appreciated. And my thanks go out to Dr. William Schenck, my second reader, for his many helpful comments. I am deeply appreciative of my family, who is my constant source of support and encouragement. On a final note, I am greatly indebted to the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College and the Croft Institute for International Studies for allowing me this worthwhile opportunity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

On a dark evening in early 1945, a frigid wind blew across St. Nazaire on the Loire River, near Rennes. The company of Luftwaffe Oberleutnant Dietrich Schulz-Köhn was locked in by the Allied troops, and he was chosen to negotiate with the Allies the release of Frenchmen captured by the German troops. Schulz-Köhn was fluent in both French and English, and his tall, bespectacled figure attracted the attention of the American officer in the enemy camp. The American officer eyed the Rolleiflex camera slung about the overcoat of the Nazi lieutenant. He offered to exchange it for some Lucky Strikes cigarettes or some records from the Budapest String Quartet or Leopold Stokowski. Schulz-Köhn clutched his camera and was about to refuse when a thought crossed his mind. Perhaps he should give it a try. "No, I would like to know what Count Basie, Benny Goodman, and Lionel Hampton sound like right now." In the frigid winter air, the ice had been broken.

The flabbergasted American officer gaped at Schulz-Köhn, "Have you ever heard of Panassié? You know Delaunay?"

The Nazi lieutenant's face erupted into a wide grin. "Man, you are a cat!" he exclaimed. On this note, an armistice was discussed, and prisoners from both sides were exchanged. Later that year, when the Germans surrendered on May 8, 1945, Schulz-Köhn was taken prisoner by the Americans. In the POW camp, the two great Parisian jazz critics Hugues Panassié and Charles Delaunay heard of his plight and sent him care packages and morale-boosting letters.[1] Jazz thus expressed its gratitude to this devoted fan, one of the many French and Germans who satisfied their cravings

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[1] Michael Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 201.

for its sultry rhythms, either overtly or in secret. Despite the harsh conditions of the interwar years and World War II, this period proved to be fertile ground for the cultivation of jazz.

The syncopated rhythms of jazz music resonated among listeners with backgrounds as diverse as the music itself. It could be heard leaking out from cabarets along the sloping streets of Montmartre and Montparnasse in the Parisian twilight, spinning out on countless upbeat records in secluded living rooms, and even meandering its way from radios to eager ears, from those of the German soldiers to the young Zazous, the radical counterculture of French youth. During this time, no other music appealed to such a diverse audience. My thesis will examine the following question: What was the political and aesthetic role of jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany and in occupied France? Jazz was regarded by many as a symbol of freedom, independence, and America; however, jazz music was also an apolitical, upbeat form of entertainment, music that compelled one to jump up and dance despite the grim, slow *adagio* of war. Officially, the Nazis classified jazz as "degenerate" music and attempted to hasten its demise. Unofficially, the German military included many nationalists who were also devoted jazz fans like Schulz-Köhn. Jazz's ability to appeal to a vast audience ensured its survival during the war despite Nazi persecution.

To answer my question, I will analyze the arguments presented by scholars and historians who have examined jazz during this period. I will begin my discussion with a closer look at the role of jazz in the Third Reich. Horst Bergmeier and Rainer Lotz in the book *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* examine the fervent and at times inconsistent Nazi attitude towards jazz. The

German Broadcasting Company RRG, according to Bergmeier and Lotz, informed the press as early as 1933 that the Nazi regime was banning all “dubious” dance styles in which “provocative rhythms predominate and melody is violently abused.” At the same time, Hitler himself supported the performance of German jazz music on the radio to lure listeners from Allied nations, such as Britain, onto the Nazi airwaves. The Nazi’s willingness to manipulate jazz and harness its popularity to further the ideology of the Reich may be due to their detaching jazz from its American origins and regarding the music strictly on the basis of its entertainment value.

In his book *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany,* Michael Kater maintains that as jazz was forced to retreat into the shadows of the clandestine, it became a symbol of resistance. He writes of the case of the Hamburg Swings, the noncompliant youth of Germany who refused to abandon their extreme tastes for flamboyant clothing and music. The defiant jazz of the Swings became a means of survival for the Ghetto Swingers, the jazz musicians who performed within concentration camps and claimed that the popularity of jazz actually saved their lives.

Once we gain an understanding of domestic attitudes towards jazz in Nazi Germany, I will shift my focus to the case of occupied France. Rather than disappearing during the occupation years, jazz experienced an explosion of popularity unlike any it had seen prior. Did jazz take on a more significant role in occupied France, which caused this phenomenon to occur? In German-occupied nations such as France, Kater indicates political undertones often associated with the music: “Jazz musicians in Germany’s newly dependent territories always had one foot in the organized resistance or the concentration camp, and hence, … jazz came close to assuming its original

function as protest music."[2] *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation* by Gérard Régnier, the impressive account of the story of jazz during these shady years, dissects each element of Nazi treatment of jazz in occupied France to conclude that historians and scholars today exaggerate the importance of jazz music to the Nazis and their commitment to its annihilation. Régnier argues that the Nazis were concerned with much more important matters than expending all of their energy on its prohibition. They relied instead on the heavy use of propaganda to impose the Nazi ideology and often relaxed their regulations on jazz music as long as some effort had been made to detach it from any link to America. In many cases, a simple insertion of a French title to an American jazz tune would be sufficient to damper any suspicions on behalf of the German censors, as we will soon discover.

To avoid being targeted by the anti-jazz Nazi authorities, jazz was often reshaped and renamed to ensure its survival, a practice that was not wholly supported by jazz purists. My analysis will take into account the positions of jazz purists versus those who believed that jazz's survival depended on its ability to adapt to the changing wartime atmosphere. The champion of the jazz purists was the French jazz critic and co-director of the Hot Club de France, Hugues Panassié, who admired a raw, pure, and beautiful jazz, unadulterated by commercialism. For Panassié, real jazz was freedom for the individual musician, who crafted an expression of his inner self through the improvisational character of the music. This freedom of expression, this soulful rhythm, could not be taught but stemmed rather from the heart of the musician and was a natural ability of jazz musicians of African-American origins.

[2] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 146.

The views of Hugues Panassié and his business partner Charles Delaunay are examined in detail by Ludovic Tournès in his book *New Orleans sur Seine: Histoire du jazz en France.* Tournès writes extensively of Panassié's erudite perspective and his ardent conclusion that very few individuals could accurately mimic the natural rhythmic abilities of African-Americans when playing jazz. Panassié scoffed at Charles Delaunay's willingness to highlight jazz as a European art form in order to maintain its existence in German-occupied France. Panassié admired jazz for its very essence; any artificial attempt to recreate the music would be, in his eyes, an empty tune. Many German soldiers admired jazz for its aesthetic qualities as well; however, they paid no mind to the background of the music as long as it was pleasing to the ear.

The presence of the Germans in France quickly robbed daily life of all sense of normalcy. The restrictions upon American jazz were marginal compared to the scarcity of life's necessities, such as food. On December 31, 1942, French journalist Sacha Guitry composed a bitterly humorous menu for a New Year's Eve midnight supper (*le réveillon)* to suit the times: "fish eventually; roast presumed; chicken anticipated; vegetables very likely; salad possible; dessert hypothetical. Wines blue, white, red; cigarettes individual."[3] The sharp pangs of hunger drove many French citizens to cling to jazz music as a precious semblance of normalcy. A stronger connection between jazz and resistance towards totalitarianism may have been the result of the suppressed atmosphere in France under the Occupation.

In his book *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity,* Matthew Jordan argues that the rise of jazz caused serious cultural waves, such that many conservative

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[3] William A. Shack, *Harlem in Montmartre: A Paris Jazz Story between the Great Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) p. 114.

listeners and critics perceived jazz as a threat to traditional French culture. He considers the case of the youth counterculture of Paris, the Zazous, who rejected the ideals of the Vichy regime in favor of a more decadent lifestyle of extravagant clothing and, of course, American jazz. The Zazous saw a close association between jazz and the American lifestyle of freedom and individuality. The Zazou movement, Jordan further explains, coincided with a counter movement to dissociate jazz from its American roots and promote it as a purely French form of music. Jazz was being pulled in opposite directions, tossed in the heightened waves of political extremism, and subsequently became more popular than ever before.

Whether the prohibition of jazz was a mere formality, a matter of protocol, or whether it constituted a major ingredient of Nazi entertainment policy remains to be determined; indeed, each study of the case of jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany attaches to the music varying degrees of significance. From a defiant form of resistance to a lifeline in which the ability to play music was a means of survival, to a simple tune listened to for some upbeat entertainment, jazz held various roles for individuals during the war. The lens of history is not objectively focused, but rather tinted by the point of view of the historian. In my analysis of each historian's view of the significance of jazz, I will try to distinguish between accuracy and exaggeration. Is jazz accurately characterized by Régnier in *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation,* as a form of entertainment that appealed to Nazis as well as friends of America? Did anti-Nazi sentiments reverberate from this penetrating rhythm, or did it crowd out trepidation in a manner that had little or nothing to do with political resistance? In some cases, jazz was linked to expressions of resistance against a totalitarian regime. At the same time,

jazz was also listened to for its easy, pulsing rhythm, nothing more. Despite these trends, or rather due to a combination of these trends, this music experienced an explosion of popularity throughout the Occupation that truly characterized this period as the Golden Age of jazz.

Chapter 2: Jazz in the Third Reich

Jazz was well established in the culture of Germany prior to the Nazi rise to power in 1933. Following the initiation of the Third Reich, jazz - especially that played by American and Jewish musicians - was targeted due to its associations with individual freedom and racial impurity. The citizens of Germany refused to cease listening to the upbeat music, a stubbornness that compelled the Nazi authorities to take certain measures that will be examined in this chapter. Horst J.P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz in *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* address the calculated effort made by Goebbels and the propaganda ministry to keep jazz under control without causing dissatisfaction among German jazz lovers. Though his book *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation* focuses predominantly on the case of Paris under the German occupation, Gérard Régnier also discusses the dilemma in which Goebbels found himself, caught between the popularity of jazz and the cultivation of Nazi ideals. How he chose to react to this predicament will be examined later in this chapter. Michael Kater in *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* presents the story of jazz in Nazi Germany as told by the musicians who experienced it and the jazz fans who kept it going. While the listeners of jazz enjoyed the music for a variety of reasons, jazz musicians were forced to serve on the forefront of the Nazi war against jazz, where the music and Nazi ideology were often at odds. For these musicians, jazz was not merely an escape; it was their livelihood.

Before we step further into the culture of Nazi Germany, let us reflect for a moment upon jazz itself. Jazz. The word invokes a sense of freedom; it does not end in an abrupt halt, but sizzles on the tongue as though reluctant to leave. Jazz's close

association with independence did not go unnoticed by those who looked to the music as a form of respite and an antidote to the horrors of war. Forty years after his experience as a forced laborer in Berlin in 1943, Polish author Leopold Tyrmand delivered a speech at a conference entitled "On Freedom." In this speech, he speaks of a jazz that manifests all notions of freedom, a bold assertion of independence based simply upon its intrinsic qualities. His argument, though built of many words, is formed in such a way that any amount of paraphrasing would not do it justice, and it is worth quoting in full:

> Freedom, all its mobilizing power notwithstanding, is a notion laden with myriad implications and purports. The longer we live the more we suspect how deviously it can be perverted, and the less we trust the certitudes for which, forty years ago, we were so ready to risk our lives. Let me, therefore, focus on one illustration, motivated as I am by what the Italians call '*intelletto d'amore'*. In 1942, during my first Polish underground briefing in Vilna, now Lithuania, the music blasting out, disguising the meeting as a dance, was Fats Waller's 'Ain't Misbehavin'; in Oslo, Norway, in 1941, my Hjemmetronten cell's anthem was 'A Tisket A Tasket' …Ella Fitzgerald sang words that were pregnant with hope: '…and someone helped me find my basket and make me happy again…' and the entire gathering cheered.
>
> Is there a lesson in it? Does jazz teach us something about freedom – one of the most complex of all the spiritual and social

concepts with which Judeo-Christian civilization ever had to struggle? There were some among us, certainly, who pondered the Constitution and the American promise, or dream, but for most of us the collective improvisation of a Dixieland combo came to mean, if only subliminally, the perfect emblem of freedom and all the necessary energy to defend it. It was an image of liberty whose dynamics, at the time, seemed invincible, a situation where anyone plays his own tune, providing he submits to a wise and superior arrangement.

Jazz was to us a system of latitudes subject to a freely accepted discipline of integral bonds between an individual and a group. As such it became perhaps the best metaphor for liberty that any culture has ever come up with. It conveyed a message that there is a central authority – usually with a trumpet in hand – to which one is responsible for holding the proper key and beat and who is entitled to a proper share of expression – and this is exactly what constitutes the principles from which anyone who knows how to use an instrument and contribute to a common sound can make a statement about what he believes is beautiful and true.

In 1943, in a Frankfurt Wirtschaft on Neue Mainer Strasse, I listened, at a clandestine jam session, to Sidney Bechet's 'Really the Blues'. I sat next to a German of my own age, in uniform but on leave. 'It's my record,' he said proudly. 'I was in a Panzer division

> in France. When we took a town, the others went after pâté and I looked for the music shops.'[4]

Jazz as Freedom. Freedom as Jazz. The point where one ends and the other begins is fuzzy, at times nonexistent. For Tyrmand, jazz represented all laudable aspects of freedom itself: a fluidity of movement within the integrated structure of tone that enabled each musician to showcase his individual talent. For those who felt strongly the pulls of freedom and independence against a totalitarian regime, jazz was their mainstay. For those who simply admired its aesthetic qualities, the music stood alone, and had not the need to be permanently bound to any sense of political or cultural ideas.

Before the Nazis forced their hostile views regarding jazz onto the occupied nations, the music faced grave challenges in the Third Reich itself. Whereas in occupied France the Nazis constituted a foreign power that was tightening its grip on the French way of life, in Germany the authority issued from a domestic source. Due to this hostile environment that emerged early in the 1930s with the rise of Hitler, German jazz had to adapt in ways that were never required of French jazz. In the early years of the Reich, jazz was treated more as an unexpected guest than as an intruder. Gérard Régnier cites the example of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, during which American jazz was played as a rallying music to evoke the values of the Olympics to foreign athletes and visitors. This hospitable environment collapsed when the Olympics came to a close, and jazz was once again subject to a variety of restrictions. As interpretations of jazz were subject to the prevailing circumstances, both politically and culturally, to fully understand the situation surrounding jazz in occupied France, we must first examine the

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[4] Mike Zwerin, *Swing under the Nazis: Jazz as a Metaphor for Freedom* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000) p. 85-86.

various avenues down which jazz ventured to elude capture by the Nazis within borders of the Third Reich.

2.1 – Official Reactions to Jazz

As we will see, the Nazis found little success at pinning down an unfailing definition of jazz. Gérard Régnier explains that when establishing restrictions on the music, propaganda Minister Goebbels did not wish to ban *all* jazz, for he recognized that many of the Reich's own citizens adored the music. To define jazz in a universal manner proved more difficult than Goebbels had anticipated. Goebbels gave his most precise denotation of the abhorred elements of jazz in his daily ministerial briefing on February 1, 1941, which was then quoted by Bergmeier and Lotz:

> With regard to the question of playing jazz music on the German radio, the minister laid it down that the following are banned on principle:
>
> 1. music with distorted rhythms,
> 2. music with atonal melody line,
> 3. the use of so-called 'stopped' horns.[5]

In addition to these somewhat vague parameters, Régnier notes that Goebbels' main irritation was with *jazz nègre*, for in this particular form of jazz he found a strong contradiction to the ideals of the Nazi party. Despite his strong distaste for the "distorted rhythms" of jazz, Goebbels recognized that Germany harbored many jazz lovers. In accordance with a regime that relied heavily on image, Goebbels permitted a

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[5] Cit. in Boelcke, Willi A. (ed.) *Kriegspropaganda 1939-1941 – Geheime Ministerkonferenzen im Reichspropagandaministerium,* Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1966. Cited by Bergmeier and Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves,* p. 140.

diluted, German form of jazz for the benefit of these individuals who, if not satisfied, would quench their thirst for syncopation from other sources, such as the most likely candidate: the BBC. He harnessed the music and used it predominantly as a means of manipulation on the airwaves of the Reich, subtly infusing Nazi propaganda whenever possible.

Goebbels tried desperately to provide a justifiable explanation for jazz, music in which he found very few qualities to admire. He ultimately placed the music under the umbrella of light entertainment, a necessity to prevent the discontent of the German people. Bergmeier and Lotz provide a decent example of Goebbels' reasoning. Notice how he gingerly shifts his stance to find a viable balance in the following 1942 article written by Goebbels for the journal *Das Reich* entitled "Jazz on the Radio":

> The answer to this question has to be negative if by jazz we mean a form of music that totally ignores melody, indeed even makes fun of it, and is based on rhythm alone, rhythm which manifests itself principally in a cacophonous instrumental squawk that offends the ear. This alleged music is revolting, being in reality not music at all, but talentless and unimaginative juggling with notes. On the other hand, it must not be suggested that our grandparents' waltzes were the apex of musical development, and that nothing since then has been any good. Rhythm is fundamental to music. We are not living in the Victorian age, but in a century that takes its tune from the thousandfold humming of machines and roar of motors. Our war songs today are set to a different tempo from those of even the First

> World War. The radio people need to pay attention to this, if they do not want to get left behind in the era of stiff-collars and frock-coats. This is not intended as a personal criticism of anyone in particular, yet we feel we have, all the same, a duty to respond to the justifiable demands of our fighting and toiling people in this respect.[6]

From this quote, we can easily discern Goebbels' awareness of the tastes of his own people, for he speaks with remarkable candor. Though he personally sees jazz as a "cacophonous instrumental squawk that offends the ear," he warns against the danger of getting "left behind in the era of stiff-collars and frock-coats." Goebbels treats jazz as an indulgence, like chocolate or cigarettes, and the Nazi authorities have a duty to provide for the "justifiable demands of our fighting and toiling people." At this point in the course of the war, America had joined the Allied nations and, as Goebbels was a practical man, he recognized that the satisfaction of the people of the Third Reich was vital to the regime's overall success in the war effort. For this reason, he was willing to leave a crack wide enough for a bit of jazz to leak through as a method of appeasement.

In his discussion, Michael Kater explains that Goebbels recognized the importance of maintaining the good humor of German civilians as well as members of the Nazi military. Goebbels donated thousands of radio sets to soldiers along the fronts to make their lives more bearable, and yet he could not deny that the soldiers themselves were the primary listeners of the forbidden radio programs. Fighter pilots

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[6] Cit. in *Film und Funk,* 19 March 1942, Cited by Bergmeier and Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves,* p. 144.

would claim that tuning in to BBC radio broadcasts as they set out on missions was necessary before they "bombed [BBC] to the ground."[7] Kater describes the efforts made by Goebbels to transform jazz through a series of dilutions into a music deemed acceptable by the Nazi regime. Perhaps the most notable of these is the creation of Charlie's Orchestra, a gaggle of jazz performers who showcased Nazi propaganda under the gilded exterior of syncopated music. In Kater's words, "It was an attempt to reverse the damage done by the BBC to the Germans with their broadcasts by paying the enemy back in kind: American-type jazz was to be thrown back to the British Isles from Germany in order to confuse the king's loyal subjects."[8] In this way, Goebbels was able to justify his carrying on the tune of jazz despite his abhorrence of the music, a malevolent strategy of disguise and deceit. The Nazis would harness jazz's immense popularity at home and abroad to further the anti-jazz ideals of the Reich.

Through Charlie's Orchestra Goebbels wielded his subtle influences of Nazi propaganda onto the listeners of German radio stations. Tunes that were at their start easily mistaken for American jazz standards would take a sinister side step and be replaced by satirical stanzas on the second verse, meant to impose Nazi ideology within the rhythms of the music; targets included Churchill, British "money bags," the Soviet ally (after June 1941), the U.S. friend, and the Jews, and in turn offered ardent praise for the German military.[9] Bergmeier and Lotz explore these lyrics in much greater detail than does Kater. The classic jazz tune "When Day is Done," often played by such great jazz musicians as Django Reinhardt and his Quintette, began with the usual

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[7] Kater, *Different Drummers*, p. 126.
[8] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 130.
[9] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 132.

crooning during a propaganda radio show in autumn of 1940: "When day is done and shadows fall, I dream of you…" After a prompt from the bandleader Charlie later on in the music - *London's people in their solitude!* - his orchestra would respond with lyrics of more pronounced bitterness and intensity. I will quote them as Bergmeier and Lotz present them:

> When day is done and shadows fall, we dream of peace.
>
> We can't go on believing in Churchill's victories –
>
> we don't stand for this bluff any more,
>
> the whole world laughs at him.
>
> This hopeless war is Churchill's war.
>
> It's not too late we'll get rid of him.[10]

The lyrics were directed towards British audiences in hopes of causing them to doubt their own wartime leaders. Bergmeier and Lotz shrewdly note that most British listeners hardly noticed the caustic insertions, tuning in to Hitler's Airwaves merely to catch some of the jazz tunes. Kater, looking towards the overarching impact of such propaganda, presents three criteria by which the jazz of Charlie's Orchestra could be classified: artistic-aesthetics, efficacy, and morality.

For all aesthetic purposes, the jazz performed by Charlie was by far the greatest of its kind in the Reich. As to Charlie's effectiveness, it must be carefully noted that the music was never performed outside of a balmy environment of Nazi nationalistic fervor. The music would be inserted between political skits and flashes of propaganda, and

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[10] Lyra XXXIV, "When Day is Done," written by Robert Katscher, 1926. (Taken from a sound recording of Charlie's Orchestra, autumn 1940), as quoted by Horst J.P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

would not be without a fair amount of political innuendo pulsating from the lyrics of the song itself; indeed, not a single tune is without a tinge of bitterness reflective of Nazi ideals, from anti-Semitism to anti-Americanism. Due to these components as well as the sunken standards of the music itself, for it was not improvised and had been toned down to a level acceptable to the Nazis, the overall quality of the jazz on these programs experienced some damage. Kater notes that most British listeners of the program tuned in with a chuckle of amusement and were hardly lured by its explicit content of propaganda.

The ethical considerations are much more acrid, as the messages of Charlie's Orchestra were constantly steeped in racism and anti-Semitism in addition to the hateful declarations against Britain and America. Indeed, to use a form of music created by African-Americans and Jews as a vehicle of hatred against these individuals in the service of a totalitarian regime punctuates the ethical dilemmas experienced by German jazz musicians during this period. Kater argues that the appreciation of jazz for its aesthetic qualities in the culture of Nazi Germany provided for its cultivation as a form of music during this time, but its constant use as a mechanism by the Third Reich to further Nazi ideology inevitably caused its morality as a vocation to crumble. When jazz is distorted in such a way to promote such contradictory ideals, jazz musicians are faced with an ethical dilemma. To what extent do they continue to create music when the very purpose of their trade is to elevate the radical ideologies of a totalitarian regime? As the example of Charlie's Orchestra reveals, many musicians were willing to take that chance.

The reprobate refrain of Charlie's Orchestra has become a fascination for historians. While Kater's 1992 *Different Drummers* identifies Charlie's Orchestra as the zenith of the puzzling paradox surrounding the Nazi policies towards jazz, we must turn Bergmeier and Lotz for a comprehensive view of this phenomenon. In their 1997 book *Hitler's Airwaves,* Bergmeier and Lotz take Kater's brief references towards Charlie's Orchestra and the propaganda of swing and delve into the Nazi skits and radio programs in remarkable detail. They then sift through the various elements of the orchestra, from the musicians to the arrangers to the music they created, to reach an understanding of the driving forces behind the success of this particular form of Nazi propaganda.

Charlie and his Orchestra came into existence in May 1935 as the camouflaged appellation for the Lutz Templin orchestra. The band made its public debut in 1939 under reed player Erhard 'Funny' Bauschke in short pre-show segments in the German cinemas. That these segments hinge almost completely on Nazi propaganda cannot be denied, for the spectator is pelted with reminders of the prohibition of listening to foreign broadcasts and of the death penalty for harvesting information in this manner. Bergmeier and Lotz cite a vivid example:

> Tran seeks to tune in to a foreign station while Helle advises against it on the grounds that (a) it is forbidden, (b) no 'good German' would do anything like that, (c) foreign stations only tell lies anyway, and (d) there is already plenty of good dance music to be heard on German radio. To emphasize the last point, a short excerpt of hot music is performed by

an unnamed band: Erhard Bauschke's version of *'Nachtexpress nach Warschau'*.[11]

The band grew and matured within the entertainment realm of the Reich, and by 1940 had developed into Charlie's Orchestra, appearing every second Thursday on a program entitled "Political Cabaret," produced by the Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft (RRG), Hitler's airwaves. Goebbels' tactics were well planned: Nazi propagandists chose only music that was easily mistaken as popular American standards, which enticed listeners and successfully convinced them against switching off the radio.

Composed of some of Germany's greatest jazz musicians, the orchestra beguiled listeners with hot jazz. "It was long assumed that the 'Charlie' recordings featured hot jazz because the Templin orchestra included some of Europe's best jazz musicians," explain Bergmeier and Lotz, "This is one of the myths surrounding these recordings. The music in this series was cleverly selected and arranged with a particular target audience in mind: the general public which regarded Paul Whiteman as the 'King of Jazz'."[12] Only the most perceptive audience could distinguish the differences between propaganda jazz and American jazz. Once the lyrics to the songs were sung, however, the deep penetration of propaganda could not be overlooked.

Bergmeier and Lotz note that a majority of all "Charlie" titles, about sixty percent, were standards first published in the 1930s. Fifteen percent derived from standards from the 1920s and another fifteen percent from the 1940s. Almost ninety percent of the "Charlie" recordings are American, from Broadway musicals and Hollywood films. Of these titles, Bergmeier and Lotz agree that only fifteen percent may be termed jazz

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[11] Grammophon 10704, as cited by Bergmeier and Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves,* p. 150.
[12] Bergmeier and Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves,* p. 157.

standards, and none thanks to German arrangers. They explain, "In fact all 'Charlie' titles are heavily scored and leave little opportunity for improvisation. Only here and there is room left for an occasional solo. The result is pleasant swing music in the Dorsey Brothers, Harry James, Glenn Miller or Benny Goodman mould." [13] In a manner characteristic of the totalitarian nature of the Reich, jazz was stripped of the necessary element of improvisation and reduced to a mere shell of its former self. Charlie's jazz was checked by the musical score, which prevented any expression of individuality, in favor of a more acceptable, "pleasant" musical experience. Nevertheless, this music charmed not only German audiences but also British listeners, who tuned in for the music despite the irritating inserts of Nazi political propaganda in between tunes.

Both Kater and the historians Bergmeier and Lotz argue that jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany was much more accessible on the airwaves than at live concerts. Whether or not Germans made a conscious effort to defy the regime by engaging in clandestine jazz radio listening, Goebbels was nonplussed to discover that his establishment of Nazi propaganda on the radio was accomplishing little in the way of preventing Germans from tuning in to foreign stations. Despite the prohibition of foreign stations in fall of 1939, writes Kater, "the British and some other enemy stations easily penetrated the Nazi broadcast network because of locally wavering German signals and intermittent shutdowns owing to anti-air raid precautions."[14] The *Volksempfänger*, the makeshift 'people's receiver' that was designed to keep German listeners tied to just a few, standard-wave Reich stations, proved ineffective in this situation. Wehrmacht soldiers were known to find the music on their small Philips receivers or the more

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 123.

powerful army equipment, much to Goebbels's dismay, because often the jazz broadcasts were followed by news. Jazz listeners would become captivated by the BBC news, and those interested in only the news would be easily wooed by the sultry rhythms of jazz. Popular tunes such as "All the Things You Are," played by Henry Hall, and "I'm Nobody's Baby," performed by Harry Roy found their way to the ears of German listeners. According to the BBC, in 1943 as many as three million Germans had tuned into its station.

We learn from Bergmeier and Lotz that many ardent Nazis were displeased with the efforts made by Goebbels to use jazz as an enticing feature to lure foreign audiences onto German airwaves. The American-born fervent Nazi broadcaster Edward Vieth Sittler in 1943 addressed an addendum expressing his disgust to his superiors. His words drip with disdain:

> Music is a major ingredient of our broadcasts, not merely in terms of airtime, but also as propaganda. Music is more of a German thing than English or American. But this is no longer so the moment jazz turns up. Jazz is an expression of the American and British way of life, and has little in common with the German mentality. It is therefore wrong to cram German overseas broadcasts with transplanted jazz music. We cannot possibly perform this decadent 'hot' jazz as 'well' as Negroes and Jews, and this is a question of more than just a lack of technical virtuosity. Imitating, or wanting to imitate, this kind of music and the life-style that goes with it is an unconscious form of sabotage of the German propaganda effort. Anyway, Americans actually want to hear 'German'

> music…Broadcasts of light entertainment and dance music should consequently consist of purely German pieces, without endeavoring to sound 'New Yorky.'[15]

Sittler saw little benefit in sandwiching Nazi propaganda with attractive jazz pieces. In his view, jazz actually caused harm to the purity of the Nazi ideals, for it invokes a sort of lifestyle that the Third Reich was attempting to condemn. Sittler's argument accentuates the varying degrees of intensity with which jazz was scrutinized during this period. His words were expressed in the final years of a war in which jazz simultaneously stood for resistance to a totalitarian regime, propaganda in support of that regime, and an entertaining escape from the grave environment caused by the uncertainty of war.

2.2 – Reactions by the German Public

The complexities of the story of jazz in Nazi Germany were the result of its boundless popularity. Michael Kater draws a connection between the official Nazi policy on jazz, which we have just examined, and its effect on the jazz fans of the Third Reich. These members of the illustrious jazz brigade came from all sectors of society, though certain societal groups were particularly partial to the upbeat rhythms. Kater notes two populations of support: a large listening and dancing public that clung to the more commercial qualities of jazz and a smaller, more elite population of jazz purists, who classified the music as an art form. The Nazi propagandists targeted the former, for this population's appreciation for the aesthetic qualities of jazz rendered it easily satisfied by a toned-down, more appropriate form of jazz.

[15] Bergmeier and Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves,* p. 158.

Kater's latter group of jazz lovers lived jazz as a life-style. Jazz's survival under the Third Reich was contingent upon the efforts of these jazz purists. This complex network was intertwined with such figures as Dietrich Schulz, the young student of economics who harbored an inner passion for jazz. Schulz wrote his dissertation on the international recording industry, and traveled to Berlin, the jazz capital of Germany, to conduct research. Through his fervent study of jazz journals, he found an idol in Hugues Panassié, cofounder of the Paris-centered Hot Club de France. After corresponding with the French maestro, Schulz became the first German member of the Hot Club in November 1935 and would later move on to become one of Germany's most influential jazz critics.[16] He applied in 1938 to change his name, in the proper British manner, to Schulz-Köhn – likely because the name Schulz, like Smith in England, was much too common. "Köhn" was his mother's maiden name, and in this desire to make a name for himself, he became the very same Schulz-Köhn to whom we were introduced at the introduction to this thesis.

Kater groups the fans of jazz in terms of social commonalities. He identifies a strong middle-class infrastructure, with the upper and lower classes largely unenthusiastic. These middle-class jazz fans channeled this new passion to improve their station over their elders as a form of upward mobility. A striking example, Kater notes, is our friend Dietrich Schulz-Köhn, whose father was a schoolteacher of the lower class in Germany, and who committed himself to acquire a doctorate and propel himself upward in society. Other members of the middle class felt themselves descending socially and clung to jazz in spite of this. The German people soaked up the fluid

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[16] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 71.

rhythms of jazz like a sponge does water. This love for jazz, however, was not an indication of a deeper discontent on behalf of the young people with society. To construe this affinity for jazz, writes Kater, "as a token of rebellion either generational, political, or social, would be faulty, for without exception these young men all enjoyed good relationships with their parents and wished to accommodate themselves to society. Jazz served as their instrument of standing, or vehicle of movement, whatever the case may have been – and to them this was legitimate."[17] The political situation was much more complex and did not consist of outright rebellion, though for the most part attitudes ranged from slight support to indifference to mild disapproval of the Third Reich.

The jazz lovers of Nazi Germany satisfied their cravings for the syncopated rhythms through collecting records. The most discriminating jazz purists dismissed domestically produced recordings in preference for African-American, white American, and British artists. Domestic records were still quite popular, and according to Kater, "it is amazing how much forbidden fruit was still entering the country legally on foreign masters, to be processed further by German firms."[18] The continued cultivation of jazz can be attributed in part to the obliviousness of many of the regime leaders, who found no unfailing method of identifying "Aryans" and permitted such British Jews as Ray Noble, Joe Loss, Harry Roy, and Bert Ambrose to perform, because their music was preferred to the untamed American tunes. The Nazi authorities knew nothing of these musicians' ethnic background.[19] These jazz musicians were shielded by their own

[17] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 84.
[18] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 86.
[19] Ibid.

popular melodies, their feet tapping along to the rhythm instead of pounding away in flight for their lives.

The identification of jazz as a vector of protest and resistance was present in the Third Reich, but it manifested itself in a highly complex manner. Kater explains that while Nazis who abhorred jazz did so based on its close association with blacks and Jews, German jazz listeners and musicians were not necessarily champions of jazz because of this same association. Jazz was not preferred simply because the Nazi regime targeted the black and Jewish populations for its aggressive actions. Indeed, despite the Nazi racist propaganda that was so rampant in Nazi Germany during this time, the figure of the African-American was abstract for most Germans, and Jews were regarded as members of the periphery of German society. Writes Kater, "the ideal type of person who predicated his or her active involvement in the jazz culture on a pronounced antagonism to the Nazi regime – never existed in the flesh."[20] At the same time, preexisting notions of political or social nonconformity often manifested themselves in the indulgence in jazz as a discreet form of individual protest. Jazz musicians for the most part maintained a lack of political consciousness, concerned mainly with securing a gig or earning some extra money. In these cases, F. Scott Fitzgerald's thoughts that the Jazz Age in the United States "had no interest in politics at all"[21] ring true in Europe as well.

In many ways, the promotion of jazz based on its aesthetic value led to a growing discontent with the Nazi regime. In the words of German jazz critic Hans Blüthner, a devotee of jazz could not possibly accept National Socialism: "The championship of jazz

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[20] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 96.
[21] F. Scott Fitzgerald as quoted by Starr, *Red and Hot*, p. 16.

was identical with democracy and freedom."[22] Another critic of the time, Dieter Zimmerle, acknowledged that anyone who loved jazz for its own sake had nothing to fear from the regime, yet when this taste complemented any other objectionable factor, it could potentially become fatal.[23] Though these critics correctly acknowledge the close association between jazz and freedom, one must not overlook the particular treatment of jazz among many officials in Nazi Germany. The metaphorical binding of jazz to freedom was stripped away in the Third Reich; what remained was the aesthetic quality of the bare music – the notes, the melodies, the keys. Jazz lovers whose desires were contradictory to the principles of the Third Reich political environment could choose to enter the political realm of Nazi Germany free from ideological qualms pertaining to their musical preferences. They joined the Nazi party either from conviction or simple opportunism.

A more complicated case surrounded Schulz-Köhn, an ardent defender of American jazz. Along with many other university students at the time, Schulz-Köhn joined the Nazi storm troopers in the fall of 1933. Despite his love for jazz, Schulz-Köhn could not delineate the genre and the fervent nationalism of the Third Reich as mutually exclusive. Kater points out that Schulz-Köhn saw in the Nazi regime a strong nationalistic impulse whose abominable side effects could be easily overlooked.[24] Schulz-Köhn rather believed in the compatibility of the two entities, and despite his nature as an intellectual he refused to consider an alternative viewpoint. Schulz-Köhn withdrew from the storm troopers in 1936 to make time for his studies. He was met with

[22] Quotation from Hans Blüthner by Mike Zwerin, *La Tristesse de Saint Louis: Swing under the Nazis* (New York, Cooper Square Press, 1985) p. 24.
[23] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 98.
[24] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 100.

threats from the storm troopers following his lectures on jazz at the Delphi-Palast in Berlin. Perhaps as a way to avoid the belligerence of the storm troopers, Schulz-Köhn joined the Nazi party itself in February of 1938; his patriotic views had not changed. They would, in fact, gain in strength throughout the war, as would his love for jazz. When he was deployed to occupied France, he took advantage of the close proximity to the Parisian jazz clubs. Schulz-Köhn was by no means a militaristic person, yet he felt a strong duty to serve his nation and eventually earned two medals. His worldview encompassed both jazz and the Nazi regime, the former hardly incompatible with the latter.

Was the contradictory nature of Schulz-Köhn a rarity in the culture of Nazi Germany? Was it a common occurrence for Nazis to tolerate and even enjoy this music that ran counter to the core ideals of the Nazi regime? Kater notes, "Even though jazz was often disguised, riding piggy-back on the more conventionally acceptable dance music, there is no getting away from the fact that bona fide Nazis who abhorred manifestations of Americanism, blacks, and Jews could be in love with the tainted Muse all the same."[25] The highest-ranking officers of Himmler's Black Order frequented the cabarets of the Latin Quarter in Paris, meandering about in their immaculate black uniforms. For the most part, they engaged in these activities under the impression of doing something mischievous, but felt no reservations in doing so.

Kater presents the interesting case of jazz fans among the German military as one of the premier paradoxes of the Nazi regime. The Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels permitted certain manifestations of jazz within the Reich for a variety

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[25] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 101.

of reasons: his painful memories of World War I, during which a wounded foot prevented him from fighting in the war and resulted in an acute empathy for the needs of the armed forces, and his knowledge that the more satisfied the German soldiers were, the better they would fight for the Reich. This reasoning led Goebbels to maintain the existence of a form of music that he abhorred in a cool consideration of the desires of the general public. Despite his strong aversion towards jazz, Goebbels found difficulties in effectively drawing a line between acceptable "German" jazz and unacceptable American hot jazz; therefore, the military was in many ways free to dabble in a wide variety of jazz forms. What's more, many soldiers took advantage of the availability of forbidden records as they ventured into the Reich's occupied nations, as we were told in Tyrmand's earlier description of the Nazi soldier whose records came from a town they had overtaken in France. Kater notes one example of the soldiers' strong affinity for jazz: Hans Hinkel, the Nazi chaperone for jazz musician Fritz Brocksieper at a Channel coast concert, announced sententiously that Jewish and Anglo-American tunes were off limits, at which the men bombarded him with apples.[26] Jazz therefore retained a significance for these men that was not bound to ideology. They breathed it in as a breath of fresh air.

Jazz showed its ties to politics not so much among the Nazi military as in another sector of the population. The Hamburg Swings, the youth counterculture within the Third Reich, harbored resentment towards a regime that shunned individualism in favor of banal collectivism. In their radical clothing, the Swings marched up and down the most fashionable streets of Hamburg. When the Reich Youth Leader Baldur von

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[26] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 118.

Schirach declared the compulsory induction of all German youth into his organization in 1936, the Hamburg Swings exercised their first blatant act of noncompliance and refused to join.[27] According to Kater, the emphasis placed by the Swings on fashion, sexual license, jazz, and the swing dance, served as provocation against the wishes of Schirach. This frequent stirring of conflict between the Hitler Youth and the Hamburg Swings would occur throughout the war, and for the Swings jazz music would serve as their rallying cry.

Jazz took on a more complex role in the dire environment of the Nazi concentration camps, in which musicians among the prisoners clung to jazz not only as their livelihood but also as their means to stay alive. Like the taut wire of a violin, their lives vibrated on the edge of uncertainty, dependent entirely on the affinity of the Nazi soldiers for jazz. One concentration camp survivor, Wieslaw Machan, spoke with jarring candor when he described the role of jazz in his ultimate survival:

> Music saved my life in a concentration camp. In 1944 I landed in Flossenburg, which was not so famous as Auschwitz, but it was one of the most cruel…Nobody stayed alive very long… There was an orchestra there… A Polish-speaking German asked about musicians. Many people stepped forward; I had not known there were so many musicians. They thought it might save them. But when they were tested, all false musicians were hung on the gallows right away…. Then they started a so-called jazz band. There were six of us. We could get half a loaf of bread, some marmalade and a few cigarettes. It helped us

[27] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 108.

> survive. We syncopated and tried to swing and there were some solo improvisations. I played double bass, and I got pretty good. Thanks to music I not only survived the war but I became a professional bass player.[28]

The fact that many Nazis listened to jazz for no other reason than its entertainment value provided an opportunity for jazz musicians who were victims of the racial purification measures of the Third Reich to improve their chances of survival. Their very lives depended on the Nazis' casual affinity for swing music.

Kater describes the particular case of the camp of Terezín, in which a group of camp prisoners formed a jazz band called the Ghetto Swingers. American swing music emanated from the central café in the camp, much to the pleasure of the kapos and block wardens, who were ordinarily the only individuals allowed to attend. Kater recalls one particular incident involving the Ghetto Swingers: a propaganda film created by the Nazis in which the Swingers would be the stars. Terezín was refurbished, cleaned, and repainted. The prisoners in sight were made to appear healthy and well fed. The Ghetto Swingers, dressed in immaculate blue blazers embellished with a yellow Star of David, began to swing, pouring their hearts into their performance.

The music was lively, upbeat, and yet it pulsed with a certain urgency, a trepidation that existed chronically in the minds of the prisoners and grew more pronounced with each passing day. Once the filming had finished, life in the camp returned to "normal", and the musicians who formed the Ghetto Swingers were rewarded with a deployment to Auschwitz. Only three of the original Ghetto Swingers

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[28] Zwerin, *Swing Under the Nazis,* p. 73-74.

survived the war. Writes Kater, "Every one of them has maintained ever since that music saved his life; in fact, that it was jazz that saved it, jazz utilized, abused, and debased by representatives of a regime that had become inured to the impact of a universal culture, to the same degree that it had become immune to the sufferings of humankind."[29] Jazz musicians who were not able to save themselves from the perils of war found respite in their own musical creation.

Books such as *Hitler's Airwaves* and *Different Drummers* and the discussions of historians such as Gérard Régnier reveal the multifaceted nature of the debate surrounding jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany. Unlike the instrument it was often played upon, the keys to jazz were hardly black and white. The music of jazz was not subject to a universal key signature, but rather was attached to a sporadic, confusing mélange of accidentals, naturals, and double flats. In other words, no standard operating procedure existed; the regulations and policies that applied in some cases did not jive in others, for jazz does not render itself easy to define by universal criteria. Jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany was fluid, pocket-sized, and portable. Youth swung to it for its cheerful rhythm; Right wing conservatives winced at its atonality and racially impure origins and chided those who chose to listen. The leadership of the Third Reich prohibited its performance; upon being pelted by apples, as in the case of Hans Hinkel, the Nazi regime eventually relinquished its austere stance and arranhed for the performance of German jazz. Meanwhile, the Reich's own soldiers sought out the music wherever they could find it, especially in the occupied countries.

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[29] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 181.

The broad assertions of Kater are solidly supported by the factual details presented by Bergmeier and Lotz. From both works, we can infer that the Nazi regime focused much of its attention on its image on the international stage. Even Régnier, though his book principally addresses jazz in Paris under the Occupation, acknowledges this Nazi conscientiousness during the 1936 Berlin Olympics, during which not only was jazz allowed but it was actually promoted. Likewise, Kater notes the Nazis' greater austerity towards the public performance of jazz as opposed to jazz on the radio, with which the Nazi regime was much more tolerant. Kater does not, however, link this quality of the Third Reich to its very obsession with the public image; a link that can be logically made. On one level, the Nazis were averse to the public performance of jazz because it was so visible. Radio, though it spanned a much greater region, lacked the element of association by sight of which the Nazis were fond. Indeed, the Nazis' heavy emphasis on visual propaganda further exemplifies the Reich's preoccupation with sight and imagery.

On another level, Goebbels' allowance of jazz on the radio waves was to project a tempting array of German jazz to the international arena. Foreign listeners, upon tuning in to the station to enjoy the pleasant tones of jazz, would unsuspectingly expose themselves to Nazi propaganda. This tactic was hardly effective, and was more likely a further justification by Goebbels to permit jazz on the airwaves to appease the jazz lovers among his own people. Goebbels therefore balanced two opposing forces affecting jazz in the Third Reich: On one hand, the dedicated Nazis who associated jazz with its African-American origins and scorned any sort of jazz performance; on the other hand, the German jazz fans whose contentment was vital to the success of the

regime. It may be duly noted that only those Nazis who approached jazz purely from an aesthetic angle were able to combine their love for the music with their Nazi convictions with a clean conscience.

The homeland of the Third Reich was overall a harsh terrain for the uninhibited cultivation of jazz, but did jazz fare any better in the occupied nations? In France, where jazz had taken root and was now as much a part of the French identity as the *chanson*, did this music hold the same meaning? Or as seen in the German situation, was it frequently detached from its broader cultural and political implications and enjoyed for its entertainment value alone? Read on, for the melody continues.

Chapter 3: Jazz in Occupied France

A proper examination of the role of jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany would be remiss without an inclusion of jazz's role in occupied France; though the two were subject to totalitarian rule, the implications of policies restricting jazz manifested themselves in slightly different ways. France's jazz story began long before the occupation of Paris by the Nazis and even before jazz made its appearance on French soil. France's jazz story is essentially the story of jazz from its very beginning, when it first wielded its ability to draw out emotion from its listeners. At a moment of respite during the long program titled "An Experiment in Modern Music" at the Aeolian Hall in New York City in early 1924, the audience shifted uncomfortably in its seats in the stifling auditorium. Meanwhile, the lanky figure of George Gershwin strode up to the piano under the attentive eyes of Paul Whiteman and his orchestra. Ladies whispered restlessly in their neighbor's ear, and gentlemen heaved impatient glances upon their wristwatches. Within moments, a sharp trill of notes from a clarinet pierced the stifling concert hall and engaged the rapt attention of the audience. In a flirtatious manner, the clarinet sauntered its way up to the highest B-flat before cascading back down to the same F where the music began in a symmetrical fashion characteristic of Gershwin. The piece then took on the personality of a busy street, at once lazy, bustling, and romantic, strewn together by scattered elements of blue notes. The final chord was met with thunderous applause; with a grand debut, the world was introduced to *Rhapsody in Blue*, for which most listeners fell head-over-heels.

The final note of *Rhapsody in Blue* marked the grand debut of jazz in the public sphere. This moment was miles and years apart from the triumphant march of the

Nazis down the Champs-Elysées in Paris in early 1940; nonetheless, it emphasized jazz's natural role as a catalyst of emotion. Jazz's own rhapsody did not unfold neatly in black and white, but in blue. It traversed the ocean and took root in France, becoming an important part of the French culture. The approaches by fans and critics alike towards jazz were not straightforward, especially within a France hewn apart by the forces of occupation, collaboration, and resistance in the war-ripened years of the early 1940s. Rather, like the high-strung, winding melodies of *Rhapsody in Blue*, jazz elbowed its way into the limelight and out of the favor of many who harbored more conservative viewpoints. Strangely enough, despite the hostile environment ravaged by war, jazz prospered during these *années noires* that enveloped France.

3.1 – The Explosion of Jazz

The Nazis ushered in a period of occupation in Paris during which the cabarets were occupied as well. In his comprehensive view of jazz in Paris under the Occupation, Gérard Régnier notes the sharp rise in the vivacity of the Parisian nightlife. He describes the Moulin Rouge as one of Paris' premier cabarets, exploding nightly with the feverish frenzy of jazz hot. From its very debut, visitors from across the globe flocked to its open doors, eager to experience a slice of pure Parisian pleasure. A quick glance at the number of spectators each year to the Moulin Rouge gives a clear indication of the phenomenon that was overtaking jazz during the Occupation. In 1938, the number of visitors totaled 421,683. This number dropped slightly in 1939 to 343,492, perhaps due to the unease that accompanied the declaration of war on September 3. In 1940, Paris was swallowed by the Third Reich, and the number of visitors sank to 219,685. In this single year, two thirds of the inhabitants of Paris fled

the city. By 1941, the numbers had climbed once more to reach 436,999. Then suddenly, in 1942, jazz experienced an explosion of popularity; the number of visitors skyrocketed to 705,529, an increase of over 61.4% compared to the previous year. This influx did not diminish in 1943, but maintained a heightened rate of 744,753 visitors.[30] The Occupation was taking its toll on France, but jazz continued to flourish for reasons involving both the French and the Germans.

When we examine the German occupation of France, we discover that jazz music as an art form had found itself in a favorable predicament. Frenchmen pined for the music, grasping for any indication that life had retained some sense of normalcy. The Germans saw jazz as a way of distracting occupied France from cultivating ideas of revenge. The Nazi soldiers who journeyed to Paris discovered their own form of satisfaction in this jewel of the German-occupied world. In his book *And the Show Went On,* Alan Riding provides a riveting account of the pleasurable escapades of Parisian occupiers, hinting yet again at the complexities surrounding the story of jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany. Of the German authorities, he writes, "All … lyrics had to be approved by the Propaganda Staffel, but German officials were surprisingly flexible where Germany was not involved."[31] As for the German soldiers, they eagerly dove into the Parisian nightlife, looking to German-language newspapers such as *Paris-Zeitung* for recommendations on the most popular places in Paris. For those whose pockets were a bit deeper, the cabarets were the most vibrant attractions. L'Alhambra, Le Palace, Le Bobino, Le Shéhérazade, Les Variétés, the cabarets experienced a boom unseen since the Roaring Twenties. Riding notes pointedly, "The best cabarets, where

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[30] Gérard Régnier, *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009), p. 85.
[31] Riding, *And the Show Went On,* p. 91.

good food and vintage wine were always available, stayed open all night, enabling revelers to ignore the curfew."[32] Germans made up nearly 80 percent of the audience at Les Folies Bergère, where performances appeared in both German and French. Though surrounded by other Germans seeking the same enjoyments as they marveled at the colorful decorations and dancing girls in feathers, these German soldiers fancied themselves as relishing a truly French experience.

With this in mind, the claim by Régnier that too much emphasis has been placed on the importance of enforcing the interdiction of jazz in Paris under Nazi occupation seems perfectly understandable. Indeed, as long as some sort of explanation was provided, Nazi officers were quite content to let the jazz continue. Régnier quotes Jacques Bureau, a member of the Resistance and a close friend of Charles Delaunay, who relied on his own sharp wit to disperse any suspicions on behalf of the Germans over the motives of his friend. He recalls, "Our musical jokes should be put in their place. I attest that I had no trouble persuading Kieffer and the SD that Charles [Delaunay] was just an eccentric friend (anti-German, but Kieffer did not rebuke that), an adorer of black American idols and totally inoffensive."[33][*] Officially, jazz was a condemned music, a fact that the Nazis acknowledged out of respect for the authority of the Reich; however, jazz was enveloped by a thin veil of interdiction. Loopholes were hardly elusive, and the Germans were willing to let jazz continue provided it did not stem directly from African-American or Jewish origins. This relaxed approach was

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[32] Riding, *And the Show Went On,* p. 94.
[33] Régnier, *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation,* p. 145.
[*] « Nos plaisanteries musicales doivent être remises à leur place. Je témoigne que je n'eus aucune difficulté à persuader Kieffer et le SD que Charles était un simple camarade farfelu (anti-allemand mais Kieffer ne nous reprochait pas cela), adorateur des idoles noires américaines et totalement inoffensive. » Translation by author.

convenient for jazz-loving Germans, as is perfectly exemplified by the Moulin Rouge, which was inundated by pleasure-seekers even in the darkest years of Vichy rule.

3.2 – Jazz Becomes French

The explosion of jazz during the Occupation was indeed a phenomenon. How could music that represented freedom, individuality, and independence survive the stringent regulations of a totalitarian regime? Jazz was unique in its universal appeal; it's ability to embrace each and every listener regardless of the listener's background or political views. At the onset of the Occupation, jazz had already established its presence on the cultural landscape of Europe. Only when jazz was tested by the heightened restrictions wrought on by the Vichy regime and the Nazi occupiers was it firmly cemented as an integral part of the French identity. The Nazi attempts to erase jazz were only successful insomuch as jazz as a product of America faded in France. On the other hand, jazz as the gem of the French nightlife, a purely French form of entertainment, remained as vibrant as ever.

Ludovic Tournès examines in *New Orleans sur Seine: Histoire du jazz en France* the reasons behind this increase in popularity, including the Nazi's shared desire with the French to maintain a sense of normalcy by allowing jazz in occupied nations. Many jazz critics and musicians were willing to take all necessary measures to ensure the survival of jazz under the tight restrictions put in place by the Nazi regime, a willingness that was often at odds with the opinions of jazz purists. Tournès presents a prime example of this incoherence in the stories of Charles Delaunay and Hugues Panassié, the co-partners of the Hot Club de France in Paris, founded in 1932. By discussing the two dominant authorities on jazz of the period, Tournès reveals that the case involving

jazz in occupied France was not cleanly divided between those who supported jazz and those who wished for its demise. Panassié led the jazz purists, who refused to accept any form of commercialization or diversion from the African-American origins of jazz. Delaunay held more progressive views and as a survival tactic promoted jazz as inherently French, often changing the names of jazz standards in order to prevent its being targeted by Nazi censors. Despite their differing views, when Panassié and Delaunay were faced with tighter restrictions established on their art following the Nazi occupation of France, they met such prohibitions with a creativity and ingenuity that ultimately shaped the path of jazz in France in years since.

From his early years in the 1920s and 1930s, Hugues Panassié approached jazz from an erudite perspective. He studied the American musicians who toured through Paris, and published his findings in an article in 1930 that he entitled *La Revue du jazz*. In this article, Panassié defines with precision the separation between "straight" jazz and "hot" jazz, or that which imbues certain qualities of improvisation and a candid, syncopated rhythm. For Panassié, the latter is indisputably superior to the first, and "this alone represents true jazz."[35•] Panassié's true jazz was not only characterized as jazz hot, but also required the element of *swing nègre*. Panassié described this element as an "essential element to jazz music, an element that we do not encounter in any other music."[36•] *Swing nègre* ricocheted from the instruments of such musicians as

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[35] Hugues Panassié, *Grand'Route,* juillet 1930, cited by Ludovic Tournès, *New Orleans sur Seine: histoire du jazz en France* (Librarie Arthème Fayard, 1999), p. 36.
[•] « c'est lui seul qui représente le vrai jazz. », Translation by author.
[36] Hugues Panassié, *Le jazz hot,* Paris, Corréâ, 1934, p. 47, cited by Tournès, *New Orleans sur Seine,* p. 37.
[•] « élément essentiel de la musique de jazz, élément qu'on ne rencontre dans aucune autre musique. », Translation by author.

Louis Armstrong, whose natural gifts for jazz could not be taught. Tournès notes that Armstrong symbolized for Panassié the pureness of jazz as it was first cultivated in New Orleans, a spontaneous musical conversation.

Tournès makes an effort to discourage the placement of Panassié's views into terms that are too simple. While Panassié viewed the *élément nègre* as essential to the characterization of true jazz, he marveled at the abilities of white musicians such as Bix Beiderbecke and Mugsy Spanier. These musicians were able to incorporate the syncopated rhythms with such deftness that Panassié acknowledged the overall accomplishments of "this collaboration of two races": "They eliminate from their game nothing of the brilliant black spontaneity; to put it simply, they have perfected the form."[37]• Panassié, unlike most jazz-fans who drifted on the capricious waves of commercialism surrounding the music, was drawn to the originality and purity of true jazz. In his analysis of pure jazz, however, Panassié did not discredit the white musicians whose contributions to the genre were just as important as their African-American colleagues. When Tournès discusses Panassié's justification of this notion, he writes, "For Panassié, even if New Orleans is the cradle of jazz, a New Orleans style does not exist like the particular Chicago style.[38]• Even though improvisation is an indispensable element of jazz, Panassié held the belief that the critic must not overlook

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[37] Hugues Panassié, *Le jazz hot,* p. 59.

• « cette collaboration des deux races. »: « Ils n'éliminèrent nullement de leur jeu la brûlante spontanéité noire; tout simplement, ils perfectionnèrent la forme. », Translation by author.

[38]Tournès, *New Orleans sur Seine,* p. 37-38.

• « Pour Panassié, si la Nouvelle-Orléans est le berceau du jazz, 'il n'y a pas de style Nouvelle-Orléans aussi particulier que le style Chicago.' Par ailleurs, si l'improvisation lui paraît être un élément essentiel du jazz…, le critique prend en compte les formes écrites, où il note que l'influence de musiciens blancs tels que Paul Whiteman a été importante. », Translation by author.

the influence of white musicians such as Paul Whitehead in the written forms of jazz. Tournès explains that Panassié lamented the rapid commercialization of jazz and its transition into more popularized swing and dance music. With a discretion characteristic of his intellectual nature, Panassié respected the white musicians who were able to perfect the form of the *swing nègre*, and whose contributions led to a ripening of jazz from its first emergence from the cradle to its full maturity as a tune to which hummed the entire world.

To help us grasp a more tangible understanding of Panassié's ideology of pure jazz, Tournès cites Panassié's 1946 published work *La Véritable Musique de jazz.* With the clinical acumen of a physician, Panassié diagnosed the degeneration of authentic African-American jazz as the result of contamination by the virus of modernism. From its very start, Panassié explained, jazz had been subject to all manner of corruption by white musicians who had tried to copy the syncopated rhythms and improvised structure. Therefore, "especially after 1930, it began to lose its purity, to drag foreign elements into its essence that would cause much harm."[39]• Tournès notes Panassié's consideration of the variables influencing jazz. Panassié attributed its dilution to such external forces as the economic crisis of 1929, which placed "genuine jazz musicians" in a dilemma "either to commercialize or to go hungry."[40]• The crash of the world economy, accompanied by the rise of radio, provided fertile soil for the cultivation of a

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[39] Tournès, *New Orleans sur Seine,* p. 80.
• « surtout à partir de 1930, elle commença à perdre de sa pureté, à draguer des éléments étrangers à son essence qui risquaient de lui nuire beaucoup. » Translation by author.
[40] Ibid.
• « musiciens du jazz sincères » in a dilemma « ou se commercialiser, ou cesser de manger à sa faim. » Translation by author.

more mainstream, easily accessible form of jazz. Panassié could not reverse the direction in which the world was pushing jazz, though Tournès' discussion highlights Panassié's tireless efforts to restore jazz to its original quality.

Where Panassié's jazz was the homemade cake assembled from scratch, the jazz of Charles Delaunay was the cake baked from a box – modern, easy, and readily available. *New Orleans sur Seine* contrasts the conservative views of Panassié with the progressive ones of Delaunay in a thorough discussion that brings to light differing attitudes towards the role of jazz during the Occupation. For Delaunay, the continuance of jazz rested predominantly in its universal acceptance. While Panassié focused on composing articles in *Le Jazz Hot* and the production of disc recordings, Delaunay channeled most of his energy into the management of swing and the planning of jazz concerts to spark and regenerate interest in the music. As war in Europe was approaching, Charles Delaunay expressed his misgivings about the direction of man's progress in his brief essay *De la vie et du jazz* in 1939:

> Man has lost his equilibrium. He has believed in vain in 'intelligence,' in the infallibility of reason. He has scorned his body: a monstrous atrophy against nature translated by his actions. A deregulated being, an automaton, a dangerous monster who has made a world in HIS image, according to HIS reason and has bit by bit detached himself from the real world. 'Disequilibrium' by excess of reason.[41]

Jazz, in Delaunay's view, was the remedy to this 'disequilibrium'; it undermined the habits of reason that had been assembled throughout the history of mankind and

[41] Matthew F. Jordan, "Zazou dans le metro," *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity* (Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2010), p. 188.

restored a balance to life. By 1939, just prior to the German occupation of France, the world had become aware of the danger of disequilibrium and its army of automatons. A restoration of balance, of peace, was a welcoming concept. Delaunay recognized that only a music whose popularity knew no language barriers, no national boundaries, would be able to balance the opposing forces of war in Europe.

Even the wise observations of Delaunay could not stop the progression of war. When Paris fell under German Occupation in 1940, the Hot Club closed its doors for over a year. From his refuge on the Côte d'Azur in the autumn of 1940, Delaunay received a letter from a friend in Paris describing the city as "jazz-crazy."[42] After great success surrounding a benefit performance by Gypsy jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt and his band le Quintette in Normandie, Delaunay decided at the end of 1940 to organize a jazz music festival. On the 16th of December at the Salle Gaveau in Paris, throngs of fans appeared to drink in the music of which they were long deprived. The enthusiastic response launched a series of similar festivals that were favorably received, and the popularity of jazz was thereby established in occupied France.

Jazz's popularity in France during *les années noires* required the music to be flexible, adaptable, and easily accepted among social circles beyond those of its original residence, which had been the bourgeoisie and younger generations. Tournès discusses Delaunay's opinion of the changing demographic of the jazz culture. In the words of Delaunay, "Jazz enters little by little into the lifestyle of all the social classes where it replaces more and more the accordion and the song-lover." At the same time, Delaunay noted that the popular success of jazz did not necessarily constitute a musical

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[42] Zwerin, *Swing Under the Nazis,* p. 145.

success: "Quite the contrary, the new crowd will listen to this band like others go to the Vél'd'Hiv' to applaud each boxer or each cyclist. Jazz is for them a spectacle where one applauds the achievement of the drummer or the high notes of the trumpet."[43*] Tournès makes a valid point in presenting this view of Delaunay. Despite his enthusiastic promotion of the commercialization of jazz, Delaunay expressed a tinge of wistfulness with these words at the artificiality of such trends. The pragmatic Delaunay was well aware that jazz had been illuminated by the light of fame, which, though insincere, nonetheless ensured the vitality of jazz throughout the war.

Tournès describes at length jazz's importance to the French. From his arguments, we can deduce that the role of jazz was much more tangible in occupied France, for it stood not only for normalcy but also for hope in a future free of totalitarian rule. With its rise in popularity, jazz was simultaneously thrust into the political realm along with many other aspects of life in occupied France. Tournès notes that, as a result, jazz itself took on a greater significance for the French, from a pastime that fell pleasantly upon the ear to a manifestation of French ingenuity in times of distress. Delaunay recognized the need to redirect the development of jazz away from its African-American origins, much to the criticism of Panassié and other jazz purists. In planning the first two jazz concerts at the Salle Gaveau concert hall in Paris in 1940 and

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[43] Charles Delaunay, *Circulaire du Hot club de France* (avril-mai 1941), cited in Tournès, *New Orleans sur Seine,* p. 68.

[*] « le jazz entre peu à peu dans les mœurs de toutes les classes sociales où il remplace plus en plus l'accordéon et l'amateur de chansonnette. » At the same time, he notes a lack of sincerity and true musical appreciation in this trend: « ce succès populaire ne se complète pas – bien au contraire – d'un succès musical. La nouvelle foule va écouter tel orchestre comme d'autres vont au Vél'd'Hiv' applaudir tel boxeur ou tel cycliste. Le jazz est pour eux un spectacle où l'on applaudit l'exploit de la batterie ou les notes aiguës de la trompette, » Translation by author.

1941, Delaunay promoted jazz as strictly French. As Tournès explains, this strategy did not jeopardize the wellbeing of the American musicians who were to perform in the concert; it was merely an effort to camouflage from the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda Delaunay's true intentions. Tournès notes further, "Delaunay's strategy is to 'seize by the hair the leitmotif of the German propaganda and Vichy politics, which promote in their defense qualities of French nationalism."[44*] Tournès emphasizes the ingenuity of Delaunay in this explanation. Rather than taking an openly defiant stance against the Nazis, Delaunay played along with the rules that were established by the regime. He promoted jazz as French, and in doing so, the Nazis could not restrict it on the basis of its American origins.

Tournès describes the singularly vaunted effort made by Delaunay to carry out his concerts in a manner deemed most appropriate by the Vichy regime. Delaunay organized lectures related to jazz in the months leading up to the first concert at the Gaveau. These conferences discussed the origins of jazz, in that due to the longtime presence and influence of the French in New Orleans, jazz could be considered a music of French origin. Prior to the first concert opening on December 16, a brochure was circulated to journalists that presented jazz as another member of the rocky edifice of musical history that composes all of the musical greats, from Bach, Mozart, and Chopin, to Wagner, Debussy, and Stravinsky. In the discs circulated in accompaniment to the concert, Delaunay made no reference to America in the disc descriptions, writing

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[44] Charles Delaunay, *Jazz hot* (novembre 1948), cited by Tournès, *New Orleans sur Seine,* p. 80.

[*] « Le stratagème de Delaunay est de 'saisir par les cheveux le leitmotiv de la propaganda allemande et de la politique de Vichy, qui se donnaient pour défenseurs des qualités nationales françaises.' » Translation by author.

instead of « les authentiques artistes français »[45]; this clever publicity worked in that the journalists printed every word exactly as Delaunay had intended. "Why Paris jazz?" read one article, "Because Paris is the artistic center of the world and because the new orchestra represents the French musical elite."[46*] For a grand finale and to give substance to these claims so as not to attract the suspicions of the censors, the Propaganda Staffel was given a list of proposed repertoire prior to each concert. A quick skim through the lists would yield no recognition of the popular American jazz standards, for "In the Mood" had become "*Dans l'ambiance,*" "Two Left Feet" was *"Deux pieds gauches,"* "Dinah" had been renamed *"Dinette,"* etc. Tournès paints a favorable image of Delaunay, who did not stop at the mere promotion of jazz as French but took even greater measures to mask the true identity of jazz from the Nazi censors.

When it came to disguising the true origins of jazz, no avenue was left unexplored, no stone left unturned. Tournès observes that these tactics deceived credulous journalists unfamiliar with the music of jazz. Despite this, it can be doubted that the MBF[*] services, the organization in charge of the administration of occupied France, was so easily duped. Even so, the jazz concerts were permitted to commence. We begin to wonder why a form of music designated as degenerate by the Nazi regime was performed without paralyzing impediments? Tournès explains that the Germans

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[45] *Paris-soir* (23 janvier 1941), cited by Tournès, *New Orleans sur Seine,* p. 83.
[46] *Bulletin du Hot club de France* (janvier 1941), cited by Tournès, *New Orleans sur Seine,* p. 82.
[*] « Pourquoi Jazz de Paris ? » reads one article, « Parce que Paris est le centre artistique du monde et parce que le nouvel orchestre représente l'élite musicale française. » Translation by author.
[*] An abbreviation for the Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich, the organization in charge of the administration of occupied France. It includes, among others, the propaganda services at the national level (Propaganda Abteilung) and at the local level (Propaganda Staffel).

wished to convey an image of prosperity to both occupied France and to the outside world, that life under the occupation was continuing as it had before. I find a more likely explanation in the argument of Riding that the German authorities were considerably more tolerant with issues from which they felt little threat and in which Germany was not directly involved.

Though Tournès presents a sound argument, one may revisit the ideas put forth by Michael Kater in addition to those of Riding to further explain the reasoning behind this paradox. As we heard from Kater, the German soldiers occupying France enjoyed jazz as much as the French themselves. The sultry rhythms and upbeat tunes penetrated the souls of the German soldiers, who could not resist the cabarets of Paris at nightfall. The apparent ease of Nazi restrictions on entertainment may stem as much from personal interests as from political interests. After all, once jazz was promoted as purely French, it coincided with the strong national fervor that existed under the Vichy government, and therefore could be enjoyed in coalition with such ideals. Jazz music, as in Delaunay's earlier reference to the cyclists at the Vel d'Hiv, was nothing more than an article of clothing, a pair of shoes to be slipped on and then unlaced and removed when necessary. Any deeper implications of an affinity for jazz were quickly severed so as to better suit the extreme ideological atmosphere of Nazi Germany.

Though he went to great lengths to channel German jazz through a filter of Nazi propaganda, Goebbels was not alone in his manipulation of jazz to suit his purposes; Charles Delaunay was willing to strip down, rename, and effectively uproot the jazz at his Hot Club from its American origins in order to maintain its existence. With respect to Delaunay, we must duly note that his manipulation of jazz dealt primarily with the

presentation of the music rather than an interference with the music itself. While Goebbels and Charlie's Orchestra undermined the quality of the jazz by stripping it of its fundamental elements of improvisation, the jazz issuing from the Hot Club retained its syncopated spontaneity and had merely adopted an alias. Goebbels attempted to appease the cravings of jazz lovers without stepping on the toes of more conservative Nazis, whereas Delaunay tried to appease the Nazi censors without deviating too drastically from the overall quality of his jazz.

Delaunay's actions rode upon the wave of an even greater development involving jazz. Jazz was no longer an outsider to be gawked at and labeled from afar; it had made its entrance in the public sphere, an entrance that added a multitude of dimensions to the debate for and against the music. Right-wing conservatives found themselves in agreement with Panassié, one of jazz's most highly revered scholars. At the same time, Delaunay, a devoted member of the Resistance who risked his life by welcoming British airmen into his home in Paris during the Occupation, promoted jazz in a manner deemed highly acceptable by the Nazi authorities, including Goebbels himself. Pulsing away in the center of this throng was jazz itself, as vibrant as ever, upheld by the barrage of opposing forces. While some disagreed with its characteristic improvisations, its deep African-American roots, all could agree that jazz refused to be ignored.

Delaunay was tactful in his promotion of jazz as principally French as a way to dispel its associations with America. Even prior to its entrance into the war in 1942, America became the object of much of the Vichy regime's propaganda. Matthew Jordan notes that America's isolation during the early years of the war was described by

Vichy media as a “betrayal”. We can draw from his argument the notion of America as an easy target for propaganda due to its cultural and geographical distance from Europe. And, in the Vichy opinion, what better representation of Yankee character than the sultry rhythms of American jazz? America’s gallant liberation of Europe and the jazz that sounded as the music of victory two decades earlier were still fresh in the minds of many French citizens; however, the Vichy media was not daunted by jazz’s popularity and used various tactics, including brazen anti-Semitism, to fire complaints against America. Jordan quotes P.A. Cousteau who, writing for the Vichy publication *Je Suis Partout*, wielded attacks at America that ranged from the unfortunate consequences of democratic ideas to the influence of the Jews.[47] According to Cousteau, America’s entrance into the war was an extension of the Jewish peril due to its close associations with the Jews and was therefore something to resist at all costs.

Such notions reflect the conservative voice in Vichy France, a voice to which Delaunay responded by extracting the “America” out of the names and backgrounds of jazz. Ludovic Tournès’ discussion of Delaunay’s calculated effort to promote French jazz as opposed to jazz stemming from American origins is convincing; however, the de-Americanization of jazz as precipitated by Delaunay was much more effective than Tournès suggests. In some ways, jazz was completing a maturity that had begun long before war was declared and had gradually evolved into this rhythmic declaration of independence. In painting an image of jazz that was purely French, Delaunay bestowed upon the music a French identity that extended beyond a clever façade; this occurred without compromising the essential elements of jazz, such as improvisation.

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[47] Jordan, *Le Jazz,* p. 198.

"In the Mood" did not simply become *"Dans l'ambiance"*; French musicians were given the opportunity to showcase their talents away from the dominance of American jazz musicians. Stepping onto the stage in front of a riotous French and German audience highly appreciative of their talents and thirsting for some syncopated rhythms, these French musicians rose quickly to stardom. Though he does not pursue it in great detail, Tournès does not overlook this fact, and he even draws a connection between this growing propensity towards French jazz and the complexities of the French political psyche during these *années noires.* To understand the psychological pressures of this period, we must consider the gamut of emotions that assailed the citizens of France during German occupation. To counter the bitter indignity of the Nazi presence, the French clung tightly to nationalistic zeal. Jazz became the antidote of choice to counter the ills of occupation, and the subsequent success garnered by the French musicians played a vital role in the bolstering of France's own cultural identity.

Charles Delaunay was not the only individual who endowed jazz with an identity that was uniquely French. This desire to dissociate jazz from its American origins and link it to a more acceptable identity of Frenchness was a popular one, which Matthew Jordan discusses in *Le Jazz*. Jordan introduces us to André Coeuroy, who argued in his 1942 book *Histoire générale du jazz: strette-hot-swing* that the origin of jazz is really European. "For a long time," Coeuroy wrote, "we believed that jazz was specifically *nègre*. The present thesis is exactly the opposite. Jazz was black only by chance. The principal elements that compose it come from whites, and whites from Europe. By its

history and by its material, jazz is ours."[48] Coeuroy took his argument a step further, describing the path of jazz from Europe into America: "Its cradle is in Mississippi, and its inventors were the *nègres* already enslaved by Frenchmen, and still today in the service of families who came from Poitou, Saintoge, Aunis, Normandie, and Picardie … the French genius, more than the Saxon genius, with the gallant, amiable, and gay spirit of our civilization, more than the puritanical and severe spirit of Old England, was the creator."[49] Coeuroy remained convinced that the origins of jazz were actually French and that the African-American community contributed little in the way of ingenuity to cultivate this music. This position, though in favor of jazz, served to justify the position of racial purity held by the Vichy regime; to ensure its survival, Coeuroy distorted jazz's own self-identity. Charles Delaunay used similar ideas of jazz's innate "Frenchness" in his lectures leading up to his first jazz concert at the Salle Gaveau in Paris in late 1940, tactics that were gravely objectionable in the eyes of his business partner and jazz purist, Hugues Panassié.

To return again to Jordan's example of Coeuroy, we are told that Coeuroy did not end his argument with a chronological explanation of the European influence in the birth of jazz. The word itself, "jazz," etymologically derives in Coeuroy's opinion from the French word *jaser*, which means "to converse." He saw jazz as a mélange of influences from all across Europe that was merely cultivated in America: "Africa dialect? Patois *nègre?* In reality, an old Celtic word, the Provançale form of which is *jasar*, the French form *jaser* (and *gazouiller*), the Italian *gazza* (which designates an itch), the Breton form

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[48] André Coeuroy, *Histoire générale du jazz: strette-hot-swing* (Paris: Les Éditions Denoël, 1942), cited by Jordan, *Le Jazz,* p. 224.
[49] Ibid, p. 26.

geitz."[50] Though the rhythm of jazz was *d'origine nègre*, its melodies and harmonies were fundamentally European.

Jordan notes that by stripping jazz of its African-American origins, Coeuroy was able to influence perceptions of jazz in two ways: In one way, he was dismissing the primary basis of the Nazi policy against jazz. By maintaining that jazz is actually of European origins, Coeuroy was stating that jazz could not be targeted for being un-French. On the other hand, Coeuroy's claim made it possible for individuals, including Nazis, to enjoy jazz without compromising their own ideas of racial purity. Coeuroy managed to dissociate jazz from its African-American origins in order to justify the Nazi predilection for the music, a predilection that in this case was not based entirely on aesthetic reasons. For a Nazi to explain his taste for jazz, he need only point out Coeuroy's argument for its European origins ("What's the harm?") before again turning up the volume to his latest Count Basie record. What Jordan does not mention is that regardless of whether jazz was promoted as strictly French or as a product of America, most Nazi jazz lovers would continue their preference for the music. Certainly, to listen to acceptable French jazz was more easily justifiable to the Nazi authorities than to choose ostracized American jazz; however, such superficial elements as the music's specific origins influenced little the overall public taste for jazz.

The most ardent backlash against the proposal of André Coeuroy did not come from the jazz critics, as Jordan explains, but from Hugues Panassié, the most prominent proponent of "true jazz" in France. Following his discussion of Coeuroy, Jordan points out that the jazz-loving world did not exactly embrace his strange new ideas. For

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[50] Ibid, p. 29.

Panassié, writing in late 1942, the idea that jazz was fundamentally European was "constructed on false premises."[51] He claimed that the essence of jazz was not its melodies but its syncopated rhythm and improvisation, both of which are specifically *nègre*. His immense knowledge of all things jazz lends an erudite density to his writings on the subject, as we witnessed in the argument of Ludovic Tournès. Because of his expertise, Panassié was well respected in the jazz world. Jordan notes that the importance of Panassié's article lies not simply in its content but in its role as evidence that the love of jazz could be openly expressed in Vichy France. This fact alone reveals the potent nature of jazz within the culture of the Occupation. Jazz had emerged from its clandestine existence in the early years of the Occupation and was now a member of cultural society to be debated, debased, and praised.

3.3 – Jazz Lovers and Jazz Musicians: To Desist or Resist?

As I have shown by Tournès and Jordan's examples, jazz adapted with little difficulty to the more stringent atmosphere of Vichy France and the larger German component of its audiences. We begin to question, then, what effects this changing environment had on the jazz musicians, the individuals who composed the driving force of the music's success. These musicians were faced with a dilemma: to abandon their livelihood and cease the performance of jazz, or to resist the occupying regime and stubbornly persist with their rhythms. In his telling rendition of the cultural life in Nazi-Occupied Paris, *And the Show Went On,* historian Alan Riding examines the predicament of a few of these notable performers. As Riding explains, these musicians

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[51] Hugues Panassié, "Situation du jazz dans la musique," *Le Figaro* (August 11, 1942), cited by Jordan, *Le Jazz,* p. 225.

could not simply discard the music like an old record when the Germans marched into Paris; rather, swing was their life, and for swing they would risk their life. This message is startlingly clear in the atmosphere of a war in which music played a vital role both as a form of retreat and as a rallying cry. Whether swing was a side show in much greater career in cabarets, as in the case of Josephine Baker, or whether it took center stage, as it did in the life of renowned Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt, Riding touches upon the experiences of these jazz musicians and the great dangers they faced for the sake of their music.

Music has often been called the universal language, and the leading jazz diva of Paris, Josephine Baker, discovered the ease with which music traversed boundaries and skipped across language barriers. An African-American native of St. Louis, Missouri, Baker danced her way to fame and fortune in the glittering nightlife of Paris during the Jazz Age, and before long she was an international superstar. Whether or not they spoke her language, crowds were enthralled by La Baker's dynamic routines, her dazzling smile, and her *je ne sais quoi,* interlaced by an entrancing background of jazz. We often ponder music's ability to melt away spoken boundaries and political animosity during times of war. Music can have other motives as well. What, on its face, may appear to be a simple piece of music may, on a more vital note, carry valuable international information. For Josephine Baker, music became a medium of espionage.

As the Nazis entered Paris in the spring of 1940, Josephine bid adieu to the City of Lights, traveling south to Dordogne. There, she was joined by Captain Jacques Abtey, a French military intelligence officer who had been in touch with the forces of Charles de Gaulle in London. Abtey posed as Baker's secretary as they set off for

Lisbon, Baker toting crucial information regarding German military movements written in invisible ink on her music scores. The German authorities turned out to be enormous fans of Baker, who needed only to flash her radiant smile before she was allowed to cross the border, no questions asked. Her operation successful, Baker spent the remainder of the war performing for American soldiers in North Africa. She emphasized her role as a member of the Free French Forces as she unwound sultry tunes in the Moroccan heat, performing for the young men in uniform whose enthusiasm was infectious. The efforts of Josephine Baker to aid the Resistance movement merited her the honor of being awarded the Croix de Guerre and the Médaille de la Résistance with the rosette.[52] Famous for her dance number in which she wore a banana skirt, Baker looked no less beguiling in her army uniform as she received these emblems of heroism, a testament to her bravery and the remarkable power of music.

In her grand exit from the nightlife of Paris, Josephine Baker did not merely inscribe information valuable to the Resistance to the back of her music scores; she linked jazz to a broader role as a catalyst in the overarching chemical reaction wrought on by war. Though entwined in her story of intrigue, La Baker was not the only performing artist thrust into the complex atmosphere of the realities of Occupation. Riding touches upon the story of a Gypsy jazz guitarist whose popularity was his mainstay: Django Reinhardt. Mike Zwerin gives a vivid description of Reinhardt's popularity in *Swing under the Nazis*, "Of course there was Tino Rossi, Piaf, Chevalier, and the others, but the Germans *liked* them. They liked them a bit too much. It was at least embarrassing if not collaboration. But they hated swing; swing was fun, and

[52] Alan Riding, *And the Show Went On: Cultural Life in Nazi-Occupied Paris* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010) p. 95.

nobody in the world swung better than 'Made in France' Django Reinhardt."[53] A Gypsy by birth, a guitarist by trade, Django Reinhardt relied purely on the popularity of his music to steer him away from what might have become a path to the concentration camps. In London with his Quintette du Hot Club de France when war was declared in 1939, Reinhardt chose the riskier avenue and returned to Paris. In Paris, Riding explains, he performed in jazz concerts organized by Charles Delaunay and at the Hot Club before riotous crowds cheering in both French and German.

Not entirely immune to the uneasy atmosphere of Occupied France, Reinhardt decided in 1943 to flee to Switzerland, but was caught at the border. In searching him, the police secured his English Society of Composers membership card, as Riding notes, sufficient proof to send him to the gallows as a spy. The Nazi interrogation officer took one look at the guitarist and smiled: "*Mon vieux Reinhardt, que fais-tu là?"*[54] Django Reinhardt was set free with a mere warning, saved by a Nazi officer with an ear for jazz.

Some jazz musicians, like Django Reinhardt, found themselves on the receiving end of the heightened political energies during the Occupation. As a Gypsy, the jazz guitarist was in a disconcerting position under the shadow of a regime committed to erasing racial impurities. In his account, Riding mentions another jazz musician who, rather than being affected by the political movement, indirectly sponsored a sociopolitical movement of his own. Johnny Hess, along with Ray Ventura, was among the first to introduce swing music to France in the late 1930s. Shortly after the Germans invaded France, the Jewish Ventura fled to South America, but left a craving for more

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[53] Zwerin, *Swing under the Nazis,* p. 166.
[54] Zwerin, *Swing under the Nazis,* p. 187.

swing in the hearts of Parisians. According to Riding, Hess remained, and as early as 1938 began to insert the nonsense word “zazou” into the lyrics of his song “Je suis swing.” Before long, the word had taken on a greater meaning for youth across France as a form of cultural protest. Long hair and long jackets for men, short skirts and heavy shoes for women; their efforts at provocation became more punctuated when, after the Nazis required Jews to pin a yellow Star of David to their clothes, Zazous began wearing yellow stars inscribed with the words “Swing” or “Zazou.”

Matthew Jordan highlights the connection that the young Zazous of Paris drew between jazz and its American origins as the war stretched onward and the Germans pelted London with bombs in 1941, and especially during the period immediately preceding America’s entry into the war. This connection coincided with the opposing broader trend we discussed earlier towards erasing notions of jazz as purely American and instead accenting its identity as French. The Zazous used jazz to assert their own identity within the austere environment of Vichy France. Under the Vichy regime, youth were the promise of the future. The Vichy propagandists wanted to convince the public that “la vraie jeunesse française” supported their cause completely. Right-wing voices harmonized with Vichy’s careful melody, identifying jazz as the symbol of the mixed race that would be obliterated in their ideal community. Jordan describes Vichy writers themselves who accused those who listened to jazz as being un-French, that a “true” Frenchman would never engage in such activity that would undermine the Vichy ideas of France’s ideal future. Jordan explains that since jazz was viewed by the Vichy regime as un-French, the promotion of jazz came to represent resistance to Vichy societal ideals. An atmosphere stuffy with fear often causes public opinion to drift

towards the more open air of the periphery, of the extremes. Rather than be persuaded by the Vichy campaign against decadent music, the Zazous recoiled in the opposite direction, embracing their own nonconformity. Jordan depicts the conflicting pressures of the Vichy regime and the young Zazous with admirable thoroughness, and his argument reminds us that French reactions to the occupying forces were complex and by no means uniform.

The conservative voice, echoing Vichy ideology regarding French youth, was not inaudible during the early years of the Occupation. Jordan cites the conservative view of Edith Delamare, columnist for the Vichy publication *Jeunesse*, in her description of the swing youth two days after Pétain's 1941 visit to Paris; "He has a heightened sense of strange, dissonant rhythm, not disagreeable, but too new, too unheard-of for the countrymen of Gounod or Chopin, that miracle of Aryan sensibility."[55] Delamare's problem with swing was not one of aesthetics, but one of cultural ideology. A display of love for the "dissonant" rhythms defied the Vichy cause of reestablishing the true culture of France, one enveloped by Aryan purity. Here, Jordan points out the irony in the Vichy regime's practice of deception, for the "miracle" of Chopin's Aryan sensibility was that he was not Aryan at all, but Polish. The Nazis were fond of using labels to further their ideology, and just as Chopin was labeled as Aryan, jazz was labeled as decadent and as a sign of egoism. Jordan's examples emphasize the Vichy regime's reliance on generalities and rhetoric in its reaction towards a form of music that it was not able to clearly define. Vichy France attempted to squeeze the multicolored jazz into a code of

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[55] Edith Delamare, "Méfaits du swing," *Jeunesse* (June 22, 1941), cited by Jordan, *Le Jazz,* p. 195.

black and white. To listen to jazz and flaunt its associated radical ideals in public was to be an enemy to the regime, a walking contradiction.

As the Occupation progressed, views on jazz became more polarized. Writes Jordan, "As the Vichy media's hyperbolic denunciations of the jazz-loving public became more venomous and caricatured, the Zazous emerged as an extreme version of the jazz lover, publicly flaunting their opposition to the voices of Vichy authority."[56] Just as the Hamburg Swings flaunted their radical manner of dress and paraded up and down the streets of Hamburg, so the Zazous were flamboyant in their resistance to authority. In Jordan's opinion, the battle over jazz served as a microcosm of the larger overall struggle between acceptance of the modernization of France and resistance against this representation of cultural decay. Jazz was new, it was fresh, and it was different. The younger generation, in an effort to make a tangible statement against society as established by its elders, discovered in jazz a convenient manner of expression. They did not just listen to swing, they *became* swing.

Indeed, as the Zazous' pursuance of jazz and swing became more extreme, criticisms against them grew in fervor. Jordan cites one conservative critic, Robert Brasillach, editor of *Je Suis Partout,* who in 1942 described the *dancing* with a hint of repugnance as a place where "One dances there in the afternoon, girls and boys. One smokes English cigarettes. One delves into a little of the black market. One nibbles away at little petit fours … The young swing people do not have the fascist spirit, which is first and foremost the spirit of joy."[57] A music that captured the reckless spirit of idleness, jazz was seen as a decadent pastime utterly devoid of any sense of the

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[56] Jordan, *Le Jazz,* p. 186.
[57] Jordon, *Le Jazz,* p. 211.

nationalism that the Vichy regime so admired. We can note from this claim the contradictory nature of the Vichy regime. The Vichy view of jazz was of a music that defied the fervent nationalism of the Vichy government. As we examined earlier, Delaunay promoted this very same jazz as French in order to augment this same sense of nationalism. Adaptability is an inherent quality of jazz, and one that enabled it to be manipulated and reshaped to suit differing purposes.

As far as the Zazous were concerned, where there was jazz, there was America. The swing music that became such a vital component of the Zazou identity, according to Jordan, was closely related to the American spirit, for it involved a lightness of step, a pulsing rhythm of youthfulness. Jordan describes this embracing of American culture through swing dancing as "a form of generational solidarity whereby a subculture of French youth distanced themselves from the political turmoil in Europe wrought by their elders."[58] For these youth, jazz became a means of asserting their own generational individuality against the atmosphere of animosity that had been created by the generations of their parents and grandparents. In a sense, jazz possessed all the promise of youth, a promise that intrigued young Zazous even more potently than did anti-Nazi fervor. The Zazous did not initially direct their opposition solely towards the Nazi regime; they wished to counteract conservatism as a whole. Jordan explains that only as years passed and war in Europe developed did the ties between jazz and broader political notions become more pronounced.

What Jordan does not mention is that this discourse on jazz chiseled new facets into the sculpture of its interpretations in France. Panassié's criticism of the widespread

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[58] Jordan, *Le Jazz,* p. 187.

commercialization of jazz was one shared by the far Right conservatives, albeit for very different reasons. Panassié wished for jazz to survive in its purest form, whereas the conservative voices of the Vichy regime wanted it to be filtered completely from France's cultural life. Likewise, while Coeuroy's Europeanization of jazz provided an ideal justification for collaboration and racism among jazz-lovers, it also heaped praise upon the *jeunesse* as porters of "a patient life momentum that never gives up hope."[59] We can almost hear the echoes of Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels in the ideas of Coeuroy. Goebbels, realizing the importance of the enthusiasm of the younger generation as vital to the success of the Nazi regime, permitted the performance of jazz under close supervision to appease young audiences.

The caustic Vichy campaigns were ultimately of little avail, for the presence of jazz persisted in great potency throughout the Occupation. This fact compels one to place Jordan's argument aside, sit back, and reexamine the actual significance that was placed on jazz by the Third Reich and the Vichy regime. Germany was in the midst of a war of global proportions; any punitive efforts to prevent jazz from being played were handled lightly in relation to the more pressing concerns of the Third Reich. As the exaggerated emphasis on propaganda and outer impressions suggests, Nazi media painted an anti-jazz image with much more zeal than it was willing to support with actual restrictions.

We shall return again to Jordan's discussion. He notes that the medium through which much of the contention between jazz and politics was manifested in France was the radio. Behind a velvet curtain of Beethoven, Chopin, and other composers deemed

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[59] Coeuroy, *Histoire générale du jazz,* p. 221, cited by Jordan, *Le Jazz,* p. 225.

acceptable by the Vichy regime, French jazz and even American jazz could be heard on the airwaves of Radio-Paris, a Nazi-sponsored station. The music may have been desyncopated and disguised under alternate names to confuse the Nazi censor, yet its essence remained the same. Jordan notes examples of jazz standards that appeared on the airwaves under masked appellations; "'Some of These Days' became 'Bébé d'amour,' 'China Boy' became 'Petit chinois,' 'Honeysuckle Rose' became 'Rose de miel,' and 'Lady Be Good' became 'Les bigoudis.'"[60] Though the music of Gershwin and Berlin was forbidden on the radio, those who knew jazz best could distinguish these tunes; they were played subtly, revealing themselves from beneath their *noms de guerre* without declaration.

According to fellow historian Alan Riding, jazz music was not the sole form of music to be targeted for Nazi propaganda. Symphonic music, though it was much better suited to the tastes of the Germans, experienced an undertow that pushed it in the direction of Third Reich ideology. An exemplary case is found in the orchestra formed under Radio-Paris. The Grand Orchestre de Radio-Paris drew throngs of listeners to the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. The Vichy government was required to fund the operation as part of its extensive fiscal burdens, and it also supplied the wages of the eighty-members who made up the Radio-Paris orchestra. The pull of the new orchestra was irresistible. Riding writes, "These wages, which were twice as high as those paid to musicians at the Paris Opera, served to woo some instrumentalists from the Orchestre National."[61] The dynamic of music within the culture of occupied France was strongly influenced by the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that permeated life

[60] Jordan, *Le Jazz*, p. 205.
[61] Riding, *And the Show Went On,* p. 144.

within its boundaries. Financial gain's stinging temptation is felt ever more sharply in such an environment. The power of music – its close association to the soul of humanity – lends itself easily to this sort of manipulation. Whether or not they held any political significance for these musicians, opportunities such as this provided a foreseeable security that took precedence over all else.

Based upon these historians' arguments, and especially the examples of Jordan, we can see that the Vichy regime was clearly concerned with the public performance of jazz, describing it as resistance to the Vichy moral order, as opposed to the personal enjoyment of jazz on the radio in the privacy of one's own home. This was similar to the case in Nazi Germany, where jazz in a muted form could be detected on Hitler's airwaves. Such aversion to the public performance of jazz alludes to the image-centered approach of the Vichy regime. While in today's society we would view the radio, the international airwaves, as of potentially greater concern for the Vichy ideology, the Vichy government regarded the more active, impressionable gesture of a public performance as much more threatening. The Nazi prevalence for vivid propaganda stems from this same central concept: What mattered to Vichy France and the Nazis was not so much what lay in the hearts of their citizens, but rather the façade, the outward impression that outsiders received of the Reich. As long as jazz appeared to be suppressed and propaganda posters warned against indulging in the "degenerate" music, the Nazis authorities were satisfied.

Designating something as forbidden only causes one to want it more. This basic reality is a fundamental ingredient of human nature, dating back to the days of Adam and Eve. Jazz was no different. As the Vichy media publicized ever more fervently the

campaign against swing, the music experienced ever greater popularity. Though the Vichy police forces cracked down on public cafés and bars, such action fueled a sudden growth in the number of clandestine *dancings* and private swing clubs. Régnier sums up the bundle of contradictions that characterized jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany in a simple phrase, borrowing words from the historian Jean-Noël Jeanneney: "une idée fausse est un fait vrai, a misconception that is a fact." [62] To claim that jazz was completely banned during the Occupation is a false claim. At the same time, one may accurately note that during this time to play or listen to jazz music constituted a form of resistance for many groups in society. Indeed, Régnier makes a very valid point, for the individuals who suffered most from the Nazi policy on jazz were the musicians themselves. They were at the forefront, dancing dangerously on the edge of what was deemed appropriate, crossing the line but bouncing back before the Nazis could pin down their movements.

Régnier describes the experiences of one such individual, Jacques Bureau, one of the founders of the Hot Club in 1932. In 1940, Bureau found himself in Syria with the French Expeditionary Corps. His role in the corps was to spy on the Italian telephone stations in the hope of obtaining information on the strategic intentions of Hitler and Mussolini. Régnier writes that after the entry of the Germans into Paris, Bureau entered into the British army. His actions did not go unnoticed by the Nazi authorities, and on 14 July 1943, Bureau was arrested at his home in Paris and imprisoned at Fresnes. Isolated from the rest of the world, Bureau's sole consolation came from jazz. From the depths of solitary confinement, in which his only personal contact was with the Nazi

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[62] Régnier, *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation,* p. 263.

inquisitors, Bureau would recite his favorite jazz tunes from start to finish. At night, when dreams would not come, he would mentally play the solos of Bix Beiderbecke, especially "I'm coming Virginia."[63]

When he was later deported to Braunschweig, Germany, Bureau saw the arrival of the Americans. Régnier quotes Bureau of this monumental moment in his wartime experience, and in his love of jazz:

> The black soldiers played in the garden of a villa requisitioned for the deportees. The marvelous style of the South, with the preaching clarinet, the staccato trumpet improvising notes that pierced the transparency of the other instruments, and a rude and offensive trombone, stopped me in my tracks. I approached the orchestra whose joy was evident, and I listened for a long time to this music that came directly from the soul.[64]•

Upon his return to Paris following the Liberation, according to Régnier, Bureau reclaimed his post as government official in the Ministry of Health and his pavilion on the Rue Chaptal. Let us consider for a moment the role of jazz in the eyes of Bureau. Within the inescapable solitude of a prison cell, jazz became a friend to Bureau, a memory of his past life to which to cling for the sake of his own sanity. The music took

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[63] Interview by Michel Boujut, *Jazz Magazine* (January 2001), Cited by Régnier, *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation,* p. 252.

[64] Jacques Bureau, *Un soldat menteur,* Ed. Robert Laffont, p. 374, cited by Régnier, *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation,* p. 252.

• « Des soldats noirs jouaient dans le jardin d'une villa réquisitionnée pour les déportés. Le merveilleux style du Sud, avec la clarinette prêchant, la trompette improvisant staccato pour laisser les autres parties percer dans sa transparence, et un trombone rude et offensif, arrêtèrent net ma marche. Je revins vers l'orchestre dont la joie était évidente, et j'écoutai de longues minutes cette musique qui sortait directement de l'âme. » Translation by author.

on a whole new meaning when Bureau encountered the American jazz musicians; it spoke of joy and hope and freedom. For Bureau and his fellow jazz lovers and musicians, jazz represented much more than an entertaining pastime; it was the independence that had defined them before the Occupation, and it was the freedom of musical expression that they hoped would return.

Contrary to popular belief, the Nazis did not in a singular instance switch off the record player and smash all of the jazz records. Régnier addresses this, but we will take the argument one step further. We are tempted to take the explosion of jazz in occupied France during *les années noires* completely out of context, thereby inflating the paradox. Régnier asserts that jazz had been developing for twenty years in France and across Europe before its peak during the Occupation. His notion is not unfounded; in fact, what Régnier does not claim but what I will propose is that the explosion of jazz in France under Nazi occupation is most likely due to the collision of the two jazz-loving cultures. The French continued to identify with the rhythmic beat of jazz while the Germans beamed at this fast-paced, liberating music. What happens when the two fires combine? An explosion.

We see these same ideas in the argument of Alan Riding. When the Germans invaded France, the citizens of France were greatly dismayed at these impostors who threatened the French way of life. Many inhabitants of the jazz sector in France, especially those of African-American or Jewish descent, found themselves in a particularly dangerous situation that led most to flee the country. For those who could still engage in jazz without the threat of greater peril, the Occupation ushered in a new wave of jazz-fans in the form of German soldiers. These soldiers flocked to the

refulgent cabarets of Paris to drown their concerns in a sea of rhythm. For them, jazz was not a declaration of independence, a musical message to undermine the ideals of the Nazi party in favor of the freedom and tolerance of the Allied nations; rather, it was a crowd-pleaser, a playful diversion from the harsh reality of war. The arrival of these ardent entertainment-seekers was nothing more than an augmentation of the much more massive development of jazz within the culture of Europe. This development was sparked during the early years of the 1920s, escalated rapidly during the Golden Age of Jazz, endured some dents during the economic crisis of the 1930s and the outbreak of war, and reached its peak during the dark years of the Occupation in France. During these years jazz was ridiculed, worshiped, indulged in, hidden, restricted, rewritten, modified, and ultimately cemented as a fundamental component of the French identity.

Régnier notes that the assimilation of jazz into the French identity was a gradual evolution that would have occurred regardless of the changing circumstances and attitudes towards jazz wrought on by the Occupation. The influence of *les années noires*, in this regard, was not one of the acculturation of jazz itself but rather one of the rapidity with which it materialized. When faced with the heightened complexity and restrictions inflicted upon the performance of American jazz on the radio and in the public arena, French jazz musicians and producers such as Charles Delaunay were compelled to hastily cut all ties that bound the music to its American origins. French jazz was heavily promoted; as we discussed earlier, “In the Mood” became “Dans l’ambiance,” and French jazz musicians assumed their place on center stage. Not only was this transition vital to the survival of jazz music in occupied France, but it also cemented in the minds of French citizens a sense of normality, a steadfast icon in the

midst of the turmoil and humiliation of occupation. The world had been turned on its head, but the trumpet sounded and the beat continued, a subtle reminder that life was not completely off balance.

The arrival of the Americans and the Liberation of Paris in 1944 marked the end of the Occupation. Up until this time, jazz continued to make appearances on the radio as its popularity refused to wane, and the culmination of jazz on the public sphere in Vichy France, according to Jordan, occurred in 1944 with the Radio National broadcast of a concert featuring "from Debussy to Jazz" all across France. The Vichy battle against what was termed "Judeo-American democracy" had not ebbed, yet Jordan points out that jazz was no longer a target for such skirmishes.[65] Shortly thereafter, on August 25, 1944, the Allied troops liberated Paris. Jazz became, in Jordan's words, "the collective soundtrack for the liberation of France."[66] This soundtrack would continue throughout the post-war years, during which jazz would establish itself as a sign of resistance against the Vichy regime as well as a sign of true Frenchness.

Contrary to what one might expect, however, and contrary to Jordan's claims, jazz did not experience an explosion at the same magnitude as at the beginning of the Occupation. The arrival of the Americans in France ushered in a multitude of military jazz bands, such as the American Air Force Band of Glenn Miller and the Air Transport Command Band of Jack Platt. French jazz lovers could tune in to the American Forces Network (AFN), a radio station for the Liberation, which organized international jam sessions with such notable musicians as Django Reinhardt. As far as the reopening of the Parisian cabarets, such a process occurred at a much slower rate than as in the

[65] Jordan, *Le Jazz*, p. 229.
[66] Jordan, *Le Jazz,* p. 230.

early years of the Occupation. Régnier notes that after the entry of the German troops in the French capital on the 14 June 1940, total occupation was accomplished with great efficiency, and by 29 July thirty-seven establishments had begun again to welcome clients.

Following the liberation of Paris in August 1944, French citizens had to wait until October before they could again hear their favorite musicians in the lively cabarets. The forbidding of dance halls was maintained, and in January 1945 it was extended to include cabarets, because, according to the Ministry of the Interior, the war was not yet over: "Numerous families are in mourning and France still has refugees, prisoners, and deportees in Germany."[67•] This ban would not be lifted by Adrien Tixier and the Ministry of the Interior until 30 April 1945, when he announced the reopening of the cabarets and release of restrictions on dance halls "in view of the military situation and the liberation of numerous prisoners and deportees."[68•] Régnier concludes that the image of an unmitigated surge of jazz into a France liberated by the Americans is as erroneous as that of a lead weight crashing down on jazz with the entry of the Germans in Paris. Régnier's observations are valid; the Occupation had left France reeling. Where the entry of the Germans into Paris was highly efficient, engineered by the total authority of the Nazi regime, the liberation of Paris was less so. The slow return of the Paris jazz

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[67] Circulaire ministérielle (INT) nº187 – 180813 (2 January 1945), signed by Adrien Tixier, Ministry of the Interior, cited by Régnier, *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation,* p. 260.

[•] « De nomreuses familles sont en deuil et la France compte plusieurs milliers de sinistrés, de réfugiés, de prisonniers et de déportés en Allemagne. » Translation by author.

[68] Régnier, *Jazz et société sous l'Occupation,* p. 262.

[•] « compte-tenu de la situation des armées et de la libération de nombreux prisonniers et déportés, il a été décidé de rétablir la liberté de la danse et d'autoriser la réouverture des cabarets et boîtes de nuit jusqu'à 23 heures… » Translation by author.

scene did not indicate a popular aversion towards the music itself, but was rather influenced by the painful recovery of France as a whole.

To hearken back to Charles Delaunay's description of jazz at the beginning of this discussion, jazz had once again been restored to its equilibrium. The fear and uncertainty of war had chiseled away at the smooth surface of the discourse on jazz and left it vulnerable, exposed. Jazz's meaning could be distorted, masked, and publicized in order to achieve a certain goal, be it survival or extinction. We detect in the story of French jazz a distinct tenaciousness, a reluctance to yield completely to the conservative ideals of the Nazi occupiers. Only with the Allied victory and the liberation of France did jazz meet its own liberation from the disparaging currents of war; it was able to shed its disguises, and though the recovery was slow, its balance was once again restored.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

We have thoroughly examined the principal scholarship on jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany. The details are numerous; the arguments are compelling. From the midst of a war characterized by heightened emotions on both sides of the fighting, jazz emerged as a tangible expression of those emotions and an easy target for propaganda. The facts are important, but we must not forget that jazz music is an element that extends beyond mere words on a page. It is much more alive, more visceral. Listen to the metallic cadence of Louis Armstrong's trumpet as he plays "St. Louis Blues." At its beginning, the music is tame enough. A happy melody dissipates into a heated conversation among the instruments. Then, the trumpet takes off. It wanders off the beaten path, dancing around the central tune to end in a final eruption of musical laughter. The music is unbridled, free, and independent. Its upbeat rhythm coaxes the listener to jump up and dance. These unmistakable characteristics of jazz charmed its listeners during *les années noires*, who took refuge in the music to escape the horrors of war. Jazz provided the liberty that was so lacking in other aspects of life in the culture of Nazi Germany and occupied France. Whether this liberty was consciously perceived, or if it was predominantly an abstraction, was determined by the prevailing sentiments of the jazz listeners.

The works of historian Michael Kater and the team of Horst Bergmeier and Rainer Lotz present a multifaceted image of jazz. I will take my argument one step further to propose that the Nazis' inconsistent approach to jazz was in fact characteristic of the impulsive nature of the regime itself. The Third Reich relied heavily on propaganda as a source of influence upon its own citizens as well as those of its occupied nations. One

such example of a propaganda poster portrays an ape-like figure of a jazz musician playing the saxophone, sporting a six-pointed star on his lapel. Printed on the poster are the words "*Entartete Musik,"* or "degenerate music."[69] Rather than make an attempt to completely restrict the performance of jazz, for any broad restrictions on such a popular and unconventional form of music were futile, the Nazis instead chose to paint jazz in an unflattering light. The Nazis, therefore, were much more concerned with maintaining the façade of Aryan purity than with actually putting a stop to the performance of jazz. Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda for the Third Reich, realized that the Nazi propaganda against jazz was not garnering the support of many of the German citizens. Jazz was a popular form of music in Germany, as it was in most of Europe during this period.

Goebbels could not overlook the strong German affinity for jazz, and chose instead to harness that affinity for the greater benefit of the Nazi cause. Listeners to the airwaves of the Reich were introduced to Charlie and his Orchestra, a creation by Nazi propagandists to lure jazz lovers across Europe to tune in to Hitler's airwaves and in turn to fall victim to the explicit Nazi ideologies radiating from the programs. Charlie played jazz, and yet the primary components of jazz - such as improvisation - were omitted entirely. What sounded instead was a diluted form of the music, pleasing to the ear but hardly as evocative as its pure counterpart. The German citizens grew accustomed to this manipulated form of jazz such that it became a satisfaction based primarily on entertainment value. For these Nazi listeners, jazz was a playful diversion, a means of relaxation from the greater concerns of war.

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[69] Zwerin, *Swing Under the Nazis,* preface.

The Nazi occupation of France ushered in the period of *les années noires*, dark days in which all aspects of life for the average Frenchman were rationed. Food became scarce, and one would believe that jazz would naturally follow suit. On the contrary, the period of the Occupation in France saw an explosion of jazz unlike any the music had experienced before or since. Jazz was everywhere, and it stood for everything. Matthew Jordan described for us the Zazous, the youth counter-culture of France, for whom jazz became ingrained in their collective identity. They did not merely listen to swing, they *became* swing. From Jordan's argument, we see that jazz was the Zazou rallying cry against the strict principles imposed upon them by Vichy France. This new, upbeat form of music represented a statement of solidarity, a break with the traditions of their parent generation. In accordance with the outrageous clothing and hairstyles, jazz was an additional form of expression through which the Zazous proclaimed their identity. Jordan has a basis for a strong argument; however, I propose that the Zazou opinion of jazz was not so easily classifiable. Yes, jazz served as a means of separation from the parent generation and the Vichy regime; but for the Zazous, jazz was much more than a mere banner. Jazz was not simply the present identity of the Zazous; it was the embodiment of freedom, the assurance of all they hoped to become. The Zazous found in jazz a quality that was quickly becoming a casualty of war and was crucial for the survival of France under the Occupation: Unity, by a common musical passion.

The enthusiasm of the young jazz fans rendered the Nazis unable to issue a general ban on all jazz; however, the Nazis did enforce restrictions on the public performance of jazz. Cultivated by the stringent atmosphere, clandestine jam sessions

began to emerge in shady street corners all across Paris. As jazz ducked into the shadows, it entered the resistance. One such example of the important role that jazz played in the resistance movement was the case of Josephine Baker, the diva of the Paris nightlife who smuggled German military information written on the back of her music in invisible ink across the border to Portugal. For La Baker, jazz became an instrument of communication in an unusual way; in a similar manner, jazz served Charles Delaunay as a medium of resistance. A member of the Resistance himself, Delaunay diligently reopened the Hot Club shortly after the Germans occupied Paris and maintained the performance of jazz using clever strategies to mask the true nature of the music from the Nazi censors. Delaunay's promotion of jazz as French and his efforts to disguise the music under a surface that the German censors found acceptable by giving it French titles actually served to further cement jazz as part of the French identity.

It can be argued that the rapid promotion of French musicians was the result of a larger crisis of identity in France that metastasized during the interwar years and under German occupation, a view shared by Ludovic Tournès. Occupied France was a humiliated state, a state for which the spring of 1940 was the final installment on a series of misfortunes, from economic stagnation to international decommissioning of France during the interwar years. This common sense of defeat among the citizens of France sparked a renewed nationalism that was vital to the recovery of the nation. This same theme was a component of not only Vichy ideology but also of some notions supported by the Resistance, and was manifested in the defense of a national jazz that could be truly accounted for in the absence of American musicians on the jazz scene.

Though he never conformed to the particular ideology put forth by the Vichy propaganda, Charles Delaunay nonetheless expressed a similar nationalist zeal in his propensity towards French jazz musicians, an inclination that would continue long after the war had ended.

Les années noires was a period white-hot with life on the jazz scene. And yet, even today it is inaccurately believed that the Nazis enforced a ban on jazz in France under German occupation. We must note that works by Jewish jazz musicians and certain American jazz standards were indeed forbidden; however, a ban on jazz in general was futile due to the music's fluidity that was not subject to definition. Tournès touches upon this idea, as do other historians of the period, some of whom we have examined, such as Gérard Régnier. Tournès believes the interdiction of jazz may have been conjured up out of the remnants of a guilty conscience over the undeniable successes experienced by jazz musicians in France under the Occupation. In his argument, Tournès cites the ideas of Vichy historian Henry Rousso and what Rousso refers to as the "Vichy syndrome," a sense of guilt pervading the collective memory of France over the collaboration that existed between the Vichy regime and the Third Reich. For the purposes of my argument, whether or not jazz was banned in occupied France is supplementary to its overall importance to the individual citizens of France. Jazz was a ubiquitous form of entertainment, and for the French it became a tangible, flexible form of resistance.

We can draw from Tournès and Rousso the notion that not banning jazz may have been part of the Nazi strategy to use entertainment to divert French attention away from ideas of revenge. In what may be linked to the "Vichy syndrome," the rise of jazz

during this period hit upon a fear among the French people of rebuke for the appeasement and collaboration that was undertaken by the Vichy government. Kater spoke of the crumbling morality of jazz as a vocation in Nazi Germany due to its continual use to further the ideology of the Third Reich. In France, the tempo may have quickened and the process may have occurred more rapidly, but the tune remained the same. Musicians had to survive; jazz could not avoid collaboration, which ensured jazz's maintained existence throughout the Occupation in some cases.

Though Tournès and Rousso are accurate in their discussion of the collaboration that occurred between the Vichy regime and Nazi government, we cannot claim that this phenomenon is the sole contributor to the explosion of jazz during the Occupation. I propose that the melody began twenty years earlier, when the very first jazz musicians stepped out onto the cobblestone streets of Montmartre, trumpets in hand and a song in their heart. It grew in intensity as the French became accustomed to its easy rhythm, a gentle radiation of *joie de vivre* that emulated the essence of France. Charles Delaunay recognized this fusion of jazz with the French identity, and realized that the people of France appreciated jazz for its own inherent qualities. For this reason, he did not hesitate to camouflage jazz for the Nazis, which in turn solidified jazz's establishment as a French form of entertainment. The rise of jazz during the Occupation was due to a realization of the music's identity at a time when the identity of France itself was called into question. France did not rescue jazz from destruction, but rather jazz remained present under the Occupation as a remnant of France's vibrant culture and became in some ways the savior of France.

We learned from Régnier that the Nazi ban on jazz was a misconception that was

a fact; the Nazis did not ban all jazz. The myth of the Nazi ban of all jazz may have arisen from the "Vichy Syndrome," the sense of guilt following the collaboration that existed between the Vichy regime and the Third Reich. Though the Nazi censors targeted many American jazz standards, jazz grew steadily in popularity during the years of the Occupation. The cabarets entertained more visitors than ever, and French jazz musicians flourished in the new atmosphere of opportunity; jobs once held by American musicians could be occupied by their French colleagues. This explanation, however, lacks consideration of the variety of forces affecting the success of jazz during the Occupation. The survival of jazz was in the interest of not only the French citizens, but in that of the Nazi soldiers as well. This common attraction towards the music bolstered it against the damaging effects of what censorship and restrictions were enforced upon it by the laws of the Third Reich. Jazz's greater role as a symbol of resistance against the Nazi regime was recognized by certain populations, those wishing to express their discontent through music; however, due to its fluidity as a musical form and its ability to adapt and change shape to suit various circumstances, jazz's role as a source of entertainment was universally acknowledged.

To hearken back to my original question, what was the role of jazz in Nazi Germany and occupied France? Let us return once more to the towering figure of Luftwaffe Oberleutnant Dietrich Schulz-Köhn, absently clutching his camera and debating whether or not he should ask the American officer for some Count Basie records. We see a questioning look the face of the incredulous American officer: a Nazi who loves to listen to jazz? Yet, Schulz-Köhn was a single example of what was in fact a very common occurrence, German soldiers with a passion for swing and the swastika.

Kater claims that the Nazi regime was "inured to the impact of a universal culture, to the same degree that it had become immune to the sufferings of humankind."[70] Though Kater makes a valid point, he does so haphazardly. The Nazis were not inured to the impact of jazz, especially not with the same zeal as their insensibility towards human suffering; on the contrary, they fell victim to its sultry rhythms with as much enthusiasm as its followers in the Allied nations. Indeed, to listen to jazz with the complete awareness of its origins and its nature was a blatant contradiction of Nazi ideals, for jazz was independence, nonconformity - everything the Nazis attempted to abolish. But to listen to jazz purely for its musical content, to extract from it all ties to broader societal themes, is to render it less intrusive and more collaborative. The Nazis achieved this, and therefore were able to justify the performance of jazz under the watchful eye of the Third Reich. The radio could still play swing, albeit in a very structured sort of way, and Schulz-Köhn could still listen to his jazz records. Hence jazz's role in the culture of Nazi Germany was complex, easily distorted, and by no means uniform.

In occupied France, jazz took on a slightly different role. Jazz music was more deeply embedded in the culture of France and was gradually becoming a part of the French identity. This process was disrupted, or rather catalyzed, by the entry of the Nazis in 1940. My research has led me to propose that French jazz musicians were not as accustomed as their German counterparts to the heightened restrictions against their trade, and were therefore reluctant to dilute their music into a form deemed acceptable by the German authorities. For this reason, jazz was provoked into assuming a position that was a shade more rebellious. Clandestine dance halls became common, and jazz

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[70] Kater, *Different Drummers,* p. 181.

standards were disguised with French names when they were performed. Jazz was promoted as principally French by such figures as Delaunay and Coeuroy in ways unseen before the Occupation. French jazz lovers and musicians seemed to recognize that the very survival of jazz was dependent upon its flexibility. Though French jazz music underwent manipulation by jazz musicians and prominent jazz figures such as Delaunay, the quality of the music itself – its improvisation, its rhythm, and its essence – remained untouched. It took on a more active role than a mere form of entertainment, as we saw in Nazi Germany. For a France suffering the humiliation of occupation, jazz became a statement against a totalitarian regime. Musicians risked their lives for this music. For other individuals, jazz was literally a lifesaver. For all listeners, whether or not they were consciously aware of it, jazz was freedom.

Throughout history, music has ridden upon the waves of political and cultural movements in the ears of its listeners; jazz, music that was often considered through the lens of history a form of resistance against a totalitarian regime, has been particularly prone to political connections. Let us consider for a moment the role of music in our own lives. Music, apart from any broader ramifications, is a snapshot in our memories as an instant recollection of time and place – an evening with friends, a late night jam session, an indulgence in the privacy of one's home. Listening to music for many individuals is not a conscious advocacy or repudiation of a political position, such as pro-Americanism or resistance towards the Nazi regime. The music of jazz is fluid and flexible, which may have enabled jazz to liberate itself from any political undertones. When circumstances drive us to defend our own way of life, however, as the French citizens experienced under the Occupation, music becomes an act of

defiance. We cling to it for protection; rely on it for strength. Despite its changing surface, altered names, and purported presentation throughout the wartime period, the essence of jazz remained pure. This mobilizing music still had the power to convince listeners to jump up and dance away their troubles. For this reason, jazz was not placed in a bundle in the attic and forgotten following the end of the war; on the contrary, jazz continues even today to thrive in the hearts and ears of those who know it best, a testament to the timelessness of this music.

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