

Randall Sandke. 2010. *Where the Dark and Light Folks Meet: Race and the Mythology, Politics, and Business of Jazz*. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press.

### Reviewed by Aaron J. Johnson

A few years ago I was hurrying across midtown Manhattan trying to make it from the Port Authority Bus Station to Rockefeller Center on time. Although it was about forty–five minutes before curtain time for most Broadway shows, I wasn't headed to Radio City Music Hall, but to a television studio at 30 Rock—not to play the trombone but as part of my day gig to attend a local meeting of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers. As I traversed the theater district I fell in behind a bedraggled looking young white man with trumpet case. This guy really looked spent—he could barely walk a straight line and had clothes that were only bordering on clean. “He'll change into his theater black when he gets there,” I thought. I was behind him for several blocks and with each one my outrage grew. “How can this raggedy white motherfucker have a Broadway gig and I've never even subbed on Broadway?,” even though one of the benefits of having a great day gig is never having to work a repetitious job like Broadway. I was trailing behind this musician for several blocks, my rage escalating, until we reached a corner on Broadway where my “rival” stopped, knelt down, opened his case, and began busking on the street corner for the arriving show crowds. My privileged white trumpeter was in fact a scuffling street musician. I continued on to Sixth Avenue realizing that I had made foolish assumptions and worked myself into a righteous lather on the basis of scant evidence.

Which brings me to Randall Sandke's *Where the Dark and Light Folks Meet*, a very personal, but seriously flawed, consideration of racial issues in jazz. In *Where the Dark and Light Folks Meet* Sandke attempts to tackle a large number of race related topics and claims about the jazz discourse with uneven results. His targets include activist jazz writers, “radical” racial politics, claims of discriminatory practices in business, pay, and intellectual property, and neo–conservative music trends. Although sometimes the act of troubling can be a good thing, Sandke's book is troubling in ways that undermine his best arguments about the music's lack of innovative vitality, and for expanding its history beyond iconic musical figures. He sets out to, in the words of George E. Lewis, “trouble the settled” of the dominant narrative—an altogether worthy ambition—but sometimes Sandke merely comes off as feeling personally left out of jazz's past and present, a not

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uncommon frustration for many jazz musicians. He initially describes his project as one of inclusion.

My book does not purport to be a full accounting of jazz history, but rather an examination of interracial contact—where the dark and light folks meet—as it applies to the music. Plenty of jazz history is intra-racial: of and between African-American musicians, or, to a lesser extent, white musicians. But I feel that this history, particularly as regards black contributions to jazz, is already well documented. Some may accuse me of overstating the importance of cross-racial influences on jazz. However, I am not trying to place a strict quantitative value on my findings, but simply presenting them so others can draw their own conclusions. (11)

One can see that Sandke is not unaware that addressing racial issues as he does will result in controversy. Though he takes great pains to stress that this is not yet another attempt to insert whites into the story of jazz at the expense of blacks, at times it reads as exactly that.

In his [Martin Williams] influential book *The Jazz Tradition* [1970], only one chapter of twenty devoted to individual musicians profiles a white player, Bix Biederbecke . . . In 1970 Williams became director of a jazz program at the Smithsonian Institution. There he produced *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz*, a seven-LP box set that was meant to reflect a cross-section of the music . . . Out of eighty-six selections, only three were by white artists, and even for this tiny sampling he was apologetic. (27)

When the smoke clears, Sandke is dissatisfied with racial discourse that binds concepts of jazz authenticity and blackness. (In early jazz writing blackness was often used as an indicator of primitivity and therefore “realness;” from the ‘60s onward jazz’s perceived authenticity has factored into a larger project of re-claiming black identity and pride.) This is not an altogether unreasonable point of view for a non-black jazz practitioner. But rather than wage a direct assault on fragile and clichéd notions of authenticity that permeate jazz history and continue to dominate its discourse, Sandke makes sweeping claims about the motives of historical and recent jazz writers that seem designed to create ill will.

In “The Activist Jazz Writers,” Sandke links Popular Front associated figures (including John Hammond, Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, Milt Gabler, and Norman Granz)—whom he allows might not all have been “ardent Stalinists” (17), early modernist critics (such as Marshall Stearns, Martin Williams, and Gary Giddins) on through to black music writers (Amiri Baraka, Stanley Crouch, A. B. Spellman, and Albert Murray) with the continuing fallacy that “blues and swing are not just musical styles but ways of life rooted in the black experience” (34).

Sandke's basic method is to analyze racial representations in jazz discourse via the work of jazz writers, mostly published before the mid-1990s. Sometimes musicians' memoirs are used to buttress his arguments, but these sources are taken at face value and are rarely read critically.<sup>1</sup> One of the book's principal flaws is that in his zeal to recompose jazz's racial mythology, Sandke largely fails to acknowledge that the central project of jazz scholarship over the last twenty to thirty years (DeVeaux, M. Tucker, Gabbard, Magee, Gushee, Lewis, S. Tucker, Monson, Radano, Porter, Ake et. al.), has been one of demystifying legend- and anecdote-driven jazz history and challenging its dominant narrative.<sup>2</sup> Instead, Sandke takes John Genari, Scott Deveaux, and Ingrid Monson to task for acknowledging what is today largely accepted, that [jazz] music is socially constructed and reflects the black experience (34). His "absolute music" model of discourse seems quaintly anachronistic. After lauding black music and artistry and expressing his wishes for black artists to get more attention he writes:

The point I wish to make is that the leading figures of jazz, regardless of race, have created music that can stand on its own terms next to the best art of any epoch. Their work doesn't need to be propped up with the aid of socio-political theorizing. And any true understanding of jazz music requires a wider lens than a narrow "black culture" perspective provides. (12)

Despite the contradiction between jazz "not needing to be propped up" with "socio-political theorizing" and calling for "a wider lens" to reach a "true understanding of jazz music" Sandke seems to call for some old-fashioned work-centered musicology, while overlooking the reciprocal possibilities within the music for a greater understanding of socio-political matters.

Therefore, *Where the Dark and Light Folks Meet* falls somewhat outside mainstream scholarship, not only for its controversial conclusions about race and about the motives of the writers who have invoked race, but for its failure to distinguish qualitatively between the claims of sourced and peer-reviewed scholarly writing, jazz journalism and criticism, and memoirs. In addition, and surprisingly so for a book published in 2010, Sandke employs a restricted conceptual space concerning racial discourse: "folks" are either black, white, perhaps Italian (with a slight bow to New Orleans sensitivity about C(c)reoles). He completely fails to consider Latinos, Native Americans, or the constructed nature of whiteness and its evolution over the history of jazz, not to mention the music's growing internationalism. Too often the book takes an aggrieved tone and implies that a particular notion—such as the ambivalent attitudes of the black middle class towards jazz—is little understood or discussed, when it has in fact been written about and discussed at length in recent and not-so-recent jazz discourse.

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Sandke questions who benefits from racialized discourse about jazz and whether the latter helps or hurts “the music.” He asserts that

many writers were not above compromising historical accuracy in their zeal to promote social change. Some constructed elaborate theories out of the scantest evidence, if not whole cloth, and these in turn have been cited over and over throughout the jazz literature. Facts that did not fit prevailing ideologies were ignored, and mythology often trumped reality. Although myths have undoubtedly played a large and sometimes beneficial role in the popularization of jazz, they often bear little or no relation to reality. (2)

It must be noted that such is the process of writing the historical narrative, flawed as it may be. At the time of writing the “facts” were not always readily available, nor were there many jazz writers who were not outsiders to the jazz community. As the last sentence attests, easily digestible myths become the stuff of streamlined narratives. While it is a rewarding act of critical thinking to recognize and interrogate a writer’s ideological position, Sandke does not make a persuasive case that the writers he cites—and the many more he does not cite who have contributed to the construction of these myths—have acted so primarily to advance the cause of social justice any more than to burnish their own reputations as jazz authorities. His critical analysis of John Hammond, Rudi Blesh, and Leonard Feather can be read equally validly as defenses of black musicians the writers had grown fond of rather than some grand calls for social justice (18–25). While I am not going to assume these writers were against social justice, advocating for the careers of these celebrity black musicians was hardly the same as calling for a workers’ paradise and racial equality in all aspects of society.

Certainly some writers were primarily concerned with racial justice, but more often the early writing (before WWII) is by advocates of “authentic” jazz trying to control the application of the term, which soon was applied to almost any popular music with or without syncopation or a lively beat. Gershwin was jazz, Cohen was jazz. Many early advocate writers’ advocacy used racially essentializing language that equated blackness—and its associated primitivism—with the authentic practice of jazz performance. This process may indeed have worked to the disadvantage of earnest white jazz musicians as Sandke claims, but he neglects the important corollary dimension—that such attitudes served to severely restrict black musical participation to racially “appropriate” musical genres such as jazz and blues. Nowhere in the volume does Sandke address jazz musicians’ century-long discomfort with the label “jazz,” in large measure for just that reason.

One of Sandke's most pervasive arguments is that white musicians accordingly were denied the opportunity to play real jazz and that white musicians' contribution to jazz has been systematically undervalued. He cites the outstanding saxophonists Mike Brecker—winner of 15 Grammys and eulogized upon his death as “widely regarded as the most influential tenor saxophonist since John Coltrane”—and Chris Potter as examples of underrated white players.<sup>3</sup> Yet the world of jazz has hardly been a strict meritocracy, but rather a largely social scene where performing groups reflect social networks. The non-transparent and informal process of selecting and hiring musicians has always focused attention on race, with black players accusing whites of garnering a disproportionate share of the financial rewards—which Sandke attempts to refute in chapter 8, “It's Strictly Business”—and white players blaming “Crow Jim” as the major obstacle to their success.

One of Sandke's most egregious arguments is to posit a false binary discourse, largely of his own invention, of exclusionist and inclusionist models of jazz development as underlying jazz history (4–5). In his exclusionist model, jazz is “portrayed as arising from an insulated black environment, unsullied by commercial pressures”(4). Sandke's sole citation to illustrate the supposedly dominant exclusionist model is Frederic Ramsey and Charles Edward Smith's 1939 book *Jazzmen*, a book allied with the revivalist's side of the folk versus commercialized swing debate that preceded the better known “moldy figs” versus modernists one of the bebop era. Since their side was largely conservative and reactionary in nature, could there be much surprise that it would hearken to a pro-folk, pre-mass media vision of pure jazz? But more to the point, who could or would claim that jazz was created in an exclusive black environment when the history of America is full of interactions and mutual adaptations between whites and blacks? Rather, proponents of the value of black culture point with pride at the amazing and ingenious adaptations of dominant cultural practices and artifacts that African Americans have made. At no point in American history, excepting geographically isolated communities such as the Gullah, could any serious claim be made that black life was not economically, socially, and culturally intertwined with white America. Certainly Sandke does not make that claim, stressing as he does the continually undervalued white contributions to jazz, but it seems from his tone that he assumes that everyone else does. I argue that virtually no one believes jazz developed in any exclusionary vacuum. Does pointing out that jazz was created by black Americans erase any contributions by whites? Black Trinidadians didn't invent, manufacture, or introduce the oil drum into their culture, but the resulting steel pan music is no less black Trinidadian.

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In Chapter 3, “Good Intentions and Bad History,” Sandke attempts to minimize the footprint of Africa in jazz in favor of an American one. He downplays African rhythmic contributions, plays up the harmonic (that is, European) basis of bebop, and quotes black jazz musicians on their often strained relations with Africa and African audiences. For instance, Mary Lou Williams asserted that “Afro has nothing to do with jazz. Jazz grew up on its own here in America. Black Americans don’t have to go back to Africa to get their dignity. They’ve got it here,” and Art Blakey said “No America, no jazz . . . It couldn’t have come from anyone else but us. It couldn’t come from the Africans” (43). Contextually, of course, Williams and Blakey were both speaking in a time when black Americans’ concepts of Africa and Africaness were quite fluid, while the early Civil Rights Movement was struggling to get blacks respected as Americans, and when belief in “black is beautiful” was still a generation away. The comments by Williams and Blakey could be read not merely as musical ones but also as a reaction to an African–American over–idealization of Africa that was rampant during the era of African independence movements, when musicians such as Randy Weston were rhapsodic in expressing their deep connections with Africa (Weston and Jenkins 2011). At the time of these comments, black Americans were grappling with their identity as Americans of African descent while a great deal of the population, black and white, still considered Africans to be savages. Emblematic of the identity crisis was the rapid sequence of re–naming: colored, negro, Negro, Afro–American, black, Black, and African American.

It seems as though Sandke finds a racial ideologue in every author. His thesis paragraph for the chapter states:

Several generations of jazz writers believed it was their duty to combat racism by depicting the music as an outgrowth of African culture; as the product of an insular black community; and as a reaction to segregation and discrimination. But how does the historical record actually compare with these assessments? (39)

To represent the argument for the African origins case, Sandke presents passages from *The Story of Jazz* (Stearns 1956) and *Shining Trumpets* (Blesh 1946), both products of pioneering and influential jazz writers to be sure. He follows with a vigorous attack on the notion that the sense of rhythm in jazz is at all related to that in African musical practice. “As musicologist A. M. Jones writes: ‘Rhythm is to the African what harmony is to the Europeans, and it is in the complex interweaving of contrasting patterns that he finds his greatest aesthetic satisfaction.’ Likewise John Miller Chernoff says, ‘In African music there are always at least two rhythms going on. There seems

to be no unifying or main beat” (40). Jones’ post-WWII, colonial-era work and even Chernoff’s 1979 updates have been questioned by more recent scholars. Aside from jazz’s uses of polyrhythm, more fundamental issues undercut these former benchmark studies on African music. Agawu (2003) critiques the Jones–Chernoff school of work on at least three fronts: unsustainable pan–continental generalizations about African music and Africanness; a tendency to shoehorn African music into a Western discourse of rhythm while under-examining local discourses about music making; and an essentializing view of rhythm that stresses the African other rather than considering the relationship between music, language, and specific African communities.

Still Sandke runs with these highly contestable generalizations about African music, and finds the connections lacking between African music and jazz. Notably, he repeats the broad and over-generalized claim that in African music “opposing rhythmic groupings furnish an ongoing structure from which the entire performance derives its basic identity,” part of a body of thought that maintains that African music is purely about rhythm (40). Agawu cuts through these othering notions of indecipherable African polyrhythm by noting that ethnomusicologists such as Jones and Chernoff failed to note that for all its complexity, dancers are able to find a consistent beat (“Africans have only two feet!”) and demonstrates that the use of so-called additive rhythm and polymeter are related to the rhythms of African language.

Sandke fails to recognize African rhythmic practices that are well out in the open in jazz—such as the fluid shifting between duple and triple meters, clashes of rhythms against the underlying pulse, syncopation that can be derived from polymetrical practices, and jazz phrasing that “floats” above the steady pulse only to lock back onto it from time to time. Instead he looks for resemblances to the static polymetrical passages of ethnomusicological field recordings of African music—sounds taken out of the societal context that produced them—and locates these resemblances instead in the music of Stravinsky; in other words, he finds the kinds of polyrhythmic examples from the ethnomusicological literature in the music of precisely the kind of composer who would read such transcriptions. No less an authority than Dizzy Gillespie also expressed the opinion that the use of rhythm in Africa was different from black music when he wrote that “our music in the United States and the African concept of rhythm have one difference: the African music is polyrhythmic and we are basically monorhythmic” (43). While Sandke implies that because of this conceptual difference Gillespie preferred to play with Afro-Cuban drummers rather than African ones—he doesn’t seem to consider the relative availability of Afro-Cuban and African drum-

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mers in post-WWII New York—a counter-argument was made by Gillespie's Cuban collaborator Chano Pozo, as recollected by Gillespie himself, “Deehee no peek pani, me no peek Angli, bo peek African” [*Dizzy doesn't speak Spanish, I don't speak English, but we both speak African*](Gillespie 1979).

In the same chapter, Sandke makes a much more sound argument in countering claims that bebop innovations were basically ones of rhythm. He argues that the Tin Pan Alley songs of the 1930s, largely composed by non-black composers, provided a framework for the higher-interval harmonic treatments that were to become part of the bebop language. His notions about the role that repertoire may have played in the bebop revolution are appealing to those taking a sociological approach to jazz scholarship and are clearly worthy of further study. While Sandke's attention to the evolution of bebop harmony is a welcome addition, he seems to have overlooked bebop's enduring innovation of a much more dialogical and interactive performance paradigm as opposed to that of the swing era, a paradigm that both echoed the contrapuntal style of early jazz and foreshadowed the return of collective improvisation in the free jazz of the 1960s. However, why challenge the notion of rhythmic innovation other than because rhythmic properties have been so thoroughly associated with blackness in jazz?

Another major concern for a book that deals with race is Sandke's lack of nuance on the topic of race itself (that is until the last chapter, when he magnanimously calls for the dissolution of the concept of race). While Sandke clearly understands the blunt force aspects of racism such as violence, segregated life, and hiring discrimination, when his book touches on issues such as black self-loathing—in fairness why would anyone expect him to be an expert here—or monolithic presentations of whiteness, these shortcomings deflate the book's value. Two topics that suffer from this lack of nuance are the issues of black community support for jazz and the career limitations of black musicians. In chapters 4 and 7, “What Gets Left Out,” and “The Biggest Myth of All,” Sandke addresses connections between audiences and performers of both races:

Much of the jazz literature emphasizes a close connection between jazz and African music, while the more direct and demonstrable link between jazz and the European classical tradition has been largely ignored. I'm not saying that jazz belongs to this tradition, or that the language of jazz owes more to “white” culture than to black. What I am saying is that much of what we consider “black culture” is richly heterodox, and that the greatest exponents of jazz were curious and wide ranging individuals who sought training and inspiration from a variety of sources. Jazz has repeatedly been able to renew itself by acquiring and transforming new musical influences—one reason for its worldwide appeal. (87)

Once again, Sandke states what appears to be obvious. Only the earliest fan-driven writing would claim jazz to be African music brought to America. In the following chapter, Sandke discusses black musicians' and audiences' interest in performing and hearing classical music. He produces a long list of prominent black jazz musicians whose first training was in classical music. These stories of classical ambitions and jazz realities are familiar to most jazz fans and are hardly revelatory. If anything, a more novel discussion would be about how jazz itself has provided an alternative pedagogical system to classical training that has proven valuable to a wide range of American music forms.

Nor is there any novelty in Sandke's reflections on the hostility towards jazz on the part of black colleges (93). Not only does any black jazz musician older than fifty know about this historical anti-relationship, it has been described in musicians' memoirs (Smith 1991, Wesley 2002), in a 1975 doctoral thesis, and in the advocacy of Billy Taylor for more than forty years before this book (Taylor and Clarke 1982).<sup>4</sup> What does get left out of Sandke's account is the self-hating elevation of white culture above black at black colleges for generations and the deep divides over this issue. When Sandke goes on to consider the attitudes of the black middle class towards jazz, his discussion is superficial and fails to account for dissenting positions (93–97). However, when he observes that “jazz, throughout its history, has only been deeply understood and appreciated by a small group of admirers that has always cut across boundaries of race and class” he does a good job of cutting through the self-important haze those of us devoted to the music operate within.

Sandke overstates the case in “The Biggest Myth of All” where he attributes jazz's commercial viability primarily to white audiences, a notion demonstrably disproven in memoirs of jazz stars and journeymen alike (Love 1997, Smith 1991, Basie 1985). One of the consistent methodological flaws in the book—and for that matter in much of jazz writing and scholarship in general—is the overreliance on accounts of iconic figures such as Ellington, Monk, Armstrong, etc. These musicians commanded the highest fees and ticket prices and attracted the wealthiest (white) audiences but also had the name value to be able appear anywhere.<sup>5</sup> When Sandke laments the lack of good jazz playing opportunities for white musicians, his plane of reference is always the fortunes of the very best black iconic figures. These figures are jazz icons because of their singular talents, so it is expected that they would have extraordinary career opportunities. “It was unthinkable for a white musician to make a living playing jazz alone,” he writes about the pre-bebop era (109). But Sandke fails to take into account that only the very top tier of jazz musicians, regardless of race, play only jazz. Even world-class jazz talents play other musics in order to make a living, or even out of enjoyment.

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*Where the Dark and Light Folks Meet* suffers from a consistent lack of inclusion of recent and important jazz scholarship. Sandke discusses the New Orleans jazz origin myths without any reference to the more recent work that uses the concepts of transculturation, creolization, or hybridity (Dessens 2007, Fiehrer 1991, Hirsch and Logsdon 1992, Lomax 1993, G. Hall 1992) and without reference to work on jazz's contemporary emergence in Detroit (Milan 2009), New York (Welburn 1987, Rye 2009), and California (Gushee 1985). His attempt to recast our racial understanding of minstrelsy was preceded by Eric Lott's uncited *Love and Theft*, and indeed in the last couple of decades the discourse concerning minstrelsy has taken a decided turn away from narratives of exploitation and ridicule. His generally courageous efforts to upset notions of black-white pay disparity ignores the detailed primary source work of Ingrid Monson's *Freedom Sounds* (2007).

The lack of citations related to important claims can be disturbing. Sandke writes that "the jazz avant-garde has never gained broad popular acceptance, leading to cries of racism" (65). Yet no such teary outbursts are cited or even described in support. He also gives what is supposed to be a long list of (mostly) black avant-garde figures who allegedly trained a generation of "politicized students" who have transmitted "the mythology of jazz" to a new generation—actually he only names twelve including a few who are deceased and a few that only taught a course or two (66–67). Sandke gives the impression that his claim of indoctrination is supported by this passage from Eric Porter:

Because of the revolutionary meanings associated with their music, jazz musicians who became teachers had an appeal across racial lines to politicized students who sought alternative intellectual training and a validation of black cultural practices. [Musician and author] Ben Sidran noted that by 1966 the new jazz and other black musics had gained increasing popularity with white college students who wanted to identify with black liberation struggles or who linked black musical expression to their own antiestablishment orientation. (67)

However, other than a mention of West Coast composer-pianist-organizer Horace Tapscott, Sandke's list of avant-gardists who stormed the ivory tower are not the people Porter was writing about in the cited passage. Rather, Porter was describing the activities of the much more mainstream CBA (Collective Black Artists) of New York who are linked to Tapscott only because they shared a strategy of organizing musicians' collectives (Porter 2002:234). Porter is in fact commenting on how straight-ahead musicians' attempt to storm the tower was aided by the burgeoning black studies movement. Sandke makes the specific argument that the Black Arts Movement and the allied Black Studies Movement created an opportunity for radicalized

avant-garde musicians to gain access to college campuses, but Porter shows that the movements opened those doors more broadly to jazz music and musicians of many styles. While a number of avant-garde musicians did find a place in academia, their appeal at some schools was due to similarities of that music to parallel developments in Western art music. Far more often, it was not the avant-garde but mainstream musicians who found employment in programs that stressed applied musical studies (Ake 2002).

Another moment of citation absentia occurs in Chapter 5, “The Road to Radicalism,” within Sandke’s critique of the multiculturalism movement, which he links to black separatism and ultimately to the neo-classical attitudes of the institution Jazz at Lincoln Center. He proffers the following historical fact: “Mayor John Lindsay, of New York, who’d been a member of the Kerner Commission, oversaw the firing of scores of white teachers, to be replaced by black ‘role models’” (114). This assertion is completely unsupported by citation despite the apparent complexity of such personnel moves involving a strong teachers’ union and a then-independent school board. Statements such as this appear to frame notions of social and racial justice—or just plain giving folks their due—as zero-sum games, where qualified white teachers (substitute jazz musicians) are sacrificed for unqualified black ones merely to assuage white guilt.

Sandke’s best moments are the ones where his arguments take him away from the iconic figures of jazz and look to include the contributions of minor and peripheral figures. For example, he attempts to neutralize the argument that black jazz musicians were exploited or underpaid to a greater degree than their white counterparts. Here Sandke is to be applauded for trying to affix numbers—salaries, gross earnings, etc—to the topic. Yet he is not the first to dig in here, as Monson performed a similar analysis, to different conclusions, based on the pay records of the U.S. government for black and white musicians performing State Department tours during the Cold War. While Sandke has the unenviable—and methodologically elusive—task of comparing salary and gross earning numbers in memoirs and (typically inflated) trade paper accounts concerning a wide range of dissimilar musical engagements occurring over long time frames, Monson’s analysis is far more tractable; she is comparing payroll data for musical contemporaries performing comparable work.

The other issue where *Dark and Light* achieves some traction but fails to make its case is the neo-conservative direction of much of institutionalized jazz.

At the dawn of the eighties, another seismic shift would confer a new societal role to jazz. This new age was to see jazz enshrined as a cultural icon representing the black experience. The music itself was to be a celebration

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of past achievements, guided largely by a young generation of well-dressed, well spoken African American musicians. The outer boundaries of jazz would be defined and set, and the goal of a jazz musician would be to reassert and revive the glories of “the tradition.” New ideas would be largely unwelcome, as would older black musicians and most white musicians of any age. (110)

Here is the book’s noble purpose—to trouble the self-satisfied status quo that has beset jazz, at least, the institutionalized version of jazz—to question the legitimacy of the Jazz at Lincoln Center model as the music’s standard bearers. Indeed Sandke’s central critique of JALC and the jazz establishment seems simultaneously out of date as it remains enduringly in fashion. However, there are some unsettling uses of language here too. Perhaps Sandke did not mean anything but to describe the sartorial proclivities of the 80s “young lions,” but “well-dressed, well spoken African Americans” strikes me with the same subtextual punch as comedian-conservative Jackie Mason’s description of New York City Mayor David Dinkins as “a fancy *schvartze* with a moustache” in 1991. The bigger problem here is that Sandke tries to lay the blame for this neo-classical stagnation on the claim that jazz is black music. Despite the logical fuzziness of the claim, he overlooks the contributions of other institutions in producing the current state of affairs, including the recording industry, jazz’s residency on public radio, and the intellectual gaze of educational institutions. Far more people than Wynton Marsalis, Stanley Crouch, and Albert Murray have hungrily sought equal institutional footing for jazz, yet many others have been wary of the impact of institutional patronage on the music itself. This is an important point which Sandke overlooks; there can be stifling consequences when creative artists are aligned with powerful institutional forces. Instead, he ignores this possibility while blaming black identity politics for all that is stale in jazz. How then does Sandke explain the adventurous music from Los Angeles’s UGMAA (Union of God’s Musicians and Artist’s Ascension), Saint Louis’s BAG (Black Artists Group) and Chicago’s AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians), all of whose creations are tied directly to the Black Arts Movement and black power politics?

It is unfortunate that this book has reportedly earned Sandke undeserved enmity, because his motives do not appear to be the least malicious. It is part of Sandke’s biography that he has encountered the frustration of being pigeonholed as a traditional jazz musician to the point of limiting his chances to play other styles. Perhaps as a result, the book has an undercurrent of resentment; that, for example, black jazz and black jazz musicians had a virtual monopoly on opportunities to play “real” jazz. It is curious that he fails to note the obverse; that all black efforts at art music have been

steered—analogue to segregated housing patterns—to the jazz bin. Sandke exerts considerable effort to demonstrate that black musicians have long been interested in and influenced by classical music, but at least until the 1960s, that love has hardly been reciprocated by major cultural institutions. Since then, perhaps because of the synergy of compositional and performance techniques, and the at times unfortunate advancement of the notion of jazz as America's (Black) Classical music, black musicians and improvisers working outside the jazz tradition repeatedly find themselves pulled in, willing or not. As hard as Sandke tries to claim that studio work, film work, and other employment avenues were unsuitable to the temperament of jazz players, these avenues, when they were good gigs—despite his salary figures—were largely closed to black musicians. One reason Sandke's analysis falls short on this count is his failure to realize that there have been far more black musicians who sometimes play jazz than there are full-time jazz musicians. The final thing missing from Sandke's discussion of race is a sense of justice. Sandke leans on the conservative voices of Shelby Steele and Dinesh D'Souza to offer critiques of "identity politics" which he curiously extends to jazz without modification—curiously because jazz is one of the few American fields of intellectual endeavor where African Americans are considered the leaders, a meritocracy that works, thus inverting the typical American social order. Statements like the following are offensive: "The balance of power has shifted so that now, in an age of racial redress, black skin can entitle its bearer to preferential treatment in many areas of education and employment" (237). Few black people see the world this way. I'm sure Sandke is at least familiar with some of the other "privileges" to which black skin has historically entitled its bearers.

Notes

1. Sandke cites many memoirs of musical figures including Armstrong (1954), Barker (1986), Bigard (1985), Clayton (1986), Ellington (1973), Goodman (1961), Manone (1984), and (Willie "the Lion") Smith (1965).

2. There are so many examples of outstanding writing that question prevailing jazz dogma, but here are just a few. Scott Knowles DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Nichole T. Rustin and Sherrie Tucker, *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Krin Gabbard, ed. *Jazz among the Discourses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Mark Tucker, Duke Ellington, and Alexander Street Press, *The Duke Ellington Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); George Lewis, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Ronald Michael Radano, *Lying up a Nation: Race and Black Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Ingrid T. Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Calls Out to Jazz and Africa* (New York: Oxford

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University Press, 2007); Lawrence Gushee, "The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Jazz," *Black Music Research Journal* 22(2002); Eric Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz?: African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); David Andrew Ake, *Jazz Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Jeffrey Magee, *The Uncrowned King of Swing: Fletcher Henderson and Big Band Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

3. AP Obituary—an inspiring coda to the career of a quiet, gentle musician widely regarded as the most influential tenor saxophonist since John Coltrane

4. London G. Branch, *Jazz Education at Black Colleges and Universities*. Doctoral Thesis, Southern Illinois University, 1975, 103-105. Marilyn Marshall, "Are Blacks Giving Away Jazz," *Ebony*, 1988, 19.

5. I have toured as a jazz musician for almost twenty years, but it is only with bands like the Count Basie Orchestra that I have appeared in the most diverse locations. Wynton Marsalis can appear at any high school auditorium in America and draw an audience, but this is probably not the case for James Carter or Jason Moran.

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