

**STYLISTIC EVOLUTION OF JAZZ DRUMMER ED BLACKWELL:
THE CULTURAL INTERSECTION OF
NEW ORLEANS AND WEST AFRICA**

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ABSTRACT

Stylistic Evolution of Jazz Drummer Ed Blackwell: The Cultural Intersection of New Orleans and West Africa

David J. Schmalenberger

The two primary functions of a jazz drummer are to maintain a consistent pulse and to support the soloists within the musical group. Throughout the twentieth century, jazz drummers have found creative ways to fulfill or challenge these roles. In the case of Bebop, for example, pioneers Kenny Clarke and Max Roach forged a new drumming style in the 1940's that was markedly more independent technically, as well as more lyrical in both time-keeping and soloing. The stylistic innovations of Clarke and Roach also helped foster a new attitude: the acceptance of drummers as thoughtful, sensitive musical artists. These developments paved the way for the next generation of jazz drummers, one that would further challenge conventional musical roles in the post-Hard Bop era. One of Max Roach's most faithful disciples was the New Orleans-born drummer Edward Joseph "Boogie" Blackwell (1929-1992).

Ed Blackwell's playing style at the beginning of his career in the late 1940's was predominantly influenced by Bebop and the drumming vocabulary of Max Roach. His musical roots, however, were extremely diverse. New Orleans parade drumming, the Blues, Big Band swing, music of the Mardi Gras Indians, Caribbean music, and Rhythm & Blues all informed his burgeoning drumming style. During his forty-year career, Blackwell performed and recorded with various artists such as John Coltrane and Ray Charles, and with musical groups including "Old and New Dreams," and the "American Jazz Quintet." He is, however, most often associated with the Free Jazz Period and his work with Ornette Coleman.

This research project will document the generative and developmental aspects of Blackwell's drumming style. Chapter 1 covers his formative years and early musical influences in New Orleans, Chapter 2 his association with Ornette Coleman and other "free" jazz musicians. Chapter 3 will address the influence of traditional West-African rhythmic structures upon Blackwell's musical development. In Chapter 4, transcriptions of Blackwell's playing will show the coalescence of these varied musical influences which shaped his drumming vocabulary.

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Legend

- Snares on, unless otherwise noted
- Snare drum sticks, unless otherwise noted

- The Ride Cymbal pattern is written either

or

depending on the rhythmic context. However, all the cymbal ostinato figures feature a "swing" eighth-note feeling.

CHAPTER 1

BLACKWELL'S FORMATIVE YEARS AND EARLY MUSICAL EXPERIENCES

Edward Blackwell was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on October 10, 1929, and the Crescent City proved a highly creative and fruitful environment for his development as a musician.¹ From his family background, to the varied indigenous musical traditions, as well as his association with numerous influential musicians and the prolific recording industry in and around New Orleans, Blackwell was assured a very rich and diverse musical foundation.

As with many successful musicians, Blackwell was born into a family whose members possessed a great deal of musical talent. His oldest brother and a sister both performed with a traveling vaudeville show - he as a pianist and dancer, she a dancer and singer. Blackwell was sure to attend the shows whenever their vaudeville company visited New Orleans. According to Blackwell:

I'd sit behind the drums and watch how the drummer would play with the tap dancers. When I started playing in New Orleans they had clubs and I used to play with these different "shake dancers" and "fire dancers." That was another experience. You had to catch their dramatic movements when they'd throw up their hands by choking the cymbal (Fish. "Ed Blackwell: Singin' on the Set." p.56).

Throughout his life, Blackwell credited dancing and dancers as a major influence upon his drumming style. Early on, it was tap-dancing which had the greatest impact:

¹"Crescent City" refers to New Orleans.

I was quite influenced mostly by my sister's tapping. The staccato of her steps always intrigued me. I would try to imitate it with a pair of sticks or something. That was about the beginning of it (Salaam. "Edward Blackwell." p.4).

His sister encouraged Blackwell's early interest in the drums. Indeed, his entire family offered positive reinforcement regarding a career in music. Blackwell explained the support of his family as follows:

Any kid in New Orleans that showed any kind of an inclination for playing music was always encouraged to pursue it...because being a musician was one of the better paying jobs for black people (Fish. "Ed Blackwell." p.56).

Blackwell's older brothers also nurtured his earliest musical experiences by supplying various jazz recordings. These albums included small-groups led by "Dizzy" Gillespie and Charlie Parker, as well as prominent big bands such as the Count Basie and Benny Goodman orchestras (with drummers Jo Jones and Gene Krupa, respectively). Such recordings helped prepare Blackwell for work with various "rehearsal" big bands in New Orleans (i.e. bands which served as performance laboratories for musicians, composers, and arrangers). Blackwell recalled that:

musicians in New Orleans would always experiment and put together big bands. Cats would write, and that was their way of experimenting, writing charts for big bands. They would get musicians because we were always ready to play. Everyday that I lived in New Orleans, musicians were always playing with somebody. Everyday you were on your instrument, and that way you kept your chops up (Fish. "Ed Blackwell." p.56).

Blackwell would eventually utilize these big band swing experiences when he toured with the Ray Charles band in 1957. Although this band was playing blues and R & B material, the musical arrangements (e.g. the use of call and response between the horns and vocals) required an approach to drumming not unlike that within a big band.

Blackwell often mentioned Wilber Hogan (1931-1970), a New Orleans-born drummer who played with Lionel Hampton and Ray Charles among others, as an important early influence. It was Hogan who befriended Blackwell, taught him to read music, and encouraged him to join the

high school drum and bugle corps. According to Blackwell, “that’s when I got serious about the drums, marching around and playing press rolls at the football games” (Milkowski. “Masters of the Free Universe.” p.35). Blackwell offered the following recollection of his experiences:

Wilber was about three grades ahead of me in school, and when I went to [Booker T. Washington High School] I wanted to play in the band, but I couldn’t read. He volunteered to teach me to read the music and the teacher accepted me as a drummer in the high school band. Wilber was the one that first taught me about the rudiments, and the paradiddles, and all the basics of the drums (Riley and Vidacovich, p.50).

Blackwell played snare drum and/or tenor drum exclusively in the high school band. It is indeed surprising that he never played a complete drumset until age nineteen when he auditioned for his first professional gig. Raymond and John (“Plas”) Johnson were forming a Rhythm & Blues band in 1949 when their drummer was drafted into the service. Blackwell auditioned and was subsequently hired. The “Johnson Brothers Band” consisted of trumpet, tenor saxophone [Plas], piano [Raymond], bass, and drums, and their repertoire included jump-swing, shuffle, and R & B selections (Fish. “Ed Blackwell.” p.16). Blackwell worked with the Johnson Brothers for two years before moving to Los Angeles, California in 1951. These performing experiences, as well as his later work in other R & B groups, had a lasting impact on his drumming style.

Blackwell found himself without a drum instructor after Hogan left New Orleans in the mid-1950’s to pursue a playing career in New York City. Blackwell then taught himself by listening to recordings of Max Roach and other prominent jazz drummers. He also studied the recordings of jazz saxophonist and Bebop innovator Charlie Parker, a process which would prove highly significant to his musical development. “That was my schooling, listening to Charlie Parker records,” Blackwell recalled in 1992:

You know, 'Dewey Square' and all his records on Dial. I knew the owner of a drum shop, he used to order these records directly from New York for me. Even before they got to New Orleans on the radio, I would get them privately (Riley and Vidakovich. p.7).

Blackwell moved back home to New Orleans from Los Angeles in 1956. For the next two years, he performed in and around New Orleans with R & B groups led by Roy Brown, Earl King, and Huey "Piano" Smith, among others. In 1957, upon recommendation of a former colleague in the Johnson Brothers Band, Blackwell joined the Ray Charles Orchestra. "Ray bought me my first set of drums," Blackwell recalled, "and I ended up staying with him for most of 1957.² We toured all over, traveling in two chartered Greyhound buses. That was my first professional touring experience" (Milkowski. "Masters of the Free Universe." p.114).

The background to all of these developments within Blackwell's career is the rich and diverse musical culture of New Orleans. Throughout his youth, Blackwell was exposed to the city's indigenous tradition of parade music. The history of these parades and of the brass bands who played in them is a long and illustrious one. "Marching bands have always been an integral part of the city's musical culture," states author and historian Raymond Martinez, "and could not help but influence any music coming from New Orleans" (*Portraits of New Orleans Jazz*. p.15). In New Orleans, parades serve to commemorate a variety of occasions including Martin Luther King Day, St. Joseph's Night, Black History Month, Mardi Gras, and Mother's Day (Smith. *A Joyful Noise*. p.7). According to Blackwell:

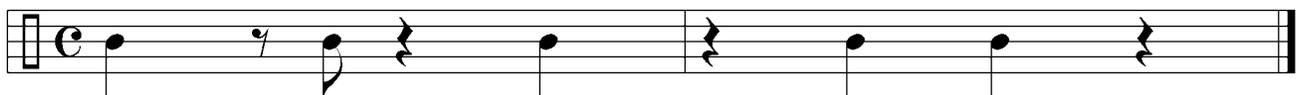
New Orleans has this heritage of marching and parading. All of the drummers that are born there come up hearing that everyday. When I was a kid, every Sunday there was a parade. There's a parade for funerals, births, deats. Everything called for a parade. Naturally, when you hear the music, people would gather and a big crowd would just follow behind. The kids would follow behind the parade, dancing (Fish. "Ed Blackwell." p. 17).

²Blackwell's original commitment to the band was just six weeks.

Blackwell is describing the New Orleans cultural phenomenon known as the *second line*. While it is difficult to specify a singular meaning for this phrase or term, it typically defines the group of individuals trailing behind a New Orleans’ funeral procession. According to New Orleans-born jazz drummer Herlin Riley, *second line* refers to the “mourners and the revelers, because the body would be in front along with the close relatives. Everybody else would be behind, in the second line” (Riley and Vidacovich, p. 39). The term also describes the “impromptu marchers and dancers along to enjoy free music and celebration” during *any* parade or gathering (Schafer. *Brass Bands & New Orleans Jazz*. p.53).

In addition, the rhythms and timbres played by the snare drummers and bass drum/cymbal players marching in a New Orleans parade are referred to as *second line*. Therefore, *second line* can mean the same thing as “parade beats” and/or “street beats.” In a general sense, this “street beat” style is defined by a predominance of snare drum rudiments and rhythmic structures based on the Afro-Cuban *són* clave pattern (figure 1):

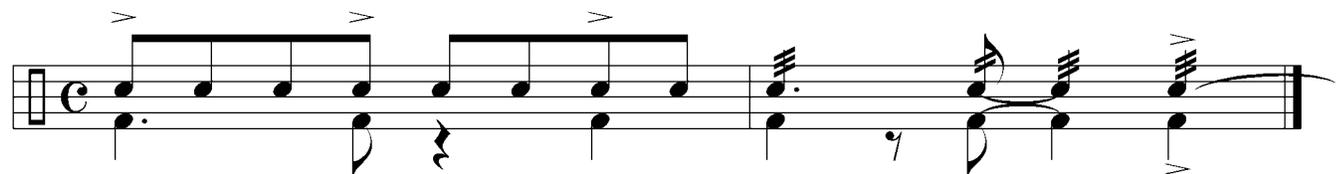
Figure 1:



Tony Scherman described the street beat percussion style as follows:

The hallmarks of the sound are a chattering snare drum and a buoyant bass drum [see figure 2], the latter accenting the final beat of every second measure to propel the music into the next two-bar phrase (Scherman. *Backbeat*. p.165).

Figure 2:



New Orleans-born jazz drummer James Black (1940-1988) described the importance of the bass drum within his hometown parade traditions:

The bass drum is very important in the style of drumming that we play here in New Orleans, because the first thing you hear in the parades is the bass drum. You know when you hear that beat from far away, “Man, it’s a parade!” In Dixieland jazz [traditional New Orleans collective improvisation], the bass drum was the thing. The bass drum and the snare drum - they were both important, but the bass drum most of all (Fish. “Back Home with James Black.” p.90).

Although Blackwell never played drums in a parade, he often participated in the *second line*, clapping and dancing along behind the processional. One can hear the New Orleans “street beat” tradition in his drumming, regardless of the musical genre or recording date. He acknowledged the significance of this parade music in a 1968 interview:

My biggest influence in jazz was being able to follow the street parades in New Orleans. The rhythms that they had going with these parades were so beautiful that even now I still feel the *rhythmic inspiration* [italics mine] that I got just from being able to run along behind the parades coming from the funerals and things. It was such a gas, man! In fact, practically any drummer that’s from New Orleans, you can always hear that type of thing in their playing - parade beats and street beats (Wilmer. “Street Parade Fan.” p. 10).

This “rhythmic inspiration” associated with the New Orleans brass bands and parade traditions had, perhaps, the greatest impact upon Blackwell’s early musical development. The influence of New Orleans’ street beats on his drumming style will be addressed in Chapters 2-4 of this research project.

Blackwell also credited the Mardi Gras Indians of New Orleans as an early influence on his musical development. These Mardi Gras Indians (i.e. “Black Indians”) are African-American men who masquerade as American Indians for the pre-Lent Mardi Gras celebration held each year. Blackwell believed that the traditional African rhythms once heard in Congo Square were

transmitted to modern times through these Black Indians.³ Two significant questions then arise:

1) why have groups of African-Americans in New Orleans been prompted to dress and masquerade as Native Americans and 2) how is it that traditional African musical sensibilities influenced the Mardi Gras (“Black”) Indians?

18th-century publicists minimized any sort of relationship, much less a harmonious one, between Native Americans and African-American slaves out of fear that they might “combine forces and drive their white exploiters back into the sea” (Nash. *Red, White, and Black*. p.292). The reality of the situation, however, was that these two groups did experience a great deal of contact, particularly in the southern United States. Throughout the 18th century, many runaway slaves sought shelter on the Native-American settlements or formed mixed Indian-African settlements hidden in the swamps outside New Orleans (Hirsch and Logsdon. *Creole New Orleans*. p.38). These runaway slaves often married Native-American women, produced children of mixed blood, and, therefore, helped promote Afro-Indian acculturation (Nash. *Red, White, and Black*. p.296).⁴ While it not possible to document the exact number of runaway slaves who joined the Indian settlements,

the persistent inclusion in Indian treaties of a clause providing for the return of escaped slaves demonstrates that the bounties offered Indians for slave catching often evoked little response (Nash. *Red, White, and Black*. p.294).

Native Americans, including the Choctaw, Cherokee, Natchez, Creek, Muskahogean, and Seminole peoples, frequented the French Market and other local markets in New Orleans

³The open field formerly known as Congo Square has been replaced by the downtown business section of New Orleans. This area, situated near the Municipal Auditorium on North Rampart Street, was called many things over the years including Place Congo, Congo Plains, and Beauregard Square (in honor of the Confederate General), and is now known as Louis Armstrong Park. According to author Raymond Martinez, “before this place was Congo Square, it was Circus Square, site of visiting carnivals, and before that, it was ceremonial ground of the Oumas Indians” (*Portraits of New Orleans Jazz*. p.20).

⁴These relations eventually led to the terms *griffon*, meaning “black Indian” (Berry, Foose, and Jones. *Up From the Cradle of Jazz*. p. 207) and *mustee*, used to “categorize the offspring of African and Indian parents” (Nash. *Red, White, and Black*. p.296).

throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Within these marketplaces, the Native Americans had the opportunity to interact with African-American slaves. These slaves were sent to the markets to buy foodstuffs and other products for the white households (e.g. firewood, medicinal herbs, baskets, various spices, etc.), and many of these items were purchased directly from the Native Americans. “It was more than a market place,” Maurice Martinez writes,

it was a social event, a moment when slaves and servants could talk with each other. No doubt such encounters turned into friendly relationships (Berry. *Up From the Cradle of Jazz*. p.201).

Like the French Market, Congo Square (established ca. 1750) served as a public marketplace. It also provided an environment in which the African-American slaves could congregate (typically on Sundays) to practice traditional African drumming, singing, and dancing, thus preserving their cultural heritage. Native-Americans also gathered in Congo Square, and were no doubt influenced by the African music and dance celebrations. By the 1840’s, these celebrations were increasingly suppressed by the Anglo-American community. However, Congo Square continued to function as a meeting place and traditional African musical performances “persisted in pockets of the city almost until the twentieth century” (Scherman. *Backbeat*. p.165).

When cultural activities in Congo Square were suppressed, it was the Carnival and Mardi Gras celebrations which helped sustain the African musical traditions in New Orleans. The Black Indians participated in various parades and funeral processions, masquerading and providing syncopated percussion accompaniment. In this way, the Black Indians are inextricably linked with the *second line* parade tradition. The percussion instruments found in a Mardi Gras parade include various idiophones such as tambourines, cowbells, wooden sticks, *shak-shak* (maracas), and cymbals which are all used to create syncopated rhythmic accompaniments. According to anthropologist David Draper:

Traditionally, the only instrument which accompanied the Mardi Gras Indian songs was the tambourine, which was referred to by the Indians as a “drum.” Additional, impromptu instruments may be created on the spot. For example, an empty wine bottle will often be used for a “drum,” with hair combs serving as striking sticks. Cowbells are also occasionally heard, and are struck with a large bolt or any other objects at hand (“The Mardi Gras Indians.” p.231).

The music of the Black Indians is marked by several characteristics typically associated with traditional West-African music including polyrhythmic beat patterns, call and response textures, and a “high level of communal participation in the music-making” (Sands, p.90).⁵

According to Blackwell:

The rhythms they played with their tambourines, that was something else. Most of the Indians were congregated down below Canal, and down in that section is where Professor Longhair [Henry Roeland Byrd] lived. And they were very heavy on that rhythmic thing. In fact, we used to go down to their *practices* [my italics] where they would have their rehearsals (Palmer, p. 18).

It is interesting that Blackwell used the word “practice” to describe these events. The Black Indians today still refer to the neighborhood retreats in which they drum and dance as a *practice*, “echoing the language of municipal ordinances of the early 1800’s which banned the ‘cultural practices’ of the African except in Congo Square” (Smith. “Behind the Lines.” p.62). Today, some Black Indian *practices* are held in barrooms, “and some are even charging a cover charge, trying to make it a nightclub event” (Smith. *A Joyful Noise*. p.62). New Orleans provided Blackwell with additional musical resources in the commercial arena as well.

The drumming style and vocabulary of several New Orleans drumset artists such as [Adolph] Paul Barbarin (1899-1969), Arthur James “Zutty” Singleton (1898-1975), and Warren “Baby” Dodds (1898-1959) also informed Blackwell’s early approach to the instrument.⁶ He

⁵Throughout this Research Project the term “polyrhythm” is used to describe recorded examples in which two or more accent patterns coexist over the same basic pulse.

⁶While there is much discrepancy as to the birth date of “Baby” Dodds (some sources indicate as early as 1984), 1898 is the accepted date.

often mentioned Paul Barbarin, a veteran of bands led by Louis Armstrong, Ferdinand LaMenthe “Jelly Roll” Morton, and Joe “King” Oliver, as a major influence. Barbarin and Blackwell both performed at a New Orleans nightclub called the “Dream Room” (ca. 1960). Blackwell was working the “after-hours” or “early morning” session with pianist Edward Frank, bassist Peter “Chuck” Badie, and vocalist Blanche Thomas. This group would begin to play around 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. after Barbarin’s group had completed their set. Blackwell reflected, “I would go down early and I’d sit around and listen to him [Barbarin] play. He used to talk to me a lot about the drums and drum rolls; how he played and how he learned to play” (Fish. “Ed Blackwell.” p.15).

Barbarin also offered Blackwell advice concerning the tuning of his drums. According to Blackwell, the “Dixieland” drummers in New Orleans played relatively small snare drums (i.e. 4” deep) and tuned the bottom, snare-head looser than the top, batter-head. This tuning configuration, coupled with the size of the drum, created an exaggerated “buzzing” snare sound and, therefore, made for very smooth-sounding rolls (Fish. “Ed Blackwell.” p.16).

Paul Barbarin’s roots sprang from the New Orleans’ parade bands in which he played snare drum or, less frequently, bass drum with attached cymbal. According to William Schafer:

the first generation of New Orleans jazz drummers studied under bandsmen like Louis Cottrell, Sr. and Dave Perkins. These men taught rudimental drumming (the traditional “drum call” military method that teaches technique through a series of rhythmic figures elaborated in an additive process). Drummers like Warren “Baby” Dodds, “Zutty” Singleton, “Monk” Hazel, Andrew Hilaire, Tony Sbarbaro, and Minor “Ram” Hall exemplify the rudimental style applied to jazz (*Brass Bands and New Orleans Jazz*. pp.91-93).

Paul Barbarin could easily be added to this list of drummers whose rudimental background fueled their drumset performance style. He first acquired a drum set in 1915 and began to play it professionally soon thereafter (Russell. “Barbarin, Paul.” p. 68). Unlike the majority of the earliest jazz drumset players in New Orleans, Barbarin did not focus exclusively on his snare drum; rather, he utilized his entire array of drums and cymbals. Lee Friedlander described Barbarin’s performance with the Luis Russell ensemble (ca. 1930) as follows:

Barbarin, in addition to a marvelous press roll, uses a high-hat and ride cymbals to excellent effect. He also flashes about between his snare and his tom-toms (Friedlander. *The Jazz People of New Orleans*. p.109-110).

Barbarin's synthesis of the rudimental, street-beat tradition and a swinging, drumset style had a lasting impact on the drumming style and vocabulary of Ed Blackwell.

Blackwell's musical education up to his twenties was grounded primarily in New Orleans parade rhythms, the Black Carnival Societies, teachers such as Barbarin and Hogan, and Rhythm & Blues. However, it was Bebop and the melodic style of Kenny Clarke (1914-1985) and Max Roach (1924-) which dominated Blackwell's drumming vocabulary in the 1950's.⁷ Both Clarke and Roach worked with a number of significant jazz artists, but it was their association with a group of musicians at a club in Harlem known as Minton's Playhouse which created a stylistic revolution.

Jazz innovators such as Charles ("Charlie") Parker, John Birks ("Dizzy") Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, Charlie Christian, and Bud Powell frequented the jam sessions held at Minton's Playhouse in the early 1940's. These sessions fostered the development of harmonic, rhythmic, and improvisational techniques that would eventually define the bebop style. According to Olly Wilson, it was during this period that Clarke revolutionized the role of the jazz drummer...

by shifting the steady 4/4 pulse from the bass drum to the ride cymbal, thereby allowing the use of the bass and snare drum for independent counter-rhythms in support of the improvising musicians. This resulted in a polyrhythmic background that complemented the asymmetrical phrasing of the soloists, an ideal that became standard for modern jazz drumming (Wilson. "Clarke, Kenny." p.218).

⁷Kenneth Clarke Spearman had dropped his surname by the time he started playing professionally (Brown. "The Development of Modern Jazz Drumset Performance." p.110).

While the emphasis did shift from the bass drum to the ride cymbal, Clarke and Roach, among others, still played the bass drum, “ghosting” quarter notes in sync with the walking bass line.⁸ According to Max Roach:

We played the bass drum, but the engineers would cover it up because it would cause distortion due to the technology at that time [ca.1949]. There were never any mic’s near our feet; they would have one mic’ above the drumset, and that was all. On 52nd Street [in New York City], we learned how to play the bass drum softly. It was always there underneath the bass fiddle, but you never heard it on the recordings. I’ve heard people say that, historically, I introduced the technique of not playing the bass drum and concentrating on the ride cymbal, which is not the case (Brown. “The Development of Modern Jazz Drumset Performance.” pp.174-175).

Max Roach advanced the time-keeping concepts which Clarke had established and incorporated more aggressive, syncopated comping figures. Roach was also very innovative and influential as a drum soloist. He constructed solos based on the given song form (e.g. 32-bar, AABA song form; 12-bar blues; etc.) through the imaginative use of pitch and timbral variety, juxtaposed sounds and silence, and rhythmic contrasts. Roach’s solos are marked by the clear-cut presentation of four- or eight-measure phrases. According to Roach:

When I build a solo, it’s a design within the structure of something, like creating a poem or a painting. Space and dynamics are important, and things like sequences. How you relate to certain timbres on the set itself is important. That’s how you build a solo (Spagnardi. *The Great Jazz Drummers*. p.43).

Throughout his career, Blackwell was quick to credit Max Roach as an influence upon his melodic soloing style and his ability to create phrases within the structure of a tune (Riley and Vidacovich. p. 51). Roach offered the following description regarding his concept of “melodic” patterns on the drumset:

I don’t go for specific pitches on the drum kit. Many times, the high and low sounds of the drumset - sounds of indeterminate pitch - fold themselves into a seemingly melodic pattern. But when I play solos on the drumset, I look for

⁸“Ghosted” notes are implied rather than actually played.

design, structure, and architecture; perhaps that's what produces the illusion that it's melodic (Whitehead. "Max Roach." p.16).

During the mid to late 1940's, when Bebop was the predominant jazz style in the major northern cities, the majority of New Orleans musicians and patrons alike wanted nothing to do with this "non-traditional" music. The early New Orleans Bebop realizations were generally regarded as so much noise, cerebral and inaccessible. Musicians who favored traditional New Orleans jazz felt threatened by the infiltration of Bebop. The harmonic progressions were much more advanced and the tempos quite fast as compared with the traditional style. Therefore, the level of sophistication and skill required to play Bebop alienated the older musicians who "could not hang."

Bebop was not a commercially viable enterprise in New Orleans either. Cosimo Matassa, a Crescent City studio recording entrepreneur and sometime record merchant, had high hopes of selling the "new music."⁹ "It looked to me like bop was the coming thing," Matassa would remember some years later:

but, I'll tell you what happened. A guy would come in, take two records in the listening booth, listen for an hour, say 'Thank you baby,' and leave. Bebop was not very commercial. I couldn't make any money with it, I'll tell you that (Scherman. *Backbeat*. p.64).

In addition, New Orleans club owners hired bands to play traditional jazz or R & B because the public generally preferred these styles over Bebop. The traditional music was a known quantity and, therefore, accessible and comfortable. R & B was (and is) dance music.

⁹Matassa owned and operated one of the first recording studios in New Orleans, the "J & M Studio," located on North Rampart Street and Dumaine. According to Matassa:

The studio started in 1945, as early as that. I was in the jukebox, the coin operating business, and we graduated to selling the records off phonographs, used things that we brought in. The customers then asked us for new ones. And then going into the new record business, going from an old record shop to a new record shop, we decided, well, let's put a studio in the back. And then I just gravitated on to the studio business out of the jukebox in time. I guess by the early 1950's I was out of the jukebox business, just doing the studio (Broven. *Walking to New Orleans*. pp.13-14).

Nelson George described the impact of R & B music as follows:

For the masses of blacks, after bebop's emergence, jazz was respected but in times of leisure and relaxation they turned to Louis Jordan and a blend of blues, jump blues, ballads, gospel and a slew of...fading black swing orchestras (*The Death of Rhythm and Blues*. p.73).

In other words, the black masses preferred “music that satisfied their taste for bluesy dance and entertainment” (DeVeaux. *The Birth of Bebop*. p.26).

Blackwell and fellow New Orleans' disciples of the Bebop found themselves playing R & B to make a living. As Harold Battiste reflected, “we had to play R & B for money, and we used that money to record jazz” (Berry. “Making the case for ‘Heritage Jazz’.”). Occasionally, a bop tune was situated discreetly within an R & B set-list in hopes that the club owner would not notice and that the crowd would not protest too violently. For the most part, Bebop was relegated to a rehearsal setting such as a band-members' living room, the local music union hall, or after-hours joints (i.e. clubs such as Foster's Hotel, the Golden Leaf, and the Million Dollar Room where musicians held early-morning jam sessions). “Even the famed Dew Drop Inn, with its lavish floor shows and comedy routines, relegated ‘hard’ jazz [i.e. Bebop] to the wee hours, after many of the customers had gone home and other musicians were coming in for an early breakfast” (Berry. “Making the case.”).

A few highly-devoted “boppers” persevered in spite of this negative environment and sustained the evolution of the “new music” in New Orleans. The nucleus of this movement included a group of individuals who would eventually form the American Jazz Quintet (AJQ). In the late 1940's and early 1950's, Blackwell often played at a club in New Orleans called Foster's. The personnel for this band regularly included Blackwell on drums, Alvin Batiste on clarinet, and Richard Payne on bass (three of the original AJQ members), as well as Warren Bell on alto saxophone, Frank Campbell on tenor saxophone, and Wallace Davenport on trumpet. According

to Bell, the year was 1950 or 1951 and the group played Charlie Parker compositions and other bebop tunes during these after-hours sessions (Bell. Interview with author, 15 January 2000).

The original American Jazz Quintet was comprised of musicians who belonged to the post-bop, modern jazz “underground” of New Orleans. The members of the group in 1956 were Battiste, Payne, Blackwell, tenor saxophonist Harold Battiste, Jr., and pianist Ellis Marsalis.¹⁰ They played at several clubs in New Orleans including the Dew Drop Inn, Foster’s, Hayes’ Chicken Shack, and the Chatterbox (according to Alvin Battiste it was “all chatter and not much money!”).¹¹ “They were all bright musicians,” Blackwell remarked concerning the members of AJQ:

and all admirers of Ornette [Coleman]. They all wrote original material, and they all had that New Orleans touch - you can’t escape it if you’re raised there (Silvert. “Old and New Dreams.” p.19).

The pioneering efforts of Blackwell and the AJQ were documented in *New Orleans Heritage Jazz: 1956-1966* (OPUS 43 Records-#OP4302; originally released in 1976). This 4-LP box set features three of the most prominent New Orleans jazz ensembles active during the 1950s and 1960s: the Original American Jazz Quintet, the Ellis Marsalis Quartet, and the A.F.O. (All For One) Executives” (Borders. “He’s Trying to Bridge the History of Orleans Jazz.”). Battiste produced the *Heritage Jazz*-collection in order to chronicle this vital, often-neglected period within the history of New Orleans’ jazz. According to Battiste:

When most historians write about jazz, they limit New Orleans’ contributions to the beginnings, thereby leaving the impression that as jazz evolved New Orleans had nothing to do with it. But what happened when bebop and

¹⁰ Harold “Battiste” is typically spelled with two “t’s” and Alvin “Batiste” with only one. However, the two are related as distant cousins.

¹¹ Statement made during the course of a panel discussion at the International Association of Jazz Educators Conference on January 15, 2000 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The title of this particular session was “New Orleans Modern Jazz Players: Survivors in the Home of Traditional Jazz.” Panelists included moderator Harold Battiste, Alvin Battiste, Ellis Marsalis, Warren Bell, and Bill Huntington.

other forms of jazz evolved? Were the New Orleans musicians still playing only in the early 'traditional' forms? Who were the young cats during the late 1940's and '50's? What were they doing? With these albums, and the 36 selections they include, we hope to answer those important questions and to fill the void so conspicuously left by most literature on jazz (Borders. "He's Trying to Bridge the History of Orleans Jazz.").

Unfortunately, *New Orleans Heritage Jazz* is out-of-print but the material therein has been re-issued on three CDs, including *In the Beginning* (A.F.O. Records, Inc. #91-1028-2; released in 1991). *In the Beginning* preserves the earliest recordings of the American Jazz Quintet, taped in 1956. Analysis of Blackwell's drumming on this recording session also offers significant information regarding his developing drumming style.

Of particular interest was the drumset Blackwell played on *In the Beginning*. Essentially, he combined several disparate drums to create a unique timbral palette. Blackwell said the following regarding this drumset:

I took a 16" military snare that I used to play in high school, bought some hoops for it and converted it into a bass drum. I had a tenor drum that a girl gave me. I put some legs on that and made a floor tom-tom out of it, and I had the regular mounted tom-tom. Then my brother painted it for me and put some glistening sparkles on it and made a real nice set out of it. It was nice sounding, but it looked like a set of toy drums. The tenor drum was a 9 x 13, I think. The snare drum was regular. There was an album recently published [1976] by Harold Battiste called *New Orleans Heritage Jazz: 1956-1966*. I'm playing that set of drums on the record (Fish. "Ed Blackwell." p.16).

Blackwell was describing a four-piece drumset: bass drum, snare drum, mounted tom, and floor tom.

A few of the drum sizes he mentioned are quite unusual. A standard size bass drum for jazz music is either 18" or 20" in diameter. Generally, the smaller the drum, the higher the pitch, thus his 16" bass drum sounds very high indeed. The 9 x 13 tenor drum (which Blackwell converted into a floor tom) refers to a marching drum which is 13" in diameter and 9" deep or tall. This is also relatively small for a floor tom, 14" or 16" being a more typical diameter for small-group jazz. The "regular" mounted tom probably refers to an 8 x 12 drum (i.e. 12" in diameter

and 8” deep). A “regular” snare drum would be 14” in diameter and either 5” or 6” deep. The drums which Blackwell used then had the following diameters: 16” bass drum, 13” floor tom, 12” (probably) mounted tom, and 14” (probably) snare drum. He also played several of the selections on the *New Orleans Heritage Jazz* recording with the snare mechanism turned off, thus producing a third tom-tom sonority. The drums within this four-piece set were relatively small and tuned rather tightly, producing very high pitches. They were also close in size and, therefore, pitch and timbre. Up until the mid-1970's, Blackwell favored a tight, high-pitched drum sound; crisp, clear, and melodious.¹²

Blackwell’s drumming with the American Jazz Quintet suggests his allegiance to Max Roach and a melodic, Bebop-inspired style. It also reflects his New Orleans musical roots, particularly the influence of the traditional brass bands and the New Orleans/Caribbean cultural and musical connection. The tunes “Nigeria,” “To Brownie,” and “Stephanie” from the *In The Beginning* recording session each contain distinctive features emphasizing the aforementioned influences. The following transcriptions, as well as the resultant observations and commentary, illustrate the impact these influences had upon Blackwell’s drumming style and vocabulary.

“Nigeria” is an original composition by Alvin Batiste, the title exhibiting his promotion of African-American cultural awareness. Beyond the title, however, “Nigeria” is not reflective of traditional West-African musical concepts. The twelve-measure form, AAB phrase structure, and harmonic progression all indicate a 12-bar blues, an African-American creation. In addition,

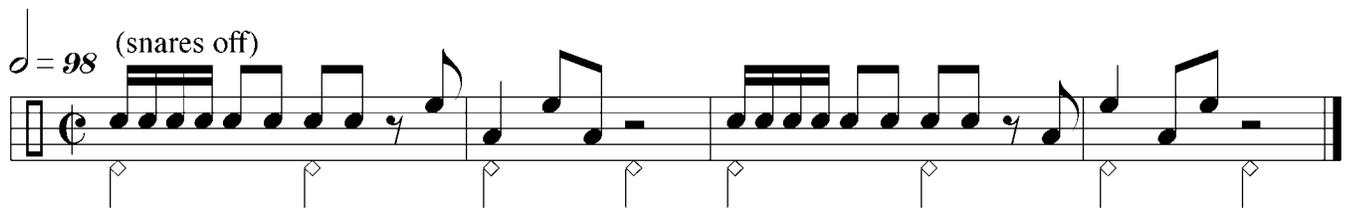
¹² Phil Hey offered the following information regarding Blackwell's concepts of drum tuning and tone production: "For the last part of his life, his preference was for a much deeper pitch. This was partly because one of his students at Wesleyan [University in Connecticut] tugged a calf head for his snare drum. When Ed told me how much he dug that, I sent him a complete set for his Sonor [drumset]" (Correspondence with author, 18 August 2000).

Beginning with the 1976 album *Old and New Dreams* (Black Saint 120013-2), Blackwell's recorded performances reflect a drumset sound which is much lower in pitch and darker in tone quality.

Battiste's melody and the improvisational vocabulary of the horn soloists are typical of the Bebop/Hardbop style. According to Harold Battiste, the beat pattern which Blackwell played during the melody (i.e. "head") is an example of the "New Orleans Congo" beat (Battiste. *Silverbook*. p.53). It is possible that this beat pattern (figure 3) was influenced by what "Jelly Roll" Morton coined the *Spanish tinge* in New Orleans music: a rhythmic pattern quite similar to a rhumba beat. According to Tom Piazza, this rhythm:

came into the port of New Orleans from South America via the Caribbean, probably a couple of hundred years ago. It's the basis of almost all New Orleans music, from Jelly Roll Morton through Professor Longhair and James Booker up to today. (Crouch. "Crescent City Rising." p.21).

Figure 3:



The rhythm section switched to a swing style for the solos on "Nigeria," again a typical practice in the Bebop style. The last solo is by Blackwell, and there are two significant features which demonstrate his respect for Max Roach and the Bebop tradition: 1) his use of a rhythmic ostinato as textural backdrop and 2) his rhythmic vocabulary and melodic sense of phrasing. Blackwell's 12-measure drum solo on "Nigeria" is buoyed by an engaging cymbal ostinato. This ostinato consists of the "jazz ride pattern" on the ride cymbal and a unique hi-hat motif played with the left foot: a closed note ("chick") on the second beat and an open note ("splash") on the fourth

beat. Blackwell then played a drum-based melody above this foundation (figure 4).

Figure 4:

Figure 4 is a musical score for a drum-based melody. It is written in 4/4 time and has a tempo of quarter note = 200. The score is divided into three systems, labeled 1, 5, and 9. The notation includes notes, rests, and symbols for ride cymbal (x) and hi-hat (+). The first system is labeled '(ride cymbal simile)'. The second system starts at measure 5, and the third system starts at measure 9. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with various rests and articulation marks.

There are numerous recorded examples where Max Roach plays a ride cymbal/hi-hat ostinato in support of a drum-based melody, similar to the texture used by Blackwell on “Nigeria.” However, in addition to the ride cymbal and hi-hat, Roach often played the bass drum on every pulse as another component within the ostinato. The following transcriptions (Figures 5A and 5B) were taken from two recordings done by Max Roach. The two excerpts in figure 5A are from “Parisian Thoroughfare” as recorded in 1954 by the “Clifford Brown/Max Roach Quintet” [Clifford Brown: *The Quintet*. Mercury EMS-2-403]. Figure 5B features an eight-measure phrase from Roach’s solo on “Confirmation,” recorded in 1959 by “The Max Roach 4” [*The Max Roach 4*. Trip Records TLP - 5574; originally released on Mercury MG 20532]. Blackwell’s solo

on “Nigeria” depicts an obvious similarity to the drum-based melodies which Roach played in figures 5A and 5B.

Figure 5A:

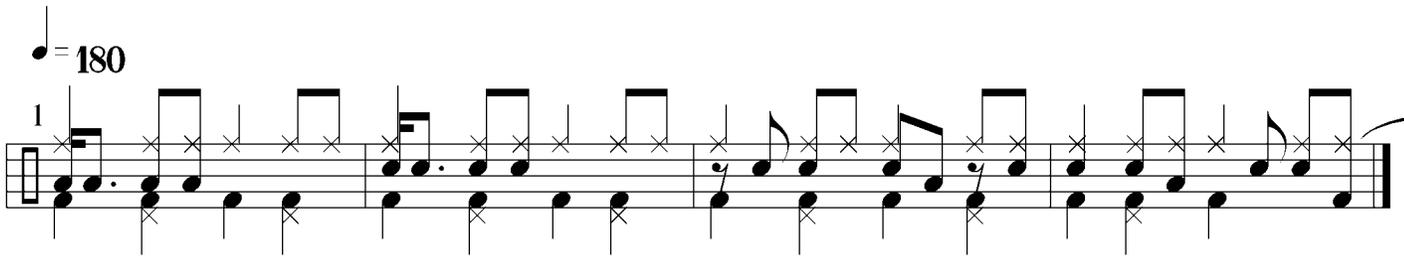
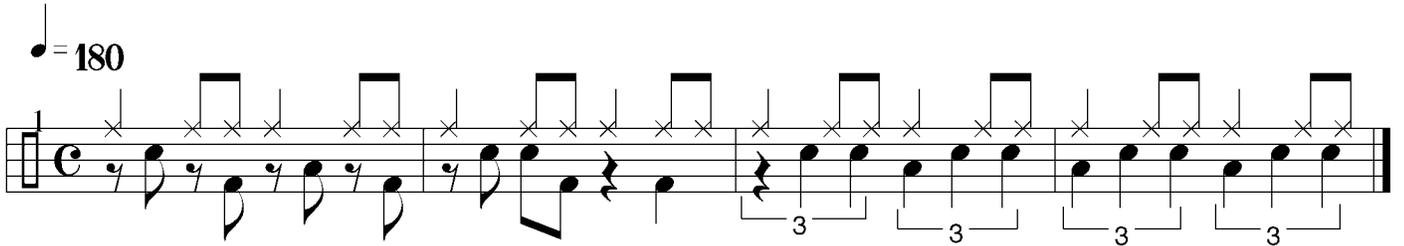
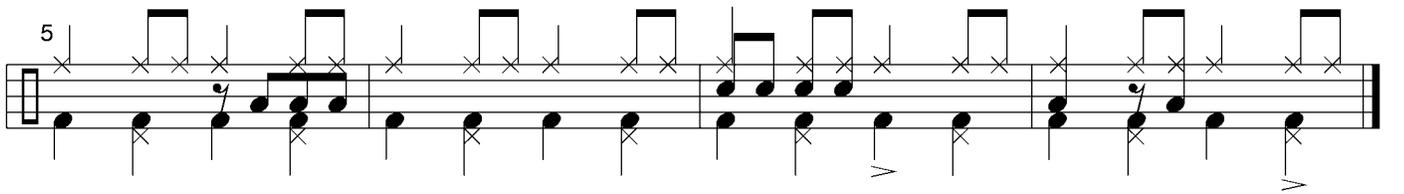
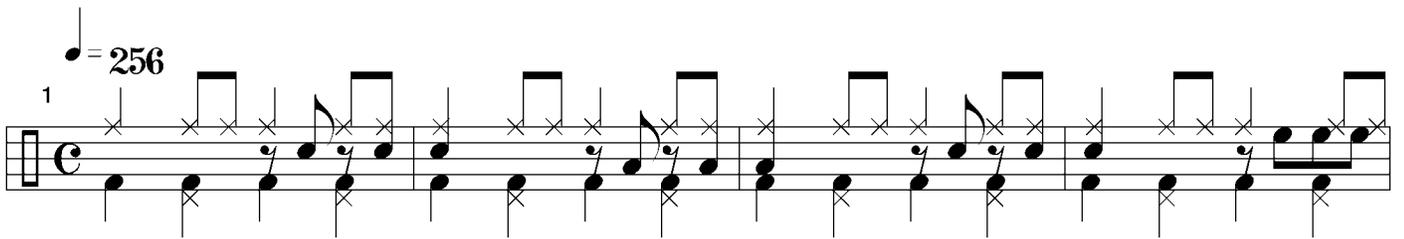


Figure 5B:



Blackwell's solo on "Nigeria," albeit short, reflects a rhythmic vocabulary and phrasing derived from the drumming of Kenny Clarke and Max Roach. It also clearly illustrates his inclination to "produce rhythms that have a quality approaching that of sing-song" (Ullman. "Ed. Blackwell." p.113). In other words, Blackwell typically played antecedent/consequent phrases marked by 1) repetitive rhythmic patterns and 2) the alternation of low-pitched and high-pitched drum sonorities. The rhythmic patterns Blackwell played within this solo emphasize eighth-note figures, a prominent use of syncopation, and motives which conclude on the second half of the third beat (figure 4: mm. 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8). Regarding the juxtaposition of pitches, when Blackwell completed a phrase in a downward motion (e.g. m. 4 which moves down in pitch from the snare drum to the mounted tom) the consequent phrase most likely resolved by moving upward (e.g. m. 8 which moves up in pitch from the bass drum to the snare drum), or vice versa. Through his use of rhythmic continuity and pitch variance, Blackwell creates a sense of expectation in the listener; a sense of suspension and resolution.

Within this solo, Blackwell also clearly outlines three four-measure phrases (see figure 4). The fourth, eighth, and twelfth measures end with an obvious space, just as a horn player might finish a phrase, breathe, and then begin again. Max Roach was one of the first, and certainly most proficient, to delineate song form within his drum solos.¹³ The realization of symmetrical, clearly-defined phrases was consciously cultivated by Blackwell. "My approach is about using space very effectively," he once said,

almost like a horn player taking a breath. The main thing you have to think about is that whatever you play has to make sense. In other words, you want to use quality, not quantity. You can run sixteenth notes around the drums, but if it doesn't say anything, it's just sixteenth notes. But when you use space effectively it makes sense (Salaam. "Edward Blackwell." p.4).

¹³ While Max Roach creates symmetrical phrases which clearly delineate the form in the majority of his drum solos, two of the best-known examples are his drumset compositions "For Big Sid" and "The Drum Also Waltzes" ("Max Roach: Drums Unlimited." Atlantic Records #SD1467).

Figure 6:

$\text{♩} = 230$ (w/mallets - snares off)

1

5

9

13

"Bridge"

17

21

25

29

Harold Battiste wrote “To Brownie” as a tribute to trumpet virtuoso Clifford Brown and characterized this piece as “hardbop” in the style of the Clifford Brown/Max Roach quintet. Blackwell’s solo on “To Brownie” very clearly illustrates his ability to delineate song forms. In this case, he played a 32-bar solo comprised of four 8-measure phrases, thus outlining an “AABA” form (figure 6). He also played this particular solo with mallets (rather than snare drum sticks) and with the snares disengaged.

Within the “A” sections of his solo on “To Brownie,” Blackwell emphasized 1) syncopated eighth-note rhythmic groupings, 2) a prominent use of space, and 3) triplet-based rhythms. These triplet rhythms were performed as either sixteenth-note flourishes (e.g. mm. 5-8 and 13-14) or eighth-note triplets (e.g. mm. 27-29). The latter figures are also commonly used by Max Roach: e.g. the principal motive within his renowned drumset composition “For Big Sid” (*Drums Unlimited*. Atlantic Records - SD 1467; first released in 1966). By way of contrast, the “B” section features a consistent flow of eighth notes (i.e. very little space is utilized) and no triplet rhythms. In addition, the snare drum rimshot and hi-hat “splash” timbral effects are introduced during the “B” section. Blackwell returned to the original material (i.e. syncopated eighth-note groupings and triplet figures) in the final “A” section. In other words, he created phrase structures which clearly delineate the 32-measure, AABA song form through his use of motivic and timbral repetition and contrast.

Regarding Blackwell’s ability to play melodically and to shape drum solos which correspond to a given song form, Ellis Marsalis offered the following in a 1980 interview:

I was from the school where drummers played a solo and when they got to the end of it they went ‘yata-tat-tat-tata-ta-boom!’ and everybody came back in. I didn’t know anything about choruses and the Max Roach style of drumming was still something that I had not really been able to tune into with an analytical ear. Edward would play drum solos and all his drum solos were constructed for the form that we were playing in. Edward would say ‘Like, I’m gonna play 2 choruses’ or what have you, and he would play that. And there were no mistakes about it, he was right there.

It was up to the other musicians in the band to be able to hear the drums, the language of the drum. And sometimes we’d lock up on it and sometimes we

wouldn't. So one day he got very angry and stopped in the middle of the song. He smashed down on the cymbal and said 'Man, what's the matter with you guys? Can't you hear anything?' He said, 'Look, when I play the head I'm going to play with *this* cymbal. I'm going to play the bridge with *this* cymbal, and I'm going to go back to the head and play with *this* cymbal. And when I play a solo, listen to what I'm playing. And when I get to the end, you should be able to hear what I'm doing.

And it was then that I also started to be aware of Max Roach, because we would play records and Edward would say 'Listen, I want you to listen to what Max is doing right here' and he'd sing along with Max. And I had begun to hear drum phrases in the same way that I would hear horn or melodic phrases and it was a kind of melodicism that existed in Edward's playing that also existed in Max's playing (Wilmer. "Alvin Batiste and Ellis Marsalis." p. 9).

Blackwell employed a unique timbral effect on the William Swanson/Harold Battiste composition entitled "Stephanie."¹⁴ Throughout this particular performance, Blackwell played the ride cymbal pattern with a conventional snare drum stick in his right hand and the comping vocabulary on the snare and toms with a mallet in his left. This, coupled with the fact that the snares were disengaged, provides a very distinctive texture. When asked about this technique in a 1981 interview, Blackwell said:

that was the way I had to play in New Orleans. I used to wrap a Scholl's corn pad around the edge of the stick and make a mallet out of it. That way, when I'm playing I could just turn the stick over and get a mallet sound. I like the contrast between the stick and the mallet - the hard and the soft sound. I used to play like that a lot (Fish. "Ed Blackwell." p.43).

Blackwell is using an actual mallet on the tune "Stephanie," rather than a modified snare stick. He went on to explain that the mallet produces a soft, "round" sound which highlights the "full intonation of the drums," while a snare stick produces a sharp attack and a less-resonant tone (Fish. p.43). According to Don Cherry, "Blackwell...always made his own sticks, his own mallets, his own practice pads" (Silvert. "Old and New Dreams." p.19).

¹⁴ Blackwell used this effect on other recordings including "The Avant Garde" with John Coltrane, Don Cherry, and Charlie Haden (Atlantic Records #90041-2) recorded in June and July of 1960.

It is possible that Blackwell's use of a snare drum stick and a mallet simultaneously stemmed from his formative experiences in New Orleans. Brass bands, which he had heard in his youth, typically had two percussionists: one who played snare drum, and one who played bass drum with an attached cymbal. The bass drummer played the drum-head with a standard felt mallet. The attached cymbal was usually played with a piece of metal such as a coat hanger or a hat band, thus producing a loud sound with a sharp attack. This combination of a warm, resonant bass drum tone with the articulate cymbal timbre is not unlike Blackwell's conception on "Stephanie" - i.e. resonant comping figures played on the drums with a mallet, coupled with the articulate ride cymbal ostinato played with a wooden stick.

Several other jazz drummers from New Orleans have utilized this combined mallet/stick technique. One notable example is Vernel Fournier (1928-) and the beat pattern which he played on "Poinciana" with the Ahmad Jamal trio. Fournier was born and raised in New Orleans and was a contemporary of Ed Blackwell. He explained that the drum beat on "Poinciana" consisted of 1) a cymbal bell pattern played with the back end of a wooden snare stick and 2) a snare drum/floor tom figure played with a yarn or felt mallet (Riley and Vidakovich. *New Orleans Jazz and Second Line Drumming*. p.47). In addition, he turned the snares off on his snare drum to create a tom-tom sonority, just as Blackwell did on the AJQ piece "Stephanie."

Fournier's drumming on "Poinciana" exhibits a musical texture and vocabulary similar to that of New Orleans' bass drummers within the brass band tradition. He described and contextualized his "Poinciana" beat pattern as follows:

you've seen the drummers in New Orleans with the bass drum and the cymbal on top, that's all it [the "Poinciana" beat pattern] is. (Riley and Vidakovich. p.47).

It is possible then that Blackwell played the mallet/stick configuration on "Stephanie" for the same reason that Fournier and many other New Orleans-based drumset players did (and do) - as a part of their musical experience and cultural encoding.

By the time the album “*Boogie Live*” was recorded (A.F.O. Record #92-1228-2; originally taped in 1958, first released in 1994), the American Jazz Quintet had undergone a few personnel changes. Ed Blackwell, Alvin Batiste (clarinet), and Ellis Marsalis (piano) were returning members from the 1956 band, the original American Jazz Quintet. New personnel included tenor saxophonist Nathaniel (“Nat”) Perrilliat and bassist Otis Deverney. William Swanson and Peter “Chuck” Badie, while not on this particular recording, served as alternate bassists with “AJQ-2.” *Boogie Live* was recorded live in concert at Booker T. Washington High School Auditorium in New Orleans.

It was during the Christmas holiday in 1957, when Blackwell was on break from the Ray Charles R & B tour, that he decided to stay in New Orleans and resume playing Bebop. “Ray really liked the way I played,” Blackwell recalled:

but I didn’t want to go back on the road. I wanted to play Bebop. Anytime anybody wanted to hear some modern jazz they would have to come to where we [members of AJQ-2] were playing (Wilmer. *As Serious as your Life*. p.182).

During this period (i.e. the late 1950’s), audiences in New Orleans were more receptive to “modern jazz,” when compared to those of the decade before. The AJQ-2 worked most weekends and enjoyed a large following of Bebop devotees. In fact, this group was so popular and the chemistry of the band members so strong, that Blackwell turned down Ornette Coleman’s initial invitation to join his band in New York (ca. 1959). Blackwell’s move to New York, as well as his work with Coleman and other “Avant-Garde” musicians, will be explained further in Chapter 2.

Transcriptions of Blackwell’s drumming on the composition “Never More” from the *Boogie Live* recording are considered below. These particular transcriptions represent comping figures (i.e. accompanimental patterns, typically played on the snare drum and bass drum, designed to support and create a dialogue with the soloist) and solo ideas which Blackwell copied literally from Max Roach and/or Art Blakey.

Figures 7A and 7B spotlight triplet-oriented comping patterns associated with the Bebop/Hardbop lineage. These rhythms, coupled with the snare drum rim-click timbre, are found throughout the recordings of Roach, Blakey, and numerous other drummers.

Figure 7A:

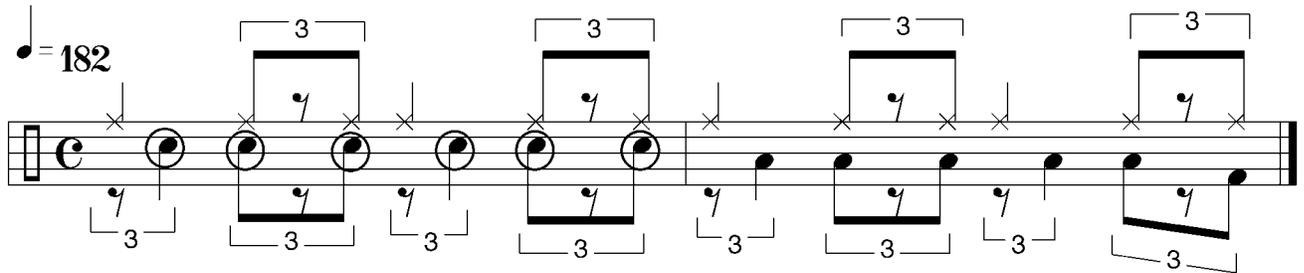
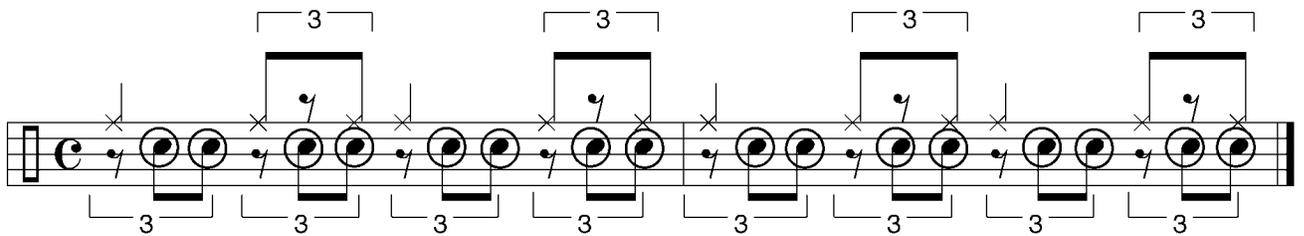


Figure 7B:



Blackwell’s 32-measure solo on “Never More” (figure 8) also contains several rhythmic figures and melodic ideas which stem from the drumming vocabulary of Max Roach. Three rhythmic/melodic ideas, in particular, suggest Roach’s influence: 1) implied double-time rhythmic patterns, 2) additive phrase structures, and 3) a predominant use of quarter-note triplet rhythms. Blackwell essentially played sixteenth-note rhythmic patterns in measures 7-12, signifying a double-time feel (i.e. rhythmic material which suggests a tempo twice as fast as the original pulse). He often employed this device when soloing on a tune with a moderate tempo (e.g. his entire 32-measure solo on the piece “Stephanie” has a double-time feel).

Figure 8:

Figure 8 is a musical score for guitar, consisting of eight staves of music. The score is written in a single system with a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is primarily composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with frequent use of triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Measure numbers 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 28 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves. The score includes various guitar-specific notations such as 'x' for natural harmonics, 'v' for vibrato, and '+' for natural harmonics. The piece concludes with a final measure containing a triplet of eighth notes and a whole note rest.

Blackwell’s use of additive phrases throughout this solo generates a great deal of rhythmic tension and, therefore, interest.¹⁵ Two specific examples best illustrate this concept: mm. 7-8 and 11-12 as outlined in figures 9A and 9B, respectively. In figure 9A, Blackwell played a two-measure rhythmic cell based on a 3 + 3 + 2 additive pattern. Similarly, in figure 9B, he phrased the sixteenth-note rhythms “in three” - i.e. within groupings which are three eighth-notes in length. In addition, the start of each of these groupings was punctuated with a bass drum note, thus reinforcing the syncopation. Both of these examples create tension through the use of syncopated rhythmic patterns. They also both mirror the asymmetric phrase structures found in the majority of Max Roach’s drum solos.

Figure 9A:

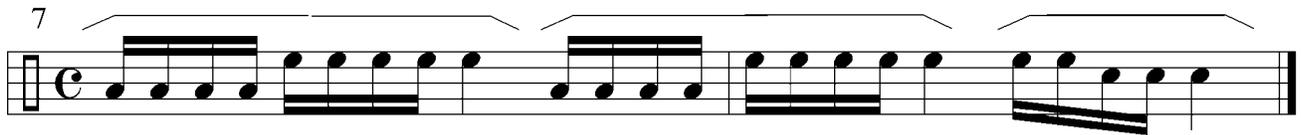


Figure 9B:



Blackwell’s solo on “Never More” also pays homage to Roach’s frequent use of quarter-note triplet rhythms. In mm. 3-4 and 13-14 (figures 10A and 10B, respectively), Blackwell played these triplet rhythms on either the snare, mounted tom, or floor tom, while sustaining the

¹⁵ Throughout this Research Project, the term *additive* is used to describe note values and/or phrase groupings which do not correlate with the regular divisions of the given time span or metric structure. The terms *additive*, *divisive*, and *syncopation* will be considered in greater detail within Chapter 3.

jazz ride cymbal pattern and the hi-hat on beats two and four. Blackwell’s use of quarter-note triplets bears a striking resemblance to the material shown in figure 11, as recorded by Max Roach in 1954 on the tune “Jordu” (*Clifford Brown: The Quintet*. Mercury EMS-2-403).

Figure 10A:

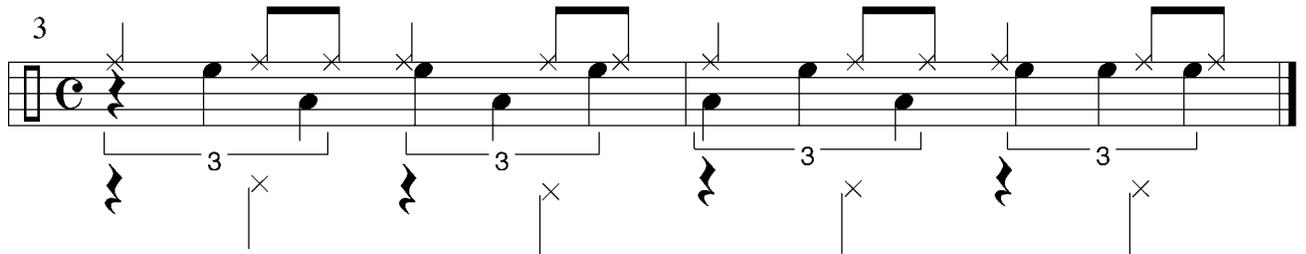


Figure 10B:

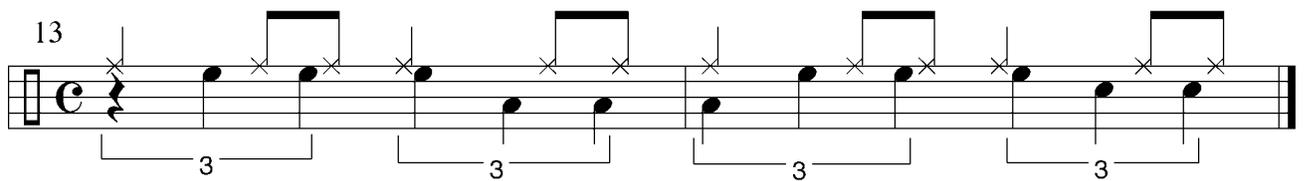
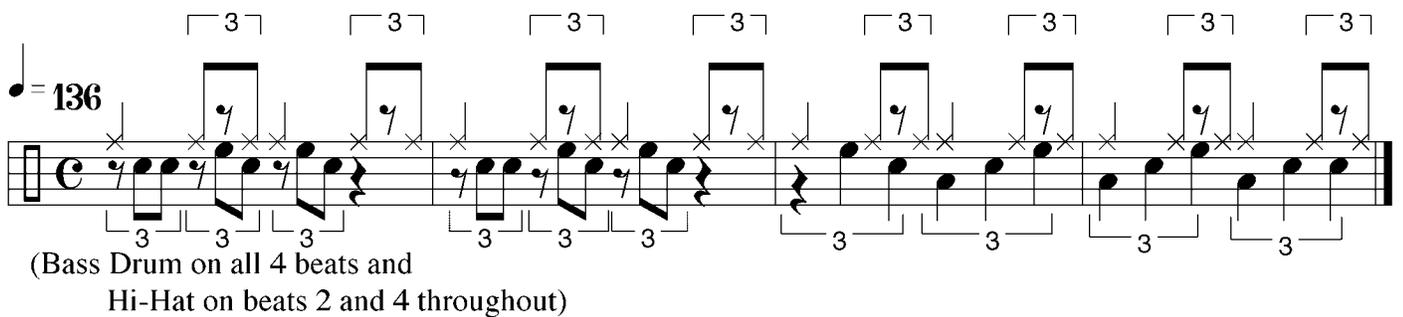


Figure 11:



A more obvious reference to Roach’s use of quarter-note triplets is located in mm. 15 -16 (figure 12). Here, Blackwell played the quarter-note triplet figure on the bass drum, emphasizing the beginning of each triplet with a sixteenth-note flourish on the toms. Figure 13 features a four-

measure drum solo played by Max Roach.¹⁶

Figure 12:

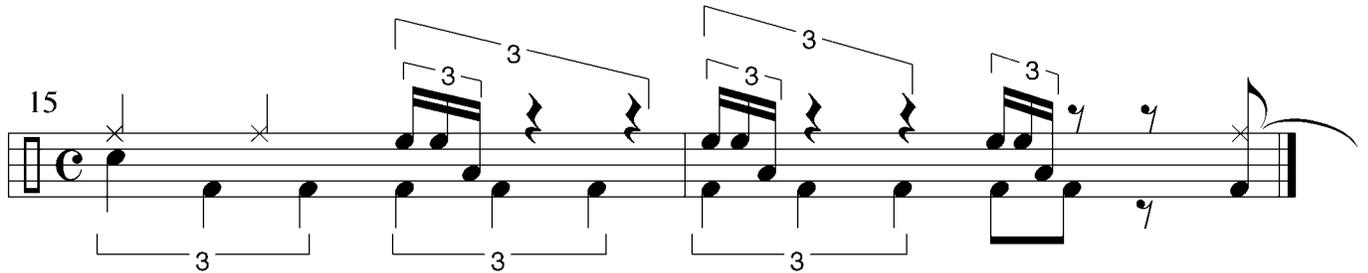
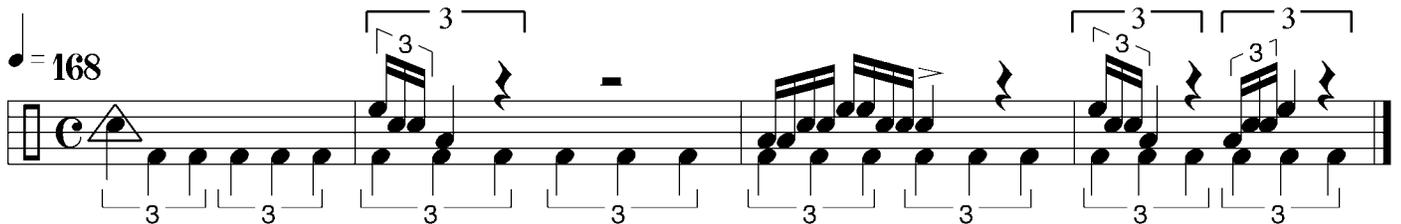


Figure 13:



It is obvious from the comparison of figures 12 and 13 that Blackwell was influenced by the quarter-note triplet rhythms so often used by Max Roach.

The influence of Max Roach, albeit a significant component in Blackwell's stylistic development, is but one piece of the puzzle. New Orleans parade traditions, dance rhythms, blues, Rhythm and Blues, big band swing, and the music of the Black Indians all contributed to his burgeoning drumming style as well. By the time Blackwell left New Orleans in 1960 to join Ornette Coleman's group in New York, he had effectively incorporated all of these influences within his playing. Discussion and transcriptions in Chapter 2 will reveal how Blackwell's unique drumming vocabulary impacted the development of the "Free Jazz" movement in the 1960's.

¹⁶ This example was taken from the Sonny Rollins album *Saxophone Colossus* (Prestige Records 7079, recorded June 22, 1956) and the selection "Moritat."

CHAPTER 2

ORNETTE COLEMAN AND "FREE JAZZ"

Blackwell drums like no other so-called “free jazz” drummer. There is something impassionately elemental about Blackwell’s ringing sound. The way he strikes both the skin and the cymbal produces a round and resonant tone. Plus, Blackwell uses space better than most. Whether accompanying or soloing, Blackwell is a joyful drummer who literally inspires dance.

Ed Blackwell is one of the founding fathers of avant-garde jazz drumming - an ironic distinction when you consider that his drumming style is not the loud thunder of a shangoist (the style usually associated with free jazz), but rather he is much closer to Elegba the trickster, a perpetual smile inside the core of this serious music (Salaam. Liner notes from “A Tribute to Blackwell.”).

Ed Blackwell’s drumming is most often linked to the Avant-Garde movement in jazz (also termed "Free Jazz" and "the New Thing"), due mainly to his work with the Free Jazz pioneer Ornette Coleman (1930-). While it is true that he was instrumental in the development of Coleman’s musical concepts, Blackwell’s background and experience illustrate an ongoing coalescence of several more traditional drumming styles that included those characteristic of New Orleans parades, Rhythm & Blues, Big Band Swing, and Bebop. Blackwell’s conventional roots as compared with his advancements of Free Jazz yields a fascinating disparity. This apparent contradiction, i.e. that a drummer who emanated from an established, relatively orthodox musical background would foster and develop Free Jazz, prompts several questions:

- 1) What are the defining qualities of Free Jazz?
- 2) Which characteristics of Blackwell’s drumming reflect these qualities?
- 3) How did Blackwell, a musician steeped in the Bebop tradition and, more specifically, the drumming vocabulary of Max Roach, help forge the style known as Free Jazz?
- 4) Why was Blackwell’s drumming such an effective foil for the melodic and rhythmic explorations of Ornette Coleman?
- 5) How did Blackwell develop his synergistic relationship with Ornette Coleman?

The dissemination of “Free Jazz” (also referred to as “the New Thing” and the “Avant-Garde”) began with the recordings of pianist Cecil Taylor (ca. 1956-58)¹⁷ and the performances of Ornette Coleman’s quartet in New York City in 1959. Coleman, however, was already experimenting with standard jazz conventions a decade earlier, including a highly productive period from 1953-55 when he lived and practiced with Ed Blackwell. The Free Jazz genre of the 1960’s was prompted in great part by the basic tenant of all true jazz: spontaneous improvisation. For many musicians, Bebop had seemed formulaic and had run its course. By the late 1940’s, Bebop music, with its extraordinarily fast tempos, angular melodies, and complex chord progressions, generated an increasingly codified means of expression. These stylistic conventions, at first fresh and invigorating, became a sort of “musical strait-jacket.” According to author Stuart Nicholson:

For almost two decades the methodology of bop had been thoroughly examined from both ends of the spectrum, by reductionists such as Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk through to John Coltrane’s high-density cascades. By the end of the 1950’s several young musicians were beginning to view bop’s harmonic and rhythmic conventions as limiting and were experimenting with cutting themselves free of such constraints (*Jazz: The 1980’s Resurgence*. p.105).

Jazz pioneers such as Lennie Tristano¹⁸, Cecil Taylor, and Ornette Coleman sought freedom from the conventions of Bebop, and attempted to break from this stylistic mold.

To understand this movement towards “the New Thing,” it is first necessary to describe a few defining characteristics of Free Jazz. Amiri Baraka (a.k.a. LeRoi Jones) acknowledged the emergence of Free Jazz as early as September 1961 in an article for *Metronome* magazine. According to Jones, “the rhythmic freedom of Bebop in the 1940’s was lost in the 1950’s only to

¹⁷ This period was exactly the same time-frame in which Blackwell was recording “In the Beginning” and “Boogie Live” with the American Jazz Quintet.

¹⁸ “‘Intuition’ and ‘Digression’ of the Lennie Tristano sextet of 1949 are probably the earliest examples of collective improvisation without structural models either written out or dictated in detail beforehand” (Wilson. *Ornette Coleman*. p.39).

be rediscovered in the 60's." He continued that...

...because rhythm and melody complement each other so closely in the "new" music, both bass player and drummer also can play "melodically." They need no longer be strictly concerned with thumping along, merely carrying the beat. The melody itself contains enough rhythmic accent to propel and stabilize the horizontal movement of the music, giving both direction and impetus. And so it is that drummers like Blackwell, [Billy] Higgins, and Charles [Moffet] can roam around the melody, giving accent here, inferring actual melody elsewhere.

Elvin Jones, in his recent work with John Coltrane, also shows that he understands the difference between playing melody and "elegant" elaboration around a static rhythm.¹⁹ The strict 4/4 is missing, and the horn men can even improvise on the melodic efforts of the rhythm section. This is one reason why in a group like [Ornette] Coleman's it seems as if they have gone back to the concept of collective improvisations (Baraka. "The Jazz Avant-Garde." pp.226-227).

Dewey Redman, a saxophonist who played with Blackwell as a member of Ornette Coleman's quartet (ca. late 1960's-early 1970's) as well as the Coleman-inspired group "Old and New Dreams," believes that Free Jazz developed from another tradition. According to him:

a lot of people think that avant-garde jazz music came out of the blue, but actually it came out of the *blues*. I'm saying that anyone that came out of the southern background, as opposed to California or the East, they had to be exposed to the blues because that was a way of life. It's not remarkable, for instance, that Ornette Coleman came out of that and yet created something very different (Stokes.*The Jazz Scene*. p.130).

The following definition of "Free Jazz" appears in *The New Groves Dictionary of American Music*:

A collective term applied to a very wide range of highly personal, individual styles. It is probably best defined by its negative characteristics: the absence of tonality and predetermined chord sequences; the abandonment of the jazz chorus structure for loose designs with predefined clues and signposts; an avoidance of "cool" instrumental timbres in favor of more voice-like sounds; and *often the suspension of jazz pulse for a free rubato* [italics mine] (Robinson. p.166).

Robinson goes on to say that "free jazz drummers explored multi-directional rhythms implying

¹⁹ Jones is referring to the general comping vocabulary associated with the Bebop and Hardbop styles (i.e. "dropping bombs") when he mentions "elegant elaboration around a static rhythm."

various meters at once, and interacted with other musicians by supplying percussion color or textures *rather* [italics mine] than a uniform pulse” (p.166).²⁰

The final “negative characteristic” outlined above (i.e. “the suspension of jazz pulse for a free rubato”) is most revealing when viewed in relation to the development of Ed Blackwell’s drumming style. It is rare indeed to hear Blackwell “suspend” the pulse in favor of “free rubato.”²¹ His inclination towards drum solos and comping patterns which exhibit a strong sense of pulse remained constant throughout his entire musical career. This can be attributed mainly to his upbringing in New Orleans and his association with dance: i.e. his sisters’ tap-dancing, his participation in the “second line,” and his early experiences playing drumset for dancers including R & B and Big Band swing music. When Blackwell played drums, he sought to inspire joy in the listeners’ hearts and movement in their bodies. In a 1980 “Blindfold Test” for *Down Beat* magazine, Blackwell made the following comments with regards to the tune “Look-Ka Py Py” by the New Orleans group, The Meters:

The main objective here is to make it dance, and that’s my main objective too; when I play I imagine someone dancing to the rhythms, get a fixed vision of a dancer in my mind. One of the prime requisites to be a good drummer is to know how to dance - that should be the first thing a drummer learns, even before he gets the drums (Mandel. “Blindfold Test.” p.51).

²⁰ Robinson is using the descriptive term "multi-directional" to indicate polyrhythms. Blackwell was very adept at creating polyrhythmic textures, giving the illusion of multiple drummers playing two or more meters simultaneously. Blackwell's penchant for polyrhythmic beat patterns will be addressed in Chapter 3.

²¹ One notable exception was his performance on the Ornette Coleman composition “Beauty is a Rare Thing” recorded on *This is Our Music* [Atlantic SD-1353]. Throughout this tune, Blackwell used mallets to play rolls and other coloristic effects on the drums and cymbals. While he did play a few isolated rhythmic motives, they were not repeated enough to constitute a “groove.” Peter Wilson offered the following commentary regarding the “group improvisation” represented on this recording:

None of the four players is confined to certain roles, and no obligation to keep time or anchor the music harmonically or rhythmically keep bass and drums from equal say in this chamber-music-like discourse of seven minutes’ duration. “Beauty is a Rare Thing” had fewer direct imitations than other aspects of Coleman’s style, but it is the piece that points farthest into the future; the sound-texture improvisations of the Art Ensemble of Chicago flow directly out of it (*Ornette Coleman: His Life and Music*. p.117).

During this same “Blindfold Test,” Blackwell critiqued the composition “Message to the Ancestors,” as recorded by the Avant-Garde percussionists Andrew Cyrille and Milford Graves. This piece, from the album entitled *Dialogue of the Drums*, was based entirely on their “free” improvisation, with no apparent structure or pulse:

There has to be something for the listener to identify with, something they can take away with them, after they’ve heard the album, something they can retain. The musicians have to strive to find something to put into the listener’s ear. Like, this is very interesting, but unless you’re a drummer yourself, there’s very little of interest you could find in it. Just the fact that they’re trying out a lot of different sounds... it’s really nothing new (Mandel. p.51).

Blackwell’s critique of this percussion duet clearly illustrates that he did not consider totally “free,” unstructured drumming to be an effective, accessible means of performance.

The transcriptions contained in this chapter will show that Blackwell’s drum solos recorded in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s with Ornette Coleman and other Free Jazz-artists, while not bound to a thirty-two bar/AABA song form, do in fact portray many of the stylistic attributes associated with his Bebop-inspired drumming style: a driving, consistent pulse; thematic development within an overall “melodic” style; symmetrical phrases four or eight measures in length; and, perhaps most significantly, an exuberant feeling inspired by dance.

Blackwell and Ornette Coleman, apparently, first crossed paths in 1949 in a New Orleans nightclub where Blackwell was working with the Johnson Brothers R & B band. Coleman (originally from Forth Worth, Texas) was passing through town with a blues band featuring vocalist Clarence Samuels. The following incident occurred while Coleman was on tour with Samuels, just prior to meeting Ed Blackwell. This particular situation indicates the level of hostility often directed towards Coleman and his musical experimentation at that time:

In a dance hall in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Ornette, in the middle of his blues tenor solo [he was playing tenor for this particular tour], interjected some of his modern ideas. Not only did the solo make the tough crowd unhappy - it actually stopped the dance (Litweiler.*Ornette Coleman*. p.37).

Ornette then continued.....

“All of a sudden a guy came in and said some musicians wanted to meet me outside, so I went outside and there were really big guys, six or seven of them. I said, ‘How you doin?’ And one of them said, ‘Where you from?’ And I said, ‘Oh, I’m from Fort Worth.’ And they were all black guys....They started using ‘nigger’ and all this, and ‘You’re not from Texas with your beard like that and your long hair. You must be one of those Yankee kind of niggers!’ And all of a sudden a guy kicked me in my stomach ... and I had my horn cradled in my arms and I blacked out... They were just beating me to death. One guy took my tenor and threw it down the street. Then Melvin [Lastie] and the band came out and discovered I was beat up and they took me to the police department. The cops said, ‘What you doing with that long hair?’ And they started calling me ‘nigger’ and they told me that if them other niggers didn’t finish me,*they were gonna*” (Litweiler. *Ornette Coleman*. p.37).

Coleman, now without a horn, traveled on with the Clarence Samuels band to New Orleans. There he ended up living with Frank Lastie and his family (including sons Melvin and David) for about six months. “Melvin’s father, Frank Lastie, was a drummer in church, and David Lastie, Melvin’s younger brother, played alto saxophone” (Litweiler. *Ornette Coleman*. p.38). Melvin himself was a very accomplished trumpet player. Ornette eventually borrowed David Lastie’s alto saxophone in order to do some playing in New Orleans. In a 1966 interview, Coleman recalled the development of his musical vocabulary during this period:

It was while I was staying at Melvin’s that I started playing like I’m trying to play now. The things that me and [Don] Cherry were doing [during the 1950’s in Los Angeles], Melvin and I could do that then, and that was 1949 (Spellman. *Four Lives in the Bebop Business*. p.85).

It was Melvin Lastie who brought Coleman over to the club in which the Johnson Brothers and Blackwell were playing in 1949. Lastie introduced Coleman and Blackwell that night, and Coleman sat in with the band. Accounts differ greatly as to the impact of the initial meeting between the drummer and the saxophonist. Blackwell offered the following in a 1968 interview:

When I heard Ornette for the first time, I felt the happiness he generates. That was one of the main things that I loved about his playing. It was so *free* [italics mine], although he had so many terrible experiences behind him because of the way he played. I couldn't understand why people couldn't hear it. He reminded me of a New Orleans parade (Litweiler. *Ornette Coleman*. p.38).

By way of contrast, "Plas" Johnson (tenor saxophonist with the Johnson Brothers) said that Ornette Coleman was not received well by New Orleans musicians, Blackwell among them. Johnson's recollection is that Blackwell refused to play with Coleman because he was "out of time" (Wilmer. "Alvin Batiste and Ellis Marsalis." p. 8). Perhaps the negative reception Coleman received for his playing while in New Orleans prompted a type of selective memory, as evidenced within the following 1995 interview for Cadence magazine:

Cadence: Didn't you meet Blackwell in New Orleans?

Coleman: No, I met Melvin Lastie, a fantastic trumpet player. I met Blackwell in California.

Cadence: Did he look you up?

Coleman: We ran into each other from some mutual relationship with other musicians. But from the day I met him we've always had a good rapport.

It is likely that Blackwell's perception of Coleman's musicianship ca. 1949 falls somewhere between the two aforementioned extremes. While he did probably respond positively to the "happiness" Coleman generated, Blackwell must have been perplexed by Coleman's phrasing (i.e. not necessarily adhering to 8-bar phrases). At this time, Blackwell was exploring ways to develop the Bebop language of Max Roach. Coleman's deviations from this "norm" must have been difficult to understand and accept. Regardless of Blackwell's initial impression of Coleman, he later said that the saxophonist never crossed his mind again until they reunited in Los Angeles in 1953 (Palmer. "Crescent City Thumper." p.17).

When Blackwell left the Crescent City for Los Angeles in 1951, his traveling companion was New Orleans-born pianist Ellis Marsalis (Blackwell and Marsalis were two charter members of the American Jazz Quintet). Marsalis later described their trip out West as follows:

It was a long ride, very long. We didn't have much money, in fact, I don't know if we had any. What Blackwell would do, he would play the snare drum - he had a snare drum on his lap - and he knew all these Charlie Parker songs, and he would play them on the drums; sort of "Name that Tune" as played by the drummer! Edward knew all the tunes so well and could articulate it on the drum so well that you'd have to be deaf not to hear it, I mean, he was that precise in what he did (*Blackwell Jazzset*. National Public Radio Broadcast. September 9, 1993).

To articulate Charlie Parkers' compositions clearly, Blackwell presumably used various snare drum techniques - e.g. rim shots for accented notes, flams for marcato notes, rolls or ruffs for sustained notes, etc. Blackwell's performance of Parker "heads" as described by Marsalis required an acute awareness of timbre, melodic shape, and form, as well as the precise technique to realize these conventions. Qualitative descriptions such as "acute awareness" and "precise technique" are not normally linked with Free Jazz musicians. On the contrary, words such as "chaotic" and "anarchy" were (and still often are) used to describe Free Jazz, and "primitive" the musicians who play it. John Boudreaux (1936-), a drummer from New Orleans associated with Harold Battiste's "All For One" record label in the early 1960's, described Blackwell's drumming technique as follows:

Blackwell played a bigger inspiration on me, I'd say, than any drummer I heard, cause he was playin' so different and correct. He just exaggerated correctness and precision... (Battiste. Liner notes from "New Orleans Heritage Jazz." p.12).

Blackwell created time-keeping patterns, comping figures, and solos which featured a meticulous clarity, coupled with an exuberant, buoyant sense of pulse. It is precisely these attributes which would help define and cultivate Ornette Coleman's stylistic explorations in Los Angeles in the early 1950's. In other words, Blackwell's drumming, when combined with Coleman's harmonic and rhythmic experimentation, proved a major catalyst for the emergence of

“the New Thing.” His precision, moreover, would forever challenge the assumptions that Free Jazz lacks clarity.

Soon after Blackwell arrived in Los Angeles, he moved into the Morris Hotel on Fifth Avenue. It was once an elegant establishment, but by 1951 the hotel, as well as the surrounding neighborhood, were quite run-down (Litweiler. *Ornette Coleman*. p.42). Several jazz musicians lived in this particular hotel and it, therefore, served as a meeting place for these like-minded individuals. During this period, Ornette Coleman was playing dance music (i.e. R & B and Blues) with his own band in Fort Worth, Texas, but he felt he was only “marking time” with this experience. So, “in 1953, Coleman decided to give jazz, and Los Angeles, another chance” (Litweiler, John. p.44). Upon his arrival, Coleman stayed with tenor saxophonist Kenneth Battle, who lived on Fifth Avenue, not far from the Morris Hotel. Blackwell stopped over one day with his drums in tow and the three men held an impromptu jam session (with Battle on piano). This session marked the beginning of a long and very prolific musical relationship between Blackwell and Coleman.

Coleman moved into the Morris Hotel to facilitate interaction with the other musicians, particularly Blackwell. Soon thereafter, Coleman and Blackwell found a house in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts where they lived together from 1953 to early 1955 (Litweiler. *Ornette Coleman*. p.44). It was during this period that the two immersed themselves in musical study. Blackwell recalled:

We stayed together, rooming together in one room. Sleeping together in a big double bed. Getting up early in the morning, practicing, going to work, coming home, practicing, all day, just practice, practice, practice (Salaam. “Edward Blackwell: The Rhythm King.” p.4).

According to Blackwell, Coleman “would come up with a new tune and we’d get together and go over it and over it, play and play it, until we got it down together” (Fish. “Ed Blackwell.” p.42).

We would get together and he would say “OK, well here, man, I want you to take these sticks and we’ll just swing.” Well, when somebody tells you that, right away you get a mental block. For a while I would get hung-up, and he would [say] “Well, just play - whatever *your* idea is about swinging.” So I would just start playing and then I would begin to realize what he was talking about because the more I played, the more I could get into it. And I really dug what he meant. When he said “swing,” he didn’t mean the old-type “swing,” he used “swing” more or less as a term for playing free, for playing my *own* self. And I got to know exactly what he meant (Wilmer. *The Face of Black Music*. p.20).

Blackwell and Coleman often performed Coleman’s compositions in a duo format since other musicians did not understand or appreciate their musical experimentations. “We’d go to jam sessions, and the cats would walk off the stand,” Blackwell remembered. “They wouldn’t even attempt to try to play with [Coleman]. But because we had been practicing every day as a duet, we would just go up on the stand and play our set” (Salaam. “Edward Blackwell.” p.4). Gigs were few and far between, and any money they received for playing was minimal. Nonetheless, they did have ample time to rehearse and, therefore, develop Coleman’s musical theories. He composed new tunes constantly, sometimes several in one day.

Coleman’s musical aesthetic was stretching the boundaries of conventional Bebop and the Blues in terms of tonality, form and rhythm. One can hear from a succession of albums recorded by the Ornette Coleman quartet that Blackwell’s playing was transforming as well. Prior to 1953, his drumming style was firmly rooted in the Bebop mold: four- or eight-measure phrases; demarcation of the song form within solos and comping; etc. He later recalled, “when I started playing with [Coleman], I had to change around to a whole new concept of playing” (Fish. “Ed Blackwell.” p.43). This “new concept” meant that the form of a tune would evolve through improvisation, as opposed to a pre-determined song structure. According to Blackwell:

when Ornette starts a tune, there’s a certain place he intends to get, but there’s no certain way to get there, and a lot of cats are not aware of how that happens (Wilmer. *As Serious As Your Life*. p.63).

Understandably, Blackwell was “not aware of how that happens” either when he and Coleman first began practicing and playing together. It is important to remember that Blackwell’s early drumming style was an extension of the melodic, form-conscious approach associated with Max Roach. According to Litweiler:

Hard Bop drummers joined their lead instruments in the forefront of creating musical lines and...Edward Blackwell’s deep interaction with Coleman was an advance on Hard Bop polyphony (*The Freedom Principle*. p.157).

Blackwell had to adapt his understanding and control of musical forms and phrase structures in order to effectively accompany Coleman. This developed over time, and not without incident. Ellis Marsalis recalled observing a rehearsal situation in 1956 which involved the drummer and saxophonist. Marsalis stated that Blackwell...

...would usually play a press roll on the turnaround and start at the top of the song²². This one time he did it and Ornette stopped and said, ‘Why did you end my phrase?’ which was to say, ‘If I’m playing a phrase and come to the end of the song, play out the phrase - don’t just adhere to the form of the song’ (Litweiler. *Ornette Coleman*. p.45).

A separate incident as recalled by Ellis Marsalis is also quite revealing concerning Blackwell’s view (ca. 1956) on the role of particular instruments within a musical context:

Both of us [Marsalis and Harold Battiste] were playing piano. We were playing somewhere, and I started a cycle of 7th chords, just moving ‘em up the scale, up the piano chromatically, and Ornette said, ‘That’s it! That’s it! Keep playing that!...’ I didn’t really understand what I was doing, it’s just that whatever it was, Ornette related to it. Eventually it kind of disturbed Edward because I had forsaken the rhythmic responsibility of the group in favor of trying to play harmonically what Ornette was hearing and trying to hear myself what was going on (Wilmer. “Alvin Batiste & Ellis Marsalis.” p.9).

²²This technique of playing a roll into the next section or chorus of a tune was popularized by Bebop and Hardbop drummers, including Max Roach and Art Blakey.

Blackwell, who had played for two years in a duo format which provided a great deal of musical freedom, became disenchanted when Marsalis deviated from the stereotypical Bebop-oriented piano role: to outline the harmonies while comping *in time* with the pulse of the music.

Blackwell's drumming with the American Jazz Quintet in the 1950's clearly reflects his ability to outline 32-bar/AABA song forms and 12-bar blues forms. It proved very challenging for him, therefore, to relinquish his preconceived notions of formal structures, and simply respond to what Coleman was playing at any given moment. Reflecting upon Coleman's approach to musical form and phrasing, Blackwell stated:

Ornette would start off with 'one' here, and the next time 'one' would be somewhere else. So you had to listen to where he put that 'one' to follow where it was. If you were going by where *your* 'one' was, and you were playing that AABA form, it just wouldn't work (Spagnardi. *The Great Jazz Drummers*. p.79).

These experiences involving flexible song forms and "movable" downbeats advanced Blackwell's transformation toward a more "free" drumming style. Blackwell offered the following assessment in a 1977 interview:

I had been used to playing with groups in New Orleans that were always playing like eight bars of this or that, but when I got to playing with Ornette there was no way of anticipating how the music would be going. I had to listen very closely to what he was going to do, and probably my biggest influence on him was the fact that he got used to listening to me too (Palmer. *Crescent City Thumper*. p.52).

Coleman would later validate Blackwell's evaluation of their mutual inspiration:

Certain phrases I start to play with my drummer, Edward Blackwell, suddenly seem backward to me because he can turn them around on a different beat, thereby increasing the freedom of my playing (Fish. "Ed Blackwell." p.14).

Blackwell left Los Angeles in 1955 and returned home to New Orleans. Then in 1956, Blackwell "convinced" Harold Battiste and Ellis Marsalis (fellow members of the American Jazz Quintet) to accompany him back to Los Angeles for the summer (Burch. "One for All." p.76).

Harold Battiste remembered this period as follows:

1956 was the year when Ellis, along with Edward Blackwell and myself left for Los Angeles. According to Ellis, I was conned into going because I had a car. In Los Angeles, we paid dues, woodshedded, paid more dues, gigged one night a week...sometimes, and then paid still more dues. Our early experiments with Ornette Coleman's music and playing during that period made the environment intensely creative. It was the germination of what was to become "Free Jazz" (Battiste. Liner notes from "New Orleans Heritage Jazz." p.18).

Except for this brief stint in Los Angeles during the summer of 1956, Blackwell made New Orleans his home base between 1956 and 1960. During this period, his main performing outlets included the American Jazz Quintet (AJQ) and the Ray Charles band, playing Bebop and R & B respectively, as noted in Chapter 1. Why then, after two very fruitful years (1953-55) of experimentation with Ornette Coleman, would Blackwell return to New Orleans and the supposed constraints of Bebop and R & B? Adequate monetary compensation was, no doubt, one factor. Blackwell was able to play regularly back in New Orleans and could, therefore, sustain a living without working a "day job."²³ It must have also been a welcome change to play with a full ensemble of varied timbres (i.e. not just alto saxophone and drumset) before an enthusiastic crowd. In the late 1950's, both the AJQ and the Ray Charles band attracted sizable, loyal audiences; quite a turnaround from Blackwell's club experiences in Los Angeles with Coleman.

Coleman invited Blackwell back to Los Angeles in 1959 to record his first album, *Something Else!*. Blackwell, though, was enjoying his artistic and financial success in New Orleans and declined Coleman's offer. According to Blackwell:

When Ornette got ready to make his first recording, I was in New Orleans. He sent a ticket for me to come to L.A. to do the recording with him, but I was in the midst of the American Jazz Quintet thing, so I just sent the ticket back. Billy [Higgins] had been around. He and [Don] Cherry had been listening to us [Coleman and Blackwell] play a lot, so the logical choice was for Billy to make it.

²³ Blackwell recalled that, during the lean years with Coleman from 1953-55, "sometimes on Sundays somebody would hire us for four dollars and we'd play. We'd be so happy playing, it never occurred to us that we weren't getting paid any money. We just loved to play" (Milkowski. "Masters of the Free Universe." p.35).

Billy continued with the band until Ornette got to New York. I really didn't want to leave and go back to California when Ornette first called me because we were developing the music with the American Jazz Quintet, plus I had had quite a bit of California. I was a little disenchanted with it because of the reception we used to get with Ornette's music (Salaam. "Edward Blackwell." pp.4-5).

In April of 1960, the Ornette Coleman quartet (featuring Don Cherry, Charlie Haden, and Billy Higgins) was performing at the Five Spot in New York City. "In those years," John Litweiler stated, "New York enjoyed the alleged benefits of its 'cabaret card' law, which forbade anyone with a police record of illegal drug possession to perform in nightclubs, thus sparing New Yorkers from the unspeakable horrors of music played by addicts." Litweiler continued:

Billy Higgin's cabaret card was revoked; in April the Five Spot told Ornette to replace him with another drummer. In an extraordinary conjunction of events, the blinded goddess Justice provided Ornette with the necessary new drummer. In New Orleans Edward Blackwell and his wife Frances were arrested for miscegenation and jailed, thus sparing New Orleanians the unmentionable, perhaps even unremarkable, presence of an interracial married couple. Fortunately, the Blackwells were released on bail, and skipped; Edward contacted Ornette, who first recommended him to John Coltrane for the new band Coltrane was forming before hiring Blackwell for his own quartet. Blackwell came to New York, played a week with Ornette, and with his first paycheck sent for his wife. (Litweiler. *Ornette Coleman*. p.81).

The Ornette Coleman quartet, with Blackwell on drums, performed at the Five Spot for roughly three months. Reviews of their performances were mixed, but the overall reception of Coleman's music was much more positive than it had been in Los Angeles. Blackwell recalled this particular engagement as follows:

When I got to New York, my chops were happening. Cats were coming by to check me out. We were drawing in crowds six nights a week for three months. A lot of people came out of curiosity, a lot of people came because they seemed to really like the music (Milkowski. "Masters of the Free Universe." pp.114-15).

Many "cats" were curious about Blackwell's playing since the Crescent City drummer was an unknown quantity in New York City, working with *the* most controversial jazz musician. According to Blackwell:

A lot of people weren't aware that Ornette and I had played so much together before. They thought Billy Higgins was the first drummer that had ever come up playing with Ornette. So when I came on the scene, everybody said 'Where'd *he* come from?' When they found out that Billy was having problems with his cabaret card, everybody was telling Ornette, 'Man, you ain't gonna find a drummer to play that shit, man.' He was telling them, 'I know somebody who can play it' (Fish. "Ed Blackwell." p.56).

One of the many musicians who frequented the Five Spot during Coleman's engagement was, Blackwell's main source of inspiration, Max Roach. Roach remembered Blackwell's drumming as being highly innovative:

I had first heard about Ed Blackwell from the musicians that were coming through New York City out of New Orleans. When I finally heard him, he was with Ornette, maybe even Don Cherry when they first came to New York. I had never heard a drummer who sounded like Ed. He had his own musical personality, and he had an approach to the instrument that was really captivating...He was an original, and when you're trying to make a name for yourself, being an original is a big boost for you because you can be identified immediately on records. Before I walked into a club, just by hearing him outside, I knew it was Ed. I think he made a great contribution to the instrument (*Blackwell Jazzset*. National Public Radio, September 9, 1993).

After this engagement at the Five Spot, Coleman's quartet went on the road and, again, experienced favorable reactions to its music. However, upon returning to New York, Coleman became selective with his bookings and took very few gigs. This prompted Blackwell and Cherry, both disenchanted with the lack of work, to leave the group. Upon leaving Coleman's band, Blackwell played within a variety of musical groups. In the summer of 1960, he participated in a recording session with John Coltrane and Don Cherry entitled *The Avant-Garde* (Atlantic 90041-2). Blackwell also played a historically significant two-week gig in July of 1961 (also at the Five Spot Cafe) with the Eric Dolphy-Booker Little quintet. This particular engagement resulted in several outstanding recordings including the *Eric Dolphy and Booker Little Memorial Album, Here and There*, and the *Immortal Concerts*.

From 1962-1965, Blackwell “had little or no work apart from the occasional coffeehouse or loft gig with Don Cherry, and a few recordings” (Wilmer. “Ed Blackwell.” p.19).²⁴ It is indeed ironic that a musician as versatile and sensitive as Blackwell had become pigeon-holed as a Free Jazz drummer. Blackwell’s playing style was cultivated within the “New Orleans-bred concept of drumming as an ensemble art - ‘for the benefit of the band,’ as the city’s greatest drummer, Baby Dodds, once said” (Litweiler. *Ornette Coleman*. p.100). Most musicians in New York, however, were reluctant to hire Blackwell for fear that his playing would somehow be too “free” and, therefore, not supportive. Charles Suhor offered the following comments regarding Blackwell’s association with Ornette Coleman’s group during the height of their newfound success:

It is possible that the exposure Blackwell is receiving in the Coleman group is not the most favorable kind. Not that he is unable to conform to the group’s standard of nonconformity. Certainly he is capable of going as far into orbit as his companions, but Blackwell’s is basically a mainstream talent, building on the past rather than breaking from it, and it is best viewed against the relief of an adventurous but not anarchic group. Furthermore, the hotly controversial nature of the Coleman group has tended to divide the critics and public into two camps. In this rigid critical atmosphere, categorical damnation or praise of the group is more common than cool evaluation of the merits of its individual members (“New Jazz in the Cradle.” p.16).

While it is true that Blackwell’s drumming style with Ornette Coleman exhibits more freedom than his work with the American Jazz Quintet (AJQ), his Free Jazz performances were not devoid of structure, continuity, or logic. Figure 1 represents an eight-measure excerpt from Blackwell’s drum solo on the Ornette Coleman composition “Blues Connotation” (*This is Our*

²⁴ John Baskerville offered the following description concerning such “alternative” performing outlets:

One of the methods used to avoid the exploitation and absurd working conditions of the clubs was to establish alternative venues for performances. Musicians utilized warehouses, abandoned studios, and the loft apartments of musicians, painters and others to present concert and experimental sessions. In addition to the lofts, musicians played coffee houses, bookstores, churches and street-concerts to avoid the clubs. A few ambitious musicians rented concert halls and community centers to get their music to their audience (“The Impact of Modern Black Nationalist Ideology.” pp.178-179).

Music. Atlantic SD 1353)²⁵. This excerpt suggests two 4-measure phrases and exhibits a melodic style akin to the Bebop language of Max Roach. In fact, this excerpt could be effectively spliced within any number of compositions Blackwell had recorded with the American Jazz Quintet, ca. 1956. He achieved coherence within this particular passage through the combination of rhythmic repetition and timbral variety. The repetition of rhythmic material is marked by a predominance of motives which begin on the second half of beat three and conclude on second half of beat two in the following measure (see motives “A”, “B”, “C” and “D” within Figure 1).

Figure 1:



While the rhythmic vocabulary within motives “A”, “B”, “C” and “D” is virtually identical, Blackwell varied his drum choices, and thus the contours of the drum melody, throughout. Of

²⁵ This particular album also marks Blackwell’s recording debut with Ornette Coleman in July and August of 1960.

particular interest is the culminating note (i.e. the second half of beat two) in measures 1, 2, 5, and 6: motive “A” ends with the bass drum, motive “B” the floor tom, motive “C” the snare, and motive “D” the mounted tom. These subtle pitch distinctions (as well as the combinations of drum pitches in general) lend a sense of variety; a type of theme and variations format based on the “sing-song” style attributed to Blackwell.

The material found in Figure 1 is admittedly the most obvious Bebop-oriented passage within Blackwell’s solo on “Blues Connotation.” The balance of his solo, however, also features a consistent tempo, call and response-type motives, and symmetrical phrases based on a tension/release pattern of high versus low pitches. In other words, vocabulary very much in keeping with the melodic drumming style of Max Roach, vocabulary not normally associated with the supposed wild abandon of Free Jazz.

Ekkehard Jost made the following insightful comments regarding Blackwell’s drumming on the Don Cherry album *Complete Communion* (Blue Note #84226):

As we know, drum solos in jazz (whatever the stylistic area) very often deteriorate into a show of virtuosity without recognizable thought or direction and have little or nothing to do with the music. This is not the case with Blackwell. Building on the rhythmic patterns of the tunes, he develops his solos into variation on those patterns by playing round them, breaking them up, putting them back together, superimposing others, etc. In this respect Blackwell’s free jazz drum solos are a good deal less “free” than the long-winded solo excursions of Buddy Rich, for example. This is one of the ironies that arise in jazz when the concept of freedom is used without defining it (Jost. *Free Jazz*. p.144).

Figure 2:

Figure 2 is a musical score for guitar, consisting of ten staves of music. The tempo is marked as 250. The score begins with measure 1 and includes various musical notations such as slurs, triplets, and fret markers. A section labeled "Bridge" starts at measure 17. The score concludes at measure 40.

1 $\bullet = 250$

5

9

13

17 "Bridge"

21

25

29

33

37

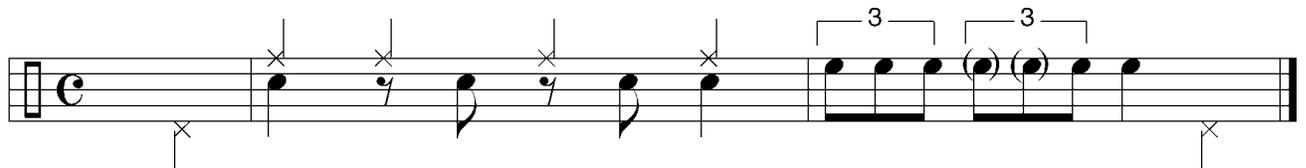
In figure 2, Blackwell’s 40-measure solo from “Complete Communion” is presented in its entirety. As far as the structure of this particular solo, Blackwell outlines clearly five eight-measure phrases. Each of these phrases concludes on either 1) the second half of beat two (mm. 8, 32, and 40) or 2) directly on the third beat (mm. 16 and 24). These rhythmic cadences allow the music “to breathe,” much like a horn player would breathe before beginning the next phrase.

These 8-measure phrases are composed of 2-measure motives (the one exception being mm. 17-20 which is clearly a 4-measure idea). The principal melodic and rhythmic motive composed by Don Cherry for “Complete Communion” is presented in figure 3. This melodic/rhythmic idea, also two measures in length, is often implied by Blackwell during his solo, the most obvious example being mm. 5-6 (see figure 4). Herein, Blackwell played rhythms very similar to those composed by Cherry. A direct comparison of figures 3 and 4 illustrates how Blackwell could, to recall Jost (p.49), *build on the rhythmic patterns of tunes and develop his solos into variation on those patterns:*

Figure 3:



Figure 4:



There are several rhythmic/timbral ideas within Blackwell’s solo on “Complete Communion” which reflect his affinity for Bebop/Hardbop drumming, as well as his New Orleans

roots. The triplet passage in mm. 17-19, with its clear-cut, repetitive accent and timbral patterns, is an obvious example of Max Roach-inspired phrasing. Blackwell also played a few hi-hat “licks” in this solo (e.g. mm. 3-4 and 10) which are commonly found in the Bebop/Hardbop language of drummers such as Roach, Art Blakey, and “Philly” Joe Jones.²⁶ The overall melodic shape of this solo also depicts the “sing-song” character associated with Blackwell’s drumming style. One noteworthy example is mm. 5-8 where Blackwell created a call and response pattern of high versus low-pitched drums as follows:

- m.5 highlights the snare drum sonority, m.6 the lower-pitched mounted tom;
- m.7 again emphasizes the snare drum timbre, while m.8 moves from the floor tom (the lowest pitch to this point) back to the snare drum.

Figure 5:



Figure 5 features another significant motive Blackwell used within his solo on “Complete Communion.” Bill Huntington, a bass player from New Orleans who has performed with Alvin Batiste, Mose Allison, and Ellis Marsalis, among many others, offered the following thoughts regarding this motive:

A lot of guys I played with in the fifties and sixties had a little comping figure they would do with the left hand, like on the upbeat of two. I believe it came from Blackwell and it gave the time a lift - sort of a fifties hip-hop feel (Riley and Vidacovich. *New Orleans Jazz and Second Line Drumming*. p.72).

While this syncopated figure did not “come from” Blackwell, he did use it quite often and very

²⁶Blackwell often played such hi-hat motives, including his solo on “Never More” (mm. 31-32), as noted in Chapter 1.

effectively throughout his career. This particular motive served as “structural glue” for his solo on “Complete Communion” as he either stated it literally (mm. 5, 29, 30, and 37), implied or varied it in some way (mm. 2, 4, 8, 16, 21, 22, 25, 32, and 36), or rhythmically displaced it (mm. 13 and 35).

Finally, measures 33 and 34 of this solo highlight a beat-pattern which, according to Blackwell, evolved from the New Orleans parade traditions.²⁷ This groove, which was used by Blackwell throughout his career on numerous recordings, will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this research project.

The structural logic inherent within these particular solos by Blackwell, as well as his sensitive, clearly-defined comping vocabulary, reveal that his drumming style in the 1960’s was never really all that “free.” Rather, his work with Ornette Coleman and other Free Jazz artists was predominantly groove-oriented and based upon symmetrical phrasing. It is these characteristics which signify “Elegba the trickster” and Blackwell’s ability to sustain a “perpetual smile inside the core of this serious music.” He was able to advance Free Jazz drumming while, at once, preserve his musical roots. Blackwell was able to assert his precise drumming technique, a Bebop-inspired sense of phrasing, and an awareness of formal structures upon a musical style which diminished, if not rejected, these values - no small trick indeed. Kalamu ya Salaam offered the following comments regarding Blackwell’s coherent, intelligent drumming style:

More than any other drummer, especially in the context of new music (or “free jazz,” or whatever you choose to call it), Blackwell plays rhythms. The beat is obvious, unmissable, and yet, the metronomic constancy of his rhythm-making notwithstanding, Blackwell plays as freely and as happily - there is passion, a passion rooted in a love of life - as anyone can possibly play (“Edward Blackwell.” p.4).

This was, perhaps, Blackwell’s most fascinating achievement during the Avant-Garde

²⁷Information regarding the New Orleans roots of this beat-pattern was derived from an interview with Phil Hey held in May of 1997. Hey is a jazz drummer, currently residing in the Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN area, who studied with Blackwell for approximately eight years.

movement of the 1960's: to play with such clarity and precision as to sound profoundly adventuresome, to play so "inside" (relative to the given context) that it sounded "outside."

Salaam also provided this eloquent synopsis of Blackwell's work with Ornette Coleman and their advancement of the "New Thing:"

While the new music influence and contributions of Max Roach, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams and other drummers are important, it is necessary to put into perspective that it was Blackwell who worked with Ornette and helped Ornette work out an entirely new direction for modern jazz. Moreover, Blackwell has never deviated from his chosen course. Edward Blackwell, although not widely celebrated, is actually one of the major shapers of post-bop, new music ("Edward Blackwell." p.4).

CHAPTER 3

THE AFRICAN CONNECTION

A primary issue concerning the evolution of Ed Blackwell's drumming style stems from an apparent chronological contradiction: namely, the date of his first tour of West Africa as compared with the date of the release of Ornette Coleman's album *Ornette!* (Atlantic SD-1378). Blackwell's drumming on this recording, in particular his performance on the composition "T. & T.," has often been described as sounding West-African. This characterization was first established within the album liner notes written by Gunther Schuller:

Blackwell gradually transforms the piece ["T. & T."] into one of the purest examples of African drumming in jazz.

Assuming this description to be accurate, one might also assume that *Ornette!* was recorded sometime after Blackwell traveled to Africa, where he had direct contact with traditional drumming. On the contrary, this seminal recording took place in January of 1961, six years *before* he ever visited Africa.

In 1967, Blackwell traveled to North Africa, West Africa, and the Middle East as part of a three-month, State Department-sponsored tour with jazz pianist/composer Randy Weston (1926-). While touring numerous countries, Blackwell observed traditional musical performances by different ethnic groups, played with these musicians, and recorded and transcribed various rhythmic patterns. However, as noted in Chapter 1, Blackwell had already absorbed African-derived rhythms and the overall spirit of traditional West African music while growing up in New Orleans, listening to the Mardi Gras Indians perform, and dancing in parades as a member of the "second line." These experiences undoubtedly influenced the development of his drumming style on both a conscious and subconscious level. It is quite possible then that his African-inspired drumming style had crystallized before Blackwell ever visited the continent. The purpose of this chapter then is twofold: 1) to determine which of the African-derived characteristics

associated with Blackwell's drumming stemmed from his New Orleans cultural roots, and 2) to ascertain how his musical experiences in West Africa influenced his playing style.

The fact that Blackwell's first trip to West Africa took place well *after* "T. & T." was recorded prompts several questions concerning not only *what* informed his playing, but *where* and *when* he was influenced. For instance, what is it about Blackwell's performance on "T. & T." which qualifies it as "one of the purest examples of African drumming in jazz." For that matter, *did* his playing somehow change after he travelled to West Africa and consciously cultivated its traditional musics? It is my contention that his experiences in West Africa merely focused and enhanced elements already present within his drumming style, elements encoded by way of his musical background in the Crescent City. By virtue of his upbringing in New Orleans, with all of its African cultural retentions, Blackwell had assimilated the essence of traditional West-African music well before his tour in 1967.

While it is true that Blackwell's experiences growing up in New Orleans did have a profound influence upon the "Africanity" of his playing, there were many other contributing factors as well, including:

- the pitch-conscious, polyrhythmic drumming style established by Warren "Baby" Dodds and his New Orleans contemporaries;
- the African-inspired drumming of Blackwell's idol, Max Roach;
- Blackwell's exposure to Cuban drumming with its inherent West African retentions;
- Blackwell's adaptation of polyrhythms, primarily those taken from Jim Chapin's drumset method-book "Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer."

Blackwell's trips to Africa with Randy Weston in 1967 and 1968 also facilitated the development of his drumming style, particularly regarding the spirit and energy inherent within traditional West African drumming performances and their inseparable connection with dancing.

Before any of these issues can be addressed, however, it is first necessary to describe the cultural context early in the 1960's which framed all of these elements, a context in which

Blackwell and other African-American jazz musicians performed and in which critics, such as Schuller, evaluated their work. Chapter 2 documents Blackwell's association with Ornette Coleman and his experiences as a "Free Jazz" musician. In part, the Free Jazz style evolved in reaction to what many perceived to be the stifling, formulaic conventions of Bebop. The emergence of Free Jazz also coincided with the rise of the African-American cultural movement known as Black Nationalism. During this period (late 1950's and throughout the 1960's), many African-Americans were exploring their African heritage, drawing upon this newfound awareness as a source of cultural pride and strength. According to music historian Hildred Roach:

there was much pride felt by Blacks in America in the recent independence won by African states. The colorful leaders of Africa and their new image caused Blacks to closely relate to those inhabitants of the Mother Country with renewed respect and brotherhood. A bitterness welled inside the hearts of those Afro-Americans who had not won in America an independence easily seen elsewhere. The loss of dignity and self-esteem and the loss of language and cultural norms were seen as an affront to human justice, and as a punishment for being Black (*Black American Music*. p.187).

Similarly, many African-American musicians looked to Africa as a source of inspiration. Their searching resulted in a heightened awareness of traditional African musics, particularly their organizational principles, rhythmic structures, and instrumentation. As author Michael Budds pointed out, however:

the awareness of non-Western cultures by American jazz musicians was not a purely musical development. Extra-musical, sociological factors were of extreme importance to the jazz musicians' investigation of exotic instruments and practices. Because of the newfound solidarity among blacks in America during the sixties and the newly defined alienation from white America resulting from it, American blacks began to look to the Third World - to Africa, Asia, and South America - with new interest. Africa was, of course, the primary interest (*Jazz in the Sixties*. p.15-16).

Budds argues that many Free Jazz musicians viewed their work as having political significance:

These musicians, who became known collectively as Black Nationalist musicians, perceived their music as a form of protest and intentionally devalued the European aspects of their art. Other black jazz musicians who were empathetic but not as socially militant as their Black Nationalist colleagues were likewise attracted to the new possibilities suggested by African musical practice (*Jazz in the Sixties*, p.16).

Blackwell was situated within the group of individuals described by Budds as “black jazz musicians who were empathetic but not as socially militant.” Upon returning from Africa, Blackwell was more aware of his cultural heritage, and he did consciously cultivate his West African musical roots. However, unlike other African-American jazz musicians such as Randy Weston, Archie Shepp, and Max Roach, he did not use his newfound cultural awareness as a vehicle for social protest. It is important to realize that Gunther Schuller’s liner notes regarding Blackwell’s drumming on “T. & T.” were written in 1961, during this period of intense African-American cultural awareness. It is, therefore, possible that the Black Nationalist movement informed Schuller’s consciousness as well, prompting him to describe Blackwell’s performance on “T. & T.” as “one of the purest examples of African drumming in jazz.”

Another component of Free Jazz practice was the inclusion of African musical instruments, as well as the literal or implied instrumental techniques associated with African music by its practitioners. One example would be Blackwell’s use of the West African “talking drum:”

By casting aside most features of the bop style, free jazz players harked back in many respects to simpler forms of jazz and earlier music in which elements derived from African music predominated. This in turn permitted an unusual influx of ethnic musics into jazz, examples being the “world music” of Don Cherry, the *West-African “talking drums” approach cultivated by Ed Blackwell* [italics mine], and the pygmy yodeling techniques adopted by the singer Leon Thomas (Robinson. “Free Jazz.” p.166).

Ornette Coleman, reflecting on his own awareness of the African-derived performance style of African-American jazz drummers, also believes that Blackwell’s drumming portrayed the influence of West-African “talking drums:”

I've been playing with Blackwell over twenty years. We used to play when I first went to Los Angeles. Blackwell plays the drums as if he's playing a wind instrument. Actually, he sounds more like a *talking drum* [italics mine]. He's speaking a certain language that I find is very valid in rhythm instruments. Very seldom in rhythm instruments do you hear rhythm sounding like a language. I think that's a very old tradition because the drums, in the beginning, used to be like the telephone - to carry the message (Jarrett. "Ornette Coleman Interview." p.5).

Most individuals are referring to an hourglass-shaped, West-African instrument when they use the phrase "talking drum."²⁸ This string-tension drum has different names depending upon the ethnic group being considered, such as the *lunna* of the Dagomba people from northern Ghana or the *donno* used by the Ewe people of Southeastern Ghana and Togo. It is possible to vary the pitch of a *donno* by squeezing and/or pulling the attached strings. For this reason, it is also known generically as a "pressure drum." The *donno* can be used to approximate the varied pitches and "bent" inflections associated with West-African tonal languages.

Two recordings in particular show the influence of the "talking drum" language upon Blackwell's drumming style. The Dewey Redman album "Tarik" (original release: BYG Records 529.334 - volume 34) and the Don Cherry release "Mu" (Charly - LeJazz CD 56) feature Blackwell playing a tom-tom which allows pitch manipulation.²⁹ On both recordings, Blackwell played rapid, two-hand patterns at the same time the drum pitch was fluctuating. This would imply the use of a foot pedal to facilitate pitch-bending independent of the hands.³⁰ Regardless of the instrument or the technique Blackwell might have used to play it, the sound quality is quite similar to that of the West-African *donno*.

We know that Blackwell incorporated principles of organization, various rhythmic constructs, and instruments associated with West African traditions within his drumset

²⁸ It is important to note that other West-African instruments, including the *atumpan* drums (a pair of master drums used by the Akan people of Ghana) and the slit-log or log drum, may also be used to "talk."

²⁹ The Redman album "Tarik" is out-of-print and virtually impossible to locate. However, the title track from this recording has been reissued on the 3-CD set entitled "Jazz Actuel" (Charly - CDNEW 137-3).

³⁰ According to T. Dennis Brown, "a floor tom-tom with a timpani-like tuning pedal was first used in the 1960's" ("Drum Set." *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*. p.310). Phil Hey also recalls that Blackwell sometimes played such a "timpani floor tom" - the "Hollywood/Meazzi" model.

performances; however, the cultural seeds of this practice were sown long before his trips to Africa as a result of his upbringing in New Orleans.³¹ According to ethnomusicologist and percussionist Royal Hartigan, Blackwell:

played drums on boxes, steps, and other materials during his childhood... He related that the practice of using boxes, bottles, and other non-manufactured materials as musical instruments was common in New Orleans and other cities where he observed youth and, occasionally, adults making music. This is similar to a use of boxes, bottles, hoes, and other objects in Ghana for informal and spontaneous music-making (*Blood Drum Spirit*. p.81).

Edward says “You play what you live.” This is another identity with West African music. My African teachers [including Abraham Adzinyah and the late Freeman Donkor] stress the personal nature of performing for each part [player] in the drum ensemble; that is, the manner of variations played is an expression of self. To Ed, each drummer has his or her own life experiences (*Blood Drum Spirit*. pp. 82-83).

Blackwell often referred to the drumset as a “drum family,” and the realization of multi-layered, polyrhythmic patterns a “family of rhythms.” This philosophy, which parallels both African cultural values and traditional methods of musical organization, also developed as a result of his experiences in New Orleans. Writer and photographer Valerie Wilmer³² offered the following comments concerning Blackwell’s notion of a “drum family:”

³¹ Blackwell often included the African-derived slit drum within his performances, including the following recordings: *Just Play* (Quark 9996); *El Corazon* (ECM 1230/78118-21230-2); *Regeneration* (Strata-East SES 19765); *In Willisau* (Black Saint BSR 0093); *The Magic of JuJu* (Impulse SNE-9272-3); *On This Night* (Impulse GRD-125). This instrument is actually not a drum (i.e. membranophone) at all, but rather a wooden log which is hollowed out. Wooden tongues or slats of different lengths carved from the body of the instrument are struck to produce varied pitches.

³² The following information regarding Ms. Wilmer (1942-) was taken from her autobiography entitled *Mama Said There'd Be Days Like This: My Life in the Jazz World* (London: The Women's Press Limited, 1989):

Val Wilmer was born in Yorkshire in wartime and head for London as the Armistice was signed, baby's green ration-book in hand. She sold her first photograph - a Scout troop - to the local newspaper when she was sixteen, her first written commentary on jazz appearing soon after. She has photographed weddings and worked for African newspapers, written and broadcast on music throughout the world. The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, held an exhibition of her music photographs in 1973, and she is a founding member of “Format,” Britain's first all-women photographic agency.

She is author of: *Jazz People; As Serious As Your Life; The Face of Black Music;* and has illustrated: *The Jazz Scene; Jazz at Ronnie Scott's; The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz; Black Talk.*

In a country like Ghana where drums of different sizes are known as the “Mother,” “Father,” “Son,” and “Daughter” in relation to their size and timbre, Blackwell found *confirmation* [italics mine] of his concept of the drumset as a “family of rhythms.” The drummers he heard in Nigeria, Senegal, Gabon and so on, fitted in with his love for musical freedom and his egalitarian notions about the functions of both the musician and the instrument itself (“As Serious As Your Life.” p.186).

This suggests that Blackwell’s views regarding the “drum family” were established *before* he ever visited Africa, and that his experiences in West-African countries including Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal served merely to validate his beliefs.

The multi-part percussion ensemble in West Africa does serve as a metaphor for *family*, each graduated drum pitch representing a unique individual’s voice. The indispensable part provided by each musical instrument within a typical West African drum ensemble mirrors the traditional African concept of community where the participation of every individual is vital to the success of the group. In a general sense, Blackwell’s ability to create polyrhythmic textures comprised of several distinct voices is analogous to an African community in which unique individuals work together for the common good.

The musicians within a West African percussion ensemble are able to create melodic, multi-layered textures by arranging the various instruments within *hocket* rhythmic patterns. These patterns are characterized by the organization of a rhythmic texture between two or more voices in such a way that, as one sounds, the other is silent (Knapp. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*. p.378). Figures 1A and 1B depict two unique rhythms, and figure 1C the resultant hocket pattern when they are combined:

Figure 1A:

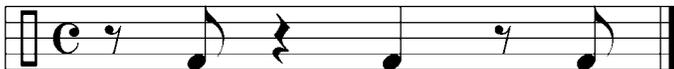


Figure 1B:



Figure 1C:



A melodic pattern is inferred when different sized-drums of varied pitches are combined in this manner. Blackwell often developed polyrhythmic textures and interesting melodic drum phrases through his use of such hocket rhythmic patterns.

While it is true that melodic, pitch-conscious drumming became more common-place among Free Jazz drummers during the 1960's, this concept did not suddenly appear as a new approach to jazz drumming. From as early as the 1920's, the drumming style of [Warren] "Baby" Dodds and his contemporaries from New Orleans is often described as being "melodic." Dodds developed his drumming technique while playing within New Orleans street parades. In the late 19th century, these parade drum sections, consisting of two or more individuals playing either snare drum or bass drum with attached cymbal, were consolidated into something akin to the modern-day drum set. According to jazz pianist and author Philippe Baudoin:

Around 1894, Dee Dee Chandler was one of the first Crescent City drummers to combine various percussion instruments into a set, and, in doing so, invented the New Orleans drum kit. Its basic components were a snare drum, one or two Chinese toms, and a bass drum, pedal-operated by drummer's right foot. Fixed to the bass drum there were woodblocks, cowbells, and a cymbal mounted on a stem (*Anthology of Jazz Drumming: Volume 1 - 1904-1928. Masters of Jazz - MJCD 804. CD liner notes, pp.26-27*).

Like Chandler, Dodds experimented with different configurations of drums, cymbals, and accessory instruments. According to historian Theodore Brown, "Baby Dodds improvised his

first drum equipment by using the rungs from a broken chair as drumsticks” (“A History and Analysis of Jazz Drumming.” p.205). Regarding his musical background and experience growing up in New Orleans, Dodds stated:

I learned in the streets, first learning to beat the big drum [bass drum] correctly so as to know just where to put a particular beat and make it fit with the music. Later I graduated to the side drum [snare drum] (Brown. “A History and Analysis of Jazz Drumming.” pp.205-206).

Robert Palmer offered the following information regarding the evolution of the drumset and the melodic, African-derived drumming style of Dodds:

Old timers who heard the New Orleans marching bands during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remarked on a certain quality of “swing” or syncopation. Originally this was a function of several drummers, but Dodds and those who came after him were able to achieve it on a set of drums which included woodblocks, gourds, cymbals, and other devices as well as snare and bass drums of the parade type. *With sets such as these a single player could create the timbral variety and richness of an entire ensemble of African percussionists* [italics mine] (*The Drums*, liner notes. Impulse ASH-9272-3).

The melodic drumming style of “Baby” Dodds, the first great jazz drummer from New Orleans, influenced the entire lineage of jazz drummers, and it was precisely this tradition of pitch-conscious drumming which became more pronounced and, eventually, the common practice by the 1960’s. Blackwell was apparently shocked to hear just how much he had been influenced by the drumming style of “Baby” Dodds. A.B Spellman recalled:

I once played a “Baby” Dodds solo for him [Blackwell] and he was surprised to hear so much of himself in Dodds, or vice versa (*The Avant-Garde*, CD liner notes. Atlantic 90041-2).

Just as a melodic sense of phrasing was not created by jazz drummers during the Black Nationalist movement, so too the use of polyrhythmic textures was not discovered by the African-conscious, African-American drummers associated with Free Jazz. Rather, the tradition of multi-layered drumset textures began with “Baby” Dodds and his New Orleans contemporaries, and

continued with successive generations. Max Roach, for one, often credits Dodds as being a primary influence upon his awareness of coordinated-independence patterns and polyrhythms.

According to Roach, Dodds:

would play quarter-notes on the bass drum, shuffle rhythm with the left hand, Charleston on the hi-hat, and the chit-ta-chang swing beat with the right hand. He played all those things at one time, and that was swing and independence. Independence has always been there. Baby Dodds and on up - we've always expressed it (Fish. "Max Roach." p.48).³³

Unfortunately, the majority of the recordings "Baby" Dodds made with Joe "King" Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, and Louis Armstrong in the 1920's do not give a true representation of his drumming style. The primitive recording techniques available at the time could not accommodate the timbral qualities and volume levels produced by the drums within a standard drumset. Typically, drummers in the late teens and 1920's were relegated to the use of specific instruments which were recorded more effectively: snare drum rim clicks, wood blocks, and small, "splash" cymbals. It is particularly interesting then to consider Dodds' recording of "Spooky Drums #2," which was released in 1946, as part of a series of solo drum improvisations. The "Africanity" of his performance on "Spooky Drums #2" was described as follows by Guy Remonko:

During the most adventurous section of the solo, Dodds phrases across the bars by creating a cross rhythm sequence (measures 88-94), thus achieving an African-like two-against-three effect within a 4/4 framework ("Spooky Drums #2." p.55).

Figure 2 features a seven-measure phrase played by Dodds on "Spooky Drums #2," highlighting this "cross rhythm sequence." This particular pattern is based on groupings which are three eight-

³³ According to Kevin Whitehead:

Max Roach didn't start listening to Baby Dodds until the early '50's, when his own stylistic development was virtually complete, but he's Dodds' spiritual heir: the complete jazz drummer, Roach has built a universe of percussion sounds on the principles Dodds put forth. If Baby Dodds made the drum-kit talk, Max Roach has made it sing. So much so that people have called him a melodist of the traps ("Max Roach." p.16).

notes in length:

Figure 2:

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff begins at measure 88 and contains a series of rhythmic patterns. Above the staff, there are several slurs and accents. The word "simile" is written above the staff in the middle. The second staff begins at measure 92 and continues the rhythmic patterns with similar slurs and accents.

Dodds' performance on "Spooky Drums #2," in the opinion of critic Robert Palmer, illustrates his ability to create multi-layered drum textures and pitch-based rhythmic patterns reminiscent of West African drumming practices:

At first it sounds like the beginning of a street parade, but before long Dodds is varying the march-like pattern with his own statements and counter-statements until "Spooky" becomes a full-fledged drum improvisation. As a display of motor co-ordination and a performance concerned with the elaboration of basic rhythmic materials and with the creation of planes of percussive color it is clearly within the West African drumming tradition. But the very idea of an improvised drum solo, played by a single drummer performing independent but inter-related parts on a battery of instruments, is an Afro-American innovation ("The Drums," liner notes. Impulse ASH-9272-3).

As stated in Chapter 1, Blackwell considered the drumming vocabulary of Max Roach to be one of the principal influences on his drumming style. It is significant then that Roach's drum solos are often described as showing the influence of traditional African drumming practices, especially in his use of polyrhythmic textures. John Fordham offered the following description of Max Roach's polyrhythmic drumming style:

Max Roach, the most advanced of all the bebop drummers, once said that his ambition was “to do with rhythm what Bach did with melody.” It was a good summary of the multi-layered approach of these drummers [Roach and Kenny Clarke], *superimposing a variety of rhythms upon each other* [italics mine], making the rhythms vary with the musical developments and making the drums more expressive. Closer, in fact, to the African drumming which had otherwise been mostly coarsened and simplified by its migration into jazz. Roach played out-of-meter patterns [i.e. polyrhythms] against the basic beat more adventurously than any of the others in the first generation of bebop - so much so that it was initially difficult to believe that only one drummer was at work (*The Sound of Jazz*. p.47).

Kevin Whitehead further describes the "Africinity" of Roach's drumming style:

Many strains in Roach's work suggest a West African influence: solo drums; a percussion choir [Roach founded the percussion ensemble “M’Boom” in 1973]; the suggestion of talking drums in such titles as “Drum Conversation” and “Percussion Discussion;” the similarity between Nigerian bata drumming and Max's two-tom patterns (“Max Roach: Drum Architect.” p. 17).

One then wonders how Max Roach developed this awareness of traditional West-African rhythmic procedures and the ability to create multi-layered textures. John Storm Roberts supplied the following possible explanations:

By the late 1950's there were quite a number of African musicians in the United States. Meanwhile, the black consciousness movement was turning people's minds toward Africa as a source of pride; thus the two elements fused. Max Roach went to Haiti to study neo-African drumming styles, and *like many other jazz musicians began to listen to the available recordings of African drumming* [italics mine]. Roach, Art Blakey, and other drummers began making a serious attempt to relate African drumming to their own tradition (*Black Music of Two Worlds*. p.254).

This passage, in addition to relating Roach's African-influenced musical experiences in Haiti, suggests that many jazz musicians in the United States were listening to recordings of African music by the 1960's. It is logical to assume that Blackwell would have access to such recordings, and that they too could have informed his African-inspired drumming style.

The ensuing comments by Roach himself present a very revealing synopsis of his earliest experiences with traditional African music which were shared with fellow musicians:

When we started dealing with a group of musicians who came from Africa, dancers and drummers, in the early Forties, that's when I became aware of two against three - because the basic hand drum beat is two against three. I realized that when I did that research trip in Ghana.³⁴ Everything's based on two against three (Fish. "Max Roach." p.48).

It would seem that while Max Roach "became aware" of traditional African drumming (specifically the polyrhythmic pattern, "two against three") in the early 1940's, he did not fully "realize" the true complexities of African polyrhythms until he traveled to Ghana in the seventies. Like Roach's trips abroad, Blackwell's tours of West Africa reinforced and validated his earlier experiences with polyrhythmic patterns.

The fact that Roach was playing polyrhythmic beat patterns (e.g. 6/4 meter "over" 4/4 meter) in the late 1940's and throughout the 1950's suggests that he may have learned much from his initial encounters with African drummers and dancers. During this period, he was also very interested in the application of Afro-Caribbean drum rhythms to the drumset (as evidenced by his study of Haitian music), and this too may have informed his approach to multi-layered textures. Another probable explanation is that he grew up in Brooklyn, New York where he was exposed to Afro-Caribbean drumming. Roach described the influence of this style upon his drumming, specifically his performance on the jazz standard "I'll Remember April," recorded in 1956 by the Clifford Brown/ Max Roach Quintet (*At Basin Street*. Emarcy/Mercury):

I grew up in Brooklyn with people from Jamaica and places like that so I heard that music all the time. And then when the Cubans came to New York, they would have four or five percussionists playing congas and timbales. I was really fascinated by that. I used to wonder, "How are you going to top that stuff? They've got four guys playing, and here I am with my lonely little drumset (Mattingly. *The Drummer's Time*. p.59).

³⁴In 1971, Roach assumed a teaching position at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. It was also during this period, in the mid-seventies, that he secured a research grant and traveled to Ghana, West Africa. According to Roach, he received a "grant from the university and spent one summer in Africa for a course I proposed, called 'History of African Music and Musicians,' and I did a lot of research over there" (Weinstein. *A Night in Tunisia*. p.125).

In addition, Roach often credited the music of Machito and his band, “Machito’s Afro-Cubans,” as being very influential to the development of his drumming style.³⁵ Author Christopher Washburne described the influence of Machito’s percussion section as follows:

By mimicking the interlocking parts of the conga drums, timbales, and bongo drums, he [Roach] gained the independence of all four limbs, creating a technique that revolutionized jazz drumset playing (“The Clave of Jazz.” p.78).

Regardless of the sources which informed his drumming style, Roach’s playing often features polyrhythmic drum beats. Consequently, it is reasonable to assert that these African-derived characteristics associated with Roach's playing influenced the drumming vocabulary of Blackwell.

Another possible contributing factor to the “Africinity” of Blackwell’s drumming might have been his exposure to *batá* drumming and other Afro-Cuban musics early in his development as a musician.³⁶ The following dialogue is taken from a 1988 interview between Blackwell and Kalamu ya Salaam:

Salaam: You also use the cowbell quite a lot.

Blackwell: I have quite a few things I hear with the cowbell. I do a thing with the stick and the cowbell that’s pretty nice. A Cuban drummer I met in Orlando, Florida in the early fifties showed me this rhythm with the bell. It’s a very hip rhythm that sounds almost Brazilian (*Coda*. p.6).

³⁵ Machito [Frank Grillo] was the first important *sonero* (lead singer in a *son* band) in New York City and his band, with Mario Bauza as musical director, initiated the mambo dance craze in the United States during the early 1940’s.

³⁶ According to John Amira:

batá are double headed, hourglass-shaped drums, generally considered to be ‘owned’ by the oricha [God] Changó. The *batá* ensemble is made up of three drums: *iyá* (mother drum), *itótele*, and *okónkolo*. *Iyá*, the largest and lowest-pitched drum, is the lead instrument in the ensemble. It is assigned the most complicated rhythms and has the most freedom for embellishment. *Itótele* is the middle sized drum. It engages in occasional variation as well as regular conversation with the *iyá*. *Okónkolo*, the smallest drum, is generally confined to rhythmic ostinatos (*The Music of Santería*. p.15).

The specific roles described within the *batá* ensemble parallel a typical West African drum ensemble. For example, the *Iyá* drum assumes a West African-derived “master drum” role with its complicated rhythmic patterns and relative freedom with regards to improvisation. The *batá* drumming tradition is associated with Santería, “a religion that has its roots in Cuba, combining West African [specifically the Yoruba people of Nigeria] religious traditions with Catholicism” (Amira.*The Music of Santería*. p.135).

This exchange reveals that Blackwell was exposed to Afro-Cuban music by the early 1950's, several years prior to his recording of "T. & T." on the *Ornette!* session. The influence of Afro-Cuban music and dance upon the development of African-American art forms and the emerging African-American cultural consciousness was summarized by Esi Sylvia Kinney:

Cuban drumming, which has incorporated many African styles including that of the Yoruba, Ibo, Ibibio, Fon, and some Congolese tribes, has retained many undeniably tribal rhythmic patterns, instruments, and manners of performance. The Afro-Cuban style spread north to the United States [beginning in the late 19th century] and was immediately seized upon and further developed (that is, improvised upon, also with the addition of as many other African rhythmic and spatial components as could be employed), both musically and choreographically. In this manner, Cubans were responsible for re-enculturating mainland North Americans with some more directly African retentions. As a result of this, United States blacks became ever more conscious of their African derivation ("Africanisms in Music and Dance of the Americas." p. 56).

In his book *Latin Jazz*, John Storm Roberts described the impact of African-derived, Latin American musical styles upon North American jazz musicians:

Latin music - specifically, Brazilian, Cuban, Argentinean, and Mexican music - has been enormously influential on American jazz. However, until now no one has traced its impact or even recognized how enormously influential it has been throughout the entire history of jazz. When Jelly Roll Morton defined a "Spanish tinge" as essential to jazz, he was being both descriptive of the important role Latin styles played in the birth of jazz and also remarkably prescient in forecasting the central role they would continue to play. The first generation of jazz men drew on Latin elements in melody as well as rhythm. *The first Latin influences were felt in New Orleans* [italics mine], a city that was a melting pot of culture - and also not very far from Mexico or the Caribbean nations as the crow flies. Musicians from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Mexico all lived in the city in the late nineteenth century, and they left an impact on the new music that was developing there (Preface).

A final contributing factor upon the "Africanity" of Blackwell's drumming style is his adaptation of polyrhythmic exercises found within Jim Chapin's drumset method book, "Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer." Chapin outlined the purpose of his method book as follows:

The ultimate aim is to free both hands and both feet from dependence on one another, and to give the drummer the means by which he can, without breaking the rhythmic mood, embellish the beat successfully (p.2).

Blackwell's manipulation of these exercises will be addressed more thoroughly when considering the transcriptions of his drumming at the conclusion of this chapter.

It is not surprising that Blackwell was influenced by Chapin's polyrhythmic exercises. Harold Battiste, Blackwell's colleague in the New Orleans-based group the American Jazz Quintet, revealed the drummer's ongoing interest in multi-layered rhythmic structures and the use of polyrhythms:

In the early 50's, Boogie [Blackwell] had an on-going challenge bet with me that I could not write a polyrhythm that he could not play. So, every day that summer he'd come by the Lafitte Project pool where I worked to play the rhythms I had written the day before. I never beat him! ("Boogie Live," liner notes. AFO 92-1228-2).

While Blackwell was well-versed in the performance of polyrhythms early in his development as a musician, the following passage dispels any notions that he consciously studied traditional non-Western musics while living in his hometown:

Robert Palmer: What about your supposedly having studied Afro-Cuban or African drumming in New Orleans? I read that in a couple of places, in A. B. Spellman's "Four Lives in the Bebop Business" and in an interview with Dr. John [Mac Rebennack] in *Down Beat*.

Blackwell: No, the only studying I did in New Orleans was with this friend of mine that got me in the high school band, Wilbur Hogan³⁷ (Palmer. "Ed Blackwell." p.17).

By the time of this interview in 1977, Blackwell had experienced many diverse cultures and musics which, subsequently, shaped the evolution of his drumming style. A highly significant event during this evolutionary process involved Blackwell's tours to West Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East in the late 1960's.

³⁷See Chapter 1 of this research project for more information concerning Blackwell's association with Wilbur Hogan.

Blackwell first traveled to Africa in 1967, playing drumset for the Randy Weston sextet. This group included: Weston, piano; Ray Copeland, trumpet, flugelhorn, and orchestrator; Clifford Jordan, tenor saxophone; Bill [Vishnu] Wood, bass; and Chief Bey, traditional African percussion. Georgia Griggs traveled with the sextet and served as general assistant, coordinator, and historian. She presented the following highly-informative tour itinerary within her *Down Beat* article "With Randy Weston in Africa:"

For three months, from mid-January to mid-April, [we] visited ten countries in West Africa (Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta [currently known as Burkina Faso], Niger, Ghana, Cameroon, Gabon, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast), one in the Middle East (Lebanon), and three in North Africa (United Arab Republic [currently known as Egypt], Algeria, Morocco).

The tour started with two rousing concerts in Dakar, Senegal. *The band members attended a rehearsal of the Senegalese Ballet Troupe - a remarkable outfit* [italics mine]. Then we went to Bamako, Mali, which, though officially very anti-Western, received the sextet warmly and provided an enthusiastic overflow audience for a "History of Jazz" concert presented in a huge East German-built field house.

In Bobo-Dioulasso, Upper Volta, the sextet performed two outdoor concerts for audiences who had not only never heard American jazz but had never heard any kind of "live" entertainment other than their own tribal music - and although they tended to be quiet and curious, they were also receptive and responsive.

In Niamey, Niger, the sextet did one open-air concert in a delightful combination zoo and museum that included replicas of local tribal villages. The band's dressing room was an entire full-scale Hausa village - you don't get that at Philharmonic Hall! Also in Niamey, they played opposite a young local group (which did Latin-style numbers) for a teen-age dance, and proved that Africans will dance to jazz, especially the blues.

Accra, Ghana, the next stop, was a mixture of heaven and hell. The hell was having to appear nearly every night at the U.S. Pavilion of the Ghana International Trade Fair under unbelievably bad conditions, but still managing to reach the huge audiences that patiently put up with the lousy acoustics and the bad design of the place, which makes it impossible to see the stage after the first two rows. *The heaven was performing in a concert that was part of the Ghana Festival of Arts to an incredibly receptive audience, and at the University of Ghana, and getting to hear and tape local tribal music and seeing - both in rehearsal and actual performance - music and dance students from the university doing stylized but authentic adaptations of indigenous tribal music and dance* [italics mine].

In Yaounde, Cameroon, the band performed with a local dance troupe - Les Ballets Bantous [italics mine]- much to the delight of the both audience and

performers, at two concerts, and also performed at Edea, Douala, and Buea.³⁸

Gabon was one of high spots of the tour. The band performed not only in Libreville, the capital, but in Bitam, Franceville, and Mouila in the interior. *In Bitam the sextet heard, and at their regular concert that evening, performed with a local group of young drummers and balafon (a xylophone-type instrument) players, and everyone had a ball. New Libreville, we witnessed and taped one of the most fascinating religious ceremonies anyone could see or hear, combining Roman Catholic and tribal ritual, music, and movement* [italics mine].

In Liberia, the sextet performed at Cottingham College “up country” and four times in Monrovia, the capital, to warm audiences.

Freetown, Sierra Leone, was another swinging city. *We also saw a special performance by the Sierra Leone Dance Troupe that was too good literally - to be true* [italics mine]. The troupe performed at the New York World’s Fair to rave reviews, but they were even better on home ground.

Then to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, for two days, where the band gave one concert at the ultra-posh Hotel Ivoire. After Abidjan, we left West Africa, for our one Middle Eastern stop - Beirut, Lebanon, and two of the most warmly received concerts any group could every hope to perform.

Then on to Cairo and Alexandria for three concerts. The wind-up of the tour was a much-too-rushed eight-day, two-country, six-city tour (via plane, car, and train) to Algiers, Constantine, and Oran in Algeria; and Casablanca, Marrakech, and Rabat in Morocco. *Perhaps Morocco was the most enthusiastic country of all* [italics mine].

The experiences Blackwell had while on this tour proved an epiphany for the New Orleans native, as he realized that many of the characteristics and practices he associated with his birthplace were actually derivative of West Africa. For example, he made the following general observations regarding the people of Africa:

Africa really reminded me of the south, the way the people live and the whole atmosphere of it. I’d see people that reminded me of home everywhere I went. You’d see your father and you’d see your mother, and it was such a close resemblance that I really got nostalgic (Wilmer. “Ed Blackwell.” p.19).

He also noted similarities between the marketplaces found in both New Orleans and Africa, and

³⁸ Blackwell recounted this experience as follows:

We had a chance to play with an African troupe from the Cameroon. It was a dance troupe and they were traveling with only one log [slit drum] drummer. We [Weston’s sextet] did a concert with them. I had a chance to play with the guy and talk to him. There were two women and two guys dancing, and they were fantastic. They really had the whole show with just that drummer! (Fish. “Ed Blackwell.” p.88).

later recalled that:

in West Africa, quite a lot of places reminded me of New Orleans. You'd see these vendors, these women on the street selling those plantains and fish, and I thought I was back in New Orleans (Palmer. "Crescent City Thumper." p.18).

Finally, he observed striking similarities between the funeral traditions found in New Orleans and Ghana, West Africa:

By going to Africa I was able to really dig how much the African culture was maintained in New Orleans as far as their funeral parades. In Africa, when they have funerals, everybody dresses up real colorful and, after they're through with everything, they have dancing and a big celebration. That was the same thing in New Orleans. They'd march to the graveyard with the body and they'd put the body down. Then they'd come back dancing.

Africans, I guess, had the concept that death brings on another life, so it was not anything to be sad about. It's just that the soul is gone to another life. That's the same concept they have in New Orleans. I didn't realize that until I went to Africa and I was able to reflect on the way the funerals were in New Orleans. We had a chance to see a couple of funerals in different places in Africa. (Fish. "Ed Blackwell." p.88).

Following his initial three-month tour of Africa, Blackwell returned twice more with Weston, once late in 1967 and again in 1968, both trips to Morocco. Each trip lasted several months. Valerie Wilmer, who traveled with Weston's entourage for a few months during the summer of 1968, recalled a memorable concert with Weston's trio, and, in particular, Blackwell's ability to generate polyrhythmic textures:

...an adaptation of Nigerian Bobby Benson's highlife number, "Niger mambo," was the highlight. Blackwell was featured on this, his long-awaited chance to express his phenomenal way with the drum [Blackwell had recently fallen off a motorcycle and broke his shoulder. This concert marked his first performance in several weeks]. He started out the rhythm on cowbell, the crowd giving a shout of astonishment when they realized he planned a one-handed solo. His pattern was simple, effortlessly alternating from cowbell to tuned side-drum [tom-tom]. Then he switched from side-drum to bass drum and snare, making the skins shout and setting up a polyrhythmic conversation with himself that drove the crowd over the edge ("Mama Said There'd Be Days Like This." p.183).

Blackwell's numerous tours of Africa exposed him to many varied traditional musical

styles, heightened his general appreciation of African musics, and fostered his understanding of their organization. In particular, he was very impressed with the multi-layered, polyrhythmic drumming he heard. Regarding various performances he witnessed, Blackwell recalled that:

individually they were very simple rhythms that would become complex when they would merge. If you had the chance to walk around the group while they were playing, you could see each cat playing a different rhythm. It was a very simple rhythm that they played, but when you hear the overall thing, man! It reminded me so much of the way guys used to play in New Orleans (Fish. p.88).

Blackwell also made field recordings and took extensive notes as a way to preserve the practices he would adopt himself:

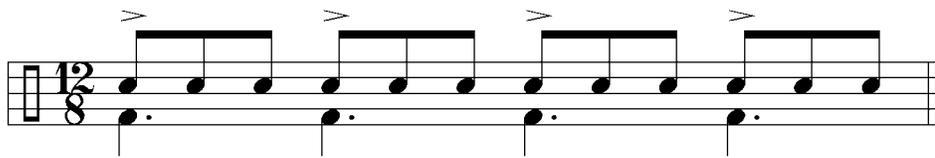
I was able to tape some of the stuff on my tape recorder until I ran out of batteries. It was difficult finding batteries around Africa! Some of the things I taped I was able to retain, but after traveling to so many different places, you hear something new and it would just wipe out what you'd just heard. I was exposed to so much stuff that I was able to retain very little. *I was able to retain the overall effect of the African drummers* [italics mine] as far as how the rhythms would affect an individual, and how to try to relate my own rhythm to that way of playing (Fish. p.88).

The majority of the transcriptions selected for this chapter reveal Blackwell's manipulation of polyrhythms, his use of syncopated ostinatos and drum-based beat patterns (i.e. as opposed to a conventional ride cymbal pattern), and his understanding of the drumset as a "family of rhythms." These transcriptions reflect how he retained the *overall effect* of African music within his drumming style. Discretion must be exercised, however, when analyzing these transcriptions. The fact that Blackwell played a syncopated drum pattern on a particular tune does not necessarily define that performance as "West-African," nor does it indicate his conscious adaptation of an African rhythm. Along these lines, Conrad Silvert stated that Blackwell merely "*reinforced* [italics mine] the African elements of his playing when he toured the African continent with Randy Weston" ("Beauty is a Rare Thing." p.19).

Before considering any African-inspired transcriptions of Blackwell's drumming, it is first

necessary to outline a few elements which characterize traditional African rhythmic structures, namely divisive rhythms, additive rhythms, cross-rhythms, and syncopation. According to the prominent Ghanaian ethnomusicologist Kwabena Nketia, *divisive* rhythmic phrases are “broken up into an *equal* number of segments” (*The Music of Africa*. p.130). Figure 3 features divisive rhythm in 12/8 meter:

Figure 3:

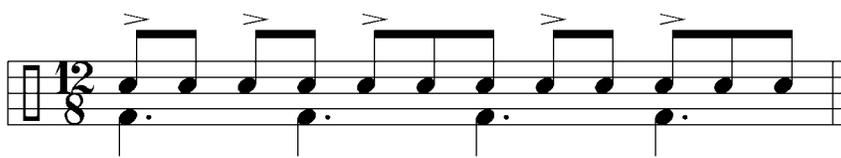


In this example, the eighth-note groupings and the accent pattern correspond directly with the underlying pulse of the music, the dotted quarter-note.

By contrast, note values and phrase groupings within *additive* rhythmic structures do not correlate with the regular divisions of the given time span. In other words, additive rhythmic patterns are broken into an *unequal* number of segments (Nketia. *The Music of Africa*. p.129).

Figure 4 depicts additive rhythm within a 12/8 time span:

Figure 4:



In figure 4, the eighth-note groupings and the accents do not coincide with the dotted quarter-note pulse.

The term *cross-rhythm* refers to “a rhythm in which the regular pattern of accents of the prevailing meter is contradicted by a conflicting pattern and *not merely by a momentary displacement* [italics mine] which leaves the prevailing meter fundamentally unchallenged (Randel. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*. p.216). One of the defining characteristics of a

much like a march (figure 7):

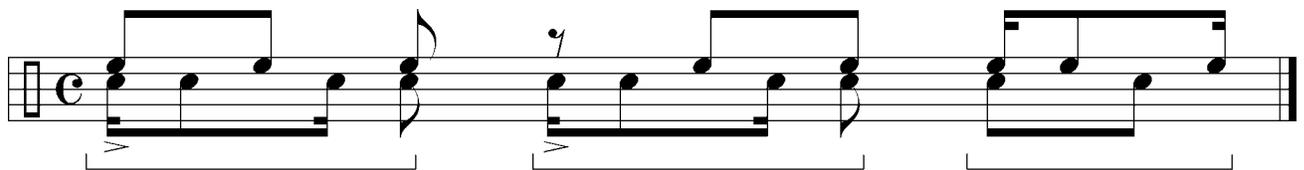
Figure 7:



The accent pattern in figure 7 depicts a phrase structure akin to the Afro-Cuban *són* clave rhythm and, therefore, does imply a “Latin feeling.”

In figure 8, Blackwell’s “Latin” beat pattern has been rewritten in order to show more clearly its relationship to the *són* clave. It is evident from this example that the composite drum melody suggests a phrase structure based on the following eighth-note sequence: 3 + 3 + 2. The result is syncopation created through the use of additive phrase structures.

Figure 8:



After Coleman and Don Cherry played the “T. & T.” melody, Blackwell constructed an “open solo” (i.e. not corresponding to any pre-determined formal structure) based on several varied thematic ideas, timbres, meters, and tempos. His solo opens with material reflecting the bebop language. In fact, several phrases throughout this solo highlight vocabulary established by Max Roach and/or Kenny Clarke, as evidenced by the 16-measure phrase in Figure 9:⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Figure 9 features several ideas which are similar to the Max Roach-inspired transcriptions found in Chapter 1 of this research project, specifically Blackwell’s solo on “To Brownie” (see Chapter 1, figure 6). Similarities include syncopated eighth-note rhythmic groupings, clearly-defined 8-measure phrases with endings marked by a use of space, theme and variations in terms of rhythmic motives, and a “sing-song” melodic flow created by the alternation of high and low pitches.

Figure 9:

1
(snares on)

5

9
(snares off)

13

Roughly one minute into his “T. & T.” solo, Blackwell initiated, what I shall refer to as, a “foot ostinato” with his hi-hat and bass drum (figure 10):

Figure 10:

This ostinato pattern, which suggests a march-like quality akin to a New Orleans parade beat, was

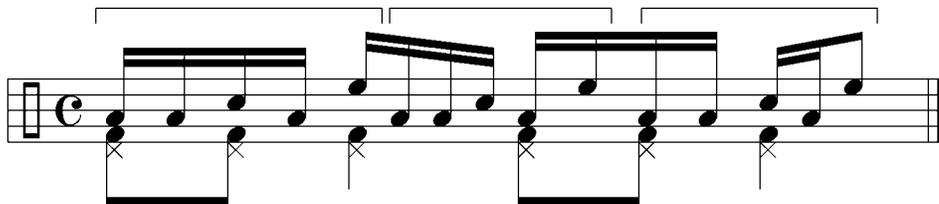
employed by Blackwell throughout his career.⁴¹ His use of such ostinatos is similar in function to the “timeline” within an African drum ensemble. According to Ingrid Monson:

It is important to note that this idea of one limb carrying a solid, repeating rhythmic pattern that other rhythms are played against has strong continuities with both West African drum ensembles and the Caribbean percussion sections they have influenced. The function of the ride cymbal in bebop drumming is analogous to that of the bell pattern played by the *gankogui* in Ewe drum ensembles (Brown. “A History and Analysis of Jazz Drumming to 1942.” p.5-6; Locke. *Drum Gahu*. p.16). This repeating pattern is the reference point against which the remaining percussion instruments orient their parts. The difference is that in the jazz drum set, one player coordinates the multiple rhythmic parts, which in turn must hook up or interlock with the remaining instrumental layers of the ensemble (*Saying Something*. p.57).

This relatively simple foot ostinato furnished a constant background upon which Blackwell could weave syncopated patterns, as evidenced in figures 11A and 11B. These particular examples also feature additive rhythmic structures as follows:

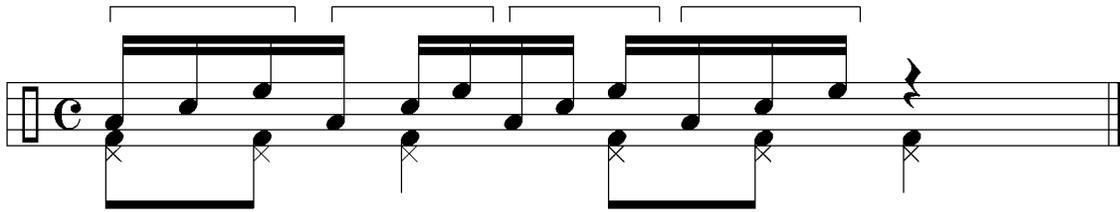
- figure 11A is comprised of three cells, each five 16th-notes in length;
- figure 11B is comprised of four cells, each three 16th-notes in length.

Figure 11A:



⁴¹ This particular solo marks the first recorded example of Blackwell’s bass drum/hi-hat ostinato known to this author.

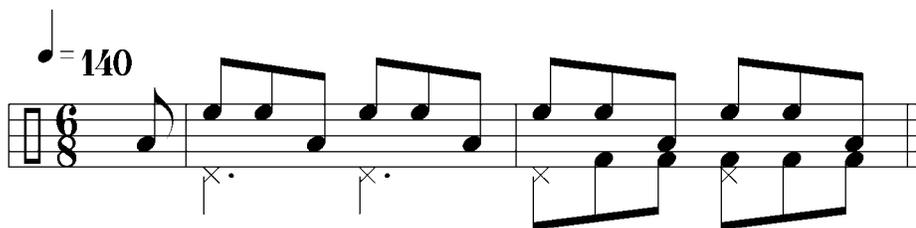
Figure 11B:



The intersection of the eighth-note pattern within Blackwell's foot ostinato with various additive rhythmic structures played on the other instruments of the drumset creates a great deal of rhythmic tension. It is probable that Schuller (among others) viewed these types of passages as being inspired by traditional West-African drumming practices.

Following numerous variations of these additive patterns, Blackwell brought his solo to a complete stop. Then, after a moment of silence, he continued with the following material.

Figure 12:



This particular example (figure 12), more than any other material within Blackwell's solo, may have been what prompted Schuller's assessment - "one of the purest examples of African drumming in jazz." The 6/8 meter and overall feeling immediately suggest an African or Afro-Cuban drumming pattern, and not a standard "swing" groove. This feeling is established, in great part, through Blackwell's timbral selections. In the first place, he adopted the mounted-tom and floor-tom sonorities, as opposed to the snare drum timbre more closely associated with Western-European march traditions. In addition, his use of the hi-hat to outline the dotted quarter-note

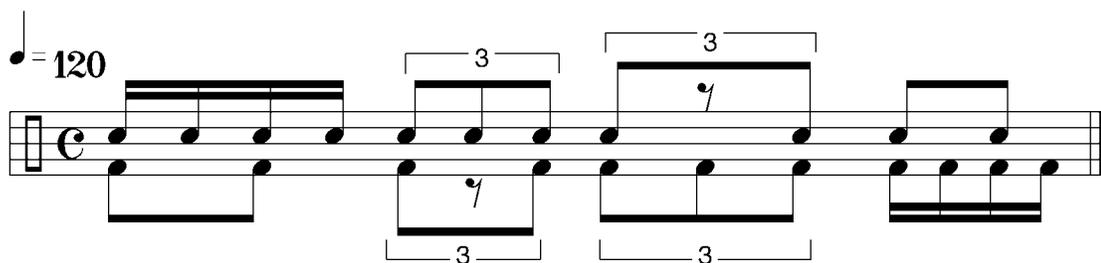
pulse is reminiscent of a Ghanaian *axatse* rattle part, both in terms of sound quality and function. Also noteworthy is the absence of the ride-cymbal timbre, *the* defining sonority within jazz drumset performance. In other words, the instruments Blackwell used suggest a timbral context quite similar to a West-African drum ensemble.

The material in figure 12 also features three distinct layers within the composite texture: the tom-tom material, the basic pulse sounded by the hi-hat, and the soloistic bass drum figures. This concept of multi-layered textures created through the vertical alignment of several individual parts is one of the characteristic elements of traditional West African drumming, as well as the African-derived batá drumming. Finally, this portion of Blackwell’s solo is fairly repetitive, in that the tom-tom and hi-hat parts remain constant and the bass drum figures vary only slightly. The use of repetitive rhythmic patterns which build in intensity stems from non-Western musical practices and aesthetic values, and it was precisely these qualities which prompted Schuller to write the following liner notes for “T. & T.:

Tremendously pulsating, through a deft combination of repetition and variation, he [Blackwell] generates the deep earthy feeling and pattern-conscious continuity of his forebears’ art of drumming.

Following the 6/8 portion of his solo, Blackwell played a seemingly intricate passage which infers a multi-layered texture. In actuality, this section emphasizes a type of “mirror image” motive, wherein the top rhythm is the inverse of the bottom (figure 13):

Figure 13:



When played in a fashion so that the subdivisions do not line up vertically (as heard on “T. & T.”), this passage sounds very complex and gives the *illusion* of more parts than the two drums which are actually sounding.

The final excerpt taken from Blackwell’s solo on “T. & T.” is shown in figure 14. This section is particularly noteworthy due to his extensive use of cross-rhythms. The initial motive (mm. 1-3) consists of five-note groupings (labeled “A-D”) in which Blackwell established the following drum-based melodic pattern:

- figure “A”: snare to mounted tom
- figure “B”: floor tom to mounted tom
- figure “C”: snare to mounted tom
- figure “D”: floor tom to mounted tom

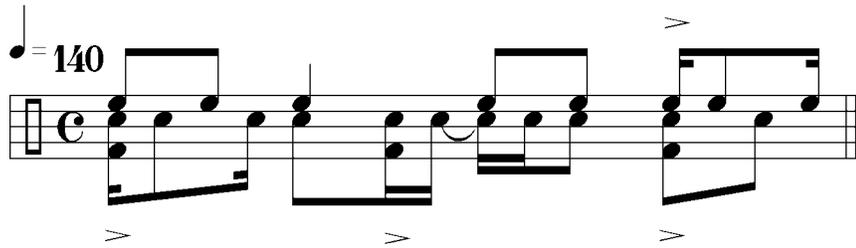
Beginning in measure 5, Blackwell played the same five-note groupings, but the figures have been displaced by one 16th-note. In other words, the pattern in measure 5 begins on the fourth sixteenth-note, as opposed to the third sixteenth-note as seen in measure 1. Finally, in measures 9-16, Blackwell played a slightly altered rendition of the initial eight-bar phrase. This excerpt once again chronicles Blackwell’s ability to create symmetrical phrase structures comprised of melodic drum motives.

Figure 14:

The figure displays four staves of musical notation in 2/4 time. The first staff begins at measure 1 and is divided into four sections labeled A, B, C, and D. Each section consists of two measures of music. The notes are primarily eighth notes, with some beamed sixteenth notes. The second staff begins at measure 5 and is divided into four sections labeled A¹, B¹, C¹, and D¹, following the same structural pattern as the first staff. The third staff begins at measure 9 and features three accents (>) over the final three notes of the piece. The fourth staff begins at measure 13 and concludes with the word "etc." and a double bar line.

After Blackwell completed his solo on “T. & T.,” he again played the clave-inspired beat pattern with which he began the piece (figure 7). During this recapitulation he added a bass drum part to further accentuate the 3 + 3 + 2 additive phrase structure, thus creating a heightened sense of closure (figure 15):

Figure 15:



The material found in figure 15, as well as several other passages from Blackwell's solo on "T. & T.," indeed reflects the "pattern-conscious continuity of his forebears' art of drumming."

Even before the composition "T. & T." was released in 1961, there was recorded evidence of Blackwell's "Africanity," though it was not identified as such until after his tours of West Africa. The John Coltrane/Don Cherry album entitled *The Avant-Garde* (Atlantic Jazz 90041-2) was recorded in 1960, seven years before Blackwell first traveled to Africa with Randy Weston.

A. B. Spellman, who wrote the liner notes for this album, made the following comments regarding the Ornette Coleman composition "The Blessing:"⁴²

There is a particularly elaborate muted trumpet solo by Cherry on this one, and a subtle mallet solo by Blackwell that evinces his study of *batá* and African drumming.

While he had been exposed to at least one Cuban bell-pattern in the early 1950's, Blackwell had obviously not studied African drumming at the time this particular album was recorded. However, *The Avant-Garde* was not released until 1967, and it is likely that Spellman wrote the liner notes at that time. It is also probable that he was aware of Blackwell's first African tour with Randy Weston that same year. It is logical then to assume that Spellman may have mistakenly suggested

42 Within his liner notes for *The Avant Garde*, A.B. Spellman offered the following information regarding the genesis of the composition "The Blessing:"

Blackwell says that when they lived together in Los Angeles, Ornette [Coleman] used to use the figure that "The Blessing" is based on to warm up his alto in the morning, and that he heard it as a working tune for the first time when he came to work with Ornette at the Five Spot [in New York City].

Blackwell's "study of African drumming" due to the close proximity of the drummer's trip to Africa and the album's release, both in 1967.

The following 16-measure transcription from "The Blessing" (figure 16) depicts the opening phrase of Blackwell's solo. This passage represents the only material from this solo which sounds remotely "African" or "Afro-Cuban."

Figure 16:

(snares off) [w/mallets]

♩ = 170

1

5

9

13

The most significant aspect in figure 16 is the cross-rhythm which Blackwell established between his bass drum and hi-hat. This series of three-note groupings outlines a compound metric pattern (e.g. 3/8 or 6/8) with no perceptible relationship to the original pulse or 4/4 meter. The material Blackwell played over this foot ostinato pattern (i.e. mm. 5-8 and 13-16) is, however, rooted firmly in the original pulse and meter.

The vertical alignment of the bass drum/hi-hat ostinato with the drum melodies creates a great deal of rhythmic tension. For this reason alone, figure 16 does give the impression of African-inspired drumming. If the foot ostinato were removed, however, this passage would be typical of most any other Max Roach-influenced material Blackwell played during his career. For example, his affinity for symmetrical structures is in evidence, with four 4-measure phrases in a kind of A-B-A-B format. The off-beat cymbal motive found in mm. 1-4 and 9-12 connects the “A” portions of this excerpt. The “B” sections are similarly linked by syncopated drum motives.

Don Cherry made the following insightful comments regarding Blackwell’s playing on *The Avant-Garde* session (taken from the album liner notes):

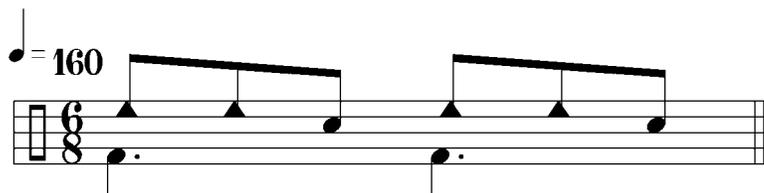
Blackwell really had his chops up on this record. He plays the drum set as a whole, so that its sound is total, but at the same time he maintains separate rhythms. All this with an even-handed balance.

The assertion that he “plays the drum set as a whole” is certainly in keeping with Blackwell’s concept of a “family of rhythms.” Similarly, the statement that Blackwell “maintains separate rhythms” validates his ability to create multi-layered drum textures. Finally, by Blackwell’s “even-handed balance,” Cherry is referring to his precise, fluid drumming technique.

Dewey Redman’s album “Tarik” and the Don Cherry release “Mu,” both recorded in 1969 after Blackwell’s several tours of Africa, highlight numerous other examples of the “Africinity” present within his drumming. The album “Mu” in particular, consisting entirely of duets by Don Cherry and Blackwell, offered the drummer a great deal of freedom to experiment with varied textures and beat patterns. The opening track on this album, “Brilliant Action,” establishes an

African-inspired idiom, with Blackwell playing several different accompanimental beats featuring diverse timbres, meters, and tempos. At the outset, Blackwell played rubato figures (i.e. “colors”) on the drums and cymbals in reaction to Cherry’s “free” playing. Then, when Cherry established a tempo, he played the jazz ride-cymbal pattern and snare drum comping figures, very much in keeping with the bebop tradition. Next Blackwell played the first seemingly African-derived material, represented in following pattern.

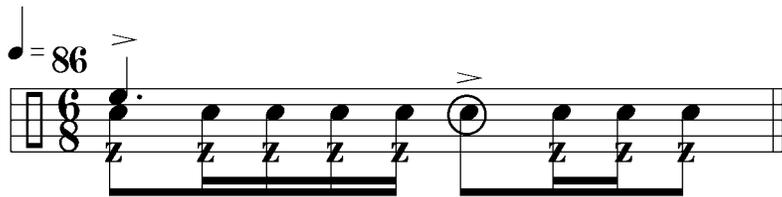
Figure 17:



The techniques and motives used in “T. & T.” seem to have initiated an approach to soloing that would become characteristic within Blackwell’s drumming style. For example, the beat found in “Brilliant Action” is virtually the same material Blackwell played on that composition (see figure 12), the only discernible difference being his timbral choices. If anything, Blackwell’s use of the cowbell in figure 17 sounds *more* “African:” its timbre suggesting an African timeline pattern. At the two and one-half minute-mark, Blackwell played the same New Orleans “street beat” as found on “T. & T.” (see figure 7). The remainder of his playing on this track features extended solos and accompanimental time-keeping based on Bebop drumming vocabulary.

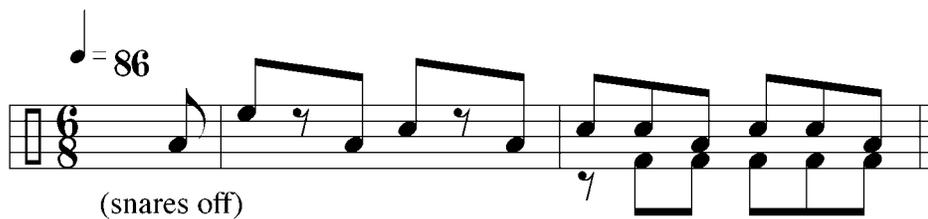
The piece “Sun of the East,” also from the Don Cherry album “Mu,” contains several interesting beat patterns. Within the opening rubato section of this tune, Blackwell played the exact same “mirror-image” motive as found on “T. & T.” (see figure 13). Next, he established a slow 6/8 groove marked by the “swish” technique/timbre characteristic of the wire brushes (figure 18):

Figure 18:



Blackwell then continued the 6/8 groove, but shifted to a different motive; a beat pattern, again, quite similar to one found on “T. & T.” (see figure 12):

Figure 19:



At roughly the four minute-mark in “Sun of the East,” Blackwell again played the New Orleans “street beat” heard in both “T. & T.” (see figure 7) and “Brilliant Action.” Following this street beat, he played a pattern which, when combined with the bamboo flute playing of Cherry, sounds more like an African-inspired beat than any other material on this album:

Figure 20:



That this beat *sounds* “African” can be attributed to Blackwell’s use of multi-layered textures, hocket rhythms, syncopation, specific timbres (i.e. no ringing cymbals), and repetition.

The fascinating truth is that Blackwell adapted this pattern from a drumset instruction book written in 1948 by Jim Chapin, called “Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer - Volume 1.” Phil Hey, a close friend and protégé of Blackwell for many years, once asked him about this particular groove; wondering if, in fact, traditional West African drumming was the catalyst. Apparently, Blackwell informed him that “No, that came from the Chapin book.”⁴³ The following exercise (figure 21) comes from “Section II - Part C” of this method book, the portion featuring polyrhythms (p.33). A comparison of figures 20 and 21 reveal a striking similarity. In fact, Blackwell’s only alterations of Chapin’s original pattern include his use of two timbres in the top part, and the additional bass drum notes on beats 2 and 4.

Figure 21:



Throughout his career, Blackwell used this pattern as one of his principal solo motives, often varying his timbral choices to infer a theme and variations format.⁴⁴

The composition “Amejelo,” also from the Cherry recording “Mu,” was named after the 6/8 bell pattern which Blackwell played during the first few minutes of this tune (figure 22). The following statement features Blackwell’s response when asked about the “Africanity” of such cowbell patterns:

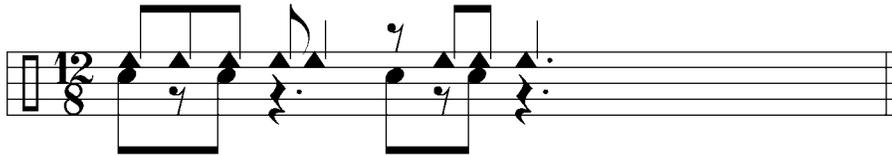
⁴³ This information stems from an interview with Phil Hey in 1997. Hey also believes that Blackwell “mixed and matched a lot from all these books [i.e. various drumset and snare drum method books], but in ways to make authorship moot.”

⁴⁴ Blackwell typically reversed the position of these two parts (i.e. sixteenth-based part on top) when notating this pattern. The configuration in Figure 21 was adopted to be consistent with the other timbral variations of this pattern (e.g. Figure 20).

Figure 23A:



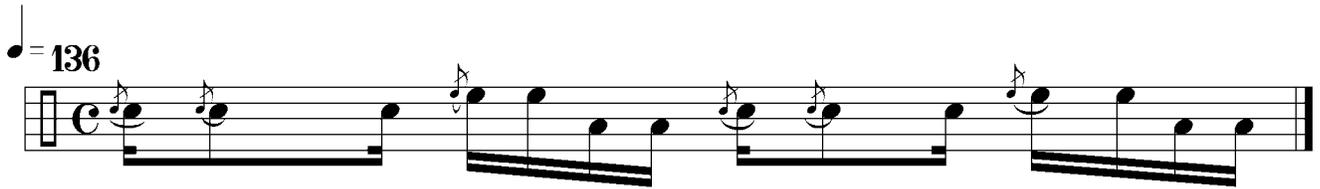
Figure 23B:



The title-track from Dewey Redman’s album “Tarik” sounds quite similar to the music of Northern Africa. Redman played a musette on this selection, a double-reed instrument similar in tone to the North African wind instrument called *alghaita*. His playing also features melismatic passages associated with the music from North African countries. “Tarik” begins with a beat-pattern (figure 24) which Blackwell played, apart from his drum solo, throughout the entire five-minute tune.⁴⁵ The bass part played by Malachi Favors is quite percussive and repetitive and, therefore, fits as another piece of the hocket “puzzle.” In addition, the lack of a piano or other harmonic instrument on this album strengthens the non-Western quality or feeling of the performance.

⁴⁵ Royal Hartigan’s 1986 Ph.D. Dissertation *Blood Drum Spirit: Drum Languages of West Africa, African-America, Native America, Central Java, and South India* was consulted concerning this transcription (p.250). Mr. Hartigan, an acclaimed drumset artist and World Music scholar, has been on the faculty of both Wesleyan University and The New School in New York City. Currently, Hartigan is teaching at San Jose State University. His other publications include *West African Rhythms for Drumset* [New York: Warner-Brothers Publications, 1995].

Figure 24:



It is my contention that the material found in figure 24, while sounding “African,” was also adapted by Blackwell from the polyrhythmic exercises in Chapin’s “Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer.” Figure 25 represents the exact exercise from this book (hence forth referred to as “C1”) which served as Blackwell’s inspiration (Section II, Part C, p.33):

Figure 25:

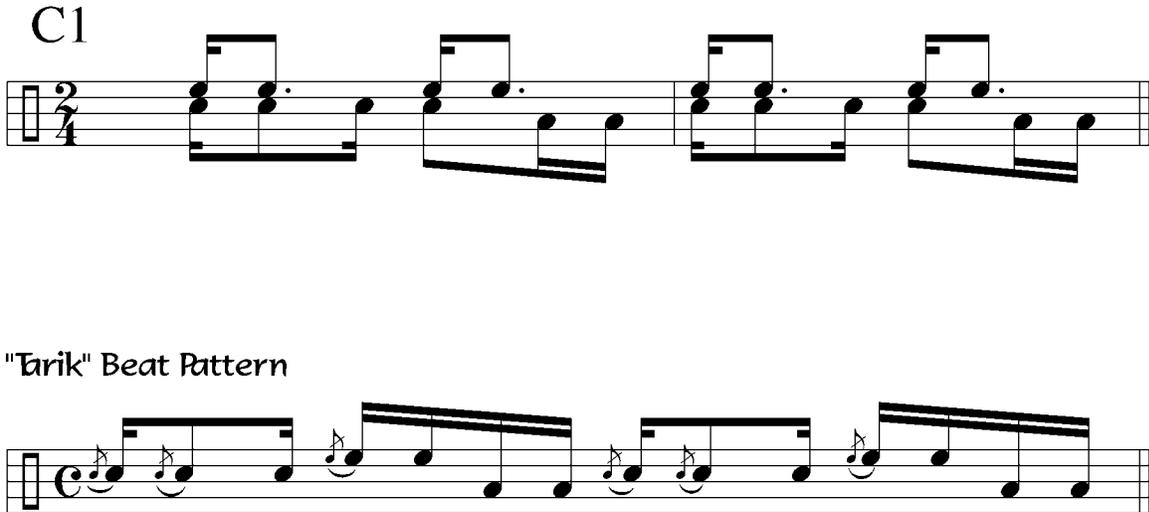


It is much easier to see the relationship between Blackwell’s groove on “Tarik” and exercise “C1” if the latter is rewritten as follows:

- cut the note-values in half - i.e. eighth-notes to sixteenth-notes;
- change the meter signature, from 4/4 to 2/4;
- invert the patterns to conform with standardized drumset notation.

For purposes of comparison, this revision of “C1” and Blackwell’s beat pattern on “Tarik” are both presented in figure 26:

Figure 26:



Blackwell did modify the Chapin pattern somewhat (e.g. the first two mounted tom-tom notes were actually played as grace-note figures on the snare drum), but it is possible that figure “C1” served as inspiration for Blackwell’s beat pattern on “Tarik.” The fact that Blackwell himself claimed to adapt another polyrhythmic example from “Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer,” an example located on the very same page as the “C1” material, is further evidence of this relationship.

Blackwell participated in several other recording sessions in the years surrounding his trips to Africa. These recordings reflect his versatility and sensitivity to the surrounding musical context. For example, vibraphonist/composer Karl Berger recorded the album “Karl Berger and Company” in 1969, just two weeks after Don Cherry and Blackwell recorded “Mu.” Nothing about Blackwell’s drumming on the Berger recording sounds even remotely “African,” while his playing on “Mu” portrays several African-inspired examples. The fact that “Mu” was recorded as a duo offered Blackwell the freedom to explore varied timbres and grooves. Better said, the duo

setting *required* Blackwell to assume a predominantly “compositional” role, which helped define the shape and flow of Cherry’s tunes. In addition, Cherry was a devout student of music from non-Western cultures, particularly Africa. The tunes which he wrote for the “Mu” session, the instruments he used (e.g. bamboo flute and various idiophones), as well as his performance style (e.g. singing with a gruff, “throaty” sound) all reflect his affinity for African music and culture. It is not difficult to understand why Blackwell, having already been to Africa three times by the time the “Mu” session was recorded, would play African-sounding drum grooves to complement Cherry’s musical concept.

By way of contrast, the “Karl Berger and Company” album features, besides Blackwell, Dave Holland on bass, Carlos Ward on alto saxophone and flute, and Berger on vibraphone. This type of ensemble (i.e. a jazz quartet) requires a different approach to the drumset, especially when compared with a duo setting. First of all, the quartet configuration allowed less “space” for Blackwell to create since more musicians were looking to fulfill their musical roles (e.g. harmonic comping rhythms on the vibraphone and “walking” bass lines) and were vying for solo space. In addition, Berger’s tunes stem from a post-Bebop, Free Jazz sensibility. Accordingly, Blackwell’s drumming features Bebop-inspired phrasing and timbres (e.g. ride cymbal ostinatos). It would have sounded highly inappropriate if Blackwell had launched into the “Amejelo” cowbell beat in the middle of a bass solo by Holland, simply because he could. Sensitivity to the surrounding musical context requires a great deal of maturity, discretion, control, and taste - four qualities easily attributed to Blackwell.

Apart from the African-sounding “T. & T.,” what are the defining characteristics of the other pieces recorded during the *Ornette!* session? There are three other selections on this album (“W.R.U.,” “C. & D.,” and “R.P.D.D.”) and none of them includes any overtly African-derived drumming by Blackwell. The instrumentation on *Ornette!*, like that of *Karl Berger and Company*, features a quartet. The *Ornette!* configuration (i.e. alto saxophone, trumpet, bass, and drums), however, is markedly different without the presence of a harmonic instrument. Still, the fact that

Scott LaFaro played “walking” bass lines to accompany the extended solos by Coleman and Don Cherry on “W.R.U.,” “C. & D.,” and “R.P.D.D.,” compelled Blackwell to follow suit; to also play time-keeping and comping figures derivative of the Bebop style. Again, the end-result would have been strange, to say the least, if Blackwell had played a beat pattern not typically associated with the Bebop vernacular within this context.

In 1977, Blackwell discussed his beliefs regarding the implementation of non-Western, non-Bebop drumming vocabulary within a jazz context:

Robert Palmer: When you play with someone like [Don] Cherry, who is so heavily into ethnic musics, does he give you specific patterns to play? Do you consciously use rhythm patterns that you’ve studied that are African rhythms? Or do you just fit into what’s going on?

Blackwell: That’s what it is, a process of feeling it as it goes along. Otherwise the patterns wouldn’t fit in because the music keeps changing. Every time I play with Donald he’s in another bag. He’s always evolving with different rhythms, and you have to go with what is happening at the time (Palmer. “Crescent City Thumper.” p.18).

As demonstrated, numerous statements have been made regarding the Africanity of Blackwell’s drumming, perhaps the earliest being Schuller’s liner notes for the “T. & T.” recording session. Valerie Wilmer offered the following additional comments in a 1968 article:

One of the predominant features of Blackwell’s drumming, aside from its intricate looseness, is a very *African-sound beat* [italics mine] (“Street Parade Fan.” p.10).

Lee Jeske referred to “Blackwell’s outstanding tribal percussive panorama” in his 1982 liner notes for a Jemeel Moondoc recording (*Judy’s Bounce*. Black Saint Records 121051-2. Recorded November 9, 1981). Conrad Silvert suggested that when Blackwell “played an extended solo at Town Hall on ‘Togo,’ the man conjured up a whole battery of hand drummers” (“Beauty is a Rare Thing.” p.19).

While it is difficult to refute such statements, it is even more difficult to prove them true. A convenient phrase like “a very African-sounding beat” certainly may provide a number of images, both aural and visual, for the reader. But what exactly is an “African-sounding beat”? The concept of a “percussive panorama” is vague at best. And, although the phrase “a battery of hand drummers” is more specific, how is this music organized and what does it sound like?

Analysis of transcriptions is critical in order to trace the possible sources of Blackwell's African-sounding drumming style. Examples of his playing recorded prior to his first African tour in 1967 which depict African-inspired rhythmic concepts reveal his New Orleans roots and his musical background. In fact, most of the African-sounding drumming recorded by Blackwell *after* his trips to Ghana, Nigeria, and Morocco features exactly the same material heard on “The Blessing” and “T. & T.,” recorded in 1960 and 1961 respectively. Virtually all of the African-sounding drumming on the 1969 Don Cherry recording “Mu” can be traced to Blackwell’s musical vocabulary established prior to his African tours (the one exception being the Ghanian-inspired cowbell rhythm on the tune “Amejelo”), and all of this material was first recorded by Blackwell in 1961 on the album *Ornette!*, six years *before* his first tour with Randy Weston. Furthermore, numerous sessions recorded after his trips to Africa show no adaptation of traditional African rhythms, thus reflecting Blackwell’s intention to complement the given musical context.

Blackwell’s tours with Weston did have an impact upon his drumming style and his overall sense of musicality. Certainly, these trips heightened his awareness of melodic drumming patterns. According to Blackwell, “to be able to play the things that I heard in Africa, the drummer has to really hear the drums as a singing instrument” (Wilmer. “As Serious As Your Life.” p.186). However, his experiences in Africa did not necessarily compel him to reproduce literal adaptations of traditional West-African rhythmic patterns. According to Blackwell:

There’s very little that you can just convert over to your own way of playing. You have to get the overall concept [i.e. the essence] of what they’re [African drummers] doing and relate it to whatever you have to play with. That’s what I did (Fish. p.91).

In 1972, Blackwell became an Artist in Residence at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. As a result of this position, he had the opportunity to interact with Ghanaian drummers including Abraham Adzinyah and Freeman Donkor. These experiences prompted a period of study in which Blackwell consciously adapted West African dance rhythms to his drumset vocabulary. Prior to this position at Wesleyan University and his conscious adaptation of West African rhythms, Blackwell was predominantly influenced by the “overall concept” of traditional African music; the *spirit* of the music with its intrinsic vitality and passion. Blackwell summarized the impact of his experiences with traditional African drumming as follows:

The freedom I’ve always felt for drumming I really could hear in the drummers in Africa. I feel more uninhibited now as far as the right and wrong things to play are concerned. I began to realize that there’s never any wrong way to play if you play the drums (Wilmer. “Ed Blackwell: Well-Tempered Drummer.” p. 19).

The confidence and heightened sense of freedom that Blackwell experienced as a result of his trips to West Africa, when combined with his prodigious drumming technique, his musical background growing up in New Orleans, and his experiences with “Free Jazz,” all merged to develop his mature drumming style. In Chapter 4, transcriptions of Blackwell’s drumming with various musical groups recorded between 1970 and 1992 (i.e. following his trips to Africa) will reveal how these elements coalesced.

CHAPTER 4
SPIRIT OF THE DANCE:
THE MATURE DRUMMING STYLE OF ED BLACKWELL

“Music begins to atrophy when it departs too far from the dance.”
- Ezra Pound

“Blackwell knows about dance. He used to dance in the street in New Orleans. And he has been to Africa, travelled all over Africa. It’s a joyful feeling playing with Blackwell. I feel that when he plays - it’s dancing.”
- Don Cherry

“When I play I imagine someone dancing to the rhythms, get a fixed vision of a dancer in my mind. One of the prime requisites to be a good drummer is to know how to dance - that should be the first thing a drummer learns, even before he gets the drums.”
- Ed Blackwell⁴⁶

The four basic forces that clearly formed Blackwell’s mature drumming style as outlined at the conclusion of the previous chapter must now be expanded to consider his relationship with dance. Royal Hartigan, who studied with Blackwell while a student at Wesleyan University, made the following statement regarding his teachers’ association with dance:⁴⁷

West African music, New Orleans street bands, and jazz all identify dance movements with drum rhythms, and Blackwell observed and participated in all three (Riley and Vidacovich. p.52).

Blackwell first experienced this connection between drumming and dancing at an early age

⁴⁶ Ezra Pound quote taken from *The ABC of Reading*. p.14.

Don Cherry quote taken from Kalamu ya Salaam’s article “Edward Blackwell: The Rhythm King.” p.4.

Ed Blackwell quote taken from *Down Beat* “Blindfold Test.” p.51.

⁴⁷ Hartigan received his M.A. in World Music from Wesleyan University in 1983, his Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology and World Music in 1986.

growing up in New Orleans, and this represents *the* principal defining aesthetic governing his drumming style.

The main purpose of this chapter then is to examine how Blackwell's playing was influenced by the spirit of dance. In addition, transcriptions of his performances recorded between 1976 and 1992 will chronicle the later evolution of his drumming style. Analysis of these transcriptions will confirm that, for the most part, Blackwell's drumming language was established early in his musical career. The transcriptions in this chapter will also reveal that, in performances recorded after his tours of Africa, Blackwell predominantly manipulated rhythmic structures and beat patterns already established within his drumming vocabulary to suit the particular context. The following categories of excerpts show how Blackwell developed and varied those elements encoded early in his musical career: 1) examples showing the influence of his New Orleans roots, 2) examples which reflect Bebop-inspired vocabulary, 3) examples which feature the literal adaptation of traditional African rhythms, and 4) other miscellaneous influences (e.g. polyrhythmic exercises, additive phrase structures, and rhythmic patterns derived from Afro-Cuban music).

As it will be recalled from Chapter 1, Blackwell's experiences growing up in Crescent City mark his first encounters with dance. For example, he often credited his sister's tap dancing as one of his earliest influences. According to Blackwell:

I had a sister who was a tap dancer, and when I was a kid I used to hear her just along the hall, practicing her routines and going through the taps. I used to make up drumsticks and sit on the floor and try to play the way she was dancing. As my playing developed, I found that when I played *I had this fantasy in my head of people dancing to the rhythms* [italics mine] (Mathieson. "Tap, March, and Dance." p.28).

Both his sister and a brother also danced with a touring show and, whenever their vaudeville company visited the New Orleans area, Blackwell would sit behind the band and watch how the drummer interacted with the dancers. He eventually played with similar shows, intently watching

the dancer's movements in order to accentuate their gestures with a cymbal crash or rim shot.

In addition, Blackwell's participation in the New Orleans "second line" and his exposure to the African-derived rhythms performed by the Mardi Gras Indians left an indelible mark on his dance-inspired drumming style. Blackwell explained the influence of the parade tradition upon the playing style of New Orleans drummers as follows:

If you listen to drummers that have grown up there, in practically every one you hear this style of playing that sometimes reminds you of a marching band, then *you get this dancing feeling behind that as well* [italics mine] ("Tap, March, and Dance." p.28).

New Orleans drumset artists capture this "dancing feeling," in part, through their use of the bass drum. According to New Orleans-born drummer and recording studio legend Earl Palmer:

You could always tell a New Orleans drummer the minute he sat down to play. First thing you could tell is how he played his bass drum. He was influenced by the parade drummer (Flans. "Earl Palmer." p.9).

Anthony Brown further described the role of the bass drummer within a New Orleans parade and their connection with dancing as follows:

Anyone who has joined in a New Orleans "second line" (informal parade of participants who follow the band) knows it is the beat of the band's bass drummer that is followed. It is the bass drummer's job to keep the beat for the band and its followers. He plays rhythms that are propulsive, maintaining a rhythmic foundation that is steady and seldom regular. He moves people down the street with a cadence that is alive with varying syncopated figures to accentuate the music or to cue the band. He is the conductor in the absence of a drum major, and *he is always in tune with the dancers* [italics mine] ("The Development of Modern Jazz Drumset Performance." pp.59-60).

The happiness that Blackwell experienced dancing in the New Orleans parades remained with him throughout his life. In fact, it was his joyful, second line-inspired drum beats which, when combined with his other generative influences, made him such a unique, innovative musician. He

attempted to reproduce and perpetuate this same feeling whenever he sat behind the drumset:

I always try to generate the feeling that I got as a kid in New Orleans. I always try to be conscious of the listener, being such an avid listener myself when I was so young. If I can give the same kind of happiness I felt as a kid, I'm really making music (Wilmer. "The Drummer." p.10).

Blackwell played with a number of R & B groups during the 1950's including those led by Roy Brown, Earl King, "Huey "Piano" Smith, and Ray Charles. The main function of such R & B groups is to get people dancing and, in order to accomplish this goal, the drummer must propel the music with an intense, relatively-simple, repetitive beat pattern. Similarly, early jazz groups, particularly the Big Bands of the 1930's and 40's, fulfilled this functional role as dance bands. According to historian Scott DeVeaux, with the advent of the pyro-technical, cerebral Bebop style in the mid-1940's, many jazz musicians made artistic virtuosity the primary objective:

[I] tossed around the heretical notion that jazz since bebop had abandoned the powerful sense of groove that characterized earlier styles. The emphasis on virtuosity, defined primarily as the ability to cut harder and harder chord changes, has pushed groove into the background, *depriving the music of the ability to reach out and involve large audiences* [italics mine].

In African music, the point of a groove is not highlight the virtuosity of the musicians, but to create a social situation. Unfortunately, this runs counter to perceived Western notions of what art is all about. Music that facilitates a social effect, party music or dance music, is considered "merely" functional. High art is separate from such mundane concerns, which results in passive audiences (who have learned not to do anything so vulgar as express their enthusiasm through physical movement) and artists who grow accustomed to the dignity of isolation. High Art should not be confused with artistry itself. The jazz musicians of the 1930's and 40's who found nothing more satisfying than setting thousands of people at the Savoy Ballroom into a raucous, rocking groove, understood this (DeVeaux. "The African Connection." p.7-8).

Blackwell also understood this concept, and his drumming with New Orleans-based R & B groups and rehearsal Big Bands enhanced the spirit of dancing he had experienced as a young boy.

Blackwell's work with the American Jazz Quintet (AJQ) and his mastery of the Bebop vocabulary of drummers such as Max Roach might then seem contrary to his experiences with

drumming and dancing. However, while Blackwell's Bebop drumming was certainly more technically involved than his playing within R & B bands, he still managed to generate an exuberant feeling of dance when performing with the AJQ. To understand this, it is important to realize that *how* Blackwell played within a Bebop context was just as significant as *what* he played, as far as specific rhythms or timbres. For example, Blackwell's "touch" on the drumset (i.e. *how* he struck the drums and cymbals which relates to both drum technique and his concept of tone production), and the way in which he envisioned dancers while drumming were two important factors contributing to the dance-like quality featured in his performances with the AJQ.

Several excerpts from Blackwell's drumming on the Harold Battiste composition "Never More," recorded in 1958 by the American Jazz Quintet on *Boogie Live*, were discussed in Chapter 1. Figure 1 below highlights one additional example of Blackwell's drumming on "Never More." This sixteen-measure passage, which features the material he played behind tenor saxophone soloist Nat Perrilliat, illustrates his ability to create comping figures which display a buoyant, dance-like quality. Figure 1 consists of four 4-measure phrases in an "a-a-b-c" format. The patterns that Blackwell played between his bass drum and snare drum suggest the "sing-song" melodic character often associated with his drumming style. In addition, he used repetitive rhythmic patterns to help delineate the phrases within this solo; the comparison of mm. 5-8 with mm. 1-4 reflects distinct rhythmic similarities. It was through his use of such repetitive rhythmic figures and melodic drum patterns, when combined with his "touch" on the instrument and the dancing images in his mind, that Blackwell could generate comping patterns and solos within a Bebop context which are suggestive of dance.

Figure 1

176

1

5

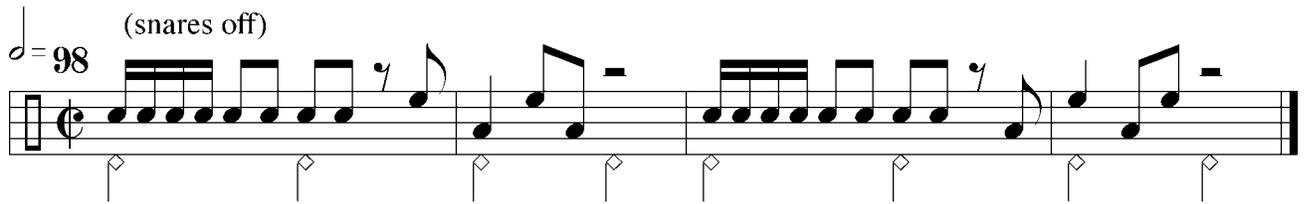
(hi-hat simile)

9

13

Also considered in Chapter 1 was Blackwell's drumming on the Alvin Batiste composition "Nigeria," recorded in 1956 on the AJQ album *In the Beginning*. The beat pattern which Blackwell played during the melody sections of "Nigeria" was referred to by Harold Battiste as "New Orleans Congo." This beat pattern (figure 2), with its accentuation on the second half of beat 2 in every other measure, produced a dance-like feeling similar to the Latin-American rumba.

Figure 2:



In his book *Latin Jazz*, John Storm Roberts illustrates the migration of the *rumba* dance to the United States, and the impact that it had upon jazz musicians:

The next rhythm to migrate to America was the rumba [the first two Latin American dance musics to have a significant impact in the U.S. were the Cuban “danza habanera” in the 1880’s, and the Argentinean “tango” in the teens and twenties], which played seminal role in the popular music scene in the ‘30’s. Uptown Latin bands and downtown jazz groups both played the music, and many musicians freely passed between the two, influencing each other as they spread the rhythm back and forth. From the mid-’30’s through the ‘40’s, the swing bands absorbed the earlier rumba style as yet another element in the pop-jazz mixture (Preface).

Figure 3 features an excerpt from Blackwell’s drum solo entitled “Street Dancing” recorded in 1982 on the Don Cherry/Blackwell duet album *El Corazon* (ECM 1230/78118-21230). This example depicts a beat pattern very similar to the rumba beat which he had played on “Nigeria.” In fact, the comparison of figures 2 and 3 show an emphasis on the second half of beat two as the defining element common to both examples.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Blackwell played this “New Orleans Congo,” rumba-inspired beat pattern very often throughout his career, as evidenced by the following examples:

- 1) “Balafon Samba” from the 1976 Karl Berger/Blackwell duet album *Just Play* (Quart 9996);
- 2) “Togo” from the 1979 album *Old and New Dreams* (ECM-1-1154);
- 3) “We Hope” from the 1980 Dewey Redman/Blackwell duet album *In Willisau* (Black Saint BSR 0093);
- 4) “Status Seeking” from Mal Waldron’s 1986 recording *The Git Go* (Black Saint 121118-2);
- 5) The title track from David Murray’s 1988 release *Ming’s Samba* (Portrait RK 44432).

passage, with its prominent use of the snare drum timbre, reflects the influence of street beats and the New Orleans parade tradition. In addition, figure 5 features what many have proclaimed to be Blackwell’s “profoundly simple” drumming style, as evidenced by the repetitive, relatively simple snare drum figures:

Figure 5:

The musical score for Figure 5 is written for snare drum in 2/4 time with a tempo of 124. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins at measure 1 and includes a hi-hat simile instruction. The second staff starts at measure 6 and features a six-measure phrase. The third staff starts at measure 11 and includes a three-measure phrase. The fourth staff starts at measure 16 and includes another three-measure phrase.

The drumming style of Max Roach informed Blackwell’s playing throughout his career, particularly with melodic drum motives and symmetrical phrase structures which delineate the given song form. Figure 6 depicts Blackwell’s 32-measure solo from the composition “Work,” as recorded on the 1991 Joe Lovano album *From the Soul* (Blue Note CDP7-98363-2). This solo includes several motives and procedures typically associated with Roach. First of all, Blackwell

outlined the thirty-two measure, AABA form with four clearly-defined, 8-measure phrases as follows:

- the ride cymbal timbre, prominent within the first eight measures, is tacet beginning in measure 9;
- the use of space at the end of measure eight, signifies a breath or cadence;
- measure 17, the “bridge,” marks his first use of this straight eighth-note motive played between his bass drum and snare drum;
- the hi-hat motive in measure 31-32, used to complete the song form, is a Bebop cliché often used by Blackwell for this purpose.

Figure 6:

184

1

5

9

13

17 "Bridge" (straight 8th notes)

21

25

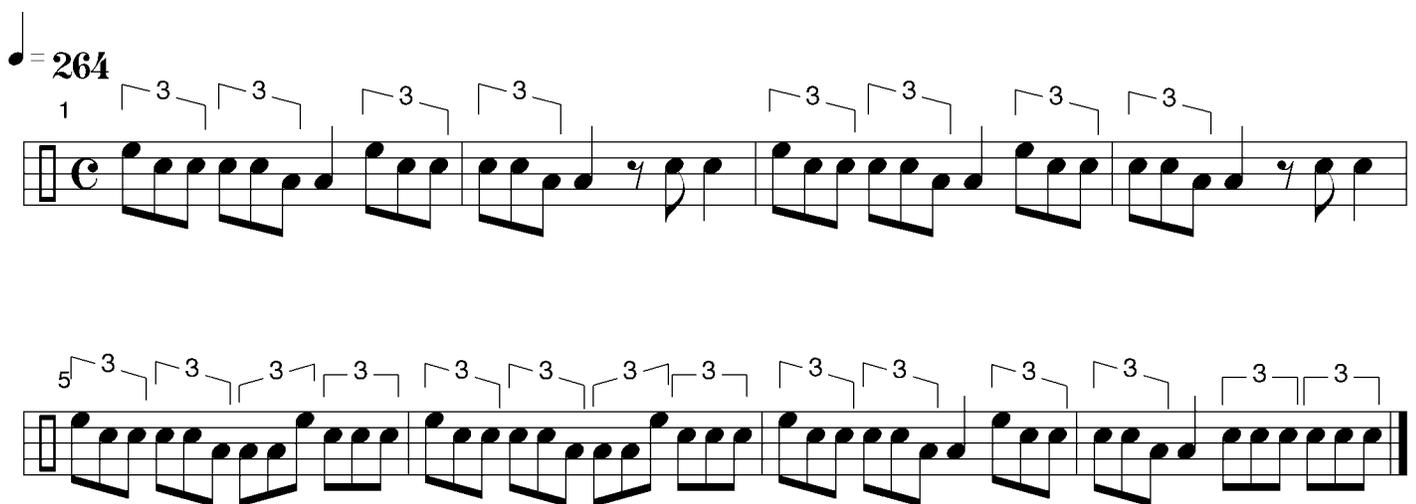
29

Detailed description: This musical score is for guitar, set in common time (C) with a tempo of 184 bpm. It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The music features a series of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating muted notes. The second staff introduces triplets of eighth notes, marked with a '3' and a bracket. The third staff continues with more complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff also features triplets. The fifth staff is labeled '17 "Bridge" (straight 8th notes)' and shows a change in rhythm to straight eighth notes. The sixth staff returns to triplets. The seventh staff concludes with a few eighth notes and a final chord. The score includes various musical notations such as stems, beams, and dynamic markings.

The material found within mm. 1-4 of figure 6 is very similar to the Max Roach-inspired solo Blackwell played on the composition “Nigeria” in 1956 (see Chapter 1, figure 4). In both instances, Blackwell played melodic figures between his snare and bass drum while maintaining the jazz ride cymbal pattern, a soloing texture often used by Roach.

Figure 7 highlights an exact Max Roach-quote played by Blackwell. This particular transcription comes from the tune “Status Seeking” and the 1986 Mal Waldron recording *The Git Go* (Black Saint 121118-2):

Figure 7:



This eight-measure phrase features a theme-and-variations format as follows:

- mm. 1-2: Blackwell states the theme, based on a 3 + 3 + 2 additive structure;
- mm. 3-4: Repetition of this theme;
- mm. 5-6: Blackwell presents a slight variation of the theme;
- mm. 7-8: Return to the original theme.

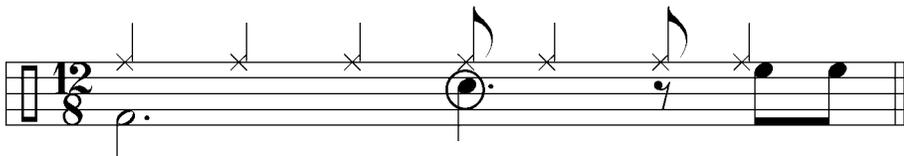
Blackwell often acknowledged his conscious adaptation of Max Roach’s drumming vocabulary, as illustrated by the following excerpt from a 1981 interview with Scott Fish:

Fish: Max Roach has written some great solo pieces for drumset like “For Big Sid” and “Conversations.” Have you ever written anything like that?

Blackwell: Yeah, I used to use a lot of it up here [Wesleyan University] to teach the students that I have. In fact, I've transcribed a lot things from Max for my students, to try to teach them the more melodic concept of the drums rather than just the technical (Fish. "Ed Blackwell." p.91).

Blackwell's mature drumming style also reflects his adaptation of traditional West African rhythms. For example, within the Karl Berger composition "Just Play," recorded on the 1976 album of the same name (Quark 9996), he played the same beat pattern as heard on the 1969 Don Cherry/Blackwell duet album "Mu." This beat, which Blackwell referred to as "Amagello," was apparently shown to him by a drummer in Ghana and is one of the relatively few instances in which Blackwell adapted a literal African rhythmic pattern to the drumset:

Figure 8:



Blackwell also played the "Amagello" beat on the title track of Mal Waldron's 1983 recording *You and the Night and the Music* (ProJazz CDJ 617). This particular composition also features a 32-measure solo by Blackwell, played over the AABA song form. His solo, presented in its entirety within figure 9, also includes the following African-derived ideas:

- passages featuring pitch-bending, reminiscent of the *donno* "talking drum" (mm. 4 and 24);
- alternation of open tones and "dead" strokes (mm. 13 and 4);⁵⁰
- clear examples of 2:3 polyrhythms (mm. 9 and 21-22);
- use of a common West African bell pattern (mm. 21-22, as seen in the floor tom part).

⁵⁰ The term "dead strokes" refers to the technique in which a stick is pressed firmly into the drumhead, thus canceling any vibrations. The alternation of open tones and dead strokes is very common in West African drumming, and serves as one of the main techniques used to arrange hocket rhythmic patterns.

Figure 9:

* = pitch bend up and down

$\bullet = 132$

The musical score consists of 19 numbered measures. Measure 1 starts with a tempo marking of 132. The notation includes various guitar-specific techniques: triplets, bends (marked with asterisks), vibrato (marked with 'v'), and a bridge section starting at measure 17. A pitch bend up and down is indicated by an asterisk and a curved arrow in measure 3. The score is written on a single staff with a 12/8 time signature.

Figure 9 continued:

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each beginning with a measure number: 22, 25, 28, and 30. The notation is written on a five-line staff with a treble clef. The first staff (measures 22-24) features a complex rhythmic pattern with various note values and rests, including a measure with a star symbol and a curved arrow above it. The second staff (measures 25-27) continues the rhythmic development with similar note values and rests. The third staff (measures 28-29) shows a dense, repetitive rhythmic pattern in the first measure, followed by more complex rhythmic figures. The fourth staff (measures 30-32) begins with a dense, repetitive rhythmic pattern, followed by more complex rhythmic figures, including a measure with a star symbol and a curved arrow above it.

The final category for consideration includes the following miscellaneous ideas:

a) polyrhythmic exercises adapted by Blackwell, b) his “mirror image” motif, c) examples inspired by *batá* drumming, and d) his use of additive rhythmic patterns.

The following three excerpts (figures 10, 11, and 12) were taken from Blackwell’s live recording with Dewey Redman in 1980 and Redman’s piece “We Hope” (*In Willisau*. Black Saint BSR 0093). The first example, figure 10, features the same foot ostinato Blackwell had played on the recording of “T. & T.” in 1960 (see chapter 3, figure 10). Additionally, the polyrhythmic patterns in this example, which Blackwell adapted from Jim Chapin’s drumset method book, depict the very same patterns which he had played on “Mu,” his 1969 duet recording with Don Cherry

(see Chapter 3, figure 20).⁵¹

Figure 10:

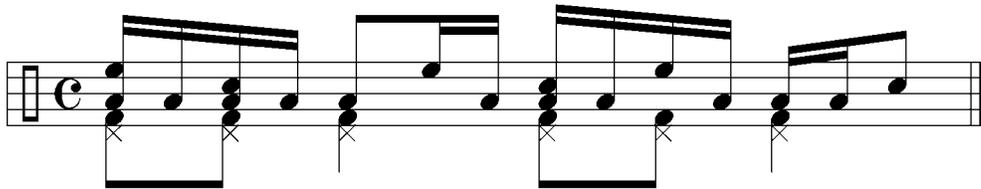


Figure 11 features another polyrhythmic exercise which Blackwell adapted from Chapin's "Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer." This pattern was first considered with regards to Blackwell's drumming on Dewey Redman's 1969 album *Tarik* (see Chapter 3, figure 24).⁵²

Figure 11:



The final example, transcribed from Blackwell's solo on "We Hope" (figure 12), highlights his "mirror image" motif, also first considered within Chapter 3 and his drumming on "T. & T."

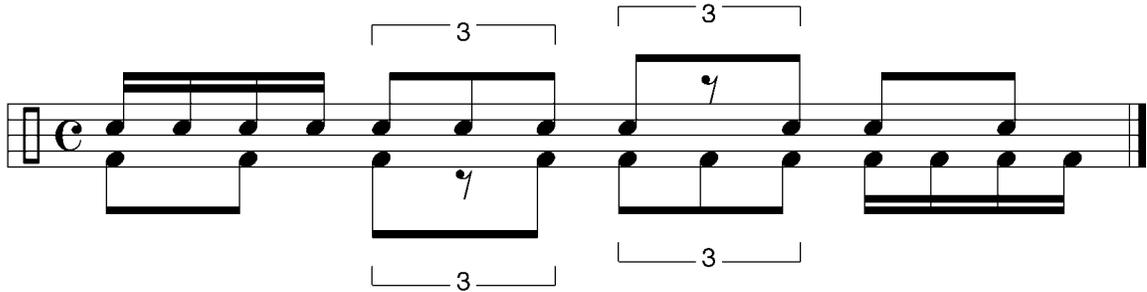
⁵¹ Blackwell used this polyrhythmic exercise from Chapin's method book quite often throughout his career. A few examples include:

- 1) "Mopti" recorded on the 1980 album *Playing by Old and New Dreams* (ECM 1205);
- 2) "Judy's Bounce" from the 1981 Jemeel Moondoc recording of the same name (Black Saint 121051-2).
[It is also noteworthy that, on this particular example, Blackwell played the exact same configuration of drums and rhythms as heard on "T. & T."]
- 3) "Off Season" as recorded on David Murray's 1983 release *Morning Song* (Black Saint BSR 0075);
- 4) "Dakar Dance" recorded on the 1987 Karl Berger album *Transit* (Black Saint BSR 0092).

⁵² Blackwell also used this polyrhythmic adaptation quite often, as evidenced by the following list:

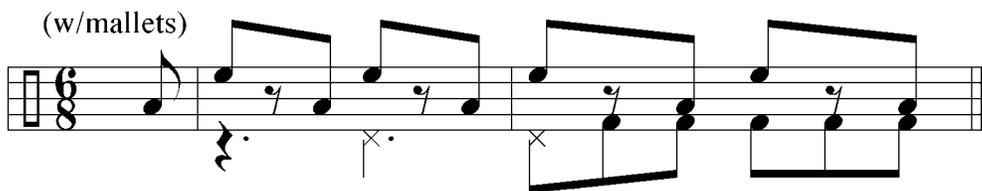
- 1) "Just Play" recorded in 1976 on the Karl Berger album of the same name;
- 2) "Togo" from the 1979 album *Old and New Dreams* by the band of the same name (ECM-1-1154);
- 3) "Status Seeking" recorded on the 1979 Mal Waldron album *The Git Go*;
- 4) "Dakar Dance" from the 1987 Karl Berger recording *Transit*.

Figure 12:



In 1981, Blackwell recorded the album *Judy's Bounce* live in concert with alto saxophonist Jemeel Moondoc (Black Saint 121051-2). His drumming on this particular album features two other African-derived influences which Blackwell incorporated early in his career and which also served as vocabulary throughout his mature drumming period. The first example (figure 13), taken from the Moondoc composition "Nimus," represents Blackwell's interpretation of Afro-Cuban *batá* drumming (see also Chapter 3, figures 12 and 19):⁵³

Figure 13:



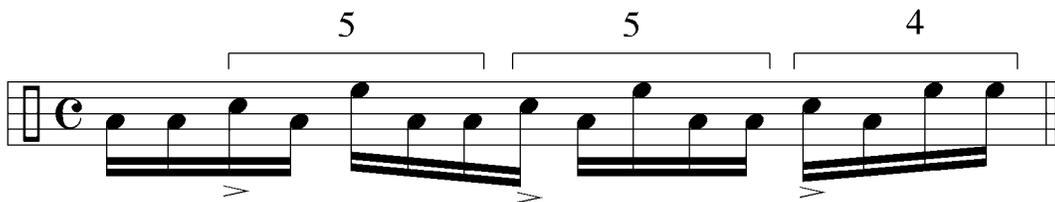
Another excerpt from "Nimus" features syncopated patterns based on rhythmic groupings which are five 16th-notes in length (figure 14). Blackwell's use of syncopation derived from

⁵³ Blackwell also played this 6/8 Afro-Cuban, *batá*-inspired pattern on the following recordings:

- 1) "Togo" and "Orbit of La-Ba," both from the 1979 recording *Old and New Dreams* by the group of the same name (ECM-1-1154);
- 2) Track #1 from the Don Cherry/Blackwell duet album *El Corazon* (ECM 1230/78118-21230-2).

additive phrase structures was also initially considered with regards to his drumming on “T. & T.” (see Chapter 3, figure 14).⁵⁴

Figure 14:



All of the transcriptions considered thus far within Chapter 4 highlight the fact that Blackwell’s mature drumming style was comprised, in great part, of patterns and vocabulary which he had been exposed to and incorporated early within his playing career. This is not unlike the experience of most jazz musicians, or any other artists for that matter, who develop a foundation of ideas and technique early within their development, and then expand or modify this same material as their mature performing style evolves. According to Blackwell:

I don’t think you can get away from the roots. You can improvise on them, but like they say, nothing is new (Wilmer. “Ed Blackwell. Well-Tempered Drummer.” p.19).

This is not to say that Blackwell was forever bound to his earliest musical experiences and the vocabulary developed therein. He, like any creative person, sought new methods and outlets in which to express his creativity. For example, in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, Blackwell performed and recorded with a number of varied jazz artists including Ornette Coleman, Thelonius Monk, Don Cherry, Archie Shepp, Mose Allison, and Karl Berger.

It is certainly one of the great ironies of jazz that in 1973, when his creative and technical

⁵⁴ Blackwell modified various additive phrase structures throughout his drumming career, including the following examples:

- 1) “Ming’s Samba,” the title track from David Murray’s 1988 album (Portrait RK 44432);
- 2) “Ettenro” recorded on the 1991 Joe Lovano album *Sounds of Joy* (Enja CD 7013-2).

abilities were at their height, and when he was working steadily with the aforementioned artists, Blackwell became quite ill and suffered the failure of both kidneys. He endured frequent spells on a dialysis machine for the remainder of his life, which severely curtailed his energy and hampered his ability to travel. Blackwell did persevere, however, and continued to grow and learn as both an artist and a teacher. By 1972, he assumed an Artist in Residence position at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. Valerie Wilmer described his teaching experience as follows:

Initially the idea of catching a train to Connecticut [from New York City] every week and actually spending two days in the classroom was alien to Blackwell's day-to-day existence. What's more, he had never considered the prospect of teaching. [According to Blackwell,] "Maybe it's just a matter of being too humble or something, but I just never figured I was playing enough to teach anybody how to play. I figured that *I* should learn to play more first." Nevertheless, soon the tattered notebook in which he was always laboriously drawing out exercises was replaced by a more academic-looking one, inscribed "Only to be opened by drummers and important people," and proudly carried everywhere by him. In 1973 he was awarded a grant to write his own drum tutor but the money had to be spent on medical expenses (*As Serious As Your Life*, p.185).

While teaching at Wesleyan, Blackwell interacted with West African drummers including Abraham Adzinyah and Freeman Donkor, both from Ghana. The fact that Blackwell was exposed to African drumming while teaching at Wesleyan had a definite impact upon his musical sensibilities. This influence was markedly increased upon his participation in several collaborative rehearsal situations organized by, then Ph.D. student, Royal Hartigan as part of his doctoral dissertation "Blood Drum Spirit: Drum Languages of West Africa, African-America, Native America, Central Java, and South India." Hartigan described the methodology of his dissertation as follows:

I have set up a research situation in which a West African master drummer and dancer, Freeman Donkor - on occasion joined by master drummer Abraham Adzinyah - has a musical and personal interaction with Edward Blackwell, an African-American master drummer. These interactions take the form of a series of interviews, rehearsals, and audio recording sessions in which the basic supporting instrumental rhythms of twenty-five traditional dance drumming pieces from Ghana, Togo, Benin (Dahomey), and Nigeria are studied and played on West African instruments. Edward participates in the ensembles and subsequently

up to Art Taylor's house [Arthur Taylor was a jazz drummer and author of *Notes and Tones: Musician-to-Musician Interviews*]. He [Taylor] was living there at the time and had a loft with a set of drums. And we'd go over there and sit down and just watch Philly. He would just entertain us for hours, man. He was a great showoff! He showed me a lot of cross-sticking techniques and brush strokes. And he'd do them so simply, but I couldn't do them for the world. I'm still trying to get those strokes down (Milkowski. "Masters of the Free Universe." p.115).⁵⁶

These statements illustrate clearly Blackwell's passionate study of percussion and his desire to accept new challenges. His willingness to share the drumming knowledge he had acquired with other musicians stems from his experiences growing up in New Orleans. According to Blackwell, most of the drummers he met while living in New York City were much less willing to share their knowledge and experiences, and he felt this was:

a drag because, you know, two heads are always better than one. You get a lot more accomplished that way, but some person thinks that maybe if he gets together with another drummer, maybe he'd steal his ideas or his technique or something. But I've never been of the opinion that I was that shallow whereby a cat could steal anything that I knew! I always figures that I had the talent or the ability to think of things - something new every day, in other words - and so I never had that feeling. But I've heard that some of the cats are very serious about that (Wilmer. *As Serious as Your Life*. p.186).

It was this willingness to share and interact with other musicians which prompted Blackwell, along with fellow Free Jazz drummers Dennis Charles, Sunny Murray, and Steve McCall, to form the percussion ensemble "Drums Inter-Actuel" in 1981.⁵⁷ While this ensemble never, to my knowledge, was recorded, they did rehearse and performed a few concerts at the Public Theater in New York City (Salaam. "Edward Blackwell: The Rhythm King." p.5).

⁵⁶ According to Phil Hey, "Philly Joe Jones turned [Blackwell] onto the Wilcoxon [method book entitled "Modern Rudimental Swing Solos"] during that sojourn to Paris" as well. Reflecting on his lessons with Blackwell, Hey also recalled ending their sessions by sight-reading snare drum duets, including material from the Firth, Ludwig, Goldenberg, and N.A.R.D. method books. "Ed also had several of those old, small 'street-beat' books we all used. If you swing even a little [when playing the material in these books], you get the second line."

⁵⁷ According to Phil Hey, Blackwell also participated in another drum ensemble a few years prior to his experience with "Drums Inter-Actuel." This ensemble included jazz drummers Dennis Charles, Roy Brooks, and Doug Hammond.

Blackwell was an innovative musician whose playing was marked by his integration of many diverse musical styles and experiences, a fact well-documented within his numerous recorded performances. His drumming style in turn influenced the development of many other jazz musicians. According to trumpeter Herb Robertson:

[Blackwell] took jazz's swing and put that New Orleans groove to it, straightened it up just enough so that younger players like me, who were basically coming out of rock & roll, could find ways into contemporary jazz, so that it wouldn't feel foreign to us (Santoro. "The Blackwell Project." p.53).

Warren Bell, an alto saxophonist who played with Blackwell in New Orleans during the late 1940's and early 1950's, characterized both the drummer's musical abilities and his magnetic performance style:

All my experiences with Blackwell were phenomenal. He's the kind of drummer that can make you play more than you can play (Bell, interview with author).

Finally, Charlie Haden, the bassist who performed extensively with Blackwell as a member of Ornette Coleman's various ensembles, offered the following assessment of Blackwell's abilities:

He listens so intensely to everybody that he plays with. He makes what they play sound better. People come up to me after we play and tell me how great I sound and I say, "Well, it's Blackwell." As long as Blackwell is playing, I just have to hold the bass - and he plays it for me (Salaam. "Edward Blackwell: the Rhythm King." p.4).

Blackwell succumbed to the kidney problems which had hampered him for so long on October 7, 1992. Bill Milkowski provided the following synopsis of Blackwell's final weeks:

Ed Blackwell's brown Sonor kit had been set up and waiting for him all week at the Village Vanguard [in New York City]. On Tuesday, September 22, 1992, opening night of tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano's gig, drummer Paul Motian filled in for the ailing Blackwell, who had checked into the hospital the week before with a bout of pancreatic inflammation. But his condition was improving, and Lovano had high hopes that Blackwell would return to the bandstand later in the week. By the weekend, the drummer Al Foster was filling in for Blackwell, whose condition had suddenly taken a turn for the worse. The pancreas problem only compounded Blackwell's long-standing kidney problem ("In Memoriam." p.116).

Max Roach, Blackwell's drumming idol and the source of much of his inspiration, presided over the funeral ceremony and offered the following words of praise:

Ed Blackwell was not just a great drummer, he was an original. He did things that none of the rest of us could do or even tried to do. And to be original is what this art is really about (Milkowski. "In Memoriam." p.116).

Ed Blackwell was indeed an original, innovative musician. His mature drumming style, with all its varied generative influences, reflects the spirit of dance framed within the cultural intersection of New Orleans and West Africa.

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EDWARD BLACKWELL DISCOGRAPHY

Entries are listed alphabetically by recording artist with Blackwell on drumset, unless otherwise noted. The symbol # refers to the given recording track.

Instrument Abbreviations:

as	alto saxophone	perc	percussion
b	bass	p	piano
b-cl	bass clarinet	pic	piccolo
cl	clarinet	p-tp	pocket trumpet
cor	cornet	ss	soprano saxophone
d	drums	ts	tenor saxophone
flug	flugelhorn	tb	trombone
fl	flute	tp	trumpet
fr-h	french horn	tu	tuba
g	guitar	v	vibraphone
mar	marimba	vla	viola
ob	oboe	vln	violin
		vcl	vocal

AMERICAN JAZZ QUINTET

- From Bad to Badder:* Alvin Batiste (cl) Harold Battiste (ts) Ellis Marsalis (p)
Richard Payne (b) guest artist, Earl Turbinton (as) Blackwell (d)
Live at "Ed Blackwell Festival" - Atlanta, Georgia - November 6, 1987
Black Saint 120114-2
1. Stephanie
 2. Nostalgia Suite
 3. To Brownie
 4. Ed Blackwell
 5. Imp'n Perry Too
 6. Edith
 7. Tony
 8. Mozarten

AMERICAN JAZZ QUINTET continued:

In the Beginning: Alvin Batiste (cl) Harold Battiste (ts) Ellis Marsalis (p)
Warren Bell (as,#13) Richard Payne (b,#11, 13) William Swanson (b, #1-10)
Otis Deverney (b,#12) Blackwell (d)
#12 live at Booker T. Washington High School - 1958
All other tracks - Cosimo's Studio, NOLA - 1956

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Never More | AFO 91-1028-2 | [originally issued Opus 4302] |
| 2. Nigeria | — | — |
| 3. To Brownie | — | — |
| 4. Stephanie | — | — |
| 5. Capetown | — | — |
| 6. Toni | — | — |
| 7. Chatter Box | — | — |
| 8. Carrie Mae | — | — |
| 9. Morocco | — | — |
| 10. Ohadi | — | — |
| 11. Summertime | — | [originally issued Opus 4305] |
| 12. You Don't Know What Love Is | — | [previously unissued] |
| 13. Yesterdays | — | [originally issued Opus 4305] |

Boogie Live ...1958: Dr. Alvin Batiste (cl) Nat Perrilliat (ts) Ellis Marsalis (p)
Otis Deverney (b) Blackwell (d)

Live at Booker T. Washington High School - 1958

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. To Brownie | AFO 92-1228-2 |
| 2. Three Musketeers | — |
| 3. Toni | — |
| 4. Fourth Month | — |
| 5. Nevermore | — |
| 6. Comin' On | — |

BILL BARRON

Jazz Caper: Barron (ts, ss) Jimmy Owens (tp) Kenny Barron (p) Buster Williams (b)
Blackwell (d)

Recorded 1978

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Jazz Caper | Muse - MR 5235 |
| 2. Spring Thing | — |
| 3. Until Further Notice | — |
| 4. New Love | — |
| 5. One for Bird | — |
| 6. Hoppin and Skippin | — |
| 7. Flip Flop | — |

RAY ANDERSON

Every one of Us: Anderson (tb) Simon Nabatov (p) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)

Power Station studio - New York - June 1992

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Funkalific | Gramavision R2 79471 |
| 2. Brother, Can You Spare A Dime? | — |
| 3. Kinda Garnerish | — |
| 4. Muddy and Willie | — |
| 5. Snoo Tune (for Anabel) | — |
| 6. Lady Day | — |
| 7. Dear Lord | — |

KARL BERGER

Crystal Fire: Berger (p, v) Dave Holland (b) Blackwell (d)

Tedesco Studio - Paramus, New Jersey - April 4/5, 1991

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Crystal Fire | ENJA CD 7029-2 |
| 2. Drinking Fire | — |
| 3. Primordial Innocense [SIC] | — |
| 4. Breathing Earth | — |
| 5. Cutting Through | — |
| 6. I Don't Want To Be alone | — |
| 7. You asked | — |
| 8. Getting There | — |
| 9. Go With It | — |
| 10. Buddha Eyes | — |
| 11. North On | — |

From Now On: Berger (v), Carlos Ward (as) Henry Grimes (b) Blackwell (d)

ESP label

Karl Berger: Berger (v) Carlos Ward (as) Henry Grimes (b) Blackwell (d)

Recorded December 1966

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Scales | ESP Disk Ltd. 1041 |
| 2. Turn Around | — |
| 3. Steps | — |
| 4. Blue Early Bird | — |
| 5. Like That | — |
| 6. Greenbird | — |
| 7. From Now On | — |

KARL BERGER continued:

Transit: Berger (v) Dave Holland (b) Blackwell (d)

Grog Kill Studio - Willow, New York - August 25 and 26, 1986

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Dakar Dance | Black Saint BSR 0092 |
| 2. Transit | — |
| 3. Chimney Road | — |
| 4. Ornette | — |
| 5. Out There Alone | — |
| 6. Drums First | — |
| 7. We Change | — |

Tune In - Karl Berger & Company: Berger (v, sarangi) Carlos Ward (as)

Dave Holland (b) Blackwell (d)

Plaza Sound Studios - New York City - July 30 and August 12, 1969

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Tune In | Milestone MSP 9026 |
| 2. With Silence | — |
| 3. Get Up | — |
| 4. Fly | — |
| 5. Beyond the Moon | — |
| 6. Clarity | — |
| 7. Never the Same | — |
| 8. From Now On | — |
| 9. Tune In | — |

KARL BERGER and ED BLACKWELL

Just Play - 1976: Berger (v, balafon, darbuka) Blackwell (d, osi-drum)

Live in concert - Albany - March 20, 1976

- | | |
|------------------------|------------|
| 1. We Are | Quark 9996 |
| 2. Just Play | — |
| 3. Steps | — |
| 4. Time Is | — |
| 5. Balafon Samba | — |
| 6. Wood and Skin Works | — |

ED BLACKWELL

Don't Quit: Charles Brackeen (various winds) Mark Helias (b) Achmed Abdullah (p)
Blackwell (d)

Recorded ca. 1980 - Sweet Earth Records

ED BLACKWELL continued:

Ed Blackwell Trio: Walls-Bridges: Dewey Redman (ts) Cameron Brown (b)

Blackwell (d)

Live in concert-Hampden Theatre, Univ. of MA, Amherst - Feb. 27, 1992

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Half Nelson | Black Saint 120153-2 |
| 2. Everything Happens to Me | — |
| 3. Boo-Boo Doop | — |
| 4. Walls-Bridges | — |
| 5. Obeeso | — |
| 6. Blues for J.A.M. | — |
| 7. Take the "A" Train | — |

Ed Blackwell Project - What It Is? Graham Haynes (cor) Carlos Ward (as,fl)

Mark Helias (b) Blackwell (d)

Live: 3rd Annual Eddie Moore Festival - Oakland, CA - August 8, 1992

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. 'Nette | Enja 7089-2 |
| 2. Pettiford Bridge | — |
| 3. Beau Regard | — |
| 4. Thumbs Up | — |
| 5. Mallet Song | — |
| 6. Rosa Takes a Stand (for Rosa Parks) | — |

Ed Blackwell Project -What It Be Like? Graham Haynes (cor) Carlos Ward (as,fl)

Mark Helias (b) Blackwell (d) Special guest: Don Cherry (tp)

Live: 3rd Annual Eddie Moore Festival - Oakland, CA - August 8, 1992

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Nebula | Enja 8054-2 |
| 2. Grandma's Shoes | — |
| 3. Pentahouve | — |
| 4. First Love (for Thelonius Monk) | — |
| 5. Lito (Part 1, 2, and 3) | — |

TERENCE BLANCHARD and DONALD HARRISON

Eric Dolphy and Booker Little Remembered - Vol. 1 "Live at Sweet Basil":

Blanchard (tp) Harrison (as, b-cl) Mal Waldron (p) Richard Davis (b) Blackwell (d)

Live at Sweet Basil - N.Y.C. - October 3/4, 1986

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. The Prophet | Evidence ECD 22073-2 |
| 2. Aggression | — |
| 3. Booker's Waltz | — |

Eric Dolphy and Booker Little Remembered - Vol. 2 "Fire Waltz":

Blanchard (tp) Harrison (as, b-cl) Mal Waldron (p) Richard Davis (b) Blackwell (d)

Live at Sweet Basil - N.Y.C. - October 3/4, 1986

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Number Eight | Evidence ECD 22074-2 |
| 2. Fire Waltz | — |
| 3. Bee Vamp | — |

JANE IRA BLOOM

Mighty Lights: Bloom (ss) Fred Hersch (p) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)
Vanguard Studios - N.Y.C. - November 17/18, 1982

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. 2-5-1 | Enja R2 79662 |
| 2. Lost in the Stars | — |
| 3. I Got Rhythm but No Melody | — |
| 4. The Man with Glasses | — |
| 5. Change Up | — |
| 6. Mighty Lights | — |

CHARLES BRACKEEN

Rhythm X: Brackeen (ts, ss) Don Cherry (tp) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)
Strata East Records - recorded in 1968

ANTHONY BRAXTON

Six Compositions - Quartet: Braxton (as, ts, B-flat ss, E-flat ss, b-cl) Anthony Davis (p)
Mark Helias (b) Blackwell (d)
Generation Sound - New York - October 21/22, 1981

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Composition No. 40B | Antilles 422-848 585-2 |
| 2. Composition No. 69N | — |
| 3. Composition No. 34 | — |
| 4. Composition No. 40A | — |
| 5. Composition No. 40G | — |
| 6. Composition No. 52 | — |

DON CHERRY

Complete Communion: Cherry (cor) Leandro 'Gato' Barbieri (ts) Henry Grimes (b)
Blackwell (d)

Recorded December 24, 1965

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Complete Communion | Blue Note 84226 |
| 2. And Now | — |
| 3. Golden Heart | — |
| 4. Remembrance | — |
| 5. Elephantasy | — |
| 6. Our Feelings | — |
| 7. Bishmallah | — |
| 8. Wind, Sand, and Stars | — |

Don Cherry Quintet: Cherry (cor) Maffy Falay (tp) Clifford Jordan (ts) Wilbur Ware (b)
Blackwell (d)

New York: January 1968

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Sound Shine | Frontier (unissued) |
| 2. Dee Boo-Dat | — |
| 3. Ahmed MoufavaK | — |

DON CHERRY continued:

Mu - The Complete Session: Cherry (p-tp, p, perc) Blackwell (d, perc)
Paris - August 22, 1969

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Brilliant Action | Charly - Le Jazz CD 56 |
| 2. Amejelo | — |
| 3. Total Vibration | — |
| 4. Sun of the East | — |
| 5. Terrestrial Beings | — |
| 6. The Mysticism of My Sound | — |
| 7. Medley: a) Dollar Brand | — |
| b) Spontaneous Composing | — |
| c) Exert, Man on the Moon | — |
| 8. Bamboo Night | — |
| 9. Teo-Teo Can | — |
| 10. Smiling Faces, Going Places | — |
| 11. Psycho Drama | — |
| 12. Medley: a) Theme albert Heath | — |
| b) Theme Dollar Brand | — |
| c) Babyrest, Time for | — |

MultiKulti: Cherry (p-tp, vcl, doussn' gouni, fl, perc, melodica) Blackwell (d, #6, 7 only)
Anthony Hamilton (vcl) A. Watts Prophet (vcl) Bob Stewart (tu)
Ingrid Sertso (vcl) John L. Price (drum programming) Mark Loudon Sims (b)
Bill Ortiz (tp, vcl) David Cherry (synthesizers) Nana Vasconcelos (perc)
James Harvey (tb) Carlos Ward (as) Karl Berger (mar) Jeff Cressman (tb, vcl)
Tony Jones (ts) Peter Apfelbaum (ts, mar, perc, p, organ, synthesizer)
Jessica Jones (ts) Peck Allmond (baritone saxophone) Will Bernard (g)
Stan Franks (g) Bo Freeman (b) Joshua Jones V (d, perc) Deszon X. Claiborne (d)
Robert "Buddha" Huffman (perc) Frank Ekeh (perc, vc) Ingrid Sertso (vcl)
Frank Serafine (synthesizers)

BMG Recording Studios - N.Y.C. - December 27, 1988
November 7, 1989
November 20, 1989
January 19/20, 1990
February 23, 1990

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Trumpet [1/20] | A & M 75021 5323 2 |
| 2. MultiKulti Soothsayer [2/23] | — |
| 3. Flute [1/20] | — |
| 4. Birdboy 12/27] | — |
| 5. Melodica [1/20] | — |
| 6. Dedication to Thomas Mapfumo [1/19] | — |
| 7. Pettiford Bridge [11/20] | — |
| 8. Piano/Trumpet [1/20] | — |
| 9. Until the Rain Comes [11/7] | — |
| 10. Divinity-Tree [11/7] | — |

DON CHERRY continued:

Relativity Suite - Don Cherry and the Jazz Composers Orchestra:

Cherry (tp, conch, vcl, perc) Blackwell (d) Charles Brackeen (ss, as, vcl)
Carlos Ward (as, vcl) Frank Lowe (ts, vcl) Dewey Redman (ts, vcl)
Sharon Freeman (fr-h) Brian Trentham (tb) Jack Jeffers (tu) Leroy Jenkins (vln)
Joan Kalisch (vla) Nan Newton (vla) Pat Dixon (cello) Jane Robertson (cello)
Charlie Haden (b) Carla Bley (pn) Paul Motian (perc) Moke Cherry (tambura)
Selene Fung (ching)

Blue Rock Studio - N.Y.C. - February 14, 1973

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Tantra | JCOA Records 1006 |
| 2. Mali Doussn’Gouni | — |
| 3. Desireless | — |
| 4. The Queen of Tung-Ting Lake | — |
| 5. Trans-Love Airways | — |
| 6. Infinite Gentleness | — |
| 7. March of the Hobbits | — |

Symphony for Improvisers: Cherry (cor) Leandro ‘Gato’ Barbieri (ts) Karl Berger (v, p)
Pharoah Sanders (ts, pic) Henry Grimes (b) Jenny Clark (b) Blackwell (d)

Van Gelder Studio - Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey - September 19, 1966

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Symphony for Improvisers | Blue Note CDP 7243 8 28976 2 0 |
| 2. Nu Creative Love | — |
| 3. What’s Not Serious | — |
| 4. Infant Happiness | — |
| 5. Manhattan Cry | — |
| 6. Lunatic | — |
| 7. Sparkle Plenty | — |
| 8. Om Nu | — |

“Untitled”: Cherry, Henry Grimes (b) Blackwell (d)
Recorded 1965.

“Untitled”: Cherry, Henry Grimes (b) Blackwell (d)
New York: November 29, 1961

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| 1. Untitled | Atlantic (unissued) |
| 2. Untitled | — |
| 3. Untitled | — |
| 4. Untitled | — |

Where is Brooklyn?: Cherry (cor) Pharoah Sanders (ts, pic) Henry Grimes (b)
Blackwell (d)

Van Gelder Studio - Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey - November 11, 1966

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Awake Nu | Blue Note BST 84311 |
| 2. Taste Maker | — |
| 3. The Thing | — |
| 4. There is the Bomb | — |
| 5. Unite | — |

DON CHERRY and ED BLACKWELL

El Corazon: Cherry (p-tp, p, melodica, doussn'gouni, organ) Blackwell (d, perc)
Tonstudio Bauer - Ludwigsburg - February 1982

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Mutron | ECM 1230/78118-21230-2 |
| 2. Bemsha Swing | — |
| 3. Solidarity | — |
| 4. Arabian Nightingale | — |
| 5. Roland Alphonso | — |
| 6. Makondi | — |
| 7. Street Dancing | — |
| 8. Short Stuff | — |
| 9. El Corazon | — |
| 10. Rhythm for Runner | — |
| 11. Near-In | — |
| 12. Voice of the Silence | — |

ORNETTE COLEMAN

The Art of the Improvisors: Coleman (as; ts, #7 only) Don Cherry (cor, #1,2,8;
tp, #3,5,6,9; p-tp, #4,7) Blackwell (d, #3-7, 9) Billy Higgins (d, #1, 2, 8)
Charlie Haden (b, #1-3, 5-6, 8-9) Jimmy Garrison (b, #7) Scott LaFaro (b, #4)
Atlantic Studios - NY: July 26, 1960
January 31, 1961
March 27, 1961

Radio Recorders - Hollywood, CA: May 22, 1959
October 8 and 9, 1959

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| 1. The Circle with a Hole
in the Middle [10/9] | Atlantic 7 90978-2 | [original release
Atlantic SD 1572] |
| 2. Just for You [5/22] | — | — |
| 3. The Fifth of Beethoven [7/26] | — | — |
| 4. The Alchemy of Scott LaFaro [1/31] | — | — |
| 5. Moon Inhabitants [7/26] | — | — |
| 6. The Legend of Bebop [7/26] | — | — |
| 7. Harlem's Manhattan [3/27] | — | — |
| 8. Music Always [10/8] | — | [original release
Atlantic (Japan)
P-10085A] |
| 9. Brings Goodness [7/26] | — | — |

Beauty is a Rare Thing -The Complete Atlantic Recordings: This box-set contains all the
recordings Coleman made for Atlantic records between May 1959 and March 1961.
Rhino/Atlantic Jazz Gallery R2 71410 (6 CD's)

The Belgrade Concert: Coleman (as, tpt, v) Dewey Redman (ts) Charlie Haden (b)
Blackwell (d)
Recorded November 2, 1971 - Jazz Door label

ORNETTE COLEMAN continued:

The Best of Ornette Coleman: Coleman (as) Don Cherry (p-tp, cor)
 Blackwell (d, #2, 3, 6) Billy Higgins (d, #1, 4, 5) Charlie Haden (b, #1-5)
 Scott LaFaro (b, #6)

Radio Recorders Studio - Hollywood, CA: May 22, 1959
 Radio Recorders Studio - Hollywood, CA: October 9/10, 1959
 Atlantic Studios - NY: July 19, 1960
 Atlantic Studios - NY: July 26, 1960
 Atlantic Studios - NY: January 31, 1961

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--|
| 1. Una Muy Bonita [10/10] | Atlantic SD 1588 | [original release
Atlantic SD 1327] |
| 2. Embraceable You 7/26] | — | [original release
Atlantic LP 1353] |
| 3. Blues Connotation [7/19] | — | — |
| 4. Lonely Woman [5/22] | — | [original release
Atlantic SD 1317] |
| 5. Ramblin' [10/9] | — | [original release
Atlantic SD 1327] |
| 6. C & D [1/31] | — | [original release
Atlantic LP 1378] |

Broken Shadows: Coleman (as) Dewey Redman (ts) Don Cherry (tp, #1, 2, 4, 5, 6)
 Bobby Bradford (tp, #1, 2, 3, 4) Charlie Haden (b) Jim Hall (g, #5, 6)
 Webster Armstrong (vcl, #5, 6) Blackwell (d, #1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8)
 Blackwell (d, # 3, 7, 8) Blackwell (d, #1, 2, 5 - together with Billy Higgins)
 Billy Higgins (d, # 4, 6) Cedar Walton (p, #5, 6)
 Unidentified woodwind quintet (oboe, bassoon, fr-h, fl, cl - #5, 6)

CBS Studio - NY: September 9, 1971
 CBS Studio - NY: September 1972

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Happy House [9/9] | Columbia FC38029 |
| 2. Elizabeth [9/9] | — |
| 3. School Work (also: The Good Life) [9/9] | — |
| 4. Country Town Blues [9/9] | — |
| 5. Broken Shadows [9/9] | — |
| 6. Rubber Gloves [1972] | — |
| 7. Good Girl Blues [1972] | — |
| 8. Is It Forever[1972] | — |

European Concert: Coleman (as - # 1, 2, 3, 5; tp and vln - #4)
 Dewey Redman (ts - # 1, 2, 3, 5; musette - # 4) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)
 Berlin, Germany: November 5, 1971

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Who Do You Work For? | Unique Jazz UJ13 (Italy) |
| 2. Street Woman | — |
| 3. Song For Che | — |
| 4. Rock the Clock | — |
| 5. Happy House (Written Word) | — |

ORNETTE COLEMAN continued:

Free Jazz - The Ornette Coleman Double Quartet:

Left channel: Coleman (as) Don Cherry (p-tp) Scott LaFaro (b) Billy Higgins (d)
Right channel: Eric Dolphy (b-cl) Freddie Hubbard (tp) Charlie Haden (b)
Blackwell (d)

- New York City: December 21, 1960
1. (First Take) Free Jazz - Part 1 Atlantic 1364 [previously released
Atlantic SD 1588]
2. Free Jazz - Part 2 —

Free Jazz: Coleman (as, all tracks) Don Cherry (p-tp, all tracks)

Charlie Haden (b, all tracks) Blackwell (d, all tracks)

Eric Dolphy (b-cl, #8) Freddie Hubbard (tp, #8) Scott La Faro (b, #8)

Billy Higgins (d, #8)

New York City: July 19, 1960 [tracks 1-4]
New York City: July 26, 1960 [tracks 5-6]
New York City: August 2, 1960 [track 7]
New York City: December 21, 1961 [track 8]

1. Little Symphony Giants Of Jazz - 53214 [Original release
Atlantic SD 1588]
2. Rise and Shine — [Previously Unissued]
3. Kaleidoscope — [Original release
Atlantic SD 1353]
4. Revolving Doors — [Previously Unissued]
5. The Legend of Bebop — [Original release
Atlantic SD 1572]
6. Embraceable You — [Original release
Atlantic SD 1353]
7. Folk Tale — [Original release
Atlantic SD 1353]
8. Free Jazz (part I and II) — [Original release
Atlantic SD 1364]

Friends and Neighbors- Ornette Live at Prince Street: Coleman (as, tp, vln)

Dewey Redman (ts) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)

Live from Ornette Coleman's Prince Street Loft - NY - February 14, 1970

1. Friends and Neighbors (vocal) Flying Dutchman FDS-123
2. Friends and Neighbors (instrumental) —
3. Long Time No See —
4. Let's Play —
5. Forgotten Songs —
6. Tomorrow —

ORNETTE COLEMAN continued:

Live in Milano, 1968: Coleman (as) David Izenzon (b) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)
Recorded Live in Milan, Italy: February 5, 1968
1. Tutti Jazzup - JU 310
2. Three Wisemen and the Saint —
3. New York —

Ornette! [also released as *Jazzlore: Ornette Coleman, vol. 29*]:
Coleman (as) Don Cherry (p-tp) Scott LaFaro (b) Blackwell (d)
New York City: January 31, 1961
1. W.R.U. Atlantic SD 1378
2. T. & T. —
3. C. & D. —
4. R.P.D.D. —

Ornette Coleman Quartet: Coleman (as - # 3-6; tp - # 1-2; vln - # 1; shenai - # 7)
David Izenzon (b) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d) Yoko Ono (dubbed vcl - # 1)
Royal Albert Hall, London: February 29, 1968
1. AOS (Emotion Modulation) Apple SW 3373 [also released: Sapcor 17]
2. Sunrise Unissued
3. Forgotten Children —
4. Long Time No See —
5. Lonely Woman —
6. Height Ashbury —
7. Buddha Blues —

Ornette on Tenor: Coleman (ts) Don Cherry (tp, p-tp) Jimmy Garrison (b) Blackwell (d)
NY: March 22 and 27, 1961
1. Cross Breeding 3/27] Atlantic SD 1394
2. Mapa [3/27] —
3. Enfant [3/27] —
4. Eos 3/22] —
5. Ecars 3/27] —

Paris Concert: Coleman(as,tp,vln - # 1-3; as,tp - # 4-7) Dewey Redman (ts,musette-#4-7)
David Izenzon (b - # 1-3) Charles Moffett (d-#1-3) Charlie Haden (b - # 4-7)
Blackwell (d - # 4-7)
Paris, France: February 18, 1966
Paris (?): October or November, 1971
1. Juillet[1966] Trio PA 7169/7170 (Japan)
2. Reminiscence[1966] —
3. All Day Affair[1966] —
4. Street Woman (Second Fiction) [1971] —
5. Summer Thang[1971] —
6. Silhouette[1971] —
7. Rock the Clock (Fantasy 77) [1971] —

ORNETTE COLEMAN continued:

Science Fiction: Coleman (as) Dewey Redman (ts, #1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 - musette,#5)
Don Cherry (tp, #2,3,4) Gerard Schwarg (tp, #1, 6) Carmon Fornarotto (tp, #1, 6)
Bobby Bradford (tp, #4, 7, 8) Asha Puthli (vcl, #1, 6)
David Henderson (narrator, #4) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d, #1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)
Billy Higgins (d, #1, 4, 6 together with Blackwell - d, #2, 3)

CBS Studio - NY: September 9, 10, and 13, 1971

1. What Reason Could I Give? [9/13] Columbia KC 31061
2. Civilization Day [9/9] —
3. Street Woman [9/9] —
4. Science Fiction [9/10] —
5. Rock The Clock [9/13] —
6. All My Life [9/13] —
7. Law Years [9/9] —
8. The Jungle is a Skyscraper [9/9] —

Stating the Case: Coleman (as) Don Cherry (tp) Dewey Redman (ts) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)

Artist's House, NY: September 22, 1972

1. Ornette's Suite - Part I: Jazz Anthology 5248
 - a) The Word Became Music [also issued as J for Jazz JFJ803]
 - b) Unknown Races "Bootleg" recording
 - c) Love Eyes
 - d) The Good Life
 - e) Skies of America
 - f) Stand By For The News
2. Ornette's Suite - Part II
[Note: Part II of the "suite" consists of an exact duplicate of Part I]

This is our Music: Coleman (as) Don Cherry (p-tp) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)

NY: July 19 and 26, 1960

August 2, 1960

1. Blues Connotation [7/19] Atlantic SD 1353
2. Beauty is a Rare Thing [8/2] —
3. Kaleidoscope [7/19] —
4. Embraceable You [7/26] —
5. Poise [8/2] —
6. Humpty Dumpty [7/26] —
7. Folk Tale [8/2] —

ORNETTE COLEMAN continued:

- To Whom Keeps a Record:* Coleman (as) Don Cherry (tp) Charlie Haden (b)
Billy Higgins (d, "Music Always" only) Blackwell (d, all other tracks)
Hollywood, CA: October 8, 1959
New York: July 19, 1960
New York: July 26, 1960
1. Music Always [10/8] Atlantic P-10085 A (released only in Japan)
 2. Brings Goodness [7/19] —
 3. To Us [7/26] —
 4. All (Cherryco) [7/26] —
 5. P.S. Unless One Has
(Blues Connotation No. 2) [7/19] —
 6. Some Other [7/26] —
 7. Motive For It's Use [7/26] —

- Twins:* Coleman (as) Don Cherry (p-tp, tp, cor) Eric Dolphy (b-cl, #1)
Freddie Hubbard (tp, #1) Charlie Haden (b, #1, 2, 3, 5) Scott LaFaro (b, #1, 4)
Blackwell (d, #1, 2, 4, 5) Billy Higgins (d, #1 together with Blackwell - d, #3)
Hollywood, CA: May 22, 1959
Atlantic Recording Studios - NY: July 19 and July 26, 1960
A & R Studios - NY: December 21, 1960
Atlantic Recording Studios - NY: January 31, 1961
1. First Take (Free Jazz) [12/21] Atlantic SD 1588
 2. Little Symphony [7/19] —
 3. Monk and the Nun [5/22] —
 4. Check Up [1/31] —
 5. Joy of a Toy [7/26] —

- The Unprecedented Music of Ornette Coleman:* Coleman (as - #1-2; tp - #3; shenai - #4)
David Izenzon (b) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)
Rome: February 8, 1968
1. Lonely Woman Lotus Passport - LPPS11-116
[or Lotus LOP 14.074,
Joker UPS-2061-KR]
 2. Monsieur Le Prince —
 3. Forgotten Children —
 4. Buddha Blues —

STEVE COLEMAN

Rhythm in Mind: Coleman (as) Kenny Wheeler (flug) Von Freeman (ts)
Kevin Eubanks (g) Tommy Flanagan (p) Dave Holland (b)
Marvin "Smitty" Smith (d, perc) Blackwell (d)
Brooklyn, New York: April 29, 1991
Novus 63125-2

1. Slipped Again
2. Left of Center
3. Sweet Dawn
4. Pass It On
5. Vet Blues
6. Zec
7. Afterthoughts

JOHN COLTRANE and DON CHERRY

The Avant-Garde: Coltrane (ss, ts) Cherry (tp) Charlie Haden (b, #1, 3)
Percy Heath (b, # 2, 4, 5) Blackwell (d)
Atlantic Recording Studio - NY: June 28, 1960
Atlantic Recording Studio - NY: July 8, 1960

1. Cherryco [6/28] Atlantic 90041-2
2. Focus on Sanity [7/8]
3. The Blessing [6/28]
4. The Invisible [7/8]
5. Bemsha Swing [7/8]

STANLEY COWELL

Regeneration: Cowell (p, synthesizer, kora, mbira) Billy Higgins (perc, gembhre)
Blackwell ("waterdrum," parade drum, perc) Marion Brown (wooden fife/fl)
John Stubblefield (zuna) Nadi Quamar (perc, mama-lekimbe, Madagascan harp)
Jerry Venable (g) Glenda Barnes (vcl) Charles Fowlkes (vcl, b)
Jimmy Heath (ss, fl, alto fl) Aleke Kanonu (perc, Ibo chanting)
Psyche Wanzandae (harmonica, fl) Bill Lee (b)
Minot Studios - White Plains, NY: April 27, 1975
Strata-East - SES 19765

1. Trying to Find a Way
2. The Gembhre
3. Shimmy Shewobble
4. Parlour Blues
5. Thank You My People
6. Travelin' Man
7. Lullabye

ANTHONY DAVIS

Song for the Old World: Davis (p) Jay Hoggard (v) Mark Helias (b) Blackwell (d)
Recorded July 1978 India Navigation - IN1036

ERIC DOLPHY

The Complete Prestige Recordings: Dolphy (as, b-cl, fl, cl)
Trumpet: Freddie Hubbard, Richard Williams, Booker Little.
Saxophone: Oliver Nelson, Ken McIntyre, Booker Ervin, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis.
Piano: Jaki Byard, Richard Wyands, Walter Bishop, Jr., Mal Waldron.
Bass: George Tucker, George Duvivier, Sam Jones, Ron Carter, Joe Benjamin,
Richard Davis.
Drums: Roy Haynes, Art Taylor, Charlie Persip, Ed Blackwell.
Recorded between April 1, 1960 and September 8, 1961.

The Great Concert of Eric Dolphy: Dolphy (as, b-cl, fl) Booker Little (tp)
Mal Waldron (p) Richard Davis (b) Blackwell (d)
New York: Live at the Five Spot Cafe July 16, 1961
This box-set contains all of the recorded material from:
Live! at the Five Spot - volume 1
Live! at the Five Spot - volume 2
Memorial Album
Immortal Concerts

Here and There: Dolphy (as, b-cl, fl) Booker Little (tp, #1, 2) Mal Waldron (p, #1, 2)
Richard Davis (b, #1, 2) Blackwell (d, #1, 2) Freddie Hubbard (tp, #3, 4)
Jaki Byard (p, #3, 4) George Tucker (b, #, 4) Roy haynes (d, #3, 4)
Bent Axen (p, #5) Erik Moseholm (b, #5) Jorn Elniff (d, #5)
Live the Five Spot Cafe - NY: July 16, 1961
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : April 1, 1960
Berlinske Has, Copenhagen : September 6, 1961

1. Status Seeking [7/16]	Prestige 7382	
2. God Bless the Child [7/16]	—	
3. April Fool [4/1]	—	
4. G.W. [4/1]	—	[original release Prestige 2517]
5. Don't Blame Me [9/6]	—	

Live! at the Five Spot - Volume 1: Dolphy (as, b-cl) Booker Little (tp)
Mal Waldron (p) Richard Davis (b) Blackwell (d)
Live at the Five Spot Cafe - NY: July 16, 1961

1. Fire Waltz	Prestige OJCCD-133-2
2. Bee Vamp	—
3. The Prophet	—
4. Bee Vamp [alternate take]	—

ERIC DOLPHY continued:

Live! at the Five Spot - Volume 2: Dolphy (fl, b-cl) Booker Little (tp)
Mal Waldron (p) Richard Davis (b) Blackwell (d)

Live at the Five Spot Cafe - NY: July 16, 1961

1. Aggression Prestige OJCCD-247-2
2. Like Someone in Love —

Memorial Album - Recorded Live at the Five Spot:

Dolphy (b-cl, as) Little (tp) Mal Waldron (p) Richard Davis (b) Blackwell (d)

Live at the Five Spot Cafe - NY: July 16, 1961

1. Number Eight (Potsa Lotsa) Prestige OJCCD-353-2
2. Booker's Waltz —

Immortal Concerts-Five Spot Cafe: Dolphy (as, b-cl, fl) Booker Little (tp)

Mal Waldron (p) Richard Davis (b) Blackwell (d)

Live at the Five Spot Cafe - NY: July 16, 1961

1. Fire Waltz Giants of Jazz CD 53067
2. Like Someone in Love —
3. Aggression —
4. The Prophet —

CHARLIE HADEN

The Montreal Tapes: Haden (b) Don Cherry p-tp) Blackwell (d)

Live at the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal, Canada - July 2, 1989

1. The Sphinx Verve 314 523 260-2
2. Art Deco —
3. Happy House —
4. Lonely Woman —
5. Mopti —
6. The Blessing —
7. When Will the Blues Leave? —
8. Law Years —

ALBERT "TOOTIE" HEATH

Kawaida: Heath (d, perc) Herbie Hancock (p) Don Cherry (tp)

Jimmie Heath (woodwinds) Buster Williams (b) Blackwell (perc) Mtume (perc)

Recorded December 11, 1969 Trip label

BARRY HARRIS

- Interpretations of Monk:* Harris (p) Don cherry (tp) Steve Lacy (ss) Charlie Rouse (ts)
Roswell Rudd (tb) Richard Davis (b) Blackwell (d)
Live at Wollman Auditorium, Columbia Univ. - NY: November 1, 1981
1. Ruby, My Dear Koch Jazz KOC-CD-7838
 2. Light Blue —
 3. Eronel —
 4. Bye-Ya —
 5. Pannonica —
 6. Off Minor —
 7. Epistrophy —

JAY HOGGARD

- In the Spirit:* Hoggard (v) James Newton (fl) Dwight Andrews (b-cl, ss, alto fl)
Mark Helias (b) Blackwell (d)
Van Gelder Recording Studio - Englewood Cliffs, NJ: May 4, 1992
1. Bye Ya Muse MCD 5476
 2. Prayin' Out Loud —
 3. Stolen Moments —
 4. In the Spirit of Eric Dolphy,
Peaceful Messenger of God's Music —
 5. Andrew —
 6. Gazzeloni —
 7. De Pois Do Amor O Vazio (After Love) —
 8. Without a Song —

CLIFFORD JORDAN

- In the World:* Jordan (ts) Julian Preister (tb) Wynton Kelly (p) Wilbur Ware (b)
Richard Davis (b) Kenny Dorham (tp) Roy Haynes (d) Ed Blackwell (d)
New York City - Spring, 1969
1. Ougoudougou Strata-East SES 1972-1
 2. 872 —

JOE LOVANO

- From the Soul:* Lovano (ts, as, ss) Michel Petrucciani (p) Dave Holland (b) Blackwell (d)
Skyline Studio - N.Y.C. - December 28, 1991
1. Evolution Blue Note CDP 7 98363 2
 2. Portrait of Jenny —
 3. Lines & Spaces —
 4. Body and Soul —
 5. Modern Man —
 6. Fort Worth —
 7. Central Park West —
 8. Work —
 9. Left Behind —
 10. His Dreams —

JOE LOVANO continued:

Sounds of Joy: Lovano (ts, as, ss, alto-cl) Anthony Cox (b) Blackwell (d)
AUDIOFORCE - NY: January 26, 1991

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Sounds of Joy | Enja CD 7013-2 |
| 2. Strengh and Courage [SIC] | — |
| 3. I'll Wait and Pray | — |
| 4. Cedar Avenue Blues | — |
| 5. Bass Space | — |
| 6. Ettenro | — |
| 7. Until the Moment Was Now | — |
| 8. This One's for Lacy | — |
| 9. 23rd Street Theme | — |

“Title not known”: Lovano, Mark Helias (b) Jay Hoggard (v) Blackwell (d)
India Navigation record company

JEMEEL MOONDOC

Judy's Bounce: Moondoc (as) Fred Hopkins (b) Blackwell (d)
Live at New York University Loeb Student Center - November 9, 1981

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Judy's Bounce | Black Saint 121051-2 |
| 2. Echo in Blue | — |
| 3. One For Ornette | — |
| 4. Nimus | — |

LEE MORGAN

Live in Baltimore: Morgan (tp) Clifford Jordan (ts) John Hicks (p) Reggie Workman (b)
Blackwell (d)

Recorded July 1968 Fresh Sound: FSR CD 1037

DAVID MURRAY

Death of a Sideman: Murray (ts, b-cl) Bobby Bradford (cor) Dave Burrell (p)
Fred Hopkins (b) Blackwell (d)

Recorded October 1991 DIW 866

Live at the Village Vanguard - Volume 6 "David Murray and Friends": Murray (ts)
John Hicks (p) Fred Hopkins (b) Blackwell (d)

Video Artists International, Inc. - NY: 1986 [VAI 6909 4]

1. Off Season
2. Lovers
3. Morning Song
4. Ming
5. Murray's Steps
6. Duet

DAVID MURRAY continued:

Ming's Samba: Murray (ts, b-cl) John Hicks (p) Ray Drummond (b) Blackwell (d)
CBS Studios - NY: July 20, 1988

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Ming's Samba | Portrait RK 44432 |
| 2. Rememberin' Fats | — |
| 3. Nowhere Everafter | — |
| 4. Spooning | — |
| 5. Walter's Waltz | — |

Morning Song: Lovano (ts, b-cl) John Hicks (p) Reggie Workman (b) Blackwell (d)
New York: September 25, 26, and 30, 1983

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Morning Song | Black Saint - BSR 0075 |
| 2. Body and Soul | — |
| 3. Jitterbug Waltz | — |
| 4. Duet | — |
| 5. Light Blue Frolic | — |
| 6. Off Season | — |

OLD AND NEW DREAMS

Old and New Dreams: Don Cherry (p-tp) Dewey Redman (ts, musette) Charlie Haden (b)
Blackwell (d)

Generation Sound Studios - NY: October 1976

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Handwoven | Black Saint 120013-2 |
| 2. Dewey's Tune | — |
| 3. Chairman Mao | — |
| 4. Next to the Quiet Stream | — |
| 5. Augmented | — |
| 6. Old and New Dreams | — |

Old and New Dreams: Don Cherry (tp, p) Dewey Redman (ts, musette) Charlie Haden (b)
Blackwell (d)

Talent Studio - Oslo - August 1979

- | | |
|------------------------|------------|
| 1. Lonely Woman | ECM-1-1154 |
| 2. Togo | — |
| 3. Guinea | — |
| 4. Open or Close | — |
| 5. Orbit of La-Ba | — |
| 6. Song for the Whales | — |

Playing: Don Cherry (tp, p) Dewey Redman (ts, musette) Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)
Theater am Kornmarkt - Bregenz, Austria - June 1980

- | | |
|-------------------|----------|
| 1. Happy House | ECM 1205 |
| 2. Mopti | — |
| 3. New Dream | — |
| 4. Rushour | — |
| 5. Broken Shadows | — |
| 6. Playing | — |

OLD AND NEW DREAMS continued:

- Tribute to Blackwell:* Don Cherry (tp) Dewey Redman (ts) Charlie Haden (b)
Blackwell (d)
Live at the Ed Blackwell Festival - Atlanta, Georgia - November 7, 1987
- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Happy House | Black Saint 120113-2 |
| 2. Law Years | — |
| 3. Togo | — |
| 4. Dewey's Tune | — |
| 5. Street Woman | — |

YOKO ONO

- The Plastic Ono Band:* Ono (vcl) Ornette Coleman (tp, vln) David Izenzon (b)
Charlie Haden (b) Blackwell (d)
Apple SW 3373 [or Rykodisc RCD 10414] February 29, 1968

DEWEY REDMAN

- JAZZACTUEL - A Collection of Avant Garde/Free Jazz/ Psychedelia from the
BYG/Actuel catalogue of 1969-1971:*
(This 3-CD set contains the Dewey Redman composition "Tarik.")
Redman (ts, musette) Malachi Favors (b) Blackwell (d)
Studio E.T.A. - Paris - October 1, 1969
- | | | |
|----------|--------------------|---|
| 1. Tarik | Charly CDNEW 137-3 | [Original release
BYG Records 529.334] |
|----------|--------------------|---|

- The Struggle Continues:* Redman (ts) Charles Eubanks (p) Hark Helias (b) Blackwell (d)
January 1982
- | | |
|-------------------|------------|
| 1. Thren | ECM 1-1225 |
| 2. Love Is | — |
| 3. Turn Over Baby | — |
| 4. Joie De Viure | — |
| 5. Combinations | — |
| 6. Dewey Square | — |

- Tarik:* Redman (ts, musette) Malachi Favors (b) Blackwell (d)
Studio E.T.A. - Paris - October 1, 1969
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Tarik | BYG Records 529.334 - volume 34 (or Affinity Records) |
| 2. FO IO | — |
| 3. Paris? Oui! | — |
| 4. Lop-o-Lop | — |
| 5. Related and Un-Related Vibrations | — |

DEWEY REDMAN and ED BLACKWELL

- In Willisau:* Redman (ts, musette) Blackwell (d)
Willisau '80 Jazz Festival - August 31, 1980
- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Willisee | Black Saint BSR 0093 |
| 2. We Hope | — |
| 3. F I | — |
| 4. Communication | — |
| 5. S 126 T | — |

DAVID SCHNITTER

- Glowing:* Schnitter (ts) Claudio Roditi (tp) Albert Dailey (p) Mark Helias (b)
Blackwell (d)
Recorded December 1981 Muse Records

ARCHIE SHEPP

- The Magic of JuJu:* Shepp (ts) Reggie Workman (b) Beaver Harris (d)
Norman Connors (s) Blackwell (“rhythm logs”) Frank Charles (“talking drums”)
NY: April 26, 1967
- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. The Magic of Juju (excerpt) | Impulse ASH-9272-3 [original release
“The Drums” LP: Impulse AS-9154] |
|--------------------------------|--|

- On This Night:* Shepp (ts, p #1, recitation #10) Christine Spencer (vcl #1)
Bobby Hutcherson (v, #1-5) Henry Grimes (b, #1-5) Rashied Ali (d, #1-3)
J.C. Moses (d, #4 and 6-10) Joe Chambers (d, #5 - timpani #1)
Blackwell (“rhythm logs” #2-4) David Izenzon (b, #6-10)
Van Gelder Studio - Englewood Cliffs, NJ: August 12, 1965 (#1-5)
March 9, 1965 (#6-10)
- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. On this Night | Impulse GRD-125 |
| 2. The Mac Man | — |
| 3. The Mac Man (alternate take) | — |
| 4. The Original Mr. Sonny Boy Williamson | — |
| 5. In a Sentimental Mood | — |
| 6. The Chased (take 1) | — |
| 7. The Chased (take 2) | — |
| 8. The Chased (take 3) | — |
| 9. The Pickaninny | — |
| 10. Malcolm, Malcolm, Semper Malcolm | — |

BOB STEWART

Goin' Home: Stewart (tu) Steve Turre (tb) James Zoller (tp) Earl Gardner (tp, #1,7)
John Clark (fr-h, #7) Jerome Harris (g) Frank Colon (perc, #1, 5)
Buddy Williams (d) Blackwell (d, #2, 4 only)
Recorded December 1988

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Subi La Nas Altura | JMT 834-427-2 |
| 2. Art Deco | — |
| 3. Bell and Ponce | — |
| 4. Tunk | — |
| 5. Sugar Finger | — |
| 6. Sweet Georgia Brown Sweet: | — |
| a) Sweet Georgia Brown | |
| b) Windmill | |
| c) Donna | |
| 7. Priestess | — |

VARIOUS ARTISTS

That's the Way I Feel Now -A Tribute to Thelonious Monk:
Steve Slagle (as) Dr. John (p) Steve Swallow (b) Blackwell (d)
Recorded 1984

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1. Bye-Ya | A & M Records SP 6600 |
|-----------|-----------------------|

MAL WALDRON

Breaking New Ground: Waldron (p) Reggie Workman (b) Blackwell (d)
New York City: 6/28/83

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Dans La Cuisine D'Alibi | Baybridge KUX 1808 |
| 2. Suicide is Painless | — |
| 3. After the Love is Gone | — |
| 4. Beat It | — |
| 5. You Are the Sunshine of My Life | — |
| 6. Gymnopedie #2 | — |
| 7. Everything Must Change | — |
| 8. Thy Freedom Come | — |

The Git Go - Live at the Village Vanguard: Waldron (p) Woody Shaw (tp, flugelhorn)
Charlie Rouse (ts, fl) Reggie Workman (b) Blackwell (d)
Live at the Village Vanguard - NY: September 16, 1986

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Status Seeking | Black Saint (Soul Note) 121118-2 |
| 2. The Git Go | — |

The Seagulls of Kristiansund - Live at the Village Vanguard:

Waldron (p) Woody Shaw (tp, flugelhorn) Charlie Rouse (ts, fl)
Reggie Workman (b) Blackwell (d)
Live at the Village Vanguard - NY: September 16, 1986

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Snake Out | Black Saint 121148-2 |
| 2. Judy | — |
| 3. The Seagulls of Kristiansund | — |

MAL WALDRON continued:

You and the Night and the Music: Waldron (p) Reggie Workman (b) Blackwell (d)
King Studio #2 - Japan - December 9, 1983

1. The Way You Look Tonight ProJazz CDJ 617
2. Bag's Groove —
3. 'Round Midnight —
4. You and the Night and the Music —
5. Georgia On My Mind —
6. Billie's Bounce —
7. Waltz for my Mother —

Live at the Village Vanguard - Volume 4 "Mal Waldron and Friends": Waldron (p)
Woody Shaw (tp) Charlie Rouse (ts) Reggie Workman (b) Blackwell (d)
Video Artists International, Inc. - N.Y.C. - VAI 69092 - 1984

1. Git-Go
2. All Alone
3. Fire Waltz
4. Left Alone