

THE 1960S:

MUSIC AND CIVIL RIGHTS

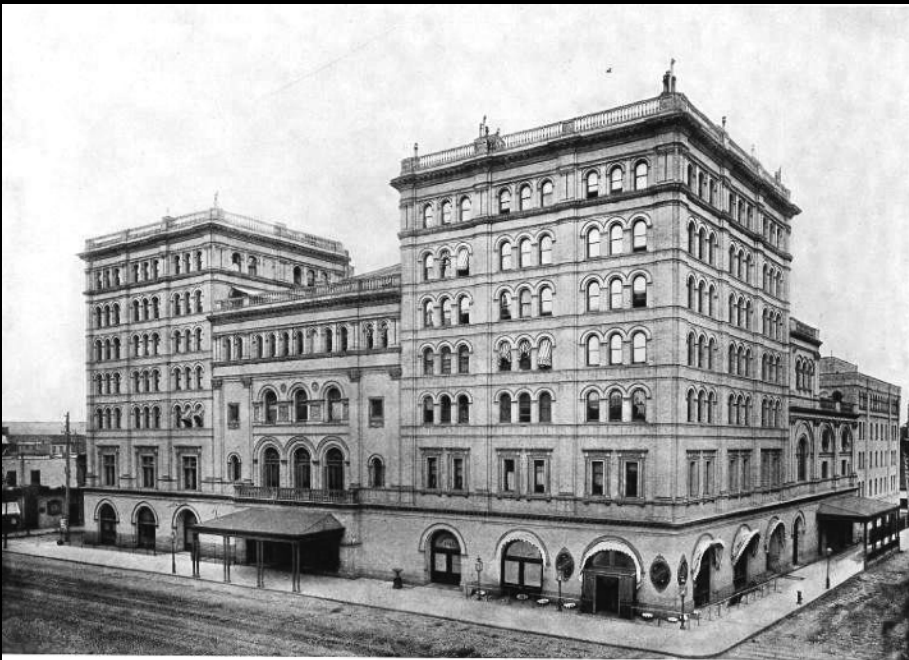




Marian Anderson (1897-1993)

- Born in Philadelphia
- early 1900s: very active in singing at Union Avenue Baptist Church (Anderson paid to perform vocal solos even when very young, sang in the church choir)
- 1907: joins People's Chorus of Philadelphia conducted by Emma Azalia Hackley
- 1910s: goes to grammar school—though her family cannot afford formal music lessons, Anderson learns in a lot of musical contexts. Her pastor and other community leaders raise money for Anderson to have singing lessons and go to South Philadelphia High School
- 1919: Chicago, performance at at National Association for Black musicians (hugely important, but also a difficult experience)
- 1919: "Erbarme dich"
- 1923: makes recordings for Victor company
- 1924: "Deep River"
- 1924: Town Hall recital in NYC
- 1925: singing appearance with NY Phil
- 1927: "Der Tod und das Madchen"
- 1935: famous (and dangerous) concert in Salzburg





THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE



Pathways to Desegregating the Metropolitan Opera

- 1943: Marian Anderson's manager starts a concerted effort of renting the Met hall for concert performances [strategic!]
- More Anderson concerts at Met in 1945, 1946, 1947 [Easter Sunday!]
—often standing room only in the 4,000 seat Met auditorium, and often a majority Black audience. More Easter concerts in 1948 and 1949
- January 1951: Duke Ellington benefit concert at the Met for NAACP
- March 1951: Fred Thomas, Black baritone, is among 3 winners of the Metropolitan Opera of the Air auditions
- October 1951: Janet Collins signed as one of the premiere dancers at the Met
- November 1951: The bar/restaurant at the Met (Sherry's) is desegregated
- November 1951: 4 Black choral members join the chorus of *Cavalleria rusticana* [breaks *Aida* pattern]
- April 1953: Robert McFerrin wins Metropolitan Opera of the Air auditions
- Spring 1954: Sylvia Olden Lee hired as a vocal coach becoming the first Black artistic staff member at the Met
- October 1954: Rudolf Bing and Marian Anderson reach an agreement for her debut at the Met in January 1955
- January 1955: both Marian Anderson and Robert McFerrin make Met stage debuts



1950-1972:

Rudolph Bing's era as Metropolitan Opera manager

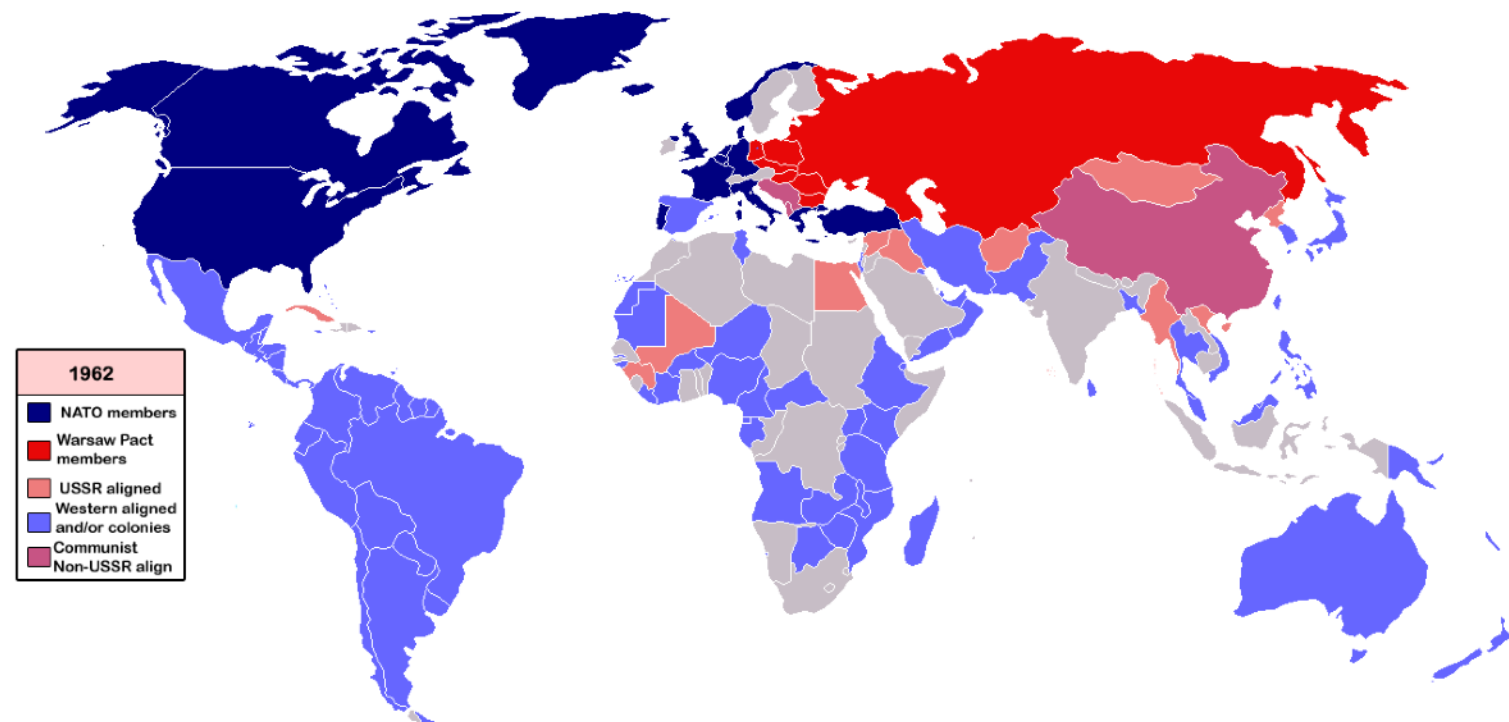
- 22 seasons of Bing's tenure: The Met averages 245 performances/year
- 22 seasons of Bing's tenure=5,429 performances in total
- January 1955: first credited performance by a singer of color during a main season opera [Marian Anderson, Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera*]
- 1955-1972: at least 733 performances by credited singers of color

	Date	Singer	Work (Role)	Venue (if not Metropolitan Opera House)	Met Broadcast?
	1/11/1965	Marian Anderson	<i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i> (Ulrica)	Academy of Music, Philadelphia	
	1/27/1955	Robert McFerrin	<i>Aida</i> (Amonasro)		
	2/26/1955	Marian Anderson	<i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i> (Ulrica)		
	4/6/1955	Robert McFerrin	<i>Aida</i> (Amonasro)		
	11/26/1955	Marian Anderson	<i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i> (Ulrica)		
	12/10/1955	Marian Anderson	<i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i> (Ulrica)		
	12/26/1955	Marian Anderson	<i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i> (Ulrica)		
	2/16/1956	Robert McFerrin	<i>Faust</i> (Valentin)		
	3/2/1956	Robert McFerrin	<i>Aida</i> (Amonasro)		
	3/16/1956	Robert McFerrin	<i>Rigoletto</i> (Rigoletto)		
	3/23/1956	Robert McFerrin	<i>Rigoletto</i> (Rigoletto)		
	4/17/1956	Marian Anderson	<i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i> (Ulrica)	Boston Opera House, Boston	
	4/21/1956	Robert McFerrin	<i>Aida</i> (Amonasro)	Boston Opera House, Boston	
	4/24/1956	Marian Anderson	<i>Un Ballo in Maschera</i> (Ulrica)	Cleveland Public Auditorium, Cleveland	
	5/19/1956	Robert McFerrin	<i>Aida</i> (Amonasro)	University of Minnesota, Northrop Memorial Auditorium	
1956-57 season	11/9/1956	Mattiwilda Dobbs	<i>Rigoletto</i> (Gilda)		
	11/12/1956	Mattiwilda Dobbs	<i>Rigoletto</i> (Gilda)		
	12/1/1956	Mattiwilda Dobbs	<i>Rigoletto</i> (Gilda)		
	12/6/1956	Mattiwilda Dobbs	<i>Rigoletto</i> (Gilda)		
	12/25/1956	Robert McFerrin	<i>Aida</i> (Amonasro)		
	1/31/1957	Robert McFerrin	<i>Aida</i> (Amonasro)		
1957-58 season	12/21/1957	Mattiwilda Dobbs	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> (Lucia)		
	1/20/1958	Mattiwilda Dobbs	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> (Lucia)		
	1/20/1958	Mattiwilda Dobbs	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> (Lucia)		

Signifying Politics through Musical Style

Cold War Sounds in the Soviet Bloc

I. How is someone forced to sound
“Soviet” in the 1940s, 60s, even in
the 1980s?



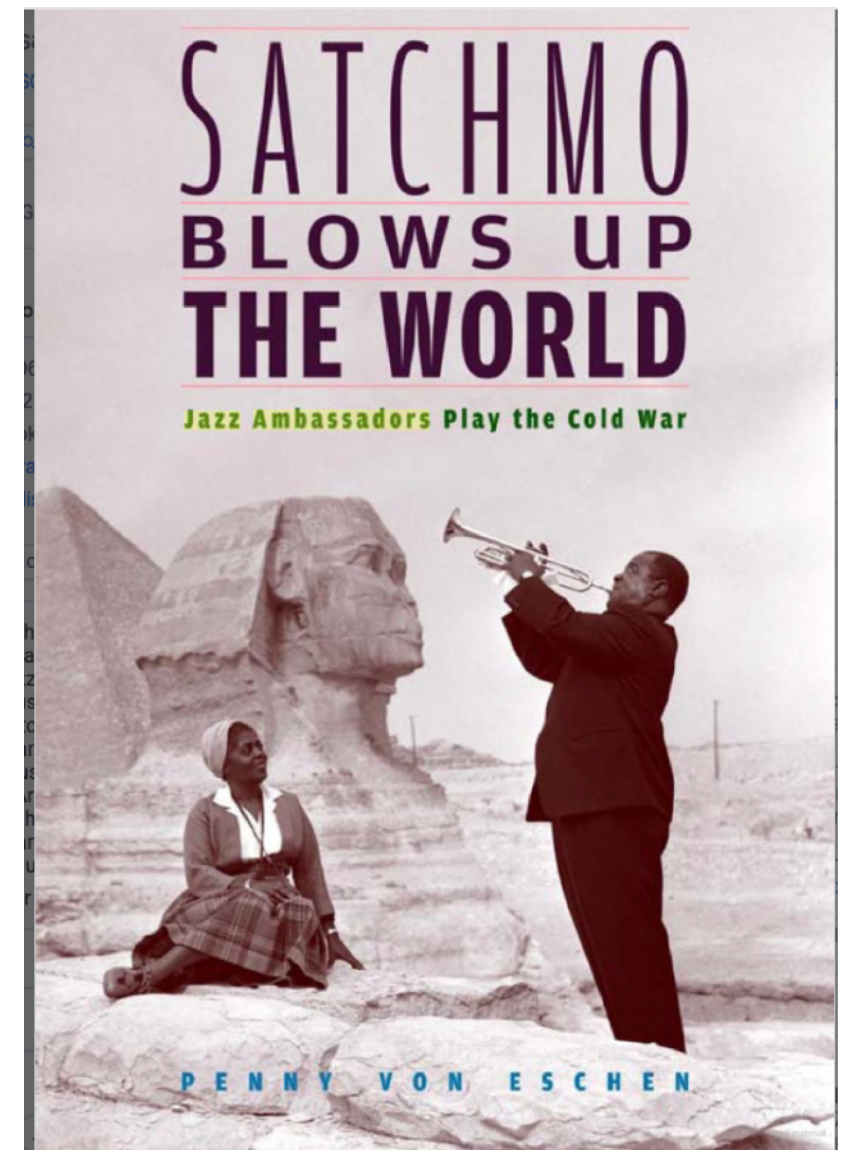
America and its Allies

II. What sounds like “freedom”?

Jazz & Serialism

Musical Style: Jazz = “Freedom” in the Cold War???

- Jazz: had been disliked by Hitler and Nazis during WWII; certain kinds of jazz often disliked by Soviets
- some repetitive analogies about improvisation = freedom (not just musical but political)
- jazz often used in the equation of jazz = America = freedom
- 1956: beginnings on the **jazz ambassadors** program by US State Department to send jazz musicians to tour much of the globe (Europe, Middle East, parts of Asia and Africa, etc)
- cultural diplomacy, intended to promote a positive view of “American values”
- musicians who took part: huge number of people, but includes Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman
- this was a public relations move by the United States: trying to make America look good, because the Soviet Union had been criticizing America’s racist Jim Crow policies
- some interesting impacts from the program (US jazz musicians hung out with local musicians and learned music from each other at times)
- yet obviously a HUGELY difficult space for Black jazz musicians to be operating in: you have experienced racism routinely in the United States, and now the US government wants you to go play in other countries around the world to show how great the US is about interracial cooperation?



Bebop: Changing Jazz in the 1940s and 1950s

late 1940s and 1950s: lots of social change in the US post WW-II

- 📌 **crisis in masculinity** in United States (changing social roles)
 - 📌 disappointment by African Americans over the **broken promises of the "Double Victory" campaign** ("I'll risk my life to fight fascism in WWII if you promise to fight segregation when I come back home"which obviously does not happen in the 1940s and 1950s).
 - 📌 This era of race relations immediately after World War II helps accelerate the importance of intensifying the civil rights movement of the 1950s
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- 📌 jazz = a very **highly** valued American cultural product at this time, AND the most closely associated with origins and production in African American culture....all this makes arguments about jazz really important and very complicated in American midcentury culture.
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- 📌 In the 1940s and 1950s, some jazz musicians start to insist that jazz is *NOT* entertainment.....instead, that jazz is ART MUSIC.
- 📌 These arguments are sometimes for aesthetic/musical style reasons, but also usually political and social ones as well.



Bebop Musical style:

- small groups: usually trumpet, sax, piano, bass, drums
- unison melody, "head" at the beginning
- chord changes
- solos in turn, over the "changes"
- more complex rhythmic feel
- often fast tempos
- virtuosic
- cutting contests
- (most weren't recorded, but you can listen to the Youtube link below at



"Hot House" recorded from television in 1952
tune composed by Tad Dameron around the harmonic structure of Cole Porter's "What is This Thing Called Love?"
(another contrafact)

Charlie Parker, alto saxophone
Sandy Block: bass
Dizzy Gillespie: trumpet
Charlie Smith: drums
Dick Hymnan: piano

Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie "Anthropology"

- another contrafact—a new tune played over the harmonic changes of another song (in this case, again "rhythm changes" from Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm")
- head: melody in AABA form (played in unison)
- afterwards: 3 choruses, improvised solos over the chord changes—played by Charlie Parker
- Gillespie then solos for 3 choruses
- live recording

Intriguingly, Charlie Parker knew a lot about what was going in contemporary classical music at the time (he read and listened quite a bit to Paul Hindemith and Stravinsky, for example). Parker said 'bop is not moving in the same direction as modern classical. It will be more emotional, flexible, more colorful."

We Insist! Freedom Now Suite

- ◆ Driva' Man
- ◆ Freedom Day
- ◆ Triptych: Prayer—Protest—Peace
- ◆ All Africa
- ◆ Tears for Johannesburg



Abbey Lincoln, vocals
Max Roach drums



Abbey Lincoln
(1930-2010)



*We Insist! Freedom
Now Suite (1961)*

Max Roach (1924-2007)



Abbey Lincoln

1995 interview:

“I don’t scream anymore. I sing about my life. The songs I sing are about the life I’ve had. So I was just practicing then...I feel accomplished [now] too, because I’ve learned to be a writer. I sing the songs that I write. I don’t sing anybody else’s material for the most part except for some old standards every once in a while. And I’ve become a composer as well. And I feel sufficient to myself as far as the music is concerned. And I’m glad those days are behind me.”

Abbey Lincoln

1995 interview:

“I picked the songs, but I had nothing to do with the arrangements, but things have really changed now because I wouldn’t let anybody do that to me again!...Defend myself. Yeah, because that’s what you have to do. For the most part it’s a man’s music. The men bring you into it. And sometimes they will help you. They will gather and help you to get through. So I always had a lot of encouragement from Thelonious Monk, people like that. John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, and especially from Roach, who gave me the impression he knew I had great talent. But I don’t know, when I look back and think about some things, it turns me off a little. ”

Musicians and Civil Rights: Individual Artists Respond



E. Musical Responses

Nina Simone

(1933-2003)



- "Pirate Jenny" (1964)

Mississippi Goddam (1963)
* Nina Simone wrote this song in response to the Birmingham church bombings in 1963. She often performed it (and recorded it) live, so some lyrics differ slightly from performance to performance.
* Think about the disconnect between the upbeat sound of the music and the subject matter of the lyrics.
- "Mississippi Goddam" (1964)

The name of this tune is Mississippi Goddam
And I mean every word of it

This is a show tune
But the show hasn't been written for it, yet
- "Old Jim Crow" (1964)

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

Hound dogs on my trail
School children sitting in jail
Black cat cross my path
I think every day's gonna be my last
- "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free" (1967)

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

Lord have mercy on this land of mine
We all gonna get it in due time
I don't belong here
I don't belong there
I've even stopped believing in prayer
- "Why? (The King of Love is Dead)" (1968)

Can't you see it
Can't you feel it
It's all in the air
I can't stand the pressure much longer
Somebody say a prayer

Don't tell me
I tell you
Me and my people just about due
I've been there so I know
They keep on saying "Go slow!"

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

