STRANGE ECHOES: A GENRE STUDY OF EXOTICA

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August 2022

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Ph.D. in Musicology.

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Strange Echoes: A Genre Study of Exotica

This dissertation is a study of exotica— a popular musical genre of the 1950s and 60s in which artists juxtaposed exotic musical references to promote fantasy and imagination of non-European people and places. The popularity of exotica was short lived in its time, lasting less than ten years, but it was rediscovered by record collectors during the lounge music revival of the 1990s. Rather than analyzing exotica from a 1990s perspective, I am interested in the entanglement of stylistic features, historical conditions, and social knowledges, particularly around race and gender, during the period that exotica became a recognizable genre. I ask the question: why did exotica emerge when it did and what did it mean to its users at the time? To answer this, I situate exotica in relation to postwar technological, musical, and social networks that inform my case studies: 1) the advent of mood or background instrumental music as a viable commercial style 2) the industry wide embrace of the vinyl long play record (LP) and marketing strategies that included increasingly sexualized images of women on album covers 3) the cultural legitimization of pop music via its association with jazz as a modern art form, and 4) music making in the Hawaiian tourist milieu and its connection to Hawaiian statehood in 1959. My study is informed by archival research and recent literature that theorizes musical genre as akin to an assemblage in which component parts interact with other genres, and as a type of knowledge system that enables its users to form and organize their sense of the world.

Échos étrangers : une étude de l'exotica en tant que genre

Cette thèse propose une étude de l'exotica, un genre musical des années 1950 et 1960 dans lequel les artistes combinaient des références musicales exotiques afin d'offrir une représentation fantaisiste et imaginaire de peuples et de lieux non-européens. La popularité de l'exotica fut de courte durée à l'époque, soit moins de dix ans, mais le genre fut redécouvert par des collectionneurs de disques à l'occasion du renouveau de la musique lounge dans les années 1990. Plutôt que d'analyser l'exotica selon une perspective des années 1990, je m'intéresse à l'enchevêtrement de caractéristiques stylistiques, de conditions historiques et de connaissances sociales ayant marqué la période où l'exotica devint un genre reconnaissable, avec une attention particulière pour les enjeux de race et de rapports entre les sexes. Je pose la question suivante : pourquoi l'exotica a-t-il émergé à cette époque précise et que signifiait-il pour ses utilisateurs? Pour y répondre, je situe l'exotica en lien avec une série de réseaux – technologiques d'après-guerre, musicaux et sociaux – qui nourrissent mes études de cas. Celles-ci se divisent comme suit : 1) l'arrivée de la musique d'ambiance ou instrumentale d'arrière-plan en tant que style commercial viable; 2) l'adoption par l'ensemble de l'industrie du format long jeu (LP) en vinyle et de stratégies publicitaires incluant des images de plus en plus sexualisées de femmes sur les pochettes d'albums; 3) la légitimation culturelle de la musique pop par le biais de son association avec le jazz comme forme d'art moderne; 4) la pratique musicale dans le milieu touristique hawaïen en lien avec l'indépendance d'Hawaï en 1959. Mon étude s'appuie sur la recherche d'archives et la littérature récente qui conçoit l'idée de genre musical comme un assemblage dans lequel les diverses composantes interagissent avec d'autres genres, et en tant que système de connaissances permettant à ses utilisateurs de former et d'organiser leur vision du monde.

Acknowledgements

Big thanks first and foremost to my supervisor David Brackett— your expertise, and countless hours of discussion about popular music, genre, and historiography have been fundamental to shaping my ideas about music scholarship and this dissertation. I am grateful for your many years of support, encouragement, patience, and trust. Thanks to my committee members Lisa Barg, Kevin Fellezs, and Will Straw (especially for lending me your magazines from the 1990s). I am fortunate to have taken seminars over the course of my doctoral studies with David Brackett, Lisa Barg, Lloyd Whitesell, Beverly Diamond, and Jonathan Sterne. A special thanks to Jonathan Sterne and all the members of CATDAWG who were always ready to read a draft, exchange ideas, and just check in. You all made covid lockdown a little more bearable. I want to thank all the faculty and staff at the Schulich School of Music. I am also truly thankful for my colleagues from the Schulich School of Music, especially Kristin Franseen, Kiersten and Marta Beszterda van Vliet, Zach Milliman, Bryan Terry, Jack Flesher, Allyson Rogers, Bruno Coulombe, Claire Mcleish, Shanti Nachtergaele, and Hester Jordan.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of generous grants from the Schulich School of Music and the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada Joseph-Armand Bombardier CGS Doctoral Scholarship, and the Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement that allowed me to access to archives, primary sources, and communities fundamental to my research. Thanks to archivist Amy Roberts at the Fred Fox School of Music, University of Arizona, where the Les Baxter Collection and Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection are housed. Special thanks to everyone at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, especially Dr. Byong Won Lee. With support from the music faculty, and staff, I was able to access UH Manoa’s Library Archives and Manuscripts Collection, the Hawaiian Collection, and

local newspapers and magazines, such as the *Honolulu Advertiser*, *Star-Bulletin*, *Paradise of the Pacific,* and *Music Studio News* and documents related to tourism and music in Honolulu at the Hawai'i State Archives, and the City of Honolulu Municipal Reference Center. There were several librarians and archivists who were especially helpful, including librarian Jodie Mattos, and archivist Leilani Dawson. A special recognition to the late Barbara B. Smith for her willingness to take the time to discuss this topic and her recollections. Without the vast and important work of academic and non-academic record collectors, public forums, websites, and related ephemera I would have not been able to write this dissertation. For your editing skills, thanks to Rebecca Hutton and Susan Walker.

Finally, I am especially grateful to my friends and family who have been there for me through it all, Jamie Myers-Riczu, Patricia Galaczy, Nancy Liknes, Debbie Burnett-Benton, Meredith Olson, my mom Dorothy for always getting excited for me, Gerald, Martha, Joanne, Katherine, Jasper, Leah Weinberg and my Fanny Bay family who talked me through the highs and lows of the final process.

INTRODUCTION |

On June 5, 1956, Elvis Presley made one of his first television appearances on the Milton Berle Show, a program that rock historians have cited as a watershed moment in the emergence of rock 'n' roll. Part of its historical significance is related to the controversy over Elvis' sexualized performance of "Hound Dog" on a prime-time family variety show. Critics accused Elvis of contributing to, if not causing, juvenile delinquency.[1] However, not all the reviews focused on what they saw as impending social decline. Some reviews reported on the more mundane aspects of the program such as the "mixing of ingredients" that was common with this type of variety show. In addition to Elvis, the show featured a variety of comedy skits, songs, and dances by guests Deborah Paget, Irish McCalla, seven-year-old Barry Gordon, and Les Baxter. The entertainment newspaper *Variety* evaluated the production and sound, the physical attributes of the female guests, and audience response to determine that the show was an overall success.[2]

What viewers might find noteworthy in a television show can vary considerably depending on the time and place in which it is viewed. During the "lounge revival" of the early 1990s, the Milton Berle Show was again recognized as a moment of historical importance.[3] But instead of focusing on Elvis and the cultural phenomenon of rock 'n' roll, record collectors and lounge music afficionados turned their attention to one of the other guests that represented the

[1] Elvis's appearance on the program was both widely hailed and criticized, and it serves as a historical focal point for the convergence of rock 'n' roll, anti-miscegenation policy, and moral panic. *New York Times* music critic Jack Gould expressed his disapproval by equating the performance with a burlesque dancer's "hootchy-kootchy." See, Jack Gould, "New Phenomenon: Elvis Presley Rises to Fame as Vocalist Who Is Virtuoso of Hootchy-Kootchy." *New York Times*, June 6, 1956, 67.
[2] "Milton Berle Show," *Variety*, June 13, 1956, 35.
[3] Chris Morris, "Bachelor Pad Music From '50s, '60s Is Swingin' Again," *Billboard,* September 9, 1995, 1, 114, 123.

mundanity of the 1950s—Les Baxter. In a 1995 article titled "Bachelor Pad Music from '50s, '60s Is Swingin' Again" with a subheading "A Brief History of Pad," the show was revisited as the moment when Les Baxter's "space age bachelor pad" music was ousted from its prominent place on the charts by Elvis.[4] According to the article, Elvis and Baxter were "pitted against each other" reflecting a "great divide in American popular culture."[5] In attempting to account for the "death" of Les Baxter's type of music, the author of "A Brief History of Pad" invoked the show as a cultural turning point in which Baxter, and his style of music, was banished into obscurity.

From the perspective of the 1990s this narrative is straightforward and easy to digest. The "History of Pad" was written during a time of nostalgic reimagining of older musical styles that resulted in the swing revival and the lounge revival.[6] This revival impetus was initiated by record collectors searching for alternatives during the "age of hyphen-rock," countless derivations of rock including sub-genres such as grunge, indie rock, and alternative rock.[7] These terms were applied to artists who rejected the "overly polished" and commercial MTV format. But what was once considered alternative was quickly becoming mainstream. In their search for an alternative to the "alternative" music they perceived as tiresome, record collectors and others participating in the lounge revival hailed Les Baxter as the archetype of the forgotten and neglected music they sought to resurrect.

The lounge revival stimulated interest in exotica and other easy listening styles that had been excluded from the pop-rock canon along with various attempts at interpreting their

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[4] The *Billboard* "Hot 100" charts from April 1956 show that Baxter's "Poor People of Paris," previously No. 1, was replaced by Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel," an event that supports this argument.
[5] Morris, "Bachelor Pad Music," 114.
[6] In addition to nostalgic impulses such as the "lounge" music and swing revivals, the emergence of the category of "world music," increased country-pop crossover, and "alternative" as a generic designation made up the dominant musical trends.
[7] Jim Sullivan, "The Age of Hyphen-Rock," *The Chicago Tribune*, October 13, 1991.

historical impact, but it nevertheless relied on a simplistic narrative with rock at the centre, to describe what was actually a complex period. Rather than a struggle between opposing musical styles, Albin Zak describes this period as being, a "motley-collection of rock 'n' roll and older popular styles with ample evidence of cross-pollination."[8]

Viewing the 1950s musical field as a cross-pollinating and interactive network challenges the belief that Baxter's music was antithetically positioned against rock 'n' roll. The idea that Les Baxter's style of music was first eclipsed then ultimately erased by rock 'n' roll was an idea formulated from a retroactive position. The contemporary notion that rock 'n' roll was a dominant force in popular music had yet to manifest itself in 1956. During the 1950s both rock 'n' roll and Les Baxter's style of music were among several genres animated by novelty, artifice, and experimentation that fell under the larger umbrella of popular music. Artists working in the popular music industry during the postwar period blended a wide diversity of forms, instruments, and techniques in their search for a hit record. The reason I begin with the Milton Berle Show is because, in addition to being associated with the retroactive "space age bachelor pad music," Baxter was also well known for his "exotic-style" arrangements and, along with Martin Denny, considered one of the innovators of exotica.

A HISTORICIST APPROACH

One way of broadening the narrative that *Billboard's* "Bachelor Pad Music" presented is to consider the Milton Berle Show through a historicist lens. A historicist approach analyzes the conditions of the period in which a genre emerges. These conditions include the various music-related discourses amongst musicians, journalists, industry executives, and audiences, in addition

[8] Albin Zak, *I Don't Sound Like Nobody: Remaking Music in 1950s America*. Tracking Pop, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 5.

to relationships between other musical genres in a particular time. A historicist approach engages with the dynamics of the period through primary sources and archival materials, rather than through a "presentist" perspective.[9] The presentist approach interprets the past based on the present-day view, which more often than not results in a "grand narrative" that obscures many of the conflicts, struggles, collaborations, and influences that provide deeper meaning, depth, and understanding about the period and its music.

In the article "Bachelor Pad Music," the Milton Berle Show represented the nail in the coffin of Les Baxter's style of music, yet *Billboard* charts and other media sources indicate that the height of Baxter's popularity with exotica and other "space age" recordings occurred between 1958-62 in the years following Les Baxter's appearance on the show. While Elvis may have replaced Baxter's number one spot on the charts, it would still be a few years before the apex in popularity of exotica; the fact that the genre was "dying" before it even reached peak popularity is curious. Moreover, retroactive accounts often claim that the demise of exotica was due to its generational appeal as adult-oriented music that was becoming increasingly outdated. In Franco Adinolfi's words, it was "once the exclusive domain of mothers and fathers, of adults in general, utterly inappropriate for youth."[10] The focus on generational dynamics to explain shifts in taste and market directions is a common approach when discussing this period; indeed, teenagers and younger listeners comprised a new industry demographic, but the narrative that Baxter's style of music was only for adults gets complicated once other historical factors are

[9] For a discussion on the distinctions between historicist and presentist in historical approaches, see, David Brackett, *Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 5. Brackett draws from Mikhail Bakhtin to analyze how the "presentist" perspective "encloses" the work "within the epoch." See, Mikhail Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, translated by Vern W, McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press', 1986), 4.

[10] Francesco Adinolfi, Karen Pinkus, and Jason Vivrette, *Mondo Exotica: Sounds, Visions, Obsessions of the Cocktail Generation*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 18.

considered. For example, in 1956, the same year Baxter appeared on the Milton Berle Show, he released *Skins! Bongo Party with Les Baxter* (1956), a percussion LP marketed to teenagers on Capitol Records.[11] This album was only one of several attempts by Baxter during this period to engage with the teen market; in 1960 he would repeat this venture with the album *Teen Drums.*[12] Looking past exotica's initial emergence reveals that the "exotic sound" found its way into countless youth led surf and garage bands in the early 1960s. Exploring these and other forays into youth territory disrupts the revivalist narrative of exotica as adults-only music.

What is most striking about the retroactive analysis is how the author of "Bachelor Pad Music" emphasises the struggle and tension that was assumed, from the perspective of the 1990s, to have existed between generations, individual artists, and categories of music during the 1950s. This focus on the oppositional dynamics of the musical field is not noteworthy per se. When "bachelor pad music" was written in 1995, the conditions of generic fluidity that characterized the 1950s had changed significantly. Tamara Livingston has identified that, across the board, revivalists position themselves in opposition to aspects of the contemporary cultural mainstream.[13] But what is worth remarking on is how this oppositional narrative has become accepted writ large, and how it reflects the way that music histories (specifically post rock) are often imagined to fit this particular oppositional binary structure.[14] By drawing attention to other

[11] Les Baxter, *Skins!: Bongo Party with Les Baxter*, Capitol Records (EAP 1-774, 1956), LP.
[12] Les Baxter, *Teen Drums,* Capitol (437445-32968, 1960), LP.
[13] Tamara E. Livingston, "Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory," *Ethnomusicology* 43, no. 1, 1999: 66-85.
[14] As David Brackett, Kier Keightley, and Bernard Gendron have shown, binaries can become mapped repeatedly onto historical narratives from various eras. From the swing-bop divide to the pop-rock divide, the legitimacy of each being worked out in the public discourse among fans, critics and the industry. For a discussion of how the fragmentation of AM pop radio in the late 1950s contributed to a growing perception that adult and teen tastes were best segregated, see, Keir Keightley, "Music for Middlebrows: Defining the Easy Listening Era, 1946-1966," *American Music* 26, no. 3, 2008: 322. For a discussion of the swing-bop divide, see, Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press.) And David Brackett illustrates how this binary can manifest even within emergent categories. His discussion of race music in the 1920s was

factors and challenging assumptions about exotica, the musical field of 1956 begins to look more like a dynamic network of commingling styles; a field in which artists experimented with and blended whatever musical materials were circulating at the time.[15] Rather than an assumed struggle between two artists and genres, this moment can be seen as emblematic of the stylistic fluidity and drive to produce new and sometimes "unusual" sounds that characterized 1950s popular music and entertainment.

My main objective with this dissertation is to examine the conditions that led to the formation of exotica as a musical genre from a historicist perspective to reveal aspects about the period that may be overlooked. In this study I draw significantly from David Brackett's framework for analyzing popular music genres of the twentieth century which builds on genre scholarship in fields of film, literature, and music.[16] Brackett's approach departs from historical writing that focuses on a linear and causal concept of music history by examining how genres become meaningful in relation to one another as "part of a constellation or 'field' that participates in a horizon of conventions and artistic possibilities at a given moment."[17] This approach accounts for the processes by which the genre came about, focusing on various events, debates, and dynamics, rather than on assumptions about a musical style that are made retroactively around issues of authorship, origins, and meaning.

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predicated on a high-low divide within the world of African American music, with spirituals and Western art music on one side, and blues and jazz on the other. See, Brackett, *Categorizing Sound,* 2016.

[15] I use the term musical field in this dissertation to describe the power relationships that people and institutions take part in. According to Pierre Bourdieu, the field is a social system that it is not strictly defined by coordinated activities. Rather the field has its own set of rules. It is a "structured space with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force independent of those of politics and the economy. Its structure at any given moment is determined by the relations between the positions agents occupy in the field." See, Pierre Bourdieu, and Randal Johnson. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). 6.

[16] Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*, 2016.

[17] David Brackett, "Breakthrough '66: The Avant-Garde Probes the Boundaries of Jazz," in *Genre and Music: New Directions,* edited by Georgina Born and David Brackett, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2023), 5.

Michel Foucault's genealogical approach to history is an apt framework to analyze the formation of genre (as a system of knowledge networks) at a given moment. Rather than analyzing a system of knowledge (in this case a musical genre) from its assumed features, Foucault's genealogical method addresses the unexamined trivialities that are overlooked in its formation. Foucault builds on Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887) by showing how genealogy can be applied to history as a way to question so-called self-evident "facts" about history.[18] Instead of focusing on origins, beginnings, and questions that lean toward causality and linear history, Foucault writes that the genealogist's historical analysis is based on disparities, discontinuity, rupture, and difference. In applying this to musical genre, one can find that a genre *emerges* from an entanglement of historical conditions and social knowledges rather than a particular moment of origin. The search for origins itself, claims Foucault, is a product of a particular way of thinking in which things are believed to be most pure at their moment of birth. He associates this thinking with "monumental history:" the documenting of history's "high points" of development as recovered in the works, actions, and creations of great men.

Foucault's genealogical approach is particularly well suited to an analysis of a music genre such as exotica that has been historically treated as musical trash or "drek" by music journalists and critics.[19] This evaluation can partly be attributed to the historical position or temporal scale of music history in which the critic is situated. In its time exotica was recognized

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[18] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, edited by D. F. Bouchard, 139-164, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977); Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Douglas Smith. 1997. *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic: By Way of Clarification and Supplement to My Last Book, Beyond Good and Evil*. The World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 142. Michel Foucault, and Robert Hurley, *The History of Sexuality*, (Vintage books. New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 12.

[19] Greg Kot, "For Better or Worse, Lounge Music (Yes, That Easy Listening Drek) Has Returned, So…" *Chicago Tribune* February 19, 1996.

as articulating a particular type of "tropical modern music" or exciting "travel music."[20] A critical overview of the musical field in 1957 would situate exotica in the sphere of mood music— a central organizing category of the post-LP recording industry. But by the 1990s, with the dominance of rock music firmly established, exotica's position in relation to the large scale of rock history prompted a different meaning for its users. This shows how the different historical position that a critic/listener/user occupies has an effect on the way they conceptualize the relations between music, social meanings, and industrial functions.

Through a genealogical and historicist approach I examine the events and discourses from which exotica emerged in a particular time, but the analysis of the long-range historical narrative of exotica is also a significant aspect of its meaning. David Brackett explains that an analysis of the long-range narrative reveals that the generic formation of exotica is also "constituted by successive presentist impressions of a category and later retroactive histories of the category."[21] While the goal of my historicist methodology is to provide a counter to presentist conceptions of exotica, the long-term historical scale of exotica shows that a series of presentist impressions play a fundamental role in the unification of disparate artists and musical styles. This becomes apparent in the next section as I chart the series of events that contributed to exotica's emergence.

[20] Murray Schumach, "The New Mood Music Must Be Vivid," *The New York Times*, March 16, 1958, 12.
[21] Brackett, *Categorizing Sound,* 329.

WHAT WAS/IS EXOTICA?

Exotica is defined by Phil Ford as "a kind of pop music popular from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s that was intended to evoke unfamiliar and distant peoples, places, and times."[22] This is a suitable definition of exotica, but there is a notable lack of attention to the producers and the audience responsible for producing the concept of exotica. At what point, and how, did users identify an assemblage of factors as the musical genre of exotica?

In this dissertation, I pursue a different way of understanding exotica by expanding on and clarifying Ford's definition. I propose that exotica articulated together several different strands of popular music that began in the mid-1940s and stabilized as a recognizable genre around the years 1957-60 when Martin Denny and Les Baxter, two artists with different musical aesthetics, were linked together through music industry discourses, citation of musical techniques meant to evoke otherness, and the materiality of the long play record (LP) that was central to the recognition of exotica as a type of mood music. The combination of musical characteristics, texts of the liner notes, and visual aids of the album art brought together separate but related artists and pre-existing concepts of musical exoticism, which afforded extra-musical cohesiveness and a specific meaning for its users.

I argue that exotica is defined by a constellation of exotic musical tropes and racialized discourses within the organizational system of mood music — instrumental pop music marketed primarily to white American audiences during the 1950s. Exotica was not meant to be authentic to any particular place or musical tradition. Rather, it was the interaction and juxtaposition of numerous exotic references that assembled together and engendered an identification of exotica.

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[22] Phil Ford, "Exotica," in *Grove Music Online.* Oxford Music Online, accessed July 23, 2022. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2256526

In order to support this thesis, I situate exotica in relation to postwar technological, musical, and social networks that inform my case studies. Major developments that contributed to the emergence of exotica include: 1) the advent of mood or background instrumental music as a viable commercial style; 2) the industry wide embrace of the vinyl long play record (LP) and marketing strategies such as increased sexualized images of women on album covers; 3) the cultural legitimization of pop music via its association with jazz as a modern art form; 4) postwar discourse around cultural exchanges through tourism and travel entertainment in Hawai‘i and Hawaiian statehood in 1959; 5) musical strategies of othering via orchestral arrangements, recordings, and live entertainment; and 6) shifting conceptions of racial representation and racial citizenship in the postwar structure of the U.S.

Defining exotica is difficult because it emerged in stages. It is associated with artists who had dissimilar musical styles and worked in different areas of the entertainment industry. While there were at times stylistic consistencies, the variety of approaches and artists makes defining the genre according to its musical features alone almost impossible (a topic I will return to shortly). The focus, then, turns to other unifying factors that came together in the labeling process. One way of engaging with what Michel Foucault describes as the "particular stage of forces" that came together in a recognizable genre, is to locate the moment in which exotica was labeled.

The following chart provides a selection of significant chronological moments in the emergence of exotica. I begin this chart in 1957 with the release of Martin Denny's *Exotica* (Vol. 1) album with Liberty Records. This does not mean that the conditions for exotica to become a genre label did not exist prior to 1957, but that, through the convergence of several musical and

non-musical conditions, the labeling process came about at this moment. This chart illustrates how the labeling of exotica can be understood as a largely retroactive process.

Table 0.1: Chronology (Stages) of Exotica

1957	Martin Denny's *Exotica* (vol. 1) is released on LP Review: "jungle mood music album with a swinging beat"
1958	Liner notes to Martin Denny's *Primitiva* (LP) written by Les Baxter
1958	Interview with Arthur Lyman: "It's not jazz, it's how nature is. You know, native yells, birdcalls, it's like going into the jungle"
1959	Review: "Here's cool Hawaiian music without the whiny guitars, it's called "Exotica"
1960	John Ball Jr. "The Witch Doctor in Your Living Room" *Hi Fi Stereo Review* links Les Baxter's *Ritual of the Savage* (1951) to the origins of exotica
1968	Liner notes to Les Baxter's *The Sounds of Adventure* (LP) describes exotica as "movement" that began with Ravel's "Bolero"
1990	Rhino Records reissues *Exotica: The Best of Martin Denny* (CD and Cassette Tape)
1993	Capitol Records releases *The Exotic Moods of Les Baxter* (CD)
1993-94	Record collecting magazine *Incredibly Strange Music* (vols. 1 and 2) interviews Martin Denny, Les Baxter, and Yma Sumac (Released with companion CD and Cassette Tape)
1995	RCA releases *The History of Space Age Pop: Melodies and Mischief* (vol. 1) (CD)
1995	*Billboard* article: "Bachelor Pad Music From '50s, '60s Is Swingin' Again."
1996	Capitol releases Ultra-Lounge series, *Mondo Exotica* (vol. 1) (CD)

INDUSTRY NAMING OF EXOTICA

The labelling of a popular music genre, as Simon Frith observes, must be understood within a commercial/cultural process in which the needs of the industry (selling music) are central, but the industry relies on the audience tastes and trends to guide the process of forming

labels to meet the needs of the industry (selling music).[23] The process of labelling a genre, then, includes the interaction of people directly (artists, executives), and indirectly (journalists, audiences). David Brackett identifies how this process works through what he describes as different levels of genre. These levels include industry labels that are often compiled (or forced) in order to sell music, but there are also "critic-fan genres."[24] Brackett describes critic-fan genres as the non-formal descriptions of genre circulating among journalists, critics, and audiences that may or may not be adopted by the industry. Rick Altman describes this process of naming film genres as "adjective to noun:" in each case of a genre being recognized when "the development of the stand-alone noun signals the liberation of the former adjective from its noun and the formation of a new category with its own independent status."[25]

Another aspect of the labeling of a popular music genre, or what David Brackett calls *genrification,* is the citational process: the musical contents that constitute a new genre are citations of the musical conventions of genres that precede it.[26] Brackett argues that a new genre emerges through a process of repetition (preceding musical conventions are cited to the point that they acquire a new label) and difference (the reorganization of the musical field as a new genre shifts the boundaries of other genres).[27] Through the repetition of pre-existing musical texts, in addition to images, discourses, and musical rhetoric, exotica acquires some stability as it also alters (ever so slightly) the borders of its neighboring genres. Brackett suggests that one condition in the recognition of a genre is when the listener can "place it in the context of a genre, that is, in the context of how sounds, lyrics, images, performer personae, musical rhetoric, and a

[23] Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 76.
[24] Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*, 11.
[25] Rick Altman, *Film/Genre*. (London: British Film Institute Publisher, 1999), 52.
[26] Brackett, "Breakthrough '66," 6.
[27] Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*, 13.

generic label (among other things) can be related."[28] Once the label of exotica is understood in context of a genre, the generic label can be cited out of context and audiences will understand its meaning. This idea of citationality also helps to understand how different interpretations of exotica occur when the user is situated in a different historical position.

Prior to the industry labelling of exotica in 1957, for example, some of Les Baxter's compositions and arrangements were often described as "exotic-style." Around 1950, terms such as exotic, and occasionally exotica, were used to describe primarily arrangements of exotic themed popular songs or light classics, and Latin music—but not in the way that referred to a genre that would be legible to the public. The boundaries between these types of music were not always obvious and descriptive terms were often used interchangeably. Vic Damone's "My Bolero" (1949), for example, is a Spanish bolero with congas and muted trumpets described at the time as "a pseudo exotic bolero that exudes commercialism."[29] Xavier Cugat's "Morocco" (1950) was described as a "moderately paced rhumba . . . hunk of exotica more in Cuggie's light concert vein."[30] "Bamboo" (1950), a song by the Vaughn Monroe Orchestra, was described as "heavy exotica," whereas Morton Gould's album *Music at Midnight* was described as "leaning somewhat to the side of the exotic . . . another skilfully molded package of concertized pops."[31] In jazz periodicals, "exotic" was often used to describe a particular type of novelty recording such as Buddy DeFranco's "Kamasutra" (1952).[32] These examples show how the idea of "exotic" existed on a spectrum during the same period that Les Baxter released his album *Ritual of the Savage* (1951), but that the genre of exotica had yet to be labeled.

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[28] Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*, 13.
[29] "Record Reviews," *Billboard,* August 27, 1949, 31.
[30] "Record Reviews," *Billboard,* May 6, 1950, 41.
[31] "Record Reviews," *Billboard,* April 21, 1951.
[32] "Record Reviews," *Downbeat* 19, no. 25 (1952): 12.

I provide some examples in the previous table (*table 0.1*) that illustrate how between 1957-1960 exotica was defined in relation to other genres, and by existing knowledge that its users had with certain descriptive terms. For example, *Variety* describes Martin Denny's *Exotica* (vol. 1) as a "jungle mood music album with a swinging beat."[33] When asked to describe exotica, Arthur Lyman (an original member of the Denny group) stated that "it's not jazz, it's how nature is. You know, native yells, birdcalls, it's like going into the jungle."[34] By 1959 exotica had a name. In the *Chicago Daily Tribune* exotica was described as "cool Hawaiian music without the whiny guitars."[35] These reviews show how exotica was understood in relation to three separate but interacting spheres of popular music that American audiences would have been familiar with: as a type of mood music, as jazz (or not jazz), and as a type of Hawaiian music (but without the Hawaiian steel guitar).

Franco Fabbri, one of the earliest scholars to theorize the relational aspect of genre in popular music proposes three main points in the emergence of a genre: 1) a new genre is not born in an empty space but in a musical system that is already structured; 2) meaning is determined in its relation to other genres; and 3) rules that define a new genre are common to other existing genres.[36] Fabbri defines a popular music genre as a particular "musical event" in which a new genre "may be situated in the intersection of two or more genres, and therefore belong to each of these at the same time."[37] From this perspective, rather than viewing exotica as a circumscribed

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[33] "Exotica," *Variety,* July 24, 1957, 56.
[34] Pat Langlois, "Did Lyman Leave Mark on Denny? *Honolulu Advertiser,* May 4, 1958, 76.
[35] Leonard Will, "Here's Cool Hawaiian Music Without Whining Guitars," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 19, 1959, F11.
[36] Franco Fabbri, "A Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications," in *Popular Music: Critical Concepts in Media & Cultural Studies.* Vol. 3, edited by Simon Frith, (London: Routledge, 2004), 7-35. The rules that Fabbri lays out are divided into five categories: 1) formal and technical rules; 2) semiotic rules; 3) behavior rules; 4) social and ideological rules; and 5) economic and juridical rules.
[37] Fabbri, "A Theory of Musical Genres," 7.

set of musical traits, exotica can be understood to operate in a system of relations and difference. These include relations between circulating and identifiable musical styles such as mood music, progressive jazz, Hawaiian music, and light classics, and through the pre-existing notion of what terms such as exotic, jungle, and primitive meant as descriptors in the context of these genres.

Context, according to John Frow, is also a factor in what he calls "genre worlds"; rather than purely stylistic features, genres can create effects of reality and truth which are central to the different ways the world is understood by drawing our attention towards some of its features and away from others.[38] Frow argues that a genre can establish knowledges by providing new information on the basis of old information—information that is not explicitly given but which it supposes the listener to have. This is similar to the idea of citation in the way that information can be transmitted via earlier repetitions of exotic as a musical style, or as pre-existing social knowledges and discourses. As a generically specific world, exotica projects (and contributes to) the audience's knowledge of how the terms "exotic," "unusual" "offbeat," "strange," "primitive" and "junglish" function together to create a specific meaning.[39] Much like Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, context involves the material and situational elements that structure the space in which

[38] Frow cites J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, edited by J. O. Urmson and Sbisà Marina. William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), and Jacques Derrida and Barry Stocker, "Signature, Event, Context" in *Jacques Derrida: Basic Writings*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 105-134. Derrida engages with Austin's text, but argues that the meaning of an event, statement, or idea, is less related to the subject, and more to context—the framing or setting of the event and provides the resources for its appropriate interpretation.

[39] Frow, *Genre,* 7. Exotica was described in these terms in the following reviews: Ren Grevatt, "Liberty Debs 4 Real Hot Stereos," *Billboard,* September 29, 1958, 6; "Album Reviews," *Variety*, September 16, 1959, 44; "Court of Records," *Los Angeles Times,* August 18, 1957, 9; "Combo Review, Martin Denny Group," *Variety,* March 4, 1959, 49. These terms reflected undercurrents of evolutionary progress inherited from nineteenth century anthropology. Johannes Fabian's "denial of coevalness" theorizes how these categories were constructed to prescribe not only conditions of difference, but also temporal distance. See, Johannes Fabian, and Matti Bunzl. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 16.

agents (those in the music industry and audiences) are positioned, and how they relate to one another.[40]

Stuart Hall's concept of articulation also accounts for context, certain conditions, or circumstances under which a linkage between different elements can be connected, but as Hall points out, "it is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time."[41] This approach accounts for the byways and networks that an idea travels as it "discovers its subject rather than how the subject thinks the necessary and inevitable thoughts which belong to it."[42] In other words, the relationship between ideas, concepts, and musical features may not generate the same meaning for everyone, but there are commonalities that take shape as discourses are articulated in certain contexts. Hall's theory of articulation asks the question: under what circumstances can a connection be forged or made? I keep this question in mind throughout this dissertation.

MUSICAL COMPONENTS OF EXOTICA

In the previous section I detailed how the naming or labeling of exotica demonstrates an interactive process of industry and critic-fan discourses, the relational quality of musical genres, the citation or repetition of musical components and social knowledges, and extra-musical features such as visual images and musical rhetoric. I demonstrated how prior to being recognized as a genre, terms such as "exotic" were used by institutions that were invested in classifying the genre of "exotica" in order to commercially and economically benefit from its

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[40] Pierre Bourdieu, and Randal Johnson, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
[41] Laurence Grossberg, ed., "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall," in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, edited by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, 131–151, (London: Routledge, 1996).
[42] Grossberg, "On Postmodernism and Articulation," 141-42.

classification. That the identification of exotica is based on more than its formal musical qualities is further evidenced once the musical characteristics are examined on their own.[43]

Take for example the song "Quiet Village," one of the most recognizable songs in the genre of exotica. "Quiet Village" is a binary form, duple meter instrumental song written by Les Baxter in 1951 and recorded by Martin Denny in 1957. Denny's arrangement of "Quiet Village" for piano, bass, vibraphone, and percussion begins with a continuous two-measure rhythmic ostinato that uses a rhythm similar to a *clave* in the piano and a basic *güiro* pattern that underlies a long cascading melody in the piano for the first section, and in the vibraphone for the second section. Overall, the song is enveloped in a wild thicket of birdcalls, croaking frogs, and general "jungle sounds."

Together, this grouping of musical traits is legible as exotica, but once each trait is examined on its own, the unity of what holds these traits together in the genre of exotica can be questioned. For example, elements such as *clave*, *güiro,* and congas could be found in Latin, folk, Afro-Cuban, and jazz recordings. The combination of piano, bass, vibraphone, and percussion was a common grouping in small jazz combos of the late 1940s and 50s coming out of the big band/swing era. Ensembles fronted by men such as Stan Kenton and George Shearing were described at the time as progressive (or sometimes modern) jazz that was different but related to bebop and Afro-Cuban jazz (also described as modern jazz). Arranging popular standards for a variety of different instruments was a common technique in both small jazz

[43] For a discussion of the history of a genre's formal characteristics see, Rick Altman, *Film/Genre*, (London: British Film Institute, 1999). Altman observes that the emphasis on formal characteristics can be traced back as far as Aristotle's poetic categories, which, as originally established a certain set of assumptions adopted by every subsequent genre theorist; by borrowing an already defined object (poetry) rather than defining his own. The problem he argues is that this creates the notion that poetry, or music, exists in itself and that a "type" can have an essential quality.

combos and mood music, and many of the instruments in "Quite Village" could be heard in ensembles that performed classical repertoire and popular songs. Taking all these factors into account, it would be safe to assume that it must be the characteristic of the birdcalls and croaking frogs that engender an identification of exotica. Yet, there is ample historical evidence to show that animal sounds could be found in a host of different genres during the 1950s including light orchestral arrangements, novelty songs, rhythm and blues, doo-wop, Afro-Cuban, and Latin music.

Prior to the popularization of birdsong as a musical characteristic of exotica, artists such as Pérez Prado and Katherine Dunham had included birdsong in their performances of the early 1950s. Prado famously popularized the mambo by implementing short repeated syncopated figures into big band arrangements supported by an underlying Afro-Cuban percussion section. A characteristic of Prado's style of mambo was his non-verbal expressions such as grunts, yelps, and bodily gestures.[44] In a similar fashion, record reviews for Katherine Dunham and Her Afro-Cuban Ensemble described the "singing and laughing men with bird sounds, chirping and 'jungle sounds' on *Toitica la Negra*."[45] Taking these factors into account, it does not take much effort to see that defining exotica through its internal features is almost impossible.

What, then, is the unifying force that holds the genre together? Applying Manuel DeLanda's adaptation of Gilles Deleueze's concept of assemblage to a musical genre is useful in analysing how, rather than differentiating one musical genre from another through its internal features, it is the *interaction* of the various musical and non-musical elements that participate in

[44] David García, "Going Primitive to the Movements and Sounds of Mambo," *The Musical Quarterly* 89, no. 4 (2006): 505-23.
[45] "In the Popular Field," *New York Times*, March 11, 1951. Katherine Dunham and Ensemble, *Toitica La Negra*, Decca BM 30493, 1948, 78rpm.

the perception of difference.[46] The concept of assemblage complements other theoretical approaches that emphasize the relational aspects in which musical genres operate, as well as Foucault's emphasis on the formation of systems of knowledge (made up of discourses) that come into focus through historical processes.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of multiplicity-networks draws on metaphors of nature to describe how a network works.[47] One of the traditional metaphors to describe how an organism works is the image of a tree with a root system. The roots, stems, leaves, and bark all function as various component parts that together support and maintain the tree as a whole. This interrelatedness of the various parts that make up the whole is predicated on the tree as a singular entity. Rather than a tree with a root system, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the concept of the rhizome is a more accurate metaphor to explain a network. A rhizome is a type of fungus that has no attachment to a root system. Parts of the rhizome can be broken off and reattached in various places but it remains functional as a whole system. In this type of system there is not one particular feature (or component) that is privileged. Instead, the whole of the fungus is made up of parts that work together through a system of dynamic interrelations.

Manuel DeLanda builds on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of multiplicity-networks with his extrapolation of their related concept of the assemblage: "a wide variety of wholes constructed from heterogeneous parts" with varying levels of interaction between the parts.[48] This type of system can be applied to musical genre as a way to analyze how a genre has a specific identity even though it may share some of the same musical characteristics with other

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[46] Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity,* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006).
[47] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3-25.
[48] DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 5.

genres. The focus is less on what might be construed as the "true nature" of the genre, and more on how a genre is a dynamic interrelation of many musical and non-musical knowledges, discourses, and sonic properties that interact and react to one another. Audiences would have been familiar with birdcalls, one of the identifying features of exotica, in Latin music, Afro-Cuban, and folk music. These styles interact with other musical descriptions including "jungle" and "primitive" that are also linked to jazz and musical modernism, musical and theatrical expressions of African diasporic traditions, and pre-existing "exotic-style" arrangements in the popular mainstream.

Complicating the identification of exotica even more is the fact that artists recognized as participating in the canon of exotica (from our current perspective) had disparate musical aesthetics and worked in different arenas of the entertainment industry. Les Baxter had a multifaceted career throughout the 1950s as a musician, recording artist, A&R agent for Capitol records, film composer, and arranger. Martin Denny began his career touring as a lounge pianist, and after landing in Hawai‘i in 1954, formed a progressive jazz combo that was influenced by the postwar tourist dynamics in Waikiki. Tak Shindo was a prolific composer of Hollywood and television providing Japanese instruments for recording sessions, arranged Japanese folk tunes, and decided what Japanese material to use and where it should appear on films. Yma Sumac began her career as a Peruvian folk singer eventually recording with Capitol Records. What were the conditions that brought these artists with different aesthetics together under one generic umbrella? Furthermore, why were some artists *not* included in the exotica canon?

The grouping of disparate artists into the genre of exotica can partly be explained through the textual, visual, and musical affordances of the long play record (LP). As the recording industry embraced the commercial LP during the early 1950s, liner notes and album art provided

a non-musical method of building connections between artists and ideas into a coherent and legitimate genre.

THE LONG -PLAY RECORD AND EXOTICA

Between 1957-1959 Martin Denny released seven exotica albums. Once *Exotica* (Vol. 1) was a success, six more albums followed: *Exotica* (Vols., 2, 3) *Forbidden Island, Primitiva, Hypnotique,* and *Quiet Village*. Of the sixty-nine songs on these seven albums, thirty-four are original compositions by either Martin Denny (21) or Les Baxter (13).[49] Denny's use of Baxter's songs was one of the factors that connected the two artists and began the process of linking earlier iterations of exotic-style to exotica. This link was further strengthened when Baxter acknowledged the connection by writing the liner notes for Denny's album *Primitiva*:

> When I first met and heard Martin Denny and his group at the Interlude in Hollywood, May 1958, we were not strangers to one another; that is, not musically. I was aware of Denny's talents through his performance of many of my compositions . . . I was not only impressed by the success of his albums, but also by his group's interpretation of highly descriptive musical moods . . . the rhythms and sound effects are produced by a host of instruments as unique as the lands from which they come . . . Buddhist prayer bells from Japan, a two-hundred-pound carved rhythm log from the jungles of New Guinea, weird sounding gongs, chime effects, percussion instruments from India, Africa, Japan and Hawaii and the beautiful harp effect of a Japanese Koto. Denny has obtained many of his unusual sounds simply by using children's toy bells bought in a five and Dime store.[50]

In addition to linking Les Baxter and Martin Denny, these notes take up significant space on the back of the album highlighting the *combination,* or inventory of musical instruments, a phenomenon that occurs frequently on liner notes and record reviews of both exotic-styles and exotica suggesting another factor in the unification of the genre. The notes for *Primitiva* mark an

[49] As I will examine in chapter 4, the rest of the songs can be grouped into film music, Broadway or operetta, Hawaiian, hapa haole, light concert, British popular song, Tin Pan Alley, and Japanese or Japanese American composers.
[50] Martin Denny, *Primitiva,* Liberty LRP-3087, 1958, LP, Liner notes.

initial and important point of contact between the earlier precedents of Les Baxter exotic-style songs and Martin Denny's exotica albums. Once this connection was made, other canon forming discussions followed. Thus began the first retroactive process that looked back at exotic precedents to form a coherent "history" of the genre.

One influential exotica article was written in 1960 by John Ball Jr. for *HiFi Stereo Review* titled "The Witch Doctor in Your Living Room."[51] The article documented what he describes as the three stages in the emergence of exotica. The first stage, "booster," which got exotica off the ground and on its way, he argued, was an "early exotica triumph based on Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*" supplied by Les Baxter's *Ritual of the Savage* (1951)."[52] Les Baxter had made this claim himself in the liner notes of *Ritual of the Savage*, but the connection was further strengthened by this article. Martin Denny's *Exotica* (Vol. 1, 1957) was then considered to be the second stage, and the final stage was the "LP revolution and coming of high fidelity."[53] The article cites exotic-style precedents including Maurice Ravel's *Bolero* (1928), Moisés Simon's *The Peanut Vendor* (1930), compositions by Ernesto Lecuona, Bing Crosby and Ray Kinney's Hawaiian themed recordings, Andre Kostelanetz's *Exotic Music* (1947), and Morton Gould's "colorful exotically-scented" orchestrations.[54] Ball's use of the terms "booster" suggests how the relationship between "exotic-styles" and certain types of music (light classics, Hawaiian themes, and Latin music) were already circulating, but it took a little push to move exotica into a recognizable genre. Another way of thinking about this is through the idea of citationality. David Brackett explains that each slight modification of the genre

[51] John Ball Jr., "The Witch Doctor in Your Living Room" *HiFi Stereo Review* (March 1960), 62-67.
[52] Ball Jr.,"The Witch Doctor in Your Living Room," 63.
[53] Ball Jr.,"The Witch Doctor in Your Living Room," 63.
[54] Ernesto Lecuona and Moisés Simon were Cuban composers that represented the European-Spanish spheres of classical Cuban music.

through successive iterations works to bring a model or "prototype" at a particular historical moment into existence.[55] This model then functions to strengthen future statements and accounts of the genre. For example, in 1968, Les Baxter's connection to Western art music, and the formation of exotica was reinforced in the liner notes to his album *The Sounds of Adventure* (1968):

> The Exotic Movement in music can be traced back to Ravel and Bolero - this composition had Parisian audiences in a frenzy in the year 1928. But "Exotica" was not heard in a popular sense until Les Baxter embellished the basic classical ideas with his own innovations . . . Because of his constant contributions to the field of music, no one can forget that Les Baxter originated the Exotic Movement, although there have been many imitators.[56]

While this account assumes some conceit on Baxter's part, the perceived connection to classical composers is significant because this is one aspect of exotica that has been repeated in revival literature. Through these successive statements about the genre, certain traits and connections stabilize over time. *The Sounds of Adventure* (1968) also marks that last entry I provide (*table 0.1*) before interest in exotica was revived between 1990-1996 through primarily a retroactive process.

THE REVIVAL STAGE OF EXOTICA

The release of *Exotica: The Best of Martin Denny* on Rhino Records (a record label specializing in reissues of older material) in 1990, followed by Capitol Records release of *The Exotic Moods of Les Baxter* in 1993 marks another reorientation of exotica. In the early 1990s, record collecting magazines such as *Incredibly Strange Music* that were interested in forgotten music from the pre-rock period began publishing issues with companion CDs and cassette tapes

[55] Brackett, *Categorizing Sound,* 13.
[56] Les Baxter, *The Sounds of Adventure*, Capitol 90984, 1968, LP, Liner notes.

of music. This process of compiling music and artists from a 1990s perspective initiated the inclusion of artists that were assumed to have been associated with exotica, but who predated the labeling of exotica, such as Yma Sumac, into the frame of the genre.

By 1995, the year the previously mentioned *Billboard* article "Bachelor Pad Music" was published, the interest in exotica had moved from the fringes of thrift-shop record collecting and re-issues by independent labels to the mainstream and was quickly embraced by major labels (Capitol, RCA, and Columbia) eager to release re-issues and retrospective compilations from the 1950s. Record collectors who considered themselves "vinyl archaeologists" or "cultural trash pickers" were central to the initial process of identifying and categorizing various postwar musical styles. This nostalgic impulse combined with the needs of the industry (selling, grouping, and organizing music) to activate newly constructed generic labels such as "space age bachelor pad," and "lounge," with their own retroactive "history." Industry sources from the 1950s show that there were established marketing categories of country, rhythm & blues, and popular music. Other styles such as folk, spiritual, semi-classical, and novelty were added depending on the publication, recent recordings, and other conditions that supported their formation. During the lounge revival, music that did not necessarily fit into these marketing categories such as mood music, light classics, and "sound" records, were retroactively consolidated into a broad category of "space age bachelor pad music."

Part of the appeal of exotica in its time, and in the revival period, was the fascination with racial, ethnic, and gendered otherness. As the *Billboard* article "Bachelor Pad Music" attests to, a narrative of exotica as a type of strange and bizarre music antithetical to other commercial styles such as rock 'n' roll was formulated during the 1990s. This narrative was mediated through descriptive journalistic writing that projected an idyllic past by equating music with a fantasy

mid-century lifestyle, a process that can be understood as constructing what John Frow describes as a "genre world." Exotica and its companion groupings were often framed as "lost"—as were related extra-musical discourses that envisioned an extinct way of living that valued leisure, comfortable homes, cocktail parties, mid-century modern design, seductive bachelors, happy families, and normative gender roles.[57]

This strangeness or difference often centered on the visual aspect of the recordings. One of the most celebrated phenomena of the lounge revival period was the fascination with "cheesecake" record albums covers generated by record collecting magazines such as *Incredibly Strange Music*. In his 1994 review of *Incredibly Strange Music*, David Toop endeavoured to identify the aesthetic of music that the magazine categorized as "incredibly strange" determining that one sure sign is "large breasts on a record cover."[58] That same year, the *Los Angeles Times* featured an interview with a self-identified lounge musician who attributed his interest in exotica to his father, who "listened to any record that had a picture of a pretty girl in an exotic location—in front of a beaded curtain, next to a volcano."[59] Martin Denny's record album art holds a particular appeal with revivalists because his albums featured the same model, Sandy Warner (known as "the exotica girl"), staged in different tropical-exotic scenes: bamboo, waterfall, and palm trees.

Images of exotic looking women and mid-century décor on the cover of records afforded retroactive ideas about 1950s life over thirty years later when they were reinscribed on Capitol's Ultra Lounge series of the 1990s providing inspiration for revival literature, record collecting

[57] Jennifer McKnight-Trontz, *Exotiquarium: Album Art from the Space Age,* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1999).
[58] David Toop, "Incredible, Strange, and Highly Exotic," *The Wire*, October 1994.
[59] Chuck Crisafulli, "Dressed Up, Ready to Lounge," *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1994, F52.

magazines, tiki-bars, cocktail recipes, and related ephemera. [60] These and other accounts from the exotica revival period indicate that images were an important part of the music's nostalgic appeal. Furthermore, the volume of "cheesecake" record covers rediscovered during the 1990s lounge revival generated the use of new genre labels; for instance, "space age bachelor pad music."

I chose to begin the chronology, or stages of exotica in 1957 with Denny's *Exotica* (Vol. 1), but it is arguable that depending on the users' temporal perspective, there could be other interpretations. According to Ball's perspective in 1960, the chart would have begun in 1951 with Les Baxter's *Ritual of the Savage.* According to Les Baxter's perspective in 1968, the chart would have begun in 1928 with Ravel's "Bolero." Yet another stage, or reorientation, of exotica began in 1990 by including artists such as Yma Sumac that had not been associated with exotica during the period of its initial emergence. The meaning of exotica changed over time according to the needs and perspectives of its users.

One factor in the changing historical conditions is the users' relationship to the shifting landscape of the musical formats. In chapters 1 and 2, I discuss how the commercial adoption of the LP in 1948 (in combination with radio listening practices, liner notes, and visual images) provided endless possibilities for thematic mood and background albums throughout the 1950s. By the 1990s, the format of the Compact Disk (CD) had replaced the LP.[61] In the 1950s, the

[60] For a collection of record covers, see, McKnight-Trontz, *Exotiquarium,* 1999, and Janet Borgerson and Jonathan Schroeder, *Designed for Hi-Fi Living: The Vinyl LP in Midcentury America,* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017); V. Vale and Andrea Juno, eds., *Incredibly Strange Music,* vols. 1-2 (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1993-1994).

[61] Jonathan Sterne, *Mp3: The Meaning of a Format*, Sst: Sign, Storage, Transmission, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 5. Jonathan Sterne describes the emergence of the CD and situates it in the general history of compression, "as people and institutions have developed new media and new forms of representation, they have also sought out ways to build additional efficiencies into channels and to economize communication in the service of facilitating greater mobility."

design of the LP which included album covers and liner notes reflected the increasing connection between music and social and cultural politics, as it also restructured the music industry and led to the increase in record labels. During the 1990s, users' relationship to the LP involved collecting, discovering, documenting, and categorizing, from their presentist perspective, what was assumed to be a "dead and buried" format (and its music) of the past.[62] In Tim Anderson's *Making Easy Listening,* he makes the argument that users in the 1990s were drawn to exotica not only because of the exotic musical techniques of the 1950s, but also recording methods and aesthetic sensibilities that appeared exotic, or as "odd antiquities, archaic materials that act as reminders of an age when stereo and high fidelity were young and held yet-to-be-forgotten futures."[63]

During the 1950s exotica emerged from specific sites of music making (live and studio) that coalesced into a recognizable genre when the label of exotica was consistently articulated into an assemblage of different components interacting with each other in a consistent way. With exotica, this coalescence occurred during a specific historical period in which the LP was becoming established as a medium which afforded extra-musical associations through thematic material, liner notes, and album art.[64] As I discuss in the chapters that follow, exotica emerged

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[62] Morris, "Bachelor Pad Music," 123.
[63] Anderson, *Making Easy Listening*, 162.
[64] Affordance is a keyword adopted from ecological psychology and widely used in media studies to describe the relationship between technology and sociality. The notion of an "affordance" was first introduced by J.J. Gibson as a way of explaining how animals/humans interact with the world while also being shaped by the world. Gibson explains that his meaning of the word affordance, "implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment.[64] Gibson emphasizes that the action—what an animal/human does with the object— determines possibilities in their material and emotional world. Peter Nagy and Gina Neff have theorized the concept of "imagined affordances" to address the many complex factors, including affect, that arise with human-technological use. They argue that much of the ways the term "affordance" is used in communication theory refers back to how human users are afforded or constrained in their conscious or rational decisions. Rather than a reductive causal or deterministic view of technology, imagined affordances helps to understand how users shape their media environments, perceive them, and have agency within them through their uses of the materiality and functionality of technologies. See, James J. Gibson, The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception (Boston: Houghton

from an organizational system in which mood albums provided background music for imagined social scenarios, in addition to participating in social commentary on— imagined and real— sexual subjectivities, gender roles, and suburban living, and cultural exchanges through travel and tourism. These recordings that circulated in the wider cultural marketplace generated meaning (and continue to generate meaning) for musicians, audiences, academics, and music critics.

LITERATURE REVIEW: EXOTICA

I begin this section with literature review related specifically to exotica. With a few exceptions, most of the literature on exotica is from the perspective the revival period. Scholarship on this topic is limited—most books and articles generally fall into (often overlapping) disciplines of musicology, media and communication, cultural studies, and journalism. These studies, with their critical approaches to aesthetics, industry, and technology provide a range of useful models, but there is little analysis that advances an account of the historical emergence of the genre. Most begin from a position in which the parameters and aspects of exotica are considered to be self-evident, and their analysis often supports the ambitions of the revivalists.

As Tim Anderson suggests, users in the 1990s were drawn to exotica not only because of the aesthetic strangeness of the music, but also recording methods (including, I suggest, the related LP matter of visuals and liner notes) that appeared as "odd antiquities."[65] Many

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Mifflin, 1979), 127; James J. Gibson, "The Theory of Affordances," in Perceiving, Acting, and Knowing, edited by R. E. Shaw and J. Bransford, 67-82 (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1977); Gina Neff, and Peter Nagy, "Imagined Affordance: Reconstructing a Keyword for Communication Theory." *Social Media Society* 1, no. 2: 2015: 1-9.

[65] Anderson, *Making Easy Listening,* 162.

journalistic books and articles written about exotica often take the strangeness of the music as a starting point. This strangeness is not purely relegated to retroactive accounts; there is no question that it was also considered strange during the 1950s.[66] Exotica was often described as "weird" "offbeat" and" strange" in album reviews of the period. Yet, authors from this first wave of revivalist literature tended to exaggerate the peculiarity of the music and its related cultural ephemera, affirming their own interpretive status through knowledge of obscure pop culture references.[67] The strangeness of the music and its associated material—album covers in particular—has provided a rich archive from which to explore many inter-disciplinary ideas from phenomenology and time travel to mid-century architecture and design.[68] While exotica has been dismissed as exploitative representation and racist orientalism,[69] some scholars and journalists attempt to interpret the meaning of exotica through a postmodern lens—a variety of different analytical approaches such as simulacrum, hyperreality, hermeneutics, and pastiche.[70]

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[66] Novelty recordings of the 1950s illustrate the extent to which artists across the generic spectrum self-consciously identified with weirdness and strange sounds as an aesthetic goal. This was often related to recording technologies and/or unusual instruments. For example, an artist who adopted strangeness as a performing identity was "Crazy Otto" (Fritz Schulz-Reichel), a German pianist who described his unusual sound (the "Tipsy Wire Box") as "an off-tune piano in an off-beat beer hall." Crazy Otto, *Crazy Otto Rides Again,* Decca DL 8133, 1956, LP. Another example is The Polyphonics, a trio that performed with two harmonicas and electronic equipment (handcrafted multi-track tape recorders) referred to as, "The Monster." The Polyphonics, *Zounds What Sounds,* Seeco CELP 4480, 1959, LP.

[67] David Toop, *Exotica: Fabricated Soundscapes in a Real World*. (London: Serpent's Tail, 1999).

[68] Some scholars have used exotica to explore conceptions of imagined time and space. Andrew Wenaus discusses Les Baxter through a phenomenological lens. He argues that the "surrealist absurdity" of exotica was an expression of existential angst concerned with spatial illogicality enabled by stereo and recording technology. See Andrew Wenaus, "Anxiety in Stereo: Les Baxter's Space Escapade, Armchair Tourism, Polar Inertia, and Being-in-a-World," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 26, no. 4 (2014): 484-502.

[69] John Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica: Music, Politics, and the Culture Industry*, (London: Pluto Press, 2000); Josh Kun, "Against Easy Listening" in *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 29-47.

[70] See, for example, Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (Post-Contemporary Interventions. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

Francesco Adinolfi's widely cited *Mondo Exotica: Sounds, Visions, Obsessions of the Cocktail Generation,* for example, works around the problem of otherness in exotica by claiming the revivalists, or "the cocktail generation," strove to "change the macho, bourgeois, elite, or racist signifiers" of exotica by "bending it to the will of a vibrant postmodernism." [71] The meaning of exotica for Adinolfi, lies in its reception during the 1990s, a period in which "cultural recycling was global, intrusive, constantly repeated—and the more it became the unconscious result of the influence of an ever more powerful media (especially television and film), in which images of different eras coexist simultaneously, the more culture lost a sense of its own historicity."[72] Drawing on postmodern rhetoric, this journalistic approach is more intrigued with the generation that rediscovered exotica than with the generation that created it.

Musicologist Phil Ford's "Taboo: Time and Belief in Exotica" theorizes exotica as "a mode of representation governed by a peculiar mode of reception—one of willed credulity enabled by submission to its spectacle."[73] Ford applies hermeneutics to the analyses of exotica to argue that it "is less a genre of music than a class of cultural objects that share a characteristic projection of the self across boundaries of space and time."[74] Ford makes an interesting connection between 1950s exotica and the countercultural embrace of Indigenous and East-Asian symbolism, but this type of analyses rarely emphasizes how knowledges of representation are formed —and continue to proliferate. This runs the risk of reinforcing and protecting the institutional power structures of racism that led to representations of difference in the first place. Ford's analysis highlights the disintegration between the boundaries of "high art" and "mass culture," but this aesthetic leveling fails to account for the reasons that exotica became a

[71] Adinolfi, *Mondo Exotica,* 21.
[72] Adinolfi, *Mondo Exotica,* 21.
[73] Phil Ford, "Taboo: Time and Belief in Exotica," *Representations* 103, no.1, (2008): 107.
[74] Ford, "Taboo," 112.

recognized genre in the first place. As Georgina Born writes, "cultural postmodernism can be seen as an ideology tout court in the classic sense of a cultural system that conceals domination and inequality."[75]

Rather than analysing exotica through a postmodern lens, several studies engage with a more historical approach to exotica through its position in the broader sphere of mood music and easy listening. Joseph Lanza's *Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy Listening, and Other Mood Song* is widely cited, and considered an important early study of ambient sound, easy listening, and mood records. [76] Lanza calls attention to the period of "musical miscellany" by exploring composers such as Andre Kostelanetz, Henry Mancini, Hugo Winterhalter, Percy Faith, Enoch Light, George Melachrino, and Morton Gould—composers who bridged the gap between light classics and pop. Lanza provides an extensive discography and several interesting anecdotes, but as his scope is vast — he covers everything from Dadaism and Luigi Russolo's Futurist manifesto "The Art of Noises" to new age music of the 1980s —he tends to skim the surface. [77]

Keir Keightley's "Music for Middlebrows: Defining the Easy Listening Era, 1946-1966," does not specifically mention exotica, but he engages in a genealogical analysis of how the term easy listening came to be.[78] This is relevant to my study because prior to the industry labeling of easy listening in 1961, mood music was a predominant style of mainstream postwar popular music; moreover, exotica is often described as a type of easy listening music. In the 1950s there

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[75] Born and Hesmondhalgh eds., *Western Music and its Others*, 21.
[76] Joseph Lanza, *Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy-Listening, and Other Moodsong*, rev. ed. (New York: Picador, 1995; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Anderson, *Making Easy Listening,* 2006.
[77] Lanza, *Elevator Music*, 119-127.
[78] Keightley, "Music for Middlebrows," 309-35. Tim Anderson's, aforementioned *Making Easy Listening,* is also worth mentioning here because of its consideration of the significance of recordings in reshaping the postwar music industry. See, Anderson, *Making Easy Listening,* 2006.

were differences in the various styles that now fall under the umbrella of easy listening, but each of the genres that are undistinguishable to listeners in the present day would have made sense as different and distinct to audiences of the 1950s.[79] Easy listening is a way of describing the categorization of music that during the 1950s was predicated on the production of artificial boundaries between white and black music.[80] Keightley argues that before it became a marketing category, the adjective "easy" was used in a number of contexts as a subjective quality to describe the radio chatter of disk jockeys, in opposition to "difficult" art music, or even consumer products, underscoring the relationship of easy listening to radio and how the discursive coherence of easy listening's feminine terms (soft, light, quiet), combined with its commercial appeal, contributed to negative connotations that resulted in its designation as cheap and tasteless music.

The most comprehensive collection of essays on exotica as its own subject is Philip Hayward's edited volume, *Widening the Horizon: Exoticism in Post-War Popular Music*.[81] Hayward et al. provide some interesting source documents, along with a typology for identifying specific musical characteristics of exotica including Orientalism, Afro-Tropicalism, and a category Hayward describes as "Hawaiianesque."[82] Cultural and musical analysis constitute the majority of these essays on the post-revival canon of exotica musicians, which includes Les

[79] In other words, they made sense in the moment, but the category of easy listening swallowed them up to the point that today their meanings are difficult to comprehend, a process that Keightley describes as "boomer historiography." See, Keir Keightley, "Long play: adult-oriented popular music and the temporal logics of the post-war sound recording industry in the USA" *Media, Culture, and Society* 26 no. 3 (2004): 375–391.
[80] For a discussion of racial boundaries in musical categories, see, Karl Hagstrom Miller, *Segregating Sound: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow*. Refiguring American Music, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010), and Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*, 2016.
[81] Philip Hayward, ed. *Widening the Horizon: Exoticism in Post-War Popular Music*, (Sydney, NSW: J. Libbey, 1999).
[82] Hayward, *Widening the Horizon,* 7.

Baxter, Yma Sumac, Korla Pandit, Arthur Lyman, and Martin Denny. This is a useful source, but it nevertheless begins from a position in which the canon of artists, repertoire, and musical characteristics of exotica are considered to be self-evident.

Revival literature also makes connections between *fin de siècle* exoticism and the music of Les Baxter that I identified as stabilizing around 1960 with Ball's article. In one of the few scholarly music theory articles on exotica, Rebecca Leydon argues that the pastoral language of Debussy and Ravel (percussive ostinato patterns, parallel chords or chord planing, parallel thirds and fifths, non-diatonic scales, polytonal arpeggios, colouristic chromaticism, and the wordless chorus), were reinscribed for a suburban audiences of the 1950s.[83] Her main point is that once serious European composers became uninterested in impressionistic musical techniques, "the ideological functions of these venerable musical codes [were] reactivated in their reception by post-war American suburbanites."[84] Leydon persuasively identifies musical codes and devices that signalled exoticism in the music of postwar pop, but her analysis bypasses paths by which these devices travelled including the human agency and artistic labor of African American jazz musicians.

One recent publication that engages with both the genre of exotica, and exoticism in Western art music, is William Anthony Sheppard's *Extreme Exoticism: Japan in the American Musical Imagination*.[85] Sheppard comprehensively traces American fascination with Japanese music to the nineteenth century when Americans' initial musical encounters were shaped by

[83] Examples: Debussy's "Sirens" from *Three Orchestral Nocturnes* (1900), and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe* (1901).
[84] Rebecca Leydon, "Utpoias of the Tropics: The Exotic Music of Les Baxter and Yma Sumac," in Philip Hayward, *Widening the Horizon: Exoticism in Post-War Popular Music*, (Bloomington, IN: John Libbey Publishing. 1999), 46.
[85] William Anthony Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism: Japan in the American Musical Imagination,* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019).

japonisme (or Japanism)—a craze for "all things Japanese" including Japanese art and decorative objects.[86] As American musicians followed up on the initial encounters by creating their own representations of Japanese music, these musical representations became the way most Americans have encountered Japanese music—through music manufactured by other Americans.[87] Because of this, he argues that the reception, representation, and influence of Japanese music have always been bound up with and impacted prevailing American artistic and social concerns; thus exoticism has repeatedly served as a major catalyst for musical experimentation [88]

Sheppard is one of a few musicologists to address the genre of exotica in his studies, no doubt a by-product of his extensive research on Tak Shindo.[89] Yet, he has little to say about the genre except that "avoiding such adjectives as 'odd,' 'bizarre,' and 'unique' is a challenge in attempting to describe exotica albums."[90] Sheppard's research does offer some insight into how exotica can be analyzed as an assemblage. He suggests that "musical exoticism has most often been achieved through the reuse of sonic stereotypes that work efficiently to signal otherness to the audience. Such musical signals of the exotic were frequently employed interchangeably and stylistic features from multiple exotic sources were commonly intermixed."[91] Analyzing this intermixing of musical materials and their discursive meanings as an assemblage, in combination

[86] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism*, 19.
[87] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism*, 53.
[88] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism,* 6, 11.
[89] Tak Shindo was a Hollywood composer of film and television who performed *koto* on Martin Denny's *Primitiva*, in addition to recording several of his own exotica recordings including *Mganga!* (1958), *Brass and Bamboo* (1960), and *Accent on Bamboo* (1960). Sheppard writes that in 1942 Shindo was interned at the Manzanar Relocation Center (Sierra Nevada, California) where he received his first musical training performing through the camp's musical education program. After his internment and a stint in the military he received a BA in Music from Los Angeles City College. He eventually studied composition with Miklós Rózsa at the University of Southern California where he earned a master's degree in Asian Studies with a thesis on the Shakuhachi flute.
[90] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism,* 299.
[91] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism,* 10.

with the context of exotica albums in the wider sphere of mood albums, addresses what can be considered the "weirdness" of the genre. Seen from this perspective, exotica reveals far more about Western listeners and their mechanisms for dealing with the exotic than it does about non-Western peoples or music.

LITERTAURE REVIEW: RACE, GENDER, AND COLONIALISM

One does not have to look deeply to see that the genre of exotica is constructed around representations of race. Exotica works by drawing attention to race in the way that its audience expects and understands. How does one account for the complex and confusing layers of racial representation occurring during this period? On one level, musical exoticisms that would be familiar to an American audience function to signify racial, ethnic, or gendered otherness. On another level, people producing and consuming music were living under a legal system of racial segregation.

Mark Jerng's concept of "racial worldmaking" is helpful to in analyzing how race and popular fiction genres operate together in making available certain knowledges about race and projections of the world. In *Racial Worldmaking: The Power of Popular Fiction,* Jerng builds on John Frow's concept of "genre worlds" to examine how truth and authority are produced by fiction genres to activate perceptions of race.[92] He suggests that while some popular fiction genres such as sword and sorcery, or yellow peril future war, can easily be written off as racist, xenophobic, and misogynist regressive fantasies, or as reinforcing already existing modes of

[92] Mark C. Jerng, *Racial Worldmaking: The Power of Popular Fiction*, Fordham Scholarship Online, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 7. One of Jerng's main critiques of existing scholarship on race centers on conventional approaches that mark the visual body as racialized. Jerng argues that theories of genre can be applied to race by thinking beyond the concept of race as the visual body, rather, "the assumed visuality of racial difference on the body is itself something that is *rendered* visible and *made* salient through a set of social practices."

racial discrimination, they are at the heart of what he calls "racial worldmaking"—narrative and interpretive strategies that shape how readers perceive race so as to build, anticipate, and organize the world.

Mark Jerng's approach is particularly well suited to examining exotica, a genre which has also been written off as commercial trash. Jerng explains that the effectiveness of popular fiction genres "lies not so much in the conventional sense of discriminating against specific persons; rather, it consists in getting us to embed race into our expectations for how the world operates."[93] Rather than analysing how musical exoticisms are racist by the way they reinforce ugly stereotypes, Jerng posits that the question should instead focus on how race, or the absence of race, shapes how genres are understood, thereby generating meaning for its users. What contexts, situations, and explanations are made possible by racial imagining? His approach helps to avoid the initial knee-jerk reaction to exotica as racially insensitive, and instead seeks to understand what exotica can show us about how genres produce ideas about race.

Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh's *Western Music and Its Others* argues that "to examine musical borrowing and appropriation it is necessary to consider the relations between culture, power, ethnicity, and class; and these relations are always further entangled in the dynamics of gender and sexuality."[94] Born and Hesmondhalgh offer a wide array of approaches to articulations of difference in music scholarship through an interdisciplinary and postcolonial lens. One of the main objectives of the book is to account for the range of musical representations of identity (i.e., not all musically articulated identities are the same). Born provides a model for identifying musical constructions of identity and difference that are

[93] Jerng, *Racial Worldmaking*, 2.
[94] Born, and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and Its Others*, 3.

primarily experiences of the cultural imaginary, what she has termed "musically-imagined communities."[95]

What I find most useful about Born's model for musically imagined communities is how, because of the reflexivity of the model, it can be used to analyze how the process of exotic articulations of difference can also work to define whiteness. Whiteness works as a category of identity that is most useful when its very existence is denied, unspoken, invisible, or, like mood music (or easy listening-a category more familiar to readers in 2022), assumed to be the norm and thus requires no explanation.[96] Born suggests that one way the musical imaginary works is to "'potentialize' real or emergent forms of identity through music, thereby re-forming the boundaries between social categories, self, and other."[97] I apply this idea of emergent identities in chapter 2 to think about the relationship between music, the LP, and gender identities such as "the bachelor," or the identification with whiteness through suburban living. W.A. Sheppard poses what he calls a thought experiment inspired by Hua Hsu: "what would it take to represent "white" as exotic in the American musical imagination?"[98] In an indirect way, this dissertation addresses that question by situating exotica in a system in which social identities, or ways of expressing difference and "normality" around not only race but gender, are being represented through different musical means. Exotica, then, intersects with whiteness as an identity, which is in turn related to attitudes around racial integration, national identity, and citizenship in the postwar period.

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[95] Born, and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and Its Others*, 35-36.
[96] Emily S. Lee, ed., *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race*. Suny Series, Philosophy and Race, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 260. See also Richard Dyer, *White*. Twentieth Anniversary ed. (London: Routledge, 2017).
[97] Born, and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and Its Others*, 35-36.
[98] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism,* 12.

Exotica emerged at the same moment that Hawai‘i became a state in 1959. The inclusion of Hawai‘i into the U.S. is part of a larger process of postwar foreign policy historically connected to the military strategies in the Pacific Rim, and the emergence of the Cold War: the long period of geopolitical tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Christina Klein's *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* examines the proliferation of Orientalist cultural materials in the postwar period as political elites, journalists, academic, and cultural producers strategized what Klein calls global imaginaries of containment and integration as a way for Americans to view the world as a whole and their place in it.[99] The idea of the U.S. as a harmonious multi-racial nation supported not only the goal of enlisting the decolonizing world as allies in the fight against communism, but is also tied to a particular promotion of postwar travel and tourism through citizen engagement. Tourism was promoted as a way to bring capitalism (the "free world") to developing countries by way of direct connection with U.S. citizens. Americans were asked to empathize with and form human bonds with people from other cultures, in particular Asians. Klein suggests that the strategies of tourism and travel sought to expand cultural and economic power of the U.S. in Asia and the Pacific. Exotica in Hawai‘i, as I show in chapter 4, participated in these circulating discourses of a racially and ethnically diverse America through multi-racial women that legitimized U.S. global expansion through music and texts.

As a musical idea of a tropical or Hawaiian paradise, exotica participates in the colonial project through the gendered and racialized tourist fantasies. There is a large body of literature that interrogates how images of Hawai‘i throughout the twentieth century relied on the

[99] Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 23. Klein provides analysis of the 1947 Truman Doctrine and Wilcox's speech of 1957 to explain these two worldviews.

feminization of the nation as a gendered paradise to propel U.S. imperialism.[100] In Vernadette Gonzalez's *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawai'i and the Philippines*, she argues that the term paradise is not a generic or static term, but "specifically refers to an idea of passivity and penetrability engendered by imperialism as an alibi for domination."[101] Gonzalez examines how the dual strategies of militarism and tourism in Hawai'i intersect with gender by relying on notions of colonized land and people (especially women) as passively there for the taking. Christine Skwiot's *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawai'i* argues that women were central to the image of Hawai'i as a modern multi-ethnic, interracial melting pot. She uses the term "racial aloha" to describe the strategy that permitted supporters of tourism and statehood to write Hawai'i's mixed-race population, in particular the interracial woman, into narratives of national belonging.[102]

Exotica is an assemblage of racial and gendered cultural life in Hawai'i during a particular time, but it also juxtaposes modernism and primitivism— ideological "isms" that are dependent on each other for meaning. As a type of music that trafficked in fantasies and representations of non-European cultures in which listeners took pleasure in imagining exotic worlds, exotica is bound up with colonial legacies. In this next section I examine some of the literature that addresses musical representation of these terms.

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[100] Scholars that have addressed the ways that colonial discourse constructed the idea of Hawai'i as an island paradise include, Elizabeth Buck, *Paradise Remade: The Politics of Culture and History in Hawai'i* (Philadelphia, PA, Temple University Press, 1993); Susan Smulyan, "Live from Waikiki: Colonialism, Race, and Radio in Hawaii, 1934–1963," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 27, no. 1 (2007): 63-75; Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawai'i and the Philippines*, (Next Wave. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest,* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
[101] Gonzalez, *Securing Paradise*, 6.
[102] Christine Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawai'i*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 169.

LITERATURE REVIEW: MUSICAL MODERNISM, EXOTICISM, PRIMITIVISM, ORIENTALISM

Modernism, exoticism, and primitivism are slippery musical terms that afforded composers throughout the twentieth century an imaginative range of styles and ideologies. Rather than trying to define any of these terms, I trace the networks by which ideas of musical modernism, allusions to classical music, and non-Western musical representation were inserted into popular music forms of the 1940s and 50s. Modernism and primitivism are vague concepts that operate within a system of artistic movements (music, literature, and visual arts, performing arts). These practices are informed by ideologies of modernity constructed through colonialism, in particular the way modernity, is framed through the history and location of the West.[103]

The general narrative of musical modernism situates Richard Wagner's late nineteenth century experimentation with form, tonality, and orchestration as "breaking with the past" in both aesthetic and historic terms. Other late nineteenth century composers such as Richard Strauss, Alexander Scriabin, and Claude Debussy through their harmonic innovation, block chords, and non-Western scales and modes, are also associated with early modernism.[104] While concert composers often found inspiration from folk, and vernacular traditions including jazz

[103] Paul Gilroy, Timothy Mitchell, and Edward Said have argued that modernity and modern concepts of property rights, human liberty, consciousness, culture, and art, are tied to capitalism, slavery, colonialism, and blackness. Slavery created the conditions that differentiated how modern was experienced by Europeans, as opposed to Africans, African Americans, and other colonized populations. Studies on modernity and colonialism include, Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993). Timothy Mitchell, *Questions of Modernity*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 2 (1989): 217-236; Rosalind C. Morris and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (Routledge Classics. London: Routledge, 2004); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 25th anniversary edition, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

[104] By the 1930s strands of modernism included the Second Viennese School and experiments with atonality, Igor Stravinsky's primitivism, and German expressionism of Paul Hindemith. See, Leon Botstein, "Modernism," in *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, accessed July 29, 2022. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40625

music's primitivist caché in the 1920s, I am most concerned with the strand of modernism exhibited in mid-century American popular music and its associated discourses.

America during the interwar years, in particular New York, is examined by Carol Oja as a site for the "kaleidoscope of musical styles" or "abundant chaos" in the multiple modes of expression identified as modernist. She writes this about modernism:

> The beauty of modernism was that it encompassed no dominating center or clear line of authority. Modernism was impossible to pin down. It embraced many styles. It did not even have a stable home. Yet it stood for one basic principle: iconoclastic, irreverent innovation, sometimes irreconcilable with the historic traditions that preceded it. It was an ideal to which composers and visual artists aspired, as much as fashion designers and machine manufacturers.[105]

The basic principle of artistic innovation that Oja identifies is a hallmark of popular jazz music criticism during the 1940s. The term "modern" was used to define any innovative style or sound that reflected a shift away from jazz as entertainment to jazz as art.[106] In the postwar period, modernism had a fluid meaning that can be understood as varying degrees, scale, or levels. The debates around commercialism of popular music via jazz also collided with the culture industry critiques of the Frankfurt school leading to attempts to separate commercial jazz from modern (or progressive) jazz that was seen as "art for art's sake." "Modernism" in the jazz press during the postwar period was used much more freely to describe artistic dispositions than in the industry trade magazines such as *Billboard* and *Variety.* Yet, debates in the jazz press had a significant impact on postwar music industry categories.

Musical exoticism and primitivism are sometimes used interchangeably, but they do reflect different periods and musical techniques. Exoticisms in Western art music are not related

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[105] Carol J. Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4.
[106] Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

to musical modernism per se but were used by composers in a variety of contexts to depict the Other through musical representation of peoples, places, or periods.[107] Much like how context is central to the construction of Frow's "genre worlds" by drawing our attention towards some of a genre's features and away from others, the context in which musical exoticism is deployed is also significant. This has prompted most musicologists to agree that exoticism is a chain of signifiers that relate to previous musical works rather than to any specific ethnicity, but they can be adapted to fit representations of power and difference in many contexts.[108] Exoticism is a term generally used by musicologists to refer to specific musical codes that are hallmarks of the 19th century.

In American popular music rarely is jazz described as musical exoticism. Primitivism, on the other hand, is used in a more culturally specific way that generally denotes folk and "pre-modern" and/or African and African American derived idioms, seeking to set certain elements outside of Western historical time. The use of primitivism to describe jazz (early twentieth century ragtime rather than big band/swing music of the 1930s) can be traced to its influence on

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[107] Some of the major studies on exoticism, modernism, and orientalism include Jonathan Bellman, *The Exotic in Western Music*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press 1998); Jonathan Bellman, "Musical Voyages and Their Baggage: Orientalism in Music and Critical Musicology," *Musical Quarterly* 94, no. 3 (2011): 417-438; Born and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and Its Others*, 2000; Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); 20-53; Derek B. Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," *The Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (1998): 309-335; Ellie M. Hisama, *Gendering Musical Modernism: The Music of Ruth Crawford, Marion Bauer, and Miriam Gideon,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 32. Locke provides typology for identifying specific musical characteristics that composers of Western art music employed: overt, submerged, and transcultural. Locke's concept of overt exoticism is made up of techniques that audiences would immediately recognize as exotic such as a slinky *cor anglais* solo, tinkling bells, or a pentatonic scale.

[108] See, Susan, McClary, *Georges Bizet, Carmen,* (Cambridge University Press, 1992); Olivia Ashley Bloechl, Melanie Diane Lowe, and Jeffrey Kallberg, eds. *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon, *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s to 1940s: Portrayal of the East*, Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2007).

Western art music composers such as Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Igor Stravinsky. French intellectual circles further fueled the interest in American jazz as artists turned to non-European cultural materials for sources of visual and musical artistic inspiration.[109] During the interwar period, French critics such as Hugues Panassié promoted jazz as a subject worthy of study in the U.S. including discourses that cemented the link between visual arts primitivism and jazz. Because of the French influence, Ted Gioia points out, there was little discussion of the nuances of jazz or the racial history in the U.S. resulting in what he calls the "primitivist myth": the depiction of the African American jazz artist as an emotional and intuitive, but "uncerebral" practitioner—jazz springs from inspiration, not from intellect.[110]

Like the descriptive language and context used to help audience place exotica in the popular sphere, this distinction between exoticism and primitivism is related to a particular type of racialization of Black people based on early anthropology and its related pseudo-scientific approaches to race, theories of evolution and progress which supported the belief in the superiority of Western civilization. This dissertation begins, then, with the premise that exotica is not a stable musical genre with a clear identity, but rather, a constellation of meaning in a certain historical moment. Exotica constitutes an assemblage of sounds, practices, and discourses that

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[109] Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 187-90. Primitivism as a style emerged during the early twentieth century as a visual art movement, as well as a philosophical approach to the human psyche. Primitivist tropes, according to Torgovnick, imagine primitives as noble savages, savage hordes, primal, violent, and sexual, or a combination of all, and are frequently associated with Western women. As a cultural analysis, Torgovnick's study is useful, but it has little relevance to the specific connection between jazz and primitivism. Her study, and most others of primitivism draw from on the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Arts 1984 exhibition, "Primitivism in Twentieth Century Art." This exhibition, and related publications, were curated to show the similarities between Western art and African and Oceanic arts, yet critics of the show have argued that it romanticized the notion of primitivism. See also, Glenn Watkins, *Pyramids at the Louvre: Music, Culture, and Collage from Stravinsky to the Postmodernists*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013); James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: 20th-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[110] Ted Gioia, *The Imperfect Art: Reflections on Jazz and Modern Culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 33.

revolves around the interactions of people making music in a particular historical period and within economic, political, and cultural systems. The chapters of this dissertation comprise case studies that each address the different conditions that converge in exotica. These different conditions are interrogated and scrutinized in minute detail as I piece together, to quote Foucault, "the details and accidents that accompany every beginning."[111]

NOTES ON SOURCES AND TERMS

In each chapter of this dissertation, I draw from a mix of print media including trade and industry magazines such as *Billboard* and *Variety*, jazz periodicals, local and national newspapers, archival documents, record album liner notes, and publicly sourced online discography databases such as Discogs, Tiki Central, or other online community forums. I would also turn to private sellers of records on eBay or Etsy to find images of record covers, and often purchased recordings from these sites. These sites were also essential because sellers often post photos of record covers, and I was able to zoom in and read the original text of the liner notes.

Recordings dates during the period of this study are confounding and frustrating. To begin with, there are no dates on recordings. This may be because the recording date (s) is/are different from the pressing date and/or the release date. Usually, an album was made up of several songs that may have all had different recording dates. The main problem with dates during this period, however, is the issue of different record speeds and formats. The LP (or EP) would be repackaged and rereleased with older master recordings that were previously released on 78. Previously recorded songs could be regrouped into theme albums, and once high-fidelity

[111] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 144.

became a marketing tool, previous recordings could be rereleased as high-fidelity or stereo recordings. Because of all these factors, I tried to adhere the earliest press releases for recordings in trade magazines to cross reference dates. In order to verify the date of a recording (as closely as I could) I would reference *Billboard* or *Variety* to locate the review or date of release.

I would also like to note the use of Hawaiian and Japanese terms. While my dissertation focuses on tourist sites of music making in Waikiki, I acknowledge that there are ongoing efforts to view Hawaiian music through a decolonial lens in which perspectives of resilience and resistance address the historical and present-day dispossession of Native Hawaiians (Kānaka Maoli).[112] I follow the lead of Kevin Fellezs in determining where to use the diacritical markings. I recognize that I am writing an English language text for English language readers, and because of this I stick to the English spelling of Hawaiian terms. I italicize the few terms I use for Japanese instruments such as *koto, shamisen*, but I do not italicize Hawaiian terms.[113] Because the okina is now broadly used in Hawai‘i, I will use this marking when referring to Hawai‘i from my current perspective, or when Hawai‘i is already in use such as “The University of Hawai‘i at Manoa.” I do not use the okina for any titles or spelling in the historical texts such as the program “Hawaii Calls” unless they appear in the text. Fellezs further points out that the terms such as Kānaka Maoli, Native Hawaiian, and Hawaiian reflect the tensions brought by the distinctions that assigned naming and self-naming articulate; therefore, I will use the term Native Hawaiian to describe Kānaka Maoli unless otherwise stated in the source or text.

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[112] Hōkūlani K. Aikau, and Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, eds., *Detours: A Decolonial Guide to Hawai'i. Duke University Press,* (Durham: Duke University, 2019).

[113] Fellezs notes that Noenoe K. Silva’s critical approach with English language texts is to not italicize “Hawaiian words in the text in keeping with the recent movement to resist making the native tongue appear foreign in writing produced in and about a native land and people.” Quoted in Kevin Fellezs, *Listen but Don’t Ask Question: Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Across the Transpacific,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), xvi.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

CHAPTER ONE | THE EMERGENCE OF BACKGROUND AND MOOD ALBUMS

In chapter one I examine the conditions under which background and mood music emerged as a viable commercial style of music that was embraced by record companies as an effective way to market pop LPs. I begin by mapping how the concept of background music gained a foothold in the public sphere during World War II as American defense industries adopted "industrial music" as a way of maintaining morale, relieving boredom, and boosting production. I show how the recording industry and industrial music for factories intersected with aesthetics of popular instrumental music through the elimination of the vocals and adoption of choral groups used as musical instruments without words, an emphasis on instrumental melody, and limited percussion. These musical characteristics became the aesthetic choice for (some tasks) of factory workers and for background music that had not yet developed into a commercial style. I examine how radio also played a role in bringing the concept of "moods" into the public sphere through shifts in radio listening practices that began organizing programs around specific times of day and longer stretches of continuous music.

The second section is devoted to the development of mood albums as a viable commercial style as the major record companies worked to come up with strategies for new ways to market and sell popular LPs. In this chapter I focus on the recordings and archival materials of Paul Weston, one of the early innovators of mood music during the period, 1945-1954, with Capitol and Columbia Records. The main purpose of this chapter is to show how mood albums, which traversed the boundaries of respectable light classical, operetta, musical theatre, and pop standards, became embroiled in ideological debates about musical genre and cultural status, and

played an important historical role in new marketing and packaging strategies by effectively presenting music continuously and thematically.

CHAPTER TWO | SEX, AND OTHER AFFORDANCES OF THE LP

I build on the discussion of mood albums in chapter 2 by examining the material and historical specificity of select mood albums to show how new packaging strategies of the LP were central to the emergence and recognition of exotica. I show how the proliferation of mood albums throughout the 1950s was the product of a series of vigorous marketing strategies that adapted to, and developed, the new LP disk market based on listening practices that had been established across the postwar media landscape. One of the identifying characteristics of exotica was the image of Sandy Warner, "the exotica girl," on the cover of Martin Denny's albums. Moreover, the link between Les Baxter and Martin Denny was formulated through the detailed record liner notes that created narrative cohesion between the artists and their musical styles. The extra musical possibilities of the LP were not restricted to exotica, but exotica emerged into a space in which the LP was integrating into the cultural landscape by becoming a significant site of social commentary regarding normative gender roles, female sexuality, masculine spaces, and suburban living. I historicize images of sexy women on record covers and connect this phenomenon to the othering, even exoticizing, of women by tracking how displays of female sexual submissiveness on record covers were linked to exotic themes of "outer space" on Les Baxter's *Music Out of The Moon* (1947)— a recording which opened the door to more overt sexual themes with Jackie Gleason's mood albums. Through the medium of the LP, I then trace how both gender norms and difference are evoked through the combination of social discourses, music, liner notes, and visual images which participated in shifting cultural attitudes regarding

the sexual social order of the 1950s. I then examine how the marketing strategies of the LP, combined with the mood music field, supported and generated an increase in recordings as well the number of independent record labels or subsidiaries of major labels. It was in this climate of expansive growth for record companies that Liberty Records, the company which recorded and released Martin Denny's exotica albums, was formed.

CHAPTER THREE | JAZZ MODERNISM AND EXOTIC MUSIC

Chapter three deals specifically with the genealogy of exotica to determine what the concept of exotic music meant prior to the emergence of exotica as a genre c. 1957-60 and how it was associated with Les Baxter. I examine what exotic music meant prior to the emergence of exotica as a generic label, and to show how the idea of exotic music was increasingly cited by artists, critics, and journalists to describe various articulations of difference. Postwar music, including exotica, can only be understood in relation to the big band/swing era of the 1940s in which a legitimization of jazz as a modern art form created new categories and artistic debates spilled over into popular music. In the first section I tackle the canonical narrative of Les Baxter's association with Western art music composers such as Stravinsky and Ravel. I examine how the artistry of African American jazz musicians and the discursive formations in the pages of jazz periodicals around jazz modernism laid the groundwork for "Stravinsky- adjacent" artists like Les Baxter to shift these hybrid musical styles into the pop sphere. Through associations with Stravinsky, I show how the type of progressive jazz musical aesthetic, embrace of Afro-Cuban music, and its related discourses combined in the music of both Martin Denny and Les Baxter. To do this I examine some of Baxter's other exotic influences, output, and collaborations in the early 1950s by tracing the popular music pathways in which ideas of modernism,

exoticism, and primitivism travelled and what these terms meant in the early 1950s. In the second half of this chapter, I turn my attention to recordings that were produced by Les Baxter that assembled different exotic codes that were activated for a variety of goals. In particular I examine the exotic/primitive intersections between African American concert dance with Katherine Dunham's *Tropical Revue* (1945), Peruvian folk music of Yma Sumac's *Voice of the Xtabay* (1950), and the combination of ethnic otherness, gender and high fidelity with Bas Sheva's *The Passions* (1954). I examine how Les Baxter and the artistic labor of women interacted through a constellation of mood album, Afrodiasporic entertainment, Hollywood nightclubs, and gendered and racialized discourses.

CHAPTER FOUR | "WE PLAY VACATION MUSIC" EXOTICA IN HAWAI'I

This chapter situates Martin Denny's exotica in the postwar soundscape of Waikiki and its interconnection with the U.S. popular music industry between the years 1954 when Denny arrived and 1959 when Hawai'i became a state. I divide this chapter into two sections that examine two spheres of exotica: live performances of the Martin Denny Group in the hotel lounges of Waikiki in which exotica was developed with a particular tourist audience in mind; and recordings of exotica with Liberty Records that stabilized the genre by drawing links between Martin Denny and earlier recordings of Les Baxter, as well as connecting exotica to mood albums. Broadly, this chapter demonstrates how Martin Denny's exotica articulated the vision of a modern and multi-racial Hawai'i through tourism and hotels as sites of music making. I show how exotica participated in a particular moment of nation building through tourism by legitimating a view of Hawai'i as a modern and harmonious multi-racial melting pot during a period in which Hawai'i was anticipated to be, but not yet officially, part of the U.S.

AFTERWORD | EXOTICA AFTER 1960

My chapters are comprised of a variety of convergences and citational processes that stabilized to the point that exotica could circulate in many different settings and be understood; therefore, I conclude by discussing the expression of exotica in African themed recordings, and those by youth-led and electric guitar fronted rock ‘n’ roll bands after 1960. I then revisit some of the main themes of the study such as the tensions between historicist and presentist perspectives, how musical techniques and discourses function in making the familiar strange and the strange familiar, and the way that women were central to how conceptions of exotic circulated. I do this by providing an introduction to the literature, musical output, industry acceptance, and ideological positions of revival period (ca., 1990-1996).

CHAPTER ONE |

THE EMERGENCE OF BACKGROUND AND MOOD ALBUMS

> *Pallid recordings of pop 'standards' that blended into the living room rug like crumbs are on the way out. The new mood music must grab the ear or die unsung on dusty store shelves . . . The songs are the same standards as ever, but the arrangements supply an exotic flavor, and the record liners have texts that could go with a travelogue.*
> — Murray Schumach, *New York Times,* 1958

I begin this chapter with an excerpt illustrating how the genre of exotica entered a space already structured around and recognized by its audience as a type of instrumental mood music. By 1958, after almost a decade of prominence on the charts, the popular but often ridiculed mood music's long run was not necessarily over. Rather, it was being reinvented with new and exciting "exotic" song arrangements often dubbed "travel music." Though Murray Schumach does not directly use the label of exotica in the above-quoted *New York Times* article, he infers the genre by characterizing the arrangements as a type of exotic mood music in which "the record liners have texts that could go with a travelogue."[114] From this account, exotica was recognized as a type of mood music through the practice of arranging instrumental versions of standards combined with specific themes and texts that the format of the LP afforded. In addition to liner notes, the trend of sexy women on record covers that began with mood albums eventually became one of the identifying features of exotica recordings linking exotica and mood music. There are, however, differences between exotica and other types of mood music, as suggested by the above *New York Times* quote. Many mood albums, produced by primarily male artists and record executives, highlighted features of 1950s America which were inevitably informed by the

[114] Murray Schumach, "The New Music Must Be Vivid," *The New York Times*, March 16, 1958, 12.

postwar period's gendered and racialized social dynamics. The themes for mood albums were informed by activities that Americans were thought to be engaged in such as reading, socializing, studying, or romancing. With exotica, the focus was less on music blending into the background of everyday activities, and more on making the quotidian (i.e., standard songs and normative experiences) strange and different. Though exotica participated in the mood sphere of instrumental popular songs, exotica artists emphasized a musical representation of the non-Western world in a way that was comprehensible to American audiences.

This chapter begins with the premise that mood music was a central organizing system of the post-LP recording industry. Since exotica was considered a type of mood music, I begin by examining mood music itself in order to understand what exotica meant in relation to the broader musical field. To do this, I divide this chapter into two sections. The first section maps how background music gained a foothold in the American public sphere during World War II. I trace the different strands of background or "industrial music" in first war defense factories, and then in public spaces through shifts in radio wherein programs were organized around setting "moods" by broadcasting longer stretches of continuous music. I show how industrial music's acceptance in public spaces had an influence on record labels, many of which consequently began grouping instrumental popular songs into thematic albums for background listening that listeners could purchase for home use.

In the second section of this chapter, I turn to Paul Weston and his style of arrangements, song choices, and marketing strategies that promoted his particular brand of mood music to show how his style of mood music converged with the increasing industry awareness of industrial music, and with Sigmund Romberg's "middlebrow tours" as music for everyone. These factors and the success that Weston achieved with mood albums quickly became embraced by the music

industry as a viable commercial style and played an important historical role in new marketing and packaging strategies by effectively presenting music that straddled classical and popular continuously and thematically.

The primary purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, I stress how mood albums as background listening emerged from a variety of different media and debates around categories of music, particularly different strands of jazz/dance band music. Secondly, I examine a genealogy of mood music to show that its musical aesthetic has historical precedents in U.S. society of the late 1940s including attitudes and legal structures around race and gender. This chapter lays the groundwork to understand how mood music provided a blank slate from which artists and record executives could imagine a variety of different social scenarios, including the exotic.

FACTORY MOODS: WARTIME INDUSTRIAL MUSIC

> *A new vitamin has been added to the war worker's diet said Dan H. Halpin, manager of RCA's Industrial Music Service: "It's Vitamin M—for music."*
> *— Billboard,* 1944[115]

With increasing factory production during the war, a growing interest in worker productivity led to the idea of music in workplaces. American defense industries took their cue from British war time studies on the effects of music in factories and adopted "industrial music" as a way of maintaining morale, relieving boredom, and boosting production. Between 1941 and 1943, the number of plants, arsenals, and shipyards using music had reportedly grown from 500 to 3000.[116] By 1944, 2,500 industrial plants had sound systems, and more than 650 of them broadcast recorded music.[117] The development of industrial music was made possible by

[115] "Industrial Music Users Hold Confab at RCA Quarters," *Billboard*, May 13, 1944, 62.
[116] Doron K. Antrim, "Music in Industry," *The Musical Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (1943): 275–90.
[117] Joe Koehler, "Music in Wartime: Today's Oil for Industry's Wheels," *Billboard,* September 25, 1943, a22.

increasing broadcasting capabilities, including the growing use of PA (public address) systems. These sound systems were engineered for factories and businesses by companies such as Muzak, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), and General Electric.

Arguably the most famous telephone music company, Muzak (brand stamped in 1934) began as an alternative to radio in 1922 under the name Wired Inc.[118] Rather than relying on commercial phonograph recordings for their programs, Muzak hired arrangers and musicians to produce recordings for their musical library which they dispersed through telephone lines.[119] From the mid-1930s on, Muzak amassed a large library of transcription disks—high quality 33 1/3 phonograph recordings made for radio broadcasts and wireless music subscriptions, not intended for commercial use. For factories and businesses that desired workplace music but did not subscribe to Muzak or its competitors, there was an option to construct in-house sound studio complete with turntables, a volume level meter, a control panel with individual channels, a microphone, a storage cabinet for disks, and a card file for their record library.[120]

Muzak is recognized as the leader in "elevator music" from our contemporary view, but during World War II, RCA led the promotion of background industrial music for factories. RCA

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[118] For a history of Muzak, see Joseph Lanza, *Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy Listening, and Other Moodsong* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Hervé Vanel, *Triple Entendre: Furniture Music, Muzak, Muzak-Plus,* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017); Jonathan Sterne, "Sounds Like the Mall of America: Programmed Music and the Architectonics of Commercial Space," *Ethnomusicology* 41, no. 1 (1997): 22-50. Anahid Kassabian also addresses some of the questions around where background music, or Muzak, came from in Anahid Kassabian, *Ubiquitous Listening: Affect, Attention, and Distributed Subjectivity*, Fletcher Jones Foundation Humanities Imprint, (Berkerley: University of California Press, 2013), 4.

[119] Vanel, *Triple Entendre,* 51.

[120] The card file would ideally have detailed information about each recording—style, tempo, length, tonal balance (for bass and treble), whether it was vocal, instrumental, or an "unusual" arrangement, in addition to information about which "work type" it was classified under. For example, Mark Weber Orchestra's "La Cumpsarita" would be classified as a South American Tango for "work-lunch," with additional remarks that it has a "soft, steady rhythm." Barbara Elna Benson, *Music and Sound Systems in Industry,* (McGraw-Hill Industrial Organization and Management Series New York: McGraw-Hill Book, 1945), 5.

engineered sound studios, planned and sold programs, and held conferences for plant broadcasters.[121] In 1944, RCA filmed *Manpower, Music, and Morale*, an industrial music booster film screened across the U.S.[122] RCA also promoted industrial programming in universities as a viable career path for music students, and sponsored academic lectures in the Department of Music at New York University and The Juilliard School. At NYU, RCA brought together music educators, labor leaders, production and safety engineers, industrial executives, and plant broadcasting directors as part of their lectures.[123] As a result of RCA's influence, Juilliard instituted a series of courses for industrial plant music directors, providing "instruction in actual use of equipment, types of music to suit different times of the day and different types of workers, and the use of live talent."[124]

Industrial music was supported by the U.S. War Production Board, and the fields of engineering, industrial management, psychology, business, and music coalesced to determine the parameters of "music to work by." Parameters that included timing, duration, volume, consistency, and programming, were mapped onto work tasks, worker types, and environments. The aim of the industrial music programmers was to develop a "stimulus progression" throughout the workday based on song arrangement style and rhythmic intensity.

One attempt to compile a discography of recordings based on the stimulus progression was undertaken by Barbara Benson, a program director for RCA Victor before moving to the record division of Station WMCA, New York, when she published *Music and Sound Systems in Industry,* a comprehensive book on industrial music. *Music and Sound Systems*' main selling

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[121] Joe Koehler, "Music in Wartime: Today's Oil for Industry's Wheels," *Billboard,* September 25, 1943, a22.
[122] "RCA-V Movie Pitches Music for Industry," *Billboard,* March 4, 1944, 4.
[123] Barbara Elna Benson, *Music and Sound Systems in Industry,* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1945), 25. "RCA Sponsoring Industrial Music Lecture Course," *Billboard,* July 15, 1944, 66.
[124] "RCA and Juilliard Push Industrial Music Promotion," *Billboard*, April 29, 1944, 13.

point was its extensive discography compiled from the catalogues of Decca, RCA Victor, and Columbia, forming a representative list of commercial recordings available to suit periods of "work, opening, lunch, and special events" in industry settings.[125]

To determine workers' tastes preferences, factory personnel installed suggestion boxes and conducted polls in their quest for background music. Results were published in the *Musical Quarterly:* "American girls up to 25 years of age prefer current popular music . . . men, especially the middle aged, are strongly addicted to marches . . . a Chicago steel company, numbering a majority of Italians among its personnel, features opera excerpts with success."[126] In collaboration with RCA, *Billboard* published a study (*figure 1.1*) in 1944, ranking the music preferences of factory workers by regions in the US. Hit Parade, Patriotic, and Waltzes were workers' most-preferred music types across all regions.[127] RCA created the poll with their jukebox program in mind, which explains the inclusion of Negro Spirituals, Blues, Hillbilly, and Western, which ranked fair in worker preferences (excepting Hillbilly in the south). Though African Americans had been able to work in factories following Roosevelt's 1941 Executive Order 8802 banning discrimination in the defense industry, it is unclear whether RCA considered African American workers' musical preferences.

[125] "New Book Offers Hints on Music for Big Plants," *Billboard*, August 11, 1945.
[126] Antrim, "Music in Industry," 284.
[127] "What Tunes for War Plants?" *Billboard,* March 25, 1944, 90.

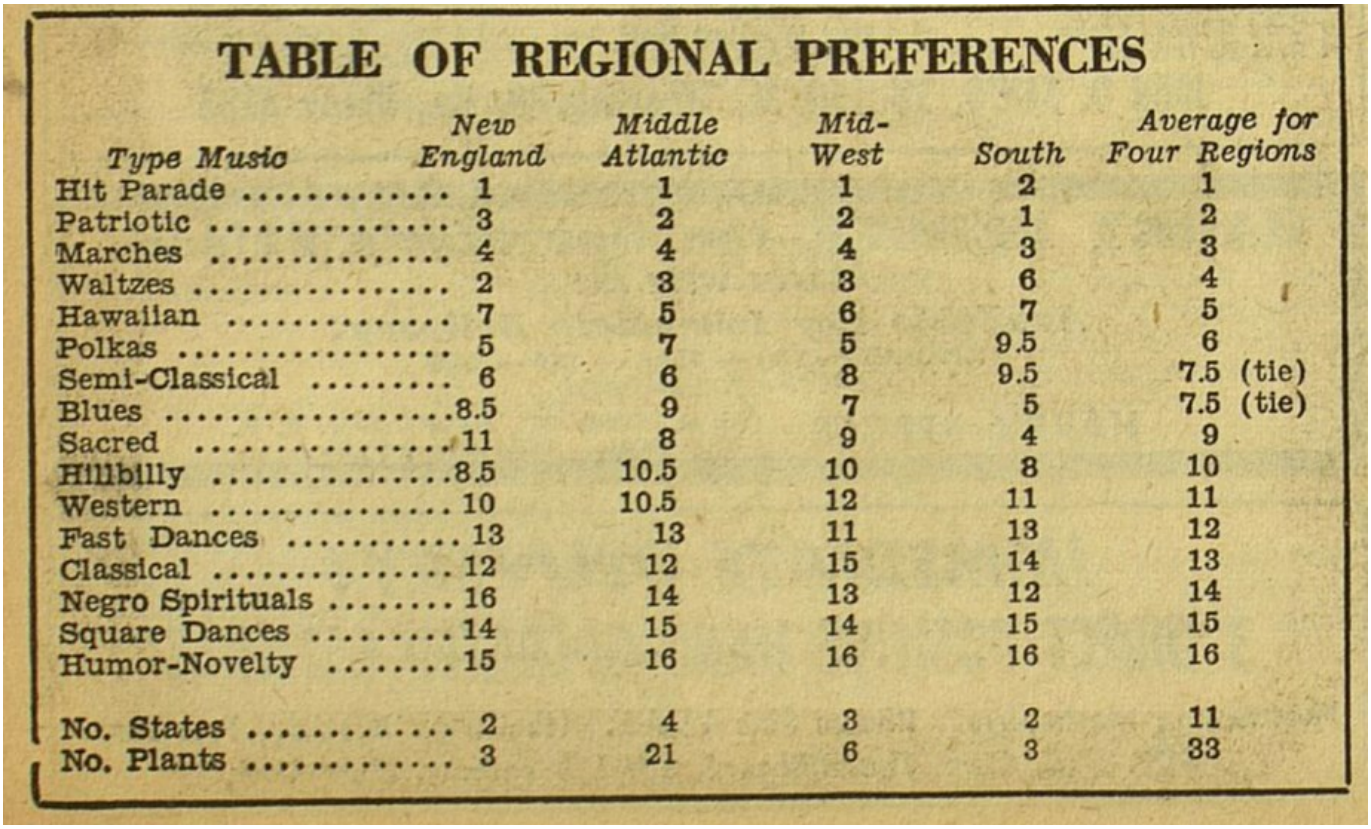

TABLE OF REGIONAL PREFERENCES

Type Music	New England	Middle Atlantic	Mid-West	South	Average for Four Regions
Hit Parade	1	1	1	2	1
Patriotic	3	2	2	1	2
Marches	4	4	4	3	3
Waltzes	2	3	3	6	4
Hawaiian	7	5	6	7	5
Polkas	5	7	5	9.5	6
Semi-Classical	6	6	8	9.5	7.5 (tie)
Blues	8.5	9	7	5	7.5 (tie)
Sacred	11	8	9	4	9
Hillbilly	8.5	10.5	10	8	10
Western	10	10.5	12	11	11
Fast Dances	13	13	11	13	12
Classical	12	12	15	14	13
Negro Spirituals	16	14	13	12	14
Square Dances	14	15	14	15	15
Humor-Novelty	15	16	16	16	16
No. States	2	4	3	2	11
No. Plants	3	21	6	3	33

Figure 1. 1."What Tunes for War Plants?" *Billboard*, March 25, 1944, 90.

There was some consensus amongst industrial music promoters that the more precision needed for a task, the less rhythmic the music should be.[128] One study claimed that precision workers required "mood music, background in character so that the workers feel it's there and yet do not have it disturb their work . . . but music for mass production must have a distinct rhythm."[129] *Music and Sound Systems in Industry* emphasized instrumental melodies over vocal melodies, claiming "recordings must have a definite melody line . . . by that we mean an arrangement bereft of elaborate introductions or interpolations—one which sustains the original theme or melody throughout the recording."[130] Another factor that most studies agreed on was that vocals distracted the worker but choral groups with voices used as musical instruments were acceptable.

[128] Antrim, "Music in Industry," 284.
[129] Koehler, "Music in Wartime," a22.
[130] Benson, *Music and Sound Systems,* 22.

In other words, human voices were permitted as long as there were no lyrics. It was a difficult task to find songs with no words because during the big band/swing era, dance bands with vocalists was a popular aesthetic. Because there were no commercial recordings of instrumental popular songs in which instruments played the melody instead of vocal lyrics, Muzak and RCA recorded numbers with choral effects on transcription disks that could be copied over and reused for industrial music use only.

Muzak continued to expand its wireless music business into office spaces and small businesses. Postwar architecture built background music into the structure of buildings with the installation of loudspeakers and wiring in offices and professional buildings during construction.[131] Muzak was not the only company that provided private music services for businesses. National Wired Music Corporation of New York, General Music Service, and MagneTronics were a few other companies competing with Muzak. These companies either culled their program material from Capitol Record's library of radio transcriptions or the International Library service in England. The main factor all these wired service companies shared was using and promoting instrumental popular or light classical music with no vocals.[132]

By the end of World War II, it was clear that industrial "music to work by" was not going to become the promising musical field anticipated by academics in music departments and industrial music companies. However, some significant factors of industrial music began to emerge in the popular music industry and the record business at large. These factors included aesthetic matters, such as eliminating vocals but adopting choral groups and solo voices as a kind of musical instrument, which was a significant aesthetic feature of 1950s instrumental pop music

[131] Benson, *Music and Sound Systems,* 53.
[132] "Lang-Harron Broadcasting Ops to Handle World Wired Music in N.Y. and Philly," *Billboard,* October 20, 1945, 22.

broadly. Another critical factor was the industry trend that featured recordings of popular songs that featured "simpler" or "less elaborate" arrangements.

Industrial music offered factories an alternative to radio through a specific, intentional aesthetic of background music. Rather than simply playing radio programs on the P.A. systems during the workday, industrial music was promoted as a legitimate (and scientific) type of music formulated through the values of increased production, while keeping the worker in mind. The ideological and practical function of industrial music had yet to merge with a commercial style of mood music, but through changes in broadcasting and radio practices, the idea of background music moved from the factory to a variety of public spaces, including the home. Developments in radio, including the longer stretches of music for specific periods of work during the day, and the development of the idea of "late night" listening, all contributed to the emergence of commercial mood music.

OVERVIEW OF NETWORK RADIO

It is nearly impossible to overstate the impact of radio on the social and cultural life of Americans before the advent of the LP in 1948. In this next section, I provide a brief background of radio, illustrating how listeners became attuned to increasingly longer stretches of music. One way that broadcasters began organizing programs was through the concept of radio moods. According to Eric Barnouw, until the late 1920s, broadcasting in the U.S. was primarily made up of independent transmitter towers "vying for attention."[133] In 1926, the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and, shortly thereafter, the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) ushered in the era of network programming by providing affiliate stations programming through leased

[133] Eric Barnouw, *The Golden Web: A History of Broadcasting in the United States 1933-1953,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 3.

telephone cables. Intense competition between CBS and NBC to sign independent stations to their network programs resulted in over half of the formerly independently owned radio stations operating under the network banner by 1937.[134]

The mid-1930s until the end of World War II is often referred to as the Golden Age of Radio because of the mammoth productions of programs, melodramas, comedy, variety shows, spoken word, music, and more. Networks produced programs out of centralized broadcast studios in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles—all with in-house orchestras. Radio network programming rose throughout the 1930s, as did corporate sponsorship of classical music programs.[135] By 1922, the New York Philharmonic began broadcasting concerts on radio, followed by the Boston Symphony in 1926 and the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1929. Live orchestra programming continued throughout the 1930s, with NBC's broadcast concert series from the Chicago and Metropolitan Opera companies and CBS's broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia Symphonies. Radio programs of live classical music were so extensive that by 1938, thirty-two US orchestras broadcast 324 programs on NBC, while

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[134] The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was formed in 1934. Despite controlling the commercialism of radio and programming policies, the FCC opened up the airwaves to more independently owned stations. Radio stations could determine their programming (music genres, spoken word, network serials, and public service programs) as long as they adhered to the broadcasting policies of the FCC. The FCC generally divided programming into two basic types: sustaining and sponsored. Sustaining programs featured shows developed and aired by the networks or stations without commercial sponsorship. Such shows may have been in search of a sponsor, had several (rather than a single) sponsors, or were broadcast because they served the public. By contrast, sponsored programs were either supplied by advertisers directly or stations created programs in which advertisers could "participate" (for instance, through a commercial or announcement). Radio stations broadcasted sponsored programs with a short station break at the end of the segment for commercial or non-commercial station announcements. See, Louise Margaret Benjamin, *The NBC Advisory Council and Radio Programming, 1926-1945* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009), 9.

[135] Classical music programs included *Texaco Metropolitan Opera*, *General Motors Symphony*, *Cadillac Symphony Orchestra* (1933–35), *Ford Symphony Orchestra from Detroit, Atwater Kent Hour* (1926–1934), *Cities Service Concerts* (1927–1956), *The Carborundum Hour* (1929–38), *The Voice of Firestone* (1928–1949), *Bell Telephone Hour* (1940–1958), and *Magic Key of RCA* (1935–39). See, David S.G. Goodman, *Radio's Civic Ambition:* American Broadcasting and Democracy in the 1930s (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 120.

eighteen European orchestras contributed twenty-four programs: "practically a symphony a day."[136] In 1937, the NBC Symphony Orchestra was formed with Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini, while CBS created the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra.

David Goodman suggests that radio played a critical role in changing public perceptions of classical music "by juxtaposing high and low cultural idioms, and turning classical performers into stars, even making some perceptible progress for a time toward the announced goal of making classical music the new popular music."[137] The relationship between classical music and popular music was a consistent feature of mainstream popular music in the 1940s-50s, and as radio played a role in the shifting landscape of categorical distinctions between these two imagined spheres, the perceived gulf slowly closed. The emergence of mood music is historically situated at the intersection of not only interest in industrial (or background) music, but also the growing interest and demand for music that did not fit into the established binaries of serious art music, or lowbrow popular music. Mood music offered users' an alternative space in which to explore different public and private scenarios, as well as socio-cultural identities.

RADIO MOODS (1): BACKGROUND SCENE MUSIC

One of the factors in the identification of "mood" as a musical genre can be traced to its particular meaning during the golden age of radio. Mood music was occasionally referred to as "bridge music": music to hold the audience's attention during the scene transitions of radio serials. By the early 1940s, radio networks were actively recruiting "composers of light classics and mood music" to provide new musical compositions to meet the growing demand for serial

[136] Goodman, *Radio's Civic Ambition,* 119.
[137] Goodman, *Radio's Civic Ambition,* 118.

radio programs. Musicians who had previously played in ensembles accompanying silent films found employment playing and composing bridge music.

Radio music composers had a long list of standard stock themes in their repertoires, most of them retained from 1920s silent films. For example, Erno Rapée's 1924 *Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists* was a collection of standardized musical themes that could be adapted and arranged for any type of theatre ensemble, like a small orchestra or solo piano.[138] Rapée's collection provided music for a range of possible scenes: music for friendship, music for hunting, or music for marriage. Composers intended their pieces to depict animals or a real or imagined ethnic group such as Hawaiians, Bavarians, Canadians, or Africans.

As useful as standard film music had been for musical directors of radio programs, by 1940, it had become overused, and radio program directors were no longer able to simply "raid the collection." According to NBC's musical director Roy Shield, audiences desired new music for radio because all of the "existing useful light classics" were "practically worn out from repeated use."[139] Composers preferred the Romantic aesthetic for radio programs, drawing inspiration from the works of Tchaikovsky, Debussy, and Rachmaninoff to supply the musical representation of various emotions. Critics had no shortage of judgments about the overly sentimental style of the music, which some referred to as "musical weltschmerz," or the "hearts and flowers treatment."[140]

Industry accounts of the early 1940s hailed radio mood music composers as the next big thing, but by 1945 live radio orchestras were already being supplanted by radio transcription disks—high quality phonograph recordings made especially for radio broadcast, not for

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[138] Erno Rapée, *Encyclopedia of Music for Pictures,* (New York: Arno Press, 1970).
[139] Roy Shield, "Wanted — Radio Composers and Arrangers: Many Employment Outlets in Fields of Mood Music and Light Classics," *Billboard,* December 28, 1940, 68.
[140] Irving Spiegel, "Regarding the Production of Mood Music," *New York Times*, February 23, 1947, x11.

commercial use.[141] Rather than employing composers and a live orchestra, radio stations could purchase pre-recorded mood music. One example is Lou Kosloff's 1945 radio transcription disk *Mood Music,* which contained 153 original themes and bridge music. Like Rapeé's collection, Kosloff organized the music in his collection by scene or setting. For instance, the section titled "mysterioso" provided music for "quizzical," "storm," despair," "oriental," and "menace" settings. One reviewer noted that "everything from a baby's cry to a railroad train starting up and pulling in is interpreted musically, giving program directors a full run of emotional accompaniment for whatever a script might call for."[142] As a type of dramatic accompaniment, radio transcriptions provided thematic or functional "music for [your scene here]."

Though radio transcriptions were considered mood music, they were not yet associated with purchasing a record without the accompanying dramatic content, never mind home-based listening. In other words, radio mood music was meant to enhance a given show's drama, comedy, or mystery; it was not meant to be listened to on its own. One reviewer pointed out the absurdity of the possibility, writing: "these aren't albums anyone would want to sit down and listen to in their entirety, naturally, but they are invaluable for the director."[143] Why, the question was posed, would anyone want to listen to this music apart from its function as background music in radio programs? How, then, did the idea of mood music coalesce into a specific musical genre recorded and sold for background home listening? One way of tracing the eventual emergence of mood music as a viable commercial style is by examining some of the postwar

[141]Alexander Russo, *Points on the Dial: Golden Age Radio Beyond the Networks,* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 79. With America's entry into World War II in December 1941, recorded music began replacing live music programs on radio. Access to recordings was central to the shift from network programming to independent radio stations that were not wire connected but operated independently. See Barnouw, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States,* 219-220.
[142] "Mood Music," *Variety,* November 14, 1945, 34.
[143] "Radio Reviews," *Variety,* November 14, 1945, 34.

changes in radio formatting that further facilitated, and normalized, background music in workspaces.

RADIO MOODS (2): MOOD PROGRAMMING

"Air Moods Can Be Stolen!" exclaimed a bold warning to radio programmers in 1945.[144] In mid-1940s broadcasting, mood music was still associated with instrumental music meant for background radio programs, yet the concept of "mood programming" emerged around this time to describe a new trend in programming. Mood programming was a strategy of organizing radio programs in order to sustain a particular listening mood. Mood programming was designed to keep listeners tuned in for longer periods and was adopted for all types of programs—musical and non-musical.

Before mood programming took hold, some networks and radio stations described their programming as "cyclical." With cyclical programming, a standard two-hour block of content would cycle through various genres: popular music, familiar, novelty, semi-popular concert, semi-classical, and classical. Cyclical programming postulated that listeners would continue listening if they knew their preference was coming up on the show. Plus, cyclical programs had the added bonus of "cultural uplift" by weaning the listener off popular and onto classical music.[145]

Mood programming, on the other hand, was adopted by major radio networks (CBS, NBC, ABC, and MBS) to assemble radio programs into similar groups to be broadcast back-to-back. On CBS, for example, religious programs were grouped on one day, while discussion

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[144] Marty Schrader, "Air Moods Can Be Stolen," *Billboard*, February 3, 1945, 6.
[145] "Cycle Vs. Mood Programming," *Billboard,* February 21, 1948, 9. Cultural uplift was the ideological force behind the 1927 Radio Act in which the FCC was tasked with monitoring the "public interest" of radio programs.

programs were broadcast on another. The *Country Journal* was moved to coincide with agricultural news and appeal to rural listeners, and Saturday nights were set aside for two full hours of comedy and gags.[146] There was a gamble involved in the mood programming strategy—if the mood did not continue through station breaks between programs, a competing network could "swoop in and steal" it by "slipping in" a similar program. The idea was that if a listener tuned into a radio program that provided a particular mood or theme, the program should maintain the same mood throughout station breaks. Network programs that did not segue into a program with a similar mood risked losing its audience to competitors. One headline with the requisite industry vernacular claimed, "Webs Scout For Broken Moods So Audiences Can Be Lifted with Right Segs." In other words, networks must be more attuned to the audiences' experience or risk losing their listeners to clever competitors.

Once mood programming became accepted, radio executives turned to the heretofore neglected station break: the short period between programs. By 1947, many radio stations had adopted the innovation of custom-tailored station breaks to ease the often-jarring shift between programs. For example, some stations prepared recorded announcements on radio transcription disks, each written to follow or precede a specific show or type of program. Other stations customized their station breaks with a particular style of music, such as "light music" for popular programs or "harp and vibraphone" for "serious programs."[147] The concept of sustaining a mood to keep the listeners tuned in was emerging during this period, and the use of recorded music allowed stations to program continuous stretches of music for particular times of days and for specific audiences.

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[146] "CBS Switches Segs in Mood Sequence," March 9, 1946, 6; "MBS Builds Mood for Saturday Night with Two New Shows," *Billboard,* March 2, 1946.
[147] "Breaks in Mood," *Broadcasting, Telecasting,* November 3, 1947, 48.

RADIO MOODS (3): THE DISK JOCKEY

By the late 1940s, radio personalities, commonly known as disk jockeys, took on a more prominent role in the industry.[148] Albin Zak attributes the disk jockey's shifting role to the programmer's increasing use of records as a replacement for non-musical programs. Such non-musical programs included dramas, mysteries, quiz shows, and discussion shows, slowly moving from radio to broadcast television. Some radio stations, such as San Francisco's KSFO lured in potential advertising clients on the basis that "everyone likes music." KSFO and others described "blocks of music" as sustaining moods, thus generating profits by keeping listeners "tuned in." Stations highlighted music above all else, showing that it accounted for 71.34 percent of all programming.[149] Blocks of music represented hours of music, which would eventually turn into entire nights of music, many hours of which were musical recordings instead of live music.

Disk jockey's increasing prominence is evident in *Variety's* "Disk Jockey Reviews" of 1947. In this section reviewers critiqued disk jockeys on their music selections (i.e., melodic; easy on the nerves), their clever incorporation of sponsors, their limits on personal observations, jokes and gags (i.e., devoid of wisecracking), and the tone of their voice (i.e., authoritative).[150] The *Jack Gregson Revue,* for example, was broadcast on KSFO in the 10:00-11:00 am and 2:00-3:00 pm time slots. Reviewers described of Gregson's program as "easy on the ears and nerves" while "slanting his chatter so that it delineates the personality and background of his sponsors,

[148] Albin Zak, *I Don't Sound Like Nobody: Remaking Music in 1950s America,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 9. Zak points out *Billboard's* 1949 "Special Disk Jockey Supplement" attests to the disk jockey's broadening status.
[149] "KSFO Music and Mood Programming," *Broadcasting, Telecasting*, March 31, 1947, 7.
[150] "Disk Jockey Reviews: Disk Dates," *Variety,* October 29, 1947, 44; "Disk Jockey Reviews," *Variety,* March 3, 1948, 38.

most of which are radio shops, auto repair shops, and similar service salons."[151] One aspect of network subsidiaries' business model was to sell advertising airtime to local businesses. Disk jockeys like Gregson were often tasked with connecting to their audiences to sell specific products, and they devoted their time slots to music and banter often marketed towards a specific type of person doing a particular activity.

LATE NIGHT LISTENING

In addition to radio programmers' increased use of records for longer stretches of uninterrupted music, the arrival of television around 1948 was a significant factor in the shift to "late night" listening. *Variety* reported on the effect television was having on changes in radio programming; up until 1949, anything played beyond 10:30 pm was considered to be "strictly in the fringe area":[152]

> Even at this early stage of the TV game, the late evening viewing habits are becoming more pronounced, attracting audiences as radio before it had never quite succeeded in doing. And the change in family habits inspired by TV viewing is slowly carrying over into hyping late night radio listening. In the pre-TV era, the family was conditioned to getting its radio listening out of the way first (with 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. thus becoming the cream time segments), afterwards attending to their newspapers, magazines, or book reading. In the case of TV, the newspapers are read first, after which the family assembles in the living room for the video attractions, with radio getting the hangover audience.[153]

Late night listening was gaining an air of respectability. By 1952, radio stations were programming twenty-four hours a day, destabilizing the accepted notion that only "insomniacs,

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[151] "Disk Jockey Reviews," *Variety,* March 3, 1948, 38.
[152] "Radio's 10:30 Curtain Time on Comm'l Shows Being Pushed Back as Later TV Viewing Changes Family Habits," *Variety,* December 14, 1949, 29. In 1937 late night listening was comprised of "recordings spliced with news flashes every five minutes, time signals and weather reports for the following day." "Radio: Morning Musical Clock Idea for Late Night," *Variety,* June 30, 1937, 34.
[153] "Radio's 10:30 Curtain Time," *Variety,* 29.

countermen in all-night hash joints, B-girls and Main Street bums listened to late night shows."[154]

Radio programs began to feature long stretches of uninterrupted listening or entire nights of similarly themed music. One radio station in Seattle boasted full-on mood programming every night: "Tuesday it's serious music and Saturday it's jazz to keep them tuned for four to six hours." WTAM Cleveland billed *Midnight Moods with Bob Shelley* (scheduled at 11:15 pm on Saturdays) as "solid music, easy-to-take popular selections but not of the jive, syncopating tempo . . . semi-classical, minimum of talk . . . late hour listening."[155] As early as 1946, a show called *Music for Dreaming* on WINX was billed as "relaxation music" for "dreaming, dancing, or romancing."[156] While radio programs featuring late night listening prefigured mood albums as a marketing category, they nonetheless emerged through a combination of changes in radio formatting, longer listening times, and the public's embrace of background music for specific times of the day. Radio programs also adopted key terms associated with Black musical forms ("easy," "no jive" or "syncopation") as signals for what their audience could expect to hear.

SEGREGATED LISTENING AND WHITE MEDIA

Radio programmers shared a common technique: organizing their listeners not by only "type of person" but also by what activity they imagined their audience was doing while listening. Just as there were moods for shop workers and housewives, late-night listening emerged as another mode of listening. Late-night programs focused on music for leisure activities: romancing, dancing, dreaming, or relaxing. As listening times for music expanded into

[154] *Billboard*, February 16, 1952, 1.
[155] "Disk Jockey Reviews – Midnight Moods," *Variety*, November 30, 1949, 36.
[156]" Programs," *Broadcasting, Telecasting,* March 4, 1946, 64.

late night, moods afforded programmers a way to organize certain sounds they could market to imagined audiences doing tasks at home or work, and at different times of the day. This organization of sounds based on radio's imagined audience has a distinct meaning when linked to Eric Barnouw's description of radio up until around 1950 as "white media."[157] In the system of white media, radio network practices were controlled by white elites and African Americans were vilified or rendered invisible.[158]

Prior to the rise of network radio beginning in the 1930s there had been a high percentage of Black American programs on independent radio, but once the station was network-affiliated, networks dropped these programs. Combined with the rapid commercialization of radio through sponsorships, network affiliation devastated Black programs on radio in the 1930s.[159] But, in 1946 over 50 percent of African American programs were able to find sponsors, and in 1949 the first Black-owned radio stations began to appear.[160]

During World War II, propaganda about Black soldiers being lazy and other harmful racial stereotypes were distributed through radio. Racial discrimination in broadcasting kept Black performers from receiving full compensation, while white performers who appropriated their work benefitted financially. For example, Amos 'n' Andy was a long running radio serial (1928-1960) based on blackface minstrelsy stereotypes. The 1951 convention of the NAACP

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[157] Barnouw, *The Golden Web,* 3.
[158] Barbara Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: Radio, War, and the Politics of Race, 1938-1948,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Barbara Savage," Radio and the Political Discourse of Racial Equality," in *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio,* edited by Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio, 231-56 (New York: Routledge, 2002); Jade Conlee, "The Bad Violin's Good Politics: Music of Protest and Disavowal in The Jack Benny Program," in *Radio Art and Music: Culture, Aesthetics, Politics,* edited by Jarmilla Mildorf and Pim Verhulst, 135-151, (Maryland: Roman & Littlefield, 2020).
[159] Henry T. Sampson, *Swingin' on the Ether Waves: A Chronological History of African Americans in Radio and Television Broadcasting* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 2.
[160] Sampson, *Swingin' on the Ether Waves,* 783. On October 3, 1949, the first Black-owned station, WERD, went on air.

condemned the show, citing its demeaning portraits of Black people, but CBS adapted it to television. Between 1951-53, Amos 'n' Andy featured Black actors instead of the original white radio cast but retained harmful racial stereotypes derived from minstrel shows.[161]

Within the "white media" conglomerate, few Black radio personalities existed prior to 1950. In 1949, Ken Hibbert of WMOR Chicago became one of the U.S.'s first Black radio disk jockeys and WDIA in Memphis featured radio programs hosted by pioneering Black radio personality Maurice "Hot Rod" Hulbert."[162] By 1949, Hulbert was hosting three shows for WDIA: *The Sepia Swing Club* (an afternoon blues and jazz show), *The Delta Melodies* (an early-morning program of spiritual music), and *Moods by Maurice* (a midmorning program tailored to housewives).[163] What is worth noting is how descriptions of Hulbert's mood programs were not characterized as "easy listening." The absence of the term in relation to Hulbert's program highlights the particular whiteness of the word, but without a deeper examination of disk jockeys and radio programming during this period, it is difficult to gauge any connection between easy listening and Black radio listening practices. However, it is crucial to consider the role of segregation in programmers' determining types of listeners and its connection to mood music which in the LP form came to mark race and racialized spaces. It is also worth reflecting on how Georgina Born's "musically imagined communities" can be seen in this process of articulating difference through not only a type of radio chatter, but through the imagined listener.[164]

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[161] Barnouw, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States,* 297.
[162] Sampson, *Swingin' on the Ether Waves*, 758. Other pioneering Black radio personalities include Eddy Petty on WVOM Boston, Vernon Winslow on WWEZ New Orleans, Bill Sampson on KWKW Los Angeles, and Bill Cook on WART New York.
[163] *The Concise Encyclopedia of American Radio*, eds., Christopher H Sterling, Michael C Keith, and Cary O'Dell. Concise ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 735.
[164] Born, *Western Music and Its Others*, 35-36.

My examination of the various ideas circulating around mood music in the 1940s illustrates that, before the emergence of the LP in 1948, a model for extended, uninterrupted music listening was already developing in radio. With the rollout of the vinyl LP in 1948, record labels harnessed this marketing method to build up their popular music catalogues. By 1950, there was an industry-wide embrace of mood albums for background and uninterrupted listening that consumers could purchase for the home.

In this next section I provide a brief overview of the commercial adoption of the LP and the significance of mood music on its release. The "War of the Speeds" is cited as the period of instability during the years 1948-1951 in which Columbia and RCA Victor scrambled for dominance in a shifting market of various disk speeds and sizes including the 78, 33 1/3, and 45 rpms. I will not rehash the competing interests and timelines of the war of the speeds. There is no shortage of anecdotes about this period—from record executives to sound engineers, stories have been collected and are widely available. In popular music and media studies the periods before and after the LP are treated as distinct phases that were each dominated by a different kind of organization.[165] But there is a notable lack of focus on the period of transition in which the different speeds existed together for a time. Looking at this period in detail offers a chance to understand some of the factors that were in play not only in stabilizing the LP in the marketplace, but in how the LP afforded new categories of music. One can argue that while the introduction of the LP was a major change, it was still a continuation of the aesthetic and commercial boundaries that had been put in place in the preceding years, in particular around the cultural value of popular music in relation to classical music. In the narrative of how the LP was developed there

[165] Keightley, "Music for Middlebrows," 309-35; Anderson, *Making Easy Listening,* 2006; Reebee Garofalo, "From Music Publishing to MP3: Music and Industry in the Twentieth Century," *American Music* 17, no. 3 (1999): 318-54.

are several different threads that come together. These threads include sound quality, frequency, dynamics, and duration, cost, and existing recordings, but the factor that I am most interested in is content. What were the factors that determined what type of music would be recorded and released on LP?

LONG PLAY (LP) AND NEW CATEGORIES

During the 1930s, the long play record (33 1/3) was developed by RCA for radio transcription disks but attempts to market it for commercial use was hampered by the economic depression and failure on the part of RCA to develop an affordable home turntable. Columbia had knowledge of RCA's experiments with the LP and had anticipated an eventual commercial adoption of the format. Columbia president Edward Wallerstein secretly approved a series of long play vinyl recording experiments of their own and began backlogging transcription disks that would be readily transferable to vinyl disks.[166] On June 19, 1948, Columbia unveiled the long play 33 1/3 rpm for commercial use. Hamstrung by the fact that Columbia had released their version of the long play, RCA Victor spent a fortune publicizing their 45 rpm (released March 31, 1949) as the preferred speed for popular music.[167] With all the upheaval, it took years—until 1955 according to Charles Hamm—for the market to stabilize.[168]

Leading up to the release of the long play in the U.S., Edward Wallerstein had tried to expand Columbia Records in 1940 by building up its classical catalogue, slashing prices, and

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[166] Roland Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph, 1877-1977,* 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 282. Gary Marmorstein, *The Label: The Story of Columbia Records*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2007), 154.

[167] By 1954 when more that 200, 000, 000 45s had been sold, the president of RCA boasted that the "45s now represent more than 50 % of all single records sold." See, Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph,* 296; Howard Taubman, "Records: Speeds in the Factory," *New York Times,* January 1, 1950, 58.

[168] Charles Hamm, "Technology and Music: The Effect of The Phonograph" in *Contemporary Music and Music Cultures*, ed. Charles Hamm, Bruno Nettl, and Ronald L Byrnside (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 260.

promoting top U.S. artists and orchestras. Wallerstein's attempt to stimulate the U.S. classical market was a reaction to the fact that most of the classical recordings were produced in Europe. There is no doubt that classical music was the impetus for the development of the long play record, and the timing of classical works also contributed to the length of music on the LP. In a retrospective interview about the creation of the LP, Wallerstein recounted the there was no set time for a long play record so they "timed I don't know how many works in the classical repertory and came up with a figure of seventeen minutes to a side. This would enable about 90 percent of all classical music to be put on two sides of a record."[169] Columbia executives viewed classical music repertory as generating the most profit on the long play format; there was little enthusiasm for popular music on the LP.[170]

Popular music was not considered to be an appealing style of music for the type of continuous listening that the LP afforded. This fact was made clear in 1941 when Herbert Ridout, executive from the British branch of Columbia Records, stated that only classical music would benefit from the un-interruption of a long-playing record because "who on earth wants strung together some arbitrary choice of six or eight dances or ballads on one record? You could not reasonably expect six or eight "hits" every time."[171] Because of the popular field was understood to operate through the lens of "hits," there was little interest in marketing continuous popular music that the LP made possible.

By the summer of 1949 several companies had adopted the LP including Cetra-Soria, Vox, Concert Hall, Mercury, London (English Decca division). Capitol also adopted RCA

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[169] Edward Wallerstein, "Creating the LP Record," *High Fidelity,* April 1976, 56-61.
[170] Gary Marmorstein, *The Label: The Story of Columbia Records*, (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2007).
[171] Richard Osborne, *Vinyl: A History of the Analogue Record*. Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 98.

Victor's "extended play" format. Between January and April 1953 Capitol released dozens of new recordings and reissues as double EP's. Paul Weston claimed that Capitol's success during this period was because they sold records on all three speeds (78, 33 1/3, 45).[172] It was during these years of upheaval that record labels discovered that mood albums were a profitable way to market and sell popular long play albums. As I show in this next section, mood music traversed the middle ground of both popular and classical, making it a desirable genre with which to build up their pop music catalogue.

MOOD ALBUMS

Before detailing Paul Weston's contributions to the emergence of mood albums, I will first provide a short overview of how mood albums differ from mood music in general. Mood music emerged during the second half of the 1940s as background music suitable for public spaces such as restaurants and businesses, also known as Muzak or elevator music. The mood album, more specifically, is both a style of music and a particular marketing category that emerged with the format of the LP including its accompanying album art and liner notes. The mood album's trajectory began with Paul Weston's recordings between 1945-50 and reached its apotheosis around 1954, when record companies were converting their catalogues from 78 rpm recordings to the LP format.

With the rollout of the vinyl LP in 1948, record labels sought ideas to build up their pop music catalogue. One technique they used was grouping popular songs into mood albums intended for listeners to play as background music for specific activities and states of mind. By 1954, Columbia, RCA Victor, Capitol, Mercury, MGM, and Decca collectively released 175

[172] Capitol also adopted RCA Victor's new "extended play" format and between January and April 1953, they released dozens of new and reissue releases as double EP's. This was economically motivated as Capitol realized they could release half of an eight-song album on a single EP, and half on another EP.

mood music albums, accounting for 30 percent of RCA Victor's non-classical sales and eight out of ten of Columbia's best-selling popular LPs.[173] Mood albums accounted for the majority of non-classical LP sales, with each major label promoting their own mood artists who devised an ever-expanding number of mood themes.

Subjects included music for late night romantic activities, such as Paul Weston's *Music for Romancing* (1948), *Music for Dreaming* (1945), and *Music for Reflection* (1951). There were albums for modes of thought and romantic persuasion, such as Jackie Gleason's *Music to Remember Her* (1954) and *Music to Change Her Mind* (1955). Some albums, like Columbia's *Music for Gracious Living* series (1955), were conceived for domestic, suburban lifestyles involving buffets and barbecues. Other mood music albums were marketed as "therapeutic," like Melachrino Strings' *Music for Faith and Inner Calm* (1954) and *Music for Courage and Confidence* (1954). Mood albums also extended to groupings of people, such as *Music for Babysitters* (1954) and *Music for Bachelors* (1954). The tables below provide a snapshot of the mood albums recorded between 1945-56. Table 1.1 lists the earliest mood albums Paul Weston recorded with Capitol. Table 1. 2 provides a representative selection of some releases by major labels during the height of the mood phenomenon: 1952-55.

Table 1.1 Paul Weston's Mood Albums (78s and LPs), 1945-1951

	1945	1946	1948	1949	1950	1951
PAUL WESTON CAPITOL	*Music for Dreaming*	*Music for Memories*	*Music for Romancing*	*Songs Without Words*	*Music for Easy Listening*	*Music for Reflection*
					Music for the Fireside	

[173] "US In the Mood for Mood Music," *Variety,* November 17, 1954, 62; John S. Wilson, "Revolution in Pops: Trend in This Field on Discs Stresses Mood Music of Tranquil Strains," *New York Times,* November 22, 1953, x51. By 1954, sales of RCA Victor's mood albums reached one million for a retail gross of $3,700,000.

Table 1. 2 Various Artists' Mood Albums (LP), 1952-1956

	1952	1953	1954	1955
PAUL WESTON COLUMBIA	*Mood Music*	*Mood for 12*	*Music for a Rainy Night*	*Music for Quiet Dancing*
	Dream Time Music		*Music for Jennifer*	*Melodies for Moonlight*
MELACHRINO STRINGS RCA VICTOR	*Music for Dining*	*Music for Dining*	*Music for Courage and Confidence*	*Music for the Nostalgic Traveler*
	Music for Relaxation		*Music to Help You Sleep*	
	Music for Reading		*Music for Faith and Inner Calm*	
JACKIE GLEASON CAPITOL	*Music for Lovers Only*	*Lover's Rhapsody*	*Music, Martinis, and Memories*	*Music to Remember Her*
		Tawny		
CAPITOL SERIES: BACKGROUND MUSIC		*Vol. 1 Show Tunes*		
		Vol. 2 Bright and Bouncy		
		Vol. 3 Light and Lively		
		Vol. 4 Songs we Remember		
COLUMBIA SERIES QUIET MUSIC & MUSIC FOR GRACIOUS LIVING	*Quiet Music, Vol. 1* Columbia Salon Orchestra		*Music for Bachelors* Various Artists	*Music for Gracious Living: Buffet*
	Quiet Music Vol. 2 Various Artists		*Music for the Engaged* Various Artists	*Music for Gracious Living: Barbecue*
	Quiet Music Vol. 3 Various Artists		*Music for Babysitters* Various Artists	*Music for Gracious Living: Foursome*
	Quiet Music Vol. 4 Various Artists			*Music for Gracious Living: After the Dance*
	Quiet Music Vol. 6 Relaxing with Xavier Cugat			*Music for Gracious Living: Do It Yourself*
	Quiet Music Vol. 7 Moonlight Various Artists			
	Quiet Music Vol. 8, Dream Various Artists			

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the rapid speed at which major labels picked up on the mood music trend. Each major label employed composer/arrangers (many of whom came out of the 1940s jazz band milieu) who specialized in mood music and had a particular style of arranging jazz standards, light classics, operetta, waltzes, and some original songs. For example, Paul Weston, Jackie Gleason, and Les Baxter recorded mood music for Capitol Records. George Melachrino and Henri René were RCA Victor's lead mood artists. One commonality shared by all of the mood series (*Background Music, Quiet Music, Music for Gracious Living,* etc.) was that the studio musicians and other involved personnel were rarely named. Major labels could hire "no-name" musicians to keep recording expenses low. Depending on the recording contract, the name artist (Weston, Baxter) would often hire an orchestra and pay them personally in exchange for a share of the recording profits. Some of Les Baxter's contracts with Capitol and Paul Weston's contracts with Columbia (much to his dismay) worked this way.[174]

PAUL WESTON AND CAPITOL RECORDS

Paul Weston was an American pianist, composer, and arranger. He began his career arranging for the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and in the 1940s, relocated to Hollywood and joined the newly formed Capitol Records as a recording artist and musical director. In 1950, he left Capitol and took the position of West Coast Musical Director with Columbia Records. In 1950 *Coronet* magazine dubbed Weston "Master of Mood" because of his success at Capitol beginning with his album *Music for Dreaming* (1945).[175] In a letter to Goddard Lieberson, the

[174] At Columbia, Weston complained to Mitch Miller that he went "$14,000 in the hole" in 1951 because he had to pay out the chorus and orchestra for an unsuccessful album. Weston to Miller, letter, box 53, folder 7, The Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection, University of Arizona School of Music.
[175] Keith Monroe, "The Master of Mood Music," *Coronet Magazine,* February 1950; The Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection, University of Arizona School of Music, box 53, folder 36. *Coronet* was a

president of Columbia Records, Weston mentioned the *Coronet* article stating, "if you can control your nausea, I'm sure you'll admit it's both alliterative and commercial."[176] In this letter, probably written around 1956, Weston voices his irritation with what he saw as Columbia's lack of promotional effort on his behalf. Weston argued that his early mood album success at Capitol was partly due to their gimmicky promotion of his albums. By contrast, he felt ignored by Columbia's lack of promotion. While Weston was proud of his success at Capitol, his sentiments also reveal discomfort with the commercialism of mood music.

Weston's personal and professional experiences in the postwar music industry are documented in correspondences, promotional materials, meeting minutes, and personal reflections from his archival materials. These materials provide an overview of the record industry's shifting ground, including Weston's struggle to reconcile his artistic and business roles. During his time at Capitol and Columbia, he wrote several short essays: "What is Bop," "Arranging for the Modern Orchestra," "You Can't Sell What You Give Away for Free," "Album Promotion," "The Dance Band Business," "Impressions of a Confused Repertoire Man," and "The Hit Psychology." Together, his essays paint a picture of the tensions and negotiations Weston navigated between business, musical aesthetics, and artistic legitimacy. Though Weston worked in the popular music business, he considered himself an artist—and these two roles were difficult to reconcile.

Weston's first album for Capitol Records, *Music for Dreaming* (1945), was a surprise hit, and Capitol was interested in replicating its success with Weston's preceding album, *Music for Memories* (1946). One of the strategies Capitol adopted to gauge interest in recordings was to

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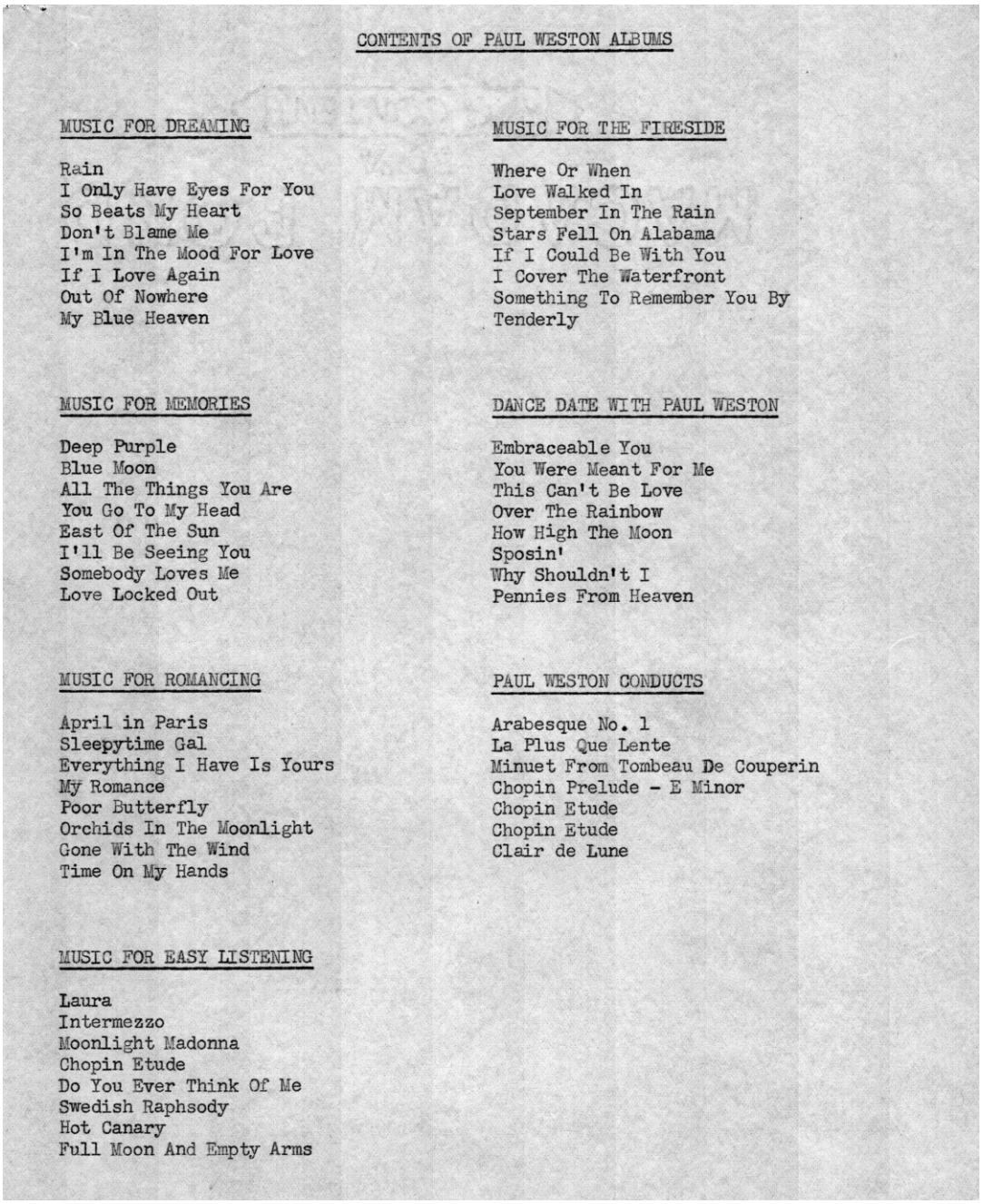
general-interest monthly magazine published in the United States from October 1936 to March 1971. It ran for 299 issues.

[176] Weston to Lieberson, letter, box 53, folder 7, The Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection, University of Arizona School of Music.

survey the label's regional managers, salesgirls, and customers for feedback. Capitol spent extensive time and resources on polling practices. The results showed that there was a high demand for Jerome Kern's and Sigmund Romberg's operetta songs to be arranged in the Paul Weston manner. One branch manager went further than simply providing a list of songs—he grouped them into themes such as "Spring," which included titles like "April Showers" and "Only a Rose." Many of the requested songs made their way onto *Music for Memories*.[177] The song contents from Weston's Capitol albums are listed in the following document *(figure 1.2)*.[178]

[177] Songs on *Music for Memories*: "Deep Purple" (Peter DeRose), "Somebody Loves Me" (George Gershwin), "I'll Be Seeing You" (Fain and Kahal), "Love Locked Out" (Ray Noble), "All the Things You Are" (Jerome Kern), "East of the Sun, West of the Moon" (Brooks Bowman), "Blue Moon" (Rogers and Hart), and "You Go to my Head" (Koots).

[178] *Dance Date with Paul Weston* (CL 6162, 1949) was released as part of Columbia's series "Dance Date"; therefore I have not included it in "Mood Albums" (table 2).



CONTENTS OF PAUL WESTON ALBUMS

MUSIC FOR DREAMING

Rain
I Only Have Eyes For You
So Beats My Heart
Don't Blame Me
I'm In The Mood For Love
If I Love Again
Out Of Nowhere
My Blue Heaven

MUSIC FOR THE FIRESIDE

Where Or When
Love Walked In
September In The Rain
Stars Fell On Alabama
If I Could Be With You
I Cover The Waterfront
Something To Remember You By
Tenderly

MUSIC FOR MEMORIES

Deep Purple
Blue Moon
All The Things You Are
You Go To My Head
East Of The Sun
I'll Be Seeing You
Somebody Loves Me
Love Locked Out

DANCE DATE WITH PAUL WESTON

Embraceable You
You Were Meant For Me
This Can't Be Love
Over The Rainbow
How High The Moon
Sposin'
Why Shouldn't I
Pennies From Heaven

MUSIC FOR ROMANCING

April in Paris
Sleepytime Gal
Everything I Have Is Yours
My Romance
Poor Butterfly
Orchids In The Moonlight
Gone With The Wind
Time On My Hands

PAUL WESTON CONDUCTS

Arabesque No. 1
La Plus Que Lente
Minuet From Tombeau De Couperin
Chopin Prelude - E Minor
Chopin Etude
Chopin Etude
Clair de Lune

MUSIC FOR EASY LISTENING

Laura
Intermezzo
Moonlight Madonna
Chopin Etude
Do You Ever Think Of Me
Swedish Raphsody
Hot Canary
Full Moon And Empty Arms

Figure 1. 2. Song Sheet, Box 53, Folder 8, Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Archives, University of Arizona School of Music.

While various arrangements of popular songs were a fundamental feature of the big band/swing era, I provide this list of songs to suggest that *song choices* for recordings played a major role in the development of mood albums—a feature that carried over into exotica recordings. Song choices signaled a particular meaning to the audience, and while that meaning

may be lost on us from a contemporary viewpoint, song choices may tell us something about the assumed listener for mood albums. For example, Paul Weston's choice to arrange light classics and waltzes (in particular, Sigmund Romberg and Jerome Kern songs) represents his effort to appeal to a certain segment of the population that would have been familiar with Romberg's self-styled "middlebrow music."

MUSIC FOR MIDDLEBROWS

Sigmund Romberg was a Hungarian-born American composer well known for his Broadway musicals and operetta that blended waltzes, marches, musical comedy numbers, and light encore pieces like "Claire de Lune," "Bolero," and "Roumanian Rhapsody."[179] Easy-to-remember melodies were a significant appeal of Romberg's operettas. Between 1943-49, Romberg toured the US, promoting "middlebrow music concerts" with programs mainly devoted to the music of Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Rogers and Hammerstein, Cole Porter, Johann Strauss, Franz Lehar, and Rudolph Friml.[180] *Variety* reported that the 567 concerts Romberg performed during these six years grossed over two million dollars. His music was marketed as too lowbrow for symphony conductors, too highbrow for jazz conductors, but was promoted as an alternative to jazz: "America wants music very much, says Sigmund Romberg, and it wants something else besides jazz."[181]

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[179] Sigmund Romberg began his career working as a staff composer for the Shubert brothers in New York City. He adapted and transformed Viennese operetta for American audiences, including *The Blue Paradise* (1915), a version of Edmund Eysler's *Ein Tag im Paradies,* Kollo's *Maytime* (1917) from *Wie einst in Mai,* and *Blossom Time* (1921) from Berté's *Das Dreimäderlhaus,* a pastiche operetta about Franz Schubert. Romberg took waltzes from these works and incorporated them into his original operettas: *The Student Prince* (1924) and *The Desert Song* (1926). William A. Everett, "Sigmund Romberg," *Grove Music Online,* in Oxford Music Online https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.23756, Accessed March 14, 2022.
[180] "Romberg's 'Middlebrow' Music Paying Off Big" *Variety*, July 6, 1949, 42.
[181] "US Yerns 'Middlebrow' Music Says Romberg," *Variety,* March 27, 1946, 55.

Around 1945, Romberg's middlebrow music, Paul Weston's recordings of mood music, and industrial music as background music in public spaces, coalesced as "music for everyone."[182] Weston did not refer to his music as middlebrow, yet his numerous arrangements of Sigmund Romberg and Jerome Kern's songs situate him directly in the middlebrow since Romberg's operetta music was deliberately marketed as middlebrow music—operetta, musical theatre, and classical melodies that were appealing to non-concert hall audiences.[183] Weston's management company clearly also saw a potential audience for his music in factories and defense plants. One promotional release stated, "wherever one turns—at home, in restaurants and hotels, beauty parlors and defense plants, department stores and supermarkets—Weston recordings are spun and piped to millions of Americans daily."[184]

The term "middlebrow" is often used in a way that assumes we know what it means. While the concept of the middlebrow has received little scholarly attention, a recent colloquy in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* drew focus to the value of studying the middlebrow in connection to music.[185] Historically, the term is tied to categories (classes) of people. Until the 1940s, middlebrow rarely referenced a category of music or musical style. During the 1920s, the British press used the term to describe an uncultivated audience—more

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[182] Dorothy O'Leary, "Middlebrow Music: Sigmund Romberg Seems to Have Solved the Problem of Pleasing Everyone," *New York Times*, July 27, 1947, X7.
[183] Francis, "Middlebrow $$," 22; "GA Concert Dept.'s Middlebrow Push," *Billboard*, April 27, 1946, 41; "Romberg's 'Middlebrow' Music Paying Off Big," *Variety*, July 6, 1949, 42.
[184]" Let's Look at the Record," Charles J. Levin Press Release, box 53, folder 16, n.d. The Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection, University of Arizona School of Music.
[185] Christopher Chowrimootoo and Kate Guthrie (Convenors) et al., "Colloquy: Musicology and the Middlebrow," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 73, no. 2 (June 1, 2020): 327–95. See also John Howland, *Hearing Luxe Pop: Glorification, Glamour, and the Middlebrow in American Popular Music* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2021), 120. Howland adopts the term Populuxe, a term coined by Thomas Hine, to describe midcentury orchestral jazz-pop music as an upscale market luxury which "invites consumers to indulge in the hi- fi audio luxury of the recordings' vibrant, life- like orchestral renderings."

elegantly termed by one writer as "mezzo-brows."[186] "Middlebrow" is predicated not only on cultural and class hierarchies but also on the very idea of "brows." "Brows" originated in racist, pseudo-scientific phrenological studies that sought to tie intellectual ability to head size and shape.

Instead of categorizing people according to the shape of their head, the U.S. music industry grouped listeners according to their hypothetical hair length: "longhair" for the serious, highbrow classical audience, and "crewcut" for the lowbrow, big band swing audience. Middlebrow fell somewhere in the middle, quite literally: "longhair that doesn't touch the shoulders" or "longhair stuff cut to shoulder length" by one writer's standard.[187] Though Russell Lynes' 1949 article in *Harper's Magazine* is often cited as the moment that "middlebrow" caught on as a type of mid-century cultural litmus test, cultural critics and journalists in the music industry had been debating the meaning of the term for several years before Lynes' article.[188]

Billboard writers noticed and discussed middlebrow, but as a musical style, its definition was debated: "few, if any, of the concert men will acknowledge that there is such a thing as a middlebrow music field . . . some are willing to admit that a middlebrow music field exists, but they say that it's just a result of the lush war dough and won't last."[189] In 1944, *Billboard* reported that of the 1,564 disk jockeys employed by the over 800 radio stations in the US, 657 had recently reported that they devoted at least one session to middlebrow music—but the disks

[186] Fox Strangeways, "The Middlebrow Indigenous Music," *The Observer*, July 12, 1936, 16; *New York Times*, January 18, 1926, 20.
[187] Robert Francis, "Middlebrow $$ From Longhair," *Billboard*, September 2, 1944, 22.
[188] Russell Lynes, "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow," *Harper's Magazine*, February 1, 1949, 19.
[189] "Middlebrow $$ Battle Starts," *Billboard* April 15, 1944, 12; "Middle-brow Music Big Biz" *Billboard* March 11, 1944, 14.

that they called middlebrow "run the gamut."[190] For example, one concert booker claimed that some clubs were requesting "sentimental" middlebrow music for their gatherings, but when they were given "My Mother's Rosary," they wrote back to the bureau that they did not request corn. When *Billboard* attempted to define middlebrow, the main consensus they could reach was that it "wasn't jump."[191] One article claimed:

> The line between strictly pop stuff and the middlebrow is not easy to define. Some will throw in "Holiday for Strings" as middle stuff, when they do they start an argument from Dixieland to Stokowski. One might find in a juke box, "Shoo Shoo Baby" right up against Don Juans's Serenade. The swinger poo-poo this as not indicative of any trend. They claim it's just an effort on the part of the management to secure a Muzak type of background music.[192]

As businesspeople and industry executives who have seemingly "lost the plot" tried to make sense of the marketplace, radio, industrial music (including Muzak), and recordings became entangled with cultural and artistic value. But because the rules were in flux, this confusion may have provided a space for other types of entertainment that did not fit the requisite "high/low" categories such as to enter.

The problem of categorization also frustrated Paul Weston. While still at Capitol, Weston released *Paul Weston Conducts,* an album of arranged compositions by Chopin, Ravel, and Debussy played by George Greeley on piano, accompanied by orchestra.[193] Unlike his mood albums, *Paul Weston Conducts* was not a success, a problem Weston blamed on the fact that it

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[190] "Middle-brow Music Big Biz," *Billboard,* 14.
[191] "Middlebrow $$ Battle Starts," *Billboard,* 12; "Middle-brow Music Big Biz," *Billboard,* 14; Francis, "Middlebrow $$ From Longhair," *Billboard,* 22.
[192] "Middlebrow $$ Battle Starts," *Billboard,* 12.
[193] Paul Weston, with George Greeley, *Paul Weston Conducts,* (Capitol, CC-174, 1950) 3x 10", 78. Debussy's "La Plus Que Lente" and "Arabesque No. 1"; Chopin's "Prelude Op. 28, No 4 in E Minor," "Valse Op. 69, No. 1 in Ab Major," and "Valse Op. 69, No. 2 in B Minor"; and Ravel's "Menuet Du Tombeau De Couperin."

was not popular or classical.[194] One of the promotion strategies for the album was to plant newspaper stories highlighting the process of shipping the record to Paris to receive approval from the Ravel and Debussy estates before the album could be licensed for release. Weston wanted to stress that this was the first time an estate had ever granted such permission to an arranger, excepting Stokowski. He was emphatic about the integrity of his work, saying: "the arrangements are in no way 'popular' treatments of the compositions."[195] The idea of a pop or classical "treatment" was regularly used in the musical rhetoric of this period as way to describe some of the available musical techniques that arrangers could choose from. What Paul Weston must have meant was that he did not experiment with timbral possibilities of instruments or voices—a feature of a pop arrangement during this period. Moreover, Weston arranged the pieces for a typical classical music ensemble (piano, strings, woodwinds) rather than for a jazz ensemble with prominent percussion and brass.

Artistic disposition in the commercial field played out in Weston's recollections and documents. He downplayed and derided his creative output. Weston called *Paul Weston Conducts* "pretentious" and *Music for Dreaming* "embarrassingly simply." He was "nauseous" about his role in mood music's development, in which he was either "taking the credit or the blame."[196] Tim Anderson suggests that navigating the recording field during this period may have led to frustration with musicians who were trained in a time when lyricist/composer arrangements were a primary source of popular music; as such, they were "caught in a cultural

[194] Weston, Capitol Records inter-office memo, box 53, folder 7, December 29, 1949, The Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection, University of Arizona School of Music.
[195] Weston, Capitol Records inter-office memo, box 53, folder 7, December 29, 1949, The Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection, University of Arizona School of Music.
[196] Weston, Capitol Records documents, box 53, folder 8, n.d., The Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection, University of Arizona School of Music.

shift that they may not have appreciated but certainly could mock."[197] While Weston was proud of what he called his "extreme novelties," such as the song "Shrimp Boats" as well as his forays into classical recordings (like *Paul Weston Conducts),* perhaps as a way to release some of their frustration with the state of the recording industry and to mock this shift, Weston and his wife Jo Stafford created Jonathon and Darlene Edwards, a fictional and parodic "bad" lounge act.[198]

EXOTIC MOODS

I discussed earlier in this chapter the importance of radio on not only the structure of the recording music industry, but in the changing public perceptions of classical music by juxtaposing high and low cultural idioms. In 1950 when Paul Weston's "Master of Mood" article came out, a *New York Times* article also recognized Percy Faith, Morton Gould, André Kostelanetz, and David Rose as "Radio's Big Four in pioneering this particular style of [mood] music."[199] These arranger/conductors are more associated with radio orchestras than with jazz bands such as Paul Weston. Percy Faith started out in 1931 as a staff arranger and conductor with the CBC in Canada. Mutual picked up his weekly shows in the US in 1938, and throughout the 1940s, he was at NBC. Morton Gould spent his career working with leading radio orchestras for NBC and CBS. Through network radio, he attained national recognition as a symphonic composer, conductor, and pianist. André Kostelanetz (employed by the CBS radio network)

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[197] Anderson, *Making Easy Listening*, xiv.
[198] Promotional materials from Weston's archive claim he was "a fundamentalist in composition, he countered the trend toward extreme novelties with 'Shrimp Boats' and 'Gandy Dancers Ball' two solid hits that are more than just different. They seem have something of the 'earthy' permanence of folk songs." He wrote both the lyrics and music for such songs as "Double Dating" and "Bop Went the Strings." "Composer Paul Weston's Contributions to the American Music Scene," box 53, folder 15, n.d. The Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection, University of Arizona School of Music.
[199] Michael Caracappa, "Music for Relaxed Radio Listening: Percy Faith Designs His Arrangements to Fit Various Moods," *New York Times,* June 4, 1950, X8.

helped popularize light classics as principal conductor of New York Philharmonic's promenade concerts.

These radio and recording artists applied different music techniques, and drew on discourses of primitive, or themes of tropical paradises to produce a type of mood music which was related to radio and light classics. For example, Faith's approach to "sustaining the right mood" was a matter of "get[ting] to "know" the composer, the reason for the song, the situation, and the mood. Faith claimed part of his process for arranging involved picturing in his mind the ideal radio listener: "Our job is to satisfy the millions of devotees of that pleasant American institution known as the quiet evening at home, whose idea of perfect relaxation is the easy chair, slippers—and good music."[200] David García writes that Percy Faith became popular in part because of his Latin novelty recordings in which he described his arranging style as adding "a splash of exciting primitive color" with the inclusion of Latin drummers.[201]

In the introduction I discussed the article "The Witch Doctor in Your Living Room" as the first look back at exotic precedents to form a coherent "history" of exotica. Morton Gould and André Kostelanetz were both recognized as contributing to the first stage of exotica. Ball suggested that Andre Kostelanetz's *Exotic Music* (1947) would possibly have been considered exotica had it not been released in the classical category and on the Columbia Masterworks label."[202] The inclusion of Gould and Kostelanetz in the canon of exotica reflects the broader cultural fascination with exotic themes, in particular themes around the tropical paradise, jungle, and Hawai'i. What sets them apart from other exotica artists like Les Baxter and Martin Denny is the way they adapted orchestral instruments to depict difference rather than incorporating Afro-

[200] Michael Caracappa, "Music for Relaxed Radio Listening: Percy Faith Designs His Arrangements to Fit Various Moods," *New York Times,* June 4, 1950, X8.
[201] David García, "Going Primitive to the Movements and Sounds of Mambo," 511.
[202] John Ball Jr., "The Witch Doctor in Your Living Room," *Hi/Fi Stereo Review,* March 1960, 62-68.

Cuban percussion and Japanese instruments. For example, Gould did not include any Afro-Cuban instruments in his orchestrated arrangement of Ernesto Lecuona's "Jungle Drums" (the album's title track). Instead, he turned to instrumental timbres—timpani for echoey drumbeats and maintained dissonant brass for danger—for use in the concert hall. While the steel guitar is featured in Kostelanetzs' arrangement of the song "Moon of Manakoora," it is strategically placed to blend with the traditional instruments of the orchestra rather than being used to depict difference. The allusion to Hawai'i is achieved in combination with the program notes for the song: "A small white schooner coast along a silent palm green shore . . . then from the island brown girls swim out to meet the white schooner . . . laughing."[203] The exotic for Gould and Kostelanetz was achieved through programmatic liner notes, visual images such as record covers featured attractive, ethnically ambiguous women in tropical settings, orchestral arranging techniques, and pre-existing knowledges about paradise, and the primitive.

In this section I have described the many ways mood music intersected with tensions between popular and classical music in the popular music field. Exotic themes were also being incorporated into mood music through arrangements and programmatic themes made possible by radio listening practices and the long play record. Though originally associated with radio, mood music was increasingly associated with continuous music for specific times of day, including the home. Mood albums, which traversed the boundaries of respectable light classical, operetta, musical theatre, and pop standards, became embroiled in ideological debates about musical genre and cultural status. But as I examine in the next chapter, they also became a vehicle for commentary regarding sociocultural identities through "the musical imaginary." Mood music

[203] André Kostelanetz, *Lure of the Tropics*, Columbia CL-780, 1955, LP, liner notes.

offered users' an alternative space in which to explore different public and private scenarios, as well as socio-cultural identities.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of mood music is historically situated at the intersection of not only interest in industrial (or background) music, but also the growing interest and demand for music that did not fit into the established binaries of serious art music, or lowbrow popular music. I have shown how mood albums' proliferation during the 1950s resulted from robust marketing strategies that adapted to the new LP disk market based on listening practices established during and across the postwar media landscape. Through the increased organization of listening, including music for workspaces and late-night listening, record companies lay the groundwork for mood music to emerge as a marketing category and a style of music. Mood came to be associated not only with functional music but with types of music that accompanied certain listening modes and thus specific activity modes, states of being, and even types of people. By assembling disparate musical excerpts into a "mood," musical meaning was reinscribed, affording an endless supply of thematic possibilities. Ideas of what constituted background music and its function (for who, for what) were a way of organizing listeners and moods were mediated through industry networks, eventually coalescing in the vinyl LP format. Record labels harnessed this idea to build up their popular music catalogues. Mood albums participated in the "middlebrow" sphere of popular music, not only through song choices and arranging styles but through the support of a wide swath of the industry, including radio, recording, and touring venues. Through these conditions, mood music can be historicized as devoid of any racial markers—except overt whiteness through the white middleclass listening subject as "the norm."

Understanding moods as an organizing structure of the recording industry and the mainstream musical field provides the groundwork for examining how exotica fit into this system.

CHAPTER TWO |

SEX, AND OTHER AFFORDANCES OF THE LP

Since 1955 mood music has tended demonstrably to become nude music; an experienced distributor summed it up like this: first there was only tombstone stuff—you know, a square of cardboard with an inscription on it. Then there was art—a drawing, a colored billboard. Then there was Mood. Music for this, music for that. And then there was Sex—in Kodachrome. It was as simple as that.
—New York Times, 1957[204]

By the mid-1950s it was official—sex had infiltrated the record business. From record jacket art featuring women lounging in flowing negligées signifying sexual availability, to the pseudo-primitivism of half-naked women in animal print bikinis alongside hide-covered drums, to images of busty Hollywood stars, sexual imagery on album covers had increased to the point that in 1957 a *New York Times* article declared that "mood music had demonstrably become nude music."[205]

When Martin Denny's exotica albums were released beginning in 1957, they entered into a popular music space in which the mood album was used for marketing popular LPs. Common criteria for mood albums included not only instrumental arrangements of popular songs, but also the requisite cover art which included sexually suggestive images of attractive young women. Following the success of *Exotica* (vol. 1), Liberty Records repeated the musical/visual/thematic

[204] Milton Bracker, "Bare Essentials of LP Covers," *New York Times,* March 17, 1957, M9.
[205] Bracker, "Bare Essentials of LP Covers," M9.

formula with Denny's following records. For the record jacket art, this included hiring the same model, Sandy Warner, for the subsequent exotica album covers. As a result, Warner became known as "the exotica girl." Her image was noticed by the record industry with *Billboard* reviews mentioning the merchandising potential that her image afforded.

A growing body of literature showcases album art as examples of mid-century design or as fascinating oddities, but scholars rarely consider the historical significance of album art.[206] In the last chapter, I argued that mood albums played an important historical role in new marketing and packaging strategies by effectively presenting music continuously and thematically. In this chapter, I show how these new packaging strategies revolved around using images of sexualized women on record covers and the development of detailed record liner notes to create narrative cohesion between disparate artists and musical styles. I examine the material and historical specificity of select recordings, to show how gender norms and difference are evoked through the combination of social discourses, music, liner notes, and visual images. I begin by tracing the conditions that led to the initial images of sexualized women on album covers from around 1947 to 1957, the point when female nudity on covers had become commonplace. I examine how the imagery and archetypes of the 1950s that were connected to exotica and other mood albums—female sexual representation through cheesecake photos, the swinging bachelor, and white middle-class suburbia—were much more unsettled and under negotiation than is often assumed from a presentist perspective. Ultimately, this chapter examines how the social, material, and musical work together to shape cultural meanings.

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[206] See Jennifer McKnight-Trontz, *Exotiquarium: Album Art from the Space Age,* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1999); Janet Borgerson and Jonathan Schroeder, *Designed for Hi-Fi Living: The Vinyl LP in Midcentury America,* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017); V. Vale and Andrea Juno, eds., *Incredibly Strange Music,* vols. 1-2 (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1993-1994).

RECUMBENT WOMEN, MOON MOODS, AND EXOTIC SOUNDS

As the above quote from the *New York Times* attests, shellac 78 rpm records were originally sold in durable cardboard sleeves, sometimes with the name of the record store printed on the sleeve. This was an improvement from the two basic types of earlier record sleeves used around 1910—either packing paper imprinted with the manufacturer's trademark or a blank sleeve with a hole cut out in the center to display the record label.[207] The term "record label" is derived from the sticker fastened to the center of the record disk. On this label, one could find the record company, the song (along with songwriter and publisher), musical artist, and the recording number.

When Alex Steinweiss joined Columbia in 1940 as art director, Columbia elevated the plain sleeve to include colorful illustrations.[208] Beginning in 1942, the artwork of illustrator Jim Flora also adorned Columbia's and RCA Victor's 78 rpm sleeves. Shellac albums were occasionally sold with accompanying booklets that included extensive recording notes, sometimes decorated with unique materials. Decca's *Music of Hawaii* (1939)—hapa haole and Hawaiian themed songs recorded by Bing Crosby, Ray Kinney, Harry Owens, Dick McIntire, and Ted Fio Rio—was covered with tapa cloth courtesy of the Hawaiian Society of New York.[209] When Capitol began to re-issue 78 rpm recordings on LPs after 1948, instead of using the front cover "slicks" from the original 78rpms, many of the covers were simply plain blue with silver embossing and no images whatsoever.[210] Children's records offered a neutral setting for

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[207] Steve Jones and Martin Sorger, "Covering Music: A Brief History and Analysis of Album Cover Design," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 11-12, no. 1 (1999): 68–102.
[208] Kevin Reagan, Alex Steinweiss, and Steven Heller, *Alex Steinweiss: The Inventor of the Modern Album Cover,* (Köln: Taschen, 2011).
[209] Bing Crosby, Ray Kinney, Harry Owens, Dick McIntire, and Ted Foi Rio, *Music of Hawaii*, recorded 1939, Decca, A-10, 5x Shellac 10'' 78.
[210] Capitol's long-play classical albums came along in September 1949, and a selection of long-play popular albums was released in October of that year.

Columbia Records to first experiment with colorful and artistic record covers as a marketing strategy. In a 1951 meeting of Columbia executives, Mitch Miller cited a study that found 30 percent of the initial appeal of children's records was in their covers. Miller claimed, "initially Little Golden Records had at best mediocre quality, but because of the flashy artwork they sold themselves."[211] Using "flashy artwork" as a marketing strategy was eventually adopted for popular albums, but with adult themes.

Before 1947, women in submissive poses outfitted in negligées or with loose fabric falling off their shoulders was an uncommon sight on record covers. Jane Russell appeared in a glamour shot on her album *Let's Put Out the Lights* (1947), and there were occasionally photos or illustrations of female artists such as Peggy Lee, Hazel Scott, and Kay Starr. Cocktail music album covers, such as Buddy Cole's recordings, occasionally featured men and women drinking together in a bar. Paul Weston, as I examined in chapter 1, is considered the pioneer of quiet music mood albums for late-night activities such as romancing, relaxing, and dreaming. His audience was assumed to be respectable young men and women who enjoyed quiet, romantic moods and sentimental evenings at home. Weston's cover art reflected this; images were generally of couples dancing or embracing tastefully on the sofa. When Weston moved to Columbia, his covers featured more of the "negligée line"—soft chiffon falling off shoulders—but the boundaries of good taste (for the period) were not pushed too far.

Mood albums' popularity grew during the early 1950s, propelled in part by the major labels and their search for themes with which to market the pop LP. Around 1954 critics began taking note of the connection between mood albums and images of women lounging in

[211] Mitch Miller, Minutes of Columbia's Pop Meeting, box 53, folder 8, March 15, 1951, The Paul Weston and Jo Stafford Collection, University of Arizona School of Music.

negligées. A *Billboard* article attempting to describe the phenomenon identified Les Baxter's theremin recording with Capitol Records in 1947 as initiating the trend:

> Mood music—or background music—befits the girlie covers and vice versa. Mood music . . . is intended to put one in a sentimental or romantic mood. The titles help inspire the use of covers featuring young ladies often in a state of dishabille, looking out recklessly into the night. From a historical viewpoint, Capitol helped start the girlie covers back in 1947 with the set *Music Out of the Moon.* This unusual collection of songs featured a femme floating in the ionosphere with an ecstatic look on her face and wearing a flowing nightgown. The set did well enough for Capitol to continue to release mood music sets with attractive shots of girls looking misty-eyed. Columbia has issued an entire series of Paul Weston "Quiet Music" sets with dames plastered prominently on the cover.[212]

According to this excerpt, the recording that reportedly began the use of "girlie covers" is Les Baxter's *Music Out of The Moon: Music Unusual Featuring the Theremin* (1947, 78rpm). The album was a collaboration between Les Baxter, songwriter Harry Revel, and Dr. Samuel Hoffman, a theremin player from Miklos Rozsa's films.[213] "Therapeutic" music was the marketing keyword, and the songs follow a space theme, with titles: "Lunar Rhapsody, Moon Moods, Lunette, Celestial Nocturne, Mist O' the Moon, and Radar Blues." The liner notes describe the recording as an exotic adventure:

> The music in this album is in reality an adventure . . . using exotic harmonies, timbre and composition to play upon the more remote realm of human emotions. It is music of a type that has been outstandingly successful as a mood creating background for motion pictures dealing with the macabre, the fantastic. It is music that can affect the sensitive mind in a way that is sometimes frightening . . . always fascinating.[214]

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[212] Bob Rolontz, "Diskeries Discover Sales Pull of Female Form as Cover Art: Sex Found Busting Out All Over Album Covers—In Particular Field of Mood Music," *Billboard,* August 7, 1954, 1.

[213] In the 1940s Miklos Rozsa used the theremin to represent psychological terror in Alfred Hitchcock's films: *Spellbound* (1945), *Lost Weekend* (1945), and *The Red House* (1947). Laurence MacDonald writes that Rosza had attempted to incorporate electronic effects for the genie sequences in *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940), but inventor Maurice Martenot was unavailable because he was fighting in the war. When Rosza wanted an eerie sound for *Sundown* (1941), he used a music saw, in addition to musical orientalisms and "jungle sounds" which consisted of drumming and chanting offscreen to represent close proximity to "natives."[213] Roy Webb's score for *The Spiral Staircase* (1946) used the theremin to depict derangement and terror.

[214] Dr. Samuel J. Hoffman, *Music Out of the Moon: Music Unusual Featuring the Theremin*, Capitol Records CC-47 Shellac, 10", 78.

While the liner notes describe the harmonies as exotic, it is unclear, from the music, exactly what was meant by this because the songs are basic melodies that remain within the tonal center of Western music. While the theremin is advertised as the main feature of the album, it does not appear in every song. The main sonic feature of the album is the prominent chorus of voices that articulate different vocalizing effects such as soaring *ahhhs*, happy-go-lucky *roo-doos,* jaunty *doo-doos,* and jazzy *doola doola do dos*. In each song Baxter utilizes timbral contrast to evoke different moods rather than harmonic adventures.

On "Lunar Rhapsody," the theremin doubles the vocals for a few phrases before the mass of voices ascends with the piano on a coloristic voyage to the heavens. Baxter splits the melody between instruments and voices for timbral and textural contrast, and there are deliberate impressionistic techniques that signify the heavenly atmosphere such as parallel chords (planing) and operatic sopranos with wide vibrato. In contrast, the song "Radar Blues" signals a grounded and speech-like mood through the use of low and somewhat flat male tenor voices with no vibrato over a medium swing rhythm in the piano and percussion.

Les Baxter devoted much of his career to vocal arranging. Baxter's early years as a musician were spent playing tenor sax in and around L.A. with Duke Ellington's clarinetist Barney Bigard, Artie Shaw, and the Freddie Slack Orchestra. Beginning in 1945, Baxter briefly worked with Mel Tormé and his Mel-Tones as a vocalist and arranger. He further honed his vocal arranging skills as the musical director for NBC radio's Bob Hope Show, and later with Capitol Records. While at Capitol, Baxter arranged vocal pop recordings for Nat King Cole, Margaret Whiting, Bob Eberly, Bobby Milano, Dick Beavers, and others to mixed reviews.[215] By 1956 he had developed a signature sound of a "choir against lush strings and muted trumpets:" a

[215] Baxter's hit instrumental arrangements included "April in Portugal," "Unchained Melody," "Blue Mirage," "I'll Never Stop Loving You," "Blue Tango," and "Poor People of Paris."

sound he would often augment with instruments like the novachord, celeste, harp, theremin, and Afro-Cuban percussion.[216] James Spencer, an fan who befriended Baxter in the 1990s, wrote in a personal memoir that Les Baxter wanted the chorus of *Music Out of the Moon* to adopt a "scat style" that would feature jazz harmonies similar to what the Mel-Tones sounded like.[217] This may be true, but this aesthetic cannot be attributed to one individual. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, this trend had been developing through the increase in background music for workspaces that would often shun words in favor of wordless vocals for higher worker production. Moreover, there was already a precedent for otherworldly sounds in film music that Baxter drew on for his theremin recordings.[218]

Exotic music tropes and musical techniques such as wordless choruses, harp glissandos, or electronic instruments were used to represent difference as otherworldly, magical, or terrifying by composers of film music throughout the 1930s and 40s. F.W. Murnau's silent film *Tabu* (1931) was scored by Hugo Reisenfeld with harp glissandos and wordless vocals, and Dmitri Tiomkin's used wordless chorus music to depict the idyllic and fictional place of Shangri-La in *Lost Horizon* (1937). For the film *Paradise Lost* (1935) Max Steiner used harp glissandos and the sounds of the *ondes martenot,* the French electric keyboard instrument that produces a vibrato effect, as otherworldly techniques.[219]

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[216] *Downbeat* 23 no. 8 (April 1956): 45.
[217] James Spencer, *The Les Baxter Companion,* (Amazon Publishing, 2018), 95.
[218] Baxter frequently wrote music for film and television. A sample of Baxter's output includes, *Medic* (1951); *The Devil and John Q.* (1951); *Monica: The Story of a Bad Girl* (1955) an exploitation remake of the Ingmar Bergman film *Summer with Monica* (1953); *Untamed Youth* (1957) with Mamie Van Doren; *The Invisible Boy* (1957) a science fiction film featuring Robby the Robot from *Forbidden Planet* (1956); the horror film *Macabre* (1958); and the Western *Escape from Red Rock* (1957). Baxter's recording *Space Capades* (1959) was used as promotional material for the U.S. Air Force.
[219] By the 1950s dissonance or atonality were incorporated as musical techniques that could depict social or psychological conflict in films such as in *The Cobweb* (1955) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). See Laurence E. MacDonald, *The Invisible Art of Film Music: A Comprehensive History* second edition, (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 159. One of the more interesting developments that took place in the mid-1950s concerned composers who began to seek out (what was perceived as) authentic sounds of

While exotic harmonies are not used as a compositional tool as advertised, there is nonetheless an attempt to signify the exotic through sound color and timbre. The album relies on the extra-musical associations of the liner notes and visual images to signal the different moods. There are no descriptive words such as jungle or primitive used on either the liner notes to alert the audience to racial Otherness on *Music Out of The Moon.* Rather, the exotic is constructed through what is considered a strange and unusual *combination* and use of instruments (harp, piano, electric guitar, gongs, trombone, violin, brass, and percussion) along with different timbral and affective uses of human voices.[220] But the visual imagery on the album cover also evokes exotic difference in tandem with the combination of instruments through the positioning of the woman to signal sexual availability.

Music Out of The Moon marks a historical intersection of outer-space fantasy, novelty recordings, mood music, film music, sexy record cover art, and exotic sounds. *Music Out of the Moon*'s cover features a young woman reclining on the floor draped in fabric—an image later replicated with Hoffman's following theremin album, *Music for Peace of Mind* (1950) (*fig.* 2.1). A 1947 *Billboard* review of *Music Out of the Moon* discussed the unique and experimental nature of the recording:

traditional and folk instruments in films that depicted the difference of non-Western places and cultures such as Africa, Asia, or the "tropical paradise." For example, *White Witch Doctor* (1953) was scored by Bernard Hermann using traditional African instruments, and Dmitri Tiompkin reportedly flew to Mexico to record authentic folk music to include in *Blowing Wild* (1953). See, *Billboard,* May 16, 1953, 38.

[220] Songs arranged for strings and wordless vocal group was a favoured aesthetic of not only Les Baxter but would become a solid pop music trope of the 1950s used by vocal groups such as the Artie Shaw singers (with Jackie Gleason), the Randy Van Horne singers (with Martin Denny), and what would be described in the revival period as the space age bachelor pad sounds of "zoo zoos zounds" of Juan Garcia Esquivel and Bob Thompson.

> Fitting into the general pattern of soothing, meaningless music, human voices are scored as instruments, singing without words. It's an interesting experiment both musically and wax-wise. The theremin, used for eerie effects in screen scoring, shows its easy adaptability to lush mood creations . . . Dealers will find added buyer appeal in the colorful, cheesecake adorned cover.[221]

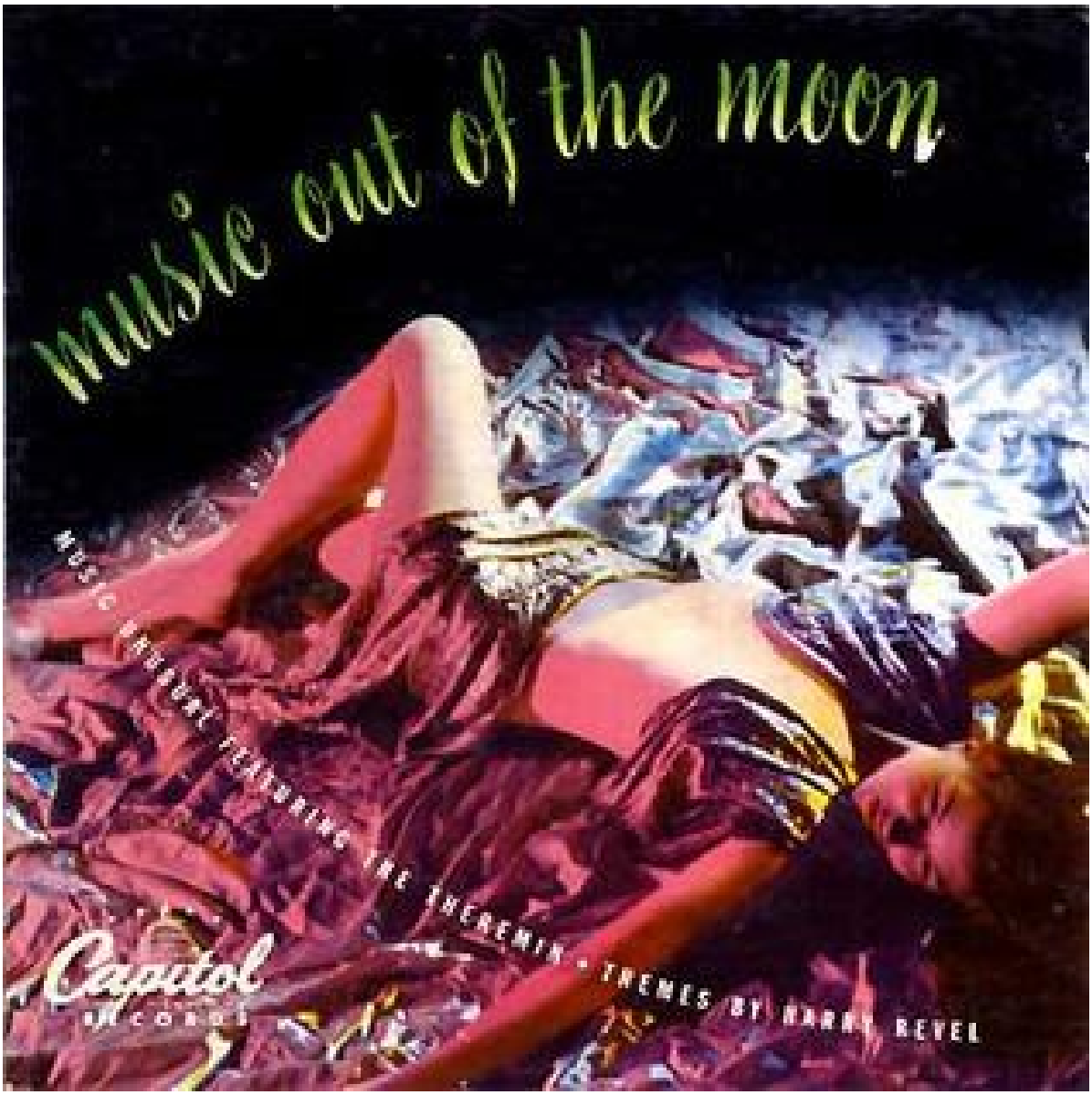

Figure 2.1. *Music Out of the Moon: Music Unusual Featuring the Theremin* (1947)

[221] "Album Reviews," *Billboard,* June 7, 1947.

What is notable about this review of the album is that it is the earliest example I can find with the word "cheesecake" being used in music industry discourse to describe artwork on a musical recording.

Joanne Meyerowitz posits that "cheesecake" entered the common parlance around 1915 as a slang term for "publicly acceptable, mass-produced images of semi-nude women."[222] She suggests that cheesecake functioned as a type of "borderline" material referring to erotic imagery that stretched the gap between respectable sexual representation and the taboo spectacle. Meyerowitz claims that mid-century sexuality was not only regulated by institutions made up of medical and psychological professionals, but by consumers of popular culture as well. Pin-up Vargas girls, sexy illustrations, and images of women in bikinis in magazines like *Esquire* and *Life,* she argues, can all be considered borderline material that marked the shifting and contested boundaries of respectable female sexual display. *Music Out of the Moon* was a novelty recording with an "outer-space fantasy" theme associated with film and "therapeutic" music. It was already marked as different from other popular music of the period which may have permitted the use of the sexualized female to be connected to the strange and exotic in this way.

Upon first glance, and from our contemporary perspective, the image on the cover of *Music Out of the Moon* seems more innocent than cheesecake. But the way the women are positioned on these albums is worth noting. According to A. W. Eaton, the classic pose for the female nude (think of Giorgione's Sleeping Venus) is recumbent and frontal, so that the pubis and breasts are in full view, often with one arm raised above her head.[223] While the models on

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[222] Joanne Meyerowitz, "Women, Cheesecake, and Borderline Material: Responses to Girlie Pictures in the Mid Century U.S.," *Journal of Women's History* 8, no. 3 (1996): 9.

[223] A. W. Eaton, "What's Wrong with the (Female) Nude?" in *Art and Pornography: Philosophical Essays*, edited by Hans Maes and Jerrold Levinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 278-308. Eaton argues that the female nude in the European visual art tradition reinforces gender inequality by making male dominance and female subordination and objectification sexy. Rather than using the male

Music Out of the Moon and *Music for Peace of Mind* are not nude, they are in similarly submissive and vulnerable positions as the classic nude. The women on the covers are both in a recumbent position, frontal, with one arm above their head. Following the release of these albums, this type of pose (signaling sexual availability) was replicated in various ways throughout the 1950s as sexually suggestive images became more common on record album covers.

JACKIE GLEASON: MUSIC FOR MEN

One of Capitol's artists who had an impact on the use of more overt sexual themes in mood music was Jackie Gleason—a celebrity television actor and a music industry outsider. Gleason was a successful entertainer, but he could not read music. His compositional process consisted of tapping out a melody on the piano which was then notated by Peter King or some other arranger.[224] After he personally financed some musical experiments in Decca's recording studio, Gleason released his debut album *Music for Lovers Only* (1952) with Capitol. It was a surprise hit.[225]

Gleason's musical style emulated Paul Weston's, with some noticeable differences. Paul Weston described his personal arranging style as music for "listening or dancing" and his record album art intimated decorum regarding romance and sex. Stylistically, Weston set individual brass sections against the background of strings and harp with a slow foxtrot rhythm. He featured

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gaze as a term to describe actual viewing practices on the part of audiences, Eaton suggests that the male gaze can be understood as a system catering to male interests and desires.

[224] Jim Bishop, *The Golden Ham: A Candid Biography of Jackie Gleason* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 285.

[225] Gleason surprised the industry by selling over 200,000 copies between 1952-1954. See, John S. Wilson, "Revolution in Pops: Trend in this Field on Disks Stresses the Mood of Tranquil Strains," *New York Times,* November 22, 1953; "Jackie Gleason Now Maestro," *Billboard*, July 5, 1952, 1.

soft and melodic piano, saxophone, and clarinet solos. Weston arranged sections of clear and bright wind timbres that are contrasted with sections of tremolo strings. Gleason adopted a similar ensemble as Paul Weston (jazz band with strings, clarinet but no flute) and also made use of the tremolo strings for some sections. But for his album *Music for Lovers Only,* Gleason took a much slower tempo for his arrangements, adding extensive portamentos, rubato, and harp glissandos. Bobby Hackett's cornet solos predominantly lean into the melody with slowly sliding grace notes and sleek chromatic embellishments. These musical factors, combined with provocative themes and song titles, differentiated Gleason's mood albums from Weston's, and worked to accomplish Gleason's stated goal: "to make America sleepily sexy."[226]

Gleason's album art featured full color images of single women or couples drinking in a bar. There was often only a suggestion of sex—a key, a pocketbook, a man's hat, or two martinis and two lit cigarettes on a table, smoke curling upwards in a spiral embrace. *Lover's Rhapsody* (1953) was a suite of romantic moods with the song titles "Desire," "Flirtation," "Temptation," and "Enchantment." *Lover's Rhapsody*'s album cover displayed four pink snapshots of a woman's facial expressions, meant to correlate to the four musical moods suggested by the song titles. *Music to Change Her Mind* (1956) was based on a selection of romantic standards, with a suggestive title and close-up image of a women in a similar position to the classic nude pose—recumbent, frontal, one arm raised behind her head. On this album cover the model is not nude, but the viewer's eye is drawn to her cleavage. Her hair is fanned out on the pillow underneath her. Unlike the images on *Music Out of the Moon* and *Music for Peace of Mind*, the model on the cover of *Music to Change Her Mind* gazes directly at the viewer.[227]

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[226] Bishop, *The Golden Ham*, 286.

[227] The liner notes for *Music to Change Her Mind* mentioned that the young lady on the cover was Jane Easton, photographed by Sid Avery. Jane Easton was a successful model in the 1950s whose pictures often appeared in men's magazines.

Gleason made boundary-pushing headlines with his album *Tawny* (1953), a programmatic "television ballet" that premiered on the Jackie Gleason Show. *Tawny* was conceived as a storyline based on a series of vignettes, with the songs titled "The Girl," "The Boy," "The Dance," and "The Affair."[228] The album cover displayed a pair of disembodied female legs that apparently went beyond the boundaries of propriety for the time. According to a 1954 *Billboard* article,

> Capitol Records has probably established some type of record for what might be termed extrovert-type covers with its current Jackie Gleason series. The sets usually feature girls or parts of feminine anatomy on covers. *Tawny* features a good-looking pair of silk-clad legs. When this cover was blown up and placed in the firm's windows here in the conservative Mutual Life Insurance Company Building on Broadway, it stopped street traffic—but only for two days. It was placed in the windows on Friday, and it was removed Monday morning, by order of the building owners. Too sexy.[229]

The album art for *Tawny* stopped street traffic, but it was not unusual for models to be photographed with their legs accentuated. Betty Grable, for example, embodied the all-American girl-next-door trope and was famously photographed looking over her shoulder, drawing the viewers' attention to her legs and backside. During World War Two, pin-up and cheesecake photos like Betty Grable's were sent to GI's oversees as part of the U.S.'s patriotic agenda to remind soldiers what they were fighting for; the models were generally hailed as patriots who boosted the morale of soldiers.[230] With *Tawny*, however, the topic of the album was not the girl waiting for you to come home from the war. Rather, the topic of the album was unmarried sex—a taboo subject at the time. *Tawny*'s liner notes spoke directly to men about unmarried sexual attraction, suggesting that *Tawny* could be any woman: "maybe you've seen her walking down the street . . . sitting alone at the end of the bar . . . or maybe her eyes have met yours for a

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[228] Jackie Gleason, *Tawny,* Capitol H-471, 1953, LP, 10."
[229] Bob Rolontz, "Diskeries Discover Sales Pull of Female Form as Cover Art: Sex Found Busting Out All Over Album Covers—In Particular Field of Mood Music," *Billboard,* August 7, 1954, 1.
[230] Meyerowitz, "Women, Cheesecake, and Borderline Material," 12.

fleeting tantalizing moment."[231] *Tawny* can thus be any desirable woman, marking a mode of objectification Eaton describes as interchangeable, or fungible, with objects of other types.[232] As Gleason stated on the back of the album, "the great French writer Guy de Maupassant once said of a woman 'she fills you to the marrow with desire.'" *Tawny* can be any woman, but the French writer is named.

Gleason drew on ideas of French high culture through references to ballet and literature, but Tawny also reflects the interest in African American modern dance during this period. In a review of the television performance (from which the musical recording of *Tawny* came from) the combination of the programmatic songs in an LP format was described as a "tone poem."[233] The music and modern dance performance that inspired the recording was choreographed by June Taylor, one of the regular dancers on the Jackie Gleason Show. According to the review, "fifty musicians and seventy-six dancers" participated in the production which included a section called "Modern Blues" described as "blues danced in graceful visual movement by an excellent all-Negro group of gazelles. The dance, spiced by some racy bits, told the story of a love triangle on a Harlem Street."[234] The musical recording of *Tawny* does not include the song "Modern Blues" rather, from what I can tell, the narrative revolves around a sexual tryst.

Gleason's albums were risqué for the period, but perhaps they were successful because they pushed the boundaries of what was considered taboo. As a music industry outsider, Gleason was able to capitalize on his celebrity by plugging his albums on his CBS-TV series, but the promotion of his albums may have benefited from his portrayals of working-class and masculine

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[231] Liner notes to Jackie Gleason, *Tawny,* Capitol H-471, 1953 LP, 10"
[232] A. W. Eaton, "What's Wrong with the (Female) Nude?" in *Art and Pornography: Philosophical Essays*, edited by Hans Maes and Jerrold Levinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 278-308.
[233] "Radio-Television: Tele Follow-Up Comment Horn," *Variety,* June 3, 1953, 31.
[234] "Radio-Television: Tele Follow-Up Comment Horn" *Variety,* June 3, 1953, 31.

television characters.[235] In these characters, he deflated any negative high-class connotations. Unlike the other mood albums of other mood artists, Gleason's liner notes did not celebrate his many musical accomplishments by detailing his conservatory training, nor his technical mastery of orchestra arrangements. His cultural status had more to do with his talent as an entertainer than as an accomplished musician. This may have had some bearing the way his albums participated in the shifting of what could be considered borderline material. This promotional opportunity included tie-ins with a hosiery company that gave away a pair of stockings for every album of *Tawny* purchased.

In a review of one of Gleason's live performances, the reviewer noted that Gleason personified "every guy's yen to lead a band" adding that the venue was packed with all of Gleason's pals, television networks, the "saloon set," plus the twenty-odd men in the orchestra.[236] The male homosocial milieu described by the reviewer illustrates how men's feelings were considered by each other as both producers and consumers. For example, when *Music for Lovers Only* was released, the title apparently worried Capitol executive Dick Jones because "he could not imagine a man, bald, and forty-five, walking up to a pretty clerk and asking for a copy of *Music for Lovers Only.*"[237] Gleason's albums illustrate how music interacted with the shifting attitudes around sex (married, non-married, or adulterous) for pleasure rather than procreation, an attitude that was also reflected by the emergence of *Playboy* in 1953.

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[235] This promotional opportunity included tie-ins with a hosiery company that gave away a pair of stockings for every album of *Tawny* purchased. "Comic Jackie Gleason as Maestro on Cap Set," *Variety,* July 2, 1952, 39; "Music as Written," *Billboard*, February 6, 1954.
[236] "Comic Jackie Gleason," *Variety,* February 18, 1953, 41.
[237] Bishop, *The Golden Ham*, 290.

COLUMBIA'S *QUIET MUSIC*

Another musical trend began in 1953, with record companies increasingly assembling series of mood albums with a particular theme. Unlike Paul Weston's and Jackie Gleason's mood albums, these albums generated profits for record labels because of their deliberate use of in-house studio musicians and orchestras. Much of the musical material for the albums was drawn from the original masters of the 1930s and 40s and repackaged according to different themes. In a deliberate effort to build up their pop album catalogue on 12-inch LPs, Columbia (with planning by Director of Pop Albums, George Avakian) released a series of eight albums under the broad series heading *Quiet Music: Easy Listening for Your Relaxation* (1952-53).[238] The musical selections on these albums mixed light classics with instrumental arrangements of pop songs.[239] Although there were some "name" artists—such as Don Baker, Al Goodman, the Dell Trio, Marek Weber, and Xavier Cugat—there were also recordings by the Columbia Salon Orchestra.

The *Quiet Music* series offers a good example of the increasingly sexually suggestive record covers in LP promotion techniques in the early 1950s. *Quiet Music* albums were originally marketed as background music for homes and restaurants, and they were released with identical covers, but the background colors varied according to each volume. The original 1952 artwork features an attractive woman lounging on the floor on a soft rug. She is reclining against a pillow, with one arm propping herself up beside a stereo with some LP records strewn about. She appears to be daydreaming as she listens. Her dress is low cut, with ample cleavage visible. The black, white, and blue color scheme on the cover would have been very economical to

[238] "Quiet Music Series Being Issued by Col.," *Variety,* April 30, 1952, 41.
[239] Songs included "Clair de Lune," "Blue Danube Waltz," "Tuica," "La Paloma," "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," "Spring Song," "Bright Shines the Moon," "La Rayuela," "Speak to Me of Love," "No Longer Does the Dawn Caress Me," and "Schubert's Serenade."

produce—the more colors used, the more costly. Each volume of *Quiet Music* used this same image but with a different color.

In 1955, the series was repackaged with different artwork and themes for each volume: *Moonlight, Soft Awakening, Romance, Nocturne, Serenade*, and *Relaxing with Cugat*. The re-released set displayed a soft-focus photographic montage of a couple in a variety of intimate, sexually charged, scenarios.[240] While Jackie Gleason's albums explicitly referenced men's sexual pleasure, the photographs display an attention to (a somewhat hazy and ambiguous) female sexuality. Musically, Gleason's *Music to Change Her Mind* alludes to what he described as a "sleepily sexy" musical idiom with slow tempos, rubato, and sliding grace notes in Hackett's cornet solos. While I have been unable to locate recordings of Columbia's *Quiet Music*, the shift in album art towards expressive female sexuality reflects the attention given to researching the pleasures of sex by scientists and medical institutions. For example, in the United States, Alfred Kinsey founded the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University on April 8, 1947. His publications *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948), *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953) were wildly popular. Moreover, Ashley Montague's book *The Natural Superiority of Women* (1954) challenged normative gender roles that had produced the idea of women as "the weaker sex."[241] These publications had a far-reaching influence on second wave feminism. That discourses around sexual politics and normative gender roles also appear on record album art, liner notes, and thematic material, demonstrates how the LP was increasingly becoming a medium for social commentary, reflection, and construction of American society.

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[240] John S. Wilson, "Revolution in Pops: Trend in This Field on Discs Stresses Mood Music of Tranquil Strains," *New York Times*, November 22, 1953.
[241] Eugenia Kaledin, *Daily Life in the United States, 1940-1959: Shifting Worlds,* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000), 109.

BACKGROUND MUSIC FOR THE HOME

Around 1953, record companies embraced the idea of mood music as background accompaniment not only for romantic escapades, but for a variety of social and domestic activities. Capitol's four-volume set *Background Music: Music Blended to Mix Gracefully with Social Gatherings* (1953) was their fastest moving album, selling 50,000 copies within a month of its release.[242] Taking advantage of social anxieties—in particular for the hostess—*Background Music*'s liner notes suggested that troublesome musical difficulties such as volume (is the music too loud or too soft?) and selections (why can't everyone agree?) could be avoided by playing these albums. The covers featured black and white photographs of happy people in social gatherings, much like the type of documentary photos found in *Life Magazine.*

Music for Gracious Living (1955), Columbia's five-volume series with arrangements of popular songs played by the Peter Barclay Orchestra, was marketed towards domestic suburban lifestyles involving club meetings, card parties, buffets, and barbeques. The album covers featured full Kodachrome color photographs of scenes right out of *Better Homes and Gardens*. The series album liners offered recipes for snacks, drinks, patio planning, dance music suggestions, and remodeling hints—even a practical exposition on building a playroom. Taken together, the albums function as a "how to guide" for suburban living. The novelty of the marketing strategy was not lost on the reviewers: "what would be just another medley of twelve popular standards, assumes greater proportions and added merchandising values as mood music with a social, hobby, or gastronomic peg."[243] This reviewer noted that while the music was becoming standard, formulaic, and interchangeable for all activities, the packaging was exciting.

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[242] "Cap's Booming in Background," *Billboard*, March 28, 1953, 17.
[243] "Album Reviews," *Variety,* September 21, 1955, 50; "Reviews and Ratings of New Popular Albums," *Billboard*, October 15, 1955, 24.

Columbia's *Music for Gracious Living* volume "After the Dance" is a compilation of songs by popular recording artists and musical theatre selections. Stylistically, the music is similar to some of the other mood arrangements: three-minute popular songs arranged for strings with no vocals. Rather than an arrangement for a jazz band with strings (horn, winds, and percussion sections), the Peter Barclay Orchestra was made up of only strings and piano. The violin section generally takes the melody, with some occasional piano solos. There are no sexy portamento cornet solos like with Gleason's mood music, nor are there clever exchanges of melody between various sections of strings, winds, and horns like Weston's arrangements. The music is more remarkable because of the *absence* of any precise identifiable musical characteristic.

Part of the appeal of these albums were the fact that they were associated with the single-family suburban house in the planned segregated suburb, which, as Paige Glotzer explains, was quickly becoming the most valuable type of residential property in the United States.[244] Glotzer suggests that race played a significant factor in shaping the postwar housing market through a co-construction of culture and economy. As a package deal of music, visuals, and liner notes, the LP offered a construction of musical meaning through ideas about how to "do" suburban living. Through the use of images and thematic material with music that is non-descript, these albums project certain ideas about the world; the kind of worldbuilding that Mark Jerng suggests is made possible by getting us to "embed race into our expectations for how the world operates."[245] This

[244] Paige Glotzer, *How the Suburbs Were Segregated: Developers and the Business of Exclusionary Housing, 1890-1960,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 3
[245] Mark C. Jerng, *Racial Worldmaking: The Power of Popular Fiction*, Fordham Scholarship Online, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 2.

type of non-specific music came to be profoundly associated with a middleclass, white, and heteronormative world.[246]

MUSIC FOR BACHELORS

Much like the communication of the normative suburban world, conceptions of gender identities were also mediated through mood albums. Many historical factors support the view of a stable bachelor identity in the 1950s. These include "girlie covers," gendered discourse around sound technologies (such as high fidelity), overtly sexualized album titles, which included not only Gleason's *Music to Change Her Mind* (1956) but Dante and his Orchestra's *Serenades for Sex Kittens* (Carlton, 1958) and The Hollywood Playboys Orchestra's *Music for Playboys to Play by* (Urania, 1957) in addition to narratives in Hollywood films. But I want to suggest that the idea of the bachelor was historically shaped by a combination of many factors (including music) that combined in 1950s media discourse.

The archetype of the bachelor (and his pad) is arguably the model for Rock Hudson's character in the 1959 film *Pillow Talk* with Doris Day. *Pillow Talk* established the automated apartment as the perfect lair for seducing women, equipped with switches and controls that dimmed lights, automatically locked doors and flipped records on the phonograph and

[246] Studies addressing the landscape of consumerism in postwar suburbia and its attendant stifling conformity include: Elaine Tyler May*, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War,* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 2003); Andrew Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in Postwar Consumer Culture,* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Sandy Isenstadt, *The Modern American House: Spaciousness and Middle-Class Identity,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Catherine Jurca, *White Diaspora: The Suburb and the Twentieth-Century American Novel,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); and Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

transformed the sofa into a bed. By the 1960s, the womanizing bachelor trope was ingrained in popular culture, but in the early 1950s the identity of the bachelor was not as rigid as we might think. According to Elizabeth Fraterrigo, photographic essays on "bachelor pads" did not appear in Playboy until 1956.[247] Moreover, Barbara Ehrenreich writes that it was not until the early 1960s that Playboy's coherent program—a utopian vision of male rebellion through a critique of marriage—was established.[248]

Mood albums participated in shifting cultural attitudes during a period in which the sexual social order was in state of flux as evidenced through the increased attention to sexual pleasures of both females and males. The identity of the bachelor sparked debates around male sexual activity. One example of how popular music factored into the growing emergence of the swinging bachelor trope is from a 1957 *New York Times* article titled "Bare Essentials of LP Covers." In the article, Milton Bracker addresses the increase in sexual themes on record covers by comparing the images on two bachelor themed albums: "The course of events is admirably charted by two competing records with the same name: *Music for Bachelors.* The first one, put out a few years ago shows a young man about town, in various guises, but strictly on his own. The more recent number by Victor shows a girl named Jayne Mansfield."[249]

Columbia's *Music for Bachelors* (1955) was part of a series directed at specific groupings of people: *Music for Bachelors, Music for the Engaged,* and *Music for Babysitters.* Like the other albums in the series, the cover art featured a black and white photographic montage, much in the style of *Life Magazine.* The snapshots on the covers of *Music for Bachelors* highlighted a young

[247] Elizabeth Fraterrigo, "The Answer to Suburbia: Playboy's Urban Lifestyle," *Journal of Urban History* 34, no. 5 (2008): 747–74.
[248] Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*, 1st ed., (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983), 50.
[249] Milton Bracker, "Bare Essentials of LP Covers," M9.

lone fellow engaging in a day of unaccompanied leisure: drinking at a bar, strolling, feeding the birds in the park, taking a boat ride on the water, watching a movie, or reading at home. Little on this cover suggests a womanizing playboy character. Musically, the songs were romantically themed, with a mix of vocal and instrumental arrangements by Columbia recording artists.[250] There is no promotion of one individual artist; rather, the album was another opportunity for record companies to assemble pre-recorded songs into a marketable pop LP.

Henri René's *Music for Bachelors* (1956) offers a different type of bachelor album than Columbia's. The cover features Jayne Mansfield, an actress and iconic sex symbol, in a sheer nightgown. Mansfield is lit from behind, holding a rotary phone, and gazing into the camera. René's album went further than providing various songs that could be considered "bachelor themed," as with Columbia's album. René's goal, according to the liner notes, was to "interpret the bachelor in musical terms."[251]

Henri René was one of RCA Victor's biggest selling mood artists. His musical output was similar to Les Baxter's type of mood albums: he composed instrumental songs and assembled them into thematic, unified albums. René, like other artists on major labels, employed orchestrators for some of his arrangements. For *Music for Bachelors,* René hired Peter King, the same arranger who worked with Jackie Gleason. The instrumental soloists on the album included jazz guitarist Barney Kessel and cocktail pianist Buddy Cole.

The album participates in shaping the idea of the "true" bachelor. When the album was released in 1956, the conception of the swinging bachelor had yet to be established (as it would be by 1959 with the film *Pillow Talk*). The liner notes for René's *Music for Bachelors* makes clear that in 1956 there were many different types of bachelors. For example, the "fussy old

[250] Various Artists, *Music for Bachelors*, Columbia, CL 686, 1955, LP.
[251] Henri René, *Music for Bachelors,* RCA Victor LPM1046, 1956, LP, Liner notes.

type" of bachelor lacking the services of a wife, darns his own socks; the only female visitors he receives are his mother or other ancient relatives. Another bachelor type was the "temporary" bachelor: a wild partier while his wife is away, but normally spending his time doing crossword puzzles in cafeterias. But the "true" bachelor is the dedicatee of the album. The true bachelor,

> is the envy of his brothers as they toil in their tame and populous domiciles . . . He is the fair prey of matchmakers, hostesses, widows, divorcees, and predatory woman of all sorts, and thus develops untold stamina, incredible speed in flight, a cunning mind ever alert for the trap, and an instinct for survival which is one of the wonders of our day . . . Yet, he has one weakness—he cannot let well enough alone. He must toy with fate by engaging with one courtship or another . . . To solace him, then, and to aid him in this fascinating display of his powers of self-destruction, this album of music was conceived.[252]

These liner notes on René's *Music for Bachelors* participate in a type of worldbuilding that imagines three fanciful scenarios for which a bachelor would require music. The first is music for "a gallant figure at the bar concocting rare drinks (learned perhaps in Rangoon, Singapore, the Gold Coast?) and captivating his lovely audience with the quizzical quips, wit, and wisdom of two continents."[253] The second scenario is music for the bachelor at contemplation, "when the stag has drunk his fill and the lone wolf has run his solitary course, there is the need for music that soothes without intrusion."[254] And finally, the album offers music for recharging and replenishment, when "the soul of the bachelor, encased in its glittering and groomed façade, must face the fact that within the triumphant man is the frightened lad."[255] The vivid (and fictional) language used to describe these scenarios work in tandem with the visuals to offer an animated exploration of the imaginary lifestyle of the "true" bachelor—a complex, well-travelled character, with a keen knowledge of exotic mixology and Freudian psychoanalysis.

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[252] Henri René, *Music for Bachelors* (RCA Victor LPM1046, 1956), LP, Liner notes.
[253] René, *Music for Bachelors,* Liner notes.
[254] René, *Music for Bachelors,* Liner notes.
[255] René, *Music for Bachelors,* Liner notes.

It is difficult not to read *Music for Bachelors* as parody. Yet the idea of the swinging bachelor was a persona promoted through *Playboy Magazine* beginning in 1953. While *Playboy* was certainly not the first men's magazine, it set itself apart by promoting a serious message of non-conformity toward traditional constructions of manhood. At the time, traditional masculinity was grounded in hard work and family life— *Playboy*'s stance was, as Barbara Ehrenreich states, "almost subversive."[256] While many of the other men's magazines asserted that the legitimate masculine space could be found in the great outdoors, *Playboy* shifted the normative spaces men inhabited from the outdoors to the luxury "bachelor pad" apartment. Because of the presence of images of naked women in *Playboy*, men felt more permitted to express an interest in style, fashion, and leisure without homosexual associations. The editorial in the first edition of *Playboy* explained the position of the magazine:

> We want to make it clear from the very start, we aren't a "family magazine." If you are somebody's sister, wife, or mother-in-law and picked us up by mistake, please pass us along to the man in your life and get back to your *Ladies Home Companion.* Most of today's "magazines for men" spend all their time out-of-doors . . . we don't mind telling you in advance—we plan on spending most of our time inside . . . we like our apartment. We enjoy mixing up cocktails and an *hors d'oeuvre* or two, putting a little mood music on the phonograph, and inviting in a female acquaintance for a quiet discussion on Picasso, Nietzsche, jazz, sex.[257]

What did *Playboy* mean by "mood music" in this first editorial? Is it a coincidence that the first edition of *Playboy* was published in 1953, the same year that mood and background albums were hitting their peak?

While *Playboy* does not specify the musical characteristics of mood music in their suggested means of seduction, mood music was most likely understood by readers as a euphemism for sex. The citational process that David Brackett argues is one of the factors in the

[256] Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men,* 46.
[257] "Editorial," *Playboy* 1 no. 1, 1953, 3.

emergence of a genre is demonstrated in the identification of mood music as type of genre had broadly become associated with sex through a combination of factors. These included the affordances of the LP, such as provocative album titles, romantic themes, and full color sexualized images of women.[258] While the musical characteristics of mood music could be altered, there was enough audience recognition of the genre's connotations that it could be cited in various situations (i.e., the above *Playboy* editorial). In references to mood music, its meaning—including its sexual signification—would be understood by audiences.

MUSIC FOR THE WEAKER SEX

As I mentioned earlier, Henri René composed instrumental songs and assembled them into unified albums, rather than arranging standards. Just as his album *Music for Bachelors* participated in shaping the idea of the "true" bachelor, in 1958 he again addressed the sexual politics of the era with his album *Music for the Weaker Sex,* a mood album based on female sexual subjectivity, as indicated through its title, album cover art, and musical conception. The album cover features an attractive, young, white woman wearing a nightgown, surrounded by daisies and sheet music labeled with the names of popular male singers: "Elvis, Perry, Frankie, Harry, Tab, Eddie, Mario, Pat, Dino, Nat, Johnny, and Bing." She is perched on a pillow, her arms raised above her head in a frontal emphasizing her face and breasts.

The songs on *Music for the Weaker Sex* are original instrumentals in Rene's signature mood style: elongated phrasing with a thick string section depicting the "moods" of the era's popular male vocalists. One noticeable difference setting Rene apart from other mood artists such as Weston and Gleason is the addition of solo electric guitar to the orchestra. For example,

[258] John S. Wilson, "Revolution in Pops: Trend in This Field on Discs Stresses Mood Music of Tranquil Strains," *New York Times*, November 22, 1953, x51.

"Perry" (Como) features quiet percussion, and the melody alternates between the electric guitar and strings. The song "Frankie" (Sinatra) highlights the exchange between the saxophone and tremolo strings. "Harry" (Belafonte) features Latin percussion, with prominent vibraphone on "Tab" (Hunter). The other songs are based on imagined moods of Eddie Fisher, Mario Lanza, Pat Boone, Dean Martin, Nat King Cole, Johnny Mathis, Bing Crosby, and Elvis Presley, whose "mood" is imagined as an orchestral arrangement of 12-bar blues with a shuffle rhythm, cascading strings, and a plucky electric guitar.

Featuring what is now a rather shocking title, *Music for the Weaker Sex* was in line with René's earlier *Music for Bachelors* as a musical vehicle for social commentary regarding the gender politics of the time. The following excerpt is taken from the liner notes on the back of the album:

> Ardent feminists may dispute the validity of this title *Music for the Weaker Sex.* Ashley Montague's best seller, for instance, was tagged *The Natural Superiority of Women*. However, almost any woman will admit to a strong weakness for a particular type of man … while girlie magazines are big sellers, male pinup books have little, if any appeal to the ladies. The scientific explanation for this, based on tests, is that men's emotions are greatly stimulated visually, while women react far more strongly to sound … In an effort to please the responsive ear of the "weaker sex," Henri René has written musical descriptions of twelve male singing stars, and we think you'll agree that the selections capture the essence of each individual personality.[259]

What makes this album historically significant is that its liner notes were written by a woman, June Bundy Csida, and the album was unambiguously directed at women and mentions feminism via Ashley Montague's book *The Natural Superiority of Women*.

June Bundy Csida was active in the popular music industry as a publicist and reporter for *Billboard* magazine. She wrote reviews of nightclubs acts (including one of Martin Denny),

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[259] Henri René, *Music for the Weaker Sex,* RCA Victor LSP-1583, 1958, LP, liner notes.

records, radio, and television. In her early career, Csida was a publicist for Spike Jones and His City Slickers.[260] Csida was a member of the National Organization of Women (NOW) from 1970 until her death in 2006. She also wrote a 1974 book titled *Rape: How to Avoid it and What to Do About it if You Can't.* As a woman who succeeded in a field dominated by men, Csida's career was uncommon, as was her inclusion of a discussion on feminism in the album liner notes.

How do we situate this album historically? Does *Music for the Weaker Sex* foreshadow a new consideration of pop music as a site of female sexual subjectivity? Was René taking an ironic approach and intentionally challenging the sexist song titles by enlisting a woman to write the liner notes? Viewing this mood album in the context of the post rock 'n' roll period, the teenage market, and taking into account earlier mood albums, *Music for the Weaker Sex* represents a cultural snapshot in a historical moment of social change.[261] Taken together, *Music for Bachelors* and *Music for the Weaker Sex* reflect the sexual zeitgeist of the 1950s in which attention to female sexuality was entangled with gendered anxieties such as "crisis of masculinity" and fears of cultural feminization.[262] For example, Philip Wylie's account in his article "The Womanization of America," which appeared in *Playboy* in 1958, linked male "emasculation" to women's gradual invasion of male spaces.[263]

The crisis of masculinity centered around a sociological based critique that women had become so controlling of domestic spaces that men were forced to carve out their own masculine area in the home.[264] This is no doubt where the contemporary notion of the "mancave"

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[260] "June Bundy Csida: 1923-2006," *Los Angeles Times,* November 8, 2006.
[261] Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-Style in Modern America* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2001), 3.
[262] Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 173.
[263] Philip Wylie, "The Womanization of America," *Playboy*, September 1958, 77.
[264] James Burkhart Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

originated. The problem, according to some cultural critics, was that women encroached on men's spaces in their desire to participate in all facets of social life. *Look Magazine*'s 1958 series on the American male claimed that to get away from overbearing women the man fled "to the basement and busied himself sawing, painting, and sandpapering. But the women followed him and today they are hammering right along with him. No place to hide there."[265] Part of *Playboy's* rebellion against the institution of marriage was to delineate male spaces—the bachelor apartment, the basement—as spaces absent of women. Yet, it appears that under the right circumstances, men might welcome women into the bachelor apartment—if accompanied by mood music.

It was not only in domestic spaces that gendered dynamics were negotiated. Joanne Meyerowitz notes that of the fifty letters *Playboy* published from women between 1953-1959, around four-fifths of them claimed to enjoy the magazine. In these letters, women insisted that commodified sexual pleasure was not for men only, and many asserted their right to being included in what they saw as sexual fun.[266] Through *Playboy* and mood albums, women audiences were active participants in sexual expression, engaging with borderline material like nude images and pornography. With mood albums, women may have been regarded as an apparatus around which to organize songs, but they were not as passive as suggested by the many images of prone women on record covers. Meyerowitz points out that much of the sexual discourse in media was regulated by medical and psychological institutions in the early twentieth century, but consumers of popular culture, including women, helped to reposition the borders of what was considered acceptable sexual representation.

[265] Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 169.
[266] Meyerowitz, "Women, Cheesecake, and Borderline Material," 22.

BUDGET LABELS

Henri René's *Music for Bachelors* is useful as yet another historical point of inquiry: the increase in record companies between 1949-1957. The proliferation in sexy record covers, including photographs of Hollywood stars, coincided with the increase in record companies releasing LP records, which grew from eleven in 1949 to nearly two hundred by 1954.[267] Many of the new record companies were budget labels, independents, or subsidiaries of major labels.[268] Rapidly expanding merchandising and distribution schemes were developed along with the influx of LPs into the market. Self-service in record stores meant LPs were moved to bins for customers to peruse independently of a salesperson. Prior to the practice of self service in the early 1950s, the customer would peruse from a record catalogue. Once the customer made their choice, the salesperson would then retrieve the record from behind the counter. Self-service bins increased the importance of eye-catching album art. Budget labels embraced the strategy of displaying "sampler records"—non-standard repertoire performed by non-famous musicians—on $4\frac{1}{2}$-foot metal racks called "rack jobbers" in supermarkets and drug stores. These rack jobber displays were like the type used for displaying paperback books. Records were generally affordable, and many came with the bonus of a busty photograph of Jayne Mansfield.

Jayne Mansfield album covers offer a snapshot of the period between 1954 and 1957, during which the LP market stabilized and record companies devised strategies of inexpensive

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[267] Roland Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph, 1877-1977,* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1977), 300. In 1954, record sales were only starting to recover from the "Battle of the Speeds." Total US sales amounted to only $213 million—less than the boom years of 1946-47.

[268] Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph*, 299. Gelatt suggests that part of the reason for this increase in LP production was because tape was cheap: "For an investment of a few thousand dollars one could buy a first class tape recorder, take it to Europe (where musicians were plentiful and low salaried), and record great amounts of music; one could then bring the tapes back to America and have the 'custom record department' of either Columbia or RCA transfer them—at a reasonable fee—to microgroove records."

production. Regent Records, for example, was a subsidiary of Savoy Records focusing on popular albums including *Amor: Dinner Music by The Regent Concert Orchestra* (1956). *Amor* mirrored Weston's style of mood music in repertoire choice (waltzes, light classics). The theme for the album was "program music designed for the background of an elegant evening at home," but, unlike Weston's, this album featured Jayne Mansfield rather than sentimental couples on the sofa.[269] Tops Music Enterprises was started in Los Angeles in 1947 by two "rack-jobbers" who sold used jukebox 78 rpm records to grocery stores, drug stores, and five-and-dimes. They decided to enter the record business by recording and releasing cover versions of successful records featuring session musicians and "no name" vocalists.[270] Tops Records recorded *For Men Only* (1957), a budget album along the same thematic lines as René's *Music for Bachelors.* The liner notes to *For Men Only* suggested that a solo male listener was the target audience for this album. The listener was instructed to "pull up an easy chair, loosen your tie, bend an ear, and get set to live a little."[271]

Using the same model or photograph for several albums was another strategy adopted by some budget labels. For instance, Hollywood Records and Westminster Records would often release the same jacket art for different artists—a common practice used by other budget labels. The same images of Jayne Mansfield can be seen on the albums *I'm in the Mood for Love* (1957) on Promenade (a subsidiary of Synthetic Plastics Label) and Al Goodman's *String Along with Me- The Stradivari Strings Play Your Favorites* (1957) on Spin-O-Rama Records. Westminster Recording Company, which marketed *Swing Low* with Hal Otis and his Orchestra (1957) also

[269] *The Regent Concert Orchestra*, *Amor: Dinner Music by The Regent Concert Orchestra*, Regent, MG 6091, 1956, LP.
[270] Lew Raymond, *For Men Only*, Tops L 1583, 1953, LP; Kurt Jensen and His Orchestra, *An Evening with Jane*, Hollywood Records, LPH 137, 1958, LP.
[271] Lew Raymond, *For Men Only*, Tops L 1583, 1953, LP, Liner notes.

used the same model on different record covers.[272] Westminster was formed in 1949, and by 1954 they had built up a catalogue of 500 primarily classical and sampler records.[273] When Westminster released both their pop and classical samplers with exactly the same photograph of the same model, one salesman commented "so what" if the subject is the same "dreamy blonde" on both albums; "maybe this dame just likes music."[274] One article in *Variety* criticized mood music for the "sameness in the titles and the artwork on the album covers, especially those featuring cheesecake models."[275] Music critics could not resist calling out the irony of "a bosomy Mickey Spillane type redhead wearing a seductive look and a slipping negligee" on the cover of Victorian operetta composer Victor Herbert albums, or Bettie Page selling the music of Fats Waller.[276] Artistic integrity was at risk as well; artists such as Leopold Stokowski and Perry Como both claimed their recordings "did not require adornment by a come-hither girl" and lamented the lack of regulation by the industry.[277]

Yet even amongst all this panic, some record dealers found a secondary market for the eye-catching covers. There were reports that some of the large record stores were ordering extra covers (*without* the disks) for the occasional customer who "soiled their original copy."[278] One salesman claimed he sold extra copies for 25 cents to customers who "didn't want the record but had a bar or den to decorate."[279]

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[272] Hal Otis, *Speak Low*, Hal Otis and His Orchestra, Westminster WP 6073, 1957, LP. Hal Otis played with Stan Kenton during the 1950s and formed a jazz-pop group on his own with violin, accordion, drums, bass, and guitar.
[273] Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph,* 300.
[274] Bracker, "Bare Essentials of LP Covers," M9.
[275] Mike Gros, "Album-or-Bust Disk Risk: Package Crown Running Scared," *Variety,* May 6, 1956, 41.
[276] Record Review, "Relax with Victor Herbert Al Goodman Orchestra," *Billboard,* July 17, 1954, 45.
[277] Bracker, "Bare Essentials of LP Covers," M9.
[278] Bracker, "Bare Essentials of LP Covers," M9.
[279] Bracker, "Bare Essentials of LP Covers," M9.

The increase in budget records coincided with the (forced) realignment of LP prices when, on January 3, 1955, RCA dropped the price of all their LPs to $3.98 overnight (except sampler LPs, which they sold for 98 cents).[280] Other major labels were compelled to follow RCA's lead. The price drop was meant to get bodies in neighborhood record stores and keep the music industry aligned with the retail networks that were at risk due to the increase in mail order record clubs (modeled on book-of-the-month clubs). By 1955, record clubs accounted for about thirty-five percent of all classical LP records sold in the United States. Columbia's "record of the month club" began in 1955, offering popular and classical albums. RCA picked up on the trend in 1958. Mail-order clubs, discount shops, rack jobbers in drugstores, and growing teenage affluence combined to grow the record industry. Between 1955-1957, annual LP sales increased by thirty percent, from $277 million per year to $460 million by 1957.

LIBERTY RECORDS

In this climate of expansive growth for record companies, Liberty Records—the label that recorded Martin Denny's exotica albums—was founded. Liberty was a Los Angeles-based company formed in 1955 by Si Waronker. As a new company in a crowded field, Liberty experimented, and had some success with genres such as jazz, R&B, and rock 'n' roll. But two of their most successful recordings were the novelty records of Alvin and the Chipmunks (an animated virtual band), and Martin Denny's exotica albums. Si Waronker partly attributed the success of exotica to their unique, eye-catching record covers featuring model and actress Sandy Warner.[281]

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[280] Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph,* 306.
[281] Michael Bryan Kelly, *Liberty Records: A History of the Recording Company and Its Stars, 1955-1971,* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1993), 11.

Martin Denny's exotica album covers align with the other "cheesecake" records I have examined that feature women in sexually suggestive poses. But the exotica album covers deviate from the normative middle-class covers of Jackie Gleason, Paul Weston, and the suburban theme of Columbia's *Music for Gracious Living* series. Sandy Warner is positioned in natural scenery that is assumed to be Hawai'i or some other tropical location. On the album *Primitiva*, for example, exotic markers revolve around nature. Warner is placed in a body of water wearing what appears to be a ripped animal skin garment. Her brown hair is long and tousled, she presents ample cleavage, her eye makeup is a simple cat-eye, and like other Denny albums, she gazes assertively at the camera. The album jacket of *Quiet Village* features Ms. Warner caressing a bamboo pole.

These images inscribe a familiar, yet different, meaning to the musical materials of these albums. They were familiar because consumers were already accustomed to the recognition of mood albums in the context of a mainstream, heteronormative, Anglo-American genre. The different arrangements, song choices, and themes on mood albums offered real and imagined scenarios for romancing, cooking, entertaining, studying, as well as conveying attitudes about sexual subjectivities and gender roles. Album covers offered sites for negotiating the boundaries of acceptable female sexual display. W.A. Sheppard has noted that in the creation of musical *japonisme* during the early twentieth century, European American women would often dress up and present themselves as Asian the covers of sheet music.[282] While the images on Martin Denny's (and other exotica) albums do not exhibit women as geisha, there is a connection with dressing up as vaguely and ambiguously exotic.

[282] William Anthony Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism: Japan in the American Musical Imagination*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 67.

The model on exotica album covers, Sandy Warner, was born Sandy Werner and she was most likely Jewish. In addition to appearing on Martin Denny's exotica albums, she was also a model for other album covers including Mickey Katz's *The Most Mishige* (Capitol, 1959) an album of Yiddish parodies of popular songs. Sandy Warner's ethnic otherness may have supported her exotic representation on the album covers, which, alongside palm trees, water, tiki, and bamboo, worked in tandem with the music to evoke difference, while remaining familiar in the mood sphere.

CONCLUSION

Spacey recumbent women, overt sex, bachelors, female sexuality, heteronormative suburban spaces, and exotica—the one commonality connecting these albums is that they all revolve around a normative, white, middle-class subject.

In this chapter I examined the many ways that white women's bodies combined with music to represent not only difference associated with the strange and exotic, but the dominant social order of the emergent white middleclass. Images of women provided a host of scenarios propelling the record industry and signifying extra-musical associations. As music that was produced in a gendered field, mood albums provided music and images that instructed women to see themselves in terms of dominant white male interests in which a particular type of sexual appeal was emphasized. But in the process, these albums introduced into the public sphere debates about unmarried sex, masculine roles, female sexual subjectivity, and feminism.

What I have tried to stress throughout this chapter is how some of these subjects and topics—cheesecake photographs, the swinging bachelor, and the suburbia dweller—were not as stable as may be assumed from our contemporary perspective. Indeed, they were unsettled and

negotiated through not only film, men's magazines, and literature, but sound recordings. One of the surprising aspects of the period is the discussion of feminism by June Bundy Csida on Henri René's album. This inclusion of feminism on mood albums demonstrates how these recordings were active sites that shaped knowledge of female sexuality in unforeseen ways.[283] In addition to introducing colorful and sensual images of women, record labels connected music to both intimate and social settings in suburbia, developing the bachelor identity and gendered spaces through men's magazines and female sexual subjectivity.

The constellation of all these diverse and sometimes contradictory meanings that I have examined in this chapter can be understood as an assemblage: meaning is derived from different discourses around gender norms and differences in liner notes and visual images. Difference is created by displaying a familiar woman who is made different in either an exotic place such as space on *Music Out of the Moon*, or in a tropical locale such as on Martin Denny's exotica albums. Yet, as a type of music released on an independent record label in an environment that almost demanded a sexy girl on the cover of every album, the conditions in which Martin Denny's exotica albums were recorded and released seem practically unremarkable. Far from being a musical outlier, exotica was very much part of a system that catered to—and helped construct—a middleclass, white, heteronormative world.

[283] Greg Kot, "For Better or Worse, Lounge Music (Yes, That Easy Listening Drek) Has Returned, So…" *Chicago Tribune*, February 19, 1996.

CHAPTER THREE |

JAZZ MODERNISM AND EXOTIC MUSIC

> *No, it's not Stravinsky, but Les Baxter and his orchestra playing a "jungle" tone-poem Les wrote himself. The music … is sweet, impressionistic and melodic, and the boys in the band give it all they've got: tom-toms, sliding strings, whistling, mutes, all sorts of slithering sounds. It's quite a lot of fun.*
>
> —Review of Les Baxter's *Le Sacre du Sauvage (Ritual of the Savage)* in *Seventeen* magazine.[284]

Les Baxter's 1951 album *Ritual of the Savage* was not described as exotica at the time of its release, but it has been folded into the genealogy of exotica through a process of linking Baxter and Martin Denny through song arrangements. When *Ritual of the Savage* was recorded, the genre of exotica had yet to emerge, but critics used the description of exotic to describe Les Baxter's earlier recording *Music Out of the Moon* (1947), and his production of Yma Sumac's *Voice of the Xtabay* (1950). Capitol Records marketed *Ritual of the Savage*, Baxter's next mood album, as a both a "jungle tone poem," and a ballet. It was the 1952 *Seventeen* review of *Ritual of the Savage* that piqued my interest in how audiences of the time would have understood where to situate the music. Why did the reviewer in *Seventeen*, a magazine aimed at young women, describe the album this way? What do the jungle, unusual (slithering) sounds, and the music of Igor Stravinsky have in common?

Ritual of the Savage alludes to Stravinsky with obvious references. The album features a French title—*Le Sacre du Sauvage,* with a nod to Stravinsky's composition for Ballet Russes' *Le*

[284] "Music a la Carte," Review of *Ritual of the Savage*, *Seventeen* magazine 11, no. 1 (1952): 23.

Sacre du Printemps (1913). The album art features an animated illustration of a dancing couple surrounded by tribal masks and statues. Musically, the songs are most reminiscent of Latin dance music arranged with a combination of instrumentation and wordless human voices similar to that heard on Baxter's *Music Out of the Moon.* But Baxter's muted brass sections over pointed, rhythmic ostinatos resemble elements of Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto* (1946). The reviewer's mention of "the boys in the band" further links Baxter's pop output to the 1940s jazz band milieu and the conditions that brought about the commission of the *Ebony Concerto.* This review led me to wonder how audiences in the 1950s understood Stravinsky's relationship to popular music, and what exotic-style music had to do with any of this.

The point of this chapter is to determine what the concept of exotic music meant prior to the emergence of exotica as a genre ca., 1957-60 and how it was associated with Les Baxter. To do this I examine some of Baxter's other exotic influences, output, and collaborations in the early 1950s by tracing the popular music pathways in which ideas of modernism, exoticism, and primitivism travelled to show what these terms meant in the early 1950s.

In the first section I explore how the artistic labour of African American jazz musicians and the discussions in the pages of jazz periodicals about jazz modernism laid the groundwork for "Stravinsky-jazz adjacent" artists such as Les Baxter to shift these hybrid musical styles into the pop sphere. I demonstrate how, through associations with Stravinsky, progressive jazz was legitimized, and Afro-Cuban music and dance was embraced amid a conflation of modernism and primitivism. In the second half of this chapter, I turn my attention to recordings produced by Les Baxter that assembled different exotic codes, activated for a variety of goals. In particular I examine the exotic intersections between African American concert dance with Katherine Dunham's *Tropical Revue* (1945), the Peruvian folk music of Yma Sumac's *Voice of the Xtabay*

(1950), and the combination of ethnic otherness, gender, and high fidelity in Bas Sheva's *The Passions* (1954).

STRAVINSKY, MODERNISM, AND AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC

Igor Stravinsky is recognized as one of the great modern composers of the twentieth century. His compositional styles reflect musical shifts and significant historical events. His cultural influence is vast, yet scholars have generally overlooked his connection to American popular music. Richard Taruskin argues that this neglect stems from the belief that Stravinsky's compositions,

> were written either on commission or 'on spec' by a composer getting his bearings in a new and unfamiliar environment, who needed money because his European royalties had been disrupted, and who sought the less than lofty affordances that popular performers (such as Paul Whiteman), Broadway producers (such as Billy Rose), local California conductors (such as Werner Janssen), or the Ringling Brothers Circus could provide—not to mention the Hollywood movie studios, with which Stravinsky haggled endlessly without ever reaching a meeting of minds, and for which he wrote a lot of music that ended up elsewhere, to his chagrin and occasional humiliation.[285]

As this quote demonstrates, Stravinsky's contact with music not composed for the concert hall is easily grouped together and presented as an unfortunate but economically convenient sidenote to his move to America in 1939. Stephen Walsh takes a similar position and describes *Ebony Concerto* as a "pot-boiler" piece.[286] I suggest that there may have been a more reciprocal and

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[285] Slim, H. Colin, and Richard Taruskin. *Stravinsky in the Americas: Transatlantic Tours and Domestic Excursions from Wartime Los Angeles (1925-1945)*, California Studies in 20th-Century Music, (California: University of California Press, 2019), 23.

[286] Stephen Walsh, *Stravinsky: The Second Exile: France and America, 1934-1971*. 1st ed, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 2006. Walsh posits that Stravinsky was in some ways a victim of circumstance and forced to participate in an unfamiliar musical marketplace to survive since the U.S. was not a signatory to the Berne copyright convention, and income from European touring and royalties dried up. There is no question that the issue of copyright had a significant bearing on his popular music decisions. However,

mutually beneficial relationship between Stravinsky and U.S. jazz musicians. Stravinsky's favourable press in the U.S. was, to some extent, dependent on the rising currency of jazz as a legitimate art form. Jazz musicians also benefited from invoking Stravinsky's name: they could not only prove their European art music chops but position themselves discursively on the shifting modernism-traditionalist spectrum that Bernard Gendron describes as a "war of words"—the discursive formations that provided a language to convey the legitimacy of jazz and the breaching of the "great divide" between mass culture and art.[287]

During the 1940s, European modernist discourse was central to the transformation of jazz from entertainment to art. The one unifying factor that seems to have had the most consensus was that modern was a word that in a discursive context signaled "less commercial." Bernard Gendron analyzes how during the 1940s "modernity" was constructed in the swirling discourses of the jazz press not as a movement but as a "small stream of new individual sounds joining a rising tide of modernisms."[288] In popular music, the term "modern" implied the separation of music that was "too commercial" from music that, while still commercial, signalled a degree of autonomy from the marketplace. There was no one musical factor that would identify modern music in the popular music field. It could only be understood in relation to other music that was

there is some benefit to looking at Stravinsky's popular music output, in particular his engagement with American jazz artists, with an eye to specificity rather than combining all his popular works together.

[287] Bernard Gendron, "Moldy Figs and Modernists: Jazz at War (1942-1946)," in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 2. Gendron draws on Foucault's "discursive formations" to describe the aesthetic discourses and debates between the traditional and modern aesthetic streams in the pages of the jazz periodicals. For an in-depth examination of the historical avant-garde and the manifestation of the postwar "reified two-track system of high vs. low, elite vs. popular" on popular culture, see, Andreas Huyssen, "*After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. Theories of Representation and Difference, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) 3-43.

[288] Gendron, "Moldy Figs and Modernists," 2.

happening at the time. Artists during this period would often navigate the shifting landscape of jazz legitimacy by aligning themselves with other artists and composers.

STRAVINSKY IS NUTS FOR SWINGS

One point of departure for discussing Stravinsky's interaction with American popular music is Benny Goodman's 1941 concert at Philadelphia's Dell Center, in which Goodman conducted Igor Stravinsky's *Tango* (1940), performed Mozart's *Concerto for Clarinet in A Major*, and led his band in some popular selections. The concert made headlines, but more ink was spilled discussing Benny Goodman's nerves and celebrity conductor/musician/actor José Iturbi's outburst than Stravinsky's role. Iturbi reportedly refused to conduct on the same program as Goodman and demanded that his contract be cancelled, but the Dell management chose instead to pay Iturbi to not appear.[289]

A concert that combined swing and classical music was novel at the time, and apart from Jose Iturbi, the idea did not raise many objections. The concert was considered more a "failed experiment," and according to *Billboard,* for everyone's sake it was "best to leave the swing and longhair apart."[290] The financial gains, on the other hand, were appealing. Benny Goodman reportedly brought in 8,500 paying customers, an audience of 3,000 lined up outside the venue, and 1,000 people scaled the cemetery fence to crash the gate. Shortly after the premier of *Tango,* Stravinsky publicly voiced his support of swing culture in *Downbeat*:

> With his first U.S citizenship papers in his pockets, smiling Igor Stravinsky, noted Russian composer and a leader of the "modern" school of music, last week declared that he "loved" swing music. "I love swings. It is to the Harlem I go. It is so sympathetic to

[289] "B.G. Hit and Conductor and Soloist," *Metronome* 57 no. 8 (1941): 9; "Benny Lets His Hair Grow but Boogie Beats Dell Bell Solid," *Billboard*, July 19, 1941, 11.
[290] "Benny Lets His Hair Grow," *Billboard*, 11.

> watch the Negro boys and girls dancing and to watch them eat the long, what is it you call them, frankfurters, no? It is so sympathetic. I love all kinds of swings."[291]

Regardless of whether these were Stravinsky's exact words, a mutually beneficial relationship between Stravinsky and jazz musicians began to be played out in the pages of jazz periodicals.

Jazz magazines in the 1940s often printed fan-based columns such as, "profiling the players" or "getting to know the boys in the band," that provided personal details about jazz musicians' likes and dislikes. Along with marital status, musicians or those writing about them typically noted their food, drink, and clothing preferences; a musician's favourite composer also figured prominently. For example, Joe Petrone of Les Brown's Orchestra described himself in *Downbeat* as, "thirty years old, guitar, has one kid, likes the moderns Stravinsky, Debussy, and Ravel."[292] *Music and Rhythm's* "Who's Who in Music" section profiled Hezekiah LeRoy Gordon "Stuff" Smith as a "violinist, [who] worked with Jelly Roll Morton, likes the Duke, Stravinsky and Kostelanetz, he swims and boxes for his health's sake, his favorite drink is gin and coke.[293] *Swing Magazine's* "The Men in the Day Band," profiled Marty Berger, noting he "sleeps in purple pajamas and listens to Stravinsky between rehearsals.[294] *Downbeat's* profile on the Sonny Dunham Orchestra makes reference to George Cane, who "relaxes in a bathing suit, and when on a heavy kick likes Stravinsky." And Emmett A. Carls, who worked with Boyd Raeburn and Bob Strong, cited "his big-time composers [as] Debussy, Delius (how'd he get in here?) and Stravinsky."[295]

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[291] "Stravinsky Gets Paper; Says I Love Swings," *Downbeat* 8 no. 4 (1941): 1.
[292] "Who's Who in Music," *Downbeat* 7 no. 13, (July 1940).
[293] "Who's Who in Music," *Music and Rhythm* 2 no. 12 (November 1941): 13.
[294] "The Men in the Day Band," *Swing Magazine: Devoted to Modern Music* 7 no. 2 (November 1941): 17.
[295] "Profiling the Players," *Downbeat* 10 no. 20 (October 1943): 15.

These representative examples testify to Stravinsky's influence, and raise a host of questions: What was it about Stravinsky that drew many musicians, in particular African American musicians, to his style, and why not American modernist composers such as George Antheil, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Ruth Crawford, George Gershwin, Roy Harris, Roger Sessions, William Grant Still, and Virgil Thomson? Without a deeper examination it is hard to say what exactly constituted Stravinsky's appeal. Ingrid Monson describes how during the postwar period African American musicians put "modernism to work in the aesthetic struggle to keep innovating and the political struggle to gain higher status and power for black music and culture."[296] As she explains, a specifically European conception of the modern artist held great appeal because "part of the symbolic cachet of European classical music to African American musicians at this time no doubt had to do with the relatively nondiscriminatory treatment musicians experienced while traveling in Europe and the greater artistic respect that continental audiences displayed for jazz."[297] In the U.S. jazz press there was a trend towards descriptions that alluded to both musical and social forces framing modernity as the great equalizer, in addition to situating Stravinsky and Duke Ellington in the same sphere.

Jazz musicians in the 1940s would have been exposed to Stravinsky's music from recordings and symphony concerts, which between 1940 and 1945 were primarily ballets and suites. Major U.S. orchestras recorded performances of *Petroushka, The Firebird Suite, Le Sacre du Printemps*, and *Suite de Pulcinella* but Stravinsky's reputation as a disruptor of the musical establishment also preceded him. Circulating stories about "rioting" at the premiere of *Le Sacre du Printemps* on May 29, 1913 and his general reputation as *l'enfant terrible* of music were

[296] Ingrid T. Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 72.
[297] Monson, *Freedom Sounds,* 86.

repeated in the press.[298] In her study of the myth of the riot during the premiere of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, Tamara Levitz argues that the vocabulary of racial conflict was combined with aesthetic arguments about the importance of newness in musical modernism, and the "revolutionary" aspect of *Le Sacre* was espoused by Carl Van Vechten, who was in the audience at the *Rite*'s opening night in Paris.[299] Van Vechten was the first writer (along with music critic Olin Downes) to describe physical violence and "rioting"— a term that Levitz suggests "accentuated the *Rite*'s unique credentials as modern art and yet that was commonly used in the U.S. press at that time to describe violent social clashes, race and prison riots, and sports matches."[300] As early as 1916 jazz periodical *Christensen's Ragtime Review* published a quote from Van Vechten's book *Music After the Great War*: "it is indeed to Stravinsky . . . whose barbaric rhythms stirred the angry pulses of a Parisian audience threatened with the shame of an emotion in the theatre, to whom we may turn for still new thrills after the war."[301] The romantic narrative of Stravinsky as a musical innovator who overcame the restrictive musical establishment travelled by way of jazz magazines.[302] It is difficult to determine if the notion of Stravinsky as an establishment disruptor had any bearing on jazz musicians because Ravel,

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[298] *Platter Chatter* 2, no. 2 (March 1946): 15. In an advertisement describing himself as a bad boy of music, George Antheil demonstrated that a proximity to Stravinsky carried cultural currency. See "Bad Boy of Music," *Variety* November 21, 1945, 24

[299] Tamara Levitz, "Racism at the Rite," in Neff, Severine, Maureen Carr, and Gretchen Grace Horlacher, eds. 146-178, *The Rite of Spring at 100*, Musical Meaning and Interpretation, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017), 161.

[300] Levitz, "Racism at the Rite," 161. Carol Oja suggests that Van Vechten's early championing of Stravinsky as a revolutionary modernist was a way to critique New York concert programming which he felt had "become stupifying." See Carol Oja, *Making Music Modern: New York in the 1920s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 300.

[301] *Christensen's Ragtime Review* 2, no. 4 (March 1916): 6.

[302] One interview with Tim Timothy (a music teacher) in *Metronome* had this to say about music history: "there has always been an objection to any departure from the conventional and orthodox treatment. Beethoven shocked his audience with his dissonant harmonies. Stravinsky's first concert was hissed and booed and was considered an insult to the musical intelligence of the audience." *Metronome* 56, no. 4 April 1940, 1.

Debussy, Delius, and later Hindemith, were also listed as favorite composers in the jazz periodicals.

Another possible reason for Stravinsky's appeal to jazz musicians may have been his proximity to Duke Ellington. In the 1940s Stravinsky and Duke Ellington both lectured at Harvard University, a fact reported on heavily by the jazz press.[303] The magazine *Band Leaders* often made the connection between the two men. Comparisons were made and reports circulated suggesting that Stravinsky was a lifelong Duke Ellington fan who'd asked for Ellington when he arrived in the U.S.[304] Moreover, in 1944 both men were commissioned to write compositions for Paul Whiteman's radio program, "Music out of the Blue." Stravinsky's *Scherzo a la Russe* had its debut on this radio show, as did Ellington's *Blutopia.*[305] It was not only Ellington's direct physical proximity to Stravinsky that connected the two men: Mark Tucker links Duke Ellington's indirect knowledge of modernist orchestration and harmony practiced by Stravinsky, Ravel, Delius, and others to the early African American composer Will Vodery, a connection also made by Gunther Schuller.[306]

As early as 1940 jazz critics were connecting Stravinsky to African American musicians. In a review of Meade Lux Lewis's Blue Note recording of "Six Wheel Chaser," one writer claimed that "what Stravinsky probably felt and tried to do in parts of *Le Sacre,* Lux accomplishes with a minimum of tonal, technical, and instrumental resources . . . repeated notes, chords, or short motives . . . pulsating percussive chords, such as Meade Lux uses in the sixth

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[303] *Metronome* 60, no. 4 (April 1944):15.
[304] *Band Leaders* 2, no. 26 (September 1945); *Band Leaders* 3, no. 2 (March 1946): 4.
[305] *The Music Dial* 2, no. 4 (1944); "Music Out of the Blue" *Variety*, September 13, 1944, 4. "Contemporary Composers," *Billboard* September 16, 1944, 11. Other composers that participated in this venture were Roy Harris, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, Paul Creston, Morton Gould, David Rose, Richard Rogers, Pete De Rose, Eric Korngold and Victor Young.
[306] Mark Tucker, "In Search of Will Vodery" *Black Music Research Journal* 16, no. 1 (1996): 123-182. See also Gunther Schuller, *The History of Jazz*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 340.

chorus, produce a powerful syncopated momentum.[307] Boogie woogie piano—12-bar blues with walking bass and other ostinato bass figures in the left hand—was seen as expressing a particular type of modernity during the early 1940s. The connection between Stravinsky and jazz became solidified to the extent that an article in *Downbeat* claimed that *The Rite of Spring* was the origin of bebop (called rebop at the time):

> Much controversy has arisen of late over the claims of altoist Charlie Parker and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie to the origination of their fantastic and exciting "re-bop" style (which is used for lack of a more appropriate title or description). Those involved in the current question may be interested in the fact that in most all of Stravinsky's works, particularly Rites [sic] of Spring, the basic "re-bop" idea is frequently and obviously scored.[308]

These accounts of African American jazz musicians' innovative process of hybridizing existing popular song forms through modernist musical techniques such as extended chords, parallel chords, linear intervallic patterns (streams of repeated intervals), and extended tonality were recognized as linked to Stravinsky.[309] But it was the bands fronted by white men that received most of the attention with Stravinsky-adjacent recordings around this period. Boyd Raeburn *Boyd Meets Stravinsky* (1946), and Woody Herman's commission of Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto* (1945) generated much more excitement in the music industry than the contributions of African American musicians that had historically incorporated aspects of Stravinsky's music.

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[307] William Russel, *H.R.S. Society Rag* 1, no. 7 (November 1940): 33.
[308] "Igor Stravinsky's Re-Bop Style," *Downbeat* 12, no. 17 (September 1945). Another example can be found in an article by Barry Ulanov on Jimmy Jones in which Jones' "chord, chords, chords" were highlighted in addition to his appreciation of the moderns, and his love of the fusion of jazz and classics in movie music. See *Metronome* 61 no. 11 (November 1945): 22-23.
[309] Guthrie Ramsey coined the term Afro-modernism to identify African American responses to the experience of modernity and the musical expressions that modernism articulated. See, Guthrie Ramsey, "We Called Ourselves Modern": Race Music and the Politics and Practice of Afro Modernism at Midcentury" in *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop,* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 96-130.

PROGRESSIVE JAZZ: JAZZ GETS A WHITER FACE

Boyd Meets Stravinsky was a mix of original pieces and standards arranged by George Handy and Edie Finkle in a tribute to Stravinsky and Hindemith. In one review of the album, Boyd was recognized as a capable interpreter: "the Count Basie style of 'jump' music, plus Stravinsky style of 'chord patterns' has resulted in an able group of enthusiastic young men, with a jazz message which America is coming to recognize as fine, meaningful, music.[310]" This account is similar to the earlier story about Meade Lux Lewis, but it suggests that Raeburn was the originator. Yet, African American artists incorporating this style either predate *Boyd Meets Stravinsky* by several years or were contemporaneously experimenting with it. Nevertheless, the recording was hyped as a revolutionary take on jazz and a major historical event.

In 1945, one year prior to *Boyd Meets Stravinsky,* Stravinsky was commissioned to write *Ebony Concerto* for the Woody Herman Orchestra. Stravinsky had been impressed by the trumpet passages in Woody Herman's version of "Caledonia," and was inspired to write a work for Herman's eighteen-piece band adding harp, bassoon, and French horn. The press was not shy in emphasizing the presumed historical significance of the composition. Herman was reportedly trailblazing the "road to the future of American music," by "bring[ing] forth something of a new era in musical expression," that was "legitimating jazz as a serious art form."[311] *Platter Chatter* reported that, "this orchestration will prove the future of merging classics with swing music . . . this occasion will be a mark for the history books . . . a classical composer the stature of

[310] "Publicity v. Popularity by James P. Quinn," *Platter Chatter* 1, no. 4 (December 1945): 1; *Downbeat* 13, no. 14 (July 1946): 1.
[311] "Woody Enters Concert Field Next Spring," *Downbeat* 12, no. 21 (November 1945): 1; *Band Leaders*, 3, no. 4 (May 1946): 56.

Stravinsky to allow an outlet for his musical expression in a swing band."[312] With all the hype, reviews for the *Ebony Concerto,* which premiered at the "Concert of Modern American Music," Carnegie Hall, March 25, 1946, were mixed.[313] The main consensus in the jazz periodicals was that the piece was difficult, but with several studious listenings it became more palatable and exciting.

As jazz moved from entertainment to legitimate art, music critics devised new terms to describe the variety of emerging styles. Mike Levin of *Downbeat* conceived of the term "grey" to describe "Stravinsky's tricky" style of music such as the *Ebony Concerto* that differed stylistically from other types of popular music such as "vocal," "dance" and "mood."[314] By the 1950s these terms had somewhat stabilized as types of popular music, with the exception of "grey," which was usually described as either "modern" jazz or "progressive" jazz.

The terms modern and progressive were interchangeable and both descriptors represented the shift from the stock arrangements of the swing bands of the 1930s, to experiments in hybrid forms, modern orchestration, and classical influences. The term modern jazz could be applied to Dizzy Gillespie and some of the core bebop musicians in their use of "extended chords," "rhythm of chordal punctuation," "well-articulated phrases," and "phrase length variations."[315] Modernism could also describe non-beboppers and white musicians such as Woody Herman, Boyd Raeburn, Pete Rugolo, and Stan Kenton, but progressive is generally the term associated

[312] *Platter Chatter* 1 no. 4 (December 1945): 4.
[313] "Woody Meets Stravinsky, and Ralph Burns Triumphs" *Metronome* 62, no. 4 (April 1946): 13; Michael Levin, "Herman Herd Thrills at Packed Carnegie Hall," *Downbeat* 13, no. 8 (April 1946): 1.
[314] Mike Levin, *Downbeat* 12, no. 20 (October 1945).
[315] "What's Right with The Beboppers," *Metronome* 63, no. 7 (July 1947): 31.

wiith these musicians who shunned improvisation in favor of harmonic and metrical complexity, loudness, and dissonance.[316]

Progressive was used throughout the 1940s and 1950s and is a precursor of "cool" jazz, which is associated with the west coast of the U.S. rather than New York. Ingrid Monson explains that Miles Davis' *Birth of Cool* was recorded in 1949 and 1950, but the term "cool" was not used to describe this particular style of jazz until 1957 when *Birth of Cool* was completed and published.[317] Yet, the term cool had been circulating around 1950. One example of this can be seen in the title of a 1950 *Metronome* article "After Bop, What? Keep Cool Fool."[318]

After bop, what indeed? As quickly as bebop gained a dominant place in the jazz world, it was just as quickly viewed as dull and predictable. For many jazz critics, white artists like Stan Kenton were seen as the next step for jazz after bebop had slowed. Bernard Gendron provides examples of the racist tropes that were undertaken post-bebop as a way of whitening the style. He suggests that there was a racialized "civilizing" discourse that promoted "the great white hope" in the future of jazz. Faced with a bebop movement dominated by African Americans, the virtually all-white jazz journals seemed always to be in search of "great white hopes"—white modernists like Stan Kenton with whom a white readership would feel more at home.[319] Some of

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[316] Max Harrison, "Progressive Jazz," in *Grove Music Online,* Oxford Music Online, accessed July 20, 2022. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.J364200

[317] Monson, *Freedom Sounds,* 81.

[318] "After Bop, What? Keep Cool Fool," *Metronome*, 66 no. 4 (April 1950): 32. Stan Kenton claimed that bebop was not the "jazz of the future" because it "hasn't settled down yet" in order to "dominate and swallow classical music." And Barry Ulanov wrote that "after bop we have a jazz of reflection and restraint, soft statements and extended ideas."

[319] Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2002), 149. Another factor in the whitening of jazz was the advent of institutional teaching and jazz schools such as Schillinger House, which later became Berklee School of Music. Schillinger House taught modern composition, and at the time emphasized dance band work and polled their student for their favourite bands, arrangers, and composers. Out of 260 students, 144 chose Stravinsky as their favorite classical composer. See, *Metronome* 65, no. 3 (March 1947): 27.

the polls taken in jazz periodicals, Monson points out, illustrate that in the eyes of the broader American public, jazz in the early 1950s had a decidedly white face.[320]

AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ: SOPHISTICATED PERCUSSION

One musical development connected to bebop that was integrated into many other 1950s jazz styles was Afro-Cuban music. Afro-Cuban percussion was seen as strengthening and reviving modern jazz music and regarded by many as a welcome addition. Two of the band leaders that were associated with popularizing Afro-Cuban music were Dizzy Gillespie and Stan Kenton.

Dizzy Gillespie's interest in Afro-Cuban music can be traced back to 1940 when Mario Bauzá's Band was introducing Afro-Cuban music to the New York jazz scene through his band Machito and his Afro-Cubans. Jairo Moreno suggest that Bauzá was determined to provide an alternative to what he viewed as the watered-down versions of Latin dance music performed by Xavier Cugat, for example, by "accentuating the percussive elements, rhythmic sensibilities, and metric orientations of Cuban dance music and foregrounded its proclivities toward vocal and instrumental improvisation, as well as other Afro-Cuban musico-cultural markers such as call-and-response."[321] In addition to his role in popularizing Afro-Cuban music in New York, Bauzá was central to the meeting and collaboration between Luciano "Chano" Pozo and Dizzy Gillespie.

Chano Pozo was a multi-faceted performer, a singer, dancer, and percussionist with a dynamic stage presence. His many compositions contained prayers, melodies, and rhythms from

[320] Monson, *Freedom Sounds,* 66.
[321] Jairo Moreno, "Bauza-Gillespie-Latin/Jazz: Difference, Modernity, and the Black Caribbean," in *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States*, edited by Jiménez Román Miriam, and Juan Flores, 176-186, E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

the Congo, Santería, and Abakuá repertoires.[322] Chano Pozo's compositions such as *Manteca* (1947), were incorporated Gillespie's along with the further Afro-Cuban influence of George Russell's *Cubano Bop* (1947), and *Afro-Cuban Suite* (1949). Through Mario Bauzá, Chano Pozo and others, the combination of bebop and Afro-Cuban styles blended evidenced through the labeling of genres such as "Afro-Cuban bop" as well as a short-lived genre of "Rumbop."[323] In 1949 Mercury Records launched an Afro-Cuban jazz series, and the discussions of Latin jazz in general turned to the specifics and nuances of Afro-Cuban dance, folk, and popular idioms.

Before long, white bands like Stan Kenton's began adding Afro-Cuban percussion sections and employed either Afro-Cuban drummers, or white drummers who were quickly learning the style. Stan Kenton's early recordings with Capitol such as *Machito* (1947), *Peanut Vendor* (1947), and *Cuban Episode* (1950) incorporated Afro-Cuban elements. Stan Kenton's arranger Pete Rugolo wrote "Fugue for Rhythm Section" and "Cuban Carnival" for a ten-piece Afro-Cuban rhythm section on the "Concert in Progressive Jazz album."[324] British pianist George Shearing also added Afro-Cuban percussion when Cal Tjader joined his group in 1953. Cal Tjader was a white vibraphone musician, but he also played Afro-Cuban percussion. When Tjader formed his own Afro-Cuban group, Shearing replaced him with Armando Pereza and incorporated the celeste to retain the vibraphone sound that had been long identified with Cal Tjader and Shearing's group.

The interest in Afro-Cuban music took on a more commercial expression through the popularity of mambo and its associated dance. Artists such as Pérez Prado began implementing

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[322] David F. Garcia, *Listening for Africa: Freedom, Modernity, and the Logic of Black Music's African Origins*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 117.
[323] "Rumbop" *Metronome* 63, no. 7 (1947): 22. Differences between Latin music and Afro-Cuban music were explained by Machito in, "Latin Music Isn't What You Think It Is," *Metronome* 63, no. 8 (1947): 8.
[324] *Downbeat* 15, no. 7 (April 1948), 7.

short repeated syncopated figures into big band arrangements supported by an underlying Afro-Cuban percussion section. Prado became associated with the mambo to such an extent that he even appeared in a film (*Al Son Del Mambo* 1951) that mythologized the origins of the style. The film weaves "magical realist" narrative in which Prado transcribes bird songs and then sets them to music.[325] A characteristic of Prado's style of mambo were his non-verbal expressions such as grunts, yelps, and bodily gestures. This embodied expression paired with a big band orchestra led some reviewers to claim that Prado's style was a combination of the "primitive and modern" in the way that he "alternat[ed] pagan screams with sophisticated sonorities."[326] David García suggests that one of the rhetorical devices that was commonly encountered in the reception and critiques of mambo was the interrelated discourses of evolutionism and primitivism as effective ways to articulate midcentury desires and anxieties concerning race, sexuality, and national identity.[327] Birdsong and nature sounds such as those found in Afro-Cuban and Latin musics are heavily associated with exotica, as is the juxtaposition of the primitive and modern in descriptions of exotica.

The growing commercial interest in Afro-Cuban percussion can be seen in *Downbeat's* 1949 article "More Bands Add Bongos," noting that the Afro-Cuban musical influence was having a strong effect on pop music: "Not only are the progressive jazz champions featuring the [Afro-Cuban] style, but bands aiming primarily at dancers are getting in on the bongo-conga drum kick . . . Nat Cole is considering adding bongos.[328] The interest in bongos extended to instructional "how to" recordings promoted by Hollywood white percussionists Jack Costanzo

[325] David García, "Going Primitive to the Movements and Sounds of Mambo," *The Musical Quarterly* 89, no.4 (2006): 505–23.
[326] Howard Taubman "Records," *New York Times.* Nov 19, 1950, X9.
[327] García, "Going Primitive to the Movements and Sounds of Mambo," 522.
[328] "More Bands Add Bongos," *Downbeat* 16, no. 3 (1949): 2.

and Jack Burger. Jack Costanzo, or "Mr. Bongo," a Chicagoan of Italian descent, worked with Stan Kenton, Nat King Cole, and other Capitol recording artists in Hollywood throughout the 1950s.[329]

During the 1950s advertisements for mail-order Conga drums appeared in the pages of *Downbeat* alongside ads for Jack Burger's *Let's Play Bongos* (1957). Burger's album notes include instruction in hand positions, accompaniment for modern jazz, descriptions of clavé, bolero, and mambo, and the various Afro-Cuban instruments. The back of the album provides notation for some basic bongo patterns *(fig.3.1)*:

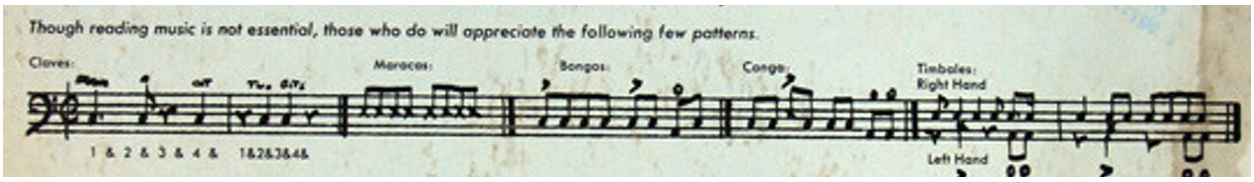

Figure 3.1. Jack Burger, *Let's Play Bongos* (HiFi Records 1957)

The liner notes read, "if you are interested in primitive art, Cuban music, or any form of creative hobby, this album is for you."[330] The reference to primitive art is also something worth noting because as I discussed in the introduction, the French jazz critics of the interwar years made the connection between Africana arts and jazz, but through the lens of primitivism. For example, an article in D*ownbeat* claimed that primitivism is the link between jazz music and modern art captured in Picassos' *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* and *Congo Blues* by Red Norvo, along with a healthy infusion of "masks, bongo drums, Afro-Cuban rhythms, Maori motifs, etc."[331] Yet, as

[329] Neil Genzlinger, "Jack Costanzo, Musician Known as Mr. Bongo, Dies at 98," *New York Times,* April 26, 2018. Costanzo taught Hollywood movie stars including Marlon Brando, James Dean, Gary Cooper, and Rita Moreno how to play bongos in movies, and appeared in films himself including *Harum Scarum* with Elvis Presley in 1965. Liner notes to his album *Latin Fever*, Liberty LST-7020, 1957, LP, stated, "when he plays in Cuba the natives shout—when he plays in Hollywood the cream of the screen stars turn out to listen."[329] Costanzo's albums reflect a "hipness" in his ties to Hollywood and the myth he created for himself with imagined connections to "natives."
[330] Jack Burger, *Let's Play Bongos*, HiFi Records, 1957, LP, liner notes.
[331] Robert George Reisner, "Writer Compares Modern Art and Jazz," *Downbeat* 18, no. 23, (November 1951): 6.

Ted Gioia discusses in detail, "the implicit primitivist view of jazz as an instinctive and intuitive approach to musical performance, bears little if any resemblance to that music as it is actually played."[332] Nevertheless, there is a conflation of modernism and primitivism in the discourses around Afro-Cuban music and dance.

Stuart Hall's theory of articulation offers a way of understanding how elements (primitivism, jazz, modernism, exotic) cohere together under certain conditions. In other words, articulation asks "how an ideology discovers its subject, rather than how the subject thinks the necessary and inevitable thoughts which belong to it."[333] These swirling discourses are underscored by the fact of racial oppression and the cultural hierarchies between popular forms of music and classical influences, which make the years immediately following World War II a complex period in music history. We can see that many of the knowledges about jazz and primitivism were articulated to the point that, by 1957, exotica became recognized as a genre.

I began this chapter with the stated goal of determining how audiences would have understood the relationship between Igor Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* and Les Baxter's *Ritual of the Savage*. I have provided some examples to show that audiences would have been familiar with Stravinsky's connection to jazz as popular entertainment, as well as the context of jazz's growing artistic legitimacy. In this case, the discursive formations of Gendron's "war of the words," can be seen as extending to European composers, whose names and identities were often used as the litmus test of modernism. Audiences would have been able to identify what Stravinsky's name meant in the context of "the boys in the [swing] band" but also in terms of the type of progressive jazz wherein white musicians combined Western musical influences and Afro-Cuban music. This identification would have a profound effect on exotica musicians

[332] Gioia, *The Imperfect Art,* 48.
[333] Grossberg, ed., "On Postmodernism and Articulation, 142.

because of the discursive possibilities afforded by Afro-Cuban music as simultaneously both "primitive" and "sophisticated."

Martin Denny and Les Baxter may have had different musical aesthetics, but they both benefited from the labelling and emergence of progressive jazz. The cultural elevation artists working in the popular music field gained through association with Stravinsky, I have shown, was formulated through the artistic work of jazz musicians, many of them Black, who experimented with hybrid pop-classical musical forms. The mixture of vibraphone and Afro-Cuban elements of George Shearing and Cal Tjader would manifest in the signature sound—including birdcalls--of the Martin Denny Group in Hawai'i. The identification of Les Baxter's link to Stravinsky on *Ritual of the Savage* was contingent on the listener's knowledge of contemporaneous Stravinsky-adjacent recordings, as well as Baxter's previous forays into exotic music with *Music Out of the Moon*. Yet, there are other cultural and historical factors around hybrid pop-classical forms—primitivism, modernity, race, and gender—that Les Baxter drew on for his articulations of the exotic. In the following section I connect Les Baxter's recordings to the artistic output of women including Katherine Dunham's *Tropical Revue* (1943-45), Yma Sumac's *Voice of the Xtabay* (1950), and Les Baxter's *The Passions Featuring Bas Sheva* (1953).

LES BAXTER'S *RITUAL OF THE SAVAGE* (1951)

Les Baxter's career is a challenge to research. Archival materials provide little in the way of personal or professional writings or correspondences. Much of his archive consists of photos, scraps of paper, poetry, ideas for songs or a television game show; many musical scores have missing parts. However, contracts found in Baxter's files provide insight into his role at Capitol

Records and suggest that he was given free rein to develop a variety of projects, devising themes for albums, hiring the musicians and arrangers, and directing the orchestra. In an interview with *Downbeat,* Baxter claimed that "under my contract I have complete freedom to do just about anything I want and in my own way."[334]

Les Baxter had a solid background in vocal arranging, and he had studied orchestration, but what is clear from looking at original manuscripts—stamped with an official seal recognizing Albert Harris, Hall Daniels, or Bill Jones as the arranger— is that Baxter himself hired the arrangers for many of his recordings. I include this not to belittle Baxter's work, but to recognize the collaboration, influences, and distribution of labour that went into these recordings. He may have acted as the "ideas" man, but there was a large musical machinery in Hollywood that supported musical production and led to cooperation between record labels and Hollywood studios. Les Baxter's *Ritual of the Savage* brought together musical codes, visual images, and discursive factors into a programmatic album, but the recording was not a unique example or outlier in this period. The album can be understood in relation to not only the association with Stravinsky and progressive jazz, Hollywood's embrace of mambo (and bongos), and Baxter's other exotic recordings, but also through the other circulating exotic entertainments that hybridized popular and classical forms.

The reception and marketing of *Ritual of the Savage* attest to the flexible boundaries between popular and classical music that existed at the time. The album was reviewed in the classical section, referred to as a tone poem, a ballet, and a programmatic work, and associated with Stravinsky. But promotional materials for *Ritual of the Savage* suggests it was imagined also as a novelty album. A fold-out from the *Capitol News Magazine* presents the album as a

[334] Nat Hentoff, "I Refuse to Cheapen my Records, Says Les Baxter," *Downbeat* 22, no. 18 (September 1955), and *Downbeat* 20, no. 24 (December 1953): 3.

parody of Hollywood safari films, in particular the cinematic trope of the "White Goddess." It is unclear if the fold-out (*fig.* 3.2) was released to the general public to promote the album, or if this was meant to be an insider joke.

Figure 3.2. Fold-out promotion of Les Baxter's *Le Sacre du Sauvage* in *Capitol News* 9, no. 11 (December 1951): 8-9.

In this fold out we see a cast of Capitol artists act out a storyline (seemingly unrelated to the *Ritual of the Savage* program) in which Les Baxter plays the aloof but capable Serge Drek, a jungle explorer who guides Griselda Kittle (Dottie O'Brein) on a journey through the Gold Coast in search of her missing sister, the fabled "White Goddess." Kittle is a steel wool heiress who becomes attracted to Drek as he engages in hand-to-hand combat with snakes, shoots elephants,

and once exhausted, is carried on her back. The "White Goddess" is revealed to be Miss Sundstrom (Giselle Mackenzie) who had been touring Africa with a girl's baseball team. [335]

One could argue that these materials were self-reflexive parodies poking fun at European fantasies and cultural ignorance. Or that dressing up and playing with stereotypes of cultural otherness were a way to explore taboo subjects such as sex, nudity, and desire since the Hays Code had banned nudity in all films except ethnographic documentaries. But the focus on the storyline suggests that the components of racial and gendered tropes from jungle films could be used for different purposes. *Ritual of the Savage* was promoted as a "jungle tone poem," a programmatic series of vignettes that musically depict what a European or American traveller might encounter on their jungle journey. This storyline differs slightly from the White Goddess enactment, but it follows a similar adventure narrative, familiar to contemporary audiences. The liner notes also read like an adventure book or film:

> Do the mysteries of native rituals intrigue you . . . does the haunting beat of savage drums fascinate you? Are you captivated by the forbidden ceremonies of primitive peoples in far off Africa or deep in the interior of the Belgian Congo? This original and exotic music by Les Baxter was conceived by blending his creative ideas with the ritualistic melodies and seductive rhythms of the natives of distant jungles and tropical ports to capture all the color and fervor so expressive of the emotions of these people. The Ritual of the Savage is a tone poem of the sound and the struggle of the jungle . . . the hue and mood of the interior . . . the tempo and texture of the bustling seaports and the tropics![336]

The program begins with the song "Busy Port," which situates the explorer/ listener in the heat and humidity of the cargo docks alongside the "freighters, bananas, coffee, and toiling natives."[337] Baxter musically represents the hustle and bustle of the fictional docks through signifiers of "urbanity," such as muted trumpets and piano ostinato with unadorned simple

[335] *Capitol News* 9, no. 11 (December 1951): 8-9.
[336] Les Baxter, *Le Sacre du Sauvage* (Ritual of the Savage), Capitol H-288, 1951, LP 10", liner notes.
[337] Baxter, *Le Sacre du Sauvage*, liner notes.

melodies. The tone of "Sophisticated Savage" described as "a lean native, casually clod in bone jewelry and an enigmatic smile" is depicted through the prominent use of the celeste and breathy flutes over a piano ostinato. The listener then embarks on the "Jungle River Boat" with the "music reflecting African and Oriental influences to describe the quaint, dilapidated craft which is usually the only means of transportation deep into the interior."[338] For this mood, Baxter draws on musical orientalisms such as the pentatonic scale and chopping staccato effect in the woodwinds and glockenspiel. The wordless vocal chorus adds textural thickness and timbral contrast in some sections. The album continues in this way, culminating in "The Ritual" a "vivid ceremony . . . never seen by white man . . . here for the first time on record the rhythms and musical sounds of secret and highest orders of native tribes are used to transform the jungle mat into a colorful stage for the violent emotional expression of these mysterious and primitive folk."[339]

Les Baxter was clearly drawing not only from Hollywood film tropes for this programmatic album in which the explorer/listener journeys deeper into the jungle to witness "The Ritual," but also from a range of media including pulp paperbacks and ethnographic cinema.[340] Fatimah Tobing Rony's book *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* centres on the form and medium by which discourses of imperialism, power, and pleasure were disseminated through ethnographic productions. She describes this type of

[338] Baxter *Le Sacre du Sauvage*, liner notes.
[339] Baxter *Le Sacre du Sauvage*, liner notes.
[340] The artist for the cover art of *Le Sacre du Sauvage* was William George, an illustrator who studied with Norman Rockwell. George specialized in pulp paperback coversfor crime and western paperbacks, as well as illustrations for magazines like *Argosy* and *Cavalier.* On the album cover is a respectful looking couple—the woman's body language is appropriately prudent for the era as the man passionately leans in—surrounded by images of tiki statues and masks, a style of art that is related to the earlier mention of Picassos' *Les Demoiselles d'Avingnon* and the influence of African tribal masks on French visual artists.

storytelling as "the whole culture" (including ritual).[341] As she explains, in a classic ethnography the life of a tribe would be encapsulated into a volume covering "an array of subsistence activities, kinship, religion, myth, ceremonial ritual, music and dance, and in what may be taken as the genre's defining trope, some form of animal sacrifice."[342] The viewer/listener accepts "a certain truth" because of the formal repetition of information, transferred through film or text, that is bound to the authority of scientific knowledge. This portrayal of a whole culture, Rory writes, can occur in cinema, in the scope of an hour or two. Baxter musically narrates a similar portrayal of an exploration that culminates with "The Ritual."

Musically, the *Ritual of the Savage* is arranged with a similar combination of instruments as Baxter used on *Music Out of The Moon.* Yet, there are some notable differences. This time, Baxter, eschewing the theremin music to evoke the eeriness of outer space, employs earlier exotic techniques, such as the timbral contrast between human voices and instruments, to evoke the strangeness of the jungle. The song "The Ritual" begins with what sounds like one minute of an African djembe percussion ensemble. The percussion ensemble then fades in and out of sections of orchestral strings. Unfortunately, there is no information on the album liner notes or in Baxter's archives to identify the group. It may have been a section of a field recording or a recording from some other source dubbed onto the album. The inclusion of authentic African musicianship *instead* of a representation of a djembe ensemble through the use of Western orchestral instruments is worth noting. Baxter was clearly attempting some element of authenticity, even if his storyline was a Hollywood concoction.

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[341] Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 10. She employs the term "fascinating cannibalism" to describe the obsessive consumption of images of a racialized Other, but her notion of "cannibalism" does not describe the primitive Other; rather, "cannibal" describes the consumers of the images.
[342] Rony, *The Third Eye*, 7.

In 1952, one year after *Ritual of the Savage* was released, Baxter formed a touring "road band" which performed in night clubs and hotels, such as The Thunderbird, in Las Vegas and the Coconut Grove nightclub in Los Angeles' Ambassador Hotel. The band comprised "a chorus of twelve voices, two Afro-Cuban drummers and a dance team featuring South American and 'native' specialty work."[343] Knowing what the "native" specialty work looked like in Baxter's performances would go a long way to answering many of my questions, but it was most likely an attempt to produce a show similar to Katherine Dunham's *Tropical Revue* and *Bal Nègre* (1946–1947), or the shows presented by Cuban musicians such as Armando Pereza, who also formed and toured with Afro-Cuban dance troupes as interest in the mambo as a commercial music and dance phenomenon was increasing. Jackie Gleason also participated in the use of "all-Negro" dancers with *Tawny* (1953). In 1954 the film *There's No Business Like Show Business* featured Marilyn Monroe singing "Heat Wave" amongst flaming torches and a troupe of dark skinned male modern dancers with names "Pablo," "Chico," and "Miguelito" (choreographed by Jack Cole). Yma Sumac was also known for her staging of the exotic through flaming volcanos and "native" dance troupes she toured with. Situating Baxter's *Ritual of the Savage* in this landscape reveals alternate meanings around hybridizations of pop-classical with his promotion of his album as a ballet. Instead of (or combined with) the Russian folk neo-primitivism of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps,* Baxter's programmatic "ballet" reflects the postwar recognition of Katherine Dunham's Afrodiasporic movement and interest in Afro-Cuban dance.

In the next section I first examine how Katherine Dunham's performances intersected with, and contributed to, expressions of the exotic through interest in modern African American modern dance. Secondly, I discuss two albums both produced by Les Baxter: Yma Sumac's

[343] "Baxter Packages Road Show, Band," *Music News* 10, no. 6 (June 1952).

Voice of the Xtabay (1950), and Les Baxter's *The Passions* featuring Bas Sheva (1954) to further explore how women participated in articulations of the exotic.

EXOTIC WOMEN (1): KATHERINE DUNHAM AND *TROPICAL REVUE*

One artist not considered part of the exotica canon, but whose work intersects with Les Baxter's *Ritual of the Savage* and other exotic styles is Katherine Dunham: scholar, educator, actress, dancer, choreographer, and overall influential figure in African American concert dance. Her legacy has been examined in detail by scholars of dance, anthropology, and African American studies; and as a scholar herself, Dunham published extensively.[344] Dunham traversed the anthropological and entertainment fields to create a serious dance technique that combined aspects of American and European ballet with African diasporic traditions. Her dance incorporated music and dance traditions from North Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, the United States, and occasionally the South Pacific. She studied social anthropology in graduate school at the University of Chicago and her dance techniques were informed by field work in Jamaica, Haiti, Martinique, and Trinidad in 1935/36. But her work was also influenced by her training in both Eurocentric dance forms of ballet and modern dance, which Anthea Kraut notes, "she integrated and at times even foregrounded, in her choreography."[345]

Dunham based her shows on actual dance rituals she had researched, but there was also an element of fictional storytelling woven into her performances. Her shows followed a revue

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[344] Susan Manning, "Race in Motion: Modern Dance, Negro Dance, and Katherine Dunham," in Jens Richard Giersdorf and Yutian Wong, eds., 234-245, *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, third edition, (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019); Anthea Kraut, "Between Primitivism and Diaspora: The Dance Performance of Josephine Baker, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katherine Dunham," *Theatre Journal* 55, no. 3, (2003): 433-450; David F. García, *Listening for Africa: Freedom, Modernity, and the Logic of Black Music's African Origins*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017); Joanne Dee Das, *Katherine Dunham: Dance and the African Diaspora*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).
[345] Kraut, "Between Primitivism and Diaspora," 447.

format by stringing together multiple short dance numbers that shared no consistent plot. She set her pieces in Haiti, Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Northern Africa, and the United States and she was unafraid to delve into Vodou, Shango, and other Afro-Caribbean religious practices onstage.[346] One of the dances in her ballet *L'ag'ya,* for example, combined dance with a story of love charms, ritual dance, and zombies. Clark suggests that fictionalizing her ethnographic work was not problematic for Dunham because she made no claim to be totally ethnographic — "in the concert halls and theatres she expected her audiences to be enlightened and entertained by art, not anthropology." To say audiences were entertained is an understatement—full page advertisements in *Variety* claimed: "Color, Riotous Rhythm and Smoldering Sex!", "Staged with her usual effectiveness—exotic and thrilling dance interpretations."[347]

Tropical Revue premiered in 1944 at the Martin Beck Theatre in New York City. It was produced by Broadway impresario Sol Hurok, who played a role in shifting the emphasis from anthropology to sex, a move that David Garcia argues overshadows Dunham's original satirical intention.[348] Yet, there were benefits that are observable in the sheer popularity of Dunham's performances. Kraut argues that with extensive runs on Broadway and national and international tours during the 1940s and 1950s, Dunham's concerts reached a broad audience that "had an undeniable impact on theatergoers' perceptions of black dance."[349] Susan Manning observes that Katherine Dunham's self-representation of blackness and performance of diaspora became more accepted and, widely legible to middle-class theater-goers during and after the war years.[350] That major Hollywood productions, musical recordings, and television shows included troupes of

[346] Vèvè A. Clark, "Katherine Dunham's Tropical Revue," *Black American Literature Forum* 16, no. 4 (1982): 147–52.
[347] *Variety,* September 2, 1953, 47.
[348] García, *Listening for Africa,* 187.
[349] Kraut, "Between Primitivism and Diaspora," 448.
[350] Manning, "Race in Motion," 239.

African American dancers supports this claim. Vèvè A. Clark states that *Tropical Revue* was one of the first productions on Broadway to normalize black lives instead of reproducing stereotypes of minstrelsy.[351] And Joanne Dees Das suggests that while Dunham's audiences were 90 percent white, she offered audiences of colour "a way to view their place in the world, not as members of an oppressed minority within a colonial nation-state (whether the United States or another), but rather as a part of a diverse global majority."[352]

The contradictions seen in Katherine Dunham's performances are well documented. She did not fit into the limited roles available to women: she was described as both cool scientist and sensuous dancer. She challenged cultural hierarchies by combining ballet, modern dance, Afro-Caribbean forms, Asian, and African American vernacular traditions in her choreography and by performing in both nightclubs and opera houses. Such seeming paradoxes are arguably similar to the contradictions observed in exotica's obsession with primitivist discourse. For example, Das writes that Dunham did not use the term "African diaspora" to describe her aesthetic at the time. Instead, she used language from her training as an anthropologist. She described her aesthetic as "primitive."[353] While this may seem backwards and harmful from a retroactive position, Das suggests that Dunham insisted that she did not take primitive to mean inferior or unsophisticated. Instead, the trope of the primitive liberated Dunham's creative voice, as it did for other modern artists of the early twentieth century. Dunham's mixing of different dance traditions, "riotous rhythm and smoldering sex," the highlighting of "native" drummers in the field of popular music and entertainment clearly intersects with other artists in the exotica canon such as Yma Sumac and Les Baxter. The paradigmatic shift from the description of African-derived cultural products

[351] Clark, "Katherine Dunham's Tropical Revue," 149.
[352] Das, *Katherine Dunham,* 5.
[353] Das, *Katherine Dunham*, 6.

as primitive to the use of the term Afrodiasporic is a result of the artistic work of Katherine Dunham, Kraut argues, has had "profound consequences for conceptions of blackness in the last century."[354]

EXOTIC WOMEN (2): YMA SUMAC AND *VOICE OF THE XTABAY* (1950)

In 1950 Yma Sumac's *Voice of the Xtabay* was released on both 78, 45, LP, and EP formats, and quickly sold more than 500,000 copies, remaining on the best-selling pop charts for weeks. As one of Capitol's best-selling albums of 1950, *Xtabay* was released with musical materials and a marketing scheme that was unique and exciting. The strategy that framed Yma Sumac as strange and mystical was such a success that when Paul Weston moved to Columbia, he brought it up in a meeting with Mitch Miller as an example of how Columbia could market more sophisticated material.[355] Capitol's marketers fixated on Sumac's backstory as the Peruvian princess whose vocal range of four octaves was proof her connection to Incan royalty. This was an unusual approach for Capitol; one writer fretted over the task of writing about a female singer who did not fit the industry-imposed mold:

> Writing about canaries and chirps has been our job for years. It's easy. First get the angle, then trot out the cliches: "smash" "sensation" "a gal with a great gait who stops the show . . . Now we have to write about Yma Sumac . . . What's so different about Yma Sumac? We're sure of one thing. The Yma Sumac story is true. You don't wisecrack about her, and you don't build "angles." Here's the way we see it: There's a mystic aura about Yma Sumac. Her mother, Atahualpa, is a full-blooded Inca, directly descended from the Inca rulers. The natives called her "Princess in the Service of the Sun God." They referred to her low register as "Voice of the Earthquake" and her highest peak as "Voice of the Birds."[356]

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[354] Kraut, "Between Primitivism and Diaspora," 434.
[355] Minutes of Columbia's Pop Meeting March 15, 1951, Box 53, folder 8, "direct promotion to specific materials for the best reaction, particularly in the case of relatively sophisticated material . . . in the case of Yma Sumac Capitol held special demonstration meeting to steam up dealer's distributors and salesmen, with notable results,"
[356] *Capitol: The News from Hollywood* 9, no. 3 (March 1951):1.

Capitol's conventional approach in the promotion of female artists illustrates how "the exotic" could be used to diverge from what was perceived as normal. The regular use of clichés also illustrates how few options were available to promote female artists. The blurring of fact and fiction and the importance of a narrative in the promotion of an artist may have been taken as a given—the fantasy was part of the Hollywood mechanism.

It is generally accepted that Les Baxter "discovered "Yma Sumac.[357] Les Baxter did produce *Voice of the Xtabay*, but Capitol's newsletter of 1950 claimed Yma Sumac was "first discovered high in the mountains of Peru by a former executive of Walt Disney Studios, John Clarke Rose, [while she was] singing at a native sun festival."[358] The liner notes for *Voice of the Xtabay* claim that Yma Sumac was born high in the Peruvian Andes, grew up talking to birds and nature, participated in sun-worshipping rituals, and was deified by the local Indigenous population who "regarded her as a reincarnation of Xtabay, the lovely and mysterious woman of Inca legend."[359] As the story goes, upon hearing of Sumac, government officials brought her to Lima where she received formal vocal training and departed to the U.S. as an ambassador of Peruvian folk music.[360]

There is some truth to this story, but it's mostly fiction. Yma Sumac was born Zoila Augusta Emperatriz Chavarri del Castillo in the region of Cajamarca in the northern Peruvian Andes, but her biography was concocted in the Hollywood studios of Capitol Records with some

[357] The story that Les Baxter discovered Yma Sumac is told in most revival accounts. See for example: John Sekerka "Interview with Skip Heller" *Cosmik Debris* December, no. 19, 1996. Recording contracts reveal that Baxter was hired by Capitol to assist and advise the recording by designating arrangers and supervising the arrangements, assisting at recording sessions, and to collaborate with Yma Sumac and her husband Moisés Vivanco, to obtain their cooperation, and to direct the orchestra. He was paid $50.00 for each master. Contract No. 1319, August 6, 1951, Les Baxter Archives University of Arizona School of Music.
[358] *Capitol: The News from Hollywood,* 8 no. 9 (September 1950):7.
[359] Yma Sumac, *Voice of the Xtabay,* Capitol CD 244, 1950, LP, liner notes.
[360] *Capitol: The News from Hollywood*, 8 no. 11 (November 1950):13.

help from a Walt Disney storyline writer. She began her career as a folk singer in Lima, where she met her husband Moisés Vivanco, and formed a folk group: the Inca Taqui Trio. Carmen Miranda writes that Sumac emerged at a time when Peruvians were beginning to pay attention to the culture of their first peoples. [361] During the first half of the twentieth century, according to Zoila Mendoza, nationalist and populist governments looked to project a stable Peruvian national identity.[362] Indigenous-based music and dances began to be seen as something to be protected and encouraged through recordings, radio, and festivals. It was in this folk environment that Yma Sumac and her group found success in Peru and in Latin America more broadly.

The Inca Taqui Trio arrived in New York City in 1946, and according to Miranda, they found the audiences for Andean folk music were less enthusiastic than they had been in Latin America. The trio played supper clubs, Borscht Belt resorts, business conventions, and for a time, a delicatessen in Greenwich Village.[363] The most accurate account of her "discovery" is from Yma Sumac herself, who claimed in an interview with *Variety* that Walter Rivers signed her to Capitol Records in 1948 after her unsuccessful stint performing in New York nightclubs; she then relocated to Los Angeles.[364] After appearing on Eddie Cantor's NBC show "Colgate Comedy Theatre" and the Hollywood Bowl, she recorded *Voice of the Xtabay*.[365] Capitol

[361] Carmen A. Miranda, "Voice of the Xtabay and Bullock's Wilshire: Hearing Yma Sumac in Southern California," in *The Tide Was Always High: The Music of Latin America in Los Angeles*, edited by Josh Kun, 130-137, (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018); Carolina A. Miranda, "On the Trail of Yma Sumac: The Exotic Legend Came from Peru But Her Career Was All Hollywood," *Los Angeles Times,* March 23, 2017.
[362] Zoila S. Mendoza, *Creating Our Own: Folklore, Performance, and Identity in Cuzco, Peru*, [English ed.] (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).
[363] Miranda, "Voice of the Xtabay and Bullock's Wilshire," 134.
[364] "Capital Prepping Big Campaign for Sumac Peruvian Song Album," *Variety,* September 20, 1950, 43. This account is confirmed by Yma Sumac in Vale and Juno, *Incredibly Strange Music* vol. 1, 169-171.
[365] "Hollywood Bowl- Symphonies Under the Stars Arthur Fielder and the Boston Pops," *Billboard,* August 12, 1950.

Records' executives invented the story of "the bird who turned into a woman" and "the voice of the earthquake" in its marketing of the album.

Initially after signing with her, Capitol's producers had difficulty finding material for Sumac to record. They brought in Les Baxter to create the *Xtabay* album which included his (and Clark's) compositions "Xtabay" and "Accla Taqui" in addition to songs written by Sumac's husband Vivanco.[366] Baxter applied the same type of arrangements that brought success with *Music out of the Moon* to Vivanco's songs, by adding piano, strings, woodwinds, Latin percussion, and gongs. Yma Sumac's voice sounds as other-worldly as the theremin-accompanied vocal chorus on Baxter's *Music Out of the Moon*, but on *Xtabay* the arrangers treated the singer's voice both as a timbral instrument to merge and interact with other sounds, as well as a solo voice connected to an actual person. Rather than a mass of voices floating around in the stratosphere as heard on *Music Out of the Moon's* "Lunar Rhapsody" or articulating mechanical urbanity on "Radar Blues," the recording of the song "Xtabay" (Lure of the Unknown Love) gives the impression of a voice hovering in the atmosphere above slow and steady timpani before a cascade of strings and flute flourishes transports her ethereal voice into an earthly body.

The liner notes on the *Voice of the Xtabay* included fictional descriptions of the songs' origins in ceremonial Incan culture. The song "Xtabay," for example, conflates Tin Pan Alley AABA form, Yucatec Mayan mythology, and a Disney-esque narrative. According to the notes, the song tells this tale:

> a lovely young Incan virgin fell in love with a high prince of an Aztec kingdom. It was a forbidden love however, for he was a high born and she was but a simple peasant. The young girl, unable to keep the secret in her heart, sung [sic] to the

[366] "Capital Prepping Big Campaign for Sumac Peruvian Song Album," *Variety,* September 20, 1950, 43.

> mountains, the winds, whoever would listen to her song. Her voice was so penetrating and enchanting that ultimately it reached and killed the far-off prince.

This explanation of the song is a blurring of fact and fiction. In Yucatec Maya mythology, La Xtabay is a supernatural being who takes the shape of a beautiful woman. She waits behind a ceiba tree and lures men into the forest on the premise of sex but then transforms into a serpent and devours them.[367] The myth of Xtabay may have been a little too mystical for the executives at Capitol. She was marketed as both an Incan and Mayan princess, a distinction that was apparently of little significance to the record company. The conflation of Mayan and Incan mythology provided the requisite and mysterious themes of nature, human-animal hybrids, and folk storytelling as a stage show, a trend popularized by the work of Katherine Dunham and her dance troupe.

Popular recording artists in the 1950s were managed by talent agencies or had contractual touring obligations through their record labels. As with other artists of this period, Yma Sumac's record sales relied on extensive touring and elaborate stage shows in nightclubs across North America. Between 1952 and 1957, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Yma Sumac performed at (among many others) the West Hollywood nightclub Mocambo, Los Angeles' Coconut Grove and Ambassador hotels, the Pierre Hotel in New York, Sans Souci in Montreal, and the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas. In Las Vegas she performed at El Rancho and played a three-week engagement at the New Frontier Hotel. She also conducted several European and Latin American tours. Yma Sumac developed a stage act with a troupe of dancers who performed against ritualized stage décor such as flaming volcanos. Dancers were

[367] Dorothy Jennifer Romans, "The Siren of Syzygy: A Textual Hermeneutic Study of the Embrace of the Anima/Animus in Yucatec Maya Culture as Seen Through the Myth of *La Xtabay*, (PhD dissertation, Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2013), Proquest 3599363.

a central feature of Sumac's stage shows and were named in many reviews of her shows. In a New York engagement at the Cotillion Room, she performed with "Andean lasses, Ula and Sari, with native drum tempos supplied by Siboney and Kilka," and dancers Cholita, Kori, and Najala were named in *Variety.*[368] One reviewer summed up the stage show with at the Palmer House in Chicago like this:

> The layout is introed by the Yma Sumac Dancers in "Coquettes" a production number which is a terp [sic] tale of Inca love. The dancers are flashily costumed, but the productions seem rather elementary. Don Kiego, male member of the hoofing trio, solos in "Danza India," a traditional Indian dance with the necessary wild gyrations, fast stops, and wilder-sounding animal-like grunts. One really imaginative dance emerges from this collection, "Llama Caravan," in which the two gals and a guy make like llamas during the mating season. The crowd likes it.[369]

This review of the show makes it out as a spectacle of sex, dance, and mythic storylines: a kind of Disney for adults. As in Katherine Dunham's shows, there was an obvious appeal in the sexual suggestiveness of the routines. As I mentioned earlier, Sol Hurok, the producer of Dunham's *Tropical Review* had emphasized the sex over anthropology. This formula appears to have been successful as a middlebrow entertainment—mixing high art (modern dance, ballet) with a growing interest in folk music, Afro-Cuban dance (mambo) and an arguably lowbrow (or vaudevillian) sexual spectacle.

Hollywood capitalized on this trend of exotic/folk/sex with both Yma Sumac and Katherine Dunham in several 1950s films. Dunham was the choreographer and had a lead acting role in Robert Rossen's *Mambo* (1954), among other films. The persona Yma Sumac constructed

[368] *Billboard*, November 5, 1955, 15; *Variety*, February 24, 1954. One unfortunate incident occurred in 1955 when dancer/choreographer Victor Dextre sued Inca Concerts and Yma Sumac Enterprises for $150,000 for a violent beating at the hand of Moises Vivanco. *Variety,* August 3, 1955, 50.
[369] "Night Club Reviews: Palmer House, Chi," *Variety,* April 20, 1955, 60.

for her nightclub shows played well on the silver screen. In 1954 she appeared in the Indiana Jones prototype *Secret of the Incas* with Charlton Heston.

Capitol pushed the Sumac Incan princess image with further recordings including *Legend of the Sun Virgin* (1952), *Inca Taqui* (1953), *Mambo!* (1954), and *Legend of the Jivaro* (1957). By 1956 Sumac was introducing more American contemporary elements to her shows by removing the flaming volcanoes and adding pop songs such as "Love is a Many Splendored Thing."[370] This inclusion of American popular music had been seen in some of her earlier shows in which she included "Negro spirituals and a Gershwin-Porter medley."[371] Her exotic persona proved fluid, as a way to traverse ethic, exotic, and folk categories as well as mainstream popular styles.

EXOTIC WOMEN (3): BAS SHEVA AND *THE PASSIONS* (1954)

Bas Sheva is an artist who is not included in the exotica canon, nor is *The Passions* considered an exotica album. Yet, I suggest that it demonstrates how women's voices were used to represent difference for other purposes besides evoking the primitive exotic. This album participates in the exoticizing of women through gendered difference around sound technology, thematic material and orchestration.

There is no question of the target audience for this album—it was marketed to "the audiophile," an assumed male consumer of home audio reproduction equipment.[372] The album was cross-listed under the marketing categories of "background and listening albums," and as

[370] "Yma Sumac's New Americanized Act," *Variety,* January 11, 1956, 63.
[371] *Variety,* August 11, 1954.
[372] For an examination of the male audiophile around this period see Eric D. Barry, "High-Fidelity Sound as Spectacle and Sublime, 1950–1961," *Sound in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, edited by David Suisman and Susan Strasser, 115-138, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

one of Capitol's Full Dimensional Sound (FDS) series, described as "specialized high-fidelity albums."[373] One of the main selling points of the high-priced album was its accompanying booklet written by Charles Fowler, at the time editor of *High Fidelity Magazine*. The booklet was meant to complement the recording by providing a "high fidelity critique" of each song according to the enhanced sonic capabilities of home audio technology. Bas Sheva's voice is intended to be used as an orchestral instrument in "a classical manner" and to produce a variety of sound effects for marketing of the FDS albums. One review in *Variety* summed up the goal of the album: "the full range of instrumental colors and shadings are used to test the [consumer's] playback equipment."[374]

HIGH FIDELITY AND EXOTIC SOUNDS

The adoption of the term "high fidelity" (sometimes shortened to hi-fi) provided a host of new marketing schemes and categories for the nascent LP business. One of the developments that benefited the industry was the Recording Industry Association of America's (RIAA) standardization of the recording curve and playback curve for consistency in LPs and audio equipment. This was necessary because, as William Francis Shea explains, the playing time on a record depends on the number of grooves on a disk and low frequencies take up more space on the disk than high frequencies. In order to have evenly spaced grooves on the disk, during the recording process the volume of all the frequencies are modified. The recording curve is the name for the modification process in which the lower frequencies are minimized, and the higher frequencies are amplified. This modification creates evenly spaced grooves but causes problems when the disk is played back. Record companies developed a playback curve for the phonograph

[373] "Sex and Hi Fi: Capitol Hits Both Markets," *Billboard,* February 6, 1954.
[374] "The Passions," *Variety*, January 27, 1954, 46.

that would compensate for the recording curve and bring the frequencies into normal position. But because each phonograph manufacturer designed playback equipment for their specific product, there was no compatibility between the playback curves. This incompatibility resulted in most records sounding different when played on different phonographs.[375]

The standardized recording and playback curves offered consumers a consistency in the LPs and playback equipment, but there were no evaluative criteria to determine the parameters of the term "high fidelity." Each record label, therefore, devised their own language and rating system to market high fidelity records. Manufacturers exploited catchwords that promoted the improved sonic qualities of the vinyl surfaces over the older shellac records. RCA Victor was one of the first companies to release technical information about their "New Orthophonic" recording curve. RCA had not changed their recording technology, but they found that there was a growing market among "audiophiles" who enjoyed technical jargon with their sound technology. Mercury's high-fidelity terminology was named "Living Presence," Vox selected "Ultra High Fidelity" (UHF), and Capitol released their Full Dimensional Sound (FDS) series in 1952.[376]

As home audio systems became more advanced and standardized, the term "high fidelity" became a marketing term and buzz word. Michel Chion argues that the notion of high fidelity is purely a commercial marketing scheme and corresponds to nothing precise or verifiable; it is based on sharpness or definition and not fidelity to "realness."[377] The term high fidelity was

[375] William Francis Shea, "The Role and Function of Technology in American Popular Music: 1945-1964" Ph.D dissertation (The University of Michigan, 1990), Proquest 9034512, 109.
[376] Some of Capitol's FDS series included, "Popular Instrumentals in FDS," "Popular Vocals in FDS," "Classics in FDS," and "A Study in High Fidelity."
[377] Michel Chion, Claudia Gorbman, and Walter Murch, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 99.

legitimized as record companies adopted technical jargon as an evaluative tool; it did not refer to aesthetic experience of the listener.[378]

Capitol Records took the lead in describing their approach to high fidelity in technical terms. The booklet that accompanied all of Capitol's FDS recordings (including *The Passions*) explains, "Full Dimensional Sound means dynamic fidelity in the recordings of music—fidelity which retains the music's original range, balance, and depth. It represents, most simply, a collaboration among artist, producer, and engineer, to produce records of outstanding excellence."[379] In order to have an FDS symbol, the recording was evaluated by a "grading committee of engineering and repertoire representatives (a rotation of review committee members further assures objective results of the procedure)."[380]

Considering the RIAA curve standardization, the claim to fidelity "which retains the music's original range, balance, and depth" is impossible. The process of recording alters the incoming sound and then alters the playback sound to adhere to the limitations of the audio equipment. But the point of the FDS evaluation was not to explain to the consumer how drastically the sound had to be modified. Rather, it was to reassure the listener that recordings are not artificial but a natural process of collaboration between the artist, producer, and engineer. The listener in this case was generally considered to be a classical music enthusiast and reader of home audio publications such as *High Fidelity* magazine.

Scientific objectivity was the professed goal with the FDS series, but the technical jargon actually opened up possibilities for higher priced records (and home audio equipment) marketed to men. There is an inherent gendered aspect to the phenomenon of hi-fi which was promoted

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[378] Shea, "The Role and Function of Technology in American Popular Music,"109.
[379] Les Baxter Featuring Bas Sheva, *The Passions,* Capitol Records LAL 486, 1953, LP, 10" Box Set, liner notes.
[380] Baxter Featuring Bas Sheva, *The Passions*, liner notes.

through magazines such as *High Fidelity.* Keir Keightley argues that the concept of home audio as a masculine technology gained momentum throughout the 1950s. The idea of a gendered listening subject is demonstrated in a 1953 issue of *Life* magazine that suggests "one of the strangest facts about both [hi-fi] bugs and audiophiles is that they are almost exclusively male . . . women seldom like high fidelity."[381] As I examined in the previous section, the idea of the bachelor was constructed through cultural connections linking attitudes toward sex, music, and the technical gadgetry of the bachelor pad as spaces absent of wives. Social commentary around gender and sexual difference was articulated through the music, liner notes, and visual images of mood albums. June Bundy Csida's notes to Henri René's album *Music for the Weaker Sex* for example, argues that there are biological differences between men and women that are demonstrated through bodily senses: men are sexually stimulated by visual images, and women are stimulated by sound.[382] These claims about the gendered listening subject may have been connected to the medical and institutional discourse around sexuality such as those found in the Kinsey Reports of the 1950s, but this discourse also offered numerous themes for mood albums.

Instead of the exotic soundscape of space, as with Les Baxter's *Music Out of the Moon*, the theme of *The Passions* is meant to, according to the liner notes, be a musical representation of seven "female passions" with songs titled "Despair," "Ecstasy," "Hate," "Lust," "Terror," "Jealousy", and "Joy." The liner notes explain the album's theme: "A woman's passions . . . violent, anguished, poignant, ecstatic . . . are eternally fascinating . . . here Les Baxter expresses them in richly orchestrated music, using as an instrument the remarkably sensitive voice of Bas Sheva—a voice whose vivid colorations range from the guttural snarl of savagery to a delicate

[381] Quoted in Keir Keightley,"'Turn It Down!' She Shrieked: Gender, Domestic Space, and High Fidelity, 1948–59," *Popular Music* 15, no. 2 (1996), 154.
[382] Henri René, *Music for the Weaker Sex,* RCA Victor LSP-1583, 1958, LP, liner notes.

and lyrical beauty."[383] The notes suggest that women possess an inherently different and fascinating emotional palette than do men, and the listener is instructed to persevere through the demanding representation of female emotions: "here is a picture of a woman's passion painted with strokes of shocking brilliance . . . daringly executed for those who can sustain the most challenging of listening sensations."[384] Bas Sheva's vocals are described as screams and grunts, and the idea of violence as a sound quality is particularly highlighted. For the listener who can endure, contingent on the playback of a well-balanced wide range system in which bass and treble tones are audible and distortion free, the reward is "the ultimate in satisfaction."[385]

Yet, the explanation of the sound quality focuses less on the technical advancements with high fidelity and more on the orchestral timbres and vocalist's range (sharp, bitter, biting, roomy, percussive, ringing, resonant, liquidity, echoey, and violent). The orchestration and instrumentation on *The Passions* indicate Baxter was once again aiming for other-worldly effects with the use of a large ensemble and unusual combination of instruments as heard in *Music Out of the Moon*. *The Passions* orchestra included two clarinets (doubling piccolo, flute, and alto flute), two trumpets, two trombones, one French horn, ten violins, two violas, two cellos, string bass, harp, piano (doubling celeste), percussion (snare, bass drum, tom toms, cymbals, wood blocks, triangle, tympani, bells, vibraphone, xylophone, timbales, conga drum, bongos, guiro, tambourine, castanets, cabaza, maracas, and gong), in addition to a choir of three male and three female voices. Baxter utilizes Afro-Cuban percussion, but there are no descriptors of exotic, primitive, or jungle themes on this album. This presentation suggests that these instruments could be framed as familiar or different depending on the theme or mood the arranger was

[383] Baxter Featuring Bas Sheva, *The Passions*.
[384] Baxter, Sheva, *The Passions,* Liner notes.
[385] Baxter, Sheva, *The Passions,* Liner notes.

seeking. Baxter could choose which features to highlight in the world of gendered strangeness he was constructing.

There is also a citational process at work through the use of timbral contrast and tone colour to signal different moods. *The Passions* is an album that reflects Baxter's *Music Out of The Moon* in many ways. The use of the operatic soprano voice to evoke an atmospheric sonority hovering above the texture of the impressionistic strings, harps, and piano was a trope that Baxter borrowed from film compositions. As an alto singer Bas Sheva's vocal range is used to achieve colours and tones different from those of the voices on *Music Out of The Moon* and *Voice of the Xtabay.*

As with Baxter's other mood albums the songs have vocals but no words. But there are observable gendered remarks that imply difference in the discussion of the timbral qualities of Bas Sheva's vocals. For example, the description of her "remarkably sensitive and vivid colorations [that] range from the guttural snarl of savagery to a delicate and lyrical beauty" marks her voice as different, even exotic. Nina Sun Eidsheim suggests that what we perceive as the content of the singer's voice is produced in part by the listener.[386] Vocal difference can be perceived as ethnic and gendered depending on what elements are highlighted and who is listening. The notion of vocal difference can reflect a culturally instilled listening process and can hinge on what is perceived as the normative voice. This norm could be inferred from

[386] Nina Sun Eidsheim, "Race and the Aesthetics of Vocal Timbre," in *Rethinking Difference in Music Scholarship,* ed. Olivia Ashley Bloechl, Melanie Diane Lowe, and Jeffrey Kalberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 358. Eidsheim discusses difference in the context of classical vocal training, for a discussion of vocal timbre and purity in early British music see, Melanie L. Marshall, "Voce Bianca: Purity and Whiteness in Early British Music Vocality, *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 19 (2015): 33-44. For discussions of Sexuality and Gender See Ruth Solie, ed., *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); and Richard Dellamora and Daniel Fischlin, eds., *The Work of Opera: Genre, Nationhood, and Sexual Difference*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

Capitol's recordings of other white female singers, which famously included Peggy Lee, Jo Stafford, Kay Starr, Margaret Whiting, and the lesser-known Helen O'Connell and Mary Mayo. Bas Sheva's voice becomes exoticized through the specialized listening qualities promoted by the FDS marketers and the essentialist discourses around sonic properties of uniqueness and authenticity.

But Baxter must have also relied on Bas Sheva's technical proficiency singing both popular songs and hazzanut: musical settings of Jewish liturgy often sung with elaborate embellishments and flourishes. Bas Sheva is the Yiddish stage name of Bernice Kanefsky. She came from a Jewish cantorial family and began her career performing at weddings in the borscht belt.[387] Rachel Adelstein explains that as part of her performance, Bas Sheva would signal the difference to her audience by "dimming the lights and donning a lace kippah (head covering) before her cantorial piece."[388] In 1953 she signed with Capitol Records as a popular song recording artist, and in 1954 she recorded *Soul of a People: Hebraich Chants* (1954). Until the middle of the twentieth century, women were not formally allowed to be cantors.[389] Adelstein suggests that Yiddish American theatre in the early 20th century, such as the revue-type shows Bas Sheva performed in, provided a public stage for Jewish female artists to perform traditional

[387] Bas Sheva toured with revue-type shows *Borscht Capades* and *Farfel Follies,* performed as a soloist in *The Story of a People* (1948), and appeared in the film *Catskill Honeymoon* (1950). In the 1960s her father, Hazzan Kanefsky, recorded two albums on Folkways Records: *Cantorials by Cantor Yosele Kanefsky* (1960) accompanied by organ, and *The Friday Night Service with Cantor Joseph Kanefsky Traditional Style* (1962) singing the Shabbat prayers unaccompanied.

[388] Rachel Louise Adelstein, "Braided Voices: Women Cantors in Non-Orthodox Judaism," (PhD dissertation (The University of Chicago, 2013), Proquest 3568347, 138.

[389] The Jewish cantorate was an all-male institution, maintained by a Talmudic dictum *kol ishah*, that a woman's voice can be seductive. Arianne Brown, "The Khazntes—The Life Stories of Sophie Kurtzer, Bas Sheva, Sheindele the Khaznte, Perele Feig, Goldie Malavsky, and Fraydele Oysher," *Journal of Synagogue Music* 31 (2007): 51.

hazzanut as a form of semi-secular art song and helped to ease the way toward acceptance of women's voices singing liturgical music.[390]

Rachel Adelstein and Arianne Brown point out that female cantors in the early twentieth century shared a common trait of singing in a low register. They suggest that this is most likely because the traditional hazzanut is a male baritone or tenor singing at the top of his range, and the women would adjust their mezzo-soprano and contralto vocal range to match the men.[391] Brown's position is that because Bas Sheva, and some other female singers sang in this low chest register, "there might have been an aspect of psychological comfort that allowed more acceptance than would have been the case with the soprano voice."[392] While it was still seen as a novelty for a woman to sing religious text in the 1950s, the attitude towards female cantors was beginning to shift, and Bas Sheva played a role in this development.[393]

Many of the musical techniques that Bas Sheva employed singing liturgical music can be heard on *The Passions.* On the song "Despair" the main motivic material is the descending chromatic tetrachord that is passed around (and inverted) through a variety of instruments and Bas Sheva's vocalizing. Her vocal inflections can best be described as a type of microtonal hiccup before sliding into, and maintaining, the desired pitch. The full range of her alto voice is utilized as she doubles many of the other instruments. Musical difference is represented through her technical proficiency in articulating bended pitches, sigh motives, turns, non-sung sounds

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[390] Adelstein, "Braided Voices," 137.
[391] Adelstein, "Braided Voices," 139. When the *New York Times* reported in 1975 that Barbara Herman was the first woman in the history of American Reform Judaism to be designated officially as a cantor, they mentioned that her vocal register was an alto. Irving Spiegel, "First Woman Cantor, an Alto, Invested," *New York Times,* June 9, 1975.
[392] Brown, "The Khazntes," 52.
[393] Bas Sheva appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1956, but the Union of Orthodox rabbis objected to a woman singing liturgy on television, and Ed Sullivan was not interesting in having her on the show to sing popular music selections. Brown, "The Khazntes," 57.

such as nervous laughter and squeals, and other ornaments rarely heard among Capitol's other female singers. The difference in sound is conveyed to the listener through a variety of factors including vocal timbre and register, combinations of instruments, theme, and musical description. The FDS marketing had less to do with how the audience perceived exotic, than with rather the musical factors incorporated in the recordings. Examined in this context, the albums discussed here attest to the different gender and racial dynamics involved in popular music of the 1950s.

While none of these artists or albums I have examined in this section were considered to be exotica at the time, they all participated in articulating different concepts of exotic. The cover art of Yma Sumac's *Voice of the Xtabay* and Bas Sheva's *The Passions* demonstrate a type of sophisticated marketing undertaken by Capitol. Instead of hired models, as was the practice of the day, these albums feature images of the artists caught in an expressive moment. Yma Sumac is dressed in beautiful traditional Peruvian attire, and she is superimposed over an exploding volcano surrounded by a collage of Incan stone idols. Although the illustration of Bas Sheva on *The Passions* does not altogether resemble photographs of her, the album cover won an industry award in 1954. It features a shocking pink lithograph of a Bas Sheva, wide-eyed staring at the viewer with her mouth agape and her hand clutching her head.[394] Both artists toured with revue-type shows and performed in and around New York and the borscht belt —the vaudeville circuit of Catskills resort hotels popular with Jewish New Yorkers. They both sang American popular songs, but Bas Sheva also sang Yiddish and sacred Jewish texts, while Yma Sumac sang in Spanish and Quechua. Their vocal range was emphasized and set apart from Capitol's other female artists and their ethnic difference was promoted as a type of exotic novelty.

[394] "Cap Album Art Lauded," *Variety*, May 19, 1954, 47. The cover won an award in the "Packaging Division" of the Lithographic Awards Competition.

These album treatments offer some fascinating similarities and differences. They illustrate how ideas of folk and high fidelity both operated on a similar sphere. On *The Passions*, it was not high fidelity, sound manipulation, or studio tricks that marked Bas Sheva's voice as different. Rather, exotic was relayed through her musical artistry, techniques, ethnicity, and gender, along with Les Baxter's orchestration and citation of different exotic tropes. Yma Sumac and Katherine Dunham's performances demonstrate how the combination of primitivism and sex was a popular theme in the networks of Broadway theatrical shows and popular music recordings. Most importantly, these women show how they navigated the racialized and gendered entertainment industry and negotiated the intersections between classical and popular.

CONCLUSION

I began this chapter with the goal of determining how audiences understood Les Baxter's *Ritual of the Savage* and its connection to Stravinsky. By asking this question I have shown that the lines between Western art music, popular music, modernism, primitivism, and exoticism were entangled between the approximate years of 1947 and 1954. These descriptive terms were not only linked to racial and gendered discourses, but to hierarchies of cultural value around high art, popular entertainments, and the middlebrow. Baxter's attempt to replicate and represent both Katherine Dunham's European ballet/African American concert dance, and Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* with his album *Le Sacre du Sauvage,* illustrates the constellation of meaning around these terms. I have begun to untangle some of the complexities around race, gender, modernism and primitivism, but this chapter shows that these terms were unstable and used for a variety of different goals. Yet, it is arguable that because of the fluidity of these terms, Martin

Denny and Les Baxter could both benefit from the identification of Afro-Cuban jazz as "primitive" and "sophisticated."

Tracing the divergent streams of women's artistry in the 1950s, among white women and women of colour, is challenging, contradictory, and complex. There were limited roles for women in the music industry outside of being models and singers, and the proliferation of white women on record covers illustrates these limitations. I have also shown in this chapter how women were central to articulating concepts of modernity. Women such as Katherine Dunham, Yma Sumac, and Bas Sheva were exoticized and sexualized, but through their artistic choices they also exposed white audience to self-representations of Blackness and ethnicity.

CHAPTER FOUR |

"WE PLAY VACATION MUSIC": EXOTICA IN HAWAI'I

Denny's group goes from bird calls to tom toms in this tastefully done set of offbeat music.
It's sort of a jungle mood music album with a swinging beat.
— Variety (1957)

Here's cool Hawaiian music without the whiny guitars. It's called exotica. It's fun.
— Chicago Daily Tribune (1959)

We play vacation music—new and different arrangements of known music
using a unique combination of instruments and sounds.
We create a musical bridge between East and West.
— Martin Denny (1961)

In the introduction I presented two of these reviews to show how exotica was understood in relation to two spheres of popular music that American audiences would have been familiar with. The *Variety* review of Martin Denny's *Exotica* (Vol. 1) situates the identification of the genre in relation to mood music—a central organizing model for mainstream instrumental pop music during this period.[395] The review from the *Chicago Daily Tribune* recognizes the genre as Hawaiian music, and notes the absence of an identifying musical feature generally attributed to some Hawaiian music— the steel guitar.[396] The quote from Martin Denny in *Paradise of the Pacific*, a periodical that promoted Hawaiian tourism and investment, adds another characteristic element associated with exotica: tourist or "vacation music" that bridged East and West.[397] As a

[395] Album Reviews, "Exotica," *Variety*, July 24, 1957, 56.
[396] Will Leonard, "Here's Cool Hawaiian Music Without Whining Guitars," *Chicago Daily Tribune,* April 19, 1959, F11.
[397] Cliff Coleman, "Martin Denny," *Paradise of the Pacific* 73 no. 7, 1961. 18-21, 27.

type of vacation music, exotica has a particular meaning in the context of Hawaiian statehood and tourism during the early years of the Cold War. This is a period in which, Christina Klein argues, Americans were developing a particular fascination with Asia.[398]

This chapter situates exotica in the postwar soundscape of Waikiki and its interconnection with the U.S. popular music industry between the years 1954 when Denny arrived and 1959 when Hawai'i became a state. The two sections of this chapter examine two spheres of exotica: the live performances of the Martin Denny Group in the hotel lounges of Waikiki, where exotic music was designed to appeal to a tourist audience, and recordings of exotica with Liberty Records that stabilized the genre by drawing links between Martin Denny and the earlier recordings of Les Baxter, as well as connecting exotica to mood albums. Broadly, this chapter demonstrates how Martin Denny's exotica articulated the vision of a modern and multi-racial Hawai'i through tourism and hotels as sites of music making. I show how exotica participated in a particular moment of nation building through tourism by legitimating a view of Hawai'i as a modern and harmonious multi-racial melting pot during a period in which Hawai'i was anticipated to be, but not yet officially, part of the U.S.

EXOTICA: IS IT HAWAIIAN MUSIC?

In 2012, George Kanahele's extensive 1979 book *Hawaiian Music and Musicians* was revised by John Berger to include the following entry on Martin Denny:

> Fewer types of non-Hawaiian music are more closely associated with Hawaii than the "Exotica" music conceived and performed by pianist Martin Denny. Denny's blend of refined jazz, tropical percussion instruments, and "jungle noises" was an essential part of the Hawaiian experience for tens of thousands of people who passed through Waikiki while Denny was playing there in the 1950s and 60s. For many of them, his music was an indelible part of their experience of Hawaii. As such, it is music of Hawaii—and represents an important chapter in local music history. Martin

[398] Klein, *Cold War Orientalism,* 2003.

> Denny's music is not Hawaiian, nor did he ever claim that it was. However, in its point of origin and the public perception of it, "Exotica" is very much a part of the music of Hawaii.[399]

While Berger argues that exotica is not Hawaiian music, he does see a place for Denny in the documentation of Hawaiian music. Berger acknowledges that exotica was a fundamental part of the tourist experience. Yet there is another aspect to Martin Denny's exotica that reaches beyond local history: the replication of the tourist experience for those listening at home to sound recordings.

Defining Hawaiian music is complicated, due to the colonial processes and European contact that brought about a synthesis of indigenous Hawaiian musical practices with Western styles.[400] Charles Hiroshi Garrett argues that it is difficult to construct a simple definition of Hawaiian music because of the wide range of ethnic music on the Hawaiian Islands; the high degree of interaction between indigenous and foreign musical traditions—initially from Europe and America; and the considerable efforts by the U.S. music industry to produce Hawaiian-themed music. In most cases, Garrett says, Hawaiian music is "defined by any music making in Hawai'i or music created by Hawaiian musicians, regardless of its degree of connection to indigenous practices."[401] Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman makes the argument that there are differences between Hawaiian music as an ethnic tradition, and "music in Hawai'i" which

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[399] George S. Kanahele and John. Berger, "Martin Denny," in *Hawaiian Music and Musicians: An Encyclopedic History*. rev. and updated ed. 126-128, (Honolulu, HI: Mutual Pub., 2012). John Berger is an entertainment journalist affiliated with the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* and its predecessor the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin.* Berger has reviewed local entertainment since 1988. His weekly column "On the Scene With" runs in the Sunday Honolulu Star-Advertiser. Berger is the editor of the second edition of Hawaiian Music and Musicians and is the Na Hoku Hanohano Award winning liner notes writer.
[400] Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, "Beyond Bibliography: Interpreting Hawaiian-Language Protestant Hymn Imprints," *Ethnomusicology* 40, no. 3 (1996): 469.
[401] Charles Hiroshi Garrett, *Struggling to Define a Nation: American Music and the Twentieth Century,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 169.

involves the traditions of various ethnic groups including Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, and Western peoples.[402] She adds that the rubric "Hawaiian music" actually describes an ethnic tradition that embraces a complex of repertory, performance practice, and genre. With its blending of diverse musical influences from Western rudiments to Portuguese stringed instruments like the ukulele, Hawaiian music, Stillman suggests, can be regarded as both an ethnic tradition and as a branch of American popular music.[403]

The musical landscape of Hawai'i changed when nineteenth-century Protestant missionaries began to set the spoken language of the Native Hawaiians (Kānaka Maoli) to the Roman alphabet, translating hymn texts into the Hawaiian language (called himeni), and introducing the Christian hymn repertoire and the rudiments of Western music to the Hawaiian peoples. King David Kalakaua (r. 1874-1891) and his sister and successor Queen Lili'uokalani (r. 1891-1893) were educated in Western musical composition and were composers of himeni-type secular songs. These songs featured secular texts set by Hawaiian composers, with tunes patterned on himeni models.[404] Throughout the nineteenth century missionaries attempted to completely eradicate Hawaiian cultural practices including indigenous musical expressions of the mele (chant) and hula (dance). King Kalakaua actively worked to revive ancient traditions of mele and hula. For his official coronation in 1883, King Kalakaua presented extensive hula performances at the royal celebrations.[405] Heather Diamond and Adria Imada both point out that after years of suppression and social change, the hula performed at the coronation had become a hybrid dance, performed in the Hawaiian language, accompanied by guitar and ukulele, and

[402] Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, "Published Hawaiian Songbooks," *Notes* 44, no. 2 (1987): 222.
[403] Stillman, "Published Hawaiian Songbooks," 221.
[404] It is worth noting that Hawaiian musical pedagogy differed from missions elsewhere in Polynesia, where there is no evidence of musical rudiments having been taught. Stillman, "Beyond Bibliography," 476.
[405] Kanahele and Berger, *Hawaiian Music and Musicians,* 201.

influenced by European music (polka or waltz tempos, couplet verses, and a vamp that separated the verses).[406]

Hybrid genres fusing European and Hawaiian elements were a prominent feature of late nineteenth century colonial dynamics. Of the many songs composed by Queen Lili'uokalani, "Aloha Oe" is arguably the most famous.[407] "Aloha Oe," composed in 1887, illustrates the synthesis of Hawaiian and Western musical characteristics that, according to Stillman, can be classified into four song types: 1) himeni: sacred texts from Anglo-American hymnody sung in Hawaiian in a form of 16 measures with alternating variations of the verse-chorus; 2) himeni-type: secular text of tunes patterned on himeni models set by Hawaiian composers in the Hawaiian language; 3) hula ku'i or hula song: secular texts set by Hawaiian composers in the Hawaiian language and choreographed in strophic form; and 4) hapa haole: secular texts by Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian composers in English, with some aspect of Hawaiian culture as a theme set in a Tin Pan Alley (AABA) song format.[408]

From the examples Stillman provides, it is evident that hapa haole was not the only type of Hawaiian song that employed Western stylings, but it was absorbed into American popular music (more than the other types of hybrid song) during the early twentieth century as fascination with Hawaiian music generated demand for live entertainment, sheet music, and phonograph recordings. Hawaiian artists such as Sonny Cunha (1879-1893), considered the "father" of hapa haole song, steel guitar innovator Joseph Kekuku (1874-1932), and many Native

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[406] Heather A. Diamond, *American Aloha: Cultural Tourism and the Negotiation of Tradition,* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008); Adria Imada, "Transnational 'Hula' as Colonial Culture," *The Journal of Pacific History* 46, no. 2 (2011): 149–76. (157)

[407] Adria Imada, "'Aloha Oe': Settler-Colonial Nostalgia and the Genealogy of a Love Song," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 37, no. 2 (2013): 35. Adria Imada cites The Queen's Songbook, Her Majesty Queen Lili'uokalani, ed. Dorothy K. Gillett and Barbara Barnard Smith (Honolulu: Hui Hanai, 1999), that suggests the song was based on Charles C. Converse's 1857 song "The Rock Beside the Sea."

[408] Stillman, "Published Hawaiian Songbooks," 225.

Hawaiian dance troupes in the early twentieth century recorded Hawaiian music and dance numbers and performed live in venues on the vaudeville circuit, Chautauqua assemblies, or local, state, and international expositions.[409]

As the Hawaiian craze took hold of American audiences in the 1920s, most Tin Pan Alley songwriters who had honed their skills writing ethnic novelty songs, soon tried their hand at writing Hawaiian-themed songs. Tin Pan Alley's interest in Hawaiian songs, Garrett observes, did not aim for musical authenticity. Instead popular songwriters perpetuated cultural and racist stereotypes by conflating the primitive and the exotic— readily identifiable in the "hula girl" iconography.[410] Further complicating any definition of Hawaiian music, Stillman writes, was the American songwriters' habit of including pseudo-Hawaiian nonsense texts. These songs then entered the Hawaiian music tradition when they were recorded by Hawaiians, many of whom added Hawaiian performance techniques.[411]

The history of Hawaiian music as a category in the American popular songbook reveals a fascinating connection to the formation of other U.S. popular music categories. David Brackett documents how record companies, in the nascent recording industry, often grouped recordings into categories that reflected the industry-wide obsession with ethnic difference. Foreign music—recordings that depicted stereotypes of immigrants— existed as a category in music company catalogues dating back to the 1890s. Brackett argues that foreign music, between 1890 and 1920, set the stage for the emergence of "a four-prong model" of musical categories including Foreign, Race, Old-time, and Popular, that would structure the U.S. music industry up until the 1940s when record companies adopted the "three-pronged model" of Country, R&B,

[409] Garrett, *Struggling to Define a Nation*, 196.
[410] Garrett, *Struggling to Define a Nation,* 168.
[411] Stillman, "Published Hawaiian Songbooks," 227.

and Popular.[412] Hawaiian music, and by association Hawaiian people, took on an identity distinct from other categories of foreign or ethnic music. Many white performers were playing hapa haole and Tin Pan Alley was generating Hawaiian songs, which Brackett argues, produced an imaginary cultural identity at odds with the industry category of Foreign music. Garrett suggests that Hawaiian music generated its own category separate from other ethnic music categories partly because Hawaiian-themed songs projected a set of stereotypes that set Hawaiians apart from mainland U.S. immigrant groups such as the Chinese; Hawaiians were portrayed as "primitive yet not frightening, sensually alluring yet safe."[413]

John Troutman maps a similar process of assimilation in which the Hawaiian steel guitar lost its connection to Native Hawaiians as it was absorbed into the American national body in the early twentieth century. He points to the proliferation of franchised non-Hawaiian schools that provided students instruction based on the American songbook arranged for the steel guitar rather than "serving as arbiters of Kānaka Maoli music."[414] Through such ethnic and cultural representation, Garrett suggests that the U.S. music industry dramatically shaped the meaning of Hawaiian music for U.S. audiences, in addition to supporting the American colonial project by tapping into the burgeoning business of Hawaiian tourism.[415]

TOURISM AND STATEHOOD: RACIAL ALOHA

During the early twentieth century, Hawaiian tourism was generally limited to wealthy elites who could travel by steamship or luxury liner. Beginning in 1935 Pan American Airlines

[412] Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*, 50.
[413] Garrett, *Struggling to Define a Nation*, 194.
[414] John William Troutman, *Kīkā Kila: How the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed the Sound of Modern Music*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 155.
[415] Garrett, *Struggling to Define a Nation*, 186.

began offering weekly flights to Honolulu, but the trips were still out of reach for all but the wealthy. Tourism was secondary to Hawai'i's plantation economy of sugar and pineapple, monopolized by descendants of missionary settlers known as the "Big Five."[416] When the U.S. Sugar Act of 1934 cut the amount of sugar that could be imported, Hawaiian planters decided to respond by pushing for statehood, which would allow easy access to the mainland market for Hawaiian products. Statehood would also afford opportunities for growing the tourist trade.

The dual push for tourism and Hawaiian statehood began prior to the World War II, but the Eisenhower administration (1953-1961) vigorously promoted travel to Hawai'i as part of its foreign policy to contain communism in the postwar period. The policy was enacted through strategic placement of American hotels at sites of former colonies or protectorates. In this way American citizens could more easily spread the benefits of capitalism through personal interactions. In Hawai'i, advocates for tourism and statehood adopted the image of the islands as a harmonious and egalitarian melting pot. Such travel promotions worked to contain postwar anxieties during a period in which concepts of race and racial citizenship were transforming. Faced with the opposition to statehood from southern states that were working to maintain segregationist laws, the Eisenhower multi-racial strategy for Hawaiian statehood had multiple benefits: the U.S. could assert its presence in Asia and the South Pacific and appeals for a multi-racial society allowed the U.S. to claim advancements in racial equality without having to make any legal changes.[417]

In 1946 the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce published *Hawaii's Postwar Plans* stating that "wartime experiences had produced a modern, urban, upwardly mobile, and racially tolerant

[416] Noel J. Kent, and Dan Boylan, *Hawaii: Islands Under the Influence*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021), 105. Kent and Boylan provide a thorough study on the economic history of Hawai'i including the plantation class known as the "Big Five."
[417] Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 43.

society characterized by new ways of living."[418] The Bank of Hawaii, the Hawaii Visitors Bureau, and the Hawaii Economic Foundation became strong advocates for statehood. Local publications such as *Paradise of the Pacific* and the *Honolulu Advertiser* were also on board with the plan. These publications would play a role in promoting Martin Denny's type of exotica, seeding the vision of Hawai'i as a multi-racial society making a cultural bridge between East and West.

Christine Skwiot, in her book *The Purposes of Paradise*, describes the multi-ethnic, interracial image of Hawai'i as "racial aloha." She depicts a strategy that permitted supporters of tourism and statehood to write Hawai'i's mixed-race population, in particular the interracial woman, into narratives of national belonging.[419] One example of how mixed-race women were used to promote the tourism-statehood agenda can be seen in *Life* magazine's 1945 article "A New Race is Emerging."[420] The article is framed by a pictorial collage of beautiful, young, "tolerant, healthy, and American" dark-skinned women. Each photograph provided the woman's "mixture" such as Caucasian-Hawaiian, Mixed Caucasian, Asiatic-Caucasian, and Asiatic-Hawaiian.[421] This novel ideal of the healthy, beautiful, unthreatening, and modern mixed-race woman manifested itself in the tourist entertainment of Waikiki in the post-war period. But the concept of racial aloha is also exhibited in the musical, artistic, and cultural life of Honolulu.

In 1951 *Paradise of the Pacific* described the racial, gendered, and classed mixing of the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, claiming that "nearly half of the orchestra members are Oriental,

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[418] Christine Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawai'i*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 149.
[419] Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise,* 169.
[420] "A New Race is Emerging," *Life,* November 26, 1945, 103.
[421] "A New Race is Emerging" *Life,* November 26, 1945, 103. Although the words white and colored are never used, the article addresses racism by claiming that it is bad manners and impractical to speak of race because "there are so many races, pure and mixed," although the author asides that "upper class whites maintain color lines."

of different backgrounds, different languages, different customs . . . youngsters and adults, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Caucasians, from every walk of life . . . side by side, making music and loving it . . . they blend handsomely together with their Caucasian brothers, finding a common denomination in music."[422] This narrative of personal interaction and emotional connection between East and West through commonalities such as music was promoted in cultural institutions such as the Honolulu Symphony. As well, Christina Klein suggests that the idea of a harmonious multi-racial Asian society was promulgated through a mix of U.S. foreign policy directives and middlebrow intellectuals' texts such as James Michener.[423]

James Michener was one of the most prolific and popular storytellers of the 1950s. From the late 1940s through the 1950s, Michener's influence as a writer on Asia and the Pacific subjects carried great weight in the U.S. and abroad. He was embraced as an expert on Asia when he won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1947 with *Tales of the South Pacific*, his collection of stories set in the Pacific theatre during World War II. Rodgers and Hammerstein adapted some of these stories for their hit 1949 musical *South Pacific*—a musical that generated exotica arrangements by Martin Denny and Tak Shindo including "Bali Ha'i," and "Dites-moi." Michener was evidently a close friend and fan of Martin Denny's to the extent that he wrote the liner notes for Denny's 1959 album *Hypnotique.*

Michener wrote extensively on Asian and Pacific affairs, but Christina Klein suggests that it was not necessarily his depictions of Asian and South Pacific cultures that led to Michener's fame. She shows how the novelist made his greatest impact with his fictional accounts of Americans' encounters with Asians and Polynesians through "moments of personal

[422] Naomi Pollard, "East-West Blend in Honolulu Symphony," *Paradise of the Pacific* 63, no. 10 (1951): 13.
[423] Klein, *Cold War Orientalism,* 100.

exchange in which traveler and host engage in some kind of verbal, intellectual, emotional, or financial give-and-take."[424] Klein argues that this sentimentality encouraged the traveler to experience other cultures through affect and emotion, a departure from the scenes of heroic discovery that framed early travel writing. This aspect of feeling and experiencing another culture through tourism is a fundamental aspect of Martin Denny's exotica, as cultivated through live performances in the multicultural milieu of Waikiki in the years leading up to the establishment of exotica as a genre around 1957.

In this next section I examine the conditions that supported and encouraged audiences to *feel* Martin Denny's music through the immersive experience of hotel entertainment structured as cultural encounters. Once exotica was recorded, the emotional connection could be reinforced through album covers and liner notes. I situate Martin Denny's exotica sonically and symbolically in the soundscape of Waikiki entertainment as a demonstration of how Christine Skwiot's idea of racial aloha played out in the bar and hotel stages of Honolulu. I pay special attention to the multi-racial female entertainers in Waikiki who were central to tourist entertainment, contributing to the vision of Hawaiian society as a harmonious and modern melting pot.

WAIKIKI SOUNDSCAPE: 1958

During the 1950s, Honolulu's tourist entertainment was covered in local (territorial) newspapers and in American trade publications. Bob Krauss's "The Night Side by Bob Krauss," Eddie Sherman's "Late Date" and "Backstage," and Jack Teehan's and Charles Parmiter's "Late Date" were all night-life columns dedicated to reviews of local entertainment. These columnists

[424] Klein, *Cold War Orientalism,* 101.

wrote in the man-about-town mode, covering everything from labor union problems with hotel entertainers to celebrity sightings. Walt Christie, a columnist for *Variety*, covered Honolulu in the trade paper's Vaudeville and Night Clubs. Much of my analysis in this next section is informed by these late-night and industry columns. I begin with Eddie Sherman's 1958 "Backstage" column that narrates Sherman's visual and aural experiences during an evening in Waikiki, and as a way to place Martin Denny's exotica in relation to other local entertainment:

> Young military men (in colorful aloha shirts) following giggling gals along Kalakaua in their pursuit of happiness . . . the formal Royal Hawaiian Hotel, standing like a symbol of our civilization . . . Pierson Thal's romantic music spreading along the dancing white caps and putting a spring in the step of the grey-haired set, while Honolulu sleeps with golden memories . . . lei sellers hawking their wares from run-down trucks . . . The Ginbasha, at the entrance to Waikiki, showing off the only girlie-girlie review along the strip . . . Alfred Apaka delivering his nightly peerless performance at the Tapa Room . . . young lovers holding hands, peering through bamboo slits digging the exotic sounds of Martin Denny at the Bora Bora Lounge . . . guests at the Hawaiian Village travelling thousands of miles to get away from it all crowding around the teevee [sic] set in the lobby . . . asking where the 'natives' live.[425]

This excerpt captures the sense of an imperial stage— the militarized, gendered, racialized, and class-divided landscape of Waikiki. Sherman's perspective offers impressions of Waikiki from a local (haole) perspective. His distaste for the guests crowding around the tv set in the lobby reflects the critique of the "ignorant tourist." Sherman could have been alluding to the type of American cultural insensitivity depicted in Eugene Burdick and William Lederer's *The Ugly American* (1958), a novel that prompted a shift in Cold War diplomacy towards an understanding of Asian (and other) cultures.

Yet the columnist's account also illustrates how Waikiki hotels operated both as musical venues and expressions of imperial initiatives in the mid-twentieth century. During the first decades of the twentieth century Waikiki changed from a residential area to a hotel destination

[425] "Backstage with Eddie Sherman," *Honolulu Advertiser*, September 23, 1958, 10.

that primarily served the wealthy. Prior to the construction of the Ala Wai canal in the 1920s, which drastically changed the landscape of the area, Waikiki Beach and its surrounding area was mostly wetlands and fishponds surrounded by taro fields irrigated by springs called "sprouting waters"— where the name Waikiki comes from. Around the turn of the century, according to Masakazu Ejiri, architecture in Waikiki ran to stately Victorian mansions, California missions, and American colonial structures with touches of Orientalism. The Park Beach Hotel (1888), and Sans Souci Hotel (1893) were the first tourist accommodations to be built in Waikiki. The Sans Souci was a ramshackle wooden bohemian-style building with a lounge, dining room, and lanai. Bathhouses and cottage-style hotel complexes rose up soon enough; by the 1920s there were five major hotels: The Moana, Seaside, Halekulani, Pierpoint, and Waikiki Inn.[426]

The Moana Hotel is a good example of the role played by the tourist trade in both music making and colonial/imperial initiatives. The Moana was the site of "Hawaii Calls," a radio program hosted by Webley Edwards and broadcast between 1935 and 1975. According to Susan Smulyan, "Hawaii Calls" was crucial to transmitting fantasies of Hawai'i from the beach of Waikiki to the U.S. mainland and around the world. The radio program gained economic, political, and cultural importance as Hawai'i's old plantation economy gave way to the boom in tourism. Not coincidentally, such programs lent strength to Hawai'i's business community as it pushed for statehood.[427] The program was funded by a direct grant from the Territorial (and then State) Legislature to the Hawaii Tourist Bureau. "Hawaii Calls" was broadcast live from the banyan tree of the Moana Hotel every Saturday afternoon and attracted lots of tourists. At its

[426] Masakazu Ejiri, "The Development of Waikiki, 1900-1949: The Formative Period of an American Resort Paradise," (Ph.D dissertation University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, 1996), ProQuest 9629821. The Moana wooden structure in the Beaux Arts style with seventy-five guest rooms of oak mahogany and maple and featured Hawaii's first electric powered elevator.
[427] Susan Smulyan, "Live from Waikiki: Colonialism, Race, and Radio in Hawaii, 1934-1963," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 27, no. 1 (2007): 63.

height, “Hawaii Calls” claimed to be heard on 750 stations across the U.S.: in Canada, Japan, Korea, Europe, Latin America, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. The sound of crashing waves as “realness” was one of the features of the show, providing listeners some level of authentic connection to Hawai‘i through radio, encouraging more sound recording and, eventually, television shows.

Sherman’s column also reveals how music-making in hotels related to demographic changes as Waikiki transformed from a resort paradise for the upper classes or “carriage trade,” to a major destination for middle-class tourists who could now afford to travel to Hawai‘i. You can see this demographic shift in Sherman’s descriptions of the “young lovers” peering through bamboo and “digging” Martin Denny’s “exotic sounds” in the Bora Bora lounge. Meanwhile, the “grey-haired” could take in the music of Pierson Thal at the more formal Royal Hawaiian. Denny and Thal were associated with specific hotels: Denny with Henry J. Kaiser’s Hawaiian Village (and later Don the Beachcomber’s Bora Bora Lounge), and Pierson Thal with the Royal Hawaiian. The type of music of the Royal Hawaiian, Sherman notes, appealed to an older generation that enjoyed the kind of music circulating around 1958, which would have included Martin Denny and his combos and Alfred Apaka’s nightly shows at the Hawaiian Village.[428] I discuss these hotels and their related entertainment in the following sections to show how Henry J. Kaiser designed the Hawaiian Village to promote multi-cultural encounters. In this context exotica had a distinct cultural/political role to play, and in that way stood out from other tourist entertainment offered.

[428] Martin Denny refined his style through early experiments at the Hawaiian Village with extensive support from Henry J. Kaiser beginning in 1955. By 1958 Denny had moved his group to Don the Beachcomber’s Bora Bora Lounge, and the group’s original vibraphonist Arthur Lyman had started his own group and taken Denny’s place at the Hawaiian Village Shell Bar.

THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN

The Royal Hawaiian Hotel opened in 1927 and it still stands today as one of the first generation of luxury hotels. During the 1930s, Harry Owens and His Royal Hawaiians provided the live music for the hotel.[429] Owens was a transplant from Nebraska who, over the course of his career, composed more than 300 hapa haole songs, including "Sweet Leilani," heard on the soundtrack of Hollywood films such as *Waikiki Wedding* (1937) and *Cocoanut Grove* (1938). After leaving Hawai'i, Owens participated in producing the image of Hawai'i as a tropical paradise for Hollywood motion pictures and television in addition to his many recordings for Decca Records in the 1940s.

From 1956 to 1961 Pierson Thal was the director of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel Orchestra. Thal's orchestra played the kind of music columnist Eddie Sherman describes as "spreading along the dancing white caps and putting a spring in the step of the grey-haired set."[430] While I have not located any recordings of the band, based on a previous band of Thal's in Phoenix, AZ, his group was most likely a combination of piano, drums, bass, trumpet and two saxes. One music review described Thal's style of music as "sweet and melodic rhumba tempoed arrangements of familiar tunes (pops, and novelties) such as 'Tea for Two.' "[431] When Harry Owens was the director of the Royal Hawaiian Orchestra, the Hawaiian steel guitar was one of the instruments that made up the ensemble, but it is unclear whether Thal's group included a steel guitar. The photograph below (*fig. 4.1*) was taken around 1956 and suggests that Thal's Royal Hawaiian Orchestra was made up of a similar combination of instruments as his earlier

[429] Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, until October 24, 1944, residents of Hawai'i lived under martial law. During the war, and immediate postwar years 1941-1947, the hotel was leased by the U.S. Navy for their personnel.
[430] "Backstage with Eddie Sherman" *Honolulu Advertiser*, September 23, 1958, 10.
[431] "The Pierson Thal Orch," *Variety,* November 17, 1954, 60.

band: three saxes, two trumpets, bass, and percussion. Perhaps the steel guitar could not fit in the outrigger canoe:

Figure 4.1. Pierson Thal and The Royal Hawaiian Orchestra ca. 1956. This picture was taken in Waikiki Beach outside the Royal Hawaiian Hotel with Diamond Head in the background (Kamaaina56 Flickr Collection)

The musical contrast between the Royal Hawaiian and the Hawaiian Village can aptly be described through a parallel difference between the modern versus colonial architecture of the two hotels, in addition to the concept of racial aloha and cultural interaction that I discussed earlier. The postwar multi-racial ideal was promoted by Henry J. Kaiser through his Hawaiian Village hotel design. As Skwiot explains “whereas designers of the interwar-era Royal Hawaiian Hotel had built an architectural fantasy of white colonial rule in a tropical pink palace, Kaiser’s

blended Asian, Caucasian, and Polynesian styles to convey interracial harmony and cooperation.”[432]

HENRY J. KAISER’S HAWAIIAN VILLAGE

American industrialist Henry J. Kaiser is an important figure in postwar Hawaiian tourism and he is also part of the story of exotica. Kaiser made his fortune in roadbuilding, dam construction (most famously the Hoover Dam), and construction of Liberty ships for the U.S. merchant fleet during World War II. When he decided to retire in Hawai‘i in 1953, Noel Kent writes, “he was the overlord of a vast complex of business interests that included aluminum, steel, engineering, construction, cement, automobile, and chemical industries worth upward of $1 billion and accounting for $600 million in annual sales”[433] Kaiser’s wealth, influence, and investment in Hawaiian tourism overlapped with the Cold War strategies of Soviet containment in the Pacific Rim. He was part of a coalition made up of American Express, Hilton Hotels International, and Pan American Airlines, that promoted tourism to achieve the economic goals of modernization theorized by W.W. Rostow as the “age of high mass consumption.”[434] Hawai‘i was a fertile place for Kaiser’s ambitions. According to Kent, the magnate claimed to have “missed the tourist boom in Florida and California. I’m not going to miss it here.”[435] Kaiser’s mission began with the purchase of eight acres of oceanfront property in Waikiki that included the Niumalu Hotel. By 1954 the construction of seventy thatched roof guest cottages, rooms, and suites was underway.

Kaiser’s Hawaiian Village (now Hilton Hawaiian Village) opened in 1955 and offered a

[432] Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise,* 185.
[433] Kent and Boylan, *Hawaii: Islands Under the Influence*, 105.
[434] Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise,* 171.
[435] Kent and Boylan, *Hawaii: Islands Under the Influence*, 105.

complex of dining, entertainment, shopping, and recreational venues. Kaiser’s objective of cultural blending through modern architecture got applause from philanthropist and self-help book author William Clement Stone who, according to Skwiot, claimed that “at the Hawaiian Village you feel the brotherhood of man a reality and not a theory . . . Europeans, Americans, Polynesians, and Orientals meet on the plane of equity.”[436] Yet, what Stone does not mention is that the majority of Polynesians and Asians were entertainers and hotel workers.

The following map (*fig. 4.2*) of the Hawaiian Village ca. 1959 illustrates how Kaiser envisioned many sites and opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges through entertainment. The Tapa Room offered “nightclub dining and dancing with the Alfred Apaka Show”; the Shell Bar was the place for “cocktails and canapes and listening to a combo”; the Ale Ale Kai Room was the “main dining room and cocktail bar”; the Japanese Tea House offered “traditional Japanese dinner-cocktails”; in the Golden Dragon Garden Restaurant one could find “authentic Mandarin dinner-cocktails”; the Tiare Tahiti Room featured “dining and dancing all evening with Polynesian entertainment”; the Lua Hut was the “poolside cocktail bar;” and the convention and banquet rooms included the Long House, and the Kaiser Aluminum Dome.

[436] Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise,* 185.

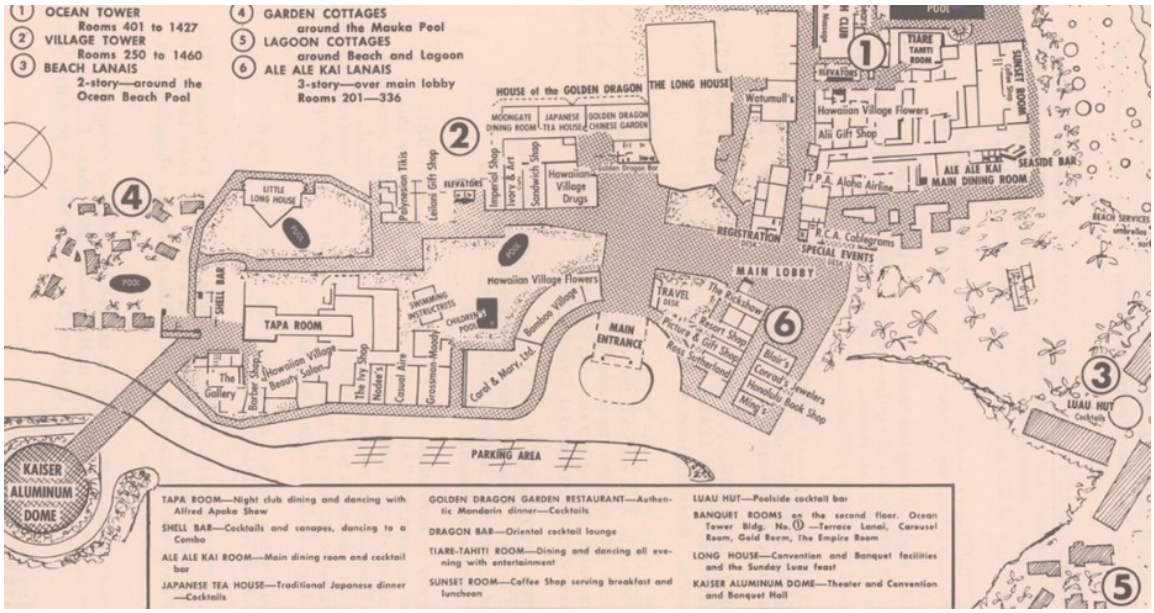

Figure 4.2. Map of Hawaiian Village ca. 1959 (Kamaaina56 Flickr Collection)

The Shell Bar is central to the origin story of exotica and it is often cited as ground zero for the emergence of the genre because it was here that Denny claimed to have incorporated into his act the croaking frogs from a nearby lagoon.[437] The Tapa Room was contained within the complex, but it was connected to the Shell Bar, which seems to open toward the guest cottages and Mouka Pool. These two rooms and the artists that performed in them represent two different but related approaches to articulating "the modern Hawai'i" through the kind of music meant to appeal to tourists. Zooming into a section of the map below (*fig. 4.3*) we get a closer look at the Tapa Room and the Shell Bar:

[437] The origin story of exotica that has been repeated in most journalistic and academic sources is that Martin Denny was performing at the Hilton Hawaiian Village "Shell Bar" when croaking frogs from a nearby lagoon could be heard over the music. When the music stopped the frogs went silent. As the story goes, the group proceeded to imitate the frogs, adding vocalized birdcalls and other "jungle sounds," and the genre of exotica was born. Some variation of this origin story can be found in almost every account of exotica, from the liner notes of Capitol's 1996 compilation of re-releases *Mondo Exotica*, to Lanza's *Elevator Music,* in which he claims the frog incident led to Denny's "invention of his trademark animal sounds," to Martin Denny's obituary in the *New York Times*. See, Joseph Lanza, *Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy-Listening, and Other Moodsong* Rev. and expanded ed., (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004) 122. Ben Sisario. "Martin Denny, Maestro of Tiki Sound, Dies at 93," *New York Times.* March 5, 2005.

Figure 4.3. Images of the Shell Bar and the Tapa Room from the Map of Hawaiian Village ca. 1959 (Kamaaina56 Flickr Collection)

Alfred Apaka, the exclusive entertainer in the Tapa Room, was one of the more famous Hawaiian entertainers of the 1940s and 50s, appearing on radio and television with Bop Hope and Bing Crosby, and Ed Sullivan in 1957. He sang in a rich and romantic baritone voice and in a popular crooner style like Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby, unlike some of the other falsetto male singers such as George Kainapau who regularly performed in the Ale Ale Kai Room at the Hawaiian Village.[438] Apaka’s Village Serenaders (*fig. 4.4*) would sing backup vocals and accompany him on steel guitar, ukulele, guitars, bass, and drums:

[438] Walt Christie, “Kaiser's ‘Ain’t Gonna Lei No Egg’ In Hawaiian ‘All Show Biz’ Bid,” *Variety* November 7, 1956, 50. George Kainapau was described by *Variety* as a four-piece combo romantic “moon spoon” bracket. In addition to these singers, the big-name attractions in Hawai‘i around 1956 were Sterling Mossman (detective, comedian, singer, “Hula Cop”), Lena Guerrero, Mel Peterson, the Kalima Brothers, Renny Brooks, Birdie Keanini, Tom Leslie, Leinaala, Kalani, Kent Ghirard, Little Joe, Webley Edwards, and Martin Denny. “Entertainment in Hawaii,” *Honolulu Star Bulletin* September 22, 1956.

Figure 4.4. Alfred Apaka at the Tapa Room (Kamaaina56 Flickr Collection)

Henry J. Kaiser reportedly had a deep affection and high aspirations for Alfred Apaka. Kaiser not only showcased Apaka through exclusive Tapa Room performances, but through Kaiser’s interest in media industries. In 1956 Kaiser started the Hawaiian Village Record Co. He built a $500,000 sound and film studio adjacent to the Hawaiian Village; received a radio and color television licence; and in 1957, commissioned Buckminster Fuller to design and build an aluminum dome as a cost-efficient public space to primarily be used as a theatre.[439]

Alfred Apaka‘s *Broadway Wears a Lei* (1956) was the first LP that Hawaiian Village Records produced. It was arranged and conducted by Axel Stordahl and recorded at Capitol Records studio with a twenty-eight-piece orchestra.[440] The repertoire was a mix of “showtunes”

[439] “Pictures,” *Variety,* October 3, 1956, 22. “Backstage with Eddie Sherman” *Honolulu Advertiser* February 15, 1957, 20. Alfred Apaka performed at the opening of the dome with 1,800 seats sold and broadcast on the Kaiser Aluminum Hour TV show.
[440] “Henry J.’s Waxery Bows With ‘B’way Wears a Lei,” *Variety* November 7, 1956, 43.

on one side, and "island tunes" on the other. Side one features selections from musical theatre including "I Could Have Danced All Night" and "On the Street Where You Live" from *My Fair Lady,* and "Hello Young Lovers" from *The King and I.* Side two offers songs by Hawaiian composers, including "Akaka Falls" and "Lei Aloha, Lei Makamae," mixed with Tin Pan Alley songs like "My Isle of Golden Dreams."

While the album predates Martin Denny's exotica albums, *Broadway Wears a Lei* shares some similarities with Denny's albums. The album was promoted as an "exotic experience" in a "pop style" by combining Alfred Apaka's "individual native quality" of voice "emotional 'feel' of Hawaii" with a "modern interpretation," and Axel Stordahl's "orchestral brilliance."[441] The description of this album—modern orchestrated arrangements of Hawaiian and island-themed songs mixed with the promise of an exotic (native) experience and emotional feel of Hawai'i is not dissimilar to the description of Martin Denny's exotica. The main difference is that instead of a small jazz combo performing instrumental arrangements with non-Western instruments, Axel Stordahl supplies a similar treatment to Alfred Apaka that he did for Frank Sinatra's Columbia recordings in the 1940s. Apaka's deep baritone voice is presented in a medium ballad tempo, framed by cascading orchestral strings and expansive crescendos in instrumental sections. The flighty woodwinds and soft chimes provide timbral liveliness and color to contrast the strings. There are very few musical characteristics that signal Hawaiian music—no steel guitar or ukulele, no sounds of the crashing surf, no bird calls or jungle sounds. However, Stordahl does gesture towards Hawaiian-ness on side two. For example, in the song "My Isle of Golden Dreams," the harp is substituted for the steel guitar, and strings rise and fall chromatically to represent sleepy undulating waves. Apaka skillfully provides vocal embellishments such as slow

[441] Alfred Apaka with Axel Stordahl's Orchestra, *Broadway Wears a Lei,* Hawaiian Village Records, HV-LP 700, 1956, LP.

turns and what can best be described as blue or flattened notes. This is most likely the type of expressive ornamentation that was described on the album liner notes as Apaka’s “individual native quality” of voice, or what was described on the album as the emotional feel of Hawai‘i.

The album cover art features a full-colour image of Apaka standing between two female dancers (a blond showgirl and a Hawaiian hula dancer) against a reflective aluminum foil background. On the back of the album are three black and white photos of the Hawaiian Village: a view of Waikiki beach from the Hawaiian Village, a photo of the Ale Ale Kai Room and Lanai Suites of the Hawaiian Village Hotel, and a photo of Axel Stordahl conducting Alfred Apaka (Henry J. Kaiser at his side looking at the sheet music) during a recording session in Los Angeles. In addition to promoting Apaka as a popular vocalist, the Hawaiian Village Records made a bid to boost Hawaiian tourism by launching a song-writing contest. The winning contestant and their favourite disk jockey stood to win an all-expenses-paid vacation in Hawaii with lodgings at the Hawaiian Village. Sadly, Apaka died suddenly of a heart attack in 1960 just as his star was rising. Henry J. Kaiser continued to support local musicians, in particular exotica musician Alfred Lyman, but there is no evidence Hawaiian Village Records made any more recordings after Apaka passed away. Kaiser’s strategy of contest giveaways and travel packages through musical recordings was only part of his contribution to changing the tourist demographic, and the soundscape of Waikiki.

BUDGET ENTERTAINMENT AND EXOTIC DANCERS

Mass tourism to Hawai‘i and other international locations through affordable airline travel changed the social and cultural landscape of the postwar era. Wartime advancements in aerospace technology, the increase in airstrips around the world, and a steady rise in personal

income saw middle-class Americans travelling abroad more than ever. In 1947, only 200,000 Americans had valid passports, but by 1953 more than a million Americans had travelled overseas.[442] Data collected by airlines shows that between 1947 and 1962 the average personal income in the U.S. rose by 65.6 percent and consumer expenditures on airline travel increased by an average of 15.6 percent per year. In 1956, 25 percent of New York domestic airline passengers made more than $20,000 per year (the national median of 1956 was $4,710).[443] United and Delta airlines began offering package vacations to Hawai'i in 1948; by 1958 affordable air travel in coach class, family fare plans, package tours, and credit plans introduced a demographic to Hawai'i. Kaiser's efforts were central to this development in several different ways.

Hotels were struggling to find the most appropriate entertainment to get those tourist bodies in seats on their premises. *Billboard*'s Vaudeville section noted the conundrum facing the Hawaiian hospitality industry more, but less affluent tourists flocked to the islands:

> Tipoff to Waikiki's changing population is the advent of a big cafeteria and possibly a chain dime store, right in the heart of the beach shopping area. Nightery owners fully realize what's happening and know they've got a major problem on their hands. Hometown trade alone simply can't get a nightery out of the red ink and the average service man—a big spender on pay nights—doesn't spend much time in the carriage trade spots.[444]

Kaiser (along with Donn Beach, the proprietor of Don the Beachcomber's) could see how to invigorate the regular entertainment (supper shows with dancing, hula dancers, and progressive jazz combos) with the staging of Polynesian floor shows that featured Tahitian

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[442] Klein, *Cold War Orientalism,* 104.
[443] Douglas Karsner, "'Now Hawaii Is Only Hours Away!:' the Airlines Alter Tourism," *Essays in Economic and Business History* 17, no. 1 (1999): 182.
[444] Walt Christie, "Honolulu Nitery Ops Sing the Blues; Tastes Change with Guest Turnover," *Variety*, December 14, 1955, 20.

performers and Samoan knife dancers.[445] It was during this time that the luau was added as an immersive experience—an event that even today remains a holiday must for Hawaiian tourists. Walt Christie covered this trend in *Variety* by reporting that Waikiki is "on a Tahitian kick . . . Don Beach imported Manuana, recent *Life* magazine cover girl for Tahiti and customers aren't disappointed . . . the trend has already caused several top hula dancers to change their monikers and routines and become "Tahitian" overnight. Samoan entertainment, especially the exhausting knife dance, also is gaining popularity as local entertainers look towards the Southern isles for new Polynesian ideas.[446]

The announcement of performer Manuana in this excerpt reveals a fascination around the names and ethnicities of performers. As Charles Hiroshi Garrett argues, Native Hawaiians were seen as inhabiting a particular identity of exotic—yet familiar— in American popular culture. Performers such as Manuana of Tahiti were often named and given top billing along with many other artists such as Maude Bonnet the "Tahitian Dancing Rage," Lovena, or Ngatokoruaimatauea the "Tahitian wiggler and sister of Johnnie Frisbie."[447] Some of these performers were part of a Polynesian floor show at the Waikiki Sands around 1957 that offered four shows nightly with a 90-cent cover charge; no meal purchases necessary. The featured artists are seen in the handbill below (*figure* 4.5). With the exception of Genoa Keawe, these artists are identified by a single stage name—Lovena, Leinaala, Maud, Emma, Leialoha, Andree,

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[445] "Late Date with Charles Parmiter," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* December 15, 1956, 41. This created some tension with the local musicians: "Some of the local musicians are a little huhu over the fact that musicians' union boss Buddy Peterson took it on himself to ok the booking of a group of Tahitian drum-beaters sponsored by Henry J. Kaiser. If Kaiser's Village can bring in Tahitian acts, why can't Don the Beachcomber's?"

[446] Christie, "Honolulu Nitery Ops Sing the Blues," 20.

[447] One report in *Variety* claimed that "Donn the Beachcomber's is importing Teura, girl dancer from the Rapa Islands, Terorotua, male singer and dancer from Bora Bora, Kahitit, girl dancer form the Tuamotus, and Mariteragi, male dancer form Tahiti. Fijjians, Maoris, and Cook Islanders will be booked later in the season." See, *Variety,* December 12, 1956.

Kealoha, Violet, Agnes, Blossom, and Faaulia—but their ethnicities may have been a way to suggest that while these performers are accomplished and professional, they were still legitimately exotic. Such billing reveals an obsession over ethic difference during a postwar period in America when ideas about racial integration and citizenship were shifting.

Figure 4.5. Postcard from The Waikiki Sands Kamaaina56 Flickr Collection

What is not seen on this handbill is the invitation to: "Thrill to the Exotic Dances of the South Seas-Hawaii, Tahiti, Samoa at the Waikiki Sands." One of the most remarkable features about Waikiki entertainment during this period is not only the number of multi-racial female performers, but the multi-purpose idea of the exotic dancer. Debates about burlesque shows appeared regularly in the Honolulu newspapers and were generally related to the shifting tourist demographic and the increase in "budget clubs" boasting exotic dancers imported from the Coast (i.e., the West Coast of the U.S. mainland including Las Vegas) and Japan. Bob Krauss reported that Club Hubba Hubba and Club Ginza offer "strip teasers" in addition to "surprisingly good supporting lineups of popular and classical singers and dancers from Japan and the Islands."[448]

Exotic dancers appear to have had two different meanings in 1950s Honolulu: they were either exotic dancers (strippers) or "South Seas" exotic dancers ("hip-wigglers"). The venues were nightclubs hosting Polynesian floor shows, such as the Waikiki Sands, or the many burlesque clubs in Honolulu. But these dancers might be found in both types of shows. Ethnic difference was a hallmark of the apparatus of tourist entertainment binding Hawai'i, Tahiti, Samoa, and the mainland U.S. (West Coast, Las Vegas) in live stage shows, recordings, and television. In this environment the budget traveler collided with multi-racial performances of

[448] "The Night Side by Bob Krauss" *Honolulu Advertiser*, November 6, 1955, 14; Christie, "Honolulu Nitery Ops Sing the Blues, 20; "Late Date with Charles Parmiter," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin,* Saturday, December 22, 1956, 39; "Late Date with Charles Parmiter," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, October 6, 1956, 100; offered these accounts: Lasa Saya (the voluptuous Jayne Mansfield of Japan) the Oasis offered mostly Japanese talent such as Yashi Muneko (the Mae West of Japan), recording artist Yamada Yoko, and the Kabuki Dancers. The South Seas, the Grove, Pearl City Tavern, and the Beretania Follies also featured a rotating array of entertainers that shared a common feature of muti-ethnic identities: Gombo the Mambo Doll (Mary Matsuyama), the Tokyo Can Can Girls, and Gussie St. Ana (The Manila Bombshell), Babette (the French Japanese Doll), Tura Satana, Ming Lee, and Orchid Kainoa.

music, burlesque, and indigenous dance.[449] It was in this environment that Martin Denny began his musical experiments with exotica.

MARTIN DENNY AND HAWAIIAN VILLAGE

When Martin Denny arrived in Hawai'i in 1954, he was already an accomplished pianist and show business veteran. During the 1930s Denny spent three years touring South America with a group called Los Studientes de Hollywood. In the 1940s he toured with Hildegarde as her accompanist, appearing at supper clubs, the Sands Hotel Las Vegas, Cal-Nevada Biltmore, and the Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro.[450] Denny's first gigs as a solo lounge pianist were at the Surf Bar of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel and the Dagger Bar at Don the Beachcomber's. Within a few years of arriving in Hawai'i Denny had formed a small jazz combo: Martin Denny (piano), Arthur Lyman (vibraphone), John Cramer (bass). He would alternate between playing cocktail piano at the Royal Hawaiian "and then run across the street and play with a trio" he recalled, adding that the group "didn't have any set arrangements so [he] bought a bunch of folio books of George Shearing."[451] Once the group added a fourth member, Augie Colon, whose birdcalls, "jungle sounds," and Afro-Cuban percussion provided showmanship and novelty, the group began to get noticed. According to Denny, "the audience loved him [Colon], and he got a tremendous amount of applause."[452] Alfred Apaka, who, in addition to being a featured artist at the Hawaiian Village was also the entertainment director, thought the group was just what

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[449] The mention of the Ginbasha in Sherman's soundscape offers two ways to view the entertainment landscape of Waikiki: the increase in burlesque venues, and through the idea of "the strip," a link with Las Vegas. Throughout the 1950s both Las Vegas and Waikiki transformed into tourist destinations in parallel ways. Most of the regular entertainers in the hotels of Waikiki, including exotica artists like Martin Denny and Arthur Lyman, also secured residences in Las Vegas.
[450] *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, December 11, 1954, 67; *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, January 27, 1954, 25.
[451] Dana Countryman, "Interview with Martin Denny" *Cool and Strange Music Magazine,* Vol. 2, 1998.
[452] Countryman, "Interview with Martin Denny," 1998.

Kaiser's Hawaiian Village needed and they quickly became a regular act at the Shell Bar.[453] The popularity of the group quickly grew and before long celebrities like William Holden were spotted at their shows. It was reportedly hard to get a seat unless you arrived early.[454]

The addition of Augie Colon enabled the group to set themselves apart from other progressive jazz groups. Birdcalls and "jungle sounds," such as croaking frogs, primate sounds, and birdcalls, became the group's trademark. These exotic novelty sounds drew tourists who could experience and interact with the music as they sipped mai-tais. Journalist Bob Kraus of the *Honolulu Star Advertiser* invited bird call experts Paul and Mary Lou Breese to Arthur Lyman's show at the Hawaiian Village Shell Bar. While downing cocktails, these birders were perhaps a bit too proficient for the nightclub's purposes: "'One of the calls isn't a bird call at all,' Paul Breese explained as he sipped his Vicious Virgin and dunked a shrimp in catsup. 'It's a gibbon, a member of the ape family.'"[455] According to Kraus, Breese cleared his throat and threw back his head in song, then explained that the kookaburra—an Australian jackass—is responsible for most of the jungle sounds heard in Hollywood. Some of the birdcalls they heard in the Lyman group were accurately stylized such as the bird of paradise and the peacock, but some they noted, were fake.[456]

While the birdcalls were novel and fun for tourists, Augie Colon, who was fundamental to the incorporation of birdcalls in the Denny group, drew on a long tradition of birdsong in Afro-Cuban and Latin music. As I discussed in the introduction, popular artists such as Pérez Prado and Katherine Dunham had included birdsong as a part of their performances in the early 1950s. While birdsong was a musical component of Afro-Cuban and Latin music, the exotica

[453] Eddie Sherman, "Offbeat Sound Specialist," *Honolulu Advertiser*, September 16, 1956, 93.
[454] Eddie Sherman, "Honolulu After Dark," *Honolulu Advertiser,* August 3, 1956, 10.
[455] Bob Krauss, "In One Ear" *Honolulu Star-Advertiser,* November 4, 1959, 15.
[456] Krauss, "In One Ear," 15.

groups, including Martin Denny and Arthur Lyman, reoriented birdcalls and jungle sounds to a tropical setting constructed exclusively for tourists.

Blending Afro-Cuban and Latin styles into an immersive tourist experience, Denny's band invigorated the tourist entertainment scene during a period of stagnation and struggle. Charles Parmiter's "Late Date" column in the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* summarized the state of Waikiki entertainment ca. 1956:

> Where is Honolulu entertainment going besides down? Looking back at the past 12 months, clubs folded, but there were some improbable successes . . . the fantastic and heartwarming self-discovery of Martin Denny, the triumphant returns of George Kainapau and Alfred Apaka. The Polynesia show has developed from the static form in which it labored for years. The importation of Tahitian musicians and dancers is a major and worthwhile change. But the big factor is in the staging, becoming an intricately conceived and brilliantly staged theatrical production.[457]

Staging was clearly a crucial element in distinguishing Denny and his musicians and from the other jazz combos around town. As a show business veteran, Martin Denny understood the importance of visuals, themes, and live performances and Henry J. Kaiser was keen to provide the space for experimentation.

In several interviews Denny claimed to have honed his skills performing at the Hawaiian Village. Improvisation and practice led to the group's "particular off-beat exotic style and new sound creations . . . the intermingling of vibes with the tinkle of Japanese chimes—the soft jazz piano and the sounds from bamboo."[458] Denny was amazed by Kaiser's cooperation and interest in the group, claiming that the industrialist must have spent about $15,000 fixing up the Shell Room for the group.[459] Their budget included $2,000 for specially tailored clothes (happi coats, barong tagalog shirts), lighting, and instrumentation. They staged a "primitive" visual experience

[457] "Late Date with Charles Parmiter," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin,* December 22, 1956, 39.
[458] Eddie Sherman, "Offbeat Sound Specialist," *Honolulu Advertiser,* September 16, 1956, 93.
[459] Sherman, "Offbeat Sound Specialist," 93.

and worked hard to appear as though they were playing traditional or tribal instruments. Denny would place tapa cloth around the vibraphone to conceal the contemporary appearance of the metal tubes. He developed a special set of switches on the piano for lighting purposes, to bring a musician into sharp focus during any particular solo. In describing the audience reaction, Eddie Sherman noted how most cocktail lounge acts rarely get noticed, but when Martin Denny's group are in the Shell Room "you can hear a pin drop most of the evening, with burst of applause after each production."[460]

Ever more new and unusual sounds were the key to keeping the audience interested. Denny's quest for unusual sounds spread beyond birdcalls. He claimed that their success was realized by "establish[ing] a mood through simple arrangements, stressing the melodic content, and highlighting it with novel effects such as glass, small cymbals, all sorts of percussion effects, we've even tuned different lengths of bamboo and put drumheads on them, also we have an assortment of Oriental effects."[461] While these approaches to melody resemble Paul Weston's mood album arranging techniques, what set Denny apart from other mood music was his relentless search for unusual instruments.[462] Denny's instruments ranged from children's toys to an antique instrument he identified as "a regong—five tuned brass bowls (probably about 100 years old) suspended by leather thongs in a bamboo frame" which he found for sale at the International Marketplace in Waikiki.[463] When he learned his friend (and fan) Hollywood director Preston Sturges would be filming on location in Burma, Denny asked if he would search for gamelan instruments for the group. Sturges discovered, haggled with, and purchased "10

[460] Sherman, "Offbeat Sound Specialist," 93.
[461] Sherman, "Offbeat Sound Specialist," 93.
[462] Denny once appealed to the public for unusual instruments through a contest in Waikiki.
[463] Shideler Harpe, "Late Date (Hilo)" *Honolulu Star Bulletin,* June 13, 1959, 68.

tuned gongs, 21 matched drums, and a collection of other gongs and bells" from a Buddhist temple.[464]

In a lengthy article on the Martin Denny Group published in *Paradise of the Pacific* ca. 1961, Cliff Coleman extolled the group's unusual instrumentation, multi-racial make-up, and their "immediately identifiable style . . .[and] the sophisticated cosmopolitanism and vigorous citizenry of multi-racial derivation" of the 50th state (or at least of Honolulu and Waikiki Beach). "Racially and nationally the boys are a potpourri" the Coleman writes. "Harvey Ragsdale, string bass and marimba, is of Hawaiian-Chinese extraction from the island of Hawaii, Frank Kim, percussionist and samisen player, is Korean from Maui, Tommy Vig, vibes and percussion, is a Hungarian who escaped his homeland in the 1956 revolution (and was a top jazz man there before leaving), and Buddy Fo, newest member, is Hawaiian-Chinese."[465] The photo accompanying the article appears below *(fig.* 4.6*)*:

[464] Sherman, "Offbeat Sound Specialist," 93.
[465] Cliff Coleman, "Martin Denny," *Paradise of the Pacific* 73 no. 7, 1961. 18-21, 27.

Figure 4.6. Martin Denny with Hawaiian hula dancer Mamo Howell in, Cliff Coleman, “Martin Denny,” *Paradise of the Pacific* 73 no. 7, 1961, 20.

Among the collection of bongos, bells, train whistles and conch shells, hula dancer Mamo Howell stands out. Mamo Howell is a half- Native Hawaiian fashion designer and model, but she was a hula dancer in the 1950s in Waikiki. This photo (*fig.* 4.6) was taken at Don the Beachcomber's, a location that the Martin Denny Group performed at on and off for years. In an interview with PBS in 2011, Mamo Howell discussed how her career as a model began as a hula dancer at the Halekulani Hotel. She was a young mother to three children at the time. She was noticed dancing by modeling scouts and offered a contract to model in New York, where being half Hawaiian meant being a woman of color (she noted that there were no Black models at that time).[466] In the 1980s Mamo began a successful business creating muumuu and traditional Hawaiian print clothing because as she explained, she did not see her culture in the clothing available at the time.

The Martin Denny Group (as far as I can tell) did not perform with female dancers between the years 1957-1960, but as I have examined, multi-racial female performers supported the dynamic tourist milieu in which the group honed their skills. As this image of Mamo Howell demonstrates, ethnically ambiguous women were part of the colorful accessories and collection of exotic items presented in the photographs of Martin Denny and other musicians. These objects are all a fundamental part of staging exotica. Mamo Howell was just one of the many female performers in Waikiki that navigated between being seen as an exotic object and a seasoned entertainer at home in nightclubs, floor shows, burlesques. Indeed, Adria Imada considers hula an "intercultural strategy and a way for women practitioners to navigate between multiple worlds and positions."[467] Jayna Brown addresses this similar articulation of modernity for both African

[466] Leslie Wilcox Interview with Mamo Howell, *Long Story Short* PBS Hawaii, June 7, 2011.YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wt6afckSNhQ&t=456s&ab_channel=PBSHawai%CA%BBi
[467] Imada, *Aloha America,* 31. Other scholars that have examined hula, modernity, and resistance include: Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*, American

American stage performers and Hawaiian hula dancers who, to use Brown's words, also "play[ed] in the field of racialized fantasies" and "negotiated the currencies that their bodies commanded on the world markets."[468] Brown writes that the limited economic opportunities for working-class black women "impressed them into lives of service, menial and manual . . . the very act of making money through the beauty, grace, and comedy of their bodies' talents reframed what could be produced by physical effort, by sweat and disciplined tenacity."[469] As with Black women stage performers, women in Hawai'i had limited economic opportunities outside the apparatus of tourism. Through their labor, the soundscape/landscape of Waikiki afforded an atmosphere of racial aloha that Martin Denny drew on and maneuvered into sound recordings.

EXOTICA RECORDINGS 1957-1959

In chapter two I discussed how Liberty Records emerged in 1955 during a period of expansive growth for record companies that included an increase in sexualized images of women on record covers. Martin Denny's exotica albums reflect the trends of the time. Between 1957 and 1959 Martin Denny released seven exotica recordings with Liberty Records: *Exotica* (vols.1, 2, 3), *Forbidden Island, Primitiva, Hypnotique,* and *Quiet Village.*[470] If the birdcalls originated at

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Encounters/Global Interactions (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 36. Heather A. Diamond, *American Aloha: Cultural Tourism and the Negotiation of Tradition*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008); Adria L. Imada, *Aloha America: Hula Circuits Through the U.S. Empire*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Adria L. Imada, "Transnational Hula as Colonial Culture," *The Journal of Pacific History* 46, no. 2, (2011): 149-176; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Sally Engle Merry, *Colonizing Hawai'i: The Cultural Power of Law* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[468] Jayna Brown, *Babylon Girls: Black Women Performers and the Shaping of the Modern*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 6.

[469] Brown, *Babylon Girls*, 7.

[470] Denny recorded an additional twenty-five exotica albums with Liberty after 1960. He was employed by Liberty as not only a recording artist, but also an Artist & Repertoire agent, producing several albums

the Hawaiian Village, it was the recordings that cemented the genre by bringing together mood music with the multi-racial environment of Hawai'i, a combination of non-Western instruments and musicians who could play them, visual aspects of record covers, liner notes written by select people, and specific song choices.[471]

Stylistically, most of the songs on *Exotica* (vol. 1) begin with a gong and cascading chimes to situate the listener in an identifiable Asian exotic space. W.A. Sheppard's recent publication, *Extreme Exoticism: Japan in the American Musical Imagination*, notes that in many cases of early Tin Pan Alley orientalism, exotic signals such as a gong appear only in the opening measures of the instrumental introduction, "announcing the representational target as clearly and quickly as possible before moving on and cadencing with the normal."[472] By "normal" Sheppard means that the song would continue as a generic Tin Pan Alley (AABA form) absent of any other musical exoticisms. Denny followed this musical strategy, but instead of a return to "the normal," he introduced exotic markers such as plucked strings and xylophone, temple blocks, bamboo, or clave struck with a pointed staccato or "chopping" effect. Such effects would accompany the melody of the song, which was played by either the piano, vibraphone, or plucked *shamisen*.

One song on the album that did not include exotic Asian signifiers was the Hawaiian song "Waipio." The opening sound of a slow rolling surf and swirling chimes (instead of a gong) set the mood of the song, before launching into a spacious melody alternating between the

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including Augie Colon's *Sophisticated Savage* (1959), *Chant of the Jungle* (1960), and Ethel Azama's *Exotic Dreams* (1959).

[471] Prior to his contract with Liberty records in 1956, Denny had recorded with Decca Records when they sent the talent scouts to Hawaii, but there is no evidence that these recordings were ever released. See, "Decca A Snake in The Grass with Flock of Hawaiian Names Inked," *Variety* Nov 2, 1955, 58.

[472] William Anthony Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism: Japan in the American Musical Imagination*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 70.

vibraphone and piano and accompanied by the requisite bird calls. This pattern of arranging songs to fit associated moods—gongs for Asia, birdcalls for Hawai‘i—was repeated on most of Denny’s subsequent albums with a few variations.

Hypnotique, an album recorded in Hawai‘i at the Kamehameha Schools Auditorium, expanded the palate of exoticisms to include a string section achieving the “pop sound” valued by Alfred Apaka and Henry J. Kaiser on *Broadway Wears a Lei*, in addition to the musical aesthetic of Les Baxter’s exotic recordings. As with most mood albums, lyrics were absent. In lieu of text, Denny turned to the familiar technique of using vocal ensembles (in this case the Jack Halloran Singers) for the wordless chorus that (*oohs, ahhs,* and *zoo zoos*) that had become more common since Baxter’s *Music Out of the Moon*. Denny also employed musicians proficient on Japanese instruments such as *koto, shamisen,* and *shakuhachi* flute, among them Barbara Smith, John Mechigashari, and Francis “Bud” Lee, to adapt (and tune) the instruments to Western temperament.

Barbara Smith did not come to performing *koto* on Denny’s albums through Hollywood; she was a professor of music at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa in 1958 when Denny asked her to perform on *Hypnotique*. The University of Hawai‘i at Manoa had hired Smith, who’d earned a master’s degree in music literature from the Eastman School of Music, in 1949, to teach piano and music theory and help develop the music department. When she realized there were no courses offered in the traditional music and instruments of Japan, Smith embarked on a study of these instruments so she could offer her students—many of whom were of Asian heritage—instruction. Thus began the ethnomusicology program at the university. In an interview I conducted with her in 2020, I asked her how she came to play *koto* on *Hypnotique* on Denny’s albums. She recalled that Denny may have “heard about my playing the *koto* as a result of

newspaper articles about my having gone to Japan to study with Miyagi Michio and to learn about and collect resources [recordings, scores, etc.] about Asian music and instruments."[473] Smith suggested that Denny had asked her to play because he wanted that instrument to sound like the music of Tak Shindo.

Tak Shindo was known in Hollywood as a prolific composer of film and television music, a music adviser, and often uncredited assistant composer for some of the Orientalist music that has been historically attributed to Franz Waxman and Max Steiner.[474] Sheppard writes that Shindo provided Japanese instruments for recording sessions, arranged Japanese folk tunes, and decided what Japanese material to use and where it should appear on films such as *Sayonara, Stopover Tokyo, Escapade in Japan, Cry for Happy*, and *A Majority of One*. Shindo scored the 1957 film *Sayonara* (adapted from the book by James Michener) with instruments such as gong, xylophone, piccolo, glockenspiel, sleigh bells, wood blocks, and *shamisen*.[475] That these instruments are identical to those heard on Martin Denny's (and to some extent Les Baxter's, sans *shamisen*) albums is no coincidence. Shindo was sought after as a Japanese music consultant on Hollywood, but Sheppard notes that Shindo's scores bear little resemblance to traditional Japanese music. The music in these films perpetuates many of the stereotypical Japanese musical exoticisms that were initially constructed in the older styles of Tin Pan Alley.

[473] Interview with Barbara B. Smith, Professor Emeritus of Music, University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Interview conducted through email March 2020.
[474] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism,* 279. In an interview with Sheppard, film composer David Raksin revealed that "we all went to him when we didn't want to do something stupid," by providing directors and composers "a sense of security that their films were somehow achieving or at least approximating 'authenticity.'"
[475] The story examines themes of anti-Asian racism and interracial marriage. Marlon Brando plays an American Air Force fighter pilot who falls in love with a famous Japanese dancer played by Miiko Taka.

The gestures often included parallel fourths and fifths, offbeat accentuation, staccato articulation, a deliberate "out of tune" sound, pentatonic scales, gongs, and chimes.[476]

While Shindo was hired on films to help ensure authenticity, he was also aware of his own otherness in the Anglo-American racial hierarchy and would employ common Asian tropes such as pentatonic scales liberally.[477] Sheppard suggests that although he was a first- generation Japanese American (Nisei) he was seen as being Japanese rather than American and his exotic music was accepted as authentic. Fully aware that such musical tropes did not represent Japanese music, Shindo was adept at composing scores to serve contemporary Americans' idea of what Japanese music would sound like. This choice to deliberately exoticize his own music is reflected in an interview with Sheppard in which Shindo recalls: "everyone [was] looking for a style. So, in my case, I decided being Oriental, I had something I should draw upon and so I decided to go 'exotic sound.'"[478] The sound Shindo refers to is exotica. Shindo performed the *koto* on Martin Denny's *Primitiva*, in addition to recording several of his own exotica recordings including *Mganga!* (1958), *Brass and Bamboo* (1960), and *Accent on Bamboo* (1960).

Martin Denny, by his own account, considered his musical exotica as experiments with unusual sounds, not fidelity to any musical tradition. For Barbara Smith, however, this was not the case. She explained that playing *koto* on *Hypnotique* was not "to provide some unusual sounds," but a chance to share her knowledge of traditional Asian instruments.[479] While Professor Smith did not recollect ever being paid for her work, she and Denny remained friends

[476] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism,* 292.
[477] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism,* 293
[478] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism,* 279.
[479] Interview with Barbara B. Smith, Professor Emeritus of Music, University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Interview conducted through email March 2020.

after her involvement with *Hypnotiqu*e. She recalls using his instruments pedagogically for teaching her students the Sachs-Hornbostel instrument classification system:

> When Denny left on tour, he lent me the set of gongs first because I knew that their pitch relationships were not that of the western equal temperament. When I gave his instruments back to him, he asked if I could re-tune them to match the piano. The wide range of instruments included an Indian Snake-charmer's instrument, a variety of bamboo woodwind (mouth-blown) instruments and a few small metal percussion pieces, but [as far she could remember], no plucked or bowed string instruments.[480]

Denny no doubt enlisted Shindo, Smith, and others because he required musicians with a legitimate knowledge of how to play and tune Japanese instruments. But Denny was not the only musician who sought some measure of authenticity in their staging of the exotic.

The desire to appear authentic is an attitude Sheppard has identified across the board in American cultural representations of Japan. In *Extreme Exoticism*, Sheppard points out that the original manuscript for *Sayonara* is marked with numbers in pencil and blue ink for the *shamisen* part. This suggests that the musician playing this part required assistance on tuning the strings and finding the pitches.[481] But, as the music was produced during a period of racial segregation, there were limits to how far the desire for authenticity could go regarding the inclusion of Japanese musicians themselves. According to Sheppard, Shindo recommended hiring Japanese musicians to play the *koto* and *shamisen* for the film music, but his proposal was turned down by Franz Waxman, who favoured placing paper between the strings of the orchestra's harp to approximate the timbral authenticity of the *koto*.[482]

A look at some of the relationships that Denny cultivated for his studio albums reveals that Denny actually relied quite heavily on other musicians to produce the exotica sound. But the

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[480] Interview with Barbara B. Smith, Professor Emeritus of Music, University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Interview conducted through email March 2020.
[481] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism,* 291.
[482] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism*, 293.

sound was not the only feature that constructed the exotica world. Denny also relied on the many multi-racial female entertainers on which the fantasy of racial aloha was dependent, and the identification of exotica with Sandy Warner “the exotica girl.” Images of women on album art, as I explored in chapter 2, have historic precedents associated with mood albums. But the images of Sandy Warner also allude to the tourist environment of Waikiki. Recall in Sherman’s soundscape the description of the young lovers holding hands peeking through bamboo to watch the Martin Denny Group. This is somewhat replicated on the cover of *Exotica* (vol. 1) in which Sandy Warner is pictured peeking through bamboo curtains.

SONG CHOICES

I discussed in chapter 1 how Paul Weston signaled a middlebrow Anglo-American musical sphere absent of any racial markers partly through the songs he chose to arrange for his mood albums. Martin Denny’s song choices also tell a story that connects the exotica label to the multicultural Hawaiian tourist milieu and link Denny’s Asian/Hawaiian expression with Les Baxter and his preceding exotic-style albums. As I mentioned in the introduction, of the sixty-nine songs recorded by Denny on seven albums, thirty-four can be grouped into original compositions by either Martin Denny (21) or Les Baxter (13). The rest of the songs can be categorized as film music, Broadway or operetta, Hawaiian, hapa haole, light concert, British popular song, Tin Pan Alley, and Japanese or Japanese-American composers.

Because Denny’s small progressive jazz combo was modelled on the George Shearing Quartet, one might assume that many of the songs would be jazz standards or Tin Pan Alley Hawaiian-themed songs drawing on ethnic stereotypes. Surprisingly, there are few of either

represented on Denny's albums.[483] Sheppard suggests a clear continuity between exotica and older forms of American musical *japonisme* through the repetition of Tin Pan Alley tunes.[484] This claim is understandable, but I have found that the repetition of Les Baxter's songs on Martin Denny's albums between 1957-1959 exceed the number of Tin Pan Alley songs. "My Little Grass Shack" by Johnny Noble is one of the only Tin Pan Alley Hawaiian-themed songs that I have found recorded on these albums. Instead of ethnic novelty songs by American composers, Denny seems to have turned to British song writers for tunes such as "Limehouse Blues" (Furber; Braham), a 1922 British popular song about East London Chinatown.[485]

Many of the songs Denny recorded were written by descendants of Hawaiian monarchy or Hawaiian-born songwriters. "Waipio" is attributed to Francis I'i Brown; "Singing Bamboos" was written by Madeline Kaululehuaohaili Lamb; "Hawaiian Wedding Song" and "Beautiful Kahana" were composed by Charles E. King (and Mary J. Montano); "Hawaiian War Chant" is attributed to Prince Leleiohoko; and "Akaka Falls" was written by Helen Kealanohea Parker. All of Denny's film and Broadway songs carry a South Pacific theme.[486] The light classics, "Lotus Land" (Cyril Scott), and "Escales" (Jacques Ibert) are themes of "faraway places" and travel, and "Rush Hour in Hong Kong" is a composition by American pianist Abram Chasins from his piano suite *Three Chinese Pieces (1926).*

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[483] The Tin Pan Alley or jazz standards include "Hong Kong Blues" (Carmichael), "On a Little Street in Singapore" (DeRose and Hill), "Laura" (Raskin and Mercer), "Flamingo" (Anderson and Grouya), "Summertime" (Gershwin), "Pagan Love Song" (Brown) "St. Louis Blues" (Handy), "Caravan" (Tizol and Ellington), and "Similau" (Clar and Coleman).
[484] Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism*, 289.
[485] Other songs by British composers included "Llama Serenade" (Charles Wolcott), "Japanese Sandman" (Whiting and Egan), "Harbor Lights" (Williams Kennedy), "Ebb Tide" (Robert Maxwell), and "Chinese Lullaby" (RH Bowers).
[486] The film and Broadway selections included "Return to Paradise" (Tiomkin), "Moon of Manakoora" (Alfred Nueman), "Stranger in Paradise" (George Forrest), Bird of Paradise; and selections from Rogers and Hammerstein musicals "Bali Ha'i," "March of the Siamese Children," "We Kiss in a Shadow," and "Hello Young Lovers," and "Happy Talk Little China Doll" (Dave Snell).

What is also notable about Denny's song choices are the many compositions by Japanese and Japanese Americans including Nobuyuki Takeoka's **"**China Nights *Shina No Yoru,*" "Japanese Farewell Song," by Hasegawa Yoshida, "Sukura" by Dai Keong Lee, and Ryoichi Hattori's "Soshu Night Serenade." Even without the sonic identifiers of the *koto, shamisen,* gongs, and bamboo, these songs reflect a complex network of musical signifiers, composers, and styles. Rather than a direct line from Tin Pan Alley, as Sheppard suggests, Denny travels through (mostly) Europe, Hawai'i, and the U.S., stopping in a few ports unknown.

Other aspects of Denny's exotica recordings such as liner notes also included prominent individuals in the arts and entertainment world. Liner notes and album art as I have examined thus far, can be understood as texts and visual aids that are part of the process of assembling a variety of people and ideas into a coherent and legitimate genre. Liner notes written by Les Baxter cemented the link between exotic and exotica, and Hollywood directors and celebrities such as Preston Sturges and James Michener linked travel and adventure through idealized direct contact with other cultures. These factors coalesced in the format of the LP that I will examine in this next section.

LINER NOTES

Liner notes, and the people who wrote them, were another way that Denny articulated the vision of exotica to the rest of the world.[487] The progression of the combo from the lounges of Waikiki and the Hawaiian Village to a more expansive audience can be read in the liner notes of Denny's albums. *Exotica* (Vol. 1) credits Henry J. Kaiser for discovering the group and the connection to tourism is clear: "their music was soon a 'must' for tourists . . . you have to hear it,

[487] Bucky Buchwach of the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* wrote the notes for *Forbidden Island* also detailed the connection to Hawai'i through Hawaiian Village and Don the Beachcomber's Bora Bora Lounge.

experience it, to believe that glasses, small cymbals, bamboo sticks with drumheads, and exotic Oriental effects can enrich music so much."[488] Liberty's marketing department most likely supplied the notes for *Exotica* (vol. 2) that drew on the experiences of listeners: letters and queries from fans marvelling at the unique sounds produced by "primitive" instruments. Fans apparently wanted to know if Liberty actually sent a recording crew to the South Seas. One letter attributed to a listener claimed, "It isn't simply listening to music, it is music we can actually feel, as your music to us isn't just instruments responding to musicians, but it is the very soul of the musician expressing himself."[489] This kind of direct personal experience reflects the cultural encounters James Michener promoted and which he imprinted on Denny's *Hypnotique*:

> This is music to see—and on this record there are many new sounds that will force the listener to create his own word pictures. It's music to feel–and Denny is careful to provide in his orchestrations the specific sound of things banging into other things, or scraping across them, or being struck by the human hand. As you can see, I get a charge out of my friend's music, and this record is a new departure in that for the first time Denny utilizes voices and strings to augment his mood.

The idealized concept that the tourist can interact, see, hear, and feel another culture, is much different than early travel writing that Christine Klein describes as the "gaze-based narrative of grand vistas and picturesque sights."[490] Michener's description of American's cultural encounters with Asia as an emotional experience through his travel writings, was replicated on the liner notes to exotica. It was this articulation of an emotional connection, Klein suggests, that created real and symbolic opportunities for audiences to imagine their evolving relationship with

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[488] The liner notes to *Exotica* (vol. 2) were most likely written by the record label that described Denny's musical imagination as going "further afield." Liberty also concocted a hi-fi label that enabled Liberty to charge a dollar more per album: Superb Spectra-Sonic Sound. Liberty's Super Spectra Sound was a combination of Telefunken microphones, Altec Lansing power amplifiers, Ampex Recorders with special microphoning and studio acoustics. Michael Bryan Kelly, *Liberty Records: A History of the Recording Company and Its Stars, 1955-1971*, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1993), 55.
[489] Martin Denny, *Primitiva,* Liberty LRP-3087, 1958, LP, liner notes.
[490] Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 129.

Asia as a part of their everyday lives.[491] Listeners could imagine Hawai'i even if they had never been to the islands by bringing an imagined world of Hawai'i into their lives and homes via backyard luaus and tiki bars.

CONCLUSION

As music made in Hawai'i, or more accurately "vacation music," Martin Denny's exotica belongs to a distinct historical moment in which Hawai'i entered the U.S. as an imagined multi-racial bridge between East and West. Rather than choosing signifiers of Hawaiian music such as ukulele and steel guitar, Denny chose to highlight Asian musical representation in his choice of instrumentation and song choices. Through the tourist spaces of hotels and his numerous sound recordings, Denny constructed a sonic world for tourists that brought together birdcalls and other "jungle" sounds from Afro-Cuban traditions, juxtaposed with an Asian character that "sounded right," or at least approximated a similar representation of Japanese music through the eyes of Americans. Exotica was constructed exclusively for tourists, but I have shown that Denny relied on the talents, knowledge, labour, and exotic status of countless entertainers in constructing the exotica world. Exotica projected a musical fantasy, but it relied on the labours of the real people it sought to represent.

With both Martin Denny's live performances and his recordings, the listener's affective experience is central to the meaning of exotica. Audiences were encouraged to experience, rather than simply identify, musical otherness. This acknowledgment of the audience (first tourists and then the wider public once recordings began to circulate) may have been what prompted Arthur Lyman to remark that with exotica, "when you put a gong in the wrong place people feel it."[492]

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[491] Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 7.
[492] Pat Langlois, "Did Lyman Leave Mark on Denny?" *Honolulu Advertiser,* Sunday, May 4, 1958, 76.

Instead of the ubiquitous use of a gong to signal East Asia as ominous, the exotica gong offered a feeling (real or imagined) of connecting to another culture. Exotica builds a genre world—within the structure of familiarity for its intended audience— rather than simply observing a different culture, the goal is to feel, connect, and experience.

AFTERWORD|

EXOTICA AFTER 1960

By 1960 exotica was a recognized musical genre. In Waikiki, there were three small jazz combos performing exotica in hotel lounges fronted by Martin Denny, Arthur Lyman, and Gene Rains. Augie Colon was touring with his Afro-Cuban band and was releasing albums including *Sophisticated Savage* (1959), and *Chant of the Jungle* (1960). The popularity of exotica widened to include recordings by Robert Drasnin's *Voodoo* (1959), Frank Hunter's *White Goddess* (1959), and Paul Conrad's *Exotic Paradise* (1960). Both Martin Denny and Tak Shindo had applied the conventions of exotica to African themed albums. These albums included all the established musical exoticisms: jazz ensemble augmented with Afro-Cuban rhythms and percussion, gongs, bells, glockenspiel, chimes, bamboo, temple blocks, harp or *koto,* and combination of brass, strings, winds, and wordless vocals and birdcalls transformed into vocalized grunts, chants, cries, nonsense words, and elephant sounds to signify Africa.[493]

While the stereotypes that thematize these albums may seem outlandish and culturally offensive to the contemporary listener, at the time in the genre of exotica they were legible, and legitimate, because they represented a constellation of exotic tropes in a mood album format, not because of any fidelity or authenticity to African music. Indeed, it was precisely because the sounds were meant to evoke the "moods" of other places and cultures by arranging familiar instruments and human voices in unknown ways (voices as sound color, texture, and timbre) and

[493] Tak Shindo, *Mganga!* Edison International SDL 100, 1958, LP; Martin Denny, *Afro-Desia*, Liberty LRP 3111, 1959, LP.

using unknown instruments in familiar ways (*koto* as a substitute for either harp or steel guitar). The repetition of a combination of sounds and images solidified a meaning of exotica that, once circulating in the broader sphere of American popular music, began to lose some of its tourist associations but maintained the Hawaiian "surf" significance.

Another development of exotica after 1960 was its appearance in recordings by youth-led and electric guitar fronted rock 'n' roll bands.[494] There are numerous examples of amateur instrumental rock and surf groups who combined pop standards with novelty animal sounds, non-western instruments, pentatonic scales, snaking chromatic lines, wordless choruses, and tremolo electric guitars.[495] Older songs that had been staples of mood music, light orchestral, and exotica also made the repertoire list of youth led bands. Between 1960 and 1964 Margarita Lecuona's "Taboo" (1930), for example, was recorded by rock groups such as Dick Dale and the Del-Tones, The La Bombas, Billy Fury and The Tornadoes, Wes Dakus and the Rebels, Red Garrison and His Zodiacs, The Surfmen, and the British instrumental group Sounds Incorporated, who opened for the Beatles on their first American tour. Such arrangements of "Taboo" would not be considered exotica because of the other components such as tremolo electric guitar, a single melodic melody in the saxophone, and/or their release on 45 rpms instead of the mood album format (liner notes, visuals, thematic material), but exotica could be recognized as blending with other genres.

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[494] Don Nicholl, "The Big Beat: Rock 'n' Roll Goes Oriental," *Disc.* June 21, 1958, 13.
[495] Some examples that combine exotica and electric guitar led instrumental songs include: The Counts, "Surfer's Paradise," Manco ML1060, n.d., 45; Del Kent, "Holiday on Saturn," Dot 45-16469, n.d., 45; The Islanders, "Forbidden Island," Mayflower M-22, n.d., 45; The Royals, "Surfing Lagoon," Vagabond VR 134-A, n.d., 45; The Shelltones, "Blue Castaway," Band Box No. 355, n.d., 45; Roy Estrada and the Rocketeers, "Jungle Dreams" King 5368, 1960, 45; The Sheiks, "Baghdad Rock," MGM 73056, 1959, 45; The Saxon's "Camel Walk," Sho Biz 1003-A, 1961; Palatons, "Jungle Guitar," Scavenger R-7961-1A, n.d., 45.; The Vibrents, "The Breeze and I," Bay Towne 409X, n.d., 45.

The song "Blue Pearl" by the Minute Men was described in one review as "a unique blend of exotica and rock n roll."[496] Stylistically, "Blue Pearl" combines a host of exoticisms including pointed staccato piano, pentatonic and minor modes, wordless vocals, snaky and embellished clarinet melody, rhythmic ostinato, and low and hollow percussion. But the song also includes the electric guitar, a signifier of rock 'n' roll, not exotica. That a particular grouping of musical features in the song "Blue Pearl" was identified as exotica illustrates how, through a citational process, certain musical traits "travel" (to use an appropriate metaphor) between genres but are identifiable as a particular grouping. Through the repetition of pre-existing musical texts, in addition to images, discourses, and musical rhetoric, exotica acquires stability as it simultaneously alters the borders of its neighboring genres (instrumental rock 'n' roll). David Brackett explains that "a musical text that is not a literal quotation can only be understood as participating in a genre if that genre is capable of being quoted outside of, or beyond, the initial context in which it was created, and if that genre is legible to addressees beyond the initial audience for the genre."[497] That exotica could be recognized in another context (rock 'n' roll) confirms its stabilization.

But musical genres do not just happen. There are certain conditions that must first be in place. The identification of exotica depended on a citational process that stabilized to the point that exotica could circulate in many different settings and be understood. The typology for exotic that predated exotica came from several different musical streams and discourses including film music, Afro-Cuban styles, progressive jazz, *japonisme,* folk music, African American concert dance, theatrical entertainment, and Hawaiian hapa haole song. Each of these streams was

[496] Jonah Jones, "June Christy on Disc Sock," *The Chicago Defender* October 29, 1960, 19; The Minute-Men, "Blue Pearl," Capitol CL15206, 1961, 45.
[497] Brackett, *Categorizing Sound,* 13.

imbued with their own racial and gendered discourses, and evaluative criteria around popular and serious music. A combination and interaction of all the components made exotica legible to the point that it could be recognized in relation to other genres that share some of the same musical features (wordless vocals) and not others (electric guitar). Exotica, then, constitutes an assemblage of sounds, practices, and discourses that revolves around the interactions of people making music in a particular historical period and within economic, political, and cultural systems.

To support this thesis, I have argued that the identification of exotica hinges more on the interaction of musical traits and their discursive meanings than on what each trait alone represents. This is how the combination of Afro-Cuban musics including percussion techniques and birdcalls, Japanese *koto,* and wordless vocals are articulated together (under certain circumstances) resulting in a specific meaning. In chapter two I examined how wordless vocals and harp glissandos were used to evoke otherworldly, magical, or terrifying difference—a representation which predated exotica in film music. Les Baxter adapted both the wordless chorus and harp glissandos to popular song forms in *Music Out of the Moon*, a novelty recording that was described as exotic through its intersection of women in submissive poses in space (other earthly locations followed with countless mood albums). Les Baxter again utilized a unique combination of instruments and wordless vocals on *Ritual of the Savage*, but these markers of difference represented the "jungle" and "primitive" rather than otherworldliness of space. In chapter four I showed how Martin Denny then cited the wordless chorus as a marker of Asian and Polynesian exoticism when the *koto* was substituted for the harp. The generic conventions of exotica were constantly being modified by each iteration of these musical traits together as they participated in the genre to create meaning.

One theme that runs through this dissertation is the role of arrangements in denoting difference. Exotica operates in the genre of mood music in which artists have a choice of which racialized and/or gendered/sexual musical markers they wish to feature. In Denny's own words, he "distinguished each song by a different ethnic instrument, usually on top of a semi jazz or Latin beat. Even though it remained familiar, each song would take on a strange exotic character."[498] What is implied by this statement, is that the strangeness is particularly comprehensible within the meta-category of "popular music," a dominant white cultural space in which the Western song form could be modified with non-Western elements just enough to make it legible to its users.

During the 1950s there was a general preoccupation with the exotic that led to a standardized way of communicating cultural and transnational exchanges as artists leaned into the search for new sounds. As thematic mood albums became a predominant medium, the term "exotic" became interchangeable with "strange" or "unusual" through extra-musical discourses. Everyday songs—and sounds— that were once familiar became strange and different in certain contexts. Songs with features that departed from the European norm, particularly those that incorporated African diasporic idioms were described as "primitive" and "jungle." These words articulated different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because, as Stuart Hall points out, they have no necessary "belongingness": "The 'unity' which matters is a linkage between that articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected."[499]

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[498] Dana Countryman, "The Martin Denny Interview" *Cool and Strange Music Magazine* no. 7, November 1997-February 1998, 16-21.
[499] Grossberg, ed., "On Postmodernism and Articulation," 141.

The success of exotica relied on a certain suspension of disbelief, but listeners did not have to stretch the bounds of reality too much. It was common practice for arrangers in the swing era to draw on exotic tropes to depict cultural difference. Artie Shaw's arrangement of "Indian Love Call," and Tommy Dorsey's "Song of India" both begin with the repetitive drum rhythm of a solo tom. Exotically themed songs, distinctive and unusual sounds, and new ways of utilizing instruments were some of the crucial ways arrangers made songs sound strange or different. In chapter one I discussed the way Morton Gould turned to instrumental timbres—timpani for echoey drumbeats and maintained dissonant brass for danger—instead of Afro-Cuban instruments in his orchestrated arrangement of Ernesto Lecuona's "Jungle Drums." Or as I show in chapter 3, while Les Baxter's *The Passions* was a promotion for Capitol's specialized FDS high fidelity recordings, it was the arrangement and combination (and large number) of instruments along with Bas Sheva's vocal techniques, ethnicity, and gender that generated Otherness. The focus of the album was less on the technical advancements with high fidelity and more on the orchestral timbres and vocalist's range.

I have analyzed exotica through a historicist perspective that considers a fraction of the many complex interrelations that stabilized in a particular historical moment. Instead of a moment of birth, I have shown that exotica emerged through a series of both small-scale interactions and large-scale processes during the years 1945-1960. The different scales of historical temporality— micro and macro—are both vital to the analysis of a genre. As I show in chapter 4, once the perception of exotica stabilized, iterative statements that suggested a "unity" of ideas/artists/musical techniques further contributed to the stabilization of the genre and constructed a genealogy of exotica that created narrative cohesion between artists and musical styles.

I have uncovered networks of musical materials, listening subjects, and discourses of race, gender, belonging, national identity, and institutional resources that would not likely have appeared based on the narrative of exotica through a present-day lens. Yet, the retroactive impressions of exotica are nonetheless a fundamental aspect of our current understanding of exotica. I began this dissertation with an article in *Billboard* titled "Bachelor Pad Music From '50s, '60s is Swingin' Again: A Brief History of Pad" as an example of how the presentist perspective of the user can influence their comprehension of a genre's meaning, or even construct new genre labels as a way to understand the past (and the present). The article "Bachelor Pad Music" linked exotica to new genre labels such as "lounge," and "space age bachelor pad"—labels that did not exist in the 1950s. The initial interest in exotica during the 1990s was generated first by reissues of older recordings on small labels such as *Exotica: The Best of Martin Denny* on Rhino Records, and independent record collecting magazines (or fanzines) that contributed to the growing interest in older music that they argued had been relegated to thrift stores and record bins as "cast-off relics" and "Neanderthal trash."[500]

The process of citationality helps to understand how different interpretations of exotica occur when the user is situated in a different historical position. Magazines that initiated the interest in older musical styles during the 1990s included *Incredible Strange Music*, *Cool and Strange Music Magazine, Cosmik Debris*, and others, followed the punk principle of do-it-yourself which included the search for music in thrift stores, the performance of music, and the labeling process. For example, the ethos of *Incredibly Strange Music* encouraged readers "to have fun inventing their own categorizations and collecting specialties as they uncover an "incredibly strange" sonic past they never knew existed, and which yet awaits rediscovery in the

[500] Irwin Chusid, *Space Age Pop vol. 1: Melodies and Mischief*, RCA 07863 66645-2, 1995, CD, liner notes.

garages, attics, and storerooms of the world."[501] The act of an individual in creating their own categories and evaluations is a political act, the editors argue, of "dismantling the status quo's control system which rules our lives and perceptions through "aesthetics"—what society deems good or bad (highbrow or lowbrow)."[502] This position prefigures not only the internet and its wide access to cultural materials, but the ongoing debates about "the end of genre."[503] The editors feared that the strange music of the 1950s would not be preserved for future rediscovery because "it was never printed on sheet music, the master tapes have probably been lost, and when all the vinyl albums wear out, it'll be gone forever!"[504] While the editors do not use the term citation, they nevertheless engage in a recognition or "reappraisal" of cultural materials through successive presentist views of the genre as the users historical perspective changes.

From this account, the revival period was much more about commenting on the current situation in the 1990s than it was about any adherence to accuracy and fidelity of the 1950s. The reason for the lounge revival was often framed in relation to contemporaneous musical genres. For example, one participant noted that "lounge music can be odd and unexpectedly funny, a refreshing escape from the earnestness and bombast of much current (and classic) pop and rock."[505] Skip Heller explained that "everyone is sick of guitar distortion with people yelling over top of it."[506] Musician Ben Daughtrey, in an interview in the *Los Angeles Times* noted that "we live in an era where you're supposed to be cool by being dull and depressed. I'm nostalgic

[501] V. Vale and Andrea Juno, eds., *Incredible Strange Music* vol. 2, (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1993), 4.
[502] V. Vale and Andrea Juno, eds., *Incredible Strange Music* vol. 1, (San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1993), 3.
[503] Amanda Petrusich, "Genre is Disappearing. What Comes Next?" *The New Yorker* March 8, 2021.
[504] Vale, *Incredible Strange Music,* 3.
[505] Karen Schoemer, "Sounds of Schmaltz," *Newsweek* 124, no. 8, August 22, 1994, 58-59. John McDonough, "On Disk: The Original Cocktail Nation," *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 1997, A13.
[506] John Sekerka, "Interview with Skip Heller," *Cosmik Debris 19,* December 1996.

for the aesthetic and romantic quality that the lounge era offered."[507] These are only a few accounts from many articles about the lounge revival written by rock critics.[508] As a genre that was regarded in the 1990s as an alternative to rock, and as also being in opposition to rock 'n' roll in the 1950s, the narrative of exotica established during the revival period is arguably part of the rock canon.

The grouping of exotica into the broad category of "lounge music" demonstrates how a new "genre world," according to Frith, is first articulated through a complex process of artists, record executives, critics, and fans, and secondly through the interest of the industry in the marketing of these new genre worlds.[509] By 1995, when "Bachelor Pad Music" was written, what had begun as a fringe interest had become mainstream through the stabilization of new marketing labels publicized through newspapers, media, and compilations by major labels that were invested in classifying the genre "lounge" in order to benefit from its classification. Genre worlds reflect the interaction of the users and the industry, and the world shaping capacity through the user's participation with, and responses to a genre. The worldbuilding of the revival period can be seen in the venues that attempted to create spaces such as "a small, cozy world in which cocktail sipping took precedence over moshing and velvet has supplanted flannel as fabric of choice."[510]

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[507] Chuck Crisafulli, "Dressed Up, Ready to Lounge" *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1994, F52.
[508] David Toop "Incredible, Strange, and Highly Exotic" *The Wire,* October 1994; Jason Cherkis, "What Cocktail Nation?" *Option* 59, November 1994, 58-65; Carina Chocano, "The Lounge Generation," *Salon Magazine* 29, August 26, 1996; Richard Cromelin, "Combustible Edison Fires Up Lounge Music," *Los Angeles Time*s, November 4, 1995, F1, F6; Joshua Glenn, "Cocktail Nation; Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Just Be Fabulous," *Utne Reader* 65 (1994): 83-89; John McDonough, "On Disk: The Original Cocktail Nation," *Wall Street Journal,* May 22, 1997, A13; Chris Morris, "Tall Cool Ones," *Billboard*, February 10, 1996, 21-27; Chris Napolitano, "The Look of Lounge," *Playboy* 43, no. 12 (December 1996): 102-104, 198; Dominic Pride, "London Taking It Easy with Lounge-Core Artists," *Billboard,* April 27, 1996: 1, 91-92.
[509] Frith, *Performing Rites,* 88.
[510] Chuck Crisafulli, "Dressed Up, Ready to Lounge" *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1994, F52.

Certain themes emerge from the literature of the revival period that imagine the world of the 1950s by emphasising the relationship between gender roles and technology. It is widely accepted that the label "space-age bachelor pad music" was coined by Byron Werner to describe what he believed was the sound and lifestyle of the 1950s: "lonely guys with too much disposable income who are nitpicky about their stereos."[511] The identity of the bachelor and bachelor spaces such as the "pad" was idealized in the 1990s to the extent that much of the instrumental pop music of the 1950s was grouped under the broad label "space age bachelor pad" music. Many of the re-issues of older music, including Capitol's compilation series *Ultra-Lounge,* built on the idea of the bachelor with volume tiles such as *Bachelor Royale*, *A Bachelor in Paris*, and *Wild, Cool, and Swingin',* and *Music for a Bachelor's Den*. The retroactive labeling of "bachelor pad music" assumes that the bachelor was not only an accepted and stable identity, but an enviable one.

Sexual politics of the 1950s were juxtaposed with the 1990s to explain the appeal of lounge music. For example, a 1997 article in *Esquire* claimed that the lounge revival represented the "restoration of a 'phallic order' in a society in which sexual roles have been disrupted by cataclysmal change—world war, feminism, AIDS."[512] The desire for so-called normative gender roles in the 1990s was acknowledged in the form of "swinging," which according to one revival participant meant, "when dames are dames and men are gentlemen."[513] In chapter 2, I examine the historical conditions under which Les Baxter's album *Music out of the Moon* initiated the trend of sexually suggestive images of women on record covers. Sexy women on album covers

[511] Greg Kot, Tribune Rock Critic "For Better or Worse, Lounge Music (Yes, That Easy Listening Drek) Has Returned, So…" *Chicago Tribune* February 19, 1996.
[512] Robert Rothenberg, "The Swank Life: Take a Pie-Eyed Journey into Lounge Culture, Where Dames are Dames, Guys Sport Sharkskin, and the Martinis are Shaken, not Stirred," *Esquire* 127 no.4 (1997): 73.
[513] Rothenberg, "The Swank Life," 73.

were not a "normal" or pre-existing truth in the social/cultural/musical world. Instead, sexual images of women on album covers became normalized as the boundaries of acceptable sexual representation shifted through small details and accidents that only become clear through a historicist and genealogical lens. Rather than a linear through line of causal relationships, I have shown that social norms and gender identities were far more complicated and unsettled during the 1950s than is commonly assumed. One of the themes that I keep returning to in this dissertation is the way the women are central to how conceptions of exotic circulated through musical and thematic material. Women were present on the periphery in many of the productions of exotica, yet they were central to its identification and meaning. The production of the exotic operated in a space that was controlled by male interests, but in which women, in particular multiracial women, each brought their own background, experiences, and labor into the field in different ways.

Other narratives around exotica in the 1990s imply that the music was a by-product of new recording and sound technology. Consider this explanation of Martin Denny's original success: "his first albums coincided with the arrival of stereo sound in commercial form. Different noises were needed to demonstrate the format's potential and Denny's records provided those noises. Simple as that." [514] Another claimed that "exotica was a sexy stereo soundtrack for tropical explorers who moved no further from the 'burb than a polyvinyl lounger slapped dead in the middle of two hi-fi speakers."[515] Retroactive analysis of exotica has produced what Jonathan Sterne calls "impact narratives," a type of technological determinism that analyzes social and cultural events through causal relationships.[516] I am not dismissing the

[514] Fred Fact, "The Kitsch are Alright: Martin Denny," *Vox* October 1, 1995, 60-76.
[515] David Toop, "Incredible, Strange, and Highly Exotic," *The Wire,* October 1994.
[516] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 7. Sterne's book *Audible Past* engages with new approaches to

impact of technology as a factor in the construction of exotica; it is a significant site of twentieth-century experiments in sound. However, as I have shown the relationship between sound recording technologies and the popularity of exotica is not so simple. The combination of instruments along with techniques of orchestral and vocal arrangements were fundamental to making the familiar strange, and the strange familiar. When the strangeness is assumed to be simply a byproduct of the recording technology historical conditions including human agency in shaping musical expression and responses to them are obscured.

I have stressed in this dissertation how generic meanings are constructed through their relationships to one another. In the 1950s exotica was understood in relation to the musical mainstream which had different streams or threads of musical styles including mood music, progressive jazz, and Hawaiian music. These musical styles were also constructed through discourses concerning gender and racial identity during a transformational period of social change and racial relocation including Hawaiian statehood, the beginning of the Civil Rights movement, and second wave feminism. Seen from a different temporal perspective of the 1990s, exotica is related to the musical mainstream of the 1990s in which rock music, or grunge to be more precise, was the dominant force.

Musicians and record collectors, some of whom described themselves as ex-punks, were central to the attribution of cultural value on exotica through the perception of it in opposition to rock 'n' roll. There was an outsider status in aligning with music that for them was antithetical to rock's values of earnestness and authenticity. Irwin Chusid's name arises frequently in revival literature for his work documenting and writing the history of what he calls "outsider music" and "space age pop." His process of documenting and recovering the discography of artists such as

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materiality, or the broad umbrella term of "new materialism" to explore the material dimensions of media, culture, and technology.

Raymond Scott, Sun Ra, and Jim Flora is commendable. Yet he openly admits to combining music, artists, and art that were historically unrelated.[517]

This interest in regrouping music into new categories such as "space age bachelor pad," "lounge," or "outsider music," illustrates how the presentist perspective is contingent on the users personal lived experience and their relationship to the musical mainstream more broadly. For example, record collectors published interviews, wrote personal memoirs, and developed careers based on relationships that they cultivated with artists from the 1950s. Skip Heller befriended Les Baxter prior to his death in 1996 and published stories online such as "My Breakfast with Baxter" in which he claimed to have been a regular at Baxter's house to the extent that he had his own bedroom.[518] Heller also had a personal relationship with Yma Sumac including performing in some of her live shows in the 1990s.[519]

Yma Sumac's placement in the exotica canon demonstrates how the revival period generated a regrouping and reformulation of genre labels along with the addition of artists who had not previously been associated with exotica. The emphasis on Yma Sumac as an exotica artist in the 1990s reveals more about the revival period that it does about how exotica was understood by audiences and the entertainment industry in its time. I am hard pressed to find any account by Sumac herself in which she identifies as an exotica artist, and she rarely mentioned Les Baxter in interviews. By her own account, she was a classical Peruvian singer.

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[517] In an interview posted on YouTube, Chusid explains how he combines music and visuals for reissues of music on the record label Modern Harmonic. He takes art from Jim Flora and publishes it on Raymond Scott and Sun Ra album covers:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AVFbZnxgYg&t=158s&ab_channel=ModernHarmonic
[518] http://www.ele-mental.org/~ecc/exo/exotica/baxterbreakfast.html
[519] John Sekerka "Interview with Skip Heller" *Cosmik Debris* December, no. 19, 1996.
http://web.textfiles.com/ezines/COSMIKDEBRIS/199612.txt

Yma Sumac has been neatly fitted into the retroactive exotica canon through the very strategies that heralded her a different in the 1950s. These strategies were her ethnic difference, her authenticity as a descendant of royalty, her four-octave vocal range, the mythological story of a "bird who tuned into a woman," her recordings, and her connection to Les Baxter. Georgina Born's model of "musically imagined communities" is an apt framework for analysing Sumac's artistic output through the lens of exotica as a historical process of reinterpretation after the fact and then reinsertion into the changing sociocultural formation.[520] As I discussed in chapter 4, Yma Sumac was popular during the 1950s for her exotic persona during a period of increasing interest in the intersection of folk, "primitive," or more accurately, Afrodiasporic stage shows and dancers such as Katherine Dunham. This influence can be seen in other popular entertainments and recordings such as with the popularity of mambo, Les Baxter's touring "native troupe," and even Jackie Gleason's "television ballet" *Tawny* with its "all-Negro" dance sections.

This dissertation contributes to growing bodies of scholarship on the construction of musical genre. Within musicology and media studies it adds to studies on music and the middlebrow, scholarship on Hawaiian popular music, entanglements of sound reproduction and representation, and the intersection of race, sound technologies, and musical genre. The latter contribution points to further directions for popular music research by offering a point of departure for the analysis of interrelations between musical categories, the commercial adoption of the LP, and the mechanisms of racial inequality race during the pre-rock 'n' roll period (1948-1954). Chapter 1, for example, points towards questions of how a new media, the LP, reproduces societal values of its historical moment. How might these values have interacted with, and

[520] Born, and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and Its Others*, 35-36.

impacted formations of musical categories associated with the LP? What overlooked connections might be made if this historical moment is viewed through not only those in the music industry ca. 1948, but the perspectives of those (people and events) that were less documented?

We live in a world where music is a fundamental part of our everyday lives. Our relationship with musical genres continues to change, as does our understanding of the role of musical genre in popular music history. Rather than simply an analysis of stylistic features, I have shown in this dissertation that musical genres are active processes that both shape and reflect our understanding of the world and our place in it.

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