

Jazz and Noir Film

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Abstract

Jazz became the music most associated with film noir. The key movie was *The Wild One*, starring Marlon Brando who personified the noir hero, or anti-hero. He was looking for trouble, any trouble. Great jazz figures were drawn to the noir form, and there was a noir style of music. West Coast trumpeter Shorty Rogers had 4 tunes in Leith Stevens great score. Great jazz stars Bud Shank, Jimmy Giuffre, Shelley Manne and the great Henry Mancini followed. The TV show Peter Gunn soon followed and kept great jazz musicians working. Jazz became the sound of the hard-boiled detective and the noir film. Of course, the writings of Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, and Ernest Hemingway predated the films and TV shows. Since the 1930s, most orchestrations for movies are composed directly for the screen and, as we'll see, cannot easily exist independent of the movie without much fleshing out. This is in contrast to a film using in its score the hit songs of an era, songs which existed independently, before the movie, and will exist independently after the movie is long gone even though it might be singularly associated with the film henceforth. Think of Roy Orbison's classic hit, "Pretty Woman," from the film *Pretty Woman* (1990). Or all the films with songs by Dean Martin, such as *Moonstruck* (1987), to establish both time and, often, place, such as Las Vegas or New York's Little Italy. (Stuart Fischhoff "The Evolution of Music in Film and its Psychological Impact on Audiences" p. 2)

"Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways."

— [Sigmund Freud](#)

Since the advent of sound in film music has played an important role. Indeed, even before the advent of "talkies", music played a part in films. Live music played a part, from the lone pianist or organist to a full orchestra. Many jazz musicians played for silent movies. The most famous of these musicians was indisputably Louis Armstrong. However, many other famous and not so famous musicians played for silent movies and these movies helped support thousands of instrumentalists. In fact, movie houses were the largest employers of American musicians. Once the talkies took over from the silent movies, things changed quickly.

Music was incorporated into movies and made for movies. All viewers had the same music with the same movies. Although not the first “talkie” or even the first movie with sound, *The Jazz Singer* was a milestone movie. As Tim Dirks writes

Although it was not the first *Vitaphone* (sound-on-disk) feature, it was the *first* feature-length Hollywood “talkie” film in which spoken dialogue was used as part of the dramatic action. It is, however, only part-talkie (25%) with sound-synchronized, vocal musical numbers and accompaniment. [The first “all-talking” (or all-dialogue) feature-length picture was Warner’s experimental entry - the gangster film *Lights of New York* (1928).] There are only a few scenes, besides the songs, where dialogue is spoken synchronously. A musical score (composed of a potpourri of melodies including sources such as Tchaikovsky, traditional Hebrew music and popular ballads) and musical sound effects accompany the action and title/subtitle cards throughout the entire film. The characters are given individual musical themes, action and title/subtitle cards throughout the entire film. The characters are given individual musical themes (Filmsite Movie Review <http://www.filmsite.org/jazz.html>).

Thus, the success of *The Jazz Singer* led to a revolution in the movie industry, including the use of music.

However, it needs to be clear that *The Jazz Singer* was not only not more than 25% “talkie” but had not one line of jazz in its music. Jazz would eventually play a part in movie music. The Telegraph(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturepicturegalleries/11164644/The-best-jazz-films.html?frame=endScreen>) listed some fine movies about jazz. The following list gives some idea of the overall use of jazz in the movies *Lady Sings the Blues*, *Blues in the Night*, *Cabin in the Sky*, *Stormy Weather*, *The Fabulous Dorseys*, *Young Man with a Horn*, *The Glen Miller Story*, *The Benny Goodman Story*, *High Society*, *St. Louis Blues*, among others.

However, jazz as an integral part of the film score comes into its own with the advent of 1950s film noir and the hard-boiled detective of that period. There is some argument about the first noir film using jazz but a good choice is *A Street Car Named Desire*. The music is definitely jazz oriented and the orchestra includes Benny Carter among other jazz luminaries. Miles Davis praised Alex North, the composer of the film score. He said,

Do you know the best thing I’ve heard in a long time? Alex North’s music for *A Streetcar Named Desire*. (*Capitol LP P.387*). That’s a wild record – especially the part Benny Carter plays. (Miles Davis in David Butler *Jazz Noir: Listening to Music from Phantom Lady to The Last Seduction*, NY:, Praeger, p. 202.)

He even compared North’s score to Duke Ellington. High praise indeed. Duke would write a great film noir score later in the decade for *Anatomy of a Murder*. North’s score, however, set the overall pattern for film noir scores. That is interesting because although obviously familiar with jazz, North was not really a jazz musician. However, he knew how to use jazz devices. As he explains,

It is commonly acknowledged that North composed the first functional, dramatic jazz score for a film. Up until then, jazz had been generally used only as source music. “Emotionally it is lowdown basin street blues,” said North in interviews at the time, “sad, glad, mad New Orleans jazz in terms of human beings. And that’s the kind of music that drummed in my head.” He wanted to convey “the internal, rather than external aspects of the film.... The music was related to the characters at all times and not the action. Instead of ‘themes’ for the specific characters, there were mental

statements, so to speak. (The Music of A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE Published in *Film Score Monthly Online*, May 2006 <https://wordsofnote.wordpress.com/articles/streetcar-named-desire/>)

The style is that of 1950s jazz, the Golden Age of Jazz in which all styles could be found and in which people from many different schools could find common ground in spite of the stylistic wars being waged. In other words, no single school of jazz prevailed in every noir film. One could hear bop, swing, Dixieland, New Orleans, or West Coast jazz. However, the similarities in different schools of jazz are greater than the differences. Certain sounds will evoke sensuality, danger, fear, sorrow or joy no matter the school

The Fifties and Jazz

The LP revolution did a great deal to enhance and preserve Jazz's popularity. It allowed not only for longer solos in contrast with the limitation of the old 78s, but also for concept albums. In addition, jazz fans tended to be older and a bit more affluent than rock fans, as *Playboy* had noted. There were many changes in jazz during the 1950s, the Golden Age of Jazz. Thanks to the creation of the jazz festival and its predecessor, the Jazz at the Philharmonic road show, it is possible to note the similarity of the different jazz styles as well as their connection. Moreover, it is possible to appreciate in retrospect the fact that most of the important jazz musicians who had lived were alive and working in the 1950s. Jazz's past, present, and future were all there in the 1950s.

Jazz was still a young art form in the 1950s. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band recorded the first jazz record in 1917. Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet, the first two outstanding jazz soloists, were still performing. The great swing musicians were well represented. The be-bop revolution had become part of the mainstream and the new revolutionaries who would blossom in the 1960s, like John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, were launching their careers or consolidating them in the 1950s. In sum, all forms of jazz could be found in vital live performances not by revival bands or repertory aggregations but by the originals, many of whom were not out of their fifties, like Louis Armstrong, even though younger musicians might consider them old men.

The first of the great festivals was the Newport Jazz Festival. George Wein, a pianist and nightclub owner in the Boston area, decided to promote a jazz festival in Newport, Rhode Island. Jazz still had a slightly unsavory reputation and the wealthy inhabitants of Newport did not have the reputation of being great supporters of the art form, a fact that added to the spice of the movie *High Society*, the successful remake of *The Philadelphia Story*.

The festival began over the July 4th weekend in 1954 and soon grew to a weeklong event with hundreds of performers. Its excitement can be viewed in a documentary of the 1958 festival entitled *Jazz on a Summer's Day*. The film made by Bert Stern, gains from the work of Aram Avakian. It was the forerunner of other concert documentaries and is still unmatched for its general quality and the matching of music and setting. It combined a sense of 50s high quality fashion with its love of the cool and the hip.

Stern juxtaposes tryouts for the America's cup with the best of jazz. Big Maybelle, Chuck Berry, and Mahalia Jackson show jazz's roots and relatives in performances. Jazz musicians and the relationship of Blues, Rock 'n' Roll, and Gospel become quite clear through the performances that accompany each of these non-jazz performers. The range of jazz in the 50s is also remarkable.

Some of the performers whom Stern highlighted are now mere footnotes to jazz history, known only to aficionados. Their 50s reputations appear inflated in retrospect. Others have stood the test of time and their reputations are still strong. Among the performers were Chico Hamilton, Jimmy Giuffre, Anita O'Day, Theolonius Monk, and Louis Armstrong. There were interesting brief interviews with fans, giving the viewer a good glimpse into the way real people looked and talked in the 50s, rather than the way Hollywood later came to portray the 50s look. Additionally, there are some excellent candid shots of fifties fans reacting to the music and dancing in the aisles, giving the lie to the old canard that you can't dance to "modern jazz".

The festival scene came at an opportune time for jazz, for dancers had gone to rock 'n roll, either live or in the sock or record hops that featured records played by disk jockeys. The big ballrooms had either closed or were deemed not appropriate for most of the modern jazz musicians. The jazz clubs were hurt by the luxury taxes left over from World War II, extended through the early Cold War period and the Korean conflict. The college kids fueled the festival culture in great measure, and the king of the college circuit was Dave Brubeck.

Brubeck was associated with the "cool" West Coast sounds of jazz. He also seemed to be part of the more cerebral movement in jazz that tied into the *Jazz with Classics* movement. The Dave Brubeck Quartet was immensely popular and its sound was one of those that helped identify an era. In spite of being considered "too white" by some critics, the Dave Brubeck quartet won the first jazz poll conducted by a black newspaper, The Pittsburgh Courier. Brubeck further angered some jazz critics when his picture appeared on the cover of Time Magazine. Nevertheless, Brubeck's album "Time Out", and its singles, "Take Five" and "Blue Rondo a la Turk", became the first in modern jazz to "go gold".

Thus, jazz in the 1950s was indeed diverse and relatively popular. That diversity is clearly reflected in the film noir tradition. There is a commonality and a diversity in these scores. Three or four references make the point. *Pete Kelly's Blues* has a Dixieland score. *I Want To Live a West Coast* one while Duke Ellington's score for *Anatomy of a Murder*, like Duke himself, is hard to categorize other than to say it is a piece of Ellingtonia. The Modern Jazz Quartet's scores for *Odds against Tomorrow* and *No Sun in Venice* are bop influenced but also cool. At one point all four of the members had been Dizzy Gillespie's rhythm section. When Kenny Clarke left, Connie Kay replaced him on drums.

Despite its sophistication jazz gained a reputation for being the music of sin and of being developed in the brothels of New Orleans and nurtured in questionable night clubs, usually owned by gangsters who controlled the music. That reputation was an aid to its use in films to signal a down and dirty scene or to accompany questionable moral activity. Jazz was also the music to express urban angst and corruption, the default position of the postwar era. This use of jazz extended to television noirs as well. Indeed, since TV aired weekly detective films, all of which were more or less noirs, there was more opportunity to use music to set the mood for the tone of the shows.

<Play Examples Here>

Although David Butler (2002) is generally correct in asserting that it was not until modern jazz had a large cadre of white players that it began to be used in noir scores. Certainly, that statement needs some examination. There were many African-Americans who played in jazz noir films and TV shows, early and later. Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Cab Calloway,

Lester Young, Louis Armstrong, Nat Adderley, Bennie Carter, Jimmy Lunceford, Sonny Rollins, Dizzy Gillespie, and the Modern Jazz Quarter, among others. This list makes one wonder just what Butler means. Although Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer are not African American they were great jazz fans and wrote classic tunes that are still in the jazz repertory, including the music for *Blues in the Night*, a film in which Jimmy Lunceford performed.

In addition to film noir, the fifties saw the flowering of TV noir, especially in the growth of TV hard-boiled detectives. Indeed, the sound of jazz became the sound of mystery, the hardboiled detective personified. But jazz had a long connection with tough private eyes and noir long before the 1950s. The writing of Raymond Chandler and his disciples as well as that of Dashiell Hammett was written to the rhythm of jazz, as was that of Ernest Hemingway. However, TV reached millions nightly and many of those viewers were watching hard boiled detectives, who were doing their thing to the sound of jazz.

A listing of the noir detective and hard-boiled programs gives a good insight into the influence of TV noir in spreading jazz. Shorty Rogers, a West Coast trumpet player, was featured in many of the TV noirs. He made a big splash with his work in *The Wild One*, the Marlon Brando 1953 influential hit movie. He went on to be heard on the soundtrack of the Sinatra movie *The Man with the Golden Arm*. Not surprisingly West Coast musicians were overrepresented in TV and film noir. In addition to Shorty Rogers, Bud Shank on alto sax. Shelly Manne on drums, Pete Condoli on trumpet, and Ray Anthony on trumpet and Plas Johnson on tenor sax were found on many shows and movies. *Peter Gunn* dominated the TV noir shows.

It was hip without effort. Its star Craig Stevens was made for the role. Henry Mancini's music was fresh and the music kept pace with the noir scripts.

The M Squad was a heavyweight show and it had a heavyweight band, The Count Basie Orchestra, the swingiest band that ever was. Bill Basie kept his band fresh over the years and with sidemen in this band like Benny Powell, Frank Foster, Frank Wess, and Sonny Payne, among others the music pushed the show forward. There were others. Mickey Spillane's *Mike Hammer* made frequent appearances, complete with noir music. There were many other crime shows. Here is a short list. Each had a noir score, or Crime Jazz. *Johnny Staccato*, *The Amazing Mr. Malone* (1951-1952), *Dragnet* (1951-1959), *Naked City* (1957-1963), *The Untouchables* (1959-1963), *77 Sunset Strip* (1958-1964), *Bourbon Street Beat* (1959-1960), and *Hawaiian Eye*, (1959-1963 among many others.

Noir Hard-Boiled Detectives

John G. Cawelti states that all hard-boiled detective stories start with the rebellion of the detective. He notes Raymond Chandler's statement in Chapter 35 of *The Long Goodbye*.

The other part of me wanted to get out and stay out, but this was the part I never listened to. Because if I ever had I would have stayed in the town where I was born and worked in the hardware store and married the boss's daughter and had five kids and read them the funny paper on Sunday morning and smacked their heads when they got out of line and squabbled with the wife about

how much spending money they were to get and what programs they could have on the radio and TV set. I might even have got rich— small town rich, an eight-room house, two cars in the garage, chicken every Sunday and the Reader's Digest on the living room table, the wife with a cast-iron permanent and me with a brain like a sack of Portland cement. You take it, friend.

Most commentators agree on the characteristics of the hard-boiled detective, whether that detective is Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe, Mike Hammer or any one of the many others. In a nutshell, the common characteristics are these. The hard-boiled here is more interested in discovering justice and bringing it about. Moreover, in that quest the evil doers seek to intimidate him while also trying to tempt him, and later on her, to the easy life of wealth and power. The hero must make some sort of personal choice, a moral decision, rather than simply solving a case. Another way of saying this is that the hero has a personal involvement in the action. He may know the victim but he also must learn to know himself and how he reacts to the crime and the entire situation.

Moreover, the detective must define his own morality. This fact often leads to his rejecting the common view that society holds as morality. Indeed, in Hammett and Marlowe society is often the cause of crime and criminal itself.

Crime isn't a disease. It's a symptom. We're a big rough rich wild people and crime is the price we pay for it, and organized crime is the price we pay for organization. We'll have it with us a long time. Organized crime is just the dirty side of the sharp dollar." "What's the clean side?" "I never saw it." (*The Long Goodbye, Chapter 48*)

At root, the hard-boiled story is a morality tale and even a romantic one. Beneath the toughness and cynicism, the hero is a romantic. He, or she, is looking to right a moral wrong, even when society refuses to acknowledge the evil at the core of that wrong. One good person must stand up for what is right no matter the cost. Again Chandler says it well.

Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of story must be such a man. He is the hero, he is everything. He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual 'man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honor, . . . The story is this man's adventure in search of a hidden truth, and it would be no adventure if it did not happen to a man fit for adventure. If there were enough like him, the world would be a very safe place to live in, without becoming too dull to be worth living in. (*The Simple Art of Murder, 1950*)

Comparing Movie and TV Noir

One of the more influential movies of the fifties was *The Wild One* in which Marlon Brando is the leader of a biker gang. He wears a black leather jacket while riding at the head of that gang. He leads his gang into a small rural town and the tension builds as the audience knows Brando will terrorize that town. It was the first movie to articulate teenage rebellion of the period. No other movie was quite so clear about it, including James Dean's *Rebel without a Cause*. The jazz soundtrack included four songs performed in a West Coast jazz style. The group's leader, Shorty Rogers, include great musicians in his group, The Giants, among them were Jimmy Giuffre, Bud Shank, Russ Freeman, Bill Holman and Shelly Manne. Leith Stevens wrote the score which provided the setting for the tense drama. The success of the movie and the contribution of the sound track, following on the great sound track of *Streetcar Named Desire*, enticed many other

jazz musicians into contributing to sound tracks, including Henry Mancini, Stan Getz, Lalo Schiffrin and so many others.

TV noir had to do what the movie noir did but in half-hour or one hour segments. Moreover, they had to find fresh ways to keep their characters tough, lonely, a bit cynical but still, at root, romantic. Things had to happen both more quickly each week and over a longer time as the series unwound. So Peter Gunn had to wrap up a mystery each week but keep in character over a long period. TV series were at the same time quickly over and longer lasting than film noir. It is interesting to see adaptations of TV noir or nourish presentations adapted for movies. Compare *Requiem for a Heavyweight*, *Peter Gunn*, *The Fugitive*, and others in their TV and movie versions.

Both display essentially the basic characteristics of noir. There is a pervading darkness of mood, character, and lighting. The characters are night creatures. Jazz is the key music, more so on TV than in the movies. But jazz appears more fitting for films noir than any other music. The hero often is a loner who has his own morality and must solve the mystery in his own way.

Noir Movies and Noir Music

Indeed, the sound of jazz became the sound of mystery, the hardboiled detective personified. But jazz had a long connection with tough private eyes and noir long before the 1950s. The writing of Raymond Chandler and his disciples as well as that of Dashiell Hammett was written to the rhythm of jazz, as was that of Ernest Hemingway.

It is commonly acknowledged that North composed the first functional, dramatic jazz score for a film. Up until then, jazz had been generally used only as source music. "Emotionally it is lowdown basin street blues," said North in interviews at the time, "sad, glad, mad New Orleans jazz in terms of human beings. And that's the kind of music that drummed in my head." He wanted to convey "the internal, rather than external aspects of the film... The music was related to the characters at all times and not the action. Instead of 'themes' for the specific characters, there were mental statements, so to speak." The movie was not about hard-boiled detectives. It was about sad, lost people in the steamy south, in New Orleans to be specific.

Noir movies in general have the following characteristics. First, as the name states, they are dark. There are shadows contrasting with light. They are dark in character as well as in lighting. You know there will be no happy ending. There are no hints at everything turning out well. It will not. The fraying section of towns are predominant. What Chandler called "mean streets". Specifically, back alleys, the underside of fancy hotels or homes, what were once called slums. Also there is a large number of cabbies, bartenders and others who have seen everything and are surprised by nothing.

Part of the fog of the night is due to cigarette smoke. Smoking appears mandatory for men and women. Film noir women tend to be hard. There is a thin line between love and hate. Sometimes it is hard to tell when a women will love you or try to kill you. They also must have full figures with low necklines, plenty of makeup. Somehow they also have dressing rooms, high heels. Gorgeous dresses are de rigueur, often in red, as are the ability to mix drinks and gloves reaching to their elbows.

Men also had a dress code. That included hats. It was the period for hats, usually fedoras. They also dressed routinely in suits and ties. They lived in shabby places, most often hotels. Their

offices had to have a whiskey bottle, in a top drawer/. They drove used cars, often convertibles but also coupes. In the classic period of noir films, all cars had running boards.

Finally, classic noir films were in black and white because they were dependent on light and shadow to heighten their effects. Relationships never seemed to work out as the characters expected. In Roger Ebert's words film noir was “. The most American film genre, because no society could have created a world so filled with doom, fate, fear and betrayal, unless it were essentially naive and optimistic...” (Roger Ebert a Guide to Film Noir Genre *Roger Ebert's Journal* January 30, 1995 <http://www.rogerebert.com/rogers-journal/a-guide-to-film-noir-genre>)

Perhaps, a brief list of classic noir films will make things clearer. In 1946 Nino Frank named film noir. He enjoyed the dark film of the times. Some have seen film noir as the result of the marriage of Raymond Chandler's Marlowe novels and German expressionism, with a touch of pulp fiction. Additionally, most noir defied the movie code of the day, the Hays Code. Eddie Muller listed 25 noir film that will last (Endless Night – 25 Noir Films that Will Stand the Test of Time <http://www.eddiemuller.com/top25noir.html>). Here are a few of his films. They are followed by some jazz in noir films. Endless Night – 25 Noir Films that Will Stand the Test of Time. Here is his list.

25. *Raw Deal* (Eagle-Lion, 1948) – [Available on YouTube](#)
24. *City that Never Sleeps* (Republic, 1952)
23. *Touch of Evil* (Universal, 1958)
22. *Scarlet Street* (Universal, 1945) – [Available on Open Culture](#) or watch above
21. *Detour* (PRC, 1945) – [Available on Open Culture](#)
20. *Tomorrow is Another Day* (Warner Bros., 1951)
19. *The Prowler* (United Artists, 1950)
18. *Gun Crazy* (United Artists, 1950)
17. *Act of Violence* (MGM, 1949)
16. *Odds Against Tomorrow* (United Artists, 1959)
15. *The Killing* (United Artists, 1956)
14. *They Live By Night* (RKO, 1949)
13. *Thieves' Highway* (20th Century-Fox, 1949)
12. *Sweet Smell of Success* (United Artists, 1958)
11. *The Killers* (Universal, 1946)
10. *Moonrise* (Republic, 1948) – [Available on YouTube](#)
9. *Out of the Past* (RKO, 1947)
8. *Night and the City* (20th Century-Fox, 1950)
7. *Nightmare Alley* (20th Century-Fox, 1947)
6. *The Maltese Falcon* (Warner Bros., 1941)
5. *Double Indemnity* (Paramount, 1944)
4. *The Asphalt Jungle* (MGM, 1950)
3. *Sunset Boulevard* (Paramount, 1950)
2. *Criss Cross* (Universal, 1949)
1. *In a Lonely Place* (Columbia, 1950)

It is interesting to note how many of these films do have jazz or jazz-like music. Skip Heller (2012) has a brilliant article on Crime Jazz, the jazz we associate with film and TV noir. Although I don't agree with all he says, I do agree with most of his thoughts. My major difference is that I

think jazz in some form or other appeared in more noir movies than he does. However, his description of Crime jazz is clear and everyone can understand it, at least everyone who loves the genre or been exposed to it.

The nickname is "crime jazz." We all know the style—a kind of enticing sleaze fest whose prototype composition is "Harlem Nocturne." Here we have all the elements well in place—the "take it all off" minor melody played by alto saxophonist Rene Bloch with disreputable virtuosity popping out of a stripper cake of minor sixth chords, bumping grinding rhythms, and general unseemliness. It is perfect in its musical depiction of ill repute, and was prolifically recorded in the years immediately following the Second World War. Film composers were well aware of "Harlem Nocturne," too, and after *Streetcar*, they hit the style hard. Historian Jim Dawson, whose recent and excellent book *Los Angeles's Bunker Hill: Pulp Fiction's Mean Streets And Film Noir's Ground Zero* (2012), is an expert both on all things noir and Los Angeles music, shared the following opinion: "The producers were looking for dissonant, expressionist, hard-edged music to go with the films' hard-edged cinematography. They wanted to subvert the standard Hollywood drama/love story."

And subvert it they did. It was no longer boy meets girl. After some problems, boy and girl fall in love. After more problems, boy and girl get married and live happily ever after. *Double Indemnity*, a film without a jazz score but with one source jazz song, will allow a quick look at how even minimal use of jazz can make the point of subversion and opposition to the usual Hollywood love story. *Double Indemnity* became a pattern for film noir. The hard-boiled dialogue, with Raymond Chandler's stamp on it, along with Billy Wilder's smart reframing of James Cain's novella, showed what a noir movie should be. Each detail added to the whole – Barbara Stanwyck's cheap platinum wig, her cheap perfume, the male friendship between Robinson and McMurray, the shots of the office showing the monotony of capitalist labor, the venetian blinds mimicking prison stripes, and the shadows and darkness. There was more, much more indeed.

Although Miklós Rózsa's music score is not jazz, it is edgy indeed. However, the fatal scene in which the lovers shoot one another is introduced by Jimmy Dorsey's *Tangerine*. The Johnny Mercer's lyrics tell of toasts to her but with a heart belonging only to her. The male singer is answered by a female's who notes how tawdry *Tangerine* is and the "s only fooling one girl . . . *Tangerine*." It is an effective scene leading into the double murder, which reflects the double indemnity of the title.

It soon became clear that source music could have but a limited effect on the mood and pace of movies. So that the movie began to determine what music should fit it. Films noir of a certain type began to get the music the genre needed. Dawson (2012) put the matter into perspective.

It is interesting to note that most of this stuff—not the Lewis or the Ellington scores—is true Hollywood music. The composers were real live trained composers who largely started in radio and/or big bands, then went into film music because that's what composers get hired to do in Hollywood. The players are the cream of the West Coast 1950s jazz scene, and the recording quality is just gorgeous. At every stage of musical creativity, Hollywood in the 1950s had an incredible human resource bank, and during this period more money was spent on music for film than music for any other purpose. But it was with his 1955 score for *The Man With The Golden Arm* that he first came to real notice (an Oscar nomination), with its brassy retelling of the Muddy

Water's "I'm A Man" riff, jagged minor chords and spotless performance. This score is truly perfect of its craft, and deserves every accolade.

Thus, film noir began to influence the type of music it craved. Producers and music directors had a huge bank of great musicians to draw on and did so eagerly. These first call musicians and composers really were able to call on their skills to provide jazz to order. It is necessary to point out that most of what became associated with film and later television noir was based on the blues or a blues feeling. If *Harlem Nocturne* was the pattern, then many could produce a minor bluesy song in that vein. Here are a few that come to mind. Ray Anthony & His Orchestra, *Pete Kelly's Blues (Main Theme)*, Miklós Rózsa, *The Asphalt Jungle (Main Theme)*, Duke Ellington, *Anatomy Of A Murder (Main Theme)*, Alex North, Jerry Goldsmith & The National Philharmonic Orchestra, *A Streetcar Named Desire (Main Theme)*, Elmer Bernstein, *Frankie Machine* (From 'The Man With The Golden Arm'), The Chico Hamilton Quintet, *Night Beat* (From 'Sweet Smell Of Success'), Lalo Schifrin, *Cubano Be*, Buddy Morrow, *Night Train*, Henry Mancini & His Orchestra & Chorus, *Peter Gunn* and so many others could be added. Moreover, a quick listen shows that although there are certain commonalities, the musicians continue to put their own stamp on things. No two play *Harlem Nocturne* the same way, for example, even when they play it relatively straight. However, the underlying theme of satiety and sexuality combined with ennui and skepticism is present in each performance. There is a world-weariness to much of the films noir jazz, a "things aren't what they appear to be" doubting of accepted reality.

Duke Ellington, born April 29, 1899 and died May 24, 1974, was certainly a jazz superstar. Considered one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, the pianist and big band leader wrote more than 1,000 musical pieces. His songs became popular standards, he was a 12-time Grammy winner, and he's in just about every musical Hall of Fame that could possibly apply to his body of work. His name is one of the best known in jazz history. But did you know he was a movie star, too? From almost the beginning of his career, Ellington appeared in movies. The casting made perfect sense – when the script called for some hot dancing to cool jazz, what better way to bring it than with the ever-popular Duke Ellington orchestra? His winning smile didn't hurt, either – he had a screen presence as comfortable and confident as most actors. To celebrate the late legend's birthday, we present a few notable film appearances by Duke Ellington. *Black and Tan Fantasy* was a 1929 short film about the Harlem Renaissance Movement. It was a perfect venue for Ellington's first big-screen appearance, since he was a major player in the Harlem scene. Ellington's music plays throughout the film, and the story revolves around Ellington and his band, as well. - See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/news/legends-and-legacies/duke-ellington-at-the-movies/787/#sthash.yv210X8m.dpuf> *Cabin in the Sky* was groundbreaking in 1943 for its all-black cast. Ellington's band was the perfect addition, driving this swing dance showcase with a couple of great tunes.

- See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/news/legends-and-legacies/duke-ellington-at-the-movies/787/#sthash.yv210X8m.dpuf> *Anatomy of a Murder* gave Ellington the chance to speak a few lines – and to share a piano bench with James Stewart. And Ellington didn't just cameo in this movie – he wrote the musical score, too. - See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/news/legends-and-legacies/duke-ellington-at-the-movies/787/#sthash.yv210X8m.dpuf>

Conclusion

Films noir influenced the development of jazz and in turn jazz influenced films noir. Both at one time existed independently of one another. However, at least from the time of *A Streetcar Named Desire*'s score it was clear that they were made for each other. The best noir films tended to have the best scores. *Odds against Tomorrow* had John Lewis of the MJQ, *Elevator to the Gallows* by Miles Davis, *Anatomy of a Murder* by Duke Ellington, *I Want to Live* by Gerry Mulligan and his group (Gerry Mulligan (Baritone sax), Art Farmer (Trumpet), Bud Shank (Flute), Shelly Manne (Drums), Frank Rosolino (Trombone), Pete Jolly (Piano), and Red Mitchell (Bass)). Not one of these movies had the Harlem Nocturne type noir score. Each provided just the right atmosphere for the noir film but went beyond the usual expectations.

Rather than using the expected orchestration, the composers and musicians dipped a little deeper into their jazz bags and came up with other than the usual effects to get the desired results. What has happened, I think, is that while the demands of the noir film encouraged the growth of minor key and bluesy orchestrations, the genius of jazz musicians reshaped them into music that fit their own requirements. There is nothing wrong with "Harlem Nocturne". I love it. Ellington recorded it. However, Ellington could do that and something else. So could every great jazz musician who worked for TV or movies. The noir genre gave many great musicians the opportunity to shape jazz for film.

Often overlooked is the fact that Louis Armstrong made an appearance in noir films from time to time. In *The Strip*, for example, he leads a band that included Jack Teagarden on trombone, Earl Fatha Hines on piano, and Barney Bigard on clarinet. One of his better groups indeed. Louis's playing was still excellent and no lessening of its music was made to conform to stereotypes of the noir genre. Indeed the musical accompaniment for film noir was always good and sometimes great.

Jazz also helped change films noir in ways often overlooked. It helped bring African Americans into films in non-stereotyped ways via salon scenes and being in a band. As Stephen Powers noted

In the 1940s and '50s, when social activists insisted African Americans appear in movies as something more than stereotypes, nightclub scenes provided the perfect means for Hollywood to circumvent a problem it did not have the will to solve. In cinematic nightclubs black women become singers and chic patrons instead of cooks or mammies and black men become musicians and sophisticated well-dressed customers instead of porters or servants, although many still worked as waiters or bartenders on screen. The nightclub also provided a venue for popular jazz entertainers such as Nat "King" Cole, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, or Hazel Scott, who could perform in these locales without directly affecting the filmic narrative. As Donald Bogle points out, these sequences could be inserted to capitalize on the black entertainers, and were often "cut from the films [. . .] should local (or Southern) theater owners feel their audience would object to seeing a Negro."¹ Southern distributors freely excised scenes that portrayed blacks less stereotypically, despite ongoing pressure from black activists (Stephen Powers 2007).

Powers also notes that films noir also gave at least of the glimpse of the battle between the waning of swing and the ascendancy of bop, a movement initiated by mainly black artists. It also resulted in jazz becoming an art form and losing its overall popularity with the general public. It is also true that jazz musicians began to have speaking roles in the movies that passed on important information or led to key action. It became harder for southern distributors to clip these scenes from movies.

The message of films noir is much like that of jazz itself. The individual must make his or her own way through the mean streets. To do so, he or she must develop a code of personal morality. It may not, almost certainly is not, conventional morality. However, it does guide actions. Often the noir hero is set against traditional morality in order to do the right thing. The noir hero sees things more clearly than others and leads a lonely life because of it. William Day put the matter this way in speaking of jazz improvisation and moral perfectionism.

Moral perfectionism is best characterized not as a set of moral axioms or principles, as though it stood in competition with the dominant theologies of morality (Utilitarianism and Kantianism), but as a kind of thinking that begins after or beyond such theories. It is a thinking whose distinctive features are a commitment to speaking and acting true to oneself, combined with a thoroughgoing dissatisfaction with oneself as one now stands. One might summarize these features by saying that they identify a way of living set against a life of conformity and a lifeless consistency (Day 2000:99).

Thus, Day sums up the jazz musicians and the morality of those musicians. But note he also sums up the noir heroes morality as well. If not a match made in heaven, then it was at least a match made in Hollywood.

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