Black Music Styles as Vehicles for Transnational and Trans-Racial Exchange: Perceptions of Blackness in the Music Scenes of London and Paris (1920s-1950s)

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Intellectuals, writers, artists and historians have recognised a fundamental role of black genres in the general evolution of music because their influence has been considerable worldwide. In the early twentieth century, not only did the spreading of blues and early forms of jazz represent one of the greatest musical influences of the century, but it also influenced other forms of art. In the context of the expansion of studies on culture and race, the spread of black forms of art throughout Europe has increasingly received attention from scholars in recent years. A large number of studies have explored the vogue of so-called Negro Art in the first part of the twentieth century and the spread of black music, jazz in particular, in the 1920s, the so-called "Jazz Age." For instance, in the French context various studies have examined the interplay between white avant-garde and black cultures,[1] as well as the jazz scene in Paris and the reception of that genre by French musicians.[2] The evolution of jazz in Britain has also been investigated, exploring how this genre of music has been received and transformed in the British context.[3]

With regards to the prominence of music in black forms of art, the British scholar Paul Gilroy has underlined that cross-cultural exchanges have been facilitated by a common urban experience of various groups of black people, and a new form of blackness developed: "dislocated from their original conditions of existence, the sound tracks of this African American cultural broadcast fed a new metaphysics of blackness elaborated and acted in Europe and elsewhere within the underground, alternative public spaces constituted around an expressive culture that was dominated by music."[4] In urban contexts these alternative spaces included nightclubs and cafés where black artists performed and which

functioned as meeting places but also as spaces where musicians contributed to developing an underground musical environment in which black genres of music had a fundamental importance, and which allowed them to profoundly influence mainstream music of the period.

In his book *Art Worlds* (1982), the sociologist Howard Becker has underlined how important it is to understand the process by which participants in an art world ignore, absorb, or fight change.[5] The spreading of black genres of music brought changes to the music scenes of London and Paris in the years 1920s-1950s. Musicians entered into contact with new musical tendencies, learned new genres, incorporated new styles into theirs, and created new sounds. Furthermore, the diffusion of genres such as jazz, *rumba*, and *calypso*, contributed to creating a transracial environment in the music scenes of London and Paris, thus representing an additional international character to the cultural lives of the two metropolises.

The urban experience was one fundamental element of the circulation of musical forms in general, and of black genres of music in particular. Spaces for music such as theatres, concert halls and nightclubs, appeared in the urban context, and the entertainment industry concentrated its infrastructure there. Furthermore, it was in urban spaces that encounters between people of different origins, with different histories and backgrounds, and between them and the local population, took place. These encounters became the vehicles for the spreading of new genres of music and for metropolitan change. The sociologist John Eade and the urban theorist Michael Peter Smith have stressed the importance of considering the historical implications of cross-national movements in the study of urban change. The city offers opportunities and constraints to migrants who also bring with them historically specific practices and identities: “the city is both a medium and an outcome of human agency, including agency of transnational migrants, their networks, and their projects.”[6]

In the 1920s Paris and London were two metropolises at the centre of increasing globalising connections. They were capitals of nation-states and empires, and, with the process of the internationalisation of cultural life, places that attracted groups of people from different parts of the world. Global networks established through musical connections and exchanges found in London and Paris the spatial dimension where to develop. This, in turn, transformed the cities, especially their cosmopolitan character.

As Becker has written “every art world uses, to organize some of the cooperation between some of its participants, conventions known to all or almost all well socialized members of the society in which it exists.”[7] Moreover, he has explained that artists learn other conventions “in the course of training and as they participate in the day-to-day activities of the art world. […] Conventions represent the continuing adjustment of the cooperating parties to the changing conditions in which they practice; as conditions change, they change.”[8] Building on this idea, this article examines the process of learning new genres of

music, which I analyse in the first part of the paper. I draw attention to the different forms and practices of learning black styles of music that took place in the music scenes of London and Paris, including learning from teachers or through journals and books, and informal ways of learning. In the early stages of the development of dance music, musicians and dance bands were demanded to play various genres of music during the same show, including jazz, *rumba* and *calypso*, which were identified as "black" music by the audience. It was through this process of learning that musicians appropriated black styles of music.

The second section of the article took the specific case of musicians in London and deals with the various perceptions of blackness that they had. The presence of different groups of black musicians and the spreading of new genres of music from the other side of the Atlantic influenced the meaning of blackness in the music scene. Moreover, the context of forms of racial discrimination notwithstanding, there is evidence that there were multiple ways in which coloured musicians reacted to the reality they lived in and constructed their personal identity. It seems that in the music world talent was more important than everything else. In this sense, building on the concept of indifference to nation, which has been developed in the in the field of Central and Eastern European studies, I suggest that several musicians had a feeling of indifference to blackness (and nationality). This feeling was linked mainly to the fact that for them the importance of music went beyond racial and national issues. If you believe in the transformative power of music and music is a big part of your life, make sure the quality of your Hi-Fi equipment isn't getting in the way of your appreciation. click here to visit Graham Slee HiFi for free to see how they can help you transform your Hi-Fi.

Processes and Practices of Learning Music Styles

In the first stages of music development of the early twentieth century, single musicians and bands often played various genres of music during the same show, such as jazz, *rumba*, and *calypso*. All these styles were perceived as "black" music by the audience. This blurring allowed musicians to perform genres of music which had different origins and therefore meet the demand of the moment, which was often characterised by different styles of music in vogue. However, this implies that musicians had to learn different genres of music and to be flexible enough to be able to learn different types of music. Following the criticism expressed by Karl Hangstrom Miller with regards to studies that have tended to conceive music as the product of musicians' personal talent or social identities,[9] the analysis of this aspect shows how playing black genres of music also implied a process of learning that could find different ways of being put into practice.

The role that teachers and schools of music played was important in this sense. Besides self-taught musicians, one of the most widespread ways of learning an instrument was through private lessons with expert musicians. In many cases the person who wanted to learn an instrument found a teacher by word of mouth, but there were teachers that publicised their

activity in music journals hoping to attract new students. For instance, in order to promote his activity a French saxophone teacher, Professor Lebrun, published an advertisement in the journal *L'artiste musicien de Paris* in February 1929.[10] The advertisement underlined the fact that the teacher taught the American style of playing and improvisation, and that the lessons were modelled on teaching methods used by professional musicians.[11]

Advertisements that promoted personal lessons on the saxophone were common in music journals and testified the spreading of brass instruments together with the spreading of jazz music. Moreover, another recurring element in advertisements was the idea of being able to learn in a short period of time, which was guaranteed by the teacher. For instance, in 1930 the British journal *Melody Maker*[12] published an advertisement of the English saxophonist Ben Davis who gave private lessons on the saxophone. The advertisement pointed to the teacher's abilities to make students successful musicians in a brief period of time. Indeed, the caption said that Ben Davies had "started hundreds of pupils on the road to success" and exhorted readers, adding "he can do the same for you, and make you the Saxophone star of your district in the shortest possible time."[13]

In addition to single teachers, several music schools promoted their activities through advertisements in musical journals. For example, the "Keech" school of music, located in the area of Mayfair in London, published its advertisement in the *Melody Maker* in 1932. In this case too, the caption pointed to the quality of the teaching and to the perspective of getting quick results. Furthermore, it is interesting to note the kind of instruments taught in the school. The school provided courses of saxophone, drums, banjo, ukulele, a particular type of banjo-ukulele called "banjulele," Hawaiian guitar, and rhythm-style piano. The teaching of these instruments is an indication of the diffusion of new genres of music that required those specific instruments in bands and specific ways of playing.[14]

The spreading of black genres of music gave musicians that had recently arrived in the city the opportunity to play an important role in the music scene as teachers. The case of the Guyanese clarinettist and composer Rudolph Dunbar is quite interesting in this sense. Born in British Guiana in 1899, Dunbar started playing the clarinet in the British Guiana Militia Band in 1913. After a brief stay in Barbados as a member of the police band, he moved to New York in 1919 where he began his musical studies at the Institute of Musical Art of Columbia University. In the meantime, he started playing jazz to pay for his studies. This double path of classical musical training and jazz-playing in bands was replicated by Dunbar in Europe. Indeed, he arrived in Paris in May 1925 in order to study conduction, composition, and clarinet at the conservatory, and philosophy and journalism at the University of Paris. During these years he played in various jazz bands performing not only in Paris but also in other European cities. He continued his studies in Leipzig and Vienna, before moving to London in the summer of 1931, where, within a few months, he founded his clarinet school.[15]

Immediately after its foundation, the *Melody Maker* published an advertisement that

promoted Dunbar's school. It is interesting to note that on the left of the advertisement there was a photo of Dunbar and on the right the title stressed both his studies at the Institute of Music and Art of the Columbia University in New York and his role of lead saxophonist and clarinettist with the all-black American show *Blackbirds* that had been played in London a few years before.[16] Moreover, the caption that contained a description of Dunbar and his school, stressed that he was one of the main clarinettists who played in the principal concert halls of Paris, and leader of the saxophone sections of many well-known dance bands. In addition to the courses of clarinet playing, Dunbar also offered a course of saxophone playing that included "the indispensable Rhythmic African Polyphonic Style now dominating dance music."[17] The advertisement is significant because it reveals that the promotion of this Guyanese-born musician in a music journal published in Britain comprised the reference to his musical career in New York (his studies and his playing in an important show), and in Paris. These two elements were emphasised to denote his quality as a musician and as a teacher, a fact that shows how a musician who had grown up in a colonial territory and who had travelled to and formed himself as a musician in two of the most important urban music scenes worldwide, came to be the one who transmitted musical knowledge and skills to musicians in Britain.

Furthermore, a few months before the founding of the school, Dunbar had begun to write a series of articles on the clarinet for the *Melody Maker* that constituted a course on clarinet playing published periodically in the journal. The first of these articles appeared in October 1931. On that occasion, the editors presented the series of lessons with an opening comment, and described the difficulties that they encountered in finding the right musician who could do the course: "few dance clarinet players have an absolutely thorough theoretical as well as practical mastery of the instrument. The one or two who have, would not, or could not, express themselves on paper. We hailed the advent of Rudolph Dunbar with delight, therefore." The editors deemed Dunbar's technical abilities on the instrument and his practical knowledge of "hot" music as an "almost unique combination of talent." This, together with the ability to write clearly, made him the right person to become technical editor. It is worth noting that, presenting the course, Dunbar wrote that it was not "a course on legitimate clarinet playing, but a series of lessons for dance band saxophone players who wish to 'double' the clarinet without hope or intention of becoming a virtuoso of the instrument." Further, he added that, since saxophone players were often afraid to start playing the clarinet, which he considered to be the most difficult among wind instruments, the aim of the course was to make saxophone players aware that they were mistaken and that they could play the instrument.[18]

Articles devoted to specific genres of music appeared in various music journals and were tools with which musicians could know more about new styles. For instance, both the French journal *Jazz-Tango*[19] and the *Melody Maker* published articles dedicated to the Cuban genre of the *rumba*. In March 1933, *Jazz-Tango* published an article titled "L'Interprétation de la rumba" in which a French jazz pianist exposed the main elements for the correct

execution of the *rumba*. At the beginning of the article the musician wrote that the rhythm was difficult to assimilate for French people for various reasons, including the fact that the "nonchalance exotique" of the dance collided with what he though was the nervous mood typical of French people.[20] What followed in the article was the explanation of the roles that different instruments played in a dance band, starting from the rhythmic section formed by the clave and the maracas.[21] In April 1936, the guitarist who played with the American dance bandleader Roy Fox, wrote the first of a similar series of articles for the *Melody Maker* that differentiated between various styles of *rumba* played by different bands, and was specifically devoted to the role of the guitar.[22] In both cases the authors, who had learned to play the *rumba* in France and England, made reference to the music of Don Barreto as a great example for the understanding of the correct way to play the genre.

The Cuban brothers Marino and Emilio Barreto began their career in Spain where their family moved in 1925 in order the escape Gerardo Machado's regime.[23] One year later they left Spain and arrived in Paris where they started being active in the city's musical scene, and they were members of the American revue *Black People*. In 1928 Marino went to London, where he played in dance bands usually featuring American musicians. Together with the African-American singer Norris Smith he formed a duo, and in 1929 they went back to Paris where he performed and also recorded his duets with Smith.[24] In 1935 Don Marino Barreto went back to London and performed there with his duo. During the 1940s he became an important figure for the spreading of Afro-Cuban music in London, which he mixed with jazz tunes in his shows.[25]

https://youtu.be/exsUe-6j7J8

While Marino played in both London and Paris in the first part of his career, Emilio, who took the stage name of Don Barreto, built his career in Paris playing the guitar and the violin. The Cuban orchestra that he formed in Paris was the most well-known band in the city that performed Cuban genres of music. In 1933 the journal *Jazz-Tango* dedicated an article to his orchestra that debuted in the Montmartre club *Melody's*, which had opened in 1931 during the Colonial Exposition. In February 1932 the orchestra made his debut, and in the following years spread the Cuban genre of the *rumba* in Paris. In particular, the article underlined how the success of the orchestra was linked to the fact that the public preferred his small band, which was usually formed by five elements, and Barreto's one-man shows, because it performed a more genuine genre compared to the *rumba*s with jazz arrangements performed by other big orchestras in Paris.

https://youtu.be/7-w2R5wcutU

During this period Don Barreto's orchestra made records for Columbia that were successful. This led the band to sign an exclusive contract with the British company Decca and to make records in London.[26]

Thanks to his success and his reputation in the Parisian music scene, Don Barreto wrote a series of technical articles in *Jazz-Tango* in order to explain the Cuban genre of the *rumba*. The first article was published in July 1936 and it testifies how he had internalised the idea of the *cubanidad*, the essence of Cuban identity formed by white, black, and mulatto elements merged in the context of Cuba. The fact that in the War of Independence Cubans of African origins had fought alongside white Cubans, was at the basis of the *cubanidad*. This

concept served to legitimise the Cuban system, which tended to obscure the existence of racial discrimination on the island, but at the same time it became a myth that still had to be realised.[27] In the 1920s the artists who formed the movement of Afrocubanismo, attributed new value to black cultural contributions to Cuban national culture, in order to reconcile a reality of racial pluralism with the necessity of creating a culturally homogeneous nation: blackness was a component of Cuban national identity, a *cubanidad mestiza*.[28]

In order to explain that the *rumba* and the *son* were not exclusively black dances, at the beginning of the article Barreto maintained that racial antagonism did not exist, and that all Cubans, whatever their colour of the skin was, were the same. In Cuba, unlike in the United States, separation did not exist, and four centuries of mixing of races in the same context and education had led to the fact that mentality and moral reactions of the black and white population were the same.[29] This was true, Barreto wrote, in the music field, too. In Cuba there was not a white music and a black music, but there was a national music with African roots, which were fundamental for the existence of a Cuban music:

> Il n'y a pas à Cuba, comme il n'y a pas aux Etats-Unis, une musique blanche et une musique noire. Il n'y a qu'une musique nationale de racine africaine. Si Cuba prétendait nettoyer de toute influence africaine son folklore musical, pour en extraire la pure essence européenne, il ne lui resterait rien.[30]

Furthermore, Barreto explained that the *rumba* internationalised by American records was not the real *rumba*, but the *son*. The *son*, which was usually confused with the *rumba*, was born in the eastern part of the island and was danced initially by the popular classes before becoming the dance of the middle-upper classes, too. Then, it spread to Hollywood and Paris, and from there it became known worldwide. Nevertheless, Barreto added at the end of the article, the rhythms of the *rumba* and the *son* were not only the products of African passion, but also of the specific environment of the island, "the soul of the marvellous island."[31]

https://youtu.be/luXbc-828z4

Besides articles published in journals, in some cases musicians also published books dedicated to specific genres of music. Among these was the drummer and bandleader Edmund Ross, known as Edmundo Ros, who in 1950 published a book titled *The Latin-American Way: Latin-American Music, Its Instruments and How to Play Them*. Ros was another musician who moved across the Caribbean and Europe following a path linked to musical training in various institutions. Born in Trinidad in 1910, he started his musical studies in the Police Academy and in 1927 he moved to Caracas, Venezuela, in order to study at the Academy of Music. In those years, jazz music spread from the United States increasing Ros's interest in dance music. He started performing as a percussionist and singer in clubs mostly playing Cuban tunes, and adopted his Latinised stage name. This period in Venezuela was fundamental for him and for the rest of his career; many people believed that he was Venezuelan.[32] In 1937 Edmundo Ros followed his musical studies, this time in London, where he studied composition and conducting thanks to a fellowship that he won at the Royal Academy of Music. In London, he entered into contact with African students, and through them he started frequenting clubs in Soho where he met Don Marino Barreto and other musicians playing the styles of music that he used to play in Caracas. Thus, Ros began to be active in the London music scene joining Don Marino Barreto's Cuban band, performing as a vocalist and drummer and recording several records for the Decca company. Thereafter, he formed his own band with musicians of various origins, and became a prominent figure that promoted Caribbean music in the city.[33]

https://youtu.be/AusdppKG3Ig

This successful career through which he popularised Latin-American music included the publication of his book in 1950. In the book, Ros introduced and explained the instruments used in Latin music hoping to "increase the understanding of Latin-American music and the special instruments used in its performance, and by increasing understanding, add to the enjoyment of players, dancers and listeners."[34]

The book opened with a drawn map of Central and South America with two flags indicating where *rumba* and *samba* came from, and two men with the typical instruments of the two genres. In between them another flag indicated Venezuela, where Edmundo Ros was born. This illustrated map was part of the idea of the work as an effort to show in a simple way the origins of these genres of music. The book began with a section about the background of the instruments, in which Ros briefly reconstructed the history of Latin-American music and its diffusion worldwide. He drew attention to the genres of *samba* and *rumba*, pointing to the differences that influenced the way in which they should be analysed:

> While *Samba* and *Rumba* fall under the heading of Latin-American music they are really quite different from each other because they originate from different parts of the South American continent, have different histories, and each its own special group of rhythm instruments. […] Just as the history of *Samba* is different from that of the *Rumba* so the styles of the two forms must be treated as different from one another. They cannot be discussed together under the heading 'Latin-American,' but must be regarded separately.[35]

However, Ros also identified common features between genres that were linked to the

rhythm section, which he defined as “the rock on which Latin-American music is built.” Indeed, Ros oscillated between two apparently-contrasting directions. On the one hand, he underlined the differences between *samba* and *rumba*, and in particular he described the variety of instruments used to play the two genres of music. On the other hand, he included *samba* and *rumba* in the broad category of Latin-American music, talking about a “true Latin-American character.”[36] Nevertheless, these two elements were part of his attempt to illustrate genres of music that were commonly-identified as Latin-American while explaining the differences between them, in an effort to give readers more complete information about them. In so doing he would “extend the knowledge and appreciation of authentic Latin-American Music as widely as possible.”[37]

https://youtu.be/A76OBR1_rv0

The book examined separately some of the typical rhythmic instruments used to play *rumba* (*claves*, *maracas*, *bongos* and *timbales*), and *samba* (*samba-tambourine*, *cabaça*, *reso-reso* and *chocolo*) with the rhythmic notation on a musical stave. At the end of each section the various rhythms were presented together in order to show how they worked with one another as a rhythmic section. In addition, the book gave short examples of the various forms of *rumba* and *samba*, and of genres that derived from the original rhythm. The work concluded with four brief compositions written by Ros based on the different genres analysed in the previous pages and with an advertisement of Latin-American instruments designed by him, which a company based in the area of Old Street in London manufactured.

Articles in journals and books devoted to specific genres of music were ways in which musicians could learn about styles that they were not familiar with. However, not many musicians were able to read and write, and therefore not able to learn through books and journals. In addition, the learning through written sources required a certain degree of musical training that not all musicians had. Thus, other ways of learning, which can be labelled as "informal," resulted to be fundamental. Among these was learning through records or sheets of music. Recorded music came to be of crucial importance for musicians willing to play dance music, and some of the musicians who travelled back and forth to the United States brought new records to Europe. For instance, the African-American singer and club manager Ada "Bricktop" Smith recalled that the African-American saxophone player Sammy Richardson, who was active in the Paris music scene, used to go to New York quite often to pick up records that musicians in Paris could listen to.[38] The Jamaican trumpeter Leslie Thompson also recalled that when he worked in American shows in Britain there were people in the cast who brought over the latest records from New York. As they all had portable record players, musicians and dancers employed in the show could listen to new records any time they wanted.[39] It is interesting to note that the *Melody Maker* in 1930 published a list of recorded tunes divided by instrument. The title above the list significantly said "Learn From Others! Listed hereunder dance band musicians will find records featuring their particular instrument," a fact that shows how learning from records was considered an important tool for performing dance music.[40]

Another fundamental informal way of learning new genres of music was the direct contact with musicians who played them. This was the case of musicians who grew up in areas where migrant communities settled. For instance, the guitarist Joe Deniz recalled that as his native city Cardiff was a port city, there were a lot of people coming from different part of the world, in particular from the Caribbean.

Frank, Joe and Laurie Deniz were the sons of a sailor from the Cape Verde islands, and of a woman with English and African-American origins who lived in Cardiff. Their musical interest began in their house: their father played the violin, the mandolin and the guitar and their mother played the piano. They hosted musical sessions with other Cape Verdeans in their house, usually on Sundays. Like other Cardiff musicians, the brothers came to know *calypso* and other Caribbean styles of music through the contacts with the Caribbean community of the city. Furthermore, their father took the eldest brothers Frank and Joe to work on ships, and thus they had the chance to enter into contact with music styles from various parts of the world.

Frank had the longest experience on ships, and worked as a seaman for ten years.[41] This experience was fundamental for his musical training. Thinking about that time years later, he recalled that everywhere he went with the ship he used to listen to the local radio and go to clubs where he saw local musicians playing, especially guitarists who would influence his own style. This is how he became familiar with genres of music such as *rumba* and *tango*,

which were different from what he listened to in England at that time and were very inspiring. Moreover, he bought his first guitar while working as seaman. He practiced with it on the ship and used it to play in nightclubs while travelling.[42]

As the case of the Deniz brothers' shows, experiences that formed musicians' backgrounds were important for their activity as musicians in the urban music scene. Indeed, musicians whose personal experiences were characterised by encounters with various musical cultures, were more capable of adapting to play a variety of genres during their careers. Joe Deniz recalled that the first music he heard was mainly *calypso* because of the influence of Caribbean migrants in Cardiff, which he defined as a "cosmopolitan place," comprising all the nationalities. In addition, he recalled that because of this influence there was not a tradition of brass bands, and that he and his brothers came to know jazz only from records and from the shows of bands to which his mother used to take her children.[43] Moreover, Frank and Joe's experiences show that travelling was another way in which musicians entered into contact with new genres of music. Working as seamen the two brothers had the opportunity to listen to local bands and radios when their ship stopped in ports. In 1936 the two brothers together with the pianist Clara Wason, Frank Deniz' wife,[44] went to London, determined to work in the music entertainment of the capital.

The Deniz brothers were among those musicians who had the chance to enter into direct contact with genres of music while travelling and therefore were able to see the differences between those genres performed in Europe with the "authentic" styles. In 1931 the *Melody Maker* published an article, which was a dialogue between two musicians about the *rumba*. One of the two said that one musician had just told him "some dope about the *real* rumba bands". This player revealed the details because he had been working on a cruise and one of his trips took him to La Havana where, in a local dance hall, he "saw and heard the native musicians playing the real thing."[45]

The encounters between musicians who were active in the music scenes of London and Paris and those who travelled or who arrived in the two cities, were fundamental for the learning process. Indeed, one of the most effective ways of learning new genres of music was through direct contacts between musicians playing together and rehearsing. What Leslie Thompson recalled in his autobiography with regards to his participation in two attempts to form an all-coloured band in Britain is illustrative of this process.

In 1929 the Trinidadian pianist George Clapham recruited several musicians of Caribbean origins.[46] Despite the efforts and the rehearsals, the attempt was not successful because the band could not reach an adequate level of performance comparable to that of American big bands in fashion at the time.[47] On the contrary, the second try of forming an all-coloured band made a few years later by Thompson and the Guyanese bandleader Ken "Snakehips" Johnson in 1936 was successful, but it required an intense period of rehearsing during which the members of the band had to work hard in order to develop a good sound as a band that could compete with American ensembles, and to get the swing, the

"American bounce."[48] Louis Stephenson, one of the saxophone players in the band, remembered a lot of rehearsing with the band in a rehearsal room in Denman Street in Soho and in a studio in St. John's Wood area in the North West of London. As he recalled, Stephenson was not really into music, thus he admitted that for him rehearsals were particularly hard,[49] a fact that shows that musicians playing in the music scenes had to work hard in order to play all the black genres of music in vogue in those contexts.

Blurred Perceptions of Belonging: Indifference to Blackness in the Music Scene of London

In most of the cases in the music scenes of both London and Paris dance bands played various genres of music that were all identified and labelled as "black" music. This blurring made musicians learn and perform genres of music which had different origins, and gave "blackness" multiple meanings. Recent directions in the field of Black Studies have tended to extend the focus of the analysis beyond national perspectives in order to understand the global dimension of black encounters and networks,[50] and at the same time studies on blackness in Europe have developed within national historiographies and transnational histories of Europe.[51] The musical networks of metropolises such as London and Paris were not strictly defined, neither at a musical level, because black music had different meanings, nor at a social level, because of the cosmopolitan context in which musicians worked. Musicians' feelings of personal belonging differed, and were related to multiple meanings given to blackness, to the empire and to the nation.[52] In the case of musicians who were active in the London music scene, the oral sources that are part of the "Oral History of Jazz in Britain" of the British Library National Sound Archive (BL NSA) have been fundamental for reconstructing part of this blurring. Moreover, they reveal how for some musicians blackness was not a crucial element of their feeling of belonging as musicians.

In 1946 the journalist Stanley Jackson in his guide on Soho described the variety of groups of coloured people that frequented the area, underlining the differentiation between them.

> In Soho you will find coloured men from all parts of the world, and it would be a mistake to regard them as one big, happy family. The Martiniquans regard themselves as the black princes of their race. They affect to despise the Senegalese or "jungle boys." Some of these "white negroes," West Indians and mulattoes, even go to local barbers to have their hair de-kinked.[53]

With regards to groups and individuals who were part of the music scene and played black genres of music, it is important to understand how they perceived this differentiation, which was linked to various aspects, including the place of origin and musicians' musical formation.

The Jamaican trumpeter Leslie Thompson recalled his experience on tour with the all-coloured American show *Blackbirds* in Manchester in 1935, and compared it with the tour with Louis Armstrong's band in 1934. Armstrong's band had been recruited by the African-

American reedist Peter DuConge in Paris. It was formed mainly by coloured American musicians and one or two musicians from Latin America among whom was the pianist Don Barreto. In both cases Thompson played with coloured musicians but the feelings that he had were different in the two situations.

The performers of *Blackbirds* travelled by train to Manchester in a carriage reserved for them where there were a lot of manchester bands. Thompson was the only non-American in the group, and he highlighted how different the ways of living of Caribbean and American people were:

> I was the only non-American negro. To travel with them was so foreign that I felt glad, in a sense, that no whites, no English people, were seeing it all, for the behaviour of the Americans was so inconsistent with English customs. Only a few weeks before, on the Armstrong tour, there were fellows from Puerto Rico, the USA, and Tyree from England. But it wasn't like that on the train to Manchester. The difference between the West Indian and the American was very marked, and aspects of their lives were very foreign.[54]

What Thompson underlined was the relationship with American musicians, who were surprised to find a black man who was not American.

> The Americans were not surprised to find me in London, but they were curious to meet a fellow who belonged to them. So they waited to see–to get the first impressions. They were struck by the fact that I didn't talk American. A black Englishman–it made a difference, so our contacts were usually on the surface.[55]

The comparison of this experience with the time when Thompson was on the Armstrong tour the year before shows how contexts could matter with regards to feelings of belonging. Indeed, his experience when he was with Armstrong's band the year before, was markedly different. In that case, once the musicians got to know each other, Thompson felt accepted by the group "as a brother" because their backgrounds–the ghetto and Jamaica–were considered as similar:

> It was different on the Armstrong tour; for I got to know the boys and they got to know me. They were lacking a nationalistic racial pride. They were quite humble and accepted me as a brother. It was due to the fact that we had no great ideas about ourselves. We were not striving; the Americans came from the ghetto, and they would have fitted in back in Jamaica. […] The Armstrong bus was a little Harlem. The important thing was that we were the same colour. It wasn't, the first time we met, but on the tour it became important and stayed there.[56]

It is worth underlining two elements that Thompson expressed in this extract. The first one is that the musicians in the Armstrong tour were more opened towards him because they lacked what he described as "nationalistic racial pride," which indicates that he found this element as limiting relationships between people, and that it could be absent in some cases,

including when musicians played together. The second interesting element that emerges in the extract is that Thompson said that the bus with which they toured seemed a “little Harlem,” a fact that reveals how the area of Harlem has become a symbol of black integration that could be used by a person living in a completely different context and who has never seen it.[57]

Similar situations and a common context did not mean that musicians had the same experiences and feelings. The Jamaican saxophone player Louis Stephenson recalled that in the 1930s he felt that there was no differentiation between black musicians from Britain and those coming from the Caribbean:

> We just knew each other as Niggers, as black people. We didn’t differentiate. For the others, for white musicians, you were just a black musician. There wasn’t any antagonism: if you were good enough you worked in the right bands.[58]

With these words, Stephenson made clear a crucial aspect linked to the multi-layered experience of being a black musician in a cosmopolitan environment. Indeed, he specified that he felt a lack of differentiation both within the group of black musicians regardless of their origins, and within the larger interracial group of musicians who were active in the music scene. What mattered mostly was the ability to play. Furthermore, Stephenson added that he felt that people respected black musicians due to the American influence as other musicians commonly thought that they had an edge because of their origins. Still, the reality was that “everybody was trying to be American, the English here and the West Indians in Trinidad.”[59]

However, in other cases musicians could feel the difference between them linked to their origins and the way they had grown up. When in 1936 Leslie Thompson recruited players for the band with Ken Johnson, he contacted a coloured trombonist from London, Frank Williams, whom he had met in 1931 at a party. In the end, he did not become a member of the band, because he was not a jazz player, but above all he did not mix with Caribbean musicians, as Thompson recalled: “he was a very home loving boy and he didn’t mix, he was so very English I don’t think he was comfortable with West Indians.”[60]

The quality and the technical level of playing that a musician had is a recurring element to which black musicians refer to when asked about their experience with and feelings towards other black players.

Frank Deniz recalled that in the 1940s after Ken Johnson’s band everybody wanted to form a coloured band. In that period, there was a pressure from agents in that direction, but there were few coloured musicians. In Johnson’s band, there were young musicians and some of them were not good players in Deniz’s view. He underlined that Caribbean musicians arriving in England found themselves in another environment, while he was born there, so it

was different for him. In addition, few musicians could read music, and this fact made playing together harder. Moreover, Deniz recalled that there was a common view that coloured musicians were all able to play well but it was not necessarily so:

> It was frustrating. When me and my brother formed our band the other musicians were white and they asked: "Why don't you employ coloured musicians"? And I answered: "Because they won't be able to play what I wanted them to play." […] You had to fight hard to find good musicians. My idea of a coloured band was the ones I saw in Brazil with qualified musicians.[61]

Interestingly, Deniz said that after having the chance to play with white musicians, he discovered that many coloured musicians were not good players. Several musicians recalled that in the 1930s there were not many black musicians. For instance, the Barbadian trumpeter Dave Wilkins remembered that he did not meet many black people while travelling around the country.[62] The few good black musicians were always working.[63] Indeed, in the context of the vogue for coloured bands it could happen that black musicians were employed even if they were not very good. This was what the English trombonist and arranger Geoff Love, son of an African-American entertainer and an English actress and singer, also noted. In 1936 Love was playing in a dance band in London. He found that the only difference which he felt between him, coming from Yorkshire, and other musicians coming from the Caribbean who were part of Leslie Hutchinson's band, a Jamaican pianist trumpeter and bandleader, was "the complete lack of discipline": when they were asked to rehearse in the morning and in the afternoon, they said that they could not make it. Thus, the band normally did not rehearse and used to play on sight. The only time when Love remembered that they had rehearsals was when the band did the first broadcast.[64]

The interesting thing is that when musicians were asked about their feelings about being black, or about the importance of working with coloured musicians, in various cases the answers did not underline their racial belonging. On the contrary they asserted that they considered themselves as a person regardless of their ethnic origin and that for them it was important to play with good musicians whether they were black or not.

The context of London was not exempt from forms of racial discrimination that affected people in the music scenes. For example, there occurred various episodes involving black musicians who were refused work or accommodation in hotels. In the case of black shows too, there were issues linked to the employment of black performers and musicians. An article published in the conservative newspaper *Daily Express* in 1925 described how after a recent attempt to introduce a "nigger cabaret" in London had not been successful, another black company showing in Paris was offered to perform in a London club. However, the agents of the club opposed the engagement of the show, because, one agent said, the engagement of coloured shows had often caused trouble. Therefore, he objected "to coloured artists being employed where food is served to white people."[65]

Leslie Thompson recalled two circumstances in which forms of racial discrimination took place. In 1929 he was searching for work and could not find it because people did not want to employ a coloured person. He was only able to find jobs in the music business and he was scared because in that context, too, it was not easy to find employment:

> You would see faces–taking a good look at this coloured fellow. And, of course, there was no vacancy. There was little work for musicians unless you were specialised. […] I was in London, with no work. There were no jobs because of prejudice: it was the same with boarding houses–"it's not me that is racially prejudiced, but the others mind." I seldom met any of these "others." I got some work in music and other things pulled together, and I survived, but it was a really frightening time for me. There was no work, outside the entertainment and music business, for black people. Believe me, I tried.[66]

A few years later, when he was living in Bloomsbury in the mid-1930s, Thompson had a coloured trumpeter from Cuba staying at his with his daughter. This man could not find accommodation "because of the colour bar."(cite) A similar difficulty had been encountered by Louis Armstrong's band when they arrived in England on tour. Thompson linked this issue to the fact that British people had a "closed mind":

> It's a funny thing, but the difficulty in getting accommodation, which was written about by Dunbar in the American press, and experienced by Louis and his band, was due to the closed mind of the natives here. "My home is my castle," but those British who had travelled, or knew people from abroad, were quite different. The general British person had no objection to us but we didn't enter into their lives. It was the same at work. They had close links with certain friends or relatives, and everybody else was excluded.[67]

These difficulties notwithstanding, Thompson did not find the situation worrying especially when talking about it years later and comparing it to what happened after the Second World War when a movement of mass migration from the Caribbean occurred:

> In the 1930s race business that it is current today was not important; in fact, it didn't arise at all. You might meet the odd individual but most Britons were polite, or interested because you were black. It all changed with the influx of immigrants after the war.[68]

Another Jamaican player, the saxophonist Louis Stephenson, juxtaposed the situation of the 1930s with the one after World War II, too, and in a sense dismissed the impact of the forms of discrimination in the 1930s, which, for him, were caused by ignorance.

> Before the war there wasn't many of us here so we didn't pose a threat. You could walk wherever you wanted, there wasn't a threat apart from the little annoying things like you going for a room and people slap the door on your face, but it was because they weren't accustomed they had a supposed idea they you came from the jungle but you can't blame them it was worn by ignorance.[69]

These types of discrimination were in some cases reported to the police. For instance, two

reports to the police in 1930 and 1931 contested the fact that several men had been refused to be served in a public house club, and a report of 1941 testified the fact that a hotel had refused accommodation to a man of colour.[70]

The context of forms of racial discrimination notwithstanding, musicians' considerations show that there were multiple ways in which coloured people reacted to the reality they lived in and constructed their belonging and identity. In addition, it seems that in the music world talent was more important than everything else. In this sense, building on the concept of "indifference to nation," which has been developed in the field of Central and Eastern European studies, we can talk about a form of "indifference to blackness."

The concept of national indifference refers to "forms of popular indifference to nationalist presumptions about personal and group identity," and has been developed in the context of the studies on the Habsburg empire and its successor states.[71] In an essay published in 2010 the historian Tara Zahra has underlined the potential of this notion as a category of analysis that "enables historians to better understand the limits of nationalization and thereby challenges the nationalist narratives, categories, and frameworks."[72] This notion builds on social and cultural histories that have devoted attention to the construction of identities, investigating issues of race, sexuality, gender and nation, but have tended to pay "less attention to individuals who remained aloof to the demands of modern identity politics."[73]

In the case of black musicians working in the music scene of London in various cases the answers given by them reveal what we can define as a feeling of indifference to blackness (and nationality). This feeling was linked mainly to the fact that music had for them a greater importance that went beyond racial and national issues, thus it can be said that it was trans-racial and transnational.

When the pianist Clare Deniz was asked whether it was important for her to work with other black musicians she answered promptly that she accepted whatever was going: if she was offered a job with a white musician she took it, and added that,

> We had no colour complex. Being musicians we mixed with everybody, coloured, white, everything. […] Even now I never think to myself: "well, I am coloured," I just treat myself as a person.

There was only one time when Clare Deniz felt that she was a coloured person. It happened in 1958 during the racial riot that occurred in London:[74]

> That was the only time when I felt: "well I am coloured, they must have some kind of prejudice against me," but before that I never felt anything at all.

Furthermore, she was asked whether she thought of herself a Welsh person, a coloured Welsh person or other. Her answer is emblematic of her undefined feelings towards colour

and nationality:

> I don’t know, honestly I find I can’t mix a lot with the Caribbean people, they don’t really accept you because you’re not born in the West Indies; the white people…I get on with them, and I get on with the coloured people if they’re friendly.[75]

Her brother-in-law Joe Deniz had a more defined idea, and when he was asked whether in his youth he felt like a Welsh man or a coloured person, he gave a firm answer:

> I didn’t feel I was anything, I just felt, well, I didn’t think myself as Welsh […] I never felt that I was a Welsh man, I just felt that I was me, that was it. Period.[76]

The Jamaican bassist Coleridge Goode arrived in London in 1942 and played with various jazz band. Answering the question whether he had the desire to play with black people, he said that it was not an issue for him. The issue was a different one:

> The issue to me was playing music and playing the best possible jazz. That to me was the important thing. I’ve always thought that music is a thing of harmony, it brings people together, it shouldn’t separate people and this business of sort of separating white from black I’ve never been for that, ever. To me people are people, no matter what their colour is. So I played with anybody who liked my playing and asked me to play with them.[77]

The answers that these black musicians, who were active in the London music scene, gave in the interviews, show that there was a sort of feeling of indifference to the importance of blackness and nationality in the music scene of a globalising city like London. This feeling was mainly linked to the fact that musical ability had a greater value than racial or national belonging for these musicians. Therefore, it can be said that theirs was a sort of trans-racial and transnational form belonging, which was linked to their activity as musicians and to the musical connections that they developed in the urban context.

Conclusion

As Andy Bennett underlined in an essay published in 2004, “globally established popular musical styles can be readily plucked from their global context and reworked in ways that make them more culturally significant to musicians and fans in particular local contexts. This transformation includes the reinscription of musical styles with local meanings.”[78]

Since the late nineteenth century, black music has acquired significant value in the musical world. This element of distinctiveness should not to be attributed to ideas of special abilities that groups have because of their ethnic characteristics, which have been used to discredit and discriminate against black forms of art. Black musicians and performers have increasingly played a role in the musical world and black genres of music have spread worldwide deeply influencing other genres.

In line with studies that reject the idea of music as a mere product of personal talent or of social identities, the process of learning that musicians with different origins made in the music scenes of both London and Paris, reveals how musicians acquired new styles of music. Musicians playing in contexts that demanded skills to play various genres of black music adopted multiple practices of learning through teachers, journals, and personal encounters, and several musicians used their skills to teach others giving lessons, founding music schools, and writing technical articles in journals. The activities of musicians such as Rudolph Dunbar, Edmundo Ros and Don Barreto show how people coming from the territories that were in a subordinated position played important roles in the spreading of black genres of music in the music scenes of both London and Paris.

Dance bands were required to play various genres of music, all identified as "black" music. Thus, musicians learned and performed musical styles that had different origins. This blurring and different personal experiences make musicians give "blackness" different meanings. Indeed, the analysis of the perceptions of musicians in the London music scene shows how they differed. Moreover, in many cases musicians attributed a greater value to music than to personal and racial belonging by saying that being musicians they mixed with everybody. Playing good music seemed to be the most important thing for them. This reinforces the idea that it is important to understand racialisation taking into account its "historical locality and signification," which Mica Nava has argued for, in an effort to "establish the variations and specificity of race relations and cosmopolitanism."[79]

In the music scenes of London and Paris musicians adopted multiple everyday practices for performing black genres music, a process that require them to work hard as musicians and in contexts that often demanded them to be black regardless of their personal history. Furthermore, they adapted to those contexts as musicians, giving importance to music before everything else, including their perceptions of personal belonging, with the idea that "music is a thing of harmony."

Notes

1. Among these are Petrine Archer Straw, *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000); Brett A. Berliner, *Ambivalent Desire: The Exotic Black Other in Jazz-Age France* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); Fionnghuala Sweeney and Kate Marsh, eds., *Afromodernisms: Paris, Harlem and the Avant-Garde* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
2. See Ludovic Tournès, *New Orleans Sur Seine. Histoire Du Jazz En France* (Paris: Fayard, 1999); William A. Shack, *Harlem in Montmartre: A Paris Jazz Story Between the Great Wars* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2001); Denis-Constant Martin and Olivier Roueff, *La France Du Jazz. Musique, Modernité et Identité Dans La Première Moitié Du XXe Siècle* (Marseille: Éditions Parenthèses, 2002); Jeffrey H. Jackson, *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Durham and London: Duke University Press,

2003).

3. See Catherine Parsonage, *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain, 1880-1935* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Hilary Moore, *Inside British Jazz: Crossing Borders of Race, Nation and Class* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). In some cases, these analyses have conceived the exploration of jazz as a music characterised by internationalism and a globalising phenomenon from its beginning. See, for instance, George McKay, *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 3–4.
4. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 83.
5. Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1982), 308.
6. Michael Peter Smith and John Eade, *Transnational Ties: Cities, Migrations, and Identities* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 12.
7. Becker, 42.
8. Becker, 59.
9. Karl Hagstrom Miller, "Working Musicians: Exploring the Rhetorical Ties Between Musical Labour and Leisure," *Leisure Studies* 27, no. 4 (October 2008): 428.
10. *L'artiste musicien de Paris* was founded in 1914 and published monthly. It was the organ of the Syndicat des Artistes Musiciens, the musicians' union in Paris. Thus, the issues treated in the journal were linked to the union's views and ideas.
11. *L'artiste musicien de Paris* XIV*,* n. 133 (February 1929).
12. The *Melody Maker* was founded in January 1926 and published monthly by the "Lawrence Wright Ltd." company, located in Denmark Street. The journal's scope was to give up-to-date information of the various branches of entertainment, and the magazine became one of the most influent music journals of the period. The editorial which opened the first issue, written by Edgar Jackson, explained that the reason that had led to the publication of the journal was the "lack of co-ordination between the many branches of the entertainment profession." *Melody Maker* I, n.1 (January 1926): 1.
13. *Melody Maker* V, n. 50 (February 1930).
14. *Melody Maker* VII, n. 82 (October 1932): 782.
15. John Chilton, *Who's Who of British Jazz*, 2nd Edition (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 115; Howard Rye, "Dunbar, Rudolph (1899-1988)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, 2004), available at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74922/, accessed 21 September 2015.
16. "Blackbirds" were a series of musicals with an all-black cast that had a great success at Broadway in 1926 and were shown in Paris and London in the following years. Cary D. Wintz and Paul Finkelman, eds., "Blackbirds," *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance: A-J* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).
17. *Melody Maker* VII, n. 73 (January 1932): 74.

18. "A Comprehensive Course For The Clarinet No. 1. Types of Instruments," *Melody Maker* VI, n. 70 (October 1931): 841.
19. The magazine *Jazz-Tango* was founded in Paris in October 1930 with the aim of spreading jazz music within France and promoting French jazz musicians. During its existence, it merged with other journals such as *Dancing* and, in 1936, with *L'Orchestre*.
20. "Pour nous, Français, ce rythme est assez difficile à assimiler, pour plusieurs raisons. D'abord, la nonchalance exotique de cette danse se heurte à notre tempérament nerveux." R. Gottlieb, "L'interprétation de la rumba," *Jazz-Tango-Dancing* IV, n. 30 (March 1933): 9.
21. Ibid.
22. Ivor Mairants, "The Rumba and the Guitar," *Melody Maker* XII, n. 151 (April 1936): 7.
23. In 1924 the former general of the war of independence Gerardo Machado was elected president. Despite the promised economic and social reforms, Machado used his power like a typical *caudillo* figure. He repressed the opposition to his regime, and in 1928 changed the constitution in order to extend the duration of the presidential mandate. The repression of the regime forced many activists, writers, artists and intellectuals to leave the country, and New York and Paris were the two privileged destinations for them. On the Machado regime see Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 5th Edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Robert W. Whitney, *State and Revolution in Cuba: Mass Mobilization and Political Change, 1920-1940* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Alessandra Lorini, "Revering and Contesting Machado in the Shadow of the Platt Amendment: Cuban Nationalism and Anti-Imperialism in the 1920s," in *Cuba in the World, the World in Cuba: Essays on Cuban History, Politics and Culture* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2009), 109–24.
24. William A. Shack, *Harlem in Montmartre: A Paris Jazz Story Between the Great Wars* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2001), 72; Rainer E. Lotz, "Black Diamonds Are Forever: A Glimpse of the Prehistory of Jazz in Europe," *The Black Perspective in Music* 12, no. 2 (Autumn 1984): 233.
25. Val Wilmer, "Barreto, Don Marino (1907–1995)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, 2004), available at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/75195/, accessed 21 September 2015.
26. "L'orchestre Don Barreto," *Jazz-Tango* IV, no. 28 (Janvier 1933): 14.
27. The concept of *cubanidad* was formulated by the hero of the War of Independence José Martí in the late nineteenth century. In one of his writings, *Mi raza* (1893), Martí wrote that "en Cuba no hay temor a la guerra de razas. Hombre es más que blanco, más que mulato, más que negro" and elaborated a notion of fatherland based upon inclusion: the true Cuban republic should be "con todos, y para el bien de todos." José Martí, "Mi Raza," vol. 2 (Habana: Obras Completas Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975), 298–300. On Martí see Alfred J. López, *José Martí: A Revolutionary Life* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014). On the use of the interpretations of Martí's thought and figure

see the volume Mauricio A. Font and Alfonso W. Quiroz, eds., *The Cuban Republic and José Martí: Reception and Use of a National Symbol* (New York: Lexington Books, 2006).

28. On the Afrocubanismo movement, see Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), and the volume, which devotes attention to the literary component of the movement, Thomas F. Anderson, *Carnival and National Identity in the Poetry of Afrocubanismo* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011).
29. "A Cuba, il n'existe pas d'antagonisme ni de séparation comme aux Etats-Unis. Quatre longs siècles de croisement de race continu ont mélangé de telle façon le sang et ont créé une telle variété de types et de couleur que souvent on ne sait où finit le noir et où commence le blanc. [...] La mentalité de la population blanche et celle de la noire, sont identiques. Leurs réactions morales, devant les mêmes phénomènes, sont égales. Leurs goûts, leur conception de la vie, leur idiosyncrasie ne diffèrent en rien. C'est que les uns et les autres sont des produits du même milieu et de la même éducation." M. Barreto, "Autour de la Rumba," *Jazz-Tango-Dancing* III, n. 22 (July 1932): 7.
30. M. Barreto, "Autour de la Rumba," *Jazz-Tango-Dancing* III, n. 22 (July 1932): 7.
31. "Le rythme de la 'rumba' et celui du 'son' ne sont pas seulement fils de l'ardeur africain: ils sont aussi fils de la lubricité du tropique. C'est l'âme de l'Ile merveilleuse, dont Hérédia sentait le parfum aphrodisiaque par dessus la mer à des milles et des milles." M. Barreto, "Autour de la Rumba," *Jazz-Tango-Dancing* III, n. 22 (July 1932): 7.
32. In his book it was reported that he was born in Caracas. Edmundo Ros, *The Latin-American Way: Latin-American Music, Its Instruments and How to Play Them* (London: Rose, Morris & Co, 1950), 5.
33. Sue Steward, "Ros, Edmundo (1910–2011)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; online edition, January 2015), available at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/104277/, accessed 21 September 2015.
34. Ros, 1.
35. Ros, 3.
36. Ros, 4.
37. Ros, 7.
38. Bricktop, *Bricktop* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 120.
39. Leslie Thompson and Jeffrey P. Green, *Swing from a Small Island: The Story of Leslie Thompson*, 2nd Edition (London: Northway Publications, 2009), 74.
40. *Melody Maker* V, n. 50 (February 1930): 151.
41. John Chilton, *Who's Who of British Jazz*, 2nd Edition (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 105–106; Val Wilmer, "Deniz, Francisco Antonio (1912-2005)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, May 2011), available at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/95285/, accessed 21 September 2015; Val Wilmer, "Deniz, José William (1913-1994)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, January 2009),

available at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76164/, accessed 21 September 2015.

42. Frank Deniz, interview by Val Wilmer, August 18, 1989, C122/81-82, BL NSA.
43. Joe Deniz, interview by Val Wilmer, July 21, 1988, C122/45, BL NSA.
44. Clara Wason was the daughter of a seaman from Barbados, and of an English woman. As Clara's father died in the first years of her life, she grew up with her mother in Mrs. Knight's home, a woman of mixed origins who came from a family active in the theatre circuit, and was married to a Caribbean seaman. It was in that environment that Clara was exposed to music, and learned to play the piano. Years later she remembered that when she was young she used to go to dance nights and listen to musicians from the Caribbean playing calypso, which she loved much. Clare Deniz, interview by Val Wilmer, July 21, 1989, C122/76, BL NSA.
45. Lou Stevenson and Dan Ingman, "Rumba This Business," *Melody Maker* VI, n. 66 (June 1931): 515.
46. George Clapham had arrived in Europe as a member of the Southern Syncopated Orchestra. For the band he recruited two other Trinidadians who had settled in London in the early 1920s: the guitarist Gerald "Al" Jennings (1896-1980) who had served the Royal Navy during WWI and settled in Britain after the war, and the drummer Gus Newton who had arrived in Britain as a seaman, and was a boarding house keeper in King's Cross. The saxophonist Joe Appleton who had arrived in London in the mid 1920s, was also in the band. John Chilton, *Who's Who of British Jazz*, 2nd Edition (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 5, 194; Jason Toynbee, Catherine Tackley, and Mark Doffman, eds., *Black British Jazz: Routes, Ownership and Performance* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 37.
47. Thompson and Green, 64.
48. Thompson and Green, 95.
49. Louis Stephenson, interview by Val Wilmer, October 28, 1987, C122/39, BL NSA.
50. William Manning Marable and Vanessa Agard-Jones, eds., *Transnational Blackness: Navigating the Global Color Line* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Dawne Y. Curry, Eric D. Duke, and Marshanda A. Smith, eds., *Extending the Diaspora: New Histories of Black People* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Jean Muteba Rahier, Percy C. Hintzen, and Felipe Smith, eds., *Global Circuits of Blackness: Interrogating the African Diaspora* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010).
51. Among these see: Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984); Sue Peabody and Tyler Edward Stovall, eds., *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003); Danielle Keaton Trica, Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Tyler Stovall, eds., *Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012); Heike Raphael-Hernandez, ed., *Blackening Europe: The African American Presence* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004);

Darlene Clark Hine, Trica Danielle Keaton, and Stephen Small, eds., *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

52. Notions of empire and blackness within metropolises have increasingly received attention in recent years. For instance, see: John Eade, *Placing London: From Imperial Capital to Global City* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2000); Michelle M. Wright, “The Urban Diaspora: Black Subjectivities in Berlin, London, and Paris,” in *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 183–228; Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris*, France Overseas: Studies in Empire and Decolonization (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010).
53. Stanley Jackson, *An Indiscreet Guide to Soho* (London: Muse Arts, 1946), 105.
54. Thompson and Green, 86.
55. Thompson and Green, 89.
56. Thompson and Green, 89.
57. Harlem at the beginning of the 1920s had become a sort of city inside New York with its black population living there and its lively entertaining nightlife of clubs, cabarets and rent parties (parties in private flats) that in the era of Prohibition were attractive for those who wanted to escape restrictions. In this context the literary and artistic movement of the Harlem Renaissance emerged. Also called the “New Negro Movement,” this group of writers, artists and intellectuals attributed new value to Africa and its culture in order to affirm the role of blacks in a society that discriminated against them. On the Harlem Renaissance see Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (New York: Random House, 1979); George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Cheryl A. Wall, *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Geneviève Fabre and Michel Feith, eds., *Temples for Tomorrow: Looking Back at the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).
58. Stephenson, interview, October 28, 1987.
59. Stephenson, interview, October 28, 1987.
60. Thompson and Green, 95.
61. Deniz, interview, August 18, 1989.
62. Love; Dave Wilkins, interview by Val Wilmer, September 9, 1987, C122/36, BL NSA.
63. Deniz, interview, August 18, 1989.
64. Geoff Love, interview by Val Wilmer, August 16, 1989, C122/79-80, BL NSA.
65. Hannen Swaffer, “Will Tango Bands Be Barred?,” *Daily Express* (14 October 1925): 7, Press Clipping TNA LAB 2/1188/EDAR278/41/1925.
66. Thompson and Green, 59–60.
67. Thompson and Green, 87–88.

68. Thompson and Green, 88.
69. Stephenson, interview, October 28, 1987.
70. TNA, MEPO 2/7344.
71. Pieter M. Judson and Tara Zahra, “Introduction,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (2012): 21. The two scholars explain that the concept implies a variety of ideas and behaviours which individuals, families, and communities have performed including the use of the language of nation flexible, but also the rejection of national labels.
72. Tara Zahra, “Imagined Non-Communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69 (Spring 2010): 94.
73. Zahra, 109–10.
74. For a reconstruction of the riots that occurred in the London in the area of Notting Hill, see Chapter 3 of Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London Is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship and the Politics of Race* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
75. Deniz, interview, July 21, 1989.
76. Deniz, interview, July 21, 1988.
77. Coleridge Goode, interview by Val Wilmer, February 5, 1988, C122/40, BL NSA.
78. Andy Bennett, “Consolidating the Music Scenes Perspective,” *Poetics* 32 (2004): 227.
79. Mica Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalisation of Difference* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 6–7.