

Jazz and Imagination:
A Sartrean Approach to Jazz Ontology

Varun Chandrasekhar-University of Minnesota

(Solo)

MY FUNNY VALENTINE

- ROGERS/HAR

C- C-(maj7) C-7 C-6

Ab maj7 F-7 D-7 b5 G7 b9

C- C-(maj7) C-7 C-6

Ab maj7 F-7 Ab-6 Bb7 (b9)

Ebmaj7 F-7 G-7 F-7 Ebmaj7 F-7 G-7 F-7

Ebmaj7 G7 C- Bb7 A7 Abmaj7 D-7 b5 G7 b9

C- C-(maj7) C-7 C-6

Abmaj7 D-7 b5 G7 b9 C- Bb7 A7 (#11)

Abmaj7 F-7 Bb7 (b9) Eb6 (D-7 b5 G7 b9)

"MILES DAVIS SEXTET VOL. 3 - JAZZ AT THE BAR" Miles - "My Funny Valentine"

Ontology and Jazz

-Kane's (2018) system is built upon cultural reproduction of historically notable recordings

-A recording however is a reduction from the infinite ways a performer could play a tune to the singular sounded music

-How then can we value the performer's agency in line with performative theories of jazz presented by Floyd (1995) and Monson (1996)?

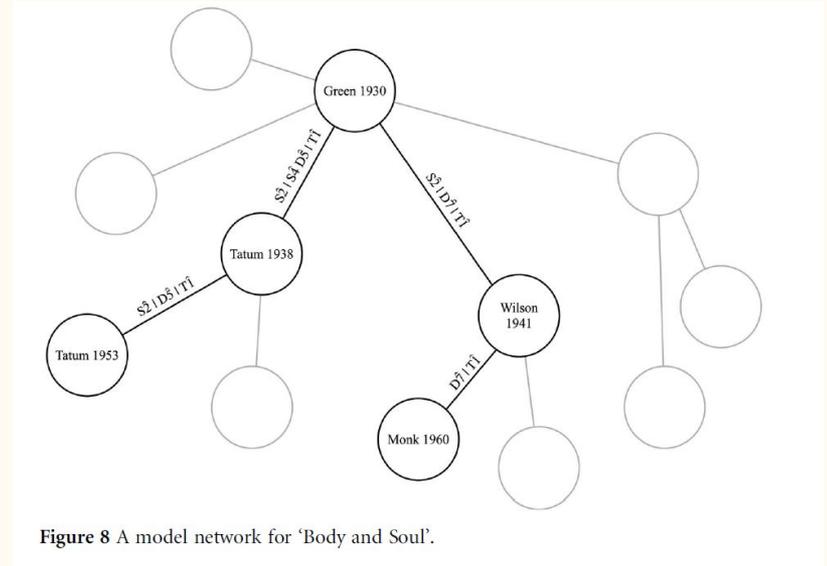


Figure 8 A model network for 'Body and Soul'.

An example of Kane's (2018) network-based approach

Sartre's Theories of the Imagination

-The imagination stems from perceptions of the real world, but allows us to mold the world into a manner that makes sense

-The imagination synthesizes different perceptions together into comprehensible images

-The object of the imagination **is not** the same as the object it imitates

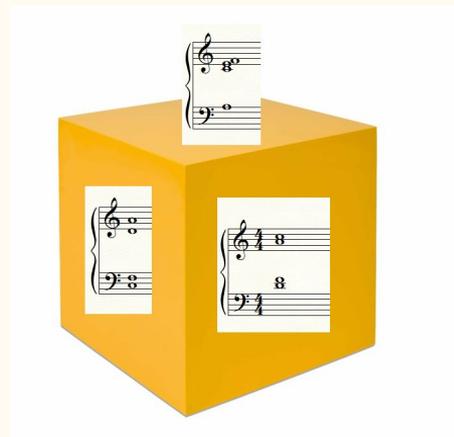


Jazz and Imagination

-Jazz musicians audiate when they play, meaning they imagine the tune in their head

-Practicing for a jazz musician means familiarizing themselves to the point of automatic audition with all of the possible ways they can interpret each individual musical symbol.

-Each chord symbol is therefore a representation of the mass of ways the musician *could* interpret the chord, and thus is what the chord is to that musician



Three sides of a theoretical “Dmin7 cube”

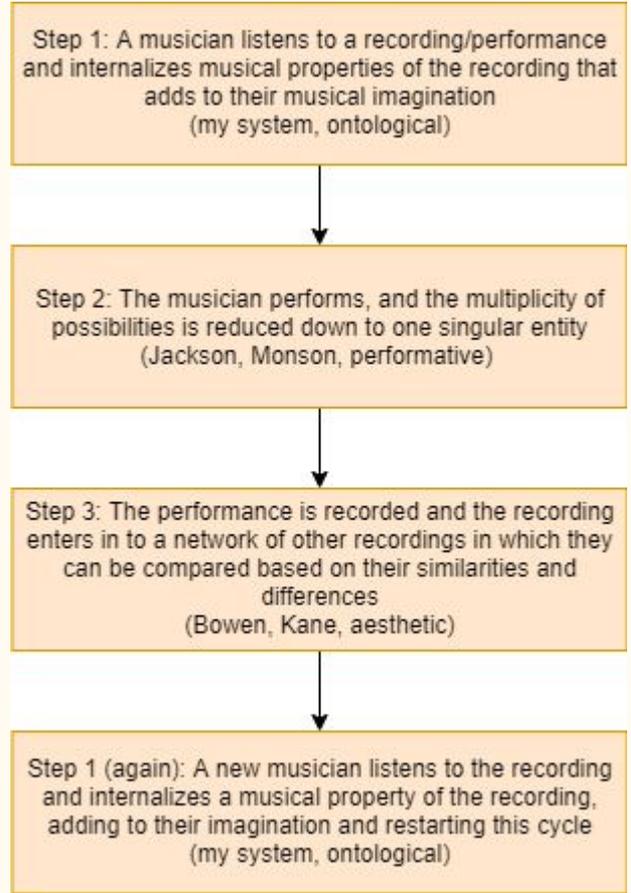
Jazz As A Three-Step Process

-Step 1: A performer imagines a tune

-Step 2: The performer performs the tune

-Step 3: A listener hears the tune and incorporates the parts they like into their imagination

-Step 1 (again): The inspired listener performs, now with an expanded imagination



My Three-Step Process

Further Avenues

-The imaginative approach I have taken is consistent with both my personal experience as a jazz musician/ethnographic studies of jazz

-The imagination forms the basis of Sartre's later existential writing

-How can we account for the existential jazz musician? What are the existential realities of the jazz musician?



Sartre at the piano