Big Band Jazz and 20th C. Art Music: The Historical Relationship Documented
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The Premise

The art music tradition (music stemming from the European Classical tradition) and the jazz tradition have had major impacts on one another throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. This project was designed to lay out history's events to show the progression of 20th century music as it relates to the big band and art music traditions. The importance of this relationship is evident in the immense popularity of jazz-art music hybrids like *Rhapsody in Blue* and also in the vast range of possibilities to be found in future musical creations.

What Inspired This Project?

Maria Schneider, a very prominent big band composer of today's day and age, has clearly made a strong effort to blend the styles of jazz and art music. In a 2008 interview with Jazz.com's Eugene Marlow, Schneider said about her music: "I love trying to make my big band sound like an orchestra, not like a big band, getting all these subtle colors out of the group. I don't want my group to sound like a big band because to me a big band doesn't have a lot of emotional subtly and expression in it. It's got power and energy and it's fun and it can be beautiful, but it's not often very moving and I want my music to be very expressive and very moving."

Practical Application: The Aaron Hedenstrom Orchestra

For another component of this project, I decided that I was going to compose an entire album of big band music of my own that crossed genre lines between jazz, art music, and hip-hop. I founded the Aaron Hedenstrom Orchestra in June 2010, when we recorded our debut album, "A Jazz Hip-Hop Symphonic Experience." This was a great way for me to put the data from this project into use and push the jazz and art music traditions forward for future generations to enjoy. Information about the Aaron Hedenstrom Orchestra can be found at: www.aaronhedenstromorchestra.com

Data Analysis: Timeline of Events

1920s
1922: Doris Millard composes piece *Hear my Song*
1925: Benny Goodman tours with one of his last orchestras, which played bebop
1927: Benny Goodman commissions classical composers Aaron Copland and Paul Hindemith to write clarinet concertos
1928: Duke Ellington becomes the first African American composer to write a full-length symphony
1930: Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians become the first band to record a Christmas album
1931: Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* becomes a huge hit
1932: Duke Ellington and his orchestra release the hit song "Take the 'A' Train"
1933: Arturo Toscanini conducts the first performance of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue"

1930s
1930: Dizzy Gillespie forms his own band in Chicago
1931: Benny Goodman's orchestra achieves its first hit, "West End Blues"
1932: Benny Goodman begins recording with the famous "Big Four" lineup
1933: Benny Goodman and his orchestra release their first record
1934: Benny Goodman organized his first big band under the Columbia record label
1935: Benny Goodman's orchestra releases its first hit, "West End Blues"
1936: Goodman big band begins its television broadcast on CBS
1937: Benny Goodman composes the work "Contrasts" by Bob Brookmeyer

1940s
1940: Stan Kenton starts his famous big band in Hollywood
1941: Kenton's orchestra records *Artistry in Rhythm*, the first big band symphony
1942: Ellington band enlarges to become 16 pieces ensemble
1943: Benny Goodman becomes the first musician to win Grammy awards
1944: Gil Evans becomes the first musician to win Grammy awards
1945: Benny Goodman tours with one of his last orchestras, which played bebop
1946: Kenton starts new 20-piece jazz orchestra, Progressions, first of its kind

1950s
1949: Kenton starts new 20-piece orchestra, the Innovations in Modern Music Orchestra
1950: Gil Evans releases album "The Individualism of Gil Evans" on Verve
1951: Gil Evans arranges *Miles Davis* "Birth of the Cool" after arranging for avant-garde jazz orchestra of Claude Thornhill
1952: Evans records for Miles Davis album "Porgy and Bess"
1953: Evans writes for Miles Davis album "Porgy and Bess"
1954: Evans writes for Miles Davis album "Sketches of Spain"
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1960s
1960: Bernstein arranges "West Side Story Symphonic Dances" based on material from his musical
1961: Kenton starts Creative World Records and Creative World Music companies
1962: Kenton releases album "Artistry in Rhythm"
1963: Gil Evans releases album "The Individualism of Gil Evans" on Verve
1964: Gil Evans releases album "The Individualism of Gil Evans" on Verve
1965: Gil Evans conducts the "New World" orchestra, which has a slow movement called "New World Symphony"
1966: Bob Brookmeyer writes and plays for Gerry Mulligan's Concert Jazz Band
1967: Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra is founded (jointly by Bob Brookmeyer, who arranged several pieces for the group)
1968: Bernstein is in late 1960s influenced work "West Side Story Symphonic Dances"
1969-71: Gil Evans releases album "Blues in Orbit" on Argo

1970s
1970: Kenton starts Creative World Records and Creative World Music companies
1971: Gil Evans releases album "West Side Story Symphonic Dances" based on material from his musical
1972: Gil Evans releases album "The Individualism of Gil Evans" on Verve
1973: Bob Brookmeyer writes and plays for Gerry Mulligan's Concert Jazz Band
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1981: Bob Brookmeyer begins working relationship with the WDR Big Band in Cologne, Germany
1982: Wynton Marsalis becomes the first musician to win Grammy awards in both classical and jazz categories
1983: Gil Evans releases album "West Side Story Symphonic Dances" based on material from his musical
1984: Bob Brookmeyer becomes conductor of the Rundfunk-Ensemble

2000s
2004: Maria Schneider's Orchestra releases first album "Euphoria"
2005: Maria Schneider wins Grammy for album "Composing in the Garden"
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2008: Canadian-U.S. composer Darcy James Argue releases a groundbreaking big band album called "Secret Machines" with his big band, "Darcy James Argue's Secret Society"