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Author(s): Micol Seigel

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THE DISAPPEARING DANCE: MAXIXE'S IMPERIAL ERASURE

MICOL SEIGEL

> "category crisis" . . . not the exception but rather the ground of culture itself."
>
> (Garber 1992, 16)

In 1914, a revue at New York City's Winter Garden celebrated a fabulous dance, just then all the rage:

> The other night a dear, old friend said, "A ball we will attend!"
> Said he'd show me all the latest dances to date
> Promised me he wouldn't keep me out very late,
> So we lost no time at all but we taxied to the hall.
> First we did a "Tango," then did a "Trot," No "Hesitation" at all.
> Then he said, "Now Lilian, Let's do the Brazilian
> And I will show you something new."
> La-la la (etc.) Oh! what that man did do!
> His arm went round my waist
> But it wouldn't stay in place.
> And every time we bent our knees
> 'Twas then I felt a run in my silk stocking,
> how shocking!
> While dancing Brazilian Max-*cheese.*
> (Nazareth and Window 1914)

Sung to music by the Brazilian composer Ernesto Nazareth, this amusing piece fed and reflected the appeal of the Afro-Brazilian set dance *maxixe.*

MICOL SEIGEL is Assistant Professor of Liberal Studies at California State University, Los Angeles. She is currently completing a book for Duke University Press, *Trading Race: Racial Construction in the Americas.*

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For a brief moment concentrated around this single year, maxixe was an inescapable part of the dance craze sweeping the United States.

In the United States today, of course, maxixe is notable primarily for its absence. Why did maxixe disappear? Like many a fad, this dance vanished from U.S. popular culture and memory when the culture industry turned its attention elsewhere. Later, critics and historians layered their neglect over that of their sources. In maxixe's case, however, the here-today-gone-tomorrow quality of popular fashions is more complex. Maxixe's star rose for some of the same reasons that it fell, all involving a pair of conjoined phenomena key to the structuring of U.S. social relations. The two defining backdrops of both the emergence and erasure of this popular form are U.S. imperialism, at its height in this period, and domestic racial conditions, particularly the ongoing fortification of Jim Crow violence against African Americans, which gained momentum from the end of Reconstruction and into the 1920s. Maxixe's fate in the United States involved both of these factors, as well as the links and tensions between them. I offer here a brief history of maxixe's travels, hoping this disappearing dance can focus those connections and contradictions, revealing facets of the project of musical classification relevant to students of popular music in all disciplines.

Maxixe, Tango, Jazz

Maxixe's moment in the United States was another chapter in the long life of a peripatetic set dance form. Its origins lie clouded in the meetings of polka, *lundu,* tango, habanera, and more in urban, nineteenth-century Brazil (Duran 1942, 21; Almeida 1948; Efegê 1974; Alvarenga 1982; Chasteen 1996; Moore 1997; Béhague 1999; Fryer 2000, 154). At the intersection of these various traditions, people dancing and playing maxixe incorporated, through their bodily movements, a series of encounters, especially Afro-diasporic encounters, in the Americas. Maxixe was not only a palimpsest of earlier crossings but an arena of cultural mixture and an opportunity for ongoing innovation. It was one of many set dance forms, as dance historian Curt Sachs (1937, 33) noted, that "crossed the Atlantic"—and, we should add, the equator—"back and forth, not one but many times, invariably altered upon their return and often carrying a new name." Created by bodies in all sorts of motion, maxixe would never come to rest.

Maxixe as such began its travels outside of Brazil in the late nineteenth century, according to Jota Efegê, maxixe's most enthusiastic and thorough historian. Efegê (1974, 141) reports that Brazilian dancers in Paris, along with French and other non-Brazilian dancers who traveled to

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Brazil, brought maxixe repeatedly to the French capital, beginning at least as early as 1889. Sachs (1937, 444–445) confirms this timing, placing maxixe at an important, catalytic position in the round of exchange initiated at the turn of the twentieth century:

> Since the Brazilian *maxixe* of 1890 and the *cakewalk* of 1903 broke up the pattern of turns and glides that dominated the European round dances, our generation has adopted with disquieting rapidity a succession of Central American [*sic*] dances. . . . We have shortly after 1900 the *one-step* or *turkey-trot;* in 1910, inspired by the Cuban *habanera,* the so-called 'Argentine' *tango* . . . ; and in 1912 the *fox trot* with its wealth of figures. After the war we take over its offspring, the *shimmy,* . . . the grotesquely distorted *Charleston,* . . . the *black bottom,* . . . the rocking *rumba*—all compressed into even movement, all emphasizing strongly the erotic element, and all in that glittering rhythm of syncopated four-four measures classified as *ragtime.*

Maxixe was a part of the great fad for Afro-diasporic set dance forms that made Paris, London, and other cities of the European metropole the sites of intense Afro-American cultural exchange, innovation, and transformation (Dewitte 1985, 1989; Lotz 1986, 1983; Riis 1986; Rye 1986; Fabre 1991; Stovall 1996; Blake 1999, 27, 62; Edwards 2000, 2003).[1]

In the United States, maxixe's vogue was vigorous but brief. By 1916, maxixes had begun to disappear from sheet-music advertisements and, presumably, the public venues they index.[2] Certainly, its suggestions about rhythm, harmony, bodily movement, and so on survived as part of the palette of possibilities for composers and performers who had lived through the fad—cultural residues can be disclaimed or ignored, but the contact is, on some level, ineradicable. Popular culture in the United States would sound Brazilian notes from time to time to haunt maxixe's fair-weather friends. In the 1920s, for example, maxixe echoed faintly through a spate of sappy songs that referred vaguely and dreamily to Brazil.[3] In the big-band scene, Sammy Gallop and Bob Crosby (Bing's kid brother) scored big with the rollicking "Boogie-Woogie Maxixe," a best-selling hit through the 1950s, which was recorded numerous times. Brazilian newspapers continued to celebrate maxixe's success in various European cities throughout the 1930s—claims that should be taken with

1. This article uses the term *Afro-diasporic* for people of African descent anywhere in the world, *Afro-American* for black-identified people throughout the Americas, *African American* for the smaller circle in or from the United States, and *Afro-Brazilian* for Brazilians of African descent or identification.

2. Maxixe's U.S. rise and fall is detailed in a chapter in Seigel (n.d.).

3. See, for example, Hill and Hirsch (1919), *Brazilian Chimes* (1923), Dixon (1920), Fairman and Bowers (1920), Vincent and Thompson (1920), Klages and Fazioli (1923), Rebére and Klages (1927), Crossing and Drew (1925), and Gollatz (1931).

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some salt but that suggest that maxixe may still have been played and danced outside Brazil between the world wars (Efegê 1974, 154–55).

That maxixe rhythms, steps, and melodies survived under other names is illustrated by the carioca performed by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in RKO's 1933 *Flying Down to Rio.* The carioca became quite a fad in the movie's wake. Efegê (1974, 101) calls it "maxixe-based," a legacy jazz historians tend to neglect in their discussion of the film and its dance (e.g., Stearns and Stearns 1968, 114). Furthermore, the "Bahiana" played in *Flying Down to Rio* by African-American performer and radio host Etta Moten Barnett, with white starched skirts and a modest basket of fruit on her head, would soon enjoy a powerful echo; it was in this garb that Carmen Miranda would offer maxixe's legacies to U.S. audiences in the 1940s. As part of the traditions feeding samba, maxixe would echo in the United States during the Miranda-inspired samba vogue and a decade later in the bossa nova.

Still, today, especially if one reads the historical record formalistically or at face value, maxixe appears to have disappeared without a trace. In the turn-of-the-twenty-first–century historical-cultural lexicon of my North American peer group, to take a terribly subjective standard, 1910s and 1920s vogues such as the turkey trot or tango have a place, while maxixe does not. As a measure of maxixe's status in a broader collective memory, one swing-dance website credits Maurice Mouvet with "creating" Brazilian maxixe in 1913 and does not even mention the dance's far more famous Brazilian exponent, Duque (Watson 2003). Even a cultural historian of dance reform, discussing the sanitization of lascivious popular dances, claims that "professional dancers . . . developed elegant versions, such as the 'Castle Walk,' 'Hesitation,' 'Maxixe,' and 'Pousse Café'" (Perry 1985, 729). The suggestion that maxixe was an elegant dance developed in the United States as a branch of moral reform would have surprised nineteenth-century Brazilian dance reformers, themselves convinced of maxixe's vulgar immorality. Maxixe has sunk so far below memory's horizon that even careful observers can miss it entirely.

Maxixe's star rose and fell against the complex background of domestic popular culture in the era of formal political imperialism, and so it is this background that we must examine to understand the dance. Exotic forms mesmerized audiences during this period, dominating popular fora. On the stages of popular theaters and pages of magazines, an endless succession of forms called Oriental, Spanish, Latin, and so on played and danced together, distinguished barely or not at all. As a scholar of vaudeville notes, audiences imbibed a steady diet of "Brazilian Maxixe, burlesques of *The Merry Widow,* Princess Rajah's snake dance, and, of course, *Salome*" (Daly 1995, 107). Sheet-music sales illustrate one slice of

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this phenomenon. When publishers stopped advertising maxixe scores about 1916, they did not simply substitute homegrown forms. Instead, they executed a head-spinning turn to songs invoking Hawaii. Suddenly, Tin Pan Alley was issuing countless Hawaiian waltzes, such as "Myona Waltz," "My Hawaiian Sunshine," "Mo-ana," and comic numbers such as "O'Brien Is Tryin' to Learn to Talk Hawaiian."[4] Just as the precise routes maxixe traveled to the United States are unclear, this dramatic turn to the Pacific is bewildering. Hawaii had become a U.S. territory in 1900, and even before the nation entered the World War I in April of 1917, it was often in the news as a point on the map of the theater of conflict. Did the war somehow shine a light on Hawaii and diminish the apparent relevance of Brazil?

Along the route of this transition, Brazilian and Hawaiian forms overlapped, foreshadowing another Brazil-Hawaii conflation, the 1930–1940s overlap of the hula and the Carmen Miranda phenomena (Imada 1999). Brazil and Hawaii share enough palm trees, it seems, to have merged in North Americans' conflationary imaginations at several moments in the twentieth century.

After Hawaii's moment in the sun, Egypt had a turn. In one popular music magazine in 1920, *Metronome,* Egyptian themes represented a plurality of place-oriented titles. Carl Fischer-Witmark took out a full-page ad for "Bo-la-bo, that favorite Egyptian Fox Trot" and another for "Alexandria," illustrated with a predictable sketch of a female dancer. Waterson, Berlin, and Snyder offered "Desert Dreams," while Jerome H. Remick and Company mixed it up with "The Irish Were Egyptians Long Ago." McCarthy and Fisher featured "(When the Sun Goes Down in) Cairo Town" and "Song of Omar," among others; various other publishers offered titles such as "Kamel-Land," "Mystic Nile," and "On the Streets of Cairo."[5] In conjunction with these tunes, *Metronome* reprinted a feature article from a more erudite serial, the *Musical Record,* detailing the "Music and Musical Instruments of the Egyptians" (Lolligo 1920). In 1922, the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb sent another cascade of fascination with ancient Egypt through U.S. popular culture, but the dig cannot explain this earlier wave.[6] Here, events in the world of science and ideas followed rather than sparked a popular trend.

Brazil, Hawaii, and Egypt were just three of a great many targets of U.S. fascination in the age of empire. In indirect, uneven, and idiosyn-

4. Advertisements for Jos. W. Stern and Carl Fischer-Witmark in *Metronome* 33, no. 4 (April 1917): 6, 12.

5. Advertisements in *Metronome* 36, no. 4 (April 1920): 4, 6, 14, 22, 24, 63, 77, 83, 98.

6. On Hollywood Orientalism in the period of Tut's tomb's discovery, see Karnes (1986); for a recent assessment of Tut's significance in the United States, see McAlister (1996).

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cratic ways, each subsequent minivogue indexed U.S. involvement with that region or nation in political, cultural, military, or economic arenas. North American cultural producers and their industry followed, led, and simply celebrated their state by enthroning and devouring tidbit after exotic tidbit. Exoticist culture was not simply an epiphenomenon of political imperialism but an inextricable and consequential part of a multilayered discursive structure that included cultural, political, and commercial facets. Culture and commerce fed imperial ideology with delicious panoplies of available exotics. Their kaleidescopic views of the globe's semisavage Others offered a counterpoint against which U.S. consumers could posit their nation's unique (and uniquely admirable) qualities.

This context both midwifed the U.S. vogue for maxixe and ensured its quick demise. Acquired tastes for the exotic carved out many shallow niches for such forms on Broadway and Tin Pan Alley, fragile toeholds that ensured a quick slip from the public eye. The period's exoticist cultural orientation welcomed maxixe not as a visiting dignitary, notable on its own, but as one of a delegation of foreigners whose strangeness could be enjoyed rather than feared because their stay promised to be short.

The specific mechanisms that guided maxixe through this exoticist hit parade involved a central frame of imperial culture: its antiblack racism. Maxixe's producers, fans, and commercial promoters had to thread maxixe through the maze of deeply racist cultural and social hierarchies that shaped and constrained Afro-diasporic cultural exchange and innovation. Genres that met with commercial success were usually shaven of their most obvious references to Africa or blackness by producers, performers, and fans, especially white ones. In Brazil, maxixe had undergone a process of whitening before elite social clubs would dance it, but the racial divisions within Brazil that made that distinction possible were rarely visible from afar. Abroad, then, maxixe's promoters blurred the connection to the South American country most associated with Africa in mores and population. Their work in the United States helped fold maxixe into the culture of empire's panoply of delicious, benign exoticisms, related to African-American forms closely enough to be titillating and at enough distance to be safe.

Maxixe's case reveals the concrete workings of the often confusing, complex forces that operate to obscure Afro-diasporic elements of U.S. culture—that plant, in Toni Morrison's (1992) resonant phrase, an Africanist "absent presence" in a collective cultural subconscious, invisible to some but profoundly influential nonetheless. Following maxixe's erasure, we can see exactly how one Afro-diasporic form was stripped of flesh and its skeleton stashed in the closet of the master's house. Without deliberate misrepresentation, simply by accepting and reworking the lin-

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gua franca of the cultural hierarchies in place around them, the promoters and performers who introduced maxixe to the United States characterized it in ways bound to erase its associations with things African—or Brazilian, a category easily conflated with "African" in North Atlantic eyes.

The interlinked aspects of this process tellingly illustrate the broader ideological context. Maxixe was stripped of its Afro-diasporic or Brazilian affiliations, celebrated as kin to tango and to France, and finally, absorbed into jazz as jazz itself was increasingly proclaimed a racially neutral, "American" form. Before looking at each of those processes in turn, it is useful to note what was probably the most significant mechanism of maxixe's eventual erasure. This was simply the trivializing disregard of its specific history, which also paved the way for its triumph. Music industry executives, performers, and audiencies in the United States sanded its Afro-associated edges to fit it to the expected gamut of multiple, generic exotics. People failed to notice where it came from (Argentina? Mexico? France?), inflicted endless variations in spelling—matchiche, mattchiche, mattchich, machichi, macheech, max-cheese, maxix, maxie—and reveled in a perpetual confusion over its pronunciation. The Gallop-Crosby "Boogie-Woogie Maxixe" opens with indulgent empathy: "It ain't easy to pronounce it." Countless such reiterations of the foreignness of the word functioned as affirmations of the lack of need to know. Entirely free of contrition, they were gleeful reminders of the privilege of ignorance, that unmistakable yet necessarily unarticulated prerogative of power. It is this that allowed maxixe so intimately to support the ideological underpinnings of U.S. imperialism.

Another ideologically revealing mechanism of erasure is the conflation of maxixe with tango. Maxixe was often called "Brazilian tango." The alias made good commercial sense as a useful frame of reference, but it also suggested that maxixe's distinction from the better-known Argentine referent was trivial. Situating tango as the norm and maxixe simply a variant, this comparison set maxixe up to sink again back into the matrix that gave it brief life. As dancer-didact Max Rivera (1913, 73) declared: "One can say nothing about maxixe which has not already been said about the tango. The two dances have the same exotic origin and the same popular origin."[7] Similar conflations abounded. In the 1910s, some pieces were described as "maxixe or tango" or "tango maxixe," as if the two were interchangeable, as with the sheet music "Magic Love" (1915) and the Prince's Band recording of Penso's "Grossmith Tango." Many maxixes were titled in Spanish, even those that referred to some feature of Brazil or the Brazilian landscape (Belmonté 1913; Santos 1914; Widmer

7. Translations mine unless otherwise attributed.

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1914; "La Flor del Amazona" 1915). Some songs classified as tangos also referred to Brazil in their titles (Dixon 1913; de Castro 1914; Ferrara 1914). In a telling conflation, the Café des Beaux-Arts advertised an evening with the *maxixeiro* Duque as "Tango Night."[8] While it is certainly possible that Duque simply danced tango rather than maxixe in that gig, this was maxixe's brightest day, and Duque the sun in the center of its sky. More likely, the café expected its patrons to understand what a tango by Duque entailed.

In fact, tango suffered a similar conflationary flattening. Tango and maxixe bled together and into larger generic exotic categories. The *Maori-Tango or Maxixe, La Rumba, Tango or Maxixe* (titles of recordings by Tyers and Tim Brymn), and the sheet-music category "Tangos, Ta-Taos, Maxixes etc." brought indigenous Australia, Afro-Cuba, and China into the mix.[9] The forms gained Mexican and generic Latin American affiliations in the "true Tango," "La Bonita: Mexican Intermezzo," and the "Real South American Tango," "Manana" (rhymes with banana?).[10] Perhaps the price of both genres' fame in the United States was the loss of any specific affiliation with either Brazil *or* Argentina.

Tango, as hindsight so clearly reveals, had a better footing than maxixe.[11] Part of tango's eventual survival and maxixe's loss may reflect the racial valence of these two South American nations, and Argentina's successful self-representation as more white and more European than its largest near neighbor, which extended even to its Afro-descended cultural strains. A 1938 study of jazz revealed the assumptions of the era about the tango, whose name, many claim, is a Kongo word: tango's "rhythms, apparently also originally Negroid, were similarly Latinized by the Argentines," wrote one observer (Sargeant 1975, 118). This view offered sweet vindication for the intense labors that Argentines spent to represent their national racial identity as white (Andrews 1980; Natale 1984; Prieto 1988; Guy 1991; Svampa 1994). Brazil occupied a far more precarious position in the hierarchical global mappings of more African and more European nations and peoples, which helps explain why even maxixe's

8. Advertised in the *New York Times* February 18, 1915, 20. The same and similar ads appeared in the *New York Times* throughout February and March 1915.

9. From an advertisement for Jos. W. Stern and Co., which appeared in *Metronome* 33, no. 3 (March 1915): 2, and in *Metronome* 31, no. 4 (April 1915), inside front cover.

10. Used in an advertisment for Oliver Ditson, *Metronome* 31, no. 2 (Febrary 1915): 12. *Manana* was advertised on the back cover of Davis (1914). These find an echo in a literary realm in the British aristocrat Osbert Sitwell's poem "Maxixe," about dancing Mexican dwarves (Sitwell 1922a, b).

11. Even as early as the late 1930s, Tin Pan Alley simply listed maxixes as tangos in offerings of sheet music for sale. See, for example, "Bergeiro (Rio Brazilian Maxixe)," "Maurice (Tango Maxixe)," and "Tango Dreams (Brazilian Tango)," listed under "The World's Foremost Tangos for Piano" on the back cover of Filiberto (1938).

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Brazilian champions might have collaborated in its alignment with Orientalist, generic Latin American, and other non-Brazilian, non-African cultural or national formations. The representation of maxixe and its most famous Brazilian exponent, Duque, as French is a signal illustration of this representational tendency.

Promoters of maxixe in the United States played up its Frenchness and French success with zeal. They advertised particular maxixes as "The Latest Parisian Craze" (Nazareth 1914b), a "Celebrated Parisien March" (Borel-Clerc 1906), or simply, "The Latest European-American Craze" (Dugue and Costa 1913). Many offered maxixe titles and descriptions in French or gave the genre name in French (e.g., "Maxixe Bresilien" or "Brésilienne" and "Tango Argentine" in recordings by Arthur N. Green and J. Storoni). One of the cornerstones of the U.S. vogue, the song "Dance That Dengozo with Me," winked self-consciously at the genre's French pretensions, adding to its title a flirtatious "Oo-La-La" (Beardsley and Cobb 1914).

Duque allowed himself and his dance to be represented as French and probably embraced the opportunity. The very names of the New York clubs he played indicate the status a Francophone flavor could lend a house of leisure: the "Club De Vingt," "Café des Beaux-Arts," "Parisian Café Chantant," and so on. The first offered "Thés Dansants . . . Under the direction of Duque of Paris, France," the second billed Duque's appearance as "Paris in New York," and the third called him the "World's Most Renowned Dancer" and among "Europe's Most Famous Stars."[12] A dance teacher who claimed to be a pupil of Duque identified herself and her mentor as both just in from Paris.[13] With Duque's white-looking features and classy tuxedo attire, his French affiliations often crowded out Brazil entirely. The *New York Times'* report in March 1915 that "the Parisian dancer" was to "sail for Rio de Janeiro next week to appear in the Municipal Theatre there" did not suggest that Duque might have been going home ("Theatrical Notes" 1915).

Presenting Duque and maxixe as French or as tango was not exactly a misrepresentation, except inasmuch as any representation is partial, for maxixe and its agile exponent were in many ways French after their experiences in France, just as maxixe was indeed often indistinguishable from tango, given its long coexistence and interaction with that form. Pieces later scholars would call "maxixes" were called tangos in Brazil before

12. As advertised in the *New York Times* December 18, 1914, 20; March 9, 1915, 18; and February 7, 1915, X6. Only a club that did not invoke France in its title, the Hotel Knickerbocker Grille, called Dubuqe and Gaby "famous Brazilian Dancers," and even its copy immediately added that they were "celebrated in the leading Capitals of Europe" (*New York Times* December 18, 1915, 4).

13. Advertisements in the *New York Times,* October 4, 1914, 15; December 13, 1914, RPA7.

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they earned a name of their own, and they remained synonymous or contested even in the work of Ernesto Nazareth, probably the best-known composer of maxixes. Nazareth's U.S.-published compositions reflect this confusion; one edition of his "Bregeiro" was called a "Rio Brazilian Maxixe" on the cover and a "Tango Bresilienne" inside (Nazareth 1914a). During maxixe's U.S. vogue, tango and maxixe rhythms were not clearly distinct. Although one cannot define a standard maxixe rhythm, the rhythmic pattern of Nazareth's ubiquitous "Dengozo"—♪♪♪♪♪ in $\frac{2}{4}$ characterizes several pieces labeled Argentine tangos, and even one termed a Brazilian Polka (Davis 1913; Brymn 1914; Pinto 1914). One song labeled "maxixe" gave its time signature as "Tempo di Tango," using an elongated form of this pattern (Dugue and Costa 1913). Publishers in the United States specified some pieces as "Argentine tangos," as if maxixe's visibility as a tango during its vogue made such a distinction necessary (Logatti 1914; Sarrablo 1919). Perhaps these various conflations explain Curt Sachs's (1933, 444–445) doubly dubious characterization of the "so-called 'Argentine' tango."[14]

As the confusion shown in U.S. sheet music suggests, maxixe and tango were not clearly distinct cultural forms in this period. They had met and mingled in untraceable ways in Brazil, Argentina, and environs in the late nineteenth century and in Europe from the beginning of the twentieth (Esteves 1997). In Paris and throughout Europe, the dances shifted to align with local tastes and in conversation with other set dances in vogue there at the time. They moved through cultural meeting grounds crowded with Afro-diasporic forms from the Americas, including the Caribbean—beguine, *son,* merengue, quadrille, *danzon,* and so on (Edwards 2000).

The forms themselves, in a sense, served as cultural meeting grounds, occasions for syncretism and innovation. French pianist Leo Vauchant described the opportunity he found in arranging Cole Porter's "first piano copy of 'Begin the Beguine.' . . . I did it in a Latin version. Nobody heard of the beguines there in South America. It was Brazilian, and it was also Haitian. I had seen the *Balle Noir* in Paris where they played beguines" (Goddard 1979, 273). Performers such as Vauchant innovated based on themes that they encountered when their travels intersected the travels of people and traditions from three continents or more. Trumpeter Arthur Briggs described a pianist he played with in Paris "who was in an

14. Nor did "Argentine" groups shrink from the maxixe; on their recording of Ernesto Nazareth's "Dengazo," the Argentine Marimba Band called it a "Brazilian Maxixe-Tango." In Brazil even today, *tango* still often serves as a synonym for *maxixe* in musicological terms, according to one historian of music: "In truth here in Brazil the word 'tango' means something very different than Argentine tango, and in fact is very close to 'maxixe'" (Gomes 2001).

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orchestra, not a straight orchestra, they played waltzes, and tangoes and schottisches and things like that, you know" (Briggs and Collier 1982, 147). Tango in the repertory of this decidedly "not straight" group gestures to the dense contact zone tango constituted in this period. In the ample space of Briggs's "things like that," performers brought diverse genres into acrobatic approximations.

Despite tango's bleaching, or perhaps in part thanks to the privileges its whitish tint conferred, the form remained a space of Afro-diasporic encounter. In this sense, as a touch point for circuits of highly charged cultural ions, tango constituted some of the grounds on which and with which jazz was conceived. African-American musicians had met and engaged with tango since at least its vogue during World War I, as vaudeville critic Frederick J. Smith disclosed in a 1915 review. The form had enjoyed such intense exegesis by African-American performers that "after a season of the tango," he wrote, "we know nearly every ebony musician by sight" (quoted in Foreman 1968, 213). African-American musicians met tango outside the United States as well. Garvin Bushell, who toured South America with Sam Wooding's band, remembered with great pleasure the exchange his band enjoyed with Argentine musicians: "I had a ball in Buenos Aires. I loved it, and especially playing beside the great tango orchestras and they're trying to play jazz and we were playing tango" (Bushell and Montgomery 1977, 142). Wooding, too, remembered this mutual exchange: "We used to do tangos. And the funny thing, we'd do a tango sometime, and we got them down pretty good. And the tango band, which was Canero, which was the greatest band there they had at the time, Canero's band was playing 'St. Louis Blues'" (Wooding and Albertson 1975, 198–199).

One strikingly dense site of tango's encounters with African-American performers was Paris, a critical meeting point for Afro-American set dance forms. Joe Zelli's club in Montmartre alternated jazz and tango in twenty-minute sets; Haitian flutist Bertin Depestre Salnave played in a "tango band at the Apollo Theatre" in the city of light sometime between 1919 and 1921; trombonist Herb Flemming (né Arif Niccolaiih El-Michelle) and his Plantation Orchestra gigged with a tango band at the Abbaye Thélème in 1930 (Goddard 1979, 219; Rye 1986, 222; Stovall 1996, 42). As Jody Blake put it (1999, 113), the Abbaye was one of "these establishments [that] gave visitors the impression that they had suddenly stepped into Harlem." The Abbaye had also been the site, in 1908, of the triumphant Paris debut of the Afro-Brazilian *maxixeiros* Geraldo Magalhães and his partner Nina Teixeira (Efegê 1974, 146; 1978; 1980). Maxixe's ghost flitted through the halls of that cabaret just as it haunted the music played there.

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The Abbaye Thélème felt like Harlem not because it was patronized by black North Americans but because its guests hailed from all over the African diaspora. Paris boasted as transnational a gamut of Afro-diasporic people and cultural forms as did Harlem—or Buenos Aires, as Sam Wooding's band's experience suggests, or New Orleans, where noted jazz pianist and composer Jelly Roll Morton wrote pieces that incorporated not only blues and ragtime but "Creole folk songs, marches, operatic arias, Mexican pop songs, Cuban *sones,* music hall melodies, and of course French quadrille tunes" (Szwed and Marks 1988, 34). Many such cosmopolitan cities and districts hosted the heady encounters that kicked Afro-diasporic cultural exchange up to such a dynamic rate in the period of heady innovation and change that contemporaries called the *tumulte noir.*

The intense cultural crossing behind the creativity of this period involved neither jazz borrowing from static forms nor multiple emergent forms developing chastely in isolation. "We got to know each other very well, you know," Sam Wooding told his interviewer about his South American friends (Wooding and Alberton 1975, 198–199). Related, simultaneous musical developments led to the United States' and Brazil's respective best-known twentieth-century Afro-diasporic forms: jazz and samba. The two genres emerged together and with much in common, "paralelamente" (Vasconcelos 1977, 27), in simultaneous "evolutions" (Tinhorão 1966, 13, 34–35), like "twin brothers" (Vidossich 1975, 59, cited in Lis 1996, 70). But simultaneity and similarities, left at that, suggest coincidence rather than a significant relationship. As musicologist Eduardo Lis (1966, iv) has argued: "From the turn of this century, jazz and Brazilian music have influenced each other." His argument holds equally true for tango and a host of other forms.

The historical record as formally or conventionally conceived fails to reflect this mutuality. History and memory do a disservice to the landscapes of dense, scarred layerings of the many cultural forms that wrestle under the signs of genre names. Happily, few adepts of jazz today would still agree that "jazz's diffusion all over the world, its introduction, assimilation and development in the different countries is . . . a mere footnote to the overall history of jazz" (Olliver and Mooney 1989, 2). Yet, much of the formal historical record was shaped and preserved by people who did believe in jazz's preeminence worldwide, slanting research and preservation toward the conclusions they embedded in their preliminary assumptions and questions. The prejudices of jazz aficionados who routinely discarded branches of musical development they considered

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"of no importance" strew stumbling blocks in the path to understanding artistic innovation.[15]

The Smithsonian Institution Oral History Series, a priceless source in many respects, is an illustrative example. When Monk Montgomery interviewed Garvin Bushell for the Smithsonian, he repeatedly ignored Bushell's desire to talk about his South American experiences, despite their clear significance to the player's sense of his musical life. Consider some excerpts from the transcript of their conversation (Bushell and Montgomery 1977):

> *Mr. Montgomery:* How long did that tour last? . . .
> *Mr. Bushell:* Oh, no, two years and something. Two years—from '25 to '27. In the meantime we'd been to South America too, you know. Buenos Aires.
> *Mr. Montgomery:* But I mean during that two years, you were in Europe traveling?
> *Mr. Bushell:* Yes, yes (71).

The same dynamic recurs a few minutes on:

> *Mr. Montgomery:* But the rest of Europe was pretty—
> *Mr. Bushell:* Oh, sensational, South America was sensational.
> *Mr. Montgomery:* Did you go to Africa, any parts of it? (74)

A moment later, there is a similar exchange.

> *Mr. Montgomery:* Well, when you left Europe to come back to the States, obviously the band broke up, or did it?
> *Mr. Bushell:* Well no, it didn't exactly. We went from Europe to—we went from Marseilles to Buenos Aires and we stayed in South America for about six months. There we played Buenos Aries, Montevideo, Rosario, Tucumán, and one other town—we played vaudeville and we also played cabaret. We played theaters there and cabarets. We played at the Cabaris in Buenos Aires.
> *Mr. Montgomery:* How was your reception there?
> *Mr. Bushell:* Great, great, wonderful.
> *Mr. Montgomery:* Well, was it—did you get—did you gain momentum from that band by going to Europe and Russia and back—when you come back to the States . . . (74–75).

Interested in the band's reception in South America rather than any

15. The frequency of this phrase in jazz criticism, up until quite recently, is astounding. Harold Flakser (2001), a prolific critic and dedicated jazz collector with a drill-sharp memory, told me that Leon Abbey's recordings were "of no interest" because they were "all Congas." He also termed Brazil a "pygmy country" because it had no early jazz periodicals of note. While not devoted to what Flakser considered jazz, Brazil did produce periodicals such as *Jazz,* an illustrated weekly published by *A Manhã* in the 1920s, the *Revista Musical* in the 1920s, *O Rio Musical* from 1922 into at least the mid-1920s, and by the 1950s, the *Revista da Musica Popular,* published in Rio and full of articles on jazz.

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encounters the musicians might have had with other players or musical forms, and despite Bushell's enthusiasm for the Argentine stint and his obviously excellent memory of its details, Montgomery omits South America from his summary of the band's history.[16]

Historians and critics late in the twentieth century were certainly not solely to blame. Their attitudes, like those of audiences throughout the North Atlantic, reflected and reproduced hierarchies among nations. Those hoping to "correct" the record have made little headway. As a Paris correspondent for a São Paulo newspaper noticed about a Josephine Baker show, probably in the 1930s, U.S. performers and producers and French audiences accepted and participated in the absorption and erasure of Brazilian contributions. At the end of the revue, he recounted, "Josephine sings her biggest hit, *Pauvre Noir.* One would never suspect that the song, which in the program and on records lists André Hornez (lyrics) and Barroco [*sic*] (music), is a version of *Terra seca.* Everyone leaves the theatre without knowing that it is a Brazilian song, thinking it's a North American spiritual, as the scene in the play suggests. Maybe Ari Barroso himself doesn't even know that he is currently the composer of the biggest hit in France" (Cabral n.d., 416). Danced by Baker to words by a French lyricist, this piece was hybrid no matter how faithfully it cleaved to Barroso's score. The reporter's point is valid nonetheless: North American popular culture and its most beloved (and demonized) subset, African-American culture, was so visible and popular that European audiences awarded it wider authorship than it deserved.

Along with popular attitudes and the priorities of collectors and historians, the commercial project driving popular culture is a critical part of the erasure of mixture and hybridity. The disproportionate naming power of African-American forms reflects in large part the shape the culture industry took in the 1910s and 1920s. The U.S. music industry and its global power gave (and continue to give) North American cultural products disproportionate exposure—even, in some contexts, the African-American forms violently marginalized within the nation's borders, although usually not African Americans themselves. After all, the eclipse of the transnational phenomena of jazz's collective formation began alongside and in tandem with the developments that would make jazz palatable to white audiences and attractive to a largely white consuming

16. To his credit, Montgomery noticed, at the end of the interview, that Bushell had been taking notes of topics that he wanted to revisit and gave him an opportunity to voice them. Bushell's first and several subsequent comments at that prompted details of his South American travels, including the revealing discussion of his band's mutual cultural exchange with the famous tango orchestras of Buenos Aires (Bushell and Montgomery 1977, 142).

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public.[17] Ronald Clifton Foreman Jr. (1968, 27) has commented on the renamings and displacements common in the earliest period of the recording industry's engagement with jazz:

> Borbee's Tango Orchestra recorded for Columbia on February 14, 1917. . . . When copies of Columbia 2233, "It's a Long, Long Time"/"Just the Kind of a Girl," reached music stores and record departments, merchants and customers discovered that the performing musicians were members of "Borbee's Jass Orchestra." The record label said that they were. Columbia's transformation of BTO into BJO was one of several alternatives available to any manufacturer who did not have the "real" jazz band at his service.

The shift was cosmetic, a simple change of name. Thanks to the culture industry and the building-block social categories underpinning assumptions about nation and race, "jazz" came to name the transnational phenomenon of Afro-diasporic popular music, as the national affiliation of African-American music "civilized" its savage thrill and enthroned it above the other Afro-American and Afro-diasporic musics simmering unstintingly in the cauldron of collaborative innovation.

The complex vectors structuring Afro-diasporic cultural production during this period—the splintering, shattering intersections of hierarchies among and within nations—mean that African-American and Afro-Brazilian popular forms emerged together neither coincidentally nor in jolly cooperation but in a contested conversation structured by the uneven power relationships between and among various social groups in many countries. Samba, maxixe, tango, and kindred forms are multiply compromised: erased by racism when aligned with the marginalized Afro-diasporic forms grouped under the rubric of jazz and erased by national hierarchies when perceived as other than "American."

Classification and Its Discontents

If representing maxixe as French or as tango is not simply a misrepresentation, it is unquestionably a strategy used in pursuit of specific ideological goals. Cultural forms offer perfect clay for representational struggles, for their inherent hybridities can be seen from so many directions. Perhaps it would have been possible, had power relations been appropriately configured, for maxixe to have prevailed in memory over tango or even jazz, without altering the actual music all that much.

17. While black listeners were more critical to the support and development of black popular musics, white consumers were better able to buy them, a situation that the music industry has shaped and responded to unimaginatively. See Foreman (1968).

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Classification is at heart a process of naming, that quintessential reflection of power.

Critics of cultural imperialism have long understood the implications of the Adamic act of naming. One line of defense in Brazil has rallied cultural nationalism to contest the ravages of absorption, a strategy both strengthened and compromised by its narrow conceptualization of culture. In the 1920s, for example, critics worked to police the borders of cultural forms rather than challenge those borders. The musicologist, novelist, folklorist, and poet Mário de Andrade, a key figure in the highly nationalist modernist movement centered in São Paulo in the 1920s, distinguished maxixe carefully from tango and habanera. He insisted that Brazilian tango was unrelated to the Argentine variety, as Brazilians' "primitive" adaptation of Cuban habanera, but that it had overcome and transformed the essential characteristics of that form as well. Maxixe was "a genuinely Brazilian urban dance, free of the Hispano-African character of the habanera" (de Andrade 1954, 4).

Similarly, Brazilian concert dancer and dance historian Eduardo Sucena recognized that maxixe "had evolved," when danced by Duque in Paris, but delineated the forms it had incorporated with great care. Duque's maxixe was "no longer the classic maxixe danced in [the carnival clubs of] the Fenians and the Democrats, but a new thing, entirely his. A folkloric dance incorporating fond memories of Brazil, a choreographic combination of our old dances, a mix of samba, lundu, jongo, caterete, fofa and batuque" (Sucena 1988, 123). In Sucena's mix, maxixe remained unquestionably "Brazilian." The pupil of Duque who taught his dances in New York would have been surprised to read such a list. She advertised Duque's "latest successes" as "Lulu Fado, French Tango, Danzon Cubano & Polka Bresilienne," later adding the "Boston Brazilienne," and the "Duque Polka"—all forms already transnational in multiple ways, revealing within themselves the process of exchange at the heart of cultural innovation.[18]

In a particularly audacious response to maxixe's erasure through its formative travels, prominent 1920s composer and bandleader Eduardo Souto called the fox-trot "nothing more than a vulgar imitation of our maxixe!" He credited Brazil with sparking the dance craze then sweeping Europe and the Americas, ridiculing the imitative attempts of his North American neighbors: "[T]he fox-trot appeared some fifteen years ago, more or less, when our maxixe was at the height of its success in Europe! The North Americans wanted to imitate *our* typical music and couldn't

18. Advertisements in the *New York Times* October 14, 1914, 15; December 13, 1914, RPA7.

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get past the issue. Look and you will see that they (with the fox-trot) began our syncopation, but couldn't manage to continue!" (cited in Efegê 1974, 46).[19] Souto's protestation mobilized an alternate cultural origin story in an attempt to reconfigure the social relations reflected in the vectors of the named and the forgotten.

Potent as they are as exhortations to nationalism, such attempts to isolate maxixe deny the dynamics of cultural contact in general, the interconnected evolution of Afro-diasporic culture in particular, and all the evidence about maxixe's travels. Often they must deny it quite actively, since nationalist denunciations of corrosion can be stark indexes of cultural shifts. This certainly holds true for maxixe. A Brazilian reporter fumed in 1912 over "falsified maxixe, translated into French, with steps from the *cake-walk,* the *can-can,* the Spanish *jota*" (cited in Efegê 1974, 148). Three years earlier, just ahead of the wave of nationalist orthodoxy that would make affirmations of mixture highly unpopular and difficult to articulate, a reporter for the *Gazeta de Notícias,* proud of maxixe's success in Paris, exulted: "*Maxixe* became an enchantment. *Maxixe* was learned and *maxixe* was transformed" (cited in Efegê 1974, 146). Inside Brazil as well, as a historian of this music discovered, maxixe evolved in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Rio de Janeiro in the 1920s, "an epoch in Brazil in which popular melodies were notably similar to New Orleans jazz." Bands popular at the time "used tuba, clarinet, trombone and drumset. The *maxixe,* for example, presented some trombone 'glissandos;' . . . in the manner of traditional jazz" (Vidossich 1975, 53–54, cited in Lis 1996, 69).

Interested in revindicating Brazil, cultural nationalists such as Souto, de Andrade, Sucena, and others attempted to rework national hierarchies without modifying interlocking structures of class, gender, and race. Indeed, they drew on those structures to produce their desired effect. De Andrade praised maxixe by distancing it from "Hispano-Africanisms," Sucena cast its "folkloric" additions as class mobility by gesturing to the shift from carnival clubs to Parisian cabarets, and Souto invoked widely held stereotypical assumptions about rhythmic Latins and stiff Anglo-Saxons to strengthen his contentions. These and similar critics were prevented by their investments in the social hierarchies of their day from see-

19. Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier wrote similarly of the Cuban form *manisero:* "The whole world has a record of our national *Manisero!* The *pick-ups* of the *boulevards* repeat it ceaselessly; Mistinguette sings it in the *Casino de Paris* it has invaded Berlin, Belgium, the Cote d'Azure. . . . [O]ne hears it in Palestine, near the wailing wall; it is played in Constantinople. . . . Our creole rhythms, lords of the market, multiply its manifestations. . . . The son, the rumba, the beguine! The Antilles, carried to Paris! In the very moment of the imperialist expositions, the colonial expositions, Lutecia becomes our colony" (cited in Quintero-Rivera 2000, 13 [italics in the original]).

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ing maxixe's broadest contexts. They missed the importance of racism to the erasure of Brazilian culture outside Brazil and could not understand how strict cultural classification fed the root of the problem they decried.

Students of U.S. popular music have encountered similar pitfalls. Scholars challenging the deprecation of Afro-American forms have often challenged racial definitions by engaging in musical classification. They have striven to portray black music as "American," and their success has been twisted into the most amnesiac, triumphalist patriotism.[20] They have insisted that their subjects *were* art, rather than trying to contest the abstraction of art from the violence of the material world (McClary and Walser 1994). These interventions were critical in their moment, and the scholars who launched them were insightful, dedicated social critics. Edward Berlin (1980, 185), for example, complained that the categories modern writers assign to music "tend to reflect subjective impressions and prejudices rather than musical analysis." Berlin, ragtime's keenest student, strove for the possibility of a purely musical analysis, untainted by "prejudices." A quarter-century ago, this was a good approach. In the cultural logic of the early twenty-first century, ignoring race is the cornerstone of the most reactionary racisms.

The thoughtful, forceful challenges to the coherence of racial categories increasingly audible in recent years offer students of popular music an opportunity to reconsider the fundamental musicological project of classification.[21] Classification attempts to discipline the results of the world's ceaseless meetings and mixtures, a dubious proposition in any context, with ever-imperfect, contingent, unstable results. Like racial categories, musical genres may appear cleanly distinct from certain vantage points, but wide and muddy border zones chasten those interested in boundary fixing. Both Brazilian and North American popular musics draw and flow from the quadrille, cakewalk, congo, *choro, lundu, umbigada,* habanera, *son,* polka, waltz, schottische, mazurka, march, and so on, in reiterations so complex and buried as to make jazz, samba, and related forms inextricably part of each other.

Chronological continuity poses barriers just as thorny to the project of classification. In the multiple simultaneous, uneven steps from *batuque* to *lundu* to maxixe to samba, one cannot set the exact point at which each set dance ceased being *lundu* and became maxixe, or when the transition to samba effectively occurred (Vasconcelos 1977, 25–26; Moura 1983, 54, 80; Lopes 1992, 41; Chasteen 1996; Fryer 2000, 154). Many observers cite

20. Parts of this critique are articulated in the comments of Robin D. G. Kelley and others on Ken Burns's documentary film *Jazz,* in "Watching 'Jazz'" (2001).

21. On sexual categories, see Judith Butler's (1993, 310) search for "rallying points for a certain resistance to classification and to identity as such."

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Nazareth as the composer whose work fixed the genre, but he called his compositions tangos. Observers today classify the pieces written by the brilliant composer Sinhô as maxixes as well; he called them sambas (Alvarenga 1982, 336; Fryer 2000, 157, 237n5).[22] The borders between maxixe and samba are particularly difficult to pin down, as are those between samba and its composite predecessors, including *choro*, *marcha*, and others (Chasteen 1996). One early commentator called samba a "dance keeping most of the characteristics of the Brazilian Maxixe but more ballroom-like," and a quicker, subtler, "hot" maxixe (Pierre 1931, 17). Another researcher has remarked about the composition (contentiously) designated the first samba, "Pelo Telefone," that it had a rhythm "which for a long time could be found here and there in various [other] compositions," a mix of *batuques*, Bahian folkloric forms, and Rio de Janeiro maxixe (Tinhorão 1966, 12).

Likewise, jazz and ragtime "freely interchanged" during the period of transition between the two, writes one jazz historian (Berlin 1980, 15); another reminds those who date jazz to the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's 1917 recordings that "a richer and more developed form of jazz was being played by black musicians in New Orleans at least ten years before that, and that the various tributaries which combined to form this music can be traced back to the Civil War" (Goddard 1979, 10).[23] From World War I to the 1920s, "the lines separating what we now call jazz, ragtime, Tin Pan Alley, vaudeville music, and other relevant forms were quite unclear. . . . [T]he current, rigorous differentiation of these musical forms is retrospective" (Evans 2000, 14). Like a sock patched until no single thread of its manufacture remains, musical continuity defies neat classification. When does one style end and the next begin?

Conclusion

Musical genres lack deep coherence, just as racial categories have no essential basis. Thus the classification of music and dance must find support outside a strictly musical realm, just as the definition of racial and national traits must draw on other logics (including the highly persuasive logic of violence). These are among the ritual, repetitive acts that constitute ideology's "language of consciousness," in Barbara Jeanne Fields'

22. Gérard Béhague (1999, 75) considers Nazareth's "Odeon" (1909) and "Apanhe-te cavaquinho" (1913) "classical models of an erudite expression of *choro*."

23. Historians of this tradition agree that there is "an unbroken line of development from the music of the early black composers of social dance . . . to the beginnings of notated ragtime." Floyd and Reisser (1980, 175, cited in Szwed and Marks 1988, 32); see also Sargeant (1975, 19–21).

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(1990) piercing explication. Both projects use comparisons, metaphors, and analogies; both borrow the apparent "naturalness" of other social categories, such as gender and class. What we must now understand is that they also reach for each other. Different classificatory projects provide each other with mutual support. By leading people through near-identical processes of imposing limits on the infinite, they provide rehearsals for each other. In naturalizing one set of limits through scientific or musical expertise, they offer the same alibis to the other.

This particular pair of classificatory projects is also connected directly, for music weaves all its social context into its phrases and themes. Through music and dance, people make race and nation, by performing, imitating, innovating, choosing partners, groups, and locations, claiming leisure and pleasure, and of course, by critiquing, attributing, defining, and just plain talking about it.[24] The corollary is equally true: race and nation shape music and dance. National borders and racially marked processes of subject-formation impose formative limits on where people live and with whom, the traditions they imbibe, the social qualities ascribed to them and which they embrace or reject, and so on. Inattention to the connections between these two types of classificatory projects, one targeting groups of people, one staking out cultural forms, reproduces the toxic mapping of culture onto race so insidiously pervasive today. Conceived as bodies of tradition and practice that adhere naturally to certain subgroups of people—as in "Brazilian culture," "American culture," "black culture," and so on—categories of culture often map themselves over, rather than displacing, essentialized notions of race. The increasingly acknowledged hybridity of jazz provides an opportunity to disrupt this essentializing mapping, which extends the legacies of the exoticist culture of empire into our day.

The Afro-diasporic traditions grouped today under the sign of "jazz" offer an opportunity to accept Marjorie Garber's (1992, 16) charge to theorize "category crisis" as the very "ground of culture itself." Students of music can choose to be as constructionist in their analyses of cultural forms as are the most sophisticated investigators of the "making" of blackness, whiteness, and other racial categories. Many have already embraced such an approach; Krin Gabbard's (1996, 8) fully social definition of jazz as "the music that large groups of people have called jazz at particular moments in history" provides one lead. If musicological or music-historical research is to follow this model, the social aspects of musical classification must comprise part of the material analyzed.

24. These musical negotiations are perfect examples of the habitus, Bourdieu's formulation of "necessity turned into virtue" in everyday acts, as he summarizes his concept in Bourdieu (1988, 782); see also Guillory (1998) and Radano (2000).

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In this light, we can reconsider maxixe's erasure, and why it matters that the traditions it helped shape do not bear its name. Certainly, musicians drew on maxixe and other Afro-diasporic threads to weave the tapestries of jazz that were and are essential to African-American culture and its perception and reception. Too, in welcoming Duque and maxixe for fun and profit, North American audiences and promoters added to the palate of cultural elements they used to negotiate the social categories that structured their everyday lives. They used maxixe and other foreign forms to constitute the exoticist culture of empire, to season the stone soup bubbling in the melting pot. Shuffling maxixe's affiliation with Brazil, Argentina, Europe, and Africa, while anchoring themselves in "America," they reiterated racial and national traits and hierarchies. Maxixe was one of the many small parts of these grand constructions, each of which gestured toward the whole. A club manager advertising tango at his *café chantant*, a fan humming, "his arm went round my waist . . . wouldn't stay in place . . . how shocking!" or a publisher typesetting song lists—all of these, respectively and together, invoked and recirculated French sophistication, Brazilian sensuality, and the privilege North Americans deserved to enjoy in consuming them all. Above all, they all also confirmed the validity of classification itself.

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