5 Suburbia and West Coast Jazz

In mid-1955, Dave Pell bought a three-bedroom ranch house in Encino, a suburb of Los Angeles about an hour north of the city in the San Fernando Valley. The tenor saxophonist was working six days a week and doing well—in fact, better than well. He was recording and playing concerts with Les Brown's big band, recording movie soundtracks, making jazz records, playing on local TV shows, and gigging around Hollywood at jazz clubs with his octet. Married, with three children, nine cats, and three dogs, Pell had fallen in love with the Encino house at the end of the cul-de-sac as soon as he saw it. It stood on a third of an acre, far from neighboring homes, and had a swimming pool out back.

"The first thing you had to have with a house like that was lots of cars," Pell said. "I had four of them—including a Corvette and a Cadillac. Every musician I knew had a home in the suburbs and several cars. It wasn't about car collecting or anything like that. Everyone in the music business had that many cars, because if one didn't start, you had to be able to hop into another one to get to the recording studio on time. If you weren't on time, you didn't get the call for work next time. Musicians were living the dream out here—the house, the cars, golf, the racetrack, family, swimming, the great weather. All of the top studio musicians were going through the same thing. We couldn't believe it. All you had to worry about was the traffic slowing you down."[1]

Pell, like a growing number of musicians on the West Coast in the early 1950s, was in the right place at the right time. California's suburbs were expanding at an unprecedented pace—and so was the music business. The movie industry, which needed musicians to record soundtracks, was booming, thanks in part to the end of Technicolor's monopoly over color film in February 1950 and the rise of Eastmancolor.[2] The movie indus-

try's rush to color was a response to the equally rapid rise of television—a perceived threat to moviegoing in the early 1950s. Amid these visual diversions, the LP was catching on fast with homeowners, who replaced their old 78-rpm record players with affordable three-speed phonographs. Almost overnight, demand for the new technology exceeded supply.[3]

For the white jazz musician who could compose, arrange, sight-read perfectly, and socialize comfortably on golf courses with the contractors and producers who did the hiring for studio jobs, Los Angeles was idyllic. "We woke up happy, drove around optimistic, and ended the day content," said Pell. "It only would make sense that the jazz many of us played would sound the way we felt. We were blessed. The musicians were all playing in harmony because we were having a great time. You could say that all of that spirit and feeling came out in the music that writers called West Coast jazz. If you knew the background to what was going on out here, you could hear on those records how much fun we were having."[4]

As Los Angeles expanded in the early 1950s, jazz on the West Coast mirrored the changes brought about by the city's expansion. Although many Los Angeles jazz musicians had embraced bebop in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the frantic form championed by Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker in New York made less and less sense to the white musicians who were leaving big bands and settling in Southern California. The competitive intensity and raging individualism of bebop forged in compressed urban environments was less relevant in Los Angeles—a region of sparkling newness, dreamy optimism, and open spaces.

Many of the jazz musicians who settled in Los Angeles and landed steady work in the movie, TV, and recording studios no longer had to scuffle to find work. In fact, just the opposite. Many had to organize their calendars and hire telephone answering services to field all the job offers. Home ownership, growing families, and increased responsibilities entailed some measure of risk aversion, commercial conformity, daily routines, and cookie-cutter systems for completing large volumes of work. In this intoxicating culture of long horizontal lines, rhythmic surf, lingering sunsets, prefabricated neighborhoods, curvy cars, cocky narcissism, drugstore stardom, and stubborn expectations of fame, a new modern jazz style emerged in the early 1950s. The sound suited its surroundings, placing a new emphasis on instrumental harmony, fluid execution, and polished teamwork. The level of individual musicianship, particularly in small groups, was extraordinary, and the collective results were often sleek and neatly resolved, relying less on the blues and more on new melodies and old standards cloaked in pleasing harmony and counterpoint.[5]

To the average ear, the sound of this music was less urgent and more layered, with lines coming and going in an organized flow, much like the region's emerging freeways. Horns in these small groups of four to ten musicians were the focus of attention, not the piano, bass, or drums. Early West Coast groups like the Gerry Mulligan Quartet in 1952 even dropped the piano completely. The music was often like a Bach fugue, with the instruments typically playing contrapuntally. Horns, for example, might play a melody line in tight formation and then break off into variations on the theme. Featured musicians took solos, but those tended to be short and were often exchanges with other instruments. Most important, the music was carefully arranged, with parts written out for the skilled musicians.

Instead of using the formula that had been perfected on the East Coast—where each horn in a small group played a solo accompanied only by the rhythm section—West Coast jazz increasingly featured a more scripted dialogue between the soloist and accompanying horns. By late 1952, new California record labels emerged to capture the results. The photographer William Claxton described the mood of that moment: "It was opening night at the Haig and I arrived early. After introducing myself to Gerry [Mulligan], I got permission to take pictures. The music was, of course, wonderful, and the place was packed. While I was shooting pictures, a young man introduced himself as Dick Bock. He was recording the group and he asked if he could see my pictures as soon as possible. I asked, 'Oh, do you have a record company?' He replied, 'No, but I will have one by morning.' He was so bright-eyed and optimistic. That was the beginning of Pacific Jazz Records."[6]

Pacific Jazz was soon joined on the West Coast by Contemporary, Good Time Jazz, Intro, Jazz West, HiFi Jazz, Imperial, Fantasy in San Francisco, and other small start-ups. Major labels, including RCA, Columbia, Decca and Capitol, also had offices in Los Angeles to scout and record artists while smaller labels like Prestige sent East Coast producers to the West Coast to mine the expanding pool of musical talent.

By 1955 West Coast jazz—with its emphasis on seductive melodies, counterpoint and brushy rhythms—was in full flower and attracted the attention of East Coast critics, many of whom at first expressed distaste for the laid-back sound.[7] Initially, the problem with West Coast jazz was that it looked different. Many West Coast jazz groups were made up of white musicians who had defected from big bands in California to take advantage of the weather and work. Before long, a new jazz-musician prototype emerged on the West Coast, assisted in part by the photographs on record covers and in jazz magazines. These lean, hungry-looking white

musicians, clad in white T-shirts and chinos, looked more like beachcombers than struggling urban artists. Their faces were enigmatic—seemingly relaxed but with eyes that revealed an edgy impatience and a troubled disposition. Eventually, this look was romanticized and exploited in the movies. "By 1955, the rush to produce jazz LPs and their cover art became so frantic, recording day and night, that we had to constantly invent new ways to sell these jazz artists visually," wrote the photographer William Claxton.[8]

On the East Coast and in Chicago, where many of the most influential jazz writers were based, jazz editors and record companies began to frame jazz on the West Coast as they might a prizefight or professional wrestling match. The thinking was that jazz fans would take sides, stimulating interest and sales. The musicians mostly played along with the "battle of the coasts"—even though many so-called West Coast jazz artists like Shorty Rogers and Shelly Manne were from the East Coast originally, while many so-called East Coast jazz artists, like Zoot Sims and Dexter Gordon, had moved there from the West Coast. Marketing a rivalry, whether or not one actually existed among musicians, had financial benefits but also unintended consequences. By the late 1950s, the constant comparisons, faux bickering and repeated references to West Coast jazz's "lightness" in print carried negative connotations with cultural and racial overtones. In addition, the stylistic battle left many East Coast jazz fans with the false belief that California's jazz style was somehow inferior.

Yet West Coast jazz did indeed have a distinctly gentler, rounder sound that successive waves of California jazz musicians exploited with great success in the 1950s. Where did this cooler, more harmonious sound come from? Why did the jazz style emerge when it did? And why did it flourish in Southern California and not in the suburbs of Texas, Colorado, or Florida? Clues can be found in the lifestyle of Los Angeles in the early 1950s and the region's environment in general. The historian Kenneth Jackson offers a hint in *Crabgrass Frontier:* "The space around us—the physical organization of neighborhoods, roads, yards, houses and apartments—sets up living patterns that condition our behavior."[9] The same can be said for music and art, and California's jazz artists were very much a product of their surroundings. It's no surprise that West Coast jazz's relaxed emphasis had much in common with California's landscape and lifestyle at the time.

"Los Angeles was bucolic, it was great," recalled Johnny Mandel, a composer, arranger, and musician who was born in New York, moved to California in 1934, traveled back to New York after his father's death in 1938, and returned to Los Angeles in 1954. "Many guys who came out

West with the big bands in the late 1940s decided to stay and start families here. By the early 1950s, I decided I didn't like New York at all. It was too crowded and noisy, and hard to think. But when I arrived in L.A., I found that many of the tenor saxophonists were too laid back. They all were trying to sound like Lester Young and Stan Getz, emulating an alto saxophone's range rather than the tenor. I thought the sound was light and missed the edge I had favored in New York and when I had played in Count Basie's band. Back in New York, Coleman Hawkins was still the sound most players admired.

"In L.A., I also missed the kind of close proximity to friends and other musicians that I had enjoyed in New York. Out here, I lived off in Hollywood for a long time, which was probably as tightly populated an area out here that one could find back then. I liked places that were right in town but didn't have the feeling of being in town. I liked small houses. I also wanted to be near where you could go and hear music. My metabolism was West Coast but my sensibility was still East Coast. Dexter Gordon was my man, and I spent a lot of time with the black players out here. I had just finished working with Basie in 1954, and the guys here were in awe and invited me right into their groups.

"But the segregation in Los Angeles was terrible. If you were a mixed couple, you'd always get pulled over by the police. I didn't have to deal with that, but many of my black friends did. That kind of thing went on with the police long after segregation was supposed to be illegal."[10]

The growth of Los Angeles' white suburbs—with their structure, materialism, and emphasis on the automobile, self-containment, and neighborly competitiveness—had a direct bearing on the sound of West Coast jazz. Just as New York's crushing density, noisy subways, and pressures of urban living had influenced bebop's development, Los Angeles' wild-eyed optimism and resort-like environment contributed to a new, more formulaic and airy, jazz style that matched the general mood.

WHITE PICKET FENCE

In the years immediately after World War II, Los Angeles became the fastest-growing city in the country. More veterans settled in the city and its outskirts than in any other region of the country.[11] As Los Angeles' outlying suburbs expanded, they became a destination for hundreds of thousands of middle-class families from the South and Southwest seeking employment and home ownership in the postwar economy. Significant population growth in Los Angeles actually had begun during the war,

when the federal government's program of military mobilization led to the rapid expansion of industrial companies.[12] The favorable climate allowed aircraft plants, shipbuilders, and other military-hardware companies to test and produce large orders year-round, twenty-four hours a day. A large percentage of the arms and soldiers needed to fight in the Pacific were then shipped out through the Port of Los Angeles.

But the rise of the defense industry worried elected officials in Los Angeles. Forecasts in 1942 predicted that after the war, military production would slow, reducing the number of employees needed, cutting jobs just as veterans were returning or relocating. In addition, waves of workers who had arrived in the area's unincorporated districts to work in military plants were severely straining public utilities and other resources such as highways and housing.

Throughout the country, the population was shifting en masse to suburban areas. Congress, fearing that mass unemployment and discontent at the end of the war would be compounded by a straining infrastructure, in 1942 provided funds for local and state governments to expand public works projects. Few cities were as ambitious as Los Angeles in embracing postwar planning. "The future position of Los Angeles among the great cities of the world will be largely determined by how we plan and how intelligently we put our plans into operation after the war," Los Angeles mayor Fletcher Bowron announced in 1943. The city's 1943 budget was increased from $77,000 to $133,000, and civic leaders began outlining a master plan for development that included surveys of population dispersal and industrial expansion, maps identifying shortages of community facilities, and land use proposals that in 1944 included a massive regional freeway system.[13]

When the war ended and the influx of job-seeking transplants to Southern California surged again, interconnected commercial interests joined to help the city adjust rapidly to physical expansion and accelerated population growth. New markets and submarkets were created in the region for prefabricated home building, car sales, shopping, construction, landscaping, and hundreds of new goods and services that offered households the promise of convenience and a comfortable future.[14] The two forces that led the way in shaping Southern California's development immediately after World War II were the real estate and auto industries. Larger populations needed affordable places to live. Once settled, they needed a way to get back and forth to work and shopping districts. The already crowded streets of downtown Los Angeles were inconvenient for housing and impractical for shopping. The vacant farmlands north, south, and east of the city were ideal for both.

There was little to contain the ballooning population of Los Angeles after World War II. With the passage of the G.I. Bill in 1944, federally subsidized zero-down, low-interest home loans were made available to millions of returning veterans. Land developers in Southern California were quick to capitalize on the demand for affordable housing by buying large expanses of farmland cheaply and holding down home costs by using prefabricated materials that standardized the look of the new homes and the plots on which they stood. West Coast equivalents of Levittown sprang up, offering residents a relaxed, modern suburban lifestyle at prices they could afford. Nearly sixty cities would be incorporated in the suburbs of Los Angeles from 1940 to 1960. In 1954 Lakewood, with its snaking mosaic of prefabricated homes, was typical of the new, primarily white and largely working-class, suburban municipality.[15]

The call for such communities began at the government level. In 1945, a state commission concluded that Los Angeles County needed to add at least 280,000 new homes from 1945 to 1949. "I appeal to you for help in connection with a critical housing shortage in Los Angeles," Mayor Bowron wrote to President Roosevelt in early 1945. "The situation is so serious that many persons including families of war workers and wives and children of servicemen and returning veterans are undergoing serious privations and many are in actual need."[16] The San Fernando Valley's population alone had jumped from 112,000 in 1940 to 165,000 in 1945. Spread over 212 square miles, the population growth burdened both public services and roads. Plans were needed for the physical and social development of organized communities. Two years earlier, in 1943, Catherine Bauer, vice president of the California Housing and Planning Association, had anticipated the problem, too, and offered a solution: "A major concern of post-war planning and housing must be the integration and protection of outlying communities and even the development of entirely new towns." The following year, the city's Housing and Planning Association called for socially desirable neighborhoods and new communities in outlying areas.

With housing development escalating after the war, the region needed roadways to ease suburban congestion and allow developers to build deeper into the regions surrounding Los Angeles. An elaborate system of freeways, supported by funds from the federal government, was planned to allow traffic to move fluidly with speed, safety, and efficiency.[17] The highways also needed to be built with room for further growth. Unlike most of the country's suburban regions, which were tied to the commercial centers of nearby cities by roads and rail, Southern California was too

expansive and was growing too fast to follow that model. From a practical standpoint alone, the suburbs of Los Angeles needed to be self-sufficient, and much depended on there being freeways to connect these new outlying communities without compelling drivers to enter downtown Los Angeles. "Back then, all of the suburbs ran into each other," said the saxophonist Dave Pell. "You really couldn't tell them apart."[18]

Southern California came relatively late to constructing highways, largely because before the war, there was no need. The country's first highway—the Long Island Motor Parkway in New York—was completed in 1911,[19] and the city repeated that model over the years, with multilane parkways designed exclusively for cars. All led into and out of New York, and all were initially designed and landscaped to give wealthy Long Island and Connecticut suburban residents a pleasant driving experience. By contrast, California's first expressway—the Arroyo Seco Parkway (later renamed the Pasadena Freeway)—opened in 1940,[20] with the Cahuenga Pass Freeway soon to follow. After the war, the efficiency of the German autobahn was adapted as a model by California's engineers, who developed the region's highways for maximum speed and the rapid delivery of traffic to and from the region's communities, shopping centers, and business districts. The suburbs were linked to each other but not to the center of Los Angeles, creating a new ring of commercially independent communities around the city.

Much of the enthusiasm for highway development in Los Angeles came from the auto industry's decades-old efforts to promote buses and cars over rapid rail transit systems and streetcars. Beginning in 1926, General Motors operated a national subsidiary jointly with Firestone, Standard Oil, and Mack Truck that bought up failing streetcar systems nationwide and replaced them with networks of GM-made buses.[21] Nowhere was this strategy more successful than in Los Angeles in the late 1940s, where streetcars and tracks clogged already busy streets in the city's downtown area. As the construction of affordable homes around Los Angeles increased, and suburbs expanded in the late 1940s, cars and highways were needed to ease congestion. Whether or not General Motors conspired to ensure the growth of surface transportation to sell millions of cars, residents of the region's outlying areas had no way to get around except by car. A suburban rail transit system in and out of Los Angeles would have been impractical given the vast scope of the suburbs, the network of suburban employers, and the commercial self-sufficiency of the communities around the city. The car provided the convenience and privacy that a rail transit system would not have been able to duplicate.

All of this suburban growth left downtown Los Angeles struggling. Retailers lost business in the late 1940s as white suburban residents found what they needed near their homes and avoided the city entirely. Meanwhile, those white customers who remained moved away eventually as more distant communities were developed and homes became available. Los Angeles had once contemplated a mass transit system to link the suburbs to the city, but the idea was scrapped in 1949, largely because of its cost.[22] To fund an elaborate rapid rail system, the city would have had to borrow money from residents by issuing bonds. The highways of Los Angeles, by contrast, were fully financed by taxes on gasoline and tires.[23]

By 1952, millions of suburban residents in Southern California owned new homes and cars. The virtues of the lifestyle they enjoyed—a tidy home, nuclear family, large local parks, highway driving, access to the beaches—were promoted repeatedly in advertising, television shows, and movies. The whole notion of what a suburb was supposed to be—a community located within commuting distance of an older urban center where companies with job opportunities were located—was changing. Downtown Los Angeles was viewed increasingly as an urban dinosaur. Southern California's new suburban culture, by contrast, represented a futuristic, self-contained, and sanitized environment in which residents were able to commute to work, shop, and enjoy country life from their cars—without having to encounter society's problems or the disenfranchised.

From a white jazz musician's perspective, Los Angeles was more than just a constellation of small suburban communities. Hollywood and other exurban parts of the city were the nerve centers of the movie, TV, and record industries. For highly trained musicians, the studios of these enterprises offered steady well-paid commercial work during the day, and the area's jazz clubs offered plenty of work at night. The recording studios, like the suburban developers, had aggressive production goals and deadlines, all of which necessitated musical formulas, discipline, and perfection. Jazz, like the prefabricated homes and mass-produced housing developments, needed new models and systems of execution to accomplish the heavy workloads. But Los Angeles hadn't always been dominated be white jazz musicians.

JAZZ HEADS WEST

Though Los Angeles in the first half of the twentieth century wasn't a breeding ground for jazz styles the way New Orleans, Chicago, Kansas

City, and New York were, the California city had enormous enthusiasm for jazz early on. As a Pacific port, Los Angeles attracted early railroad lines, and its mild climate and open spaces lured industry and early moviemakers. Where commerce succeeds, entertainment and nightlife quickly follow, and Los Angeles was no exception.

At least one member of the Original Creole Orchestra—one of several bands that would originate New Orleans jazz and become the first New Orleans jazz band to tour outside the South—had lived in Los Angeles in 1907. What's more, the Original Creole Orchestra itself was formed in Los Angeles, giving performances there as early as 1911. During World War I, Jelly Roll Morton, jazz's self-proclaimed inventor, toured Los Angeles and promoted shows in the city. Ada "Bricktop" Smith, Edward "Kid" Ory, and Joe "King" Oliver had all performed in Los Angeles by 1921.[24]

As the California film industry grew in the 1920s, so did the popularity of jazz in Los Angeles, particularly in the clubs along Central Avenue, the main thoroughfare in the city's black neighborhood. Silent-movie stars frequented many of these clubs, patronizing establishments like the Quality Night Club to hear the blues shouter Jimmy Rushing in 1923.[25] Starting in 1927, with the advent of sound movies, the music industry in Los Angeles expanded significantly because studios needed high-quality instrumentalists to record music. Thousands of musicians displaced from movie theaters by talkies also arrived in search of movie-studio work.

During the Depression, Los Angeles' economy rebounded modestly, thanks to the movie industry and demands for entertainment. As a result, the city attracted a growing number of black jazz musicians. But musicians who were attracted to Los Angeles weren't just itinerant musicians hustling gigs. Black families with professional musician pedigrees—like the Youngs, Woodmans, and Royals—had relocated to Los Angeles with hopes that their children would become musicians and entertainers. Fresh waves of black jazz musicians from the Midwest and Southwest moved to the city once the swing era began in 1935, following Benny Goodman's successful appearance at Los Angeles' Palomar Ballroom.

Throughout the decade, the jazz-club scene flourished along Central Avenue, nicknamed the "Brown Broadway" by a columnist for the *California Eagle*, Los Angeles' major black newspaper,[26] for its dozens of clubs. During World War II, Los Angeles became a winter base for many popular big bands. Government restrictions on gas, rubber, and truck and car parts made road tours by bands more difficult and inefficient. In addition, the American Federation of Musicians' ban on recording by its members, starting in 1942, further reduced work opportunities, because there were few

newly issued recordings for them to promote on the road. To keep busy, the major bands that settled in Los Angeles made films, performed up and down the California coast, and appeared often on the radio.

After World War II, as veterans settled in the area and the economy started to slow, the ballroom business declined considerably and, with it, the demand for dance-band appearances. The trend at first favored black musicians who performed at the small clubs along Central Avenue, playing mostly bebop that they had picked up by transcribing records by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and other East Coast artists. But in the late 1940s many of the better white musicians who had traveled to California with the big bands began to quit major orchestras rather than go back out on the road. Touring from town to town across the country had always been a harsh life, and many musicians no longer found the trips appealing. A growing number were able to find work playing in small groups, while those who had served in the war took advantage of the G.I. Bill to study formally with private teachers and at local schools.

At the same time, the demand for highly trained arrangers, composers, and musicians who could play two or more instruments and sight-read music intensified with the popularity of LPs and the movies. After Columbia and RCA settled their differences over the 33⅓-rpm speed of long-playing records in 1950, new record companies emerged in Los Angeles to record local jazz artists. Smaller groups like quartets, quintets, sextets, septets, and octets were ideal for such purposes; they not only were less expensive for the fledgling labels to produce but also could sound as dynamic as a big band with the right arrangements.

But quitting a big band to live in Los Angeles didn't immediately lead to record contracts or movie studio work for new arrivals. To protect union musicians who already lived and recorded in Los Angeles from the rising tide of transplants, the union enforced work restrictions. Newly arrived musicians had to establish residency for six months before they were issued the all-important union membership card.[27] Without the card, finding work in the city's recording studios was impossible. Nightclubs were among the only places that employed these itinerant musicians. "When I decided to move to L.A. in 1954, I knew that I would have to transfer out of the New York local of the musicians' union and into the L.A. local, which wasn't easy to do," said Johnny Mandel. "When you moved to L.A., the union wouldn't let you work as a musician for your first three months. Then when that period expired, you could only work in clubs for the next three months. The studios were off limits. This system was set up to keep musicians who relocated to L.A. from taking studio jobs away

from those who were already here working. So for the first three months I worked as a shipping clerk at the Southern California Music Company."[28]

West Coast jazz's contrapuntal sound is often dated to the summer of 1952, when Gerry Mulligan recorded with his pianoless quartet featuring the trumpeter Chet Baker, the bassist Bob Whitlock, and the drummer Chico Hamilton. But origins of the harmony-driven West Coast sound can be found earlier, especially in the recordings of Lester Young, whose dry, airy, and relaxed sound was the dominant influence on many West Coast tenor saxophonists. Other influences included the arrangements of Jimmy Giuffre and Shorty Rogers for Woody Herman's orchestra in 1947, Gerry Mulligan and Gil Evans' charts for Claude Thornhill in the same year, the Dave Brubeck Octet of 1949, and the Miles Davis Nonet of 1949 and 1950. All these musicians prized harmony and space as much as individual solos. The small-group sound that emerged on the West Coast was a crystallized extension of these trends. "Our music definitely had a different sound," said the bassist Howard Rumsey, who managed the Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach, one of the most popular jazz clubs in the Los Angeles area in the 1950s. "But it wasn't as laid back as most critics thought at first. The only difference between us and the bebop players was that we played at the Lighthouse and other guys were in Chicago and New York. West Coast jazz just sounded happier."[29]

L.A.'s Race Problem

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Los Angeles was one of the most segregated cosmopolitan areas of the country. Though Los Angeles during this period did not enforce stringent segregation by law, as in Southern states, the city and its suburbs took aggressive steps to ensure that the new suburbs would be for whites only. The prohibitive mechanisms were real estate covenants and a police department that often used harassment to discourage integration and even the free movement of blacks through the largely white areas outside Los Angeles.

"In my experiences, the Los Angeles–area housing conditions for blacks and dark-skinned Latinos were the most segregated area in the western part of the country, including Las Vegas and most of Nevada," said the jazz bassist and manager John Levy, who represented George Shearing, Cannonball Adderley, Ahmad Jamal, Ramsey Lewis, Nancy Wilson, Wes Montgomery, and other jazz artists starting in the 1950s. "Black musicians who traveled from the East and midwestern cities to play engagements in

the Los Angeles area could not live in the city's major hotels—no matter how popular those artists were. Even in the late 1950s, stars like Sammy Davis Jr., Harry Belafonte, and Lena Horne had to stay in hotels in the black ghetto areas of Los Angeles. Nat Cole, at the top of his career, had problems buying his home in the segregated Hancock Park area of Los Angeles."[30]

The black residents of Los Angeles had always been hemmed into a narrow zone south of the city's downtown. Although no laws on the books prohibited blacks from owning property outside their Los Angeles neighborhoods, real estate covenants—written agreements between white residents of communities to rent and sell their property only to whites—were standard practice, making it impossible for blacks to gain access to homes in white suburban communities. Such covenants had existed in Los Angeles since the early twentieth century, when black migration had increased. But when the Supreme Court, in 1919, overturned a lower court's ruling that challenged the legality of restrictive residence rules, these restrictive covenants—originally used to deny housing to Mexicans, Asians, and Jews—were used to bar blacks too.[31] Such practices forced existing black residents and the twenty-four thousand black migrants who had relocated to Los Angeles during the Depression into the few areas of the city where decent black housing was already hard to come by.

By 1940, some fifty thousand blacks lived in Los Angeles, and the clubs along Central Avenue attracted interracial audiences to the heart of the strip, from 41st Street, where the Dunbar Hotel and Club Alabam stood, to 108th Street, where the Plantation Club was located.[32] Movie stars, sports figures, and other progressive celebrities were frequent visitors, often traveling in interracial groups. Because the city's clubs in white neighborhoods during the early 1940s prohibited black patrons, Norman Granz, a white music producer and concert promoter, organized Sunday afternoon interracial jam sessions on Central Avenue.[33]

With the onset of World War II, blacks once again migrated to California, where factories operated around the clock, and blacks and women were hired to fill the shifts. In 1942, California Shipbuilding and Consolidated Steel in Los Angeles hired more than six thousand blacks to meet its production quota.[34] But unfair labor practices based on race continued. Blacks were typically denied union membership while working in manufacturing plants or were encouraged to form subsidiaries of more powerful white unions. Blacks were also routinely given the most menial and dangerous tasks. And for those blacks who achieved some level of economic prosperity, real estate covenants still restricted housing opportunities.

In 1948, the Supreme Court decided in *Shelley v. Kraemer* that real estate covenants were a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment and judicially unenforceable—meaning they couldn't be enforced by the courts. But the decision did not explicitly state that it was against the law to establish such covenants or that they could not be privately enforced. As a result, restrictive covenants continued to dictate where minorities could live. Not until 1953, in *Barrows v. Jackson*—a year before *Brown v. Board of Education*—did the Supreme Court deliver a final blow to restrictive covenants, deciding that an individual could not be sued for damages for failing to observe an illegal covenant.[35] But even the Supreme Court's decision did little to purge the practice. Here's how suburban Los Angeles realtors barred minorities from white neighborhoods in 1954, according to Becky Nicolaides's *My Blue Heaven* (2002).

"The Stevens family [a white family] lived one block below the South Gate border in Lynwood. They decided to sell their house. They listed the property with realtor Henry Beddoe, a member of the South Gate Realty Board. Soon, the Portugals, a Mexican family friendly with the Stevens, decided to buy it and commenced escrow negotiations. The Portugals and Stevens reached a verbal agreement, sealing the transaction. When word got out that the Portugals were Mexican, neighbors sent a letter to the Realty Board demanding the sale be stopped. Immediately, other realtors brought customers around to see the property and the transaction was delayed.

"Merle Stevens, who insisted on his right to sell to the Portugals, was disgusted with the practice. 'They were trying to substitute a buyer. . . . I thought they were stalling for time in hopes that the Portugals would get disgusted and not take the place.' Beddoe [the realtor] ultimately stood by the wishes of his client and sold the property to the Portugals. At this point, the South Gate Realty Board came down hard and fast. It fined both the buying and selling realtors $310.85 each and denied Beddoe his commission. When Beddoe refused to pay the fine, he was expelled from the Realty Board. The board claimed he had violated Article 35 of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, which read, 'A realtor should not be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character who will clearly be detrimental to property values in a neighborhood.' The expulsion denied him access to the multiple listing service, an indispensable tool for realtors, and it tainted his professional reputation. A 'whispering campaign' against him alleged that his true intention was to 'open the gates to Negroes.' Through professional pressures like this, realtors maintained control over the local housing market and sustained racial covenants long after their invalidation by the courts."[36] Such deeply entrenched seg-

regationist practices would not be halted until the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

In the early 1950s segregationist practices also affected Los Angeles' black and white jazz musicians. Until the mid-1950s all the musicians' unions in big cities—except Detroit and New York—were segregated. In Los Angeles, Local 767 was the black division of the American Federation of Musicians; Local 47 was the white branch. The white local had fifteen thousand members while the black local, about eight hundred, with the dues collected from those relatively few members barely sufficient to run the offices. While the pay scale for the black local was the same as that of the white local, under the AFM's national rules, the black local was dependent on its white counterpart for advice and virtually all other matters, including employment opportunities for its members. Such dependence made the black local little more than a rubber stamp for the white local's directives.[37] "How the hell are you going to do anything?" asked the jazz pianist-arranger Marl Young in *Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles.* "They're out there where the jobs are; you're over here where nothing is. And besides, every time [the black union] wanted to do something, they would call the white union for advice."[38]

There even was disparity between facilities. "The white union's office was downtown on Georgia Street, and then they built a new building on Hollywood and Vine," according to the saxophonist-arranger Buddy Collette, one of the first black musicians hired in 1948 to play in a television orchestra. "The black union was on Central Avenue and 17th Street. The white union had more power. The black union had to ask the white union if they could take certain jobs."[39] In 1952 the black union proposed an amalgamation—a merging of the two unions. The officials in the white Local 47 resisted a merger, but Local 767 pushed the union's leaders to put the issue to a vote by Local 47's membership. "We had people like George Kast and Gail Robinson and others who were going to meetings and saying, 'This is the right thing to do. Why, the democratic thing to do is let the membership vote,' " said Collette.[40] In December 1952 the merger was put before Local 47's members, and the amalgamation was approved by 233 votes. After winning AFM approval, the two locals officially merged April 1, 1953.[41] Despite the merger, however, there were still unresolved issues between the black musicians and the white contractors who did the hiring for lucrative recording, movie, and TV studio work. Officials at union headquarters began making notations on the cards on file, identifying a musician as white or black. Circles appeared around black members' names, instruments, or phone numbers—ensuring that most of the studio jobs phoned in went to white musicians.[42]

Though a handful of black jazz musicians like Ray Brown, Buddy Collette, Red Callender, and Plas Johnson worked consistently in the Los Angeles studios, fewer found steady work in the lucrative movie studios, and all were prevented from moving into the newly developed and largely white suburbs. As more blacks improved their standard of living and became middle class, many began to move into previously white areas north of Wilshire Boulevard that whites had abandoned to live father away in the suburbs. The departure of upwardly mobile blacks from core black neighborhoods of Los Angeles drained leadership from the Central Avenue community.[43]

The merger of the black and white union locals also resulted in more black musicians driving to work in parts of the city and suburban areas outside their core black neighborhoods. The Los Angeles Police Department responded by restricting integration and travel by blacks through these areas. William Parker, the police chief of Los Angeles in the 1950s, stepped up the practice of racial profiling and the harassment of interracial couples and integrated clubs. The wartime economy had attracted black migrants from the South, pushing the nonwhite population of Los Angeles up by more than 116 percent while the population as a whole increased by more than 30 percent. After the war more than 170,000 blacks lived in Los Angeles, 9 percent of the city's population.[44]

Black arrests in Los Angeles after the war grew disproportionately as the police department—to support its practices—attempted to connect race and crime. From 1945 to 1949, blacks made up 10 percent of the city's population yet accounted for a third of the city's "reported" homicides, rapes, and narcotics violations; black prostitution and vice made up 40 percent of the city's "reported" total. A third of traffic violation arrests involved blacks, according to the official data. "The demand that the police cease to consider race, color, and creed is an unrealistic demand. Identification is a police tool, not a police attitude," Chief Parker insisted.[45]

"On any weekend night on Central Avenue in the 1940s, you could probably see more blinking red lights than on any other thoroughfare in the country," wrote the pianist Hampton Hawes in his autobiography *Raise Up Off Me*. "It was only cops jamming brothers—the same cops who'd come into the after-hours clubs for their cut. . . . The night Billy Eckstine came by Jack's Basket Room to hear me and Wardell Gray play, he wasn't with a white woman but he was in possession of something equally suspicious: a new Cadillac with out-of-state plates. They opened the trunk to make a search. He tried to explain the New York plates by showing them identification but they still took him away, and B. wasn't

able to make it down to Central Avenue until several hours later. Those were dangerous years; it had to be dedication and love of the music that kept those people coming on the scene, subjecting themselves to that kind of abuse."[46]

Police harassment of whites patronizing Central Avenue clubs also increased in the late forties, and the number of arrests along the black entertainment strip far exceeded the number in Hollywood, a white area that also featured a concentration of jazz clubs. The bassist David Bryant said, "All the stars and all the [white] people would come over to Central Avenue and listen to the music, man. [The police] didn't like the mixing, so they rousted people around and stuff, and that's how they closed it up."[47] The trumpeter Art Farmer agreed: "The police, as far as they were concerned, the only thing they saw anytime they saw any interracial thing going on was crime. It was a crime leading to prostitution and narcotics."[48]

Little by little, Central Avenue lost its audience. Migration by middle-class blacks to more affluent black communities reduced patronage by black audiences. Police harassment, increased drug busts, and relocation by whites to more distant suburbs also took a toll. "The police started really becoming a problem," said Farmer. "I remember you would walk down the street and every time they'd see you they would stop you and search you."[49]

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Los Angeles Police Department and the city government had succeeded in squeezing off Central Avenue's nightlife economy. One by one, the clubs closed as jazz fans headed west to the white-owned clubs of Hollywood and the beach communities. West Coast jazz emerged into this racially charged climate. Jazz musicians and record producers of the period, for their part, were largely blind to racial differences. "The musicians had no problem with each other, although the musicians' union was segregated until 1953," John Levy said. "The segregated union system resulted in a lack of opportunities for black musicians to get work in the movie, television, and recording industries. The exceptions were a small number of exceptionally talented musicians. The same was true for arrangers and composers like Benny Carter and Phil Moore, who in most cases ghostwrote for white arrangers with big names and weren't given credit for their work."[50]

Jazz on the West Coast increasingly was leaving out many black musicians. The segregationist environment severely reduced opportunities for black musicians, many of whom relocated to New York in the early 1950s. Those who remained in Los Angeles did so because they were skilled enough to find work in record studios and had personalities that allowed

them to network easily with the white contractors who controlled the movie-studio jobs. "Even when banks began loaning to blacks, the attitudes were still not welcoming," Levy said. "The social and economic climate was not conducive to most creative young black musicians of that period. Therefore new music that was created on the West Coast in the 1950s was done mainly by the large number of white musicians who remained."[51]

According to Buddy Collette, "During that period, the black players almost weren't here. They didn't make very many recordings compared to the white musicians. Most were old-school players who played bebop, a sound that was increasingly out of style. Bebop was like wildfire for a while, but then the music changed. West Coast jazz came about during a period when record companies like Contemporary and Pacific Jazz helped to establish it. One thing led to another."[52] While clubs like the Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach welcomed black artists, the number of them playing at the club south of Los Angeles began to drop off in the early 1950s. "You didn't see too many blacks around there at the time," said Collette, who played at the club. "A few would come down to the Lighthouse but most stayed away. It wasn't the club's fault. The owner and Howard [Rumsey] were great, and all of the musicians loved each other. But blacks just didn't feel comfortable going there. You were in a territory where you didn't feel you belonged, and the police were quick to pull you over. If you told your friends, 'Oh, we went to the Lighthouse yesterday,' your friends would say, 'Oh, is that okay for us to go there?' As the music developed out there, black players chose not to be included. Teddy Edwards, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Chris, Frank Morgan, Harold Land, and others used to play locally. But they all left."

When the Los Angeles police stopped blacks in white neighborhoods, car occupants had to be careful. "The police usually wanted to know what you were doing there," Collette said. "Then they'd ask if you were planning to rob someone. You had to know how to handle set-up questions like that. If you became outraged and argumentative, you got into worse trouble. All of this operated in a world separate from the white jazz musicians, who were great. All had extensive playing experience with black musicians, and for them color wasn't an issue. Much depended on your talent and disposition. The guy who hired me for TV in 1948, Jerry Fielding, was white. I personally never felt racial pressure or animosity. I grew up in Central Gardens, one of the few areas in the city where people of all races lived. So when I started working in the studios, musicians asked me if I felt uncomfortable. I said, 'No, I grew up like this.' After a while, the white musicians felt better, too. I was just likeable—a trait I learned from

my mother. She didn't dislike anyone unless someone did something to her. She never referred to whites as 'those white people.' "

WEST COAST'S RELAXED SOUND

When you ask most West Coast jazz musicians about the distinct sound found in California in the 1950s, their first reaction is to deny that there was such a sound. Many also insist that there wasn't much difference between what the musicians in Los Angeles were developing and what was going on in New York. But you sense immediately that the reaction is defensive and that it comes from a feeling of being cast as creatively inferior. For years, West Coast jazz had been stigmatized by East Coast jazz writers and even some West Coast musicians who called it lightweight and lacking gut heat.

"And those writers were right," said Johnny Mandel. "Most West Coast jazz sounded like the jazz in New York but with no balls. There were a few guys on the edge—like Gerry Mulligan, Bob Cooper, and others. But most of it was too relaxed. I never got behind it. West Coast jazz didn't sound great to me. Jazz out here [in Los Angeles] was quite good when there was a large black element in South Central Los Angeles. But many of the musicians had left for New York because there wasn't much opportunity for them in L.A.

"Part of the overall problem out here was that people didn't hang out the way they did in New York," Mandel continued. "Back in New York, black and white jazz musicians always hung out together. That practice was way ahead of the laws that were eventually passed enforcing integration. All the good jazz-bar hangouts in New York performed a social and intellectual role in the 1940s and 1950s. You got your jobs there. Messages were left there for you. You shared stories, and you argued with people there. They were town centers for all musicians.

"By contrast, in Los Angeles, everyone was living in their cars," Mandel said. "You had to drive forever to get anywhere. That detachment didn't have a positive impact on you. People were by themselves too much and not communicating with each other. To produce energetic work, you have to hang. I used to be part of Gil Evans's group with Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan, and all of those guys in the late forties in New York. To be with your mates all the time was a great thing, and I missed that social interaction when I moved to Los Angeles. By not hanging out, the only time musicians saw each other was in the studios. And those interactions were always about work and work opportunities, not socializing. As a result,

little by little, jazz out here became more studied and more formulaic. Everyone who worked in the studios was in a rush to move on to the next job, which could be spaced just a few hours apart. Musicians didn't linger to catch up. It wasn't part of the culture. No one had the time or the inclination."[53]

One of the hotbeds of West Coast Jazz was the Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach, where white and black musicians played. "In January 1949 I started my Sunday afternoon jam sessions there," said the bassist Howard Rumsey, who managed the club. "I had gotten the idea from something I had seen when I played with Stan [Kenton] back in the early 1940s. There were several clubs on Central Avenue where black musicians played. In these clubs, I had seen people just sitting and listening to a small jazz group rather than dancing. Sitting and listening was a new concept out here in the early 1940s. Everything was about dancing then. The image of people listening to the music stuck in my head. I thought the concept might work at the Lighthouse in the '50s."[54]

Most of the musicians who played regularly at the Lighthouse increasingly were white veterans of the big bands. "Many musicians who came to Los Angeles came with a big band that was scheduled to play the Palladium," the tenor saxophonist Dave Pell recalled. "You'd look around at the great weather, the houses, and the lifestyle, and you quit the band you were in. On off days, we'd play golf and then go to the Santa Anita racetrack. It was heaven. Soon, full bands didn't bother traveling to Los Angeles. Bandleaders that came out here would just bring a lead trumpet player, a lead alto saxophonist, and a drummer. The rest of the band they could fill out easily with local musicians when they arrived. It was more cost-efficient for them and great for us. I must have worked for fifty bands that came through in the 1950s—and I took all the jobs."[55]

Many West Coast musicians began using contrapuntal voicings in their compositions and arrangements, especially for sextets and octets. "The musicians who played at the Lighthouse were playing a new sound—all those lines and harmonies," Rumsey said. "These musicians included Shorty Rogers, Milt Bernhart, Bob Cooper, Hampton Hawes, Jimmy Giuffre, Frank Patchen, Shelly Manne, and others. Most had left the big bands that settled here in the winters. These musicians were working off their card—meaning they couldn't work officially until they had their union membership card, which required six months of residency. Many of the new guys needed work, so I threw them casual gigs at the Lighthouse, which the union allowed. These informal gigs paid them a few bucks and kept their chops in shape while waiting for the six months to elapse."[56]

Arrangements often were a necessity, because many of the musicians were playing regularly in the studios and getting together only briefly for club dates and recording sessions. "To keep up with people, you'd either be on regular phones all the time fielding jobs or you were in studios or playing at clubs," Mandel said. "That's how you networked, as they say today. Everyone liked jazz more then, so there was plenty of arranging work available, and I was taking all the work I could get, including writing for TV and Las Vegas entertainers."[57]

Though Gerry Mulligan downplayed his role in the development of West Coast jazz, he had a lasting impact on the style during his short stay in Los Angeles. "Gerry worked at the Haig in '52," Buddy Collette recalled. "The guy working the door was Dick Bock, who eventually would start the Pacific Jazz label and recorded Gerry's band. People loved Gerry's roving baritone sound. Gerry could write that way. In a small band, the roving thing plays a trick on the ear. It fills out the empty spaces, making you think there are more musicians than there really were. Gerry also had Chico brushing a certain way. It was a quieter, cooler style. Chetty's sound on the trumpet and Carson Smith, the bass player, also was quieter. They played softer and the mikes picked them up."[58]

Chico Hamilton remembers meeting Gerry Mulligan in 1952. "Gerry used to hang out at this club where I was playing with Charlie Barnet. Gerry had just come to the West Coast, and he was on his ass, man. He didn't have nothing. He used to hang out at the bar. We met on a break and became friends. I took him home a few times and my wife made him dinner. "The next thing I knew, he called me and said he wanted to start a quartet. Gerry and the quartet got together to rehearse in my living room. I thought right away that these guys were great players. We just happened to be four guys in the right place at the right time. Hell if I know how this stuff happens. When Mulligan told me there wasn't going to be a piano in the group, that wasn't a problem. But Gerry didn't want me to use my bass drum. And that's when we went to war [*laughs*]. I finally went out and got myself a small bass drum and converted it into a bass drum. Gerry didn't want any bass drum at all. But I told him I needed something there for my right foot, to keep my rhythm. My timing depended on it. I'm still using a smaller bass drum today. There was no big idea here. The small drum simply fit better on the bandstand at the Haig [*laughs*].

"I played firm and light, and Gerry loved my style. Gerry was more than happy with the sound. We got along, although we went to war every now and then. Our friction was never about the music. Mostly stuff about our different outlooks. As an African-American, there was never any

friction playing with the Gerry Mulligan Quartet. I played with a whole lot of white groups before Gerry. When I left the quartet, the sound went with me. Gerry never had that sound on drums again. The group didn't have the same sound after that."[59]

In 1953, the bebop drummer Max Roach traveled to Los Angeles and played at the Lighthouse. "Max was happy in L.A.," the alto saxophonist Herb Geller said. "He wasn't getting as many gigs in New York as he would have liked at the time. It was really great to have him out there. There weren't many black musicians in the studios or at the clubs in Hollywood or at the beaches. Howard Rumsey at the Lighthouse was very liberal and would have Hampton Hawes, Sonny Criss, Teddy Edwards, and other black artists on the bandstand. The lineup would change from day to day, especially on Sundays. Everyone always tried to play their best."[60]

The new West Coast sound came into being just as record technology was changing on the West Coast. "My cousin Roy Hart co-founded Pacific Jazz with Dick Bock in the summer of 1952," Dave Pell said. "Phil Turetsky was their engineer. They didn't have a studio yet, so they made demos at Phil's house. Roy owned a popular drum store called Drum City, on Santa Monica Boulevard. When I told him about Gerry and Chet at these jam sessions I had attended, Roy got them, along with Chico Hamilton and bassist Bob Whitlock, booked into the Haig."[61]

By 1953, albums recorded in Los Angeles began to be marketed as a new West Coast sound, and record companies began to tout the distinction between the jazz recorded in Los Angeles and jazz recorded in New York. Among the first albums to stress the new jazz style was Shelly Manne's *West Coast Sound*, recorded for Contemporary in April 1953. And one of the earliest rivalry albums was *East Coast–West Coast Scene*, recorded in September 1954 for RCA. One side of the LP featured a West Coast group led by Shorty Rogers; the other side featured an East Coast ensemble fronted by Al Cohn. "Part of the East Coast–West Coast jazz feud really started with the A&R guys," said Creed Taylor, who produced jazz records for Bethlehem in New York during this period. "Back then, the major labels had an East Coast producer and one on the West Coast. Both were competing for promotion dollars, exposure, and dominance."[62]

Though many West Coast musicians had started as bebop players, the sound mellowed quickly. "Shorty [Rogers] was doing a lot of writing then," Dave Pell said. "When he decided to arrange for my octet, he wanted to write differently than the way he did for his group, the Giants, which had more of a bop feel. So we cheated. We took the sound of the Les Brown

band and the style of writing he favored, and we adapted it for our octet. Les liked to have all the trumpets with mutes, trombones open and a guitar underneath playing single notes. When I was in the band, Shorty came to me and said, 'You know what you should do? Instead of the full brass section, take one muted trumpet, one trombone and a guitar and create the sound in miniature.' So we did, and it worked. We simulated the sound of Les Brown with eight pieces, but it sounded much bigger."[63]

Did East Coast musicians fit comfortably into the West Coast jazz scene? "Most New York jazz musicians who came out here told me they didn't like it," Pell said. "Life in Southern California was very different from East Coast urban living. The only one who came out from the East Coast and fit right into the scene was Ray Brown. He loved it and worked steadily here. He was a golfer and fit right in. If you weren't on a call for a recording, you were on the golf course. East Coast guys would come out and not understand why they had to play golf with the contractors—the guys who decided who would be hired for recording sessions. You had to be friends with these guys, and golf made that possible.

"Many East Coast guys who weren't used to this kind of functional, structured life didn't get it. They thought we were working just to pay our mortgages. In fact, one writer at *Metronome* called the music my octet played 'mortgage-paying jazz.' Which was unfair. What was wrong with that? Hey, not all West Coast jazz guys liked it here, either. Many moved to New York and stayed there. Zoot Sims was one, for example. He didn't like it out here. He said it wasn't metropolitan enough. There was no downtown. He wanted to be on 48th Street, right in the heart of the action.

"When you hear West Coast jazz, you're hearing the happiness we were feeling, Contrapuntal music isn't the full story. But you needed the right upbeat attitude to play it and earn. A lot of guys came to town who weren't that well known but soon found themselves working steadily for the next thirty years. You had to be lucky, and you had to be in with the right crowd. You couldn't be in with the bad boys.

"The lifestyle, of course, worked nicer with a wife, kids, and country-club membership. Everyone was doing that. All your friends were doing that. It was like the houses. Everything fit together neatly. For many musicians, especially arrangers, the workload and the lifestyle demanded formulas and patterns to get it all done. If you came up with a winning formula, the way that I did with my octet, you repeated it with the best people you could find. California, especially in the music business, was about taking as many jobs each day as possible and doing them all perfectly. Such a challenge requires self-discipline and finding systems that

work. The West Coast jazz sound was like that. The music you hear is of contentment. You really felt you were blessed."

Because the sound had commercial appeal, more musicians began writing contrapuntally for small groups. "The West Coast sound featured more counterpoint—instruments assuming the lead while others played things behind them," said the alto saxophonist and West Coast leader Lennie Niehaus.[64] "With West Coast jazz, you had several different voices playing at once, which the ear likes. It gives you more to listen to than just one horn. On the East Coast, jazz musicians tended to play with a harder sound. They generally applied more air and pressure to their instruments. Our interpretation wasn't softer. It was what I would call a 'lighter loud.' Much of the philosophy on the West Coast started with Lester Young, whose family was from Los Angeles. Lester had a light beautiful sound that many tenor saxophonists out here admired and adopted. We also used more linear pieces. Much of this came from the classical classes that that many of the guys were taking. Some were studying with classical composers who wrote linear.

"In the recordings I did, I aimed for a lot of movement in the inner parts. But nature also played a role in the music. It was organic, in that what we were exposed to in the landscape and lifestyle was integrated into the sound. Out here in the early 1950s, the outdoors was a big thing. You had wide-open spaces, a lot of foliage, and the coastline and surf. Everything was easier going. It was the opposite of New York. I remember my first trip to New York. I looked out of my hotel window, and at 5 P.M. everyone was moving fast to get to the subway. It was claustrophobic. On the West Coast, everyone was a little cooler. I believe that artists are products of their environment, and out here back in the fifties, there was more horizontal space. It was a different pace that was centered on pausing and taking your time.

"Most of the jazz musicians lived on the outskirts of Los Angeles in the suburbs, in ranch houses. Some lived south toward Hermosa or Newport Beach and Orange County. Others lived north near the San Fernando Valley. I lived in West Hollywood and then moved out to the Valley in the late fifties. I wanted more space. Everyone did. Shelly Manne had a little ranch and a couple of horses. You wanted space to think. Driving to and from jobs was relaxing at first. Then the population kept getting bigger and bigger and people started moving farther and farther away and driving longer and longer to get to the studios in Hollywood. I remember the freeways only went so far but they kept being extended. You had to plan what you were going to do based on your drive.

"Black and white musicians all got along. We would play together. I never heard any complaints about recording. Most of the black musicians lived in the inner city and started moving further west later in the fifties. Les Koenig of Contemporary recorded many black artists such as Buddy Collette, Curtis Counce, Hampton Hawes, Ray Brown, and others. Les even was first to record Ornette Coleman, though he never received proper credit for that."

The East Coast tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins may have had the most romantic view of the West Coast, having spent his youth in Harlem movie theaters watching Westerns. In March 1957 Rollins recorded *Way Out West*—perhaps the ultimate East-Coast-meets-West-Coast jazz album. The Contemporary cover features Rollins standing in the desert wearing a cowboy hat and a holster with a six-shooter. On the recording, he was joined by the white drummer Shelly Manne and the black bassist Ray Brown. "I was on the West Coast at the time and Les Koenig left the choice of material completely to me. I was out West and had all these Western songs in mind from my youth. The truth is East and West Coast musicians all knew each other personally or by reputation and were friends. The album is merely a tribute to independence and being self-sufficient, which is what the West really means—at least in Westerns."[65]

Back on the East Coast, starting in the early 1950s, jazz started to change in response to the growing popularity of West Coast jazz and the inescapable influence of R&B. While West Coast jazz was developing a more suburban, laid-back sound in the early fifties, East Coast jazz musicians began to place a new emphasis on tight horn arrangements and a bigger beat. In short, musicians reloaded the West Coast approach—keeping the horns front and center but adding a more forceful and urgent attack. This jazz style was perfectly suited to East Coast jazz labels, which were seeking more original music to fill the new LP format, hold down copyright costs, and compete with R&B.