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A

BETTY CARTER: A BIOGRAPHY AND STYLE ANALYSIS

by

WILLIAM R. BAUER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1996

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Abstract

BETTY CARTER: A BIOGRAPHY AND STYLE ANALYSIS

by

William Bauer

Advisor: Howard Brofsky

This study considers the contribution of Betty Carter as a jazz singer, composer and arranger. Drawing upon the available interviews of Betty Carter, it elucidates Carter's own perspective on the events of her life. It views her development as an artist and the significance of her work within the context of the history of jazz, and explores how the changes that occurred in the music industry during the period from 1946-1996 have effected her career. Details about the formation of Carter's record company and other aspects of how she managed her career shed light on the mechanics of getting one's work to the public in the popular music business.

The second part of this dissertation provides a detailed analysis of Carter's musical style, based upon several transcriptions of her singing. Using Jan LaRue's Guidelines for Style Analysis as a foundation for the analysis, it explores those features of Carter's style which she absorbed from her musical milieu in Detroit in the early days of bebop and those that she expanded upon to create the uniquely

personal statements for which she is now known. In examining how Carter shapes the elements of Sound, Harmony, Melody, Rhythm, and Growth in conjunction with the lyrics of popular songs, the study raises questions about the creative process of jazz vocalists, and the aesthetics of jazz and jazz singing.

Acknowledgments

In the course of researching and writing this extended essay I was pleased to discover that such an endeavor need not be a solitary one. To be sure, I ultimately did spend long hours alone. But I also enjoyed the encouragement and assistance of many people who deserve credit for helping me usher this work into the world.

Howard Brofsky's patient support and timely goading proved crucial to my ongoing efforts. Lewis Porter's belief in the importance of my work and his willingness to loan me invaluable materials from his research collection fueled my efforts. My drafts benefited immeasurably from their input as well as that of John Graziano and Leo Treitler. Bruce Saylor and Ronald Roseman also gave encouragement and support.

Walter Lord got me started by giving me important tips on organizing my research. Robert Abramson introduced me to the ways that phonetic factors effect singers as they form their musical materials into expressive statements. Others contributed in essential ways, including Vincent Pelote of the Institute for Jazz Studies, who was always available to guide me to a rare recording or a source of information when I most needed it. Anand Pathuri's transcriptions of several hours of recorded interviews and Karen Streech's typing both sped my progress.

Matthew Yapple broke important ground in his work on Betty Carter, and I have been more than happy to build upon the foundation he has laid. My teaching position at Rutgers University made it possible for me to devote stretches of time to this work, and the support I received from my colleagues there inspired me to keep at it. Selma Porter gave me invaluable feedback about how I was organizing my time and my life which helped to keep me on track. My wife Marjorie calmly edited my early drafts and taught me much about writing in the process. In addition, she juggled the myriad aspects of daily living, enabling me to stay focused on this project. She and my sons Conrad and Isaac put up with my moodiness and accepted my need for quiet. I also appreciate that Betty Carter took the time and energy to be interviewed in spite of a demanding performance schedule. This project is unthinkable without the aid of all of these people, and I am grateful for the ways that many others, too numerous to mention, have furthered my research and kept this from being a lonely struggle. I do, however, take full and sole responsibility for any errors in this dissertation.

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Part I: Biography

Introduction

In June of 1948, an eighteen-year-old singer named Lillie Mae Jones, nurtured in the Detroit bebop scene and ready to take on the world, left home for Toledo, Ohio. She was about to begin her first tour with Lionel Hampton and his big band. At this time she dropped the name "Lillie Mae Jones," and adopted the name "Lorene (spelled "Lorraine" in some sources) Carter." We do not know how she came to choose this particular name. But perhaps Jones felt that by shedding her given name and adopting a stage name she could assert her independence from her family and embrace her new persona as a jazz singer.

As Lillie Mae Jones she had informally auditioned for Hampton only a few weeks earlier when his tour brought him to the Forest Club in Detroit.¹ She has described how she "was dragged to a dance where he was playing."² Her reluctance to hear a dance band came from her avid loyalty to bebop, and she literally wore her affiliation on her sleeve. "Here I was standing in my bebop gear, representing my cult."³ "Since my classmates and everybody [were] there, they knew that I sang, so they asked Hamp to let me sit in Hamp looked at me and said, 'Can you sing, Gates?' So, I

¹ Lionel Hampton, Hamp: An Autobiography (New York: Warner Books, 1989), 94.

² John S. Wilson, "Betty Carter Sings Jazz on Broadway," New York Times (24 November 1978).

³ Joel Dreyfuss, "Betty 'Slow Pop' Carter Speeds Up," Rolling Stone (October, 1976), 18.

looked at him like he was crazy, like, 'What do you mean, can I sing?' Like, 'Sure I can sing.' And he called me up and I sang."⁴ As the budding singer grew familiar with Hampton's ways she came to understand that his manner of addressing her was not unusual. "You know, Hamp called everybody 'Gates.' If he [didn't] know your name, your name was 'Gates,' . . . and everybody in the band calls everybody 'Gates.'"⁵

It was sometime during the brief period of about two weeks between the time Jones received the telegram inviting her to join the band, and the time she left home to go on the road, that she adopted her new name, Lorene Carter. But she would not use that name for long. The evolution of Carter's name reveals some of the musical considerations at work both in her joining and later, in leaving the band.

When Lorene Carter joined Hampton in 1948 bebop had begun to make an impact on big bands. At this time Hampton represented himself as one of the innovators of the new style, exaggerating his early interest in it in light of its new appeal. He even went so far as to suggest that he had discovered Dizzy Gillespie when he recorded "Hot Mallets" in 1939. On 29 September 1947, not long after Gillespie's triumphant Carnegie Hall concert, a New York paper described Hampton as "Master of Bebop and Rebop" and quoted him as follows: "Be-bop is the chord structure; Re-bop is the

⁴ Gil Noble, "Special Moments with Betty Carter," Like It Is, transcript of a WABC-TV telecast (4 July 1993), 4.

⁵ Ibid.

rhythm. We combine them to get the New Movement."⁶ Hampton obviously took a sincere interest in bebop's musical innovations, for he hired Fats Navarro and Charles Mingus and premiered arrangements by the latter; however, he also wanted to capitalize upon bebop's rapidly growing audience.

Significantly, Hampton had begun the process of signaling his interest in the new style as early as 1945, before bebop had proven its commercial viability. At this time he recorded a tune called "Hey Ba-ba-rebop," in which he sings lyrics and a scat solo.⁷ By 1946, Hampton had several bona fide beboppers playing for him. Carter recalls that "he had . . . Wes Montgomery, the guitarist, and Benny Bailey, the trumpeter."⁸ According to Gunther Schuller, "in September 1946 on 'Double talk' Hampton broke through into the bop ranks."⁹ Furthermore, his obvious pride at having recorded Dizzy Gillespie in 1939 shows that he did feel some authentic claim to contributing to the new style. "The first time I heard bebop played on a trumpet--I mean that style

⁶ Leonard Feather, Inside Jazz (1949; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 42.

⁷ Although this number made the hit parade in 1946, it had less to do with the actual sounds of bebop than its title suggests, being a blues based boogie-woogie with a stop-time verse and a call-and-response refrain a la Cab Calloway. With this tune's recording and others like it, Hampton contributed more to the newly emerging rhythm and blues style than he did to bebop. See Rich Kienzle, liner notes to Your Hit Parade: The Late '40s (MCA Records, 1991, for Time-Life Music).

⁸ Wilson, "Betty Carter Sings Jazz." Also see the discography in Hampton, Hamp.

⁹ Gunther Schuller, The Swing Era (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 400-401.

later called bebop--was when Dizzy played "Hot Mallets" with me."¹⁰

Bop vocals had played a significant role in the popularization of the new idiom, and Leonard Feather describes how "the Gillespie band . . . found bop singing a commercial asset."¹¹ Listeners had come to know the wordless vocals that boppers used as "scatting," after Don Redman and Louis Armstrong recorded its first examples in the late 1920s. Playfully using the singing of nonsense syllables to imitate the sound of an instrument, and specifically to mimic bebop phrasing and articulation, bop musicians often put scatting to comic effect, which increased the appeal of the style to non-musicians. Ever the showman looking to gain such appeal, Hampton thus had a very specific purpose in mind when he hired the young bebop singer from Detroit who had shrewdly made a specialty of scatting.¹²

Hampton liked the fact that Lorene Carter presented herself as a hip exponent of bebop, and he sought to exploit

¹⁰ Dizzy Gillespie, To Be Or Not to Bop (1979; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1985), 104-5. (Milt Hinton corroborates Hampton's perception that "[Gillespie] was the new thing, and Lionel was always searching for something new." Ibid.)

¹¹ Feather, Inside Jazz, 39-40.

¹² Gunther Schuller suggests that by the time Carter joined Hampton, he had begun a retrenchment from his bebop explorations. According to Schuller, in 1949, while "the whole jazz orchestral world was going bebop crazy," Hampton had retreated to the more familiar terrain of boogie-woogie, novelty numbers and remakes of "Flying Home" in addition to making a "sizable leap in the direction of 'rhythm and blues.'" (Schuller, The Swing Era, 401.) Some of the tunes Carter sang with Hampton, however, certainly have a boppish sound to them, and Hampton continued to perform tunes with such titles as "Rebop" and "Hamp's Bopology" until at least 1950.

her modern sound and manner for their novel effect. This reason, combined with his playfulness with names, led him to start calling her "Betty Bebop." "Betty was into bebop . . . I was into swing, but I wanted some of that bebop sound in my performances. I'm the one who gave her the nickname 'Betty Bebop.' . . . Of course she's still known as Betty Bebop."¹³ Lewis Porter has suggested that the name was a "somewhat mocking version of the name of the cartoon character "Betty Boop.'" Despite whatever affectionate intentions Hampton may have had in calling her this, the connection to a cartoon no doubt added to Carter's irritation over it.¹⁴

According to Carter, Hampton did not like the name "Lorene" because he had difficulty pronouncing it.¹⁵ In addition, with the name "Betty Bebop" Hampton could signal to audiences that he had incorporated the new bebop style into his act, and that Carter filled the very specific role of representing this style vocally. In Carter's words, "Hamp made that nickname predominant because of my ability to scat."¹⁶ I guess he wanted to be in the bebop world. I knew all the musicians, I could scat and I had a good ear, so he used me for that. He couldn't have Charlie Parker or Dizzy Gillespie, so he got me! I was the bebopper in the band, and

¹³ Hampton, Hamp, 94.

¹⁴ Lewis Porter, Jazz: From Its Origins to the Present (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 434.

¹⁵ William Bauer, unpublished interview with Carter at her home in Brooklyn, New York, 10 October 1994. Also, Wilson, "Betty Carter Sings Jazz."

¹⁶ Bill McLarney, "Betty Carter, the 'in' Singer," Down Beat (28 July 1966), 19.

I was in charge of all the modern stuff."¹⁷ Elaborating on this sentiment, she added: "He got me with the band because I was modern. I had the bebop feeling he was trying to get at that particular time. He figured my influence would help."¹⁸ This not-so-dubious distinction ultimately proved to be a mixed blessing in her dealings with Hampton.

Members of the band took to calling Carter "The Kid," a nickname that her closest friends use to this day. Carter's designation as "The Kid" probably derives from the fact that when she joined the band its mostly youthful members viewed her as even younger and more inexperienced than they. It also suggests that they held an affectionate, perhaps even protective, attitude towards her. Although she grew in confidence and skill during her time with Hampton, this nickname lingered as a vestige of her original role as novice.

After two-and-a-half years of performing with Hampton, Carter became eager to leave behind the pigeonhole that he had fashioned for her, and in 1951 she flew the coop. With her musical apprenticeship now behind her, Carter set about proving that she was a full-fledged jazz singer who, in addition to singing scat, could also "turn a lyric." The time had come once again to shed her name and reinvent herself. But to do so now posed a problem: a new name would render her unrecognizable to the national audience she had

¹⁷ Arthur Taylor, Notes and Tones: Musician to Musician Interviews (New York: Perigee Books, 1977), 271.

¹⁸ Ibid., 274.

gained thanks to the promotion Hampton's band had given her. "The name itself was catchy. Nobody forgot it--even though I hated it. And bebop was the thing among black people at that time. Betty Bebop,--the young kid scatting with Lionel Hampton."¹⁹ But the status of bebop soon began to change.

Ever mindful of her audience, Carter realized as the 1950s wore on that the bebop craze had begun to wane. The big audiences who had enjoyed the style at the end of the 1940s gradually lost interest in it, reinforcing the idea that "a large proportion of the public which had supported [Gillespie's] appearances had been attracted by the ephemeral lure of the incidental trappings rather than by the quality of the music itself."²⁰ In addition, the public had begun to associate the term "bebop" with drug abuse. People felt that "if you had anything to do with jazz, bebop jazz, you had to be an addict and were not to be trusted, not dependable."²¹ Carter had a keen eye for how to manage herself, even this early in her career. "I knew I was going to have trouble later. You know, you have foresight. Here's a word that everybody's talking about 'down with!' Which has nothing really to do with the music. Out of that dope crazy world

¹⁹ Michael Ullman, "Michael Ullman on Jazz: Betty Carter," The New Republic (27 May 1978), 24; also in Jazz Lives: Portraits in Words and Pictures (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1980).

²⁰ Michael James, Kings of Jazz: Dizzy Gillespie (London:Cassell, 1959), 28.

²¹ Barbara van Rooyen and Pawel Brodowski, "Betty's Groove" Jazz Forum 57 (international edition), 1979, 30.

came the most creative music."²² Carter had what we would now call a marketing problem.

How could Betty Bebop capitalize upon the exposure she had gained from her time on the road, while freeing herself from the stylistic limitations and negative connotations that came with the term "bebop"? She solved this problem by keeping the first name "Betty" and returning to the surname "Carter." In so doing, Betty Carter found a way to identify herself with Lionel Hampton while at the same time gaining a certain distance from the bebop sub-culture.

But Carter would not escape Hampton's legacy so easily. As late as 1966 Carter would complain to Down Beat writer Bill McLarney that the name "Betty Bebop" still stuck in some circles, and it detracted from her image by suggesting a more limited singer than she had in fact become.²³ When the entertainment market shifted from jazz to rock in the early 1960s Carter became especially sensitive about the issue of style, for this period proved the most challenging of her career.

Even though I complained about being called Betty Bebop, it was the name itself which kept people. It was easy for people to say. I got mileage out of it. When I came back to the city . . . the first thing that hit me was "'Ol Betty Bebop is back in town." Then I'd say "call me 'Betty Carter' please. Don't call me 'Betty Bebop' anymore." I used to get angry when anybody called me "Betty Bebop." I was on my own then, and I could do anything I wanted to do.

²² Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 24.

²³ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer," 19.

Sometimes [a club owner] would book me somewhere and put "Betty Carter" [on the marquee] and put underneath "Betty Carter" in parentheses "Betty Bebop." The club owner and a lot of people wouldn't know who Betty Carter was, but they would know who Betty Bebop [was], and it was to his advantage to use that name, which I didn't think about at that time. I was just trying to get the [name] "Betty Carter" established. I was fighting mad, you see, trying to get that name established in people's heads.²⁴

Carter recounts a similar story in 1966, in which a club owner put up a sign billing her as "The Bebop Girl" despite her objections. He insisted that "it might draw customers who otherwise might not know who she was." Carter prevailed, and by the time she opened at the club the sign had come down. "I no longer want to be identified with this [style]. Ella's not called 'Ella (Bebop) Fitzgerald,' is she?"²⁵ Like Carter, Fitzgerald was associated with bebop in the late 1940s. However, while Fitzgerald's espousal of the bebop style enhanced her estimation in the eyes of musicians, her name never came to reflect her association with bebop because she came to the new style after having already established herself. In fact, the impact went in the opposite direction: for such a well known pop singer to adopt the new sound greatly added to its popularity.

²⁴ Matthew Yapple, transcript of an interview with Carter conducted at her home in Brooklyn in 1980 (Because I have made use of several Yapple transcripts, this source will be referred to from here on as BNY-80). This and all subsequent Yapple citations come from the research he did for his Master's thesis in Film Production (Philadelphia: Temple University, Department of Radio-Television-Film), which consists of an unreleased videotape entitled Jazz is Betty Carter. The transcripts include all unedited footage.

²⁵ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer," 19.

Much later, as Betty Carter began to gain public recognition in the mid-1970s, her attitude about her name again changed. "I don't dislike the 'Betty Bebop' nickname anymore; I've been converted again. I realized bebop was valuable, but I didn't realize how valuable until 1975, when I [heard] young kids come up to me and ask what the bebop era was all about. I came up in that world and loved that music. The musicians had a great influence on me, and I lived and worked with that music. And I still live it. So I don't care about the name now--you can call me 'Betty Anything-you-wanna.'"²⁶ During this time Carter's growing concern for sustaining the bebop tradition mitigated against the earlier fear she had of her music being reduced to a single stylistic niche: "I used to hate [being called 'Betty Bebop'] a long time ago, but now when I hear the youngsters calling me that and asking me what [the] bebop era was like, [the name] doesn't bother me."²⁷

The story about Carter's various names has a curious twist to it. Lately Carter has mused that she wishes she had kept her given name, Lillie Mae Jones, or at least "Lillie."²⁸ When her sister Vivian passed away in 1988, Carter inherited her Detroit home, and recently she has spent time in Detroit rekindling family connections. Her regrets about having changed her name may belie a wish to integrate

²⁶ Bob Blumenthal, "Betty Carter Sets Her Own Records," The Boston Phoenix (26 August 1975) Section 2, 4.

²⁷ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 30.

²⁸ Bauer, unpublished interview.

herself into the family. In order to draw any conclusions of substance about the effect Carter's family had on her as a person and as an artist, however, we will need to turn to the background information we have about her early life.

Chapter 1: The Early Years (1930-1946)

When Betty Carter speaks of her childhood, she does not dwell on her family life, and she provides us with little information about her upbringing. From what she does say, and from what she omits, we can infer that this reticence belies a sadness associated with her childhood years. "We were not a close family. . . The family wasn't close enough where you passed around pictures and did the birthday bit."¹

Carter's parents gave her a lot of independence, but not very much nurturing. "It wasn't one of those kinds of families where everyone knew everything about everybody. We didn't raise anybody. Everybody really went and did their own thing."² As a result, her family did not pass much of its history on to her, and we have scant information from Carter herself about her family background.

We know that Carter's family did not value her musical abilities, and did not support her choice of career. "I have been far removed from my immediate family. There [has] been no real contact; [no] phone calls home every week to find out how everybody is. . . . As far as family is concerned, it's been a lonesome trek. . . . I don't know why. . . it was as lonesome as it was. It's probably just as much my fault as it is theirs, and I can't blame anybody for it. But there

¹ Yapple, BNY-80.

² Chris White, Jazz Talk, unpublished transcribed from a videotaped interview of Carter conducted at the Institute for Jazz Studies, Rutgers University/Newark, 14 April 1976.

was. . . no real closeness, where the family urged me on, or said. . . 'we're proud'. . . and all that. No, no. . . none of that happened."³

Carter's family experience has had an obvious affect on her approach to her career, and she has expressed an awareness of this. "Everything I did, I did pretty much by myself, without any help from people in the business other than musicians and club owners and stuff like that. But if you meant having somebody really close to you like a mother or father, or an aunt or uncle,. . . that wasn't there for me."⁴

After leaving home for good in the 1950s, Carter did get back home occasionally for visits: "I lived in New York. They lived in Detroit and I'd go back there to work. . . . The only time I saw them [was] when I'd do a job there."⁵ They never came out to hear her perform, however. "Not in the beginning, [and] they don't come out now."⁶

Carter and her mother, Bertha Jones, had an especially distant relationship, and she describes it with a deep sense of loss: "I didn't even know my mother until after I had left [home]. . . . As I got older, I looked back at her to realize what she was all about. I left [home] early. My other two [half-]sisters left early too."⁷ At the time her mother died, Carter's career had reached its lowest ebb, and

³ Ibid.

⁴ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ White, Jazz Talk.

her death denied Carter the chance to reconcile their differences. "She died in the early '70s. I really was hoping my mother [would not have] died as soon as she did, so that she could reap some of [the benefits of my success, and] so that I could say 'I did not completely lose,' like she said I would. That opportunity never came."⁸

Family

Carter has spoken with some detail of the events that led to her birth. When James Taylor Jones II and Bertha Cox met in Dumas, Arkansas, Jones already had two daughters from a previous marriage. After living in Dumas, and then in St. Louis, he brought his family to Detroit, perhaps to work in a Ford plant.⁹ "My mother met my father in Arkansas, then they moved up to Detroit, because of the work, I guess. I don't know [why they moved,] because we're talking about 1930."¹⁰ During the Great Depression, Detroit drew unemployed laborers in droves, not only because of the recent application of the assembly line to automobile manufacture; but also because Henry Ford offered his workers a guaranteed minimum wage. With two daughters, a new wife, and plans to have more children, Jones would have found the prospects for work more attractive in Detroit than elsewhere.

In addition, Bertha Jones had family in Flint, Michigan, and the move to Detroit would bring her closer to them.

⁸ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁹ White, Jazz Talk.

¹⁰ Bauer, unpublished interview.

Carter recalls that her mother's "sisters stopped in Flint, and they were all preacher's wives. My Aunt Litha and my Aunt Patsie, they were both married to ministers. So they had churches in Flint, Michigan. My mother's brothers were ministers. The Coxes. Reverend Earnest Cox, and James Cox, Uncle Jimmie. They were both ministers. So they stayed in Flint."¹¹

The Joneses may have considered settling in Flint, for the Cox siblings did seem close to one another. Ultimately, Carter's mother chose not to, however, and "she came to Detroit instead of stopping in Flint."¹² Yet when Bertha Jones was expecting her first child, she turned to her family: "When my mother got pregnant, and she wanted to have me, she was afraid to have me by herself, and not to have the family around. So that's the reason we moved to Flint."¹³ During this time she relied upon her sisters' experience for support. "She wanted to be by her sisters."¹⁴

In Flint, on 16 May 1930, Bertha Jones gave birth to a daughter, whom she named Lillie Mae. "So we stayed there long enough to, maybe, stop nursing, and then she came back up to Detroit."¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. Will Friedwald (in Jazz Singing: America's Great Voices from Bessie Smith to Bebop and Beyond (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1990), 403) perpetuates erroneous information given by Whitney Balliett concerning the year of Carter's birth. (See "Betty Carter," The New Yorker (20

Carter spent her childhood years growing up on the West Side of Detroit, with church and school acting as two important sources for guidance and encouragement. We will consider each of these in turn below. In her family life, the next major event occurred when she was sixteen, and her father passed away.

Carter speaks of her father's death without much emotion. "My father died early. He died in 1946 when I was in high school.¹⁶ So he was out of the picture. My mother was then struggling by herself to deal with two kids. My younger sister and my brother."¹⁷ After he died Carter's family stayed together for a short time, but eventually her mother and siblings went off in different directions. "My brother went to Korea. . . . [My mother] got married again, and she moved back up to Flint, and. . . my sister got married and. . . stayed in Detroit."¹⁸

That Carter does not have much to say about her siblings comes as little surprise. Her half-sisters, Louise and Chesabee, whom she describes as step sisters, may have lived at home during her infancy, but while she was growing up, they did not play a significant role in family life. "I have two other sisters, step sisters. My father was married before he married my mother and he had two daughters."¹⁹

September 1982):110-12.) According to Balliett, Carter was born in 1929.

¹⁶ Yapple, BNY-80.

¹⁷ Bauer, unpublished interview.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

They moved out early, and at least one of them married young. Speaking in 1994, Carter said: "One of them is living in Oakland, California, and the other is living in Detroit."²⁰ Her parents went on to have two other children, Vivian and James III, and Carter's recollection of her family life consists largely of herself and her younger siblings. "I was raised with a family of three."²¹ During her adolescence one of Carter's older sisters came to play a greater role in her life, and Carter has suggested that later, while in high school, she moved north to live with this half-sister and her husband.

Long after she had left home, Carter sought to establish ties with her remaining family members. By 1980, she had succeeded in getting to know her siblings better, including her half-sisters, and they had become aware of her success. "My brother and sisters are in Detroit now. They see now what's happening to me. That brings us a little closer."²² Now, they may occasionally catch her when she appears on television, but they still do not appreciate her importance in the jazz world.

In 1988 Vivian passed away, and left her Detroit home to Carter. As of this writing, James lives in Detroit. He apparently loves jazz, but not her "concept," as she puts it. "James is doing fine. Probably retired, or will be retired

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Leothee Miller, "An Interview with Betty Carter," Black Creation 3, no.4 (summer 1972): 36; this interview was conducted on 28 February 1972.

²² Yaple, BNY-80.

in another year. He's got a son who works for USA Today, James Jones, IV. You may have read some of his articles on musicians."²³ Carter seems reluctant to attribute her nephew's musical career to her influence. "You'd have to ask him, I don't know whether he would admit it or not."²⁴

Church

The church played a key role in the formation of Carter's character and in the beginning of her interest in music.

The strong religious nature of Carter's family came largely from her mother's side of the family, as her Cox aunts and uncles all had some connection to the church; but, her father also had religious convictions. "My mother and father were strictly Baptist church people."²⁵

Carter worshipped at two different churches during her childhood. "The first one was Chapel Hill Baptist Church," which she attended with her family.²⁶ Whatever interest and ability James Jones II had for music found sole expression in the worship of God. "He was a choir director of the church choir."²⁷ Carter did not acquire a strong connection to the church style, which may explain why she does not elaborate on her father's musical contribution to church. Her silence on

²³ Bauer, unpublished interview.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Miller, "An Interview," 36.

²⁶ Bauer, unpublished interview.

²⁷ Yapple, BNY-80, and Dreyfuss, "Betty 'Slow Pop' Carter."

the matter leaves us to speculate upon his role in her own musical development.

Singing did provide an important part of her church experience. "Oh, we did go to church of course, and we sang in the choir."²⁸ Carter did not stand out as a soloist in church, however, and as we shall see, she would choose instead to reveal her musical talent in school: "I was never one of the kind of singers in the choir that was outstanding. I was more outstanding in school. Because I sang the harmony parts, I was never first chair person. I was always a second."²⁹ To sing inner parts requires that a singer have the ability to resist drifting to the melody line and the capacity for hearing complex pitch relationships. Thus, Carter's description helps us to understand how she came to develop her ear for harmony, which would eventually enable her to improvise over chord changes.

The church nurtured Carter's musical growth in other ways as well. Jeff Titon's description of the African-American approach to singing hymns gives us some idea of what Carter experienced at the Chapel Hill Baptist Church. "The singers sway freely to the music, dancing it with their bodies."³⁰ He goes on to write that "the leader-chorus call-and-response is the predominant African group vocal organization. The singing tone quality alternates between

²⁸ Bauer, unpublished interview.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Jeff Todd Titon, ed. Worlds of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World's Peoples, 2nd edition (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 109.

Paul Berliner has also considered the importance of the church experience in the musical development of many African-American artists. Speaking of the musical implications of the church service, he describes it as "a complex, integrated model for performance derived from the testimonial cries of ministers and worshippers engaged in vocal exchanges, spirited sermons that stand on the border between speech and song, and the soulful musical interludes that enhance the service's emotional intensity and its message."³³ He goes on to quote Max Roach, writing that "in church, young musicians were judged on the basis of 'their abilities to stir the congregation's feelings' rather than on the basis of their 'technical proficiency alone.'"³⁴ Tilton's and Berliner's descriptions suggest that Carter owes at least some of the elements of her performing and vocal style to her experience in church. Carter also got some experience playing the piano at church. "I was. . . [a] piano player [in church]; the little piano playing that I did."³⁵

Carter makes it clear, however, that she did not identify much with church as a cultural or religious experience. She even suggests that she specifically chose

³³ Paul Berliner, Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 29.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ White, Jazz Talk; Will Friedwald asserts that Carter "did her first arranging in church." (Jazz Singing, 403.) Yet her knowledge of music notation remained limited until she studied piano. That Carter would have learned to make arrangements before she sang with Lionel Hampton therefore seems unlikely.

not to pursue the role of soloist, because of her distance from the religious aspects of church. "The church experience was very, very nice. It wasn't deep, it was nice. When I say it wasn't deep, [I mean] I wasn't the kind of person that went to church every Sunday; I wasn't the kind of person that sang in the choir like. . . Aretha Franklin or Gladys [Knight, or] like some of the younger girls that sang in the choir. I didn't deal [with it] like that."³⁶

At an early age, Carter sought to set herself apart from the church community in various ways. "I was always trying, even at that time, to do something different, to wear something different. It was really a 'thing,' with [the] little that I had financially, to be different. I always seemed to think differently, when I look back now, about the way I went to church."³⁷ Carter's remarks suggest that her well known self-assurance had already begun to appear when she was still quite young.

Carter asserted her independent nature even more strongly at the age of eleven or twelve years old,³⁸ when she left her family's congregation, and joined a church of her own choosing. Friendships that Carter developed at school had already begun to hold more sway in her life than her tenuous connection to her family. "[The Hartford Avenue Church] was closer to the house [than the Chapel Hill

³⁶ White, Jazz Talk.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Two different accounts that she gives disagree about her precise age.

Church,] and I was going to school with the minister's daughter. The Hill family, Charles A. Hill, his whole family went to the school [that] I was going to."³⁹ She has not elaborated upon the musical differences between the two churches.

According to Carter, no conflict arose between her and her parents as a result of her decision to leave their church. "I just decided to go to that church. My mother didn't care what church I went to, as long as I went."⁴⁰ Carter felt strongly enough about her new congregation to formalize her association with it: "I got into that congregation better than I could get into the others, and I got baptized. I was twelve, actually, when I got baptized."⁴¹

In her adulthood, Carter's church experience did color her perceptions of certain aspects of the music industry. "We thought the sound of the gospel was never going to become a commercial art form. Everybody was taken aback when Ray Charles made that music a commercial form, [and] made the [church] sound a commercial sound. A lot of black people didn't know how to handle that, because it was like blasphemy to take it out of the church and put it in the street. But now it's in the street selling Coca Cola and everything else."⁴²

³⁹ Bauer, unpublished interview.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 30.

Musical Exposure and Early Development

Carter heard music as a child, but she received little exposure to jazz. Her parents took a protective stance toward her and her siblings where the influence of the street was concerned:

They would not have liked what I turned out to be, even though [I've been] successful. My mother's family, . . . they're all gone, [all] but [my] cousins. . . ; and they don't know a thing about music. I mean they. . . stayed home and continued to go to church. But they know nothing at all about jazz. They're in Flint, Michigan, where I was really born. . . .

My father's family, the cousins and [all], they know nothing about it either. They know something about pop music, but they don't know anything about jazz. . . at all! Not the way I do. You might say they didn't go to the theater to hear a jazz artist, they didn't go to a night club to hear a jazz artist, they didn't go to a dance theater, [and] they didn't buy records of jazz people, [and] things like that.⁴³

Because Carter did not have access to the standard ways in which jazz was transmitted at the time, her exposure to black popular music remained limited until later: "We are talking about 1940-41, and when we listened to the radio, we listened to 'Superman' and we listened to 'Amos and Andy.' That was what you were listening to on the radio, because it was all that was available to you: 'Dinah Shore and the Hit Parade.' When your family is involved and your church, you naturally

⁴³ Bauer, unpublished interview.

listen to this music and you're not going out to night clubs at an early age."⁴⁴

Her parents had very strict views on the matter of jazz, views which Carter relates not only to their religious beliefs, but also to their middle class aspirations. "My parents weren't really into that [lifestyle]. There were a lot of black people at this time who weren't into anything that had a reputation of bringing the race down. Alcohol and the bars were involved with that sort of living. The church was a separate thing. You were a sinner if you were involved in something like that."⁴⁵

Her earliest exposure to jazz came about through the husband of one of her older sisters. "I learned about jazz after my brother-in-law came to Detroit with some Duke Ellington records."⁴⁶ Her brother-in-law loved the music and shared his love with Carter. "My brother in-law came on the scene with his whole vast catalog of Duke Ellington records. And that's how I listened to music."⁴⁷ One can imagine the impressionable Carter hearing Ivie Anderson's work with Ellington, perhaps even the brief bit of scatting she did on "It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing," which was a hit in 1932. "That was my experience in listening to Duke from his beginning, early, early, early Duke."⁴⁸ At first,

⁴⁴ Christopher Kuhl, "Betty Carter," Cadence 11, no.2 (February 1985): 7; this interview was conducted in Atlanta, Georgia in 1982.

⁴⁵ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁴⁶ Bauer, unpublished interview.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Yapple, BNY-80.

this exposure did not give her much to go on. "That was early. I knew that jazz existed, but I was too young at that time to go places by myself to hear it. So therefore I didn't get a chance to really hear it live. And we didn't have a record player either. . . . Records were expensive, and if you [didn't] have the money to buy them, you [had] to hear what you can hear in school."⁴⁹

Although Carter has disavowed having had a close connection with her siblings, her older sisters did exert some influence on her development. Later on, for example, she moved in with one of her half-sisters and her family. By this time her parents' musical taste no longer dictated where her curiosity could lead her. "Then listening to Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster, and getting that experience through my brother in-law's entrance into my life, and moving to the north with my stepsister, and their kids. He bought his stereo, his box, his hi-fi or whatever, and his records. That was his pride and joy. We listened quite a bit to the music."⁵⁰

Although Carter has downplayed his significance, her brother-in-law also played a key role in her development: "The brother in-law. . . was older; and he had quite a bit of experience with the music of Duke Ellington."⁵¹ When Ellington played in Detroit, he would go to hear him perform. "Duke Ellington came to Detroit, I guess, oh, dozens of

⁴⁹ Bauer, unpublished interview.

⁵⁰ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁵¹ Bauer, unpublished interview.

times. So I always knew when he was in town. [He played] at the Paradise, and at different dances. See, [musicians] had a lot of places to work in at that time. [A] lot of theaters, [a] lot of clubs, and [a] lot of dances."⁵²

In addition to her brother-in-law's records, Carter was now able to listen to jazz on the radio, and the programming increasingly included black artists: "I knew about Pops [Armstrong], we heard that on the radio. I knew about Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, on the radio."⁵³ Ella Fitzgerald (and the Decca Rhythm Boys) had had a hit in 1945 with "It's Only A Paper Moon" (Decca 23425). Judging from Carter's first recorded efforts, however, Fitzgerald's performances of "Oh, Lady Be Good" and "How High The Moon" in 1947 had a more profound impact on the young singer (see transcriptions 1, 3 and 7 in Appendix II). It was still too early for Carter to have encountered Sarah Vaughan. "I didn't know about Sarah Vaughan yet, in the very beginning; but this [exposure to singers] wasn't the catalyst. . . that gave me the idea to get in[to] the business."⁵⁴ This last comment clarifies that, as much as she admired the accomplishments of the great singers that preceded her, she did not look to them as role models. It also seems consistent with remarks Carter would make later which emphasize the virtues of individuality, and the hazards of imitation.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

If, as Carter says, her early exposure to jazz did not inspire her to choose her career, other comments she has made on the subject may give us clues as to what motivated her. She has given varying descriptions about her evolving interest in music. In one interview, Carter described herself as having an early awareness of her love for music. "As a child I always sang."⁵⁵ In this description, she began to enjoy music when she was quite young. "I began singing years ago."⁵⁶ Later, she refined this image, describing how she felt comfortable onstage, and how she enjoyed the attention she received there. "I think I probably was born with wanting to get out front, wanting to be on the stage."⁵⁷ Once she got up in front of people she found that she had an immediate rapport with them. "I was the kind of person who liked to get up on stage and smile, that's what came first."⁵⁸

Carter's identification of herself as "a singer" came later. "Afterward the singing came. I had to develop it into something. It took time, but I had the personality; I had a lot of fun on stage from the very beginning, I love it."⁵⁹ In a later refinement of this image, we get a sense of her growing seriousness of purpose. "I wasn't a singer at

⁵⁵ Miller, "An Interview," 36.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 30.

⁵⁸ Herb Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," Down Beat 43 no.14 (12 August 1976): 24.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

the age of five, six, or seven. I was about fifteen before I realized that I could hold my own on the stage."⁶⁰

At a critical time in the formation of her identity, Carter's friends in school encouraged her innate showmanship, thereby giving her important feedback and a greater sense of belonging than she received at home and at church. From them she discovered that people will support you in your interests "if you have some natural talents; this is what I discovered in school, and it was just [from] communicating with my peers."⁶¹ Shortly we will consider the critical role school played in her life.

Her attitude about the importance of individuality began with the recognition that music gave her a sense of uniqueness, and empowered her to separate from her family. "Then I discovered I had something different. My father thought I had something different; [but] he didn't know what it was."⁶² Her experience in school, then, and not simply having been exposed to music in church, on records, and on the radio, gave her the strongest impetus to consider a career in music.

In her mid-teens Carter received some piano lessons at the Detroit Conservatory, but she did not progress beyond a modest level of mastery. "I was learning the easy scales, the regular, C, D, E, F; the early books."⁶³ From her

⁶⁰ Kuhl, "Betty Carter." 7.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

description we can sense that she did not bring the intensity of motivation to her piano studies that she brought to her singing: "[When you are young] you don't know what you are going to be; you've got years to do that. When you're talking about fifteen[-years-old], unless you are some kind of prodigy, you don't know that much about the instrument or where the scales are. You've got to spend some time and [take] lessons for fifteen years before you really know what the piano is all about."⁶⁴ Carter did use this experience to build upon piano skills she had begun to acquire in church, and music reading skills she had acquired in school.

School

In school, Carter did not excel as a student, but seems to have demonstrated aptitudes for music and sports early on. "I was an average child in school, but I was never interested in anything besides music. I liked sports. I could run and jump and all that."⁶⁵ Unlike church, in which Carter restrained herself, school gave Carter a forum for getting positive attention. "I was a showman in school, at the assemblies, but in church it was different."⁶⁶

The progressive character of Detroit's west side shaped Carter's racial experience during her childhood, and she had white and black friends in school: "I was going to an

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Miller, "An Interview," 36.

⁶⁶ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 30.

integrated school. There was no separation as far as [race] is concerned. The school I went to was integrated, and the area I lived in was also integrated in Detroit."⁶⁷ Paul Berliner corroborates Carter's perception, pointing out that, by 1947, Detroit and New York had the only integrated musicians' unions in America.⁶⁸ Carter's attitude toward whites would change, however, for during the 1950s, Carter would have experiences with segregation that would influence her views on race, especially with regard to the music business. Now that Carter has a home in Detroit, she can compare her childhood experience with the current racial situation there: "It's an all black school now."⁶⁹

Carter felt good about her schooling. "I was at Northwestern [High School]. That was another hot school, a good school."⁷⁰ Ruth Harley, the pianist for the school, may have been Carter's first role model in music, for Carter speaks of her with intense admiration. Harley encouraged Carter musically: "At that time [we] had a pianist also, who was with the other choir. I don't know where Ruth Harley is now. [She] was probably the first black pianist that worked in the schools in Detroit, to accompany the choirs. She was a young, really beautiful woman. . . [and] she also liked my personality. So I got along very well with the music department."⁷¹

⁶⁷ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁶⁸ Berliner, Thinking in Jazz, 774, n.18.

⁶⁹ Bauer, unpublished interview.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

The encouragement she received from the music teachers, especially the choral director, Miss Wagner, gave her a positive outlook towards herself and towards school in general: "The music teacher thought I was going to do something. She didn't know what I was going to do. She was white. . . . She was a conductor. She taught. . . voice, and she had the glee club. She was classically trained. All teachers were in those days."⁷²

Under Miss Wagner's direction, Carter's reading skills improved, and she had ample opportunities to perform. "You sang the school songs, you did assemblies, and you prepared yourself to work at the twelfth grade commencement, . . . [and] if they were giving a dinner or if they were doing [something] for the school, she would prepare the glee club and the chorus and the a cappella chorus with music to do these things. I happened to be an alto in this group. Fortunately, for me, this is what gave me my first ego trip."⁷³

She impressed the choir director enough to gain an important, early opportunity:

Miss Wagner. . . was the teacher of both choirs, not only the a cappella choir. . . . I became a student director. . . by accident. (Everything that's ever happened to me probably happened by accident.) She hurt her back, and we had a commencement to do, and she couldn't raise her arms. . . .

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Yapple, BNY-80.

She liked my personality and my whole attitude toward the music. . . . She tried out a couple girls to see what they could do, and I was able to handle it, and. . . she really liked my approach. . . By what I was doing, she knew that I had been watching her.⁷⁴

Carter has described the impact this rewarding experience had on her:

So that was probably my first ego trip. There I am in front of the commencement class waving my arms about with the pianist accompanying us. . . . After that they pat[ted] me on the back and gave me plenty of smiles. Next, there I go, I'm off now; but then I used to sing at the assemblies when there was nothing to do. I would do that too.⁷⁵

In high school, many of Carter's friends shared her love for music, and did musical things. Most of them studied classical music, and thus, exposed her to it as well. "There were [the] twins, Lavinia and Lacinia, who. . . had perfect pitch, and [who] were. . . very young, good, musicians. I wish I knew what had happened to those girls. Then there was [Harold McKinney and] the McKinney family. . . . I say family because. . . a lot of his family have followed him. He was also well known around school. He was a classical player, he wasn't a jazz player. More classical than anything else. And so were the twins, more classical."⁷⁶ While few of her friends actually understood the latest jazz style, they kept an open mind: "It wasn't a lot of musicians

⁷⁴ Bauer, unpublished interview.

⁷⁵ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁷⁶ Bauer, unpublished interview.

in my school that played the music hard, hard jazz at that time. But they were interested in the newest music that came along."⁷⁷ Significantly, although her classmates did not share Carter's fascination with bebop, they knew of her interest in the style, and bolstered her developing self-image as a singer.

Carter's exposure to music still covered a limited range of styles, and she did not get to hear a lot of live music. She did, however, start to encounter the music of Charlie Parker. "Still, all I'm hearing is Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington. I don't have the money to get to the Paradise Theater."⁷⁸ Around the time of her father's death, she became aware of the sounds of bebop. "Anyway, it was about '46 [when] I started to hear the music in high school, hear bebop."⁷⁹ She had not encountered it before then: "In the beginning, . . . I heard bebop in school."⁸⁰ Carter has even recalled school visits from Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. "We met Bird and Dizzy when they came to our school."⁸¹ Given the information we have on the whereabouts of Parker and Gillespie, these visits would have been on separate occasions.

Later, her experience of the new sounds of bebop also came from the local hangout. "I'm only hearing dribs and

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Bauer, unpublished interview.

⁸¹ Gene Santoro, "Look What We Got," PULSE! (September 1988): 62.

drabs of bebop through neighbors and in school, and on the jukebox. There was a jukebox right across the street from [school, at] the sweet shoppe or the malt shoppe outside of school, like they had in [the television show] 'Happy Days.' We had one of those, too. We had bebop records on the jukebox, Charlie Parker, Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Billy Eckstine. This is on our box, this is where we sat and listened to the music. There were little places in town."⁸² Hearing bebop on the jukebox gave Carter and her friends a chance to absorb the characteristic sounds and licks of the new style. "[When] we played hookey at the soda joint across the street from my high school. . . we would sit around and learn the solos."⁸³

Through bebop's disarming expression, the adolescent Carter could accomplish the separation from her mother that teenagers must go through. Bebop became the foreign language that empowered Carter to shut her mother out, and put distance between the two of them: "I was listening to jazz over the radio, and jazz. . . on records. I really got involved when bebop came into existence, because my parents didn't encourage it, and didn't know anything about it themselves. They were church oriented, and figured if you hung out in bars and night clubs, you were going straight to hell."⁸⁴

⁸² Yaple, BNY-80.

⁸³ Santoro, "Look What We Got," 62.

⁸⁴ Yaple, BNY-80.

Carter adopted the hip mannerisms that went along with the music, and which would earn her a membership in the bebop subculture: "Along with bebop came a fad, a look, an attitude, an approach to the language. The whole language that we talk now, 'hip,' 'groove' and 'pad'; 'cat' and slapping of the hands; you know how they say 'howdy do.' That came out with bebop. Bebop had that long before anybody or you all got it. Of course, it's gotten fancier now, but bebop was first with that."⁸⁵ Much of the bebop argot came to the boppers from Lester Young, whose anti-heroic persona inspired the young generation.

School gave Carter an environment in which to explore herself in the role of performer, but she hadn't yet begun to perform bebop: "In my school, I was active more in singing commercial music, the music that was heard on the radio every day. That's how I got into the business, by doing assemblies and singing in school, [and] by being on the stage there."⁸⁶ This statement reinforces the conclusion that, of all the influences in her life, Carter feels that school had the greatest affect on her artistic development. Furthermore, it suggests the dynamic between the commercial style and bebop that would shape Carter's artistic sensibility.

Carter also had the good fortune to come of age musically when many opportunities existed for a young artist to get her start: "When I came up there were a lot of

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

theaters across the country that had an amateur show night - the Apollo [in Harlem], the Paradise in Detroit, the Howard in Washington, the Royal in Baltimore, [the Strand Ballroom in] Philadelphia, and the Regal in Chicago. . . a lot of theaters for young people to try out their wares."⁸⁷

These factors all converged to set the stage for Carter's first foray into the professional music world. "By accident, somebody entered my name into a theater contest which gave amateur shows every Wednesday night. This was that famous theater that had all these black entertainers there. I never knew [about it] at the time, or about the Apollo Theater in New York."⁸⁸ Carter's story illustrates the tangible support she received from her friends. "It was one of the girls in the music department [at Northwestern High School] that got the audition papers for the Paradise Theater, [and helped arrange] for me to go and take the audition. . . one of the students; a young white girl. I didn't do it myself, because I didn't even think about it. . . I never had gone to the Paradise."⁸⁹

Carter may have gotten involved in this process accidentally, but once she got started, she showed remarkable tenacity: "I got on the amateur show, after an audition. I had to sneak and do it; I lied to my parents and told them I was going somewhere else and went to take the audition. I passed the audition, and then the night of the performance, I

⁸⁷ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 24.

⁸⁸ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁸⁹ Bauer, unpublished interview.

had to lie again to go to perform. I won."⁹⁰ If she had any prior doubts, the event convinced her that she could relate well to audiences: "From the very moment I hit the stage on an amateur show contest in Detroit and won first prize, the audience and I got along great."⁹¹ Her success with singing and accompanying herself on the piano gave her the confidence she needed to pursue a professional career in music: "I sang 'The Man I Love'. . . . After the amateur show contest, I thought I could strike out and become a singer."⁹²

With this auspicious beginning, the precocious sixteen-year-old singer gained entry into the professional world. At first she had only one professional contact--her agent: "After this, there [was] a small town booking agent [who took me on]. I [didn't] know anybody in this business."⁹³ Carter began to sing in black bars and cabarets in Detroit and elsewhere in the Midwest: "A local agent saw something. . . in me. He made it his business to go to my mother to ask her if I could do a Sunday afternoon cabaret. I was going to get paid for it, so naturally the money soothed any doubts that my mother had about me going to this Sunday afternoon cabaret. The money cooled her out. So I did that, and then a couple of more Sunday afternoon cabarets at that time. I was being hired."⁹⁴ That Carter had not yet reached the

⁹⁰ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁹¹ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 30.

⁹² Taylor, Notes and Tones, 272.

⁹³ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

legal age for entering a bar did not keep her out. She used a forged birth certificate: "Because I was young (I wasn't [yet] twenty-one) [I] wasn't allowed to get into the bars. Although I went into them, I still wasn't supposed to be in them. Then I devised some sort of way of getting into the bars. I just defied my mother, and took off to do gigs other places and everywhere else, and things like that."⁹⁵

So Carter turned to the musical scene in Detroit to nurture her sense of identity, and give her a sense of belonging. As it turns out, Detroit was the right place to be at the time, for a musical revolution was in the midst of transforming the city's musical life.

⁹⁵ Bauer, unpublished interview.

Chapter 2: Learning Bebop in Detroit (1946-1948)

As much as bebop now seems a logical extension of the swing era style, to most listeners of the 1940s, bebop seemed to come out of nowhere. Thus, in order for us to understand the place of bebop in the course of jazz history, we must first consider it in light of the commercial music that preceded it. Two quotes from David Meltzer's source book, Reading Jazz, give us an important perspective on the reception of bebop as it emerged.¹ In the first, a critic writing in 1948 articulates how an unaccustomed listener reacted to the strains of the new music. Weldon Kees begins by quoting Rudi Blesh in the New York Herald Tribune:

"Seeming non-sequiturs can be artfully combined to express an integrated idea. . . . But the irrelevant parts of bebop are exactly what they seem; they add up to no such unity. . . . A capricious and neurotically rhapsodic sequence of events for their own sake, [bebop] comes perilously close to complete nonsense as a musical expression." Kees goes on to add: "Although bebop's defenders reserve as their trump card this music's 'element of the unexpected,' it is precisely bebop's undeviating pattern of incoherence and limitation that makes it predictable in the extreme."²

¹ David Meltzer, Reading Jazz (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1993).

² Ibid., 204-05; this passage originally appears in a 1948 review by Weldon Kees, in Reviews and Essays, 1936-55, James Reidel, ed. (Ann Arbor: The Univ. of Michigan Press, 1988), 194-98.

The second quote, written in 1951 by Dave Brubeck, articulates the impulse that generated such a response in more than a few listeners:

Ignoring the original melody (which the initiated knew without reiteration), [bop] musicians improvised their own themes based upon their own alteration of standard tunes. They demanded that audiences listen. Tempos were set for instrumental performance, not for dancing. This music. . . was a radical protest, not only against a world in war, but against the growing commercialism that threatened the extinction of an American art form.

For its audience, bop attracted a comparatively small, but fanatically loyal, group of intellectuals, artists, and malcontents, who felt in the tense new music some of their own revolt from a society that had betrayed them. While the general public sought to escape in popular vocalists, hill-billy tunes, novelty tunes and vulgarized interpretations of rhythm and blues, the restless protest fringe was seeking expression of its discontentment. . . . Bop, and later, 'cool jazz' were extreme reactions against the vulgar escape music that thrived on the hysteria of the times.³

These two passages suggest that bop initially arose as a counter-reaction to swing. Its adherents commented upon the musical gestures of the mainstream jazz style, exaggerating them to the point of distortion, and forming an incisive caricature of popular music. In its extreme tempos and its

³ Ibid., 239; taken from Dave Brubeck, "Jazz Perspectives [1951]" in Perspectives U.S.A. 15 (spring 1956): 22-28. As much as bebop musicians may have enjoyed inverting the social equation by shocking "squares" with music that sounded "crazy," as a rule, they did not engage in a self-conscious attempt to overturn the musical status quo. In fact, many bebop musicians would deny having had this intention, claiming, as Stravinsky did about his music, that it means nothing beyond itself; but, the technical demands of jazz performance, and an abstract quality of the music itself, tend to lead its practitioners to take a formalistic stance.

free use of dissonance, in the syncopations that disrupted both melody and accompaniment, in its often harsh timbres arranged in a complex web of sound and in the technical virtuosity required to play it, which excluded all but a few virtuosi, bebop gave voice to those urban black musicians who did not accept the role of outsider in silence, and who thus created a language of defiance to express themselves. In the process, an elite subculture crystallized around the music, with the experience of alienation from the superculture as one of its defining qualities.⁴ Armed with the sounds of progressive jazz, bebop musicians assailed the conventions of popular music.

Betty Carter has described the music in similar terms: "That's what happened to bebop. It wasn't anything they could stop, because they tried in the beginning. They said, 'oh, the crazy music. Where is it coming from?' It got all the bad reviews and everything; nobody liked it; 'too fast, too this, and too that.' Suddenly it just started to move and seep into the way composers wrote, the way arrangers wrote arrangements, the way piano players played accompanying other musicians, attitudes, language, style, walk,

⁴ In Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 11-13, Marc Slobin proposes the terms "superculture," "subculture" and "interculture" to suggest, respectively, an over arching category, an embedded unit and a crosscutting trend. He describes them as "translation terms," according to James Clifford's description of such terms as "[words] of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way." My reasons for introducing Slobin's terminology will become apparent as we go along.

everything. It just had an effect on everything at that time."⁵

Carter speaks happily of the time in her life when she got deeply involved in bebop, painting a vivid portrait of the musical scene then: "The Detroit environment was very good. When I started, Detroit was well on its way to receiving jazz. Detroit was aware, and I was really aware."⁶ Not all Detroit neighborhoods received the new music with the same enthusiasm, however: "It was, in fact, the West Side that captured the bebop craze when it came along, in 1945 and '46. [It] accepted [bebop] quicker than the East side, [be]cause the East Side was more or less the blues territory. . . . The West Side was more sophisticated, you might say, because there was a mixture of people over there. It was integrated, it wasn't all black. See, Detroit didn't become all black until the '50s; [but before then] it was mixed."⁷

Lars Björn describes how Detroit's black-and-tan cabarets, which were located in black neighborhoods,

provided entertainment for mainly (though not exclusively) white audiences. The popularity of black-and-tans for 'slumming' white audiences began in Detroit around the middle of the 1920s but their heyday was the 1930s when Paradise Valley became the musical entertainment center of the city. Around the intersection of Saint Antoine and Adams, the city's major bands could be heard. . . . [Later], the new

⁵ Matthew Yapple, from the transcript of a videotaped interview of Carter conducted at Laney Community College, Oakland, CA, during the first week of December 1979. Hereafter referred to as LCC-79.

⁶ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer," 19.

⁷ Bauer, unpublished interview.

style . . . developed in the musician's subculture of Paradise Valley, which became known as a place for 'after-hours' spots, a place to play after the night's work in a ballroom or black-and-tan. In nightly 'jam sessions' innovative musical ideas were exchanged in an environment without commercial pressures.⁸

From the outset, the jazz audience in Detroit had a white component from the West side, and anyone who wanted to hear the new sounds of bebop had to go to the black side of town: "I lived on the West Side; but the place where I heard the music, where I had to go to use the forged birth certificate, was on the East Side, called "Black Bottom," near Hastings [and] San Antoine [pronounced "ANN-twine"], at a club called the El Sino. That's where Dizzy [Gillespie] came to, and [later on,] Charlie Parker."⁹

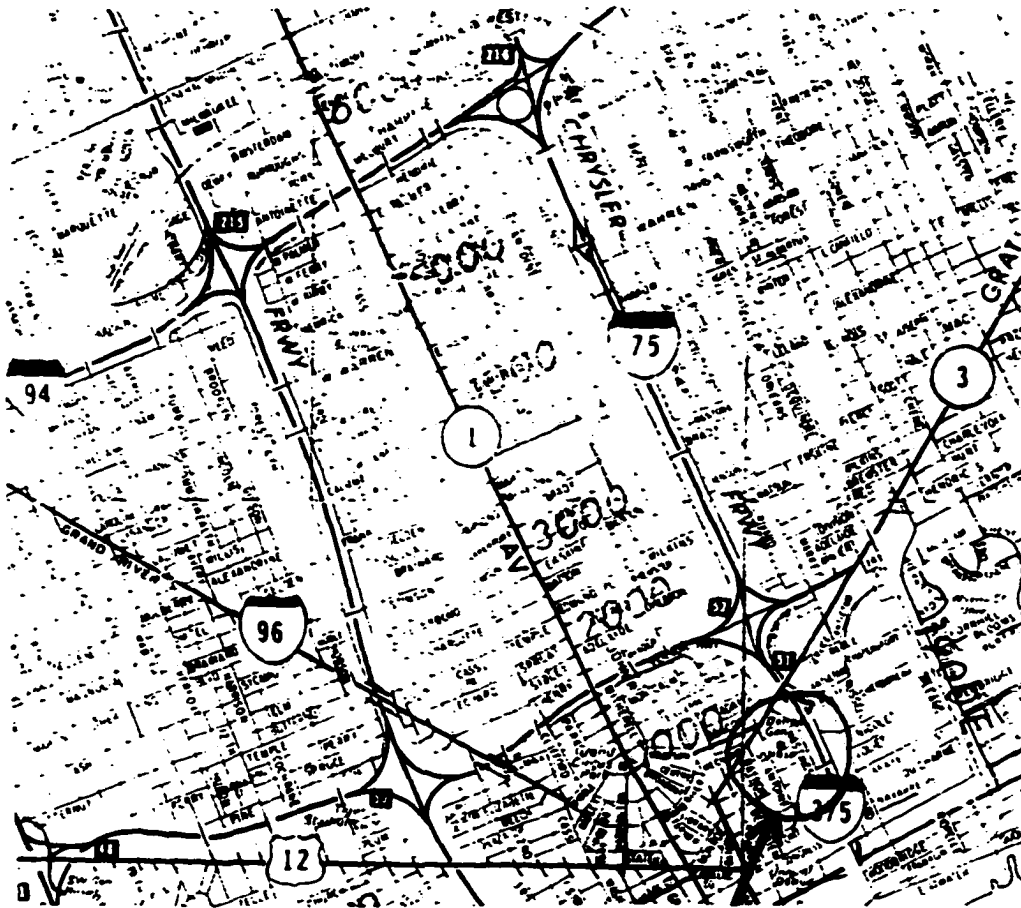
Undaunted by the fact that she was underage, Carter entered Detroit nightclubs in search of opportunities to hear the musicians and to sit in with them: "They knew I wasn't twenty one, but at that time. . . people weren't. . . as strict as they are now about the age. . . . [On] the black side of town . . . nobody cared what we did anyway."¹⁰ Nor

⁸ Lars Björn, "From Hastings St. to the Bluebird: the Blues and Jazz Tradition in Detroit," Michigan Quarterly Review 25, no.2 (spring 1986): 257-68.

⁹ Bauer, unpublished interview. Hastings and Saint Antoine run parallel to one another in an area near the intersection of the Edsel-Ford and Chrysler Freeways (see Figure 2.1). Björn suggests that the area Carter refers to as "Black Bottom," specifically near Hastings St., had been razed in the 1920s in order to build these freeways. (Björn, "From Hastings St. to the Bluebird," 258.)

¹⁰ Bauer, unpublished interview; Carter has spoken of a forged birth certificate, but she claims that it does not play a role in the confusion about the year of her birth, mentioned earlier.

Figure 2.1: Map of Detroit Showing Hastings and Saint Antoine.



did Carter's lack of experience deter her from pursuing her passion for the music: "I was relatively young. I wasn't a mature singer. I didn't know everything. Sarah Vaughan was out there. Ella Fitzgerald was out there. Dinah Washington was out there. A lot of other singers were out there, local singers that were really excellent singers, and I was just out of high school. So what did I know?"¹¹

¹¹ Yapple, BNY-80.

Fortunately, Carter could not have found a more welcoming environment for a novice bebopper. Paul Berliner summarizes the testimony of a number of musicians in describing the nurturing environment for young talent provided by the Detroit music scene. He writes of a Detroit, in which people had easy access to the new sounds of bebop. "Sympathetic club owners in Detroit left their back doors open so that passersby and underage audiences who congregated in the alleyways could sample the music of featured artists."¹²

Nightclubs such as the Bluebird Inn, Club Sudan, Freddie Guignard's, the Graystone Ballroom, the Paradise Club, and the West End Hotel on the far side of the railroad tracks near the Fleetwood Cadillac plant all embraced the new music.¹³ These and a host of others gave local and visiting musicians an environment in which to explore and develop the sounds of bebop, both in formal performances and in late night jam sessions that often went until dawn: "Detroit was. . . full of musicians that caught [onto] bebop early and supported it."¹⁴ The list of Carter's early musical associates includes many of the giants of bebop: Sonny Stitt, Charles Greenlee,¹⁵ Yusef Lateef.¹⁶ Some of the names have

¹² Berliner, Thinking in Jazz, 23.

¹³ "Nightclubs: Detroit," The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 874-75.

¹⁴ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 72.

¹⁵ Greenlee later acknowledged his Detroit roots by naming his 1960 composition "El Sino" after the bar of the same name. (Slide Hampton, Somethin' Sanctified, Atlantic 1362.)

¹⁶ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 272.

been forgotten: Leon Rice, drums, Theodore Sheely, piano. It was about late 1946 and in 1947.¹⁷

It was all sit-in, chances you take, and around town we had a lot of piano players like Barry Harris [and] Tommy Flanagan. All these guys lived in Detroit. I came up with these guys you know; Kenny Burrell, and [others who] had gigs around town. . . . There were other local piano players that were [also] very good. Jazz was like a fever in Detroit at that time. All we were doing around town was "scatting" and "turning the corner," [and] "catting."¹⁸

With the music came a life style, and a mode of identification. "We were bebopping, daddy, at that time in '47 and '48. Oh there was nothing else, no other kind of music. Everybody was scatting, you know? The sound, the language, everything, that was the day when Bird was right there."¹⁹ For Carter, bebop had an all encompassing quality that went beyond the sounds of the music. "Bebop [was a] feeling, or approach, or attitude, because that's what happened to the music. . . . You had to have the attitude and the approach and feeling; a swing about your body, . . . a gait in your walk. . . . It's just the whole attitude which made it bebop."²⁰

Scatting provided the way for a singer to enter the world of bebop, and Carter made a niche for herself by developing this skill: "The field was open if you wanted to

¹⁷ White, Jazz Talk.

¹⁸ Matthew Yapple, from the transcript of a videotaped interview of Carter conducted at the Great American Music Hall during the first week of December 1979. Hereafter referred to as GAMH-79.

¹⁹ White, Jazz Talk.

²⁰ Yapple, BNY-80.

scat. If you were interested in bebop you had to have a knowledge of improvising and be quick and fast. Otherwise you would just be ordinary."²¹ The ability to improvise played an important part in opening the door to this world. It would not, in itself, secure a place on the bandstand for very long, however, for a musician also had to have a distinctive sound. "When bop started, everyone wanted to sound different, you wanted to stand out."²² Carter's immersion in this world kept her from noticing that the jazz musician has always wanted to sound different, and stand out from the crowd.

Carter's understanding of the elements of music deepened during this time. "You [sat] in whenever you went to a night club and musicians were playing. . . . You knew the key that you sang a song in when you wanted to sing. Of course, if you didn't know the key, the cat would try to find the key for you."²³ The roots of Carter's later approach to singing, which has emphasized the interactive aspects of improvisation, lie in her experiences in the Detroit clubs:

²¹ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 74.

²² Mark Jacobson, "Betty Carter is Alive in Bed-Stuy," the village VOICE (18 August 1975), 100. In her interview with Gil Noble (Noble, "Special Moments," 1.) Carter remarked on the prevalence of improvisers in the bebop scene, which reinforces the idea that simply to be able to improvise was not enough to gain recognition. "I just improvised at that time, because that's what everybody was doing anyway." She also gives us an idea of her material at this time: I think I sang 'When I Fall In Love' and 'The Man I Love'" (Ibid.)

²³ Yapple, BNY-80.

We learned how to transpose. Musicians had to transpose to sing and to play for singers. They had to learn it and transpose on the job. A lot of musicians had to transpose their solos. That meant they had to change their concept of it on the spot. There may [have been] nine choruses before they got it together. That was training fields; that's what we did to learn. They tried and tried and tried. Things were played different[ly] by different people. Different piano players had different approaches to certain songs and a different way of playing it, and you had to adjust to that. This made you think this way today, and think this way yesterday, and tomorrow, and whatever. It was never the same.²⁴

Carter understood that she was in the midst of something important, and she decided then to make a place for herself in that world. "You know how many giants came out of Detroit during that era. I came into contact with all these musicians, and I hung under them because I saw that this was where it was for me."²⁵ In addition to working with local musicians, Carter sat in with musicians who played Detroit on road trips.

As mentioned earlier, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker both passed through Detroit when Carter was in high school, and their arrival there had a lasting impact on her. Leonard Feather claims that Gillespie had initially come to Detroit in July 1946, shortly after he had made his first recordings for the Musicraft label.²⁶ According to Feather "the band

²⁴ Yapple, GAMH-79.

²⁵ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 272.

²⁶ Dave Usher, Gillespie's business partner at Dee Gee Records recalls that he heard "Dizzy Gillespie at a 'Dixieland' Jazz Concert in Detroit in 1945. He came to the Paradise Theater in Detroit which was the soulville [sic] theater at that time. It used to be Orchestra Hall." (Gillespie, To Be or Not to Bop, 372); Thomas Owens corroborates the year, claiming that Milt Jackson performed

laid an egg" on this occasion, but "returned the following February to produce such a turnout that police had to be called out to keep the crowds from getting out of hand."²⁷ James Moody recalls the latter date, saying "Oh man; people, boy, they'd be wild. Lines would be all everywhere. We were playing the Paradise Theater in Detroit. Man, the people! Just lines, crowded, coming in to see Dizzy."²⁸ Gillespie had made a breakthrough, and "by 1947, Gillespie's was the band to follow."²⁹

Carter has recalled that "Dizzy Gillespie's first engagement in Detroit was at the El Sino club."³⁰ In 1947 the club had just opened, partly in response to the increasing public demand for the new music, so he could not have appeared there any earlier.³¹ "He had a big band then, with choice musicians: Milt Jackson, John Lewis, James Moody and Ray Brown."³² Carter's recollection suggests that she had not heard about him until he had begun to enjoy his first taste of popular success, and that she had not known of his

with Gillespie in Detroit in 1945. See Thomas Owens, "Jackson, Milt[on]," The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 571.

²⁷ Feather Inside Jazz, 41.

²⁸ Gillespie, To Be or Not to Bop, 269.

²⁹ Barry McRae, Dizzy Gillespie: His Life and Time (New York: Universe Books, 1988), 44.

³⁰ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 272.

³¹ Ross Russell, Bird Lives: The High Life and Hard Times of Charlie "Yardbird" Parker (New York: Charterhouse, 1973) 242; and "Nightclubs: Detroit," The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, 874.

³² Taylor, Notes and Tones, 272 (Carter also refers to Gillespie's personnel from this time in Miller, "An Interview," 72 and White, Jazz Talk.)

earlier appearances in Detroit: "My very beginnings of hearing him . . . in Detroit, [were] when I sneaked in. . . to hear him at the El Sino, and to hear that big band music; 'Cubana be' and 'Cubana bop' and 'Things to Come' and 'Manteca,' and those early Dizzy Gillespie compositions."³³

With the advent of bebop, the role of the singer in jazz had begun to change. Until that time, every dance band had at least one singer, albeit in a somewhat ornamental role. Given bebop's emphasis upon instrumental virtuosity, however, the human voice did not often have a place in bebop combos.³⁴ As David Stowe points out, instrumentalists had disdained singers even earlier, in dance bands: "Many musicians and enthusiasts [regarded] female big-band vocalists (and most males as well). . . as unfortunate concessions to commercial taste."³⁵ That most beboppers neglected to capitalize upon

³³ Yapple, BNY-80 Carter has claimed to have heard Gillespie as early as 1946, but if she did, it would not have happened at the El Sino. For an idea of the sounds Carter heard, listen to Dizzy Gillespie: The Complete RCA Victor Recordings (reissued in 1995 on CD; Bluebird 07863-66528-2). According to the liner notes, Gillespie recorded "Cubana Be" and "Cubana Bop" on 22 December, and "Manteca" on 30 December 1947.

³⁴ Feather, "Singing: 6. New Singers and Styles of the 1940s and 1950s," in The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 1127. Feather later cites Gillespie's use of Joe "Bebop" Carroll as an exception to this statement, neglecting to mention Gillespie's own contribution in the vocal department.

³⁵ David Stowe, Swing Changes: Big-Band Jazz in New Deal America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 173-4. Note that the term "musician" seems not to apply to singers. See also n.3, above. Stowe makes other important observation about why instrumentalists held singers in such low regard. We will return to this issue when we consider the state of scholarship on jazz singers.

the direct appeal of singers reinforces the idea that they took a non-commercial stance toward their art.

Significantly for Carter, however, Gillespie's own scat singing played a key role in his rise to fame, and her earliest recorded efforts reveal her debt to his approach to scatting. "The eccentricity of dress, the deliberate exploitation of bebop's giddiness, and most particularly, the use of the leader's consciously frivolous singing were major factors in selling the band to the public."³⁶

Scat singing dates back at least to Don Redman's 1924 recording of "My Papa Doesn't Two-time No Time," and the better known Louis Armstrong recording of "Heebie Jeebies" two years later;³⁷ but the use of improvised nonsense syllables in place of lyrics undoubtedly predates these recorded instances.³⁸ Cab Calloway and Leo Watson went on to develop scatting into an identifiable feature of their acts, and as seen in example 2.1, Ella Fitzgerald would bring it to new heights of artistry. Barry McRae exaggerates, therefore, when he suggests that "Gillespie's singing style, with its emphasis on wordless scat, changed the rules of the jazz vocal."³⁹ The complex sounds of bebop did infuse the scat vocal with a new intensity and an array of distinctive techniques for imitating the timbres and articulation of

³⁶ McRae, Dizzie Gillespie, 44.

³⁷ Schuller, The Swing Era, 166, n.8.

³⁸ Ibid. and J. Bradford Robinson, "Scat singing," The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 1093-94.

³⁹ McRae, Dizzy Gillespie, 44.

instruments. Carter responded to Gillespie's scat singing, and to other talents of his: "I liked Dizzy's arrangements, his approach to a big band, what he did in front of a big band."⁴¹

40 Porter, Jazz, 426 (This transcription is by Alexandra Sweeton and Lewis Porter).

41 Herb Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence,"
24.

sing, so every time I came out to catch him at the club, he would ask me to sing with the band. He didn't have to [let me], so he must have dug something I was doing at that particular time."⁴² Gillespie's acceptance of Carter gave her encouragement at an important time in her development, and in spite of her boldness, Carter recognized how fortunate she was. "To have an opportunity to work with these musicians was fantastic. I was in another kind of world."⁴³

She did not let her inexperience or her limited repertoire get in the way of participating, but instead, relied upon her ear and her ability to scat. "With Dizzy I did 'Mean To Me.' I remember doing that, because he had an arrangement on that tune that Sarah Vaughan used when she had a job with the band. He still had the arrangement. . . . I remember doing the first chorus, and then the band came in, the interlude, and then he looked at me and said, 'We're going to change keys.' And so, I heard the music change keys and when I went along with it, he looked at me and he winked, like my ears were on."⁴⁴

Carter credits her getting a paying gig at the El Sino to Dizzy's endorsement: "I ended up getting a job at the club, which really helped me."⁴⁵ While she had worked at

⁴² Taylor, Notes and Tones, 272.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Noble, "Special Moments," 1. In this same interview Carter suggests that she would sit in on other occasions when Gillespie came to Detroit. "So, every time he came to town, if I wanted to sit in, he would let me." This may have gone on into the 1950s, when she periodically returned to sing in Detroit.

⁴⁵ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 272.

other clubs before this gig, this job seemed to hold special significance for her: "I was gigging around town, and. . . Dizzy had a gig at the El Sino. . . . He let me sing with the band, and [after the band left] I got a gig because [Dizzy let me sing.]"⁴⁶

While Gillespie enjoyed the attention of the growing bebop audience, the music's other great exponent, Charlie Parker, had been receiving psychiatric care at Camarillo State Hospital in California. On 7 April 1947, Parker emerged from his treatment and returned to New York. By July, he had put together his classic quintet, and was to embark upon the most productive period of his career. From December 1947 to March 1948, Parker took his newly formed quintet on the road, booked to perform mostly in the midwest. Ross Russell's description suggests that they played Detroit first: "After the 'Klactoveesedstene' session [of 4 November] the Quintet left town for two weeks at El Sino in Detroit."⁴⁷ Russell adds that the band had a return engagement at the El Sino in December, a fact corroborated by Phil Schaap.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ White, Jazz Talk; In other interviews, Carter has implied that she had already worked at the El Sino by this time. That Carter worked there only after singing there with Gillespie seems more likely, however, especially since the club opened shortly before Gillespie's appearance there.

⁴⁷ Russell, Bird Lives, 252.

⁴⁸ Phil Schaap, The Complete Dean Benedetti Recordings of Charlie Parker (MOSAIC Records, MD7-129 [August 1990]). Schaap's discography documents a 21 December club date that Parker's Quintet played at the El Sino.

The young bebopper made it her business to hear this band when it came to Detroit: "The next stint [I had sitting in at the El Sino] was when Charlie Parker came into the club. At that time he had Max Roach, Tommy Potter, Duke Jordan and Miles Davis."⁴⁹ According to Brian Priestley Parker's performing repertoire at this time was different than the sides he had recently recorded, and "consisted mostly of standard songs or the bebop classics of a few years earlier such as 'Night in Tunisia,' 'Dizzie [sic] Atmosphere,' and 'Shaw Nuff.'"⁵⁰ From the tone of Carter's recollections, we can easily imagine the thrill she must have felt to join musicians she idolized: "I had to have the experience of sitting in with Charlie Parker and those guys. When they came to town, I'd be the first one there, standing in line--a real fan."⁵¹

Carter vividly recalls her first meeting with Bird: "[My friends and I] had all skipped school, and we were going to wait [for] Charlie Parker to come to rehearsal. He show[ed] up about four hours late. I took him to eat, and in our conversation, as he was eating, I told him that I was a singer (trying to be a singer). I had my forged birth certificate. . . so I could get into the club to see him, and anybody else I wanted to see. After Bird and I had struck

⁴⁹ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 273. Carter also comments on Parker's sidemen in Friedwald, Jazz Singing, 403.

⁵⁰ Brian Priestley, Charlie Parker (Tunbridge Wells, England: Spellmount, 1984), 57.

⁵¹ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 72. In Friedwald, Jazz Singing, 403, Carter elaborates on her idolization of Parker and other innovators of modern jazz.

off this relationship in Detroit, whenever I came to see him at El Sino, he would ask me to sing."⁵² In later years, when Carter was working in New York City, the two artists would sometimes reverse roles, and Bird would ask to sit in with her. He always had an inspiring affect upon her. "We did some gigs together. Also, I sat in with him early in life. That was to stimulate my ego. That's what made it for me. When you can sit in with someone that great and then the next time you go to see him, he says to you, 'Do you want to sing?', . . . you know you kind of impressed him. It was the same way with Dizzy, and most of the bebop musicians around-- [they] would always ask me to sing. I was encouraged very early in my life."⁵³

Carter's determination to make a place for herself among these musicians enabled her to step up boldly to the microphone and assert herself: "After Bird discovered I could sing, it became a thing: 'Come on up and sing!' I would get on up there and do my thing. That's how I really got started."⁵⁴

Carter has described Parker in almost mythic terms. In spite of the brief time that Parker spent in Detroit, he

⁵² Yapple, BNY-80.

⁵³ Matthew Yapple, from the transcript of a audiotaped interview of Carter conducted at KJAZ radio during the first week of December 1979 (hereafter referred to as KJAZ-79). The interview took place in conjunction with the performances at the Great American Music Hall that she recorded and released as Betty Carter and the Audience (Bet-Car, MK-1003; re-released as The Audience with Betty Carter in 1988 (Verve 835-684-2).

⁵⁴ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 273.

became Carter's guiding light for the rest of her career. She has often described how Parker's arrival at a jam session or gig would raise the level of every musician's playing. She came to use the phrase "thinking music" to describe the effect Parker had on his colleagues: "Charlie Parker was the epitome of what the music was doing to young kids in those days. That was my age, sixteen and seventeen. . . . [He was] turning us onto a different approach to music; a music that we seemed to fall in love with instantly in Detroit. . . . We were. . . on cloud nine at that time. . . . A lot of kids who have a pick of their favorite star or favorite person in the business. Well, that's what we felt about Charlie Parker in Detroit in the early and late '40s. That's what Bird means to me: [an] introduction to something new, [a push] to strive for something different."⁵⁵

The encouragement she received from Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker came at an important time for her, and it gave her strong reason to believe in herself: "When Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker say you can sing, who says you can't. . . . Charlie Parker and Dizzy put spirit in me. They gave me the go-ahead power, they gave me the thing that made me bold enough to say 'I can do that,' because if you deny what they say, I mean, you [would be] crazy to deny anybody like that. And this is what Charlie Parker. . . and Dizzy offered me in the beginning."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁵⁶ White, Jazz Talk.

She made use of their endorsements to break into the Detroit jazz scene and beyond: "That's pretty good credentials for a young girl. That's what I lived on in Detroit for a while."⁵⁷ Carter would soon begin to work at clubs in the midwest. "I even went to Cincinnati, and did a job down there at a night club called The Cotton Club. . . . I worked in Dayton, Ohio, and in Pittsburgh. I joined a couple of local bands, one called 'Sax Carry.'"⁵⁸ Before long, she got to Chicago's south side, and added Club DeLisa to her resume: "Club Delisa. Well, everybody in the business played the Club Delisa. You didn't have nothing going for you if you didn't play Club Delisa. The Delisa was like the thing to play to in the midwest, because it was a big club, and it had a chorus line, and it was very, very extravagant and very, very good. The shows were very good, very well choreographed and the whole thing. So the DeLisa was one of the clubs you tried to work in the early days of the business. You could always use that in your proposal."⁵⁹

Carter has spoken passionately on several occasions about the values that many musicians shared: "I was fortunate at the time I started out, because individualism was very important. At that time money wasn't the thing you thought about. We thought about trying to get our 'thing' together. We thought about being different, because we had

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁵⁹ Yapple, LCC-79. By "proposal," I take Carter to mean that, with each gig, she was accumulating a verbal resume in order to get work.

to be different; because it was like a sin to sound like somebody else. You'd get away with it for a while, but it [wouldn't] last."⁶⁰ Carter's views suggest that bebop attracted her, at least in part, because it gave her a sense of belonging, while also permitting her to express her individuality. The novice bebopper's next major musical experience would also give her a sense of being a part of a community. Ironically, it would occur in one of the last of the big bands.

⁶⁰ White, Jazz Talk.

Chapter 3: The Hampton Years (1948-1951)

With the help of a booking agent named Chester Rinty, Betty Carter had succeeded in getting onto the midwestern club circuit by 1948: "I had been in the business now about two years . . . diddling and daddling around the area of midwestern states, [in places] like Cincinnati, Dayton, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and working around in Detroit. Those were the kinds of gigs I [was] getting."¹ Carter has described the process that led to her early professional success as almost accidental, and she does not dwell upon the technical aspects of her early career, such as putting together material for an act. She has suggested, rather, that for the most part, she just improvised upon standard tunes.

Although Carter's career aspirations had not yet fully taken shape, she knew that she could not get very far by gigging around clubs in the Detroit area; and, while she may not have had a carefully considered plan for what to do next, she did have an awareness of how other singers had achieved success, or at least had tried to achieve it: "There [were] a lot of singers in the business at that time, singing with different bands across the country. They didn't have big names, and once they left the big bands, they just quit singing."² In fact, instrumentalists sometimes resented the

¹ Yapple, BNY-80.

² Ibid.

way some singers exploited the opportunity big bands afforded them: "Some instrumentalists were repelled . . . by the excessive career ambition of the female vocalists, many of whom considered their big-band experience nothing more than preparation for a solo musical or film career."³

Singers had few options available to them at this time. Until the late 1940s, an ambitious young singer looking to gain further experience in music, and hoping to break out of the local scene, could do so only in front of a big band. This would not always be the case. From as early as 1946 on, the fortunes of singers came to rest less and less upon their association with a big band, due to subtle changes in the music industry. Nevertheless, in 1948 it still held true that if Carter could associate herself with a big band that had a national reputation, she would gain not only steady work, but exposure to audiences across the country as well.

Carter had her sights set on one band in particular: "Dizzy Gillespie . . . was doing 'Things to Come,' and . . . 'Emanon' and 'Good Bait,' all those things where the big band sounded new and fresh. The chords were different and right on top."⁴ Gillespie seemed to favor male vocalists, however: "I really wanted to join Dizzy, . . . but he didn't have any females. He always had men like Pancho Hagood, Joe Carroll and Johnny Hartman."⁵ Carter envied the role of one singer

³ Stowe, Swing Changes, 174.

⁴ Yapple, GAMH-79.

⁵ Linda Prince, "Betty Carter: Bebopper Breathes Fire," Down Beat 46, no.9, (3 May 1979): 13.

in particular: "Johnny Hartman . . . came up during the bebop era with Dizzy Gillespie's big band about the same time I was trying to get with the band. . . . [I was] not really in touch with them; [but] I wanted to be asked [to join the band]. They didn't ask me, you know."⁶ In retrospect, Carter sees that this was probably for the best: "Suppose I had been with Dizzy's band; the things that were going on there at that time were things I didn't need to come in contact with; but I didn't know that then."⁷ Carter is referring here chiefly to the heroin abuse prevalent among the musicians, of which Gillespie was at first unaware. "In New York, I could have gone under behind that. I could have lost my 'thing' [or, talent]."⁸

If Carter considered the big bands a potential proving ground for her talent, however, her situation had greater urgency than she knew. Since the end of World War II, opportunities for a singer to join a big band had been declining, for the fate of big bands had taken a turn for the worse. In fact, "one factor that contributed to the success of bop was the collapse of the big bands. At the end of 1946 a half-dozen of the most famous ones broke up."⁹ As Rich Kienzle notes: "In December 1946, Harry James, Woody Herman,

⁶ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁷ Santoro, "Look What We Got," 62.

⁸ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁹ James Lincoln Collier. "Jazz," The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz. Ed. Barry Kernfeld (New York: St. Martins Press, 1994), 596.

Charlie Barnet, Les Brown and several other leaders all announced that they were disbanding their orchestras."¹⁰

Ironically, the rise of solo singers, while not the only cause, contributed to this phenomenon. World War II provoked the demise of the dance bands because of rationing and travel restrictions imposed at the time. The increased popularity of solo singers backed by smaller groups also hurt the big bands. James Lincoln Collier reinforces this view: "The causes were several, but the main ones were the increasing costs of maintaining a big band and a shift in public taste in favor of vocalists. Their demise left a sudden vacuum which the boppers partly filled."¹¹ While some large groups continued to do well at the end of the 1940s, "the orchestras that prospered weren't the jazz-oriented units popular earlier in the decade, but conservative, pop oriented groups like those led by Blue Barron and Sammy Kaye."¹²

One band proved more resilient than the rest, however, and Carter happened to hear it one night in 1948, with a group of her friends: "A boy friend of mine talked me into going to a Lionel Hampton dance."¹³ 'Flyin' Home' just wasn't my thing; . . . but I went.¹⁴ I wasn't too thrilled about going to this dance to see Lionel Hampton, because I was a

¹⁰ Rich Kienzle, liner notes to Your Hit Parade: The Late '40s (MCA Records, 1991, for Time-Life Music, HPD-26).

¹¹ Collier, "Jazz," 596.

¹² Rich Kienzle, liner notes to Your Hit Parade: 1949 (BMG Music, 1989, for Time-Life Music, HPD-06).

¹³ Yapple, BNY-80.

¹⁴ White, Jazz Talk.

bebop fan from way back. I had the [bebop] attitude."¹⁵ Once there, her friends urged her to sing for Hampton. "The kids around the bandstand told Hamp that I sang. He asked me 'do you sing "Gates?"' I said, 'sure,' very cockily. I went on the stage and sang."¹⁶ She claims that, at the time, she felt nervous and annoyed about this. Although she had intended to stick to the melody, she couldn't resist the temptation to scat.¹⁷ "What did I [sing]? I did some scat things. I think I did Ella Fitzgerald's 'Lady Be Good.'"¹⁸

Carter did not expect anything to come of the event:

I left the dance never thinking [I would] hear from Lionel Hampton again. But this agent, Chester Rinty, who had been booking me around town at the little cabarets and things, had kept in touch with Hamp for some reason or other. Two weeks later, Hamp called him, or, I don't know exactly how it happened, but I know that I got a call from Chester telling me that Lionel Hampton wanted me to join him in Toledo, Ohio.¹⁹ That was June of '48.²⁰

I was informed that his current singer, Winnie Brown, was leaving, and he was in the market for a singer. I didn't believe it, so. . . I went to [Rinty's] office to see the telegram. At that time, I probably was more stunned than anything else that he actually called me, and that I really got this job. . . . I knew it was a working band. I really had no idea that Lionel Hampton would ever call me for the job. . . . I just knew that he wasn't interested in somebody like me, you know. Winnie Brown wasn't a bebopper. She's a nice singer."²¹

¹⁵ Yapple, BNY-80.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Dreyfuss, "Betty 'Slow Pop' Carter," 18.

¹⁸ Yapple, BNY-80.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ White, Jazz Talk.

²¹ Yapple, BNY-80.

Hampton's own description of these events corroborate what Carter has said:

It was when we were playing a dance at the Forest Club in Detroit that I first had Betty Carter sing with me. That was 1948. She was at the dance with her friends, and hanging around the bandstand. All her friends knew she wanted to be a singer, and someone asked me if she could sing, and I said okay. She was good, and about two weeks later I sent . . . a telegram to her agent in Detroit. . . . She was a young girl, about eighteen, trying to get started.²²

Carter's surprise at Hampton's offer could have had something to do with the sheer magnitude of the opportunity. Having achieved national prominence from working with Benny Goodman a little over ten years earlier, Hampton formed his own big band in 1940. During the first half of the decade he and arranger Milt Buckner consolidated the band's sound, and produced a series of hits such as "Flying Home," "Air Mail Special" and "Down Home Jump" that assured the group wide recognition.

Hampton's popularity was linked to his reputation for showmanship, which grew from his willingness to do practically anything to get a reaction from his audiences.²³ In addition to putting on a good show, however, the band could deliver the goods musically. His band was famous for

²² Hampton, Hamp, 94.

²³ Bill Crow, Jazz Anecdotes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 292-97; and Ira Gitler, Swing to Bop: An Oral History of the Transition in Jazz in the 1940s (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 22.

the rhythmic drive and sheer volume it could produce, and Hampton was not satisfied with a performance unless he and his band had stirred the crowd to a frenzy. That he recorded consistently throughout the 1940s and 1950s gives some indication of his musical success.²⁴ The band played for Harry Truman's inaugural gala on 19 January 1949, and according to Hampton was "grossing a million a year and doing one-nighters fifty-one weeks out of the year."²⁵

Hampton had a reputation for hiring inexperienced hopefuls. In his autobiography he recounts with obvious pride the discovery of such young talents as Quincy Jones, Jerome Richardson, and Clifford Brown.²⁶ In this light, Hampton's offer to hire an unknown singer after hearing her only once does not seem so extraordinary.

As we know, Carter accepted his offer. That her mother disapproved of her decision comes as no surprise: "I defied the family, (going straight to hell, [according to them]) and joined Lionel Hampton."²⁷ In offering Carter a job, Hampton gave her the opportunity to leave home and strike out on her own without having to do it entirely alone.

Carter joined Hampton's band while it was on the road, and her first few months with the band took her to venues across the country: "I joined him in Toledo about two weeks

²⁴ Schuller, The Swing Era, 392-402. Also see J. Bradford Robinson, "Hampton" in New Grove Dictionary for Jazz, 476-77, as well as the discography in Hampton, Hamp as well.

²⁵ Hampton, Hamp, 93.

²⁶ Hampton, Hamp, 94-95.

²⁷ Yapple, BNY-80.

after I had sat in, that's how close it was, because Winnie Brown had [given] her two weeks' notice then, and she was marrying the baritone player with the band. And they were leaving together.²⁸ [I got] my first real honest-to-God road-education in this business when I started out with him. I joined the band, started right out on the road, and our first trip was [from] Toledo to Denver, Colorado, then out west to California in 1948.²⁹ In California we worked the theaters The theaters were the places that we really learned our craft, because we still had four shows to do a day. . . . We played in California, at the Golden Gate, in San Francisco."³⁰ The band did not do night club dates, but played mostly at dances.³¹

Hampton's discography gives additional information about where Carter went with Hampton.³² In July 1948 the band broadcast from Geneva, NY and in August from Peoria and Denver. In October they went to Little Rock, Arkansas. Hampton mentions encountering the fifteen year old Quincy Jones in Seattle sometime during the year he hired Carter.³³

After this time, however, the band seems to have settled in New York City for about a year, and later, in Los Angeles. Much of the band's activities during the next year-and-a-

²⁸ Noble, Special Moments, 3.

²⁹ Yapple, BNY-80.

³⁰ Noble, Special Moments, 3-4.

³¹ Ibid.

³² The following information comes from Hampton, Hamp (discography).

³³ Hampton, Hamp, 94.

half, from January 1949 to April 1950, centered in New York, which gave Carter a chance to get to know Manhattan, to make connections and to impress the Harlem audience: "In 1949, I was with Hamp. I went to the Apollo for the first time in my life. I was scared, on the road, going to the Apollo Theater in New York City. When I arrived, I jumped on that stage and that audience went crazy. With a little bit of scatting, they went crazy and ever since then, it was like that all the time."³⁴ Jack Schiffman, son of the late Apollo Theater owner, Frank Schiffman, has given us a listener's perspective on Carter's early performances: "Lionel Hampton introduced a small girl, hair bobbed short, eyes seemingly larger than her face, [who] burst out on stage, took a deep breath, and sang bebop riffs, a whole machine-gun load of them, that turned the house upside down. I never saw an audience turned on so quickly to a new sound."³⁵ By July 1950, the band had made its way to Los Angeles where it seems to have stayed until at least October. In early 1951 the band was in Hollywood, but by April 1951, the band had returned to New York.

As mentioned earlier, Hampton's band had several important, and soon-to-become-important musicians during Carter's time there. "In the band, at that time when I first joined, . . . were Milt Buckner [who had been playing piano and arranging since 1941,] Charlie Mingus, and Wes

³⁴ Yapple, KJAZ-80.

³⁵ David Hinckley, "Betty Carter, Real Live," Daily News Magazine (24 January 1988): 12.

Montgomery."³⁶ Buckner had grown up playing piano in Detroit in the 1920s, and is also known for introducing the "locked-hands" approach to voicing chords. Around the time that Carter joined the band, Buckner left, only to rejoin it in 1950.³⁷ Mingus stayed with Hampton during 1947 and 1948, and Wes Montgomery toured and recorded with Hampton from 1948 to early-1950.³⁸ "There was a trumpet player with the band, Benny Bailey, and Al Grey was on trombone."³⁹

Players seemed to move with ease from Hampton's band to Dizzy Gillespie's band, and vice-versa. Benny Bailey had recently come from Gillespie's big band; Al Grey would go on to play with Gillespie in 1956. Both would remain with Hampton from 1948 until around 1953.⁴⁰ Despite the polemics that bebop had provoked, when it came to steady work, the players revealed little regard for hard stylistic distinctions.

And yet, Carter at first kept her distance from most of the other band members, feeling that her bebop pedigree put her above these musicians. "I think I was . . . a snob. . .

³⁶ Yaple, BNY-80.

³⁷ Peter Vacher, "Buckner, Milt(on Brent)," The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, 166.

³⁸ Barry Kernfeld, "Mingus, Charles, Jr., *ibid.*, 778; Lewis Porter, "Montgomery family: Wes [John Leslie] Montgomery, *ibid.*, 792.

³⁹ Yaple, BNY-80. Carter also mentions a player named Johnny Boyd. Others whom Carter has mentioned who did not achieve prominence include Walter Williams on trumpet and a Japanese trombone player whose name Carter could not recall.

⁴⁰ Roland Baggenaes, "Bailey, Benny," New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, 51; Leroy Ostransky, "Grey, Albert Thornton," *ibid.*, 452.

. I probably went through that critical bag. [Being] young, too, and a bebopper, you know, I probably put up an attitude about 'she's all right, and he's okay.'⁴¹ Long bus rides and performing together, often several times a day, would erode her attitude, however. As mentioned earlier, the band members eventually came to refer to Carter affectionately as "the Kid."

Carter soon learned the lineage of singers that had preceded her: "Dinah [Washington] was with Lionel Hampton two singers before I was there. [The one] before me was Winnie Brown. A lot of people don't know about her, either. . . . She had a very unique, husky sort of voice.⁴² Winnie Brown . . . stayed with the band a long time. She had a big record at one time, called 'He's Gone Again,'" which she had made with Hampton.⁴³ I took her place, and she'd taken either Dinah's place or Madelin Green, one of the other singers that was with Lionel."⁴⁴

"While I was with the band, we had at least five singers. . . . We had Irma Curry, Jeanette Franklin. We had Sonny Parker, who was a blues singer. Also, in the band while I was there, was. . . Little Jimmy Scott. . . . And

⁴¹ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁴² Ibid. In this same interview, Carter implies that she did not find out about Dinah Washington's association with Hampton until later: "She lived in New York, and I saw her a lot in the '50s, when she was traveling around I was still struggling, going from club to club. . .when she was a star." Given her admiration of Washington this seems unlikely.

⁴³ Noble, "Special Moments," 4.

⁴⁴ Yapple, BNY-80.

there was also another singer that no one knows now, but maybe somebody will remember his name: Jackie Paris. . . . [The band also had] Roland Berten, . . . a tall, handsome, debonair type, who sang all the male ballads for the ladies."⁴⁵ The fact that Hampton had this many singers set him apart from other bands of the time, and serves as another indicator of the band's success. "For me, the money we were making meant that I could have several singers at a time for the engagements where it was good to have singers."⁴⁶

Joining a band as well known as Hampton's so early in her career fueled Carter's self-confidence: "You can get pretty cocky after being out [gigging] from about '46 to '48 and get with Lionel Hampton. You know, as a kid, you can think you're pretty together. That ain't no time to pay no dues, really. It [was] about a year and half, two years before I went with Hampton."⁴⁷ Looking back more than twenty-five years later, however, Carter spoke more modestly of her qualifications for singing with a big band: "I had a pretty good ear, was a pretty good singer, but most of all, I had a good rapport with people."⁴⁸

Carter knew her selling points, but she could also assess her weaknesses with ruthless objectivity. She knew,

⁴⁵ Noble, "Special Moments," 5; Gil Noble notes that Jackie Paris was also known as "Skylark," the title of a tune he recorded in his first session as a leader in 1945. Sonny Parker recorded with Wes Montgomery around the time they both were with Hampton (Porter, "Montgomery," 792.).

⁴⁶ Hampton, Hamp, 94.

⁴⁷ White, Jazz Talk.

⁴⁸ Bryant Mason, "Mom is a Chanteuse," The Daily News (8 September 1975).

for example, that she didn't have the kind of instrument that Sarah Vaughan had,⁴⁹ and that she had not acquired very much singing experience at this point in her career: "I didn't sing enough to really develop a voice. I had the ear, the knack, the personality, and everything else, but I didn't have the voice. The voice had to become mature. It takes time to develop a sound. But I had that other ability, and that's what [Hampton] used."⁵⁰

Carter's own brand of flamboyance must have appealed to Hampton's taste for showing off. Singing so frequently gave Carter a chance to hone her performing skills: "From the moment I started out with Lionel Hampton in 1948, . . . I always worked at doing exactly what I wanted to do on the stage."⁵¹

With individuals as strong-willed as Hampton and Carter, it seemed only a matter of time before tension would arise between them. Hampton had a short fuse in general⁵² and his temper, coupled with Carter's independent nature, her outspokenness and her musical preferences inevitably produced conflicts. Their disparate stylistic allegiances provided one obvious source of conflict. Ironically, while Hampton would gladly make use of Carter's allegiance to bebop in order to widen the band's appeal, he had no tolerance for her

⁴⁹ Carter could have encountered Vaughan's voice as early as 1945, when Vaughan recorded "Mean to Me."

⁵⁰ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 274.

⁵¹ Yapple, LCC-79.

⁵² Crow, Jazz Anecdotes, 294 and 296; Gitler, Swing to Bop, 88.

rejection of him and his band's swing aesthetic: "He'd look at me and ask me dumb questions like 'Whose band do you like best, mine or Dizzy's?' I'd say 'Dizzy's,' and he would fire me, and Gladys Hampton would rehire me.⁵³ He fired me seven times and I stayed with the band two and a half years, struggling."⁵⁴

Such disputes would naturally affect Carter's work, and she has described a typical occasion, when the band arrived in Harlem to play the Apollo Theater. In normal circumstances, the performers would do several shows a night, with the first to serve as a showcase for critics. The critics would then get the word out about the band's appearance and draw audiences for the following shows. If Carter and Hampton were not getting along when the band got to New York, he would pull her out of the first show. Frank Schiffman and Gladys Hampton would confront Hampton about this, and by the time the band got on stage for the second show, Carter was there with them:⁵⁵ "[Hampton's] wonderful wife, Gladys, . . . stuck with me during the whole tour. If it had not been for her, I don't think I would have stayed with the band that long. Lionel and I fought quite a bit about different little things. I hardly remember now, but we did fight. It was Gladys who saved me when he got angry enough to fire me. She wouldn't let him fire me."⁵⁶

⁵³ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 271.

⁵⁴ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 13.

⁵⁵ Bauer, unpublished interview.

⁵⁶ Yapple, BNY-80.

Gladys Hampton did more for Carter than mediate disputes between Hampton and Carter. She gave Carter encouragement at a critical time in her development: "Gladys Hampton . . . loved my work and had a funny feeling that I might do something."⁵⁷ She may also have appealed to Carter because of her strong will and independence, traits that Carter admired.

In addition, Gladys Hampton enjoyed a prosperity not often associated with African-American women of that time: "Gladys was wearing diamonds and fur coats and driving a little sports car to meet us, or flying in to meet us. In 1949, she was named 'Most Outstanding Woman of 1948' by Mary McLeod Bethune, commander-in-chief of the Woman's Army of National Defense (the WANDS). She was honored 'as an example of the leadership among women which is coming more and more into its own' and 'for unusual proficiency exhibited in business and managerial capacities as the only woman manager of a band in America.'"⁵⁸

Her affluence offered living proof to Carter that a black woman could aspire to a high degree of success and attain it. When discussing Gladys Hampton's role in her life, Carter hastens to point out that "Gladys owned a car!"⁵⁹ The impressionable young singer from Motor Town would take careful note that a black woman could own the quintessential American status symbol--a Cadillac.

⁵⁷ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 13.

⁵⁸ Hampton, Hamp, 93.

⁵⁹ Bauer, unpublished interview.

Gladys Hampton had a reputation among the band members for being the "real boss of that band," as John Hammond put it.⁶⁰ Her thriftiness in managing the band's business manifested itself in her penchant for "economizing," a term Dexter Gordon suggests she herself used to explain her money-saving measures.⁶¹ The notoriously low wages that Gladys Hampton paid contributed to the band's high rate of turnover (Howard McGhee only lasted a few weeks). She also managed the band's publishing company, Swing and Tempo Music, and its record label, Hampton Records.⁶² Because she held such a position of authority in the band, Gladys Hampton played a key role in shaping Carter's growing conception of herself as a woman in the world of jazz.

In Gladys Hampton Carter had a clear example of a woman running an organization and making decisions: "She left a big impression because she was in control."⁶³ Gladys Hampton's example instilled in Carter more than a sense of how to run a business, however. Most significantly, she demonstrated to Carter that, although men undoubtedly dominated the jazz world, women could at times successfully stand up to them, for on several occasions she had done so on Carter's behalf: "I had this role model of Gladys Hampton to emulate. She took care of the band, saw to it that everything ran smoothly, that everybody got paid and such.

⁶⁰ Crow, Jazz Anecdotes, 63.

⁶¹ Gitler, Swing to Bop, 14, 87, and 217.

⁶² Hampton, Hamp, 93.

⁶³ Bauer, unpublished interview.

That was the first time I'd ever experienced dealing with a woman who was the boss; and she was a black woman. It was very unusual at that time, and still is."⁶⁴

When Carter claimed that "the seventeen year old girl who walked into Hamp's big band was already a woman,"⁶⁵ she suggested that she had left her childhood, and by extension, her family, behind. The Hampton band took on a role her family never had for her, nurturing her talent, and acknowledging her worth. Pictures of the Hampton organization now hang on a wall in Carter's apartment in Fort Greene, Brooklyn. Images of the tour bus, Gladys Hampton's car, a surprise birthday party for Carter, a birthday cake and a briefcase given as a birthday present evoke a time when Carter felt appreciated. The prominent location of these mementos in Carter's home reveal how much Carter treasures the memory of her apprenticeship.

As Hampton notes: "Gladys was nice to Betty, too. She taught her a lot about dressing and would pass some of her clothes on to Betty."⁶⁶ Gladys' generosity takes on added meaning when we consider that "singers [who were paid less than most of their instrumental colleagues], often went into debt purchasing an adequate supply of gowns at prices ranging from \$120 to \$150 apiece."⁶⁷ She also taught her a lot about being a woman in the music world. Betty says the main reason

⁶⁴ Santoro, "Look What We Got," 62.

⁶⁵ Mason, "Mom is a Chanteuse."

⁶⁶ Hampton, Hamp, 93.

⁶⁷ Stowe, Swing Changes, 174.

the guys didn't like her was because she was a female. She also said that the one thing she had in her favor was that Gladys controlled the band."⁶⁸ Perhaps by sharing so many values and character traits with Gladys Hampton, Carter in turn filled the role of surrogate daughter for her.

In one matter, however, Gladys Hampton could not, or would not, intercede. Hampton had defined Carter's role in the band strictly as a scat singer: "He wanted me in the band strictly to do my bebop. That's how he tagged the name 'Betty Bebop' on me. Everything I did with the band was bebop. . . . I never really got a chance to sing any songs. He just had me improvising on this and on that. This is where I got my experience in being independent."⁶⁹ By using Carter exclusively for improvised scat choruses, Hampton capitalized upon her ability to improvise, her strengths as a performer and her bebop mannerisms. In so doing, he could also avoid having to create new arrangements for her: "He'd stick me into songs they were already doing, so I was singing a chorus here, a chorus there."⁷⁰

As time wore on, Carter expressed increasing ambivalence about her role in the band, revealing that she harbored ambitions to attain recognition as a full-fledged vocalist: "Here I was scatting all the time with his band. . . . I went to him one time and said, 'I want to sing a ballad.' He

⁶⁸ Hampton, Hamp, 93.

⁶⁹ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁷⁰ Santoro, "Look What We Got," 62.

said, 'no, no, no, . . . you stick with that bebop.'⁷¹ [But] I really wanted to sing some melodies."⁷²

That Hampton had such a narrow use for so enterprising a singer as Carter eventually led to problems between the two, and the name he had given her became emblematic of this conflict: "Betty did not like it when I called her 'Betty Bebop,' but Gladys told her to just go with it, and when [she left the band], she could call herself anything she wanted to."⁷³ Ultimately, Carter would come to see the wisdom in Gladys Hampton's advice. "I don't think that [he was exploiting me]. I don't think anybody was thinking about that, because I had to get some experience. Gladys would say to me . . . 'stick it out for a couple of years, and get some training.' It really worked out, because I needed it."⁷⁴ Gladys Hampton's reluctance to get involved in this issue reinforces the impression expressed by others that, while she took care of the business end of the organization, she left the artistic decisions to her husband.

Due to Carter's resourcefulness, and her drive to improve herself, her time spent in Hampton's band proved invaluable to her growth in many ways. In addition to capitalizing upon the experience she gained onstage, which solidified her scatting technique and improved her stage presence, she wisely sought to make good use of the idle

⁷¹ Yaple, LCC-79.

⁷² Yaple, BNY-80.

⁷³ Hampton, Hamp., 94.

⁷⁴ Yaple, BNY-80.

hours that touring musicians often spend between gigs:

"While we were sitting around, doing nothing, I'd feel like doing something with that time."⁷⁵ As noted earlier, she got schooled in business from Gladys Hampton.

During this time she also gained a better understanding of theoretical aspects of music. Carter had a natural curiosity about how music is put together; but, she also had other motivations for educating herself musically. She has made it clear that she values intelligence in herself and in others. Encountering the patronizing attitudes that many instrumentalists had towards female singers, she sought to distance herself from their stereotype: "I didn't want to be dumb!"⁷⁶ Carter recognized that an expertise in music's technical aspects would give her another way to set herself apart from the competition.

Her interest in music theory also grew from a wish to take an active role in music-making: "I wanted to be knowledgeable about my music; I wanted to be able to tell musicians something about it."⁷⁷ From this time on, Carter had the ability to step into a rehearsal and communicate with instrumentalists on a level that most singers could not: "Lionel Hampton [gave me] the opportunity to develop some sort of rapport with musicians."⁷⁸ Even arguments between her and Hampton would not prevent her from making progress,

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 24.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ White, Jazz Talk.

and often spurred her on: "When [Hampton] got angry with me, he wouldn't let me sing, so I figured I would take advantage of what was going on while I was out there."⁷⁹

The substance of Carter's learning went beyond a superficial understanding of the fundamental aspects of music, giving her a firm foundation in specific musical procedures:

I learned something about chord structure, putting an arrangement together, writing notes on a staff, seeing music, and transposing. I learned that from a fellow who is now playing first chair with Count Basie, Bobby Plater. I bugged him to death to show me this and that.

So I learned how to transpose a tune, [so] I wouldn't need a piano player to transpose for me. I can write the chords . . . it takes me all day, [but I can do it].⁸⁰

Saxophonist and flutist Bobby Plater had joined the band in 1946 as part of Hampton's effort to update the sound of the band, and by 1948 he had become a principal soloist. In addition to a bop-like approach to soloing, he provided some of the band's arrangements, specifically those for the singer, Sonny Parker:⁸¹ "Bobby Plater was the first alto man with Lionel Hampton in the reed section. He also was my seat partner on the bus."⁸² Plater shared his knowledge of arranging with Carter: "Bobby Plater taught me how to write

⁷⁹ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 271.

⁸⁰ Yapple, LCC-79.

⁸¹ Chris Sheridan, "Plater, Bobby," in The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, 989.

⁸² Yapple, BNY-80.

arrangements on the bus, without the piano."⁸³ Given the impact that instrumentalists have had on Carter's vocal sound, and that arranging has had on her overall sound, her interest in arranging seems natural:

My first big band arrangement was on Good Night Irene. I just wanted to see if I could voice. I used the old Glenn Miller sound, with the clarinet playing top. We played it at the Clique in Philadelphia just to see how it sounded, because I had written it on the band bus. I wrote my score out traveling back and forth, then I wrote out the parts, and at rehearsal we passed the parts out and I heard it for the first time. Boy, was I proud.⁸⁴

The choice of tune is startling unless we consider that Pete Seeger's group, the Weavers, had made Leadbelly's song a huge popular hit in 1950. In the process of making an arrangement of it, Carter extended her musical vocabulary to include sounds other than bebop: "I screamed, 'Oh, this isn't me.' But I felt great because I did it."⁸⁵ Plater had asked Gladys to come and hear the arrangement and she responded with enthusiasm, "you know, some day eventually you may have a big band."⁸⁶

The story she tells about her next arrangement gives us some insight into one of her motivations for learning how to arrange: "Then I decided to write one for myself to go into the Apollo, and Hamp didn't trust me. He was mad at me. He

⁸³ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 13.

⁸⁴ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 271.

⁸⁵ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 13.

⁸⁶ Bauer, unpublished interview.

stayed mad at me [for] a long time. But I think he really loved me because I was so different."⁸⁷ Nat King Cole had made the Hit Parade in 1950 with the Stan Kenton band on a number called "Orange Colored Sky" (Capitol 1184) which had a fairly surrealistic lyric about someone getting literally struck by love. Carter recounts:

I did an arrangement on "Orange Colored Sky," for myself, which I never got to perform. We were going into the Apollo, but Lionel Hampton wanted me to do another tune [besides "Orange Colored Sky"] which I had been singing for years, every time I came to the Apollo. It was a song where the band plays a real hip arrangement he's got in his book and I come out and do four or five choruses of scat on it. Well, I was ready to sing a few words, to let people know that I not only could scat, but that I also could sing a ballad. . . . He wouldn't let me do it. That was it! It didn't make any kind of sense for me to continue. I had been on the road for two and a half years, and I had been exposed. It was time for me to step out there on my own.⁸⁸

By June 1951, Carter had left the band: "I couldn't see the advantage of his making me go out there and improvise every night. I wanted to sing love songs; but without that training, I might not know how to be spontaneous now, or I might not want to [be]."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 13. This remark makes an interesting comparison with Carter's father's remark that she "had something different." See p.29, above.

⁸⁸ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 271.

⁸⁹ Hinckley, "Betty Carter, Real Live," 12.

Hampton did not record with many of the important vocalists who worked with him in the 1940s.⁹⁰ Carter did get to record while with Hampton, however, and, because she started with the band so soon after she had begun to sing professionally, the first four recorded examples of her singing represent some of her earliest musical thinking. They show that she had not only adopted elements of bebop, but had also integrated these elements into a viable expressive language.

The first recording we have of Carter with Hampton comes from an aircheck made at an unknown location in the mid-west. The broadcast occurred shortly after 15 October 1948, when Hampton's big band had broadcast from Little Rock, Arkansas. The broadcast included a performance of J.J. Johnson's tune "Jaybird," given in example 3.1.⁹¹ In Hampton's arrangement, Carter scatted on the first solo chorus, after the band played the head. (For a discussion of her solo see transcription 1 in Appendix II and the analysis in Part II.)

Hampton recorded with Carter twice on the Decca label, while in New York in 1949: once on 24 January only a few months after "Jaybird," in which she scatted on a tune called "Benson Boogie," a blues with a boogie-woogie feel, and again

⁹⁰ Will Friedwald observes that for such singers as Dinah Washington (with whom he recorded one session, in New York, on 29 December 1943, accompanied by a sextet), Jackie Paris, Joe Williams and Little Jimmy Scott, little recorded evidence exists of their time with Hampton (Friedwald, Jazz Singers, 404).

⁹¹ Hampton, Hamp. (discography). J.J. Johnson originally recorded the tune, which he built on the chord changes to "I Got Rhythm," on 26 June 1946.

Example 3.1: The lead line of "Jaybird," as arranged for Hampton's band.

Jaybird

$\text{♩} = 224-252$ 7 vibrs solo 2 3 J.J. Johnson (1946)

on 10 May when she sang a vocal version of Charlie Parker's "Now's The Time," called, "The Hucklebuck." Tommy Dorsey had had his penultimate hit record with "The Hucklebuck," in 1949, staying on the rhythm and blues charts for fourteen

weeks.⁹² The Dorsey version took a conservative swing approach to the tune, virtually stripping it of its bebop characteristics. Hampton's version has a somewhat more progressive sound overall. In addition to giving Carter a short solo scat break toward the end of the performance, it also gives us the unlikely occurrence of Carter singing lyrics: "Betty did 'The Hucklebuck,' which was one of my big numbers at the time, and she recorded that with me and the band. But most of the time she scatted."⁹³ Perhaps the tune's origins in Parker's theme, and by extension, its bebop associations, prompted Hampton to let his resident bebopper sing the lyrics. Of "The Hucklebuck," Carter has said, "you won't believe that 'Hucklebuck'. I used to do it calm."⁹⁴ The tempo is considerably slower than Parker's version, which gives the rendition a shuffle feel. Roger Kinkle lists only two numbers as representative jazz recordings for Lionel Hampton in 1949--"Benson's Boogie" and "The Hucklebuck." Significantly, these are the two tunes he recorded on Decca with Betty Carter.⁹⁵

⁹² An earlier recording of "The Hucklebuck," from 1948, came from a Detroit saxophonist named Paul Williams (see Bjorn, "From Hastings St. to the Bluebird," 263). In Andy Gibson's arrangement for Dorsey, Charlie Shavers sang Roy Alfred's lyrics. (See Rich Kienzle, Your Hit Parade: The Late '40s, liner notes, MCA Records, 1991 [for Time-Life Music HPD-26]; see also RCA Victor 20-3427.)

⁹³ Hampton, Hamp., 94.

⁹⁴ White, Jazz Talk

⁹⁵ Roger Kinkle, The Complete Encyclopedia of Popular Music and Jazz 1900-1950 (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1974).

According to Carter, some people from Universal Studios in Hollywood heard the band when they played at a dance in Newark, and in early 1951 they brought the band out to California to shoot a series of short performances.⁹⁶ As a result, we have some footage of Carter, presumably from just before she left the band, scatting one chorus of a tune called "Cobb's Idea." Even in such a short space of footage Carter conveys a high degree of self-assurance and stage presence.⁹⁷

Carter's experience with Hampton places her among the last of the jazz singers to have had their roots in the big bands. With her apprenticeship now over, she felt ready to try her luck in the "Big Apple," and so began the journeyman phase of her career.

⁹⁶ Bauer, unpublished interview. On another occasion, Carter has placed the filming in 1949, but the later date fits with the band's recording activity better. "I did a so-called movie short with Lionel Hampton coming out of Universal in 1949; a short movie in which I did a little bebop." Yapple, GAMH-79.

⁹⁷ Data concerning one other possible recording by Carter in this period suggest that she participated in a recording session for the Bullet label in 1950, in Memphis, Tennessee. (Walter Bruyninckx, "Betty Carter," 60 Years of Recorded Jazz (Mechelen, Belgium: Bruyninckx, 1979.) The fact that Carter's arranging mentor, Bobby Plater, led the session increases the likelihood of her involvement. Carter's role in the session remains unclear, however, and she has no recollection of having participated in it.

Chapter 4: On Her Own (1951-1954)

We have considered how, as an adolescent growing up in Detroit, Carter found in the bebop scene an environment that gave her a sense of belonging, and which allowed her to establish an identity apart from her family. Hampton's band had also been something of a surrogate family for Carter, and had enabled her to leave home and strike out on her own at a young age. In Hampton's band she had enjoyed being a part of a community of musicians that acknowledged many of the aspects of her personality and talent that she herself valued, and that supported and nurtured her growth as a person and as an artist. Her break from the band asserted her independence yet again and left her seeking a new community with which to connect. Understandably she did not accomplish this without some trauma, but she knew that she did not want to stay with a big band: "Big bands were petering out at that time. Once you had done a big band you don't want to do it anymore. That's it! It's time to get out of that unless you're forever gonna be a band singer and you want to stay with a big band for ten years."¹

She initially gravitated to Detroit, where she already had some roots: "What happened after I left Hamp? I went home for about six months, to Detroit, to regroup and get over this. When you are with something for two and one-half years, you have to realize 'now what do I do? Do I take

¹ Kuhl, "Betty Carter," 7-8.

a shot at going to New York or stay in Detroit at home?' I stayed there about six months and had to get out."²

Any hopes she may have had that she and her mother might feel differently about each other did not come to fruition. She had already established a separate life long before, and her return confirmed this fact: "After I left the band in '51 [I went] back to Detroit to see what the family was into, and discovered they were into nothing."³ Significantly, she felt that she had only two options--to stay in Detroit or test herself in New York. Carter had already become familiar with New York when the band had played there, so in some ways New York seems an obvious choice. She did not have any family there, however, and she would truly have to fend for herself now: "I left [home] in '51, and there was nobody . . . on the East Coast."⁴ After this departure, her family ties stayed weakened for a long time. As late as 1976 she was saying "my family right now does not know a thing about what I'm doing."⁵

The challenge of trying to make it in New York appealed to Carter as well, and shows again how much Carter believed in herself: "New York City. That's it. That's where it works. . . . There are other places to go; but still, if you want to take some chances and really learn at the same time, especially with the energy level that it [has], that's the

² Yapple, BNY-80.

³ White, Jazz Talk.

⁴ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter."

⁵ White, Jazz Talk.

place to go if you really have something. There is something about New York and what it does to you to make you do your thing. You won't get laid back. You got to fight if you are to survive. That is so necessary in jazz because it makes you think all the time."⁶

Moving to Manhattan

Carter proceeded to make a place for herself in New York:

So I left and came to New York, and moved . . . in[to] a hotel on 47th Street, where it looked like the world in show business lived. From Sammy Davis to Will Maston's trio to the Mills Brothers, two different dancers--interpretive dancers, saxophone players, and Miles Davis. . . . We all lived around 47th Street and Broadway. There were about three hotels that accommodated all the musicians. We stayed in the hotels and didn't pay our rent. The hotel managers kind of knew that we weren't going to pay our rent on time, but they seemed to go along with it and understand."⁷

Miles Davis's recollection of his circumstances at the time supports what Carter recalls: "I was staying in and out of hotels with bitches who were giving me what I needed to support my habit. I was staying at the University Hotel on 20th Street, and in and out of the Hotel America on 48th Street."⁸

⁶ Yaple, GAMH-79.

⁷ Yaple, BNY-80.

⁸ Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe, Miles: The Autobiography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 145.

In addition to getting herself set up, she went about making the necessary connections for getting work:

There was this bar around the corner called The Turf. It was in the Brill building on 50th and Broadway, where everybody hung out in the daytime. This is where the work sifted through and came in. The song writers were selling their songs dirt cheap. This was the early '50s, so the music at that time was separated. It was called race music. There was no integration [in] the music. There [were] always the song writers or the publishers in the building [who] took over a lot of songs that black people wrote in the '50s.⁹

Carter made her way in the world by joining an informal guild of black performers:

Also, in the bar downstairs at The Turf, we assembled to have meetings or whatever. [Its where you went] if you wanted to find a singer . . . or a dancer . . . for [the] next weekend. You could find somebody in that bar to tell about a job. We got a lot of work hanging out in the bar I did very well.¹⁰ It was no easy pickings, but you could still do what you wanted to do and survive. All you had to be was good, and you could work. It didn't make a difference what you did or how you did it, as long as it was good you got a job There were more places to work; you could be yourself, not like anyone else. But in the '60s when the money became a primary thing, it was 'be like somebody else' or close to somebody else, in order to make some money. It was quite different."¹¹

This contrast between the 1950s and the 1960s occurs frequently in Carter's interviews, and has something to do with her feelings about race. "At that time [the '50s] jazz

⁹ Yaple, BNY-80.

¹⁰ Yaple, BNY-80.

¹¹ Yaple, KJAZ-80.

was our music [both black people's and jazz musicians'; for Carter these are virtually one and the same] and we loved it We just clamored to hear it."¹²

Carter initially had little difficulty finding work:

When I first came to New York, I went into a bar called the Apollo Bar in Harlem.¹³ [It was] right down the street from the Apollo Theater, [on] 125th St. and 8th Ave.¹⁴ I stayed there six months. That's getting over in New York when you first get there.¹⁵ I really did have a pretty nice time.¹⁶ [I played with] a house band I can't remember who the drummer was, but Jimmy Butts was the bass player. I think Freddy Washington was the piano player.¹⁷

Naturally in such a people oriented business as music, one job led to another: "I went from the Apollo Bar to another club called the Paradise It's another bar, two bars owned by the same people and they just rotated me from one bar to the next, and [they] played all musicians, you know.¹⁸ [They] owned a chain of bars, and had entertainment there. If you were good in one of these great places, you could work them all. I did that and I did gigs here and there."¹⁹ Once when she played the Paradise in

¹² White, Jazz Talk.

¹³ Yapple, BNY-80.

¹⁴ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter."

¹⁵ Yapple, BNY-80.

¹⁶ White, Jazz Talk.

¹⁷ Yapple, BNY-80.

¹⁸ White, Jazz Talk.

¹⁹ Yapple, BNY-80.

Harlem, at 110th Street and 8th Avenue, Charlie Parker came into the bar, sat in front, and asked if he could play.²⁰

One of the owners, the tenor saxophonist George "Big Nick" Nicholas, recalls that he hired her for eight straight months in the Paradise. From 1950-51, Nicholas led jam sessions there, and he became known for a boisterous singing style. Originally from Lansing, Michigan, his association with Carter may date back to the time Dizzy Gillespie's band visited Detroit, for Big Nick played tenor with Gillespie then. In an interview from 1980, he reinforced Carter's perception that she had "had a hard time because they called her Betty 'Bebop' Carter and the 'Bebop' label really hurt her career, for years. [Other club owners] wouldn't hire her, but I hired her."²¹

Carter had the opportunity to work with established jazz greats at the Paradise.

That's where I had my real experience with people like Art [Blakey] and Thelonious [Monk] and Horace [Silver] and Sonny Rollins and Max [Roach]. The whole world came through musically at that time. I worked there a lot.²² I probably worked with every musician in the business in the '50s. I mean every jazz musician in the business that was around here locally. I could start naming them, and it would take this whole show to name them all.²³ I worked with Ben Webster in the '50s in clubs when Billie Holiday used to come in and catch

²⁰ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 278.

²¹ Dale Fitzgerald, George "Big Nick" Nicholas: Jazz Oral History Project (Newark, NJ: Institute of Jazz Studies, 1980; unpublished interview), 31. Thanks go to Lewis Porter for drawing this passage to my attention.

²² White, Jazz Talk.

²³ Yapple, BNY-80.

me working and ask me to sing her favorite tune at that time: . . . 'Moonlight in Vermont.' She would always ask me to sing that. So like I said, I worked with everybody from bebop musicians probably to the oldest guy who had been around in the business, Art Blakey. I worked with him quite a bit.²⁴

Mostly, however, Carter's work consisted of "just going in with the house bands and singing standards: 'Thou Swell,' 'Moonlight in Vermont,' 'Perfidia,' 'Gone with the Wind,' 'I Could Write a Book,' 'Can't We Be Friends.'²⁵ At that point I really started getting my music together: my ideas about programming my performance so that it will be interesting to me and my musicians and the audience."²⁶

Carter became a local artist in New York City: "I gigged all over the city. I worked in Baby Grand in Brooklyn, [too]."²⁷ Carter performed at the latter club in August 1955 on the same bill as comedian Nipsey Russel and Big Miller, who was billed as "Rock and Roll Blues straight from Detroit,"²⁸ but she may have worked at Baby Grand earlier as well: "It was the thing to do. You had occasional trips outside, to Atlantic City, or maybe Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, or Detroit, but you

²⁴ Yapple, BNY-80.

²⁵ White, Jazz Talk. Significantly, her first recording as a session leader consisted of this same material.

²⁶ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter."

²⁷ Yapple, BNY-80.

²⁸ The New York Amsterdam News, 10 August 1955, 19. I am indebted to Lewis Porter for making available to me this and the other press notices listed below which appeared in black newspapers.

lived here--you would take all the gigs that came your way. That's what I did."²⁹ Other locales included Boston,³⁰ Asbury Park³¹ and Chicago, where she performed at the Beige Room, at 64th and Cottage Grove in January 1954, with such acts as Clarence Robinson's "Tropicana Review" starring La Bommie, and tap dancer, Derby Wilson.³²

On Carter's travels out of New York, she encountered the entire range of black styles: "In other places like Philadelphia, we were supporting all the music. In Philadelphia, there were two clubs in the same area, one there and one here. One specialized in jazz, and one specialized at that time in rhythm and blues--the Orioles Coasters, Flamingos, Moon Glows, and the Isley Brothers--all that stuff So we had a chance to do everything."³³ On 30 March 1953 Carter sang at the Showboat in Philadelphia on the same bill as Hal Singer and His Orchestra.³⁴ She had already begun to build her following in that city while with Hampton's band, and she continued to do so as her solo career progressed. Ray Charles claims that the first time he heard Carter she was singing at the Uptown Theater in Philadelphia.

²⁹ Yapple, BNY-80.

³⁰ Leslie Gourse, Louis' Children: American Jazz Singers ((New York: William Morrow, Quill Edition, 1984), 330; Michael Ullman also mentions Carter's working in Boston in "On Jazz: Betty Carter."

³¹ Mason, "Mom is A Chanteuse."

³² The Chicago Defender, 16 January 1954, 14.

³³ Yapple, GAMH-79.

³⁴ The Philadelphia Afro-American, 28 March 1953, 20.

He recalls this taking place in 1957, but he probably heard her several years earlier.³⁵

In addition to her concern for the quality of her music-making, Carter paid attention to her appearance. Her concern for fashion, which dates back to her childhood wish to stand out at church, had gotten encouragement from Gladys Hampton. Her interest in clothing played a strong role in her self-image. Carter also used certain accessories to evoke the bebop attitude; Buck Clayton recalls how she wore a cap as a trademark.³⁶

Carter's ever growing network of connections led to an opportunity to record soon after her arrival on the New York jazz scene, a cameo appearance on a record made by King Pleasure for the Prestige label, called The Source. This side earned her some recognition in jazz circles, but less than she had hoped for: "That was when I first got to New York and King Pleasure had had 'Moody's Mood for Love' out, and his shot was 'Red Top,' which was Gene Ammons' tune.³⁷ [Ammons had] dedicated [this tune] to his wife."³⁸ Pleasure

³⁵ Ray Charles with David Ritz, Brother Ray: Ray Charles' Own Story (1978; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 168 and 221-22. Charles is probably incorrect about the year, because he claims to have gone to the Uptown Theater to hear Benny Bailey play with Hampton. But Bailey left Hampton in 1953 and spent the next six years in Europe. In describing how he acquired the Raeletts, who originally backed up Chuck Willis as The Cookies, Ray Charles mentions in passing that he heard Betty Carter singing with Lionel Hampton on this occasion, which would date it before 1951.

³⁶ Gourse, Louis' Children, 330.

³⁷ Yapple, KJAZ-80.

³⁸ Yapple, BNY-80.

added words to the solos in the original performance. "He wrote some words to it. . . . I really didn't want to do it."³⁹ Gene Ammons had recorded his hit version on 2 September 1947 for the EmArcy label, and had released it originally in two versions, one instrumental, and one with a vocal refrain overdubbed onto the head and out chorus of the tune. Lionel Hampton covered it on 3 November 1947, not long before Carter joined the band, and the band probably played it during Carter's tenure with him. Carter had most certainly encountered it before then, most likely on the juke box across from her high school. Charlie "Little Jazz" Ferguson also has a listing as leader of the session, even though the record came out under King Pleasure's name.

King Pleasure, aka Clarence Beeks, had made a name for himself by writing and singing vocalese. By a peculiar inversion of the meaning this term has in classical music, "vocalese," as it is used in jazz, represents an approach to singing in which lyrics get added to a well known instrumental solo. The approach originated in the efforts of Eddie Jefferson, who transformed classics like Coleman Hawkins' tenor saxophone version of "Body and Soul" into clever vocal numbers. Vocalese later caught on later with Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross, who enshrined Wardell Gray's "Twisted" with a sly commentary on psychoanalysis. King Pleasure had recently enjoyed the success of another vocalese based upon a James Moody solo, and went on shortly after to

³⁹ Yapple, KJAZ-80.

have a hit based upon Charlie Parker's famous solo on "Parker's Mood." As Carter puts it: "[This was] after he got famous with his 'Moody's Mood for Love.'"⁴⁰ One would expect Carter to have leapt at the chance to further her career. But she was unimpressed.

Carter's less than enthusiastic response to this early opportunity may come from the extremely constrained environment that vocalese presents for an improvisational singer. For a vocalese to work well, the singer must reproduce a recorded solo faithfully. This requirement went against Carter's fondness for leaving her mark on her material. She does indulge her impulse towards originality, adding one embellishment not in the original solo as played by Gail Brockman (see transcription 2 in Appendix II).

Ammons' tune consists of a modified twelve-bar blues progression. In King Pleasure's version, King Pleasure and Carter sing the original lyrics in octaves. Pleasure then proceeds to render Gene Ammons' tenor saxophone solo in vocalese. Carter follows with these lyrics:

I would take a solo, but I can't stop.
 I've gotta go right on spinning,
 Its a sin that I'm a little Red Top.
 I've gotta go right on a-spinning,
 Gotta go round and round until I tumble down and fall
 when I drop.
 Morning glory -
 Now you know the story
 of the little Red Top.

⁴⁰ Yapple, BNY-80.

The line placed her in an uncomfortably high tessitura, which made it hard for Carter to enunciate some of Pleasure's lyrics. This may have also given Carter her distaste for the task. She certainly did not have this in mind when she had left Hampton to sing lyrics.⁴¹

On The Road

Carter also went on a road trip through the south in the 1950s:

We mixed the shows. I was in on those shows.⁴² I even took my little bebop down on tour with Man Tan Moreland.⁴³ He used to be that little black guy in Charlie Chan.⁴⁴ We were doing camp shows with Slide Hampton at that time. He had a band with his sisters and brothers in and out of Indianapolis. They were traveling with this show with Man Tan and Bud Harris. I took my little bebop down there. We were doing southern states across the tracks, staying in the little hotels. I was scatting down there even, and people got quiet and listened then--down there in Mississippi, Biloxi.⁴⁵ It was a road show. I did my singing; [Man Tan] did his act . . . with Bud Harris. We had a shake dancer; we had a tap dancer. We had a little bit of everything. Kenny Murray was another comedian on the tour.

⁴¹ Will Friedwald erroneously claims that Carter replaced a piano part originally played by Blossom Dearie, but Dearie did not sing on either Ammons' or Pleasure's version of "Red Top." Ira Gitler may have the key to this confusion: On "one of Pleasure's several remakes of 'I'm in the Mood for Love,'...the vocal group [takes] the role played by Blossom Dearie on the Prestige recording that started it all." (See Gitler, liner notes to Moody's Mood for Love, Blue Note CDP 7 84463 2).) Carter has also remarked that King Pleasure had originally planned to use Blossom Dearie on "Little Red Top," but offers no explanation for why he chose her instead (Bauer, unpublished interview).

⁴² Yapple, GAMH-79.

⁴³ Yapple, LCC-79.

⁴⁴ Yapple, GAMH-79.

⁴⁵ Yapple, LCC-79.

There were places where we could go and try out our thing and find out what we could do . . . best. It wasn't instant. It was a . . . training We were working in all kinds of strange places; living conditions were not the best. We still worked hard . . . Who cared about the living expenses?⁴⁶

Even Dizzy Gillespie did a tour down south behind us in those days. So we moved among our people. That was the only way we could do it. Birdland was opening up in the '50s which then gave the opportunity for [work in] New York.⁴⁷ We still worked uptown at Roseland, and Charlie Parker worked uptown also. We never had any problems getting any work. I had a chance to work to get my little thing going.⁴⁸

As a vocalist, Carter had to contend with the big names in her field, and she accepted that she would have to "pay her dues" at first: "Well I'm going through the '50s . . . I'm the youngest of a crop of singers with Vaughan, Holiday, Washington. And these are giants--they've got it covered. I'm occasionally doing a gig every now and then at the Apollo Theater which is keeping me alive, and a concert here and there, but I'm steady gigging."⁴⁹ Because of her

⁴⁶ Yaple, LCC-79.

⁴⁷ Carter's recollection is slightly off, but not by much. Birdland opened on 15 December 1949, and flourished during the 1950s under the management of Morris Levy, who also had part ownership of the Royal Roost. I mention Levy here because he becomes an important character later in Carter's story.

⁴⁸ Yaple, GAMH-79. In the spring of 1957 Gillespie toured in Canada and down south to Atlanta, Georgia, but Carter may be referring to an earlier tour to Houston in 1955 with Jazz at the Philharmonic (Gillespie, To Be or Not to Bop, 434 and 404ff). Unlike Carter's experience on the road, Granz's tour not only played to integrated audiences, but intentionally generated them.

⁴⁹ White, Jazz Talk.

relatively quick success in Detroit and with Hampton, Carter felt that success lay just on the horizon:

I was, like, on the cusp. I was the jazz singer that they could touch, because Sarah Vaughan was still a star. Ella Fitzgerald was a star at that point. Nobody could really touch these girls I was singing in the bar around the corner, and [they were] doing the bigger places and better rooms. I was the local jazz singer in New York for awhile. That was my thing. Now, there were a lot of good things that happened to me during [that period].⁵⁰

The Apollo Theater

Working at the Apollo theater may have contributed to Carter's sense of imminent success, for the Apollo gave many artists of that time the springboard for leaping into the national arena: "Every time you went into the Apollo, you thought somebody was going to see you and make you a big star. That was the big thing. I did that theater, maybe two or three times a year."⁵¹ Another factor that contributed to her conviction came from the brothers who ran the Apollo Theater in the 1950s, Frank and Bob Schiffman. They had gone out on a limb to show how much they believed in her by coming to her rescue in the past, when Hampton and she had had a falling out.⁵² Carter's first gig as a single at the Apollo Theater may have been on Friday, 13 February 1953, in a show

⁵⁰ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁵¹ Yapple, BNY-80. Given her relationship with the Schiffmans, it is surprising that Carter did not perform at the Apollo sooner, but she had steady work at smaller venues for over a year after her arrival in New York.

⁵² Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter."

that included The Orioles, Paul Williams, the Five Dancing Dyerettes, and Anita Echols, also known as "Pigmeat:"⁵³ I worked the Apollo Theater with everybody you could think about from '53 on. I had developed [a] good relationship with the Apollo people because of my experiences there with Lionel Hampton, coming through New York with Hamp at the Apollo. I was able to get the owners to like me and they remembered me."⁵⁴

Her prior association with the Schiffmans may have given her firm enough footing in New York to contemplate breaking with Hampton. The association worked both ways, however. Bobby Schiffman knew his audience well, and Carter often gave him the key ingredient for a successful show: "No jazz show was successful unless you had a major female artist headlining. If you had Betty 'Bebop' Carter and you had Miles Davis as the headliner it was no good. She had to be the headliner. At least that was the pattern."⁵⁵ Carter worked with the big bands at the Apollo with self assurance,

⁵³ The New York Amsterdam News, 14 February 1953, 26. Almost a year later to the day she would perform there on the same bill as Lionel Hampton, Curley Hamner, Sonny Parker and Al Taylor. The New York Amsterdam News, 13 February 1954, 8.

⁵⁴ Yaple, BNY-80.

⁵⁵ Ted Fox, Showtime at the Apollo (1983; reprint, New York: Da Capo, 1993), 269. This seems a curious statement in light of the fact that Carter does not receive top billing in the press notices for her Apollo appearances. Certainly by the late 1950s, Miles Davis was better known than Carter.

telling the arranger how she wanted it and insisting that the conductor get his time from her.⁵⁶

As the decade wore on the Schiffmans repeatedly sought out Carter's distinctive sound and her ability to appeal to the crowd directly:

When the T Bone Walker show came--I was working in another club in Harlem [and] they asked me to come and work the Apollo. I said, 'Look, I'm working up here at Wells,'⁵⁷ and he says, 'Well double!' Now what does he need with me on that show with Muddy Waters and T Bone Walker? He said to me, "You'll be the difference. We'll put you right in the middle. We'll have blues on this side of you and blues on that side of you!"⁵⁸

The huge variety of acts that crossed the Apollo's stage showed the diversity of musical tastes within the black community:

I played on bills with . . . the Temptations, Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley, Miles Davis. It didn't matter what you did; you just had to be good at it. At the Apollo, you could play classical music if you did it well. I remember a dancer who worked on her toes. She couldn't get into a big ballet company because they didn't take black dancers. But she was brilliant, and they loved her at the Apollo.⁵⁹ I was there in the '50s with the . . . Flamingos, the Moonglows, the Isley Brothers, Ike and Tina Turner, all the people."⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Kitty Grime, Jazz Voices (London: Quartet Books, 1983), 82.

⁵⁷ Carter may mean Dickie Wells's [*sic*] Shim Sham Club at 169 West 133rd Street, which opened in 1933.

⁵⁸ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 30.

⁵⁹ Hinckley, "Betty Carter, Real Live," Daily News Magazine (24 January 1988), 12.

⁶⁰ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 43.

Carter was keenly aware of the wide range of styles that surrounded her, even as she stuck to her own approach:

I worked with [Sonny Till and the] the Orioles [in 1950, while still with Hampton] That's . . . the beginning of 'doo wop'. . . . But it was popular among the black people. Our music was played on the lower part of the dial. That's true. Nat King Cole had not got[ten] into Las Vegas yet. He was still trying to break that, but we were playing up in the Apollo, the Howard and Royal in Baltimore. All kinds of music was accepted [by] us at that time. Black people accepted all kinds of music.⁶¹

Carter has elaborated upon some of the programs at the Apollo later in the 1950s: "Later on I was at the Apollo three times in six months, which was rare. I was there with Miles, Monk, Moody, Moms Mabley, Eddie Jefferson."⁶² Jack Chambers mentions that this latter performance occurred around the spring of 1959.⁶³ Her Apollo performances with Miles will get further consideration below. "Another package I was on at the Apollo [was] a knockout: Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker, John Lee Hooker, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Bo Diddley and me! Is that unbelievable?⁶⁴ [That was the] last show I did there . . . [and] that told me a lot, that I

⁶¹ Yapple, GAMH-79.

⁶² Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 13.

⁶³ Jack Chambers, Milestones I: The Music and Times of Miles Davis to 1960 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 311-12.

⁶⁴ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 13-14.

did not have to adjust my music to be on that show⁶⁵ I did my little bebop thing with everybody."⁶⁶

Carter gauged her ability as a performer according to the exacting standards of the Apollo audience: "The Apollo Theater was really a format for black music that was uncanny. It was just unbelievable, because everything was presented there You name it, and it had been there. We were proud to play it, to do a job at the Apollo Theater. The audience was critical, and they were aware. We always had a challenge going for us when we were at the Apollo. It was our job to go in there and kill them."⁶⁷

In some ways, the Apollo Theater gave Carter her rite of passage in the world of performing, and she rose to the challenge. The showcase schedule at the Apollo Theater, while often grueling, allowed Carter to measure herself and her growth: "At the Apollo . . . we worked five shows a day sometimes, one right after the other. So you kept grading yourself: the morning show was better than the second show, or vice versa."⁶⁸ Carter speaks fondly of the collaborative environment at the Apollo. "No one had to dominate. We liked each other. I'd hang around clubs with Sarah Vaughan or Ruth Brown."⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Santoro, "Look What We Got."

⁶⁶ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 43.

⁶⁷ Laney, LCC-79.

⁶⁸ Santoro, "Look What We Got."

⁶⁹ Hinckley, "Betty Carter, Real Live," 12.

In spite of this sense of community, ambitious young performers such as Carter, who had something to prove, would also compete against the other acts. The showcase format came with an implicit competitive tone reminiscent of cutting sessions, and in some ways, they served a similar function. Apollo shows put performers to a public test, and let the highly demonstrative audience make its decision: "You'd have to follow this act, and you'd have to know how to follow it. And then you'd have to close your act, and make sure that the next act couldn't come on after you, or at least had a hard time coming on after you."⁷⁰

Two Perspectives on This Period

We get two pictures of Carter's work life in New York at this time. In one of these pictures, Carter portrays herself as a young artist working and learning within the network of musicians thriving on the Manhattan jazz scene. This happy picture places Carter within an extended family of like-minded individuals, and recalls the bebop life she had left behind in Detroit.

In this picture, we encounter Carter, the Insider, enjoying the benefits of participation in a network of mutual support: "Someone should write a book about those days. There was such joy. We thought that world would never

⁷⁰ Santoro, "Look What We Got."

end."⁷¹ Carter describes the work ethic that governed her endeavors as an individual and her collaborations:

Before, when Birdland was in existence musicians weren't thinking about [money] There was love. You didn't have to have a sign It existed; it was just there, it was expressed for each other. There was that natural respect of each other's music and each other's being there. There was no fighting and fussin' and feuding over the music. It was cooperating time at that time, 'cause everybody wanted to play, everybody wanted to learn, everybody wanted to listen, everybody wanted to be an individual.⁷²

This description corresponds most to the early 1950s, when Carter still felt justified in believing she would soon become famous.

The other impression we get of this time (significantly recounted before she began to experience increased success after 1975), describes Carter as the Outsider, and tells of a struggling singer trying to get jobs in a hostile environment: "I stayed with Hampton for two and a half years, then I left him and went to NY to try my luck. From then it's been a bitter fight from one club to the next."⁷³ Mark Jacobsen's description below paraphrases what Carter has expressed on other occasions:

Only 21, with two massive credits to her name, Betty seemed certain to make it big. But things went sour. Agents and middlemen started telling her where to sing, what to sing

⁷¹ Hinckley, "Betty Carter, Real Live," 13.

⁷² White, Jazz Talk.

⁷³ Miller, "An Interview," 37.

and how to sing. Betty calls it her 'painful times,' when she learned what happens when a jazz singer makes demands. She got a reputation for being troublesome, a reputation she has not yet shaken. It has shut her out of high-priced gigs, and left her to play small bars in Harlem and Brooklyn, while other, more cooperative singers went [to Las] Vegas.⁷⁴

Bryant Mason has also echoed Carter's words regarding this matter: "It was in this era that she acquired the reputation for being difficult. As she defines the word, that meant: "nobody told me what to sing."⁷⁵ Carter puts it flatly: "New York was a tough town to crack--even in those days."⁷⁶ Without a hit record as a "calling card,"⁷⁷ Carter "hit all the places [in New York] for work."⁷⁸ Sometimes the quality of her accompaniment left much to be desired. "It was gigging time, so you just worked with what they had"⁷⁹ If we recall that, after her early breaks, Carter had developed the expectation of a rapid rise to fame, her disillusionment seems reasonable. Now in her late twenties and early thirties, and possibly feeling that her youth was slipping away, Carter had come to feel that she had paid her dues, and it was time to see some tangible results. By the early 1960s, the idea of living from gig to gig had begun to lose its novelty and excitement. She was also experiencing the negative side effects of her willful nature, which

⁷⁴ Mark Jacobsen, "Betty Carter is Alive in Bed-Stuy," the village VOICE (18 August 1975), 100.

⁷⁵ Mason, "Mom is a Chanteuse."

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Friedwald, Jazz Singing, 404.

⁷⁸ Gourse, Louis' Children, 330.

⁷⁹ White, Jazz Talk.

undoubtedly alienated men in positions of power who were unaccustomed to a woman sticking up for herself.

Already by 1954 changes occurring in the music industry had imperceptibly begun to alter the commercial viability of jazz. Record companies sold more 45rpm discs than 78s; consumers spent \$61 million on hi-fis; long-playing records issued by all the major record companies sold for \$3.98; and Bill Haley's "Shake Rattle and Roll" would make the hit charts in late fall, signaling the emergence of rock 'n roll as a viable style.⁸⁰ As Betty Carter persisted in her efforts to "make it" as a jazz singer the forces behind these changes gradually made themselves felt.

⁸⁰ see Charles K. Wolfe, liner notes to Your Hit Parade: 1954 (CBS Records (1989), for Time-Life Music, HPD-07). The following year, Haley would produce the first rock-and-roll single to top the pop charts--"Rock Around the Clock."

Chapter 5: Early Successes (1955-1962)The Columbia/Epic Sessions

In the course of living and working in New York, Carter acquired a manager. According to Carter, John Levy was her first manager, but she didn't have him for long:

John Levy was a bass player, and he used to play bass for George Shearing, when George Shearing first came on the scene. . . . After a little time, . . . George Shearing's wife decided that John was a good businessman, so they made him the road manager, and they got another bass player. . . .

After he became the road manager, . . . John decided that he wanted to stretch. . . . John not only managed Ray Bryant and myself, he also tried to manage [Nancy Wilson] at that time, [and] in fact he [still] has [her] now. . . . He [has] kept George Shearing all the time. . . . Nancy [Wilson is] who he really [managed], and Cannonball [Adderley], and Wes Montgomery. Those were the musicians he eventually ended up really doing good things for.

But I caught him when he was young and [a] baby, [and] he didn't know that much. . . . He didn't realize that you couldn't manage people on the road, that you had to have an office so that people could get in touch with you. When he finally figured that out I was gone.¹

We should take Carter's description of Levy as a "baby" with a grain of salt. He was thirty-nine years old when he stopped performing to manage Shearing in 1951, whom he had joined three years earlier on bass. Levy had been recording since 1944, during which time he recorded with such musicians as Billie Holiday and Lennie Tristano. In addition to George

¹ Bauer, unpublished interview.

Shearing, Levy managed Sarah Vaughan, and he continued to manage talent into the 1980s.

Perhaps Carter felt that Levy was not doing enough for her, a common enough complaint voiced by ambitious young artists about their managers. Levy did get Carter a recording date for the Epic label, however, so Carter retained him at least until May 1955. In this session, her first as a leader, Carter recorded with a small ensemble that included Ray Bryant on piano and fellow Hampton alumnus, Quincy Jones as arranger: "[The reason] I did the recording with Ray Bryant . . . was because we both had the same manager. And the manager at that time was trying to get us over, so why not do a record together?"² Roughly Carter's age, Bryant came from Philadelphia where he had established himself as a solid bebop player. Columbia/Epic released the session under the title Meet Betty Carter and Ray Bryant.³

The date had excellent musicians on it, including Jerome Richardson on flute and Jimmy Blanton's cousin, Wendell Marshall, on bass. The thirty-five year-old Marshall had just finished a seven-year stint with Duke Ellington. "Philly Joe Jones actually was the . . . drummer that worked on my first recording date. . . . We [had] worked together in '53 in Atlantic City. He disappeared for awhile and [then] worked with Miles. . . . He's a very, very fine

² Ibid.

³ Because Will Friedwald based his calculations on the incorrect birth year, he claimed that Carter recorded this album when she was 26, not 25. He added that this album went partially released until 25 years later (Jazz Singing, 404).

drummer and musician."⁴ Jones had played and recorded with Tadd Dameron in 1953 when Clifford Brown was with the group,⁵ and that summer Dameron's band played in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He worked with Miles Davis from 1955 to 1958.

The seven sides consisted of material that Carter had been performing for the past four years. Among these standards, "I Could Write a Book" stands out as one she later recorded several times (see Appendix II, transcriptions 4, 11, 12, and 16). The record also included two instrumental numbers, "Sneaking Around" and "Old Devil Moon," which appear as the first items in Ray Bryant's own discography. Carter's scat solo on "Thou Swell" (see Appendix II, transcription 3) shows that her technique, vocal range, and daring had increased since her time with Hampton.

That Carter's singing here reveals her debt to Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan and Dinah Washington may come as little surprise, despite Carter's avowed disdain for imitation. Most artists go through a period in which they integrate the influence of their idols, so why should Carter be any different? In fact, to have this document from her formative years gives us important insights into the development of her style. This record enables us to hear how Carter drew upon her various influences early in her career.

⁴ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁵ Tadd Dameron, The Clifford Brown Memorial Album (Prestige LP7055). The session for this recording took place in Atlantic City on 11 June 1953, and included Gigi Gryce on alto saxophone and Benny Golson on tenor saxophones. Both later backed up Carter on records.

Just less than a year later Carter went into the studio again, this time with Gigi Gryce: "[Columbia/Epic did] the Gigi Gryce session. They had to do something. They had to do an album. And so that's the way it was. Gigi was working around town doing arrangements and we were friends and that's how that happened."⁶ In addition to a complement of horns, the session included fellow Detroiters Hank Jones on piano, Milt Hinton on bass, and Osie Johnson on drums. Carter's first version of "Social Call" occurs on this record.

Already on these four cuts,⁷ and especially on "Let's Fall in Love," Carter shows signs of striking out from her models, with the vocal line seeming to grow naturally from the rhythms of speech. Apart from occasional punctuation from the horns, a lone walking bass supports her line for much of the tune, marking the first appearance of a feature that Carter later came to use in her own arrangements. "Frenesi" features her one scat solo from the session, and indicates even greater ambitiousness in this area than she showed while with Hampton. The stylistic change that Carter's work undergoes from one recording to the next,

⁶ Bauer, unpublished interview. This date got released by CBS Records with the reissue of Carter's numbers from the Ray Bryant sessions. Official Records released a record called "The Bebop Girl" that ostensibly had this material on it.

⁷ Discographies disagree about whether Carter recorded "Tell Him I Said Hello" in this or the preceding session. The scoring for rhythm section gives us little help here, although it seems unlikely that Gigi Gryce would let a horn section go to waste. The matrix number of this song places it second in the session with Ray Bryant.

especially in those from her early period (until 1964), indicate how rapidly she was growing musically.

Later, in 1980, Carter herself acknowledged the growth that took place at this time: "When I heard that twenty-five year old record, boy I could not believe it. . . . The one that Columbia is putting out. The one with the unissued stuff. I had heard the Meet Betty Carter [and Ray Bryant] things [before], but [in] this other set [with Gigi Gryce] I was trying to improve. . . . Really, you could hear me trying to get better, slicker or sharper or something. I was really doing okay."⁸ These improvements give us some clues about the evolving nature of Carter's own aesthetic.

During this time Carter kept busy with trips out of New York. For example, in Chicago, Carter performed at Herman Robert's Show Club, along with Gene Krupa, Lucio and Rosita, Red Foxx, Aiken's Dancesations, Paul Bascomb's band, and Rogerio Domiguez's Cha Cha Band in mid-October 1957.⁹

Out There

Carter soon had another chance to record, this time with a studio band: "I had the opportunity to record another album, I think with Don Roby, who was probably the first record [label] owner in Texas. I did a jazz album for his company with Kenny Dorham, Melba Liston, Al Grey, and a lot

⁸ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁹ The Chicago Defender, 15 October 1957, 16.

of the musicians, about a ten piece band."¹⁰ Carter recorded the album for Peacock (of Houston, TX) in February 1958. According to Don Robey, "plans were also afoot to reactivate the Peacock's Progressive Jazz Label with a new album entitled Out There with Betty Carter, and a Sonny Criss record."¹¹ Carter seems an unlikely addition to Peacock's roster of Gospel and R&B artists, and Will Friedwald attributes this opportunity to "interest in her from the R&B community."¹² Speaking of Roby on another occasion, she has said: "the A&R man was a friend of mine. He cut it for his own kicks."¹³

Capitalizing on current events, Peacock released the record with a cover photograph of a sputnik and a USAF missile, presumably to illustrate just how far "out there" Carter actually was.¹⁴ Jerome Richardson played behind Carter again, now playing tenor and bass clarinet on some

¹⁰ Yapple, BNY-80. Carter has mentioned Don Roby's name in connection with a tour through the south that she went on with Lionel Hampton's band. She claims that Roby booked Hampton and Gillespie at the same time, but she has also mentioned Gillespie in connection with her later tour in the south with Slide Hampton, which raises some doubt about the accuracy of her recollections.

¹¹ Galen Gart and Roy C. Ames, Duke/Peacock Records: An Illustrated History with Discography (Milford, New Hampshire: Nickel Publications, 1990), 199. Carter recalls this session taking place in 1957. But Gart and Ames give February 1958 as the recording date and December 1958 as the release date of Out There. In April 1959, Peacock released "On The Isle of May" on one side of a single and "But Beautiful" on the other (ibid., 162).

¹² Friedwald, Jazz Singing, 404.

¹³ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer."

¹⁴ The U.S.S.R. launched the first sputnik on 4 October 1957.

numbers in addition to flute. Gigi Gryce played lead alto and contributed some of the small band arrangements along with Melba Liston, Benny Golson and others. Solos by Golson, Ray Copeland, and Kenny Dorham, and expert accompanying by Wynton Kelly on piano give Carter the surroundings and the impetus she needed to swing hard, and she did.¹⁵

Later, in 1966, with several sessions under her belt, and with a more discriminating ear for recording, Carter came to feel ambivalent about the record: "It was weak on engineering and rehearsals, but it had the best jazz ideas of any record I've ever done."¹⁶ Speaking about some of the risks she took on that record, she has said, "'You're Driving Me Crazy;' no, you don't do that instantly with anybody. Those were when I got ambitious. Those were my ambitious years."¹⁷ (See Appendix II, transcription 7.)

In addition to her dramatic scat solo on "You're Driving Me Crazy," Carter also scats two choruses on Randy Weston's "Babe's Blues" (lyrics by Jon Hendricks; see Appendix II, transcription 6). The album introduces several tunes to which Carter returned in her recording career, including "By the Bend in the River," "But Beautiful," "All I've Got," "Make it Last," and Carter's own composition "I Can't Help It." This last stands as an anthem of her attitude toward life and music:

¹⁵ Gary Giddins, "Betty Carter Sings Like a Woman," the village VOICE, 1 November 1976.

¹⁶ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer."

¹⁷ White, Jazz Talk.

I can't help it;
 That's the way that I am.
 I can't help it,
 I don't know how to sham.
 I try to do the things I feel inside,
 And believe me that's a real delight.

Have you considered what it does to your soul?;
 You sell it when you play some other's role.

So be yourself dear,
 In what you choose to be.
 I'll not change you,
 I need you, can't you see?

So try me and maybe you'll like me,
 'Cause I can't help it,
 That's the way that I am.

Making Connections and Recording for ABC-Paramount

Betty Carter's friendship with Miles Davis dates back to 1947 when she sat in with Charlie Parker. On singing with Davis for the first time, Carter states condescendingly: "I sat in with him in Detroit before he had even learned to play the trumpet--when his notes were really tit for tat."¹⁸ As mentioned earlier, Davis has described the occasion in his autobiography.¹⁹ As we have seen, when Carter later came to Manhattan, she got to know him better. Davis places the time as the latter half of 1949, while she was still with Hampton, and credits Carter with looking after his wife, Irene, when he left her: "I left her in the care of Betty Carter, the singer. If it hadn't been for Betty Carter I don't know what Irene would have done. Because of the way I treated Irene

¹⁸ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 72.

¹⁹ Davis, Miles, 105-06.

back in those days, I think Betty Carter, even today, don't like me much."²⁰ Carter gives a later time for this: "My association with Miles was . . . keener in the '50s when I left [Hampton's] band and came to New York. I became very close with his family--his kids, his wife, and him; personally in touch with them . . . in our striving to get through the New York scene, a la the gigs and paying the hotel bills. We all stayed on 47th street."²¹ Since Hampton's band used New York as a base of operations during the late 1940s, Davis' recollection may be accurate. He also claims that "by 1950 I had moved back to Manhattan and was staying in the Hotel America down on 48th street," adding that "a lot of musicians were living there including Clark Terry."²² Carter's involvement with Davis included his extended family: "There was a personal relationship [His] family and I were very close . . . his mother, his sister."²³

Davis played a role in Carter's professional life as well, and a crucial one at that. While living in Detroit for about five months at the end of 1953 and the beginning of 1954 he would encounter her at gigs: "Betty Carter used to come and sit in with Yusef Lateef, Barry Harris, Thad Jones,

²⁰ Davis, Miles, 131. Speaking in 1989, Davis may be partly reacting to Carter's open denunciation in the 1970s of his conversion to fusion, in which she virtually accuses him of "selling out." Even in her criticism of Davis, however, her deep respect for his musicianship shines through.

²¹ Yapple, BNY-80.

²² Davis, Miles, 133.

²³ Yapple, LCC-79.

Curtis Fuller and Donald Byrd. It was a really hip city for music."²⁴ Carter does not speak much of being in Detroit during this period other than for passing through on road trips; but perhaps she spent more time there than she cares to remember. Later, Davis included Carter in theater dates he did in the late 1950s:²⁵ "He presented me in Washington, and in New York, at the Howard and Apollo theaters."²⁶

She also met Thelonious Monk at that time: "On that show [at the Apollo] with Miles was also Thelonious Monk."²⁷ Carter did not pursue a friendship with Monk as she had with Miles:

I really didn't know Monk like a lot of people knew him. I never felt that I could get close to Monk. His world was so completely different from mine. His attitude and everything was different from mine. He was not the kind of person I could go up to and really rap with. Maybe I could have, but I didn't think so.

I was a theater person. I worked with everybody in the theater. I think I worked with Miles in . . . the Royal in Baltimore . . . and the Regal in Chicago. I also did some [other] concerts and things with Miles.²⁸

On 26 December 1959, Carter began a week-long run at the Regal on the same bill as Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Sonny

²⁴ Davis, Miles, 173-4.

²⁵ Ted Fox, Showtime at the Apollo (1983; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), 268-70.

²⁶ Yaple, LCC-79. Curiously, Ray Bryant appears in Miles Davis' discography within three months of his recording with Carter, and Philly Joe Jones soon after.

²⁷ Yaple, LCC-79.

²⁸ Yaple, BNY-80.

Stitt, The Jesse Powell Orchestra, Bill Henderson, and The Four Step Brothers.²⁹

As Carter's good fortune would have it, the time of her most intensive association with Miles Davis occurred during one of his most creative periods, in which he produced the classic albums Porgy and Bess, Kind of Blue, and Sketches of Spain. As we shall see in our discussion of Carter's style, Davis also had a profound impact on her musically. On artistic, professional, and personal levels, Miles Davis stands out as one of the few men from whom she felt comfortable accepting stylistic influence and professional assistance (Bobby Plater was another).

Around this time, Carter was involved with a man named James Redding. In 1960 they got married, but she speaks very little about her marriage to him. We have already encountered her reticence about discussing her personal life with regard to her family of origin, and her parents' disapproval of her life style may have something to do with this. Aside from comments that she makes on-stage before certain songs, Carter rarely mentions her relationships with men in positive terms. While she has never adopted a self-conscious stance as a feminist, she has always fought hard to maintain control over her artistic output. We have seen how this may have damaged some of her work prospects. These interactions may also have colored her perception of men, for men dominated the music industry at the time. With regard to

²⁹ The Chicago Defender, 26 December 1959, 12.

her love interests, she has made it clear that few men could handle her assertiveness, her independence, and her dedication to music. She certainly has not allowed herself to rely upon any man for financial, much less emotional support.

For this reason, her collaboration with Ray Charles takes on special meaning. Carter got to know Ray Charles from having worked with Davis: "[Miles] was the one who got me the job that got me the agency that got me the stint with Ray Charles, that got me to the point where people said, 'heard that name somewhere.'"³⁰ Carter has amplified this description by emphasizing the quality of her work: "There was a whole sequence of things. I did a theater tour with Miles Davis, and at that time his agency was booking Ray Charles. The agency saw me doing my consistency job with Miles, and so I got some more bookings from them."³¹ Carter gave more details about this meeting in a 1976 interview:

During the early '60s . . . [Ray Charles and I] got together through the Shaw agency. . . . Miles was . . . in Washington and Ray was getting ready to make some tours of the theaters. I had just started this tribute to Billie Holiday. She had just died, right? [Holiday died on 17 July 1959.] And I did this album on ABC-Paramount called Don't Weep for the Lady. And I put a couple more tunes in it as a medley in tribute to her and we went to the Apollo with this and it worked.³²

³⁰ Yapple, LCC-79.

³¹ Santoro, "Look What We Got."

³² White, Jazz Talk. The Shaw agency was run by Billie Shaw of "Billie's Bounce" and "Shaw 'Nuff."

No discographies indicate that ABC-Paramount released this material under the title Don't Weep for the Lady, but a song by that name appears in a set of twelve numbers that the label did release as The Modern Sound of Betty Carter.

Carter made the record in three sessions on 18, 29 and 30 August 1960. Richard Wess did the arrangements for his own orchestra, which included strings. Billie Holiday had recorded with strings as early as 1944,³³ when she began recording for Decca; but the use of strings in Carter's homage to Lady Day probably stems from Holiday's record Lady in Satin, made with Ray Ellis eighteen months before her death. Much later, in the beginning of the 1980s, Carter came back to using strings when she toured with conductor/arranger David Amram. This tour culminated in the record Whatever Happened to Love in 1982.

We do not know the precise time Ray Charles began to tour with Betty Carter, but by then he had been shaping his own distinctive blend of R&B and gospel for roughly five years. His infusion of the ecstatic sounds of black worship into popular music shocked some because of its blatant exploitation of religious feeling and actual church melodies for entertainment. In 1959, Ray Charles brought these sounds to the mainstream audience with his top-ten hit, "What'd I Say." When he appeared at the Apollo in 1960, he was billed

³³ Earlier, influential instances of strings backing up a singer occurred when Dick Haymes and Helen Forrest recorded with Harry James in 1941 and Frank Sinatra recorded with Tommy Dorsey's band in April 1942 (Schuller, The Swing Era, 690; 746-47).

as the "Soul Genius," and the new musical style now had a name.³⁴

ABC-Paramount recorded The Modern Sound of Betty Carter after Ray Charles had been recording for that label for about eight months and Bob Porter has suggested that her association with Charles led to this recording.³⁵ While Carter does not mention this in any of her accounts, neither does she explain how she initially connected with the record label. She implies that her tour with Ray Charles followed the making of The Modern Sound: "After [making Out There, I] was with . . . ABC-Paramount when I did my first album for them. Then I did a tour with Ray Charles. . . . I was getting a little name, because of the fact that he was big and famous."³⁶ But if this is the case, the tour would have happened in the fall, for Carter has recalled that it took place in the same year that she made the record: "In 1960 I was doing some theater dates with Ray."³⁷

Looking back in 1966, Carter appreciated having had the opportunity the tour gave her to perform for large audiences

³⁴ Fox, Showtime At the Apollo, 246-47. The explicit sexual character of Charles' singing added to its shock value, and he claims that some radio stations initially banned his songs. Incidentally, he first recorded with strings on 6 May 1959 (The Genius of Ray Charles, Atlantic LP1312), not long after appearing with Billie Holiday at Carnegie Hall.

³⁵ Bob Porter, liner notes, Betty Carter: I Can't Help It, (Impulse!, GRD 114), 5. Will Friedwald states this more strongly, suggesting that Charles "pushed" his current label to let her do a solo disc with Richard Wess (Jazz Singing, 404).

³⁶ Yapple, BNY-80.

³⁷ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 54.

without having to alter her style: "It was the high point of my life as a jazz performer, because I had the chance to work to masses of people, doing what I wanted to do."³⁸ She knew that she would have to contend with the audience's expectations based upon Charles' style: "The audience that came to see Ray Charles had no idea what I was going to do."³⁹ But she and Charles did not perform together on-stage: "What was it like when I was working with Ray Charles? It wasn't that I was working with Ray Charles, like the Raelettes worked with him."⁴⁰ The tour brought Carter to the theater circuit on which she had been working for the preceding few years: "We did the Apollo, the Regal in Chicago, the Howard in Washington, the Royal in Baltimore, and we did some concert tours."⁴¹

Aside from the invaluable experience it gave her, this road trip led to other important opportunities: "We did that tour, and I think I did a one one-nighter . . . with that band. I had a chance to do the big band arrangements [and] it was quite interesting. I was added on as an extra."⁴² But the tour held something more dramatic in store for her.

While they were at the Royal Theater, Ray Charles proposed that they team up on a record: "Then one day he asked me to record with him."⁴³ Given his much greater fame,

³⁸ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer."

³⁹ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 32-3.

⁴⁰ Yapple, LCC-79.

⁴¹ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 23.

⁴² Yapple, LCC-79.

⁴³ Ibid.

Carter was understandably stunned by his offer: "He just asked me out of the blue; . . . he'd just done 'Georgia [On My Mind]'. I thought he was kidding--I was pregnant--but he wasn't kidding. I think the people at ABC were more confused about me than anything else; they knew what Ray Charles was going to do, but I think they were trying to figure out what in the world he wanted to record with me for."⁴⁴

Carter recalls the moment vividly:

He asked me in Baltimore, in the hallway by the dressing rooms. After he asked me, it got silent; I mean, he had . . . a big hit record, he didn't need me. [When he asked me] I was talking on the telephone; I said to the lady I was talking to, 'Excuse me, I'll talk to you later.' And everybody stuck their heads out of their dressing rooms. So I said, 'What did you say Ray?' And he said, 'Let's do an album together.' I was just in shock; I didn't want to believe it, I thought he'd just forget all about it. But he didn't.⁴⁵

Another tour with Charles began on 1 April and ran for thirty days. She had just given birth to her first son, Myles Redding, on 14 March 1961. By June they were in Hollywood to make the record.

Because of the opportunity for working with a more established entertainer that this recording presented, Carter did not seem to mind having less artistic control on this project:

⁴⁴ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 54. Charles recorded "Georgia on My Mind" in March 1960 (see Bruyninckx, 60 Years of Recorded Jazz, C244).

⁴⁵ Santoro, "Look What We Got."

He picked out most of the tunes--I think I picked out only one.⁴⁶ He already had my key picked out; it was a little high for me, but I managed to deal with it at that point. I sounded like a little teeny baby singing some of that stuff. I went to his house to work on the tunes, and then went back to the hotel numb because I was really gonna do it. I learned the tunes by thinking about [them] more than [by] practicing them; we didn't go over anything more than one time, because I was capable of understanding everything he said to me about what to do and how to do it. It was just up to me to get my nerves together. And going into the studio was something I never really liked doing anyway.⁴⁷

On 13 and 14 June they cut twelve sides together at ABC studios.

According to producer Sid Feller, the record's arranger Marty Paitch and Ray Charles worked together closely on the arrangements.⁴⁸ In the way that they put them together, they acknowledged that Carter had by this time begun to assert her own unique sound. Ray Charles made subtle adjustments in his well-known approach to accommodate himself to, and to capitalize upon, Carter's style: "If you notice, we didn't do a lot of Ray Charles feeling on that album--we did a whole other kind of feeling. He even conformed a little bit in my direction--forced to, I think. He thought I was going to lean his way, but I couldn't. I'm not a gospel-type singer--never was, even when I was going to church."⁴⁹ Carter may be

⁴⁶ Carter may have chosen "Ev'ry Time We Say Good-bye," as she has kept this tune in her active repertoire until quite recently.

⁴⁷ Santoro, "Look What We Got."

⁴⁸ Sid Feller, Ray Charles and Betty Carter, liner notes (DCC Compact Classics, DZS-039).

⁴⁹ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 32.

overestimating her influence on Charles here, for he had already demonstrated his ability to sing jazz, having recorded standards in a jazz format earlier in his career.

Sid Feller has also reported that during the sessions an ad hoc studio audience of curious onlookers accumulated in the control room and studio. Although the crowd included celebrities from the motion picture and music worlds, Feller had to ask them to leave. Having people to perform for may have actually helped the anxious Carter to relax and enjoy what would otherwise have been a cold, uninspiring environment for making music.⁵⁰

At first the opportunity seemed more than she could have wished for: "To have recorded with Ray Charles was an honor because he could have had anyone he wanted."⁵¹ They even had a minor hit from that record with a Frank Loesser duet called "Baby, It's Cold Outside."⁵² The song had given Margaret Whiting and Johnny Mercer a hit thirteen years earlier (Capitol 567) with a more innocent approach than Ray Charles took. For one week in 1962, from 3 March to 10 March the single peaked at ninety-one on Billboard magazine's "Top 100 Singles" chart, giving Carter more radio exposure than she had so far received,⁵³ and the record thus introduced her to

⁵⁰ Feller, Sid Feller, Ray Charles and Betty Carter, liner notes.

⁵¹ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer."

⁵² Frank Loesser wrote the song for the film Neptune's Daughter with Esther Williams, Ricardo Montalban and Red Skelton.

⁵³ Betty T. Miles, The Miles Chart Display, vol. 1: Top 100 - 1955-1970 (Boulder, CO: Convex Industries, 1971), 400.

a larger audience than she had previously known.⁵⁴ Since it was first released, the tune has gotten sporadically reissued on Ray Charles compilations. Carter valued the small measure of fame she obtained from having made the record: "The Ray Charles record is what gets me the slow pop [of recognition] I have no regrets making that record. . . . What I regret is that we never performed it in public."⁵⁵ In fact, Carter and Charles did have the opportunity to do so, for two days after they were in Hollywood making the record they shared a two-week engagement at the Apollo which also featured the Raelettes, the Coasters, The Jazztet, Jimmie Scott and Willie Lewis.⁵⁶ In July 1961 and February 1962 Ray Charles made his next record, Modern Sounds in Country and Western. Spurred on by the huge popularity of the cross-over single "I Can't Stop Loving You," the album ultimately went gold, and since then Ray Charles has been a household name.

Two-and-a-half months after her sessions with Charles, Carter's life had more or less returned to normal, which meant gigging around New York in relative obscurity. In the week beginning 1 September, Carter appeared at the Apollo with Brook Benton, along with the Drifters, dancer Bobby Ephriam, comedian Willie Lewis, and music director Ruben Phillips; neither Ray Charles nor Miles Davis appeared on this particular date.⁵⁷ Later that year, on 14 November,

⁵⁴ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 71.

⁵⁵ Dreyfuss, "Betty 'Slow Pop' Carter," 18.

⁵⁶ The New York Amsterdam News, 17 June 1961, 19.

⁵⁷ The New York Amsterdam News, 2 September 1961, 17.

Carter recorded three sides for ABC-Paramount, but according to Michael Cuscuna the masters have been lost.⁵⁸ At some point during this time Carter switched agents, and by February of 1962, Monte Kay, who had co-owned the Royal Roost with Morris Levy, and who also managed the Modern Jazz Quartet, handled her bookings. She retained him until after 1965.⁵⁹ After the excitement of working with Charles, all of this must have felt somewhat anticlimactic.

In the shadow of developments in the music industry during the early 1970s, Carter came to feel that her work with Ray Charles, both on stage and in the studio, had little lasting significance in her career: "I stuck with Ray for a while. So I go through the '60s; everything's OK, nothing's phenomenal. I even make the record with Ray. . . nothing phenomenal."⁶⁰ Eventually, Carter would come to feel bitter about the manner in which Ray Charles handled the property. Ted Joans has reported that Carter told him she was "peeved at the bad deal that Ray Charles gave her after they cut their album, because the album was no longer being

⁵⁸ Michael Cuscuna, Betty Carter: I Can't Help It, liner notes (Impulse, GRD-114). See also, Bauer, unpublished interview. At this session Carter recorded "Frenesi," "Rock-a-bye Baby," and "I Cry Alone." It would be interesting to compare her approach to "Frenesi" with her 1956 version, and her approach to "I Cry Alone" with her 1982 version.

⁵⁹ Bauer, unpublished interview. Carter performed at the Jazz Gallery in February, 1962, with Herbie Mann and the Afro-Jazz Sextet and the Art Farmer/Benny Golson Jazztet. The New York Amsterdam News, 10 February 1962, 17. On Saturday, 24 February, Monte Kay presented Carter at the Kaufman Concert Hall with the John Coltrane Quintet and Clara Ward. The New York Amsterdam News, 17 February 1962, 17.

⁶⁰ White, Jazz Talk.

distributed and Ray Charles didn't mention it in his interviews."⁶¹ Carter seems to have felt that the record deserved to get reissued and took it as a personal snub that Ray Charles had not pursued this course. "I don't even know who has the master anymore. . . . I think [Ray Charles is] holding onto it."⁶² Later she speculated that he may have discouraged its reissue. "Well, Ray has the master. If they want it out again, he has to do it."⁶³ When it finally did get reissued on Dunhill in 1988, the digital remastering took place in Ray Charles' studio in Los Angeles.

By this time, however, it had lost its significance as a milestone in her career: "And then there's the Ray Charles album which is just there. It's okay, but it's a survival album in a sense."⁶⁴ Clearly from Carter's perspective, the record had not given her career the boost that she had hoped it would.

Early on in his autobiography, Ray Charles states his preference for Artie Shaw over Benny Goodman, placing Shaw in a whole different category. Later, speaking about his admiration for Betty Carter, he says: "She's a hell of a singer. I like to compare her to Sarah Vaughan, which is like comparing Benny Goodman to Artie Shaw. Sarah's like

⁶¹ Ted Joans, "Betty Carter," Coda: Canada's Jazz Magazine 145 (March 1976).

⁶² White, Jazz Talk. In fact, Charles' contract with ABC made specific provision for him to retain sole possession of all masters made for that label (Charles, Brother Ray, 197).

⁶³ Yapple. KJAZ-80.

⁶⁴ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 31.

Benny. She has unbelievable technique and deserves all the praise she's gotten. She's a master. But Betty's like Artie. She's a marvelous technical singer, but she's also got that old feeling--that raw feeling--that destroys me."⁶⁵ He then reminisces about his work with Carter: "I know people still ask for that album and I believe there was something special about the music we made together."⁶⁶

'Round Midnight

The pressure to sell records has had an influence on the recording industry since its inception, but during the late 1950s and early 1960s singers had to deal more and more with demands made upon them by recording industry executives to change their approach. Producers who couldn't get pop singers to adapt their sound to rock-and-roll steered them to doing ballads and into an easy listening format.⁶⁷ Carter spoke of her encounter with this attitude in 1962, when she formed an association with Atco records: "Atlantic at that time was trying to change me without telling me, trying to make me conform. I think Nesuhi Ertegun and Jerry Wexler will know they were trying to do that to me because they really can't talk to me now. I mean I got this record 'Round Midnight, Atco, and they don't know what to do with it."⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Charles, Brother Ray, 221-2.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Charles K. Wolfe Your Hit Parade: The Late '50s, liner notes, MCA Records, 1991 (Time-Life Music, HPD-23).

⁶⁸ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 24. Ray Charles had come to ABC Records from Atlantic, and was

Ahmet Ertegun founded Atlantic records in 1947 with Herb Abramson. In 1953, Abramson left the label for military service, to be replaced by Jerry Wexler, whose orientation towards R&B greatly enhanced the label's success. Two years later Atlantic records spawned a subsidiary named Atco, and Abramson briefly returned to Atlantic in order to run the subsidiary with Ertegun's brother, Nesuhi. In addition to running the label, Nesuhi Ertegun, along with Gary Kramer, produced records for Atco. Their philosophy toward artists and repertory (A&R) led them to focus the bulk of the label's production on pop music, but they intermittently recorded some jazz on Atco as well.

In a series of four sessions on 10 August, 7 November, 6 December, 1962 and 15 January, 1963, Carter recorded seventeen sides for Atco. While Atco issued a single of "Shine On Harvest Moon" and "One Note Samba" in October 1962, and the album 'Round Midnight in February 1963, the label never released the four sides recorded on 7 November 1962. These are of interest because they document renditions of songs Carter recorded on other occasions, for different labels. The version of "You're a Sweetheart" which she cut two-and-a-half years later for United Artists, for example, initially went unissued as well, but finally appeared on a 1993 Capitol reissue. She recorded "What's New" in 1969 and then again in 1987 with Carmen McRae. The unissued Atco

still on good terms with Wexler and Ertegun. Carter has not spoken of how she connected with Atco, but perhaps Charles smoothed the way for her.

session also included another version of "Moonlight in Vermont."

'Round Midnight also includes Carter's second foray into composition, a ballad entitled "Who, What, Why, Where or When," which features a bridge in which the tempo doubles. She continued to maintain three of the songs from the record in her repertoire, later incorporating "Heart and Soul" into a medley with "Body and Soul," and arranging the record's title song in 3/4 time, and recording it again in 1969. She recorded "The Good Life" again in 1988, and as of this writing the song remains in her active repertoire, albeit in a considerably different arrangement from the one she did in 1962.

Writing in 1975, Mark Jacobsen gives us a description of Carter's reaction to these sessions: "Atlantic records gave her a chance to 'return to the commercial world' with a contract to record. Betty says she 'froze and couldn't concentrate at all' when she sang with the other band . . . she calls 'Round Midnight 'one of the worst things I've ever done.'"⁶⁹ The album's first cut, entitled "Nothing More to Look Forward To" gives us a good idea of what Carter meant when she accused Atco of trying to change her. Carter sounds out of place trying to fit into the song's pop format.

Nevertheless, Carter would later clarify that, while she hated the approach on the album, the material she recorded

⁶⁹ Jacobson, "Betty Carter Is Alive in Bed-Stuy," 100.

appealed to her:⁷⁰ "The. . . Atco album with Oliver Nelson and Claus Ogerman. . . was . . . more or less a soft album, a very sweet album. A lot of tunes that nobody ever sings, and nobody . . . ever thinks about doing. I have to go back and do them. . . . They were some very good tunes."⁷¹

Carter has even expressed a liking for "Nothing More to Look Forward To." She took a certain pride in the arrangement's use of overdubbing, a studio technique that enabled her to sing in harmony with herself, and to which she later returned.⁷²

Some of her feelings about 'Round Midnight may result from a conflict that arose with her producers concerning the choice of arranger: "I picked Oliver [Nelson] first and [Jerry Wexler and Nesuhi Ertegun] got Claus Ogerman."⁷³ Although he was relatively unknown, Nelson suited Carter for several reasons: "He was new then, but I liked his voicing, what he did with the horns, the way he put them together--it was different--he had a different sound."⁷⁴ Carter would have encountered Nelson's sound on his newly produced Blues and the Abstract Truth. Nelson's idealistic personal agenda

⁷⁰ Will Friedwald discounts this when he asks: "How could anyone remotely familiar with Carter's art have her debase herself . . . and assign her such turkeys as 'The Good Life'?" While Carter wryly comments in her concerts that Tony Bennett 'made all the money' on his cover of "The Good Life," the fact that the tune recurs in her discography suggests that she has a bona fide fondness for it, if not a certain proprietary feeling about it.

⁷¹ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁷² Bauer, unpublished interview.

⁷³ Yapple, KJAZ-80.

⁷⁴ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 24.

would also appeal to Carter: "I would have to be true to myself, to play and write what I think is vital and, most of all, to find my own personality and identity."⁷⁵

For Carter, race was also a factor in her choice of arrangers: "When I approached Atlantic with Oliver Nelson, they said 'like what do I mean?' In the end they got Claus Ogerman; he's not bad, but he was also young and new and a foreigner, and here's Oliver Nelson who's young and black."⁷⁶ Nelson did eventually arrange eight of the thirteen tunes on the album: "After they coupled me with Claus, they didn't like him so they went along with me and got Oliver. . . . [And that's] the reason for Oliver Nelson on the 'Good Life.'"⁷⁷ Carter reports that Nelson also got pressured by the producers to modify his approach: "When they got Oliver, they tried to make him conform as an arranger. They tried to tell him how to write for me. That was not what I wanted. I wanted him to feel free . . . [so] we could collaborate together, and really get some free stuff. They tried to make him change, too."⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Oliver Nelson, Blues and the Absolute Truth, liner notes (New York: MCA/Impulse! MCAD-5659/JVC 468, 23 February, 1961).

⁷⁶ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 24.

⁷⁷ Yapple, KJAZ-80. Carter's memory conflicts with discographic data on the CD notes and on the original liner notes, which list Claus Ogerman as the arranger for "The Good Life." Furthermore, the voicings seem conservative, compared to the other Nelson charts, such as the title track. At the time of the album's release, "The Good Life" got released as a single (Atco 6254), on the flip side of "Nothing More to Look Forward To," which suggests that the producers believed these songs had the potential to become hits.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

That Carter did not scat on either the Ray Charles duets or 'Round Midnight leads me to suspect that her efforts to shed the bebop image date from around this time. Her later disappointment with these records suggests that, at the time they were released, she hoped they would have a greater impact on her career than they ultimately did have, perhaps even producing a hit single. After recording on the Atco label, Carter continued to gig locally in New York and she started to perform internationally as well: "I also worked with Sonny Rollins, too. I went to Japan with Sonny Rollins in 1963 . . . and then I got my own group in the early '60s. I got Billy Harper from Washington, DC and Buster Williams and John Malachi. A little group did some tours around the midwest and Ohio, and Detroit."⁷⁹ With these recent successes under her belt, Carter had good reason to believe that she was finally on the verge of reaping the fruits of her labors from the preceding fifteen years.

⁷⁹ Yapple, BNY-80.

Chapter 6: A New Direction (1963-1969)

As we have seen, by the early 1960s Betty Carter had gradually attained a degree of recognition in the music business as a jazz singer. With five records to her name and tours with such stars as Ray Charles, Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins to her credit, she went on the road with a trio. Carter could count on bookings from club-owners on the east coast and in the mid-west where she had begun to establish audiences for herself. In addition to the greater New York area, Carter worked the area from Washington to Philadelphia to Chicago. While she did not have a contract with a record company and although the labels for which she had recorded did not actively promote her music, a few idealistic DJ's were hip to the sounds of black music and they championed her cause. On his radio program, Joel Dorn rang in the new day with the sound of Carter's voice, announcing it by saying: "It's midnight in Philadelphia: here's the girlfriend."¹ When in doubt, she could rely upon musicians and club-owners in Detroit to welcome her home.

Carter was emerging from the journeyman phase of her career. Having added greatly to the knowledge she had gained from her time with Hampton about how the music business operated, she felt she was positioned to exercise greater control over her career than she had done thus far. Her

¹ William Bauer, unpublished interview with Joel Dorn, January 1995. Also mentioned in the liner notes to 'Round Midnight (Atco CD7 80453-2).

recent musical successes no doubt fueled her self-confidence, and her reputation as a prima donna dates from around this time. "That's when I started acting like a star."² It may have seemed to Carter that producing a hit was now only a matter of time; but, very soon she had to decide between having a hit record or defining herself as a jazz singer, for these options became mutually exclusive almost overnight. The following description partially accounts for why Carter did not attain the stature of Sarah Vaughan or Dinah Washington.

In 1964, a major shift in mainstream audience tastes became apparent which has since altered the economics of the entertainment field and affected the prospects of virtually all jazz musicians. The tide seemed to turn suddenly in that year with the arrival of a wave of rock musicians from across the Atlantic. The film "A Hard Day's Night" and the song "I Want to Hold Your Hand" came out in 1964, sweeping the nation with its first infusion of British rock, and a year later the film "Help!" landed on American shores.³ Carter has often spoken of the effect that the Beatles' arrival had on her: "Then I have to deal with the '60s. . . . The Beatles, OK? I'm in real trouble now, because I haven't gotten nowhere in the first place."⁴

² Dreyfuss, "Betty 'Slow Pop' Carter," 18.

³ Louis Armstrong took pride in topping the Beatles on the charts with "Hello Dolly" and Ella Fitzgerald continued to produce successful records during the early 1960s, but these are clearly exceptions.

⁴ White, Jazz Talk.

Nearly two decades before, Carter had witnessed the heyday of jazz as the source of mainstream popular music. The bebop revolution gradually undermined the connection between jazz and popular music, as evidenced in Carter's own reaction against swing. While jazz still informed mainstream popular music during the 1950s, such African-American musical developments as Rhythm & Blues,⁵ soul, gospel, doo-wop, and a blues revival laid the groundwork for the change that took place in the mid-1960s. White musical developments during the 1940s and 1950s such as country music, bluegrass, rockabilly, a folk music revival and rock-and-roll also contributed to the musical mix, as well as elements from South- and Latin-American dance music, such as samba, rumba, and tango.

At first, the proliferation of styles during this time posed no apparent threat to the prevalence of jazz in popular music and everyone seemed to benefit from the rich sonic environment such diversity provided. That Mahalia Jackson's influence extends through Dinah Washington to a multitude of singers including Dakota Staton, Nina Simone and Betty Carter, in addition to its direct impact on such different singers as Elvis Presley and Barbara Streisand, illustrates this. Sarah Vaughan credited Dinah Shore and Doris Day as

⁵ Ironically for Carter, Lionel Hampton had acted as one of the architects of this style as early as the late 1940s, along with Louis Jordan. Having influenced the Beatles, Ray Charles also had an impact on the development of rock.

sources for her style, showing that the influence between blacks and whites was mutual, if not equivalent.

The synthesis of musical styles that occurred during the 1950s brings to mind Mark Slobin's assertion that "once it was easy to say that a 'culture' was the sum of the lived experience and stored knowledge of a discrete population that differed from neighboring groups. Now it seems that there is no one experience or knowledge that unifies everyone within a defined 'cultural' boundary, or if there is, not the total content of their lives."⁶ The musical developments outlined above seem emblematic of a greater readiness on the part of many Americans to address the nation's cultural diversity. At its location on the fault line of individual and collective identity in America, music thus played a role in the civil rights movement.

Whereas rock-related styles had been on the fringe of popular culture during the 1950s, by the mid-1960s rock had already begun to supplant jazz as the mainstream popular style. Some musicians and writers have proposed that record companies manufactured the shift by marketing rock to a young generation of listeners that had begun to emerge by the end of the 1950s. Certainly the post-war affluence that Americans then enjoyed trickled down to the baby-boomers, and this had far reaching effects on the demographics of record marketing and promotion; but to ascribe such an important

⁶ Slobin, Subcultural Sounds, 11. By extension, the formation of new styles of music depends upon the fluidity of supposedly distinct musical languages.

cultural change to a conspiracy on the part of record company executives seems to oversimplify matters. These executives could not have predicted that the youth of America would adopt the sounds of rock music as a way to assert their independence from their parents.

Furthermore, the open use of black idioms by rock musicians suggests that a predominantly white superculture could afford to grant the black subculture an even greater impact on mainstream popular music than it had previously allowed during the swing era. The most successful big bands had taken elements of a musical style that had roots in African-American culture and made this style accessible to the mainstream by accommodating these elements to the Western aesthetic. The emergence of bebop reflects the effort of black musicians to reclaim jazz by reasserting aesthetic elements of African-American origin. Black styles that fed into the gradual formation of rock during the 1950s reflect yet another assertion of African-American elements within a mainstream oriented towards European-American aesthetics. Such movements within the peculiar space between super- and subculture that Slobin calls the "interculture" reveal powerful currents in the dynamic interaction of black and white cultures. Popular music has thus provided a forum for an ongoing dialogue between two distinct aesthetics and an opportunity to generate hybrid forms of expression. In the process, both the mainstream popular style and the various black styles have evolved. As Slobin has stated:

A great deal of the subculture's musical energy goes into working over its own music in a process I call "reevaluation." Over time, new perspectives cause a reordering of group priorities, a changed understanding of what is "authentic," what represents "us" best to outsiders, what sells best to a new generation of listeners, or what is now "ours" that was once "theirs." Such shifts often accompany significant social change in the superculture or a particular historical moment in the life of the subculture.⁷

The dramatic changes in the music business that occurred in the mid-1960s did not happen in a social vacuum. They reflected social and economic forces at work during the 1960s. In fact, earlier than this, music itself had provided some impetus for these changes, in part because of its public nature. Some of the seeds for desegregation had been sown by the use of racially mixed ensembles as far back as the 1930s, and by Norman Granz's "Jazz at the Philharmonic" tours in the 1940s and 1950s which required that white audience members sit among black ones.

Literary works also laid the groundwork for the civil rights movement, with such books as James Baldwin's "Nobody Knows My Name," and "Another Country" having an impact on the nation's racial consciousness. The efforts of James Meredith and the "Freedom Riders" to achieve integration in schools intensified the struggle. During 1963, riots in Birmingham, Alabama led to the arrest of Martin Luther King, Jr. To restore order President Kennedy summoned 3,000 troops. That same year 200,000 "Freedom Marchers" demonstrated in

⁷ Ibid., 95.

Washington. In 1964 and 1965, riots had erupted in Harlem, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Newark and in other urban centers, sweeping through black neighborhoods and destroying whatever lay in their path. In 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr. led the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. The music business could not help but reflect this social upheaval, and this period in American history marked a turning point in the lives and careers of jazz musicians regardless of their stature. Even Duke Ellington had difficulty getting a recording contract during this time.

For Carter, the Beatles became scapegoats for the effect that rock had had on the record industry and by extension, on the market for jazz: "It wasn't until the 1960s when the Beatles came on the scene that the impact in the music business was money--instantly."⁸ In publicizing their debt to black music in the early 1960s, the Beatles and other British rock groups acknowledged and furthered the desegregation of the audience for popular music that had begun long before. As Carter describes these events: "When the Beatles came into existence black music was accepted across the board. It . . . gave permission to every white artist who wanted to do some black material or to approach the black world of music--it was the stamp of approval. Elvis Presley had done it, but he never announced it."⁹ Carter felt that, by 1964, "the barrier for white people to

⁸ Yapple, GAMH-79.

⁹ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter."

go out and buy black music lifted, when the Beatles said their influence came from blacks."¹⁰ Significantly, the black music Carter is speaking of here is not jazz, but the black styles with which she had happily co-existed in the 1950s, and which fed directly into the formation of rock. The black following for bebop-based jazz had drifted away long before. By focusing blame for the situation on the Beatles, Carter could initially ignore the rejection of her style of jazz by black audiences.

In order to come to terms with her crumbling hopes of becoming a star, Carter eventually had to recognize that jazz had fallen from grace even with her own people. To her credit she came to this recognition sooner rather than later and ultimately turned it to her advantage. Will Friedwald has astutely noted that while the "mid-sixties rock inundation" took away many of her chances to work, "it forced [Carter] up out of the pop market."¹¹ Combined with the rock music industry, the civil rights movement left an artist such as Carter, who strongly identified jazz with black culture-- and rock with assimilation, little alternative but to go underground. Carter recalls this as the time when "they stop[p]ed making race records."¹² Her commitment to jazz necessitated a change in her approach to her career, but, in the course of abandoning her unspoken hopes of crossing over

¹⁰ Gourse, Louis' Children, 331.

¹¹ Friedwald, Jazz Singing, 405.

¹² Gourse, Louis' Children, 331.

to the mainstream audience, Carter incurred a certain bitterness about race.

As we have seen, Carter grew up attending an integrated school in a relatively progressive city such as Detroit. One gets the sense that the matter of race only entered her thinking later on, and by the mid-1960s she had come to feel strongly about the racial aspects of the music business. Ironically, while Carter recognized the impact integration was having on the reception of rock, she also felt that when she played to black crowds in the 1950s she had suffered from the "split between white and black music."¹³ Carter offers proof of how segregated the music industry still was before the 1960s by describing how WEVD played black jazz and WNEW played Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee, even in New York City. As she points out, "this was "long before Nat 'King' Cole got on WNEW . . . he broke the Las Vegas barrier."¹⁴ These and other perceptions help to account for the formation of her racial sensibility. She recalls that "when Billie Holiday got busted in the 1940s and went to jail, it made headlines; but when Anita O'Day used drugs you didn't hear about it or about how many times she did get busted."¹⁵ She also remembers that "no rehabilitation places existed for black people--only prison"¹⁶; that during the 1950s "black entertainers couldn't stay in the Las Vegas hotels where they

¹³ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter."

¹⁴ Gourse, Louis' Children, 331.

¹⁵ Grime, Jazz Voices, 166

¹⁶ Ibid.

were working; that Dinah Washington had to build a tent outside a Las Vegas hotel; and, that Sammy Davis had his problems there."¹⁷ She also recalls that "a black artist [such as] Lavern Baker [could make] . . . a commercial hit in a race market with 'Tweedledee and Tweedledum' [only to have] Georgia Gibbs cover it [and produce a popular success]"¹⁸; and, that Elvis Presley did not publicly acknowledge his debt to black music.

All of these factors illustrate how Carter faced the racial realities that confronted her and how they contributed to her attitudes towards white people, white musicians and the record industry: "[During the 1950s] there wasn't the influx of the white world in our music like we have today, . . . an influx of white artists who have learned more about black music . . . which makes it very difficult. . . . You gotta deal with it, and there's nothing wrong with that. But that's what has happened to the music today from say '59 [on]."¹⁹ Compared to Miles Davis, who had no qualms about using white musicians or appealing to white listeners, Carter ultimately came to find the implications of crossing-over distasteful on moral grounds. Among all of those who explored jazz-rock and fusion, Carter directed the most vitriol at Davis for his broad appeal, which may indicate just how much she had previously held him in awe.

¹⁷ Gourse, Louis' Children, 331.

¹⁸ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 75.

¹⁹ White, Jazz Talk.

To Carter, the stance she has maintained with regard to her style goes beyond musical implications to encompass her self-image as a black artist. Speaking in 1979 Carter said: "I have never involved myself with the commercial market. I really have managed to stay away from that, but when the '60s came, and money became the most important thing to an artist and to a record company, it had a lot to do with what happened to artists. Most of our artists decided they wanted to make some money. . . . So all of them conformed to make money. That cut down on the musicianship."²⁰ She has spoken in technical terms about the impact that jazz-rock and fusion had on the level of quality in the music: "In the '60s, the music became vamps. We got hung up with one note, even in jazz: one note and vamps. So the poor kid who was three years old in the '60s heard nothing but one note and vamp. What does he know? What can he say? What are his values? He's been brought up with electronic and one note, one note, one note. Bless his heart, what does he know?"²¹ Clearly having her own children to raise during this time heightened Carter's sensitivity to the impact of these developments on the continuity of the jazz tradition.

For Carter, sustaining the jazz tradition became a matter of preserving a black culture distinct from mainstream America:

²⁰ Yable, LCC-79.

²¹ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire, 14.

When they realized that now it was okay for white people to simulate us, mimic us, do the black music, get over, and they could freely do it, that's when money became the most important thing to the business. Everybody struck out with a sigh of relief; now I can [sing] like Muddy Waters. It became integration time, musically. [Nat] King Cole got into Las Vegas. Everything became everything, right. Think about it. Now money is the most important thing, not creativity.²²

Carter's belief that until the 1960s jazz sought to appeal to a black audience comes from her identification of jazz with bebop and its spin-off-styles, which had their own specific aesthetic. This identification also motivates her assertion that music before then was not about the money, for as discussed earlier, bebop initially defined itself in terms of its rejection of mainstream appeal.

Mentioned earlier as well was the fact that, during this time, record executives customarily put pressure on recording artists to change to an accepted pop sound in order to appeal to white listeners, and we can now see some of the reasons behind Carter's refusal to cave in to that pressure; her own artistic vision and her convictions about the role of jazz in black culture had become too strong for her to deny. Despite her difficulties with the recording industry, Carter did manage to lead several recording sessions with United Artists in 1964 and 1965. The label released some of the sides from these sessions under the title Inside Betty Carter. I will return to this recording at the end of the chapter.

²² Yapple, GAMH-79.

Partly due to her reputation for standing up to producers who tried to manage her, but also because the jazz scene had dried up and clubs all over were closing, Carter's gigging prospects slowed to a trickle. In 1979 she said: "A lot of people thought I quit. In the meantime I had two kids--they're 17 and 13--didn't have no job other than singing jazz, never had any kind of public assistance, and had no help from what you'd call a husband. I had a husband but it wasn't where I could relax because my husband was making enough money to support me--and I even bought a house--in 1965."²³ Carter had given birth to her second child Kagle Redding on 1 February 1965, and they had all moved to Newark.

During the drought in jazz employment that followed, Carter sought to keep working in music any way she knew how. She spent some time in Europe where audiences gave jazz artists the support that American audiences did not provide. Michael Ullman recounts a description of her arriving in Copenhagen to a tearful greeting by Ben Webster, a bunch of posies drooping in his hand.²⁴ She also relied on her connections to the Apollo theater and to other New York venues, occasionally performing with blues and R&B artists. Speaking of her work in 1965, Carter has said, "I worked a

²³ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 32.

²⁴ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter." 71. According to Bruyninckx, Carter performed at Annie's Place, a club in London owned by Annie Ross, in 1964, but this date is not corroborated elsewhere.

package New Year's at the Apollo with John Lee Hooker, T-Bone Walker, Sonny Terry and Brownee [sic] McGhee."²⁵

Carter recalls driving through a snowstorm to the Cadillac Club in Philadelphia for a gig around New Year's Day 1965. Later that year Carter also performed in the company of Archie Shepp, Albert Ayler, Coltrane, and Sun Ra²⁶ on Sunday, 28 March from 3 to 8PM, a performance that Carter does not recall.²⁷ Carter later took measures to distance herself from free jazz, because of her conviction that it was mainly to fool white listeners about the true ability of the musicians. Carter said to Tony Schwartz that she "deplores" the avant garde because it "alienated black audiences."²⁸ Like jazz-rock and fusion, Carter felt that free jazz would shatter the continuity of the jazz tradition. "I'm talking about this era when free music was coming into prominence. . . . I knew that a musician who jumped on the free music [bandwagon] would be lost as far as education in musicianship is concerned."²⁹

²⁵ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer."

²⁶ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer." Also mentioned in Friedwald, Jazz Singing, 405. This benefit concert entitled "New Black Music" for the Black Arts Repertory Theater School took place at the Village Gate, and included Cecil Taylor, Charles Tolliver, and Gracham Moncur, III. the village VOICE, 25 March 1965, 14.

²⁷ Bauer, unpublished interview.

²⁸ Friedwald, Jazz Singing, 400. Friedwald observes here that [Cecil] Taylor "has several times named her as his favorite singer (to which she has offered no comment), but there's little in Carter's personality or music to justify such a response [from him]."

²⁹ Yapple, BNY-80.

Carter had a few old connections that she made use of during this time: "[I was on television in 1965] when Sammy Davis had his own TV show. The series only lasted for thirteen weeks. I think I was on next to the last one."³⁰ According to Carter, her association with Sammy Davis, Jr. dates back to her time with Hampton when Gladys Hampton brought the Will Maston Trio out to California. Later, when she worked at Wells in 1965 with John Hicks, Cecil McBee, and Jack DeJohnette, Davis came to hear her. In July 1966 she helped to inaugurate a new room in a club called The Living Room, of which Davis was part owner. According to the reviewer she was "featured in the longest segment at the premiere and was warmly applauded by all the celebrities present."³¹

On 5 June 1966 Carter appeared at the Five Spot Cafe at 2 St. Marks Place,³² and during the week of 20 July 1966 she began an unlimited engagement there.³³ The advance press described the club as the "scene of former triumphs" for Betty Carter and for this particular engagement a quartet consisting of trio plus tenor saxophone played behind her. Joe Henderson filled the tenor chair at first, and then George Coleman took over this role. The instrumentation Carter had on this gig soon became unusual, as Carter

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ The Daily News, 7 July 1966.

³² the village VOICE, 25 May 1966, 12.

³³ Notices for these engagements appear in the village VOICE during the next four months: 21 July 1966, 10; 11 August 1966, 16; 3 November 1966, 34; 24 November 1966, 33.

normally could not afford to hire horns. Carter recalls the engagement: "In the early 1960s I did work with a quartet. In the Five Spot. That was with Joe Henderson for about two weeks and [after that] George Coleman. . . . I was using my trio, with John Hicks and Walter Booker . . . and a different drummer, let me see, it was either Freddy Waits . . . he worked with me down there (He may not admit that, but he did.); Walter Booker, John Hicks, Cecil McBee I worked with there."³⁴ Cecil McBee filled in for Walter Booker on bass at a later date.

Her description of this group as "my trio" contradicts Bill McLarney, who reported in 1966 that "she doesn't work regularly enough to employ her own group on a full time basis, [so] there are sometimes situations in which she and an unfamiliar trio try to get their music together."³⁵ She later confirmed that it was not until later in the decade that she could contract a trio on a regular basis. In 1976 she recalled that "it was gigging time, so you worked with what they had."³⁶ "What they had" often consisted of local musicians who have since fallen into obscurity. As the decade wore on the club scene grew even less viable as a means of support:

³⁴ White, Jazz Talk. Carter's association with John Hicks, the musician with whom she has worked the longest, dates back to this early gig, and this may lead her to refer to this group as "her trio."

³⁵ McLarney, "The 'in' Singer."

³⁶ White, Jazz Talk.

There was one guy here named Jim Harrison who was putting on a lot of concerts around New York City at that time, not a lot of big places, but he was doing the best he could. He lost his shirt putting on me and a whole lot of other guys during that whole period, but he was really trying. And it kind of helped us in our egos that somebody was trying at that time to keep us going. He and his wife were dedicated, and still are dedicated to the music.³⁷

Given the difficulties Carter encountered in getting work during this time, the issue of race led to intense resentment which lingers in some measure to this day, for she felt that she had been cheated out of the success for which she had worked long and hard and which she rightfully deserved: "If I had been a white female, I would have been a big star earlier. If I were white, with my drive and concept, I'd have had a contract with Columbia."³⁸ Under the circumstances, many jazz artists disappeared from the scene. If they did not become session musicians they took work outside of the field of music in order to get by. Carter decided that making the music was more important to her than making a killing, so she kept plugging away.

Inside Betty Carter

Carter's agent Monte Kay lined up a series of four record dates for her with the United-Artists label which took place from April 1964 to May 1965.³⁹ The musicians included

³⁷ Yapple, BNY-80.

³⁸ Gourse, Louis' Children, 334.

³⁹ Bruyninckx claims that the first seven sides got recorded in June 1964; but the liner notes give April as the month of this session.

Harold Mabern on piano, Bob Cranshaw on bass, Roy McCurdy on drums, and in one session, Kenny Burrell on guitar.⁴⁰ The first seven sides from these sessions got released on the album Inside Betty Carter. Joel Dorn has affirmed that this record represents a dramatic break with the approach Carter had taken in her previous recordings. It documents the redefinition that Carter's self-image underwent in response to the shift in the musical marketplace. Sometime between January 1963 and these sessions, perhaps during her trip to Japan, but most likely in 1964, Carter relinquished the prospect of crossing over into the pop market. This record asserts her commitment to a bebop-based concept even in the face of the diminished commercial viability of such a concept. While her singing does not depart radically from the approach she had taken on Atco's 'Round Midnight, the fact that she did her own arranging for the record is significant. In the process of making the record she altered the way she would market herself as a musician.

We know that the album stands as a reflection of Carter's own personal aesthetic because Carter has stated that, with this effort, she finally had a record she could feel good about. In 1979 she recalled: "The Inside [Betty

⁴⁰ Aside from Kenny Burrell, the musicians for the remaining sides have not been documented. Carter was among several musicians who performed in "A Tribute to the Memory of Charlie Parker" on Sunday, 14 March 1965 at the Cafe Au Go Go. Kenny Burrell and Bob Cranshaw were also among them, so her association with at least these two continued until then. This would seem to suggest that Cranshaw played bass on the 4 March session as well, but we do not know for sure.

Carter on United Artists and the last one, the one that I did for my own company, Bet-Car, with my two sons on the cover [are my favorite albums]. It has "My Favorite Things" on it and "Spring Can Hang You Up the Most."⁴¹ Her idiosyncratic renditions of these songs, with the former in breakneck 4/4 time, and the latter in a languorously slow tempo, made them signature tunes for Carter in the years that followed the record's release. As late as 1976 Carter felt that United Artists should have reissued it: "There's a demand now for the Inside [Betty Carter] record."⁴² The song "Something Big" could stand as a fanfare announcing Carter's discovery of her artistic voice at this time, for this is when she took command of her professional destiny.

In the process of cutting these sides, Carter released a truer expression of her artistic vision than she had done before. Her own tune "Open the Door," the first version of which appears on this record, expressed her concerns about the effect that financial pressures were having on her marriage. She has spoken of how her husband tried to get her to sing commercially: "'Open the Door' was a tune that I thought of in my relationship with my husband and my kids. I was trying to get him to understand what I was all about, to get to understand me more--why I couldn't give up what I was doing [in order] to go for the money."⁴³ The song became a

⁴¹ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 33. Carter has also praised this album in Yaple, BNY-80.

⁴² White, Jazz Talk.

⁴³ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 77-78.

staple of her repertoire thereafter, and she has recorded it more times than any other song. (Transcriptions 10, 14, and 15 in Appendix II are notations of three different versions of the song.) To signal its significance to her listeners she subtitled it "Theme Song" in the live recording of it from 1979. The lyrics read as follows:

Open the door, dear,
I must get in your heart.
You're making it hard to be true,
So please, come,

Open the door, dear;
And then perhaps you'll find
That you have me on your mind.

No matter
How you try to avoid me,
You can't get away so eas'ly.
If you will not come to me I'll come to you.

Open the door, please.
Why make me beg and beg?
Why torture me like this?

Can't you see,
I've got love,
Plenty love to give to you?

I've got love,
Lots of
Love to give to you?

I've got love. . .

The song's persistent Latin rhythm and its haunting, seductive melody help to make Carter's invitation seem irresistible.

Carter's concern for the jazz tradition led her to begin to explore the possibility of performing at colleges as early as 1964. In 1980 she recalled:

I remember . . . when I tried to get a grant to get into these black schools, the person I asked about the grant was on the board of NEA, one of the branches, New York or the international branch. Anyway, he told me flatly, which discouraged me completely, that the school itself would have to be interested in me in order for me to write up a proposal to get a grant to go to this school. I know the school is not interested in me. I'm not going there for that reason. I'm trying to get into the school to expose myself to the kids. . . . So I'm thinking of a real period where it's very necessary for [jazz] to be heard by the youth before the continuity is broken, you see. I had a feeling it was going to be broken [long] before [now].⁴⁴

Carter left her husband in 1967 and took her children to California to stay with her sister. She had hoped that the prospects for work might be better on the west coast, but by 1969 she had returned to Newark empty handed. Ten years later she told a California audience: "I came out here in 1967 and '69. I worked right here in San Francisco, and you all looked at me like 'what is she doing?'"⁴⁵ Over two decades had passed since Carter had sung at the Golden Gate in San Francisco with Hampton's thriving musical organization, and her failure to draw an audience on the west coast at the end of the 1960s only served to emphasize her isolation from the musical mainstream in general. It must have seemed to her as though she had exhausted nearly all of her options.

⁴⁴ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁴⁵ Yapple, GAMH-79.

Chapter 7: A New Label (1968-1974)

At the end of the 1950s free and modal jazz had each challenged the assumption that a chord progression must provide the basis for jazz improvisation. Because the bebop revolution had, by this time, gotten absorbed into the mainstream, it could no longer effectively express resistance to commercialism. "The New Thing," as free jazz was often called, took bebop's place as a musical expression of the rejection of popular culture and it had created its own subculture which was distinct from the jazz mainstream. By the end of the 1960s another major trend away from bebop-based jazz had begun to have an impact. With the sovereignty of chord changes now in doubt, the door was open for jazz to synthesize pop-rock techniques and styles into a new approach that could appeal to the current market.

After experimenting with integrating the sounds of rock into his approach, Miles Davis produced his landmark jazz-rock album Bitches Brew in August, 1969. Carter's reaction was decisive: "It wasn't until he did Bitches Brew and came up with the sound that they decided to put his picture on the trade magazine Record World. He'd made money for Columbia for years. How come they didn't respect him enough then to put his picture on the trade magazine? But he had to join them and do what they wanted him to do before they put his

picture on Record World He has disappointed me, because I want to hear something, not just sound."¹

During this period, bebop-based jazz slipped into the cracks between fusion and free jazz. Carter has openly proclaimed her disgust for the avant-garde and fusion, and for musicians who had abandoned the tradition of bebop-based jazz:

So they do a play called The Musical Tragedy of Billie Holiday and Archie Shepp writes the music. To me . . . it was an insult to Billie Holiday, because he wrote rock music . . . they were influenced by the white media. They put up the money and hoped it would be another Jesus Christ Superstar or Hair. . . . I heard the music and I know that Archie Shepp wasn't the man who should've written that music. Maybe the white people thought he could do it, but you can go uptown and ask ten people on the street who Archie Shepp is and they won't be able to tell you. Ninety percent of his audience is white.²

Given the long years that Carter had spent paying dues, it comes as no surprise that she should look with disdain upon the success of those working in a style that required less technical virtuosity than bebop.

Carter remained loyal to her bop origins during this time, and as a result, scraped through the late 1960s from gig to gig with little obvious hope of making a dent in an industry that had gone cold on bebop-based jazz. Her last record had done nothing to propel her into the public eye.

¹ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 277.

² Ibid.

After twenty years in the music business she seemed further from getting a contract with a major label than when she had started out.

Then, at the very end of the decade she met a few people who expressed an interest in producing her: "About 1969, I collaborated with two guys who wanted to start a record company, and I got a piece of the company, and did my first album for the company in 1969, which was called 'Bush'. . . . It's the first album I did for my company in part ownership."³ Ben Taylor and Orville O'Brien had planned to form a new record label and they took Carter on as a partner: "We were ambitious blacks starting our own record company jazz-wise."⁴ They hoped to produce black music that was not getting produced by commercially oriented labels. It had been over four-and-a-half years since Carter had made a record, her longest dry spell since she started recording, and this arrangement must have seemed like the answer to her prayers--a label that would not try to mold her into a hit singer at the expense of her artistic vision. As a partner in a record label she would finally have the last word on how the label produced and promoted her.

Around this time Carter began to think of the musicians she contracted for her recordings and club dates as her own trio, and not merely as a pickup group. According to her description, "I left the big band in 1951. Then I worked

³ Yaple, BNY-80.

⁴ Yaple, BNY-80.

with everybody from 1951 to 1969. . . . [Then I began working with my own group] . . . in 1969."⁵ The trio Carter had at this time consisted of Norman Simmons, piano, Lyle Atkinson, bass, and Al Harewood, drums.

Bush Records began by recording Carter in two different locations in the end of 1969: "It was live in--I really don't know--Academy Hall [that is, Judson Hall] or in Club Ruby, one of the two places. Because I got something out of Academy Hall and something out of Ruby in New York, [on Long] Island."⁶ A set at the latter venue got recorded in September, but the bulk of the material came from two sets that she performed at Judson Hall on 6 December.

The trio opened the concert with an instrumental number. Carter then appeared on the bandstand dressed in black pants, a black blouse, a gold scarf and a peaked gold cap. She opened her set with the ballad "What's New." She proceeded to sing a medley that consisted of "Seems Like Old Times," "I Remember You," and "(You Forgot To) Remember." According to the reviewer for Down Beat, she then sang "'Round Midnight" and "The Sun Died" (by Ray Charles).⁷ As we know, Carter had

⁵ Kuhl, "Betty Carter," 9.

⁶ Yapple, LCC-79. Carter's mention of Academy Hall should not throw us off the track, for she has stated elsewhere that part of the material for her recordings from this time comes from Judson Hall and part of it comes from Ruby's out in Jamaica, Long Island. Conflicting discographic data complicate this matter, however Academy Hall does not figure into the confusion.

⁷ Based upon this report it seems that the most recent edition of Bruyninckx has listed the songs from this date in the order in which Carter performed them, with "By the Bend in the River" coming between the last two mentioned above.

recorded Monk's bebop anthem earlier with an Oliver Nelson arrangement; but this time she left an even greater mark on the song: "[The tune] 'Round Midnight' had been done [before], but never in three-four time. I changed the lyrics around. That's something I do to make the music different, because you have to approach the lyrics differently. If you change to three-four time, you have to deal with the lyrics differently and the words flow differently."⁸

Carter also performed a series of tunes associated with Billie Holiday that evening (a medley consisting of "God Bless the Child," "Don't Weep for the Lady," "I'm Pulling Through" and others).⁹ Reviewer John Wilson observed that Carter's choice of tunes openly acknowledged her debt to Billie Holiday, who had died ten years earlier.¹⁰ She closed the first set with "The Surrey with the Fringe On Top." The second set included "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye," capitalizing upon her record with Ray Charles and "My Favorite Things," which she had recorded previously on Inside Betty Carter.

Taylor and O'Brien engineered the recordings, which got catalogued as Bush 907. Despite the crude sound quality of

While this edition does not mention the Club Ruby date the earlier edition of Bruyninckx does.

⁸ Yapple, LCC-79.

⁹ Tam Fiofori, "Betty Carter: Judson Hall, New York City, N.Y.," Down Beat 37, no.9 (30 April 1970). Bruyninckx only mentions the last of these three tunes, so the remainder of the medley may not have made it onto tape; however, this review does corroborate that this concert was the one that got taped for future release.

¹⁰ John S. Wilson, "Jazz Songs Given by Betty Carter--She Links Her Judson Hall Recital to Billie Holiday," The New York Times (8 December 1969).

these sides Carter now had a recorded document of her latest work. She chose for release ten of the twenty-one numbers that got recorded, and in doing so, she revealed her criteria for discriminating between an acceptable and an unacceptable "take." She had every expectation that the tunes she chose would get pressed and distributed as her first album for the new Bush label; but this did not come to pass.

Carter had gotten a sense that something was up when O'Brien started talking about buying an airplane with money derived from the project. Then he suddenly disappeared with the masters: "We had some tapes and everything, so one of the partners decides he's not going to deal right."¹¹ According to Carter, O'Brien made off with the tapes with the intention of selling them. For several years Carter succeeded in thwarting his attempts to deal the tapes to potential buyers: "I couldn't let [the record I had made for] Bush come out, because there was another partner, and I had to stop O'Brien. It never really got released on Bush."¹² Seven years later, Morris Levy, the owner of Roulette Records, got the tapes and released them on his label. We will return to this fact later. Carter wryly acknowledges now that the people she had gotten involved with were no better than gangsters and that she was in over her head for "a few minutes" (i.e. a few years).¹³

¹¹ White, Jazz Talk.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Bauer,

Such a setback would have stunned anyone in Carter's position. But because of her tenacity and her belief in her talent the story has a positive outcome. Out of the ashes of this experience arose the idea to form her own label: "[When Bush Records] went down the drain. . . I started my own company in late 1969."¹⁴ Not only does Carter affirm that her creation of Bet-Car sought to extend the concept of the Bush label, she implies that she had to produce herself in order to avoid professional embarrassment: "We had put out this advance promotion that Bush was coming out. . . . [so we had to come out with the Bet-Car recording] because we had created such a demand by saying it was going to be released on Bush. We had put out things in the [village] VOICE. . . before we were ripped off."¹⁵

At this critical juncture in her career, Carter received encouragement to strike out on her own from an unlikely source: "One day, when I was complaining about Bush [Records]. . . [to] a lady in New Jersey, [named] Lillian Conrad, . . . [she said,] 'well, Betty, do it yourself,' . . . and [I] said, 'I might as well do it myself. . . .' That's how my record company was formed in late 1969 and 1970."¹⁶ Lillian Conrad worked at the record pressing factory in Plainfield, New Jersey that was to have dealt with the post-

¹⁴ Yaple, BNY-80. Here Carter marks the beginning of her own label with the Judson Hall concert recorded by Bush records.

¹⁵ White, Jazz Talk.

¹⁶ Yaple, BNY-80. Here she extends the time of her label's inception to include the events immediately following the Judson Hall concert.

production for Bush records. She helped Carter out by diverting the delivery of five thousand record jackets from O'Brien to Carter: "We [decided that we] should start Bet-Car, my record company. We did [the first session] live, [and] we put it out there [ourselves]."¹⁷

With Lillian Conrad waiting to handle the technical aspects of the post-production phase Carter proceeded with her plan. In six months she recorded again, now for the newly formed Bet-Car records: "I did my first record at the Village Vanguard . . . [with a] terrible mixing job, because [of sound] bleeding over everything; but the feeling was there."¹⁸ Although she was broke, Carter somehow financed the record herself, but she did ultimately see some returns from the record: "The first record . . . cost me about \$4000 and I've had about two and a half pressings on it."¹⁹

The album that resulted is entitled, simply, Betty Carter, and the songs on it constitute about half of the repertoire from her Bush sessions (issued on Roulette). Taken together, the sessions for Bush and Bet-Car give us the nearest instances we have in the Carter discography to

¹⁷ White, Jazz Talk.

¹⁸ Yapple, BNY-80. Some question remains about the date of the performance, but Carter has recently recalled it as 22 May 1970. While her fortieth birthday had fallen less than a week before, she has told me that her father's birthday falls near 22 May, which suggests that she had this latter occasion in mind as well. She has added to confusion about the date by implying in an interview from 1972 that she cut her first record for her own label in 1971. Miller, "An Interview," 37.

¹⁹ Kuhl, "Betty Carter," 9. According to Bruyninckx, Carter also rereleased the United Artists LP Inside Betty Carter as Bet-Car 1000.

alternate takes. The fact that her trio was the same at both performances lends a certain degree of stability to the arrangements. From one performance to the next there are slight differences, some more noticeable than others: "I had Norman Simmons, Lyle Atkinson, and Al Harewood with me, and they stayed with me a couple of years."²⁰

A comparison of the material from the two dates reveals significant features of Carter's style. We will consider these more fully in Part II, but a few deserve mention here. At this time in her development, the way Carter reshaped a tune was not fully improvised but grew instead from a carefully worked out concept. Nevertheless, enough variation in detail exists to shade each reading of the lyric in subtle ways. The nuances in her delivery and her effectiveness as a performer contribute to the impression that she was inventing the line on the spur of the moment. A comparison of the only scat solos on these two dates reveals that, when scatting, Carter does indeed improvise. In her scat solo on "Surrey with the Fringe on Top" she extends the improvisation for over five minutes! If we compare this approach to the one used in Carter's early recordings, as in the originally unissued scat solo on "It's a Big, Wide Wonderful World" from Inside Betty Carter, we can hear that Carter's early scat singing involved more planning. Carter has reinforced this point, saying in 1978, "I've developed my [scatting] to the

²⁰ Yapple, BNY-80.

point where nobody's doing it the way I'm doing it, and I'm scatting now from the hip--it's never the same."²¹

While Carter initially formed her own label out of necessity, she ultimately came to embrace this course of action wholeheartedly: "I don't see any other way. [Record companies] are not knocking on my door yet. I'm going it myself, and I'm very proud. . . . Well, it's not very difficult once you get through the initial package. The pressing, labels, jackets--then it's up to the technicians the label people, the jacket people."²² By 1972, Carter seems to have taken in stride her new role as record label owner:

It's nothing. It's just my own thing. To record, I can hire my own engineer and go into the studio and do it. It will take me maybe six months, where it may take a record company two weeks, but it's . . . all mine and it doesn't belong to anyone else. So this is an advantage. I can do what I want to do, sing the way I want to sing, and nobody tells me what to do. I don't have to worry about the executives in the booth. I tell them what to do when it comes to recording.²³

Later, in December 1972, she told Arthur Taylor: "I have my own company. Nobody else was recording me so I recorded myself, and it actually did quite well. In other words, I know exactly how many records I sold and I got the money, so

²¹ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 30.

²² Yapple, KJAZ-80.

²³ Miller, "An Interview."

it was to my advantage. It's out there, and people are buying it. It's not overwhelming, but it's mine."²⁴

Carter had no choice but to learn about aspects of the music business with which most musicians never need to come in contact, such as post-production: "Distribution is another thing. It has nothing to do with pressing."²⁵ Without a distributor, Carter initially had no formal avenue for getting the record out to the public. She refused to sell records at her club dates opting instead to act as her own sales representative to record shops:

At first . . . I used to just tear out the record store listings in the Yellow Pages everywhere I went, then contact the shops to take records. . . . There were a few mom-and-pop record shops in every city that took five or ten copies on consignment. . . . Lillian Conrad used to press Folkways albums, so she had some ins with distributors.²⁶

Ten years after having embarked on this adventure Carter acquired an independent distributor: "I have Rounder [Records Distribution] out of [Cambridge] Massachusetts . . . distributing my things now, and because there is such a demand, I don't think I'm going to have much of a problem with distribution."²⁷

²⁴ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 282.

²⁵ Yapple, KJAZ-80.

²⁶ Bob Blumenthal, liner notes to Betty Carter at the Village Vanguard (Verve 314-519-851-2, July 1993).

²⁷ Yapple, KJAZ-80.

In the early 1970s Carter retained a booking agency called Jazz Spotlight Productions.²⁸ A New York Times review documents Carter's appearance with her trio at Cami Hall at the end of March 1971. The songs she sang included "Some Other Time" and "Black Man."²⁹ For the past three years she had worked with the same musicians, but from this time until 1976 her personnel underwent a series of changes: "After that it was like what musicians do I get now? Then I had Danny Mixon with me for a couple of years. He was on piano, and then I had a slew of bass fiddle players and drummers."³⁰ By 1972, Carter's trio had changed to Danny Mixon, piano, Stafford James, bass, and Clifford Barbaro, drums. She performed with them on 27 February 1972 in the Haybarn of Goddard College in Vermont (for the Third World Studies Program).³¹ She also performed with the same group sometime that same year at Livingston College of Rutgers University. When on the road, Carter had to improvise her accommodations, and she often stayed with friends.

She performed in a series entitled "Soul at the Center" on 1 August 1972 at Alice Tully Hall, in a double bill with 'MBoom, a percussion ensemble with Freddie Waits, Joe Chambers, Omar Clay, Warren Smith, Doug Hawthorne, and Pablo Mangrum. Cecil Taylor was scheduled to attend, but did not

²⁸ As of April 1970, this agency had its address at 152 West 42nd St., Suite 536; New York, New York (Phone 212-LO5-3517).

²⁹ John Wilson, "Betty Carter Calls Miss Holiday to Mind," The New York Times (29 March 1971).

³⁰ Yapple, BNY-80.

³¹ Miller, "An Interview," 38.

appear, ostensibly due to illness. In October Carter performed at Slugs, where eight months earlier Lee Morgan had been shot dead by his mistress. At that time she was still backed by Danny Mixon, piano, and Clifford Barbaro, drums, but by now she had changed her bass player to Wilbur Little.

In the spring of 1972 Carter had begun to produce her second record for Bet-Car records, entitled The Betty Carter Album. At that time, she seems to have been restlessly experimenting with her backup during the three sessions. She started out with Danny Mixon, Buster Williams, and Chip Lyles, with whom she made four sides. In the second session she replaced Lyles with drummer Louis Hayes for three sides, and in the final session she replaced Mixon with pianist Onaje Allen Gumbs for the remaining three sides. Made at Regent Sound Studios, where she had made Inside Betty Carter, this record marks the beginning of Carter's long and fruitful association with sound engineer Joe Ferla, and the sound quality is strong. Carter continued her fascination with overdubbing on this record, scatting "fill" for her own vocals on the first and last cuts of the album, "You're A Sweetheart" and "Sounds," and singing harmony on "Sunday, Monday, or Always." Six of the record's ten sides are Carter originals, including an up-tempo remake of "I Can't Help It," "What Is It?", "We Tried," "Happy," "Tight," and the seven-plus minutes-long "Sounds" which featured extensive scatting, and upon which she later expanded.

Surprisingly, one of the songs, "Children Live What They Learn," indicates a degree of rock influence. The song reveals Carter's growing preoccupation with educating children about jazz, and she may have used rock here to reach a young audience. Her own children appear on the back cover, and both the name of her publishing company, Mykag, and the catalogue number of her records (MK) are derived from their names, Myles and Kagle. Carter has indicated that she feels positively about this record: "The second one [I did for my own label, The Betty Carter Album], was done for me by a friend of mine [Joel Dorn] who owed me a favor and he backed it. It's been in its third pressing. It's one of the 101 Best Albums of Leonard Lyons' book."³²

Who Said Jazz is Dead

As we have seen, Carter had shown an interest in educating blacks about the importance of their own musical heritage as early as the mid-1960s, but by the early 1970s this impulse had begun to take a more clearly defined shape. Since 1972 she has spoken in interviews about the jazz tradition as a black cultural legacy and about the responsibility of the musicians and the black community to sustain it. Early in the decade she also had plans to produce a record called, significantly, Who Said Jazz Is Dead, which she described as a children's album, and which she hoped to use in the schools:

³² Kuhl, "Betty Carter," 55.

I'm in the process of doing a children's album. It's not going to be eenie, meenie, miney, mo. It's going to be my introduction to music so far as jazz is concerned, for children. We're going to do lively things, advisable things and nice things but they're all going to [have something to] do with the jazz atmosphere. [The kids] know about rock 'n roll, rhythm and blues. The kids know about that 'cause they're getting it very young. You can find them out there dancing at one and two years old, so you know they're getting it. My album, I hope, will put a new dimension on what they've been learning in school, in terms of 'Jack and Jill went up the hill.' If I do 'Jack and Jill went up the hill,' it will be done a different way than it was ever done before. The title of my album is gonna be Who Said Jazz is Dead. It's going through the educational system first and I hope I can put it on the racks in the record shops.³³

By December 1972 she was still working on this idea: "I read somewhere that music has to have a folk feeling to get across to kids, but I don't believe it. . . . If kids hear jazz young enough, they'll understand what it's supposed to feel like. Why should they wait until they're in high school or college before they're exposed to it?"³⁴ Carter did not limit herself to a didactic approach, but also had words of encouragement for aspiring young artists: "One of the tunes on the children's album I'm putting together says: 'Don't be afraid of a mistake! A mistake is all that it is.'"³⁵

During this time her active repertoire included some material from the album including such titles as "Congolese Children" (which may have included lyrics in both English and Swahili), "Listen to thy Parents," and "Life Is Growing Up,

³³ Miller, "An Interview," 37.

³⁴ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 276.

³⁵ Ibid.

Daughter."³⁶ Later she spoke of the positive tone of the material: "It would be fun lyrics for kids, but it would be swung for adults. Well you know that's the way you're gonna get the kids. You gotta tell it like it is. You can't swing [any other] way, but the one way. So that's very important that the kids hear that."³⁷ Carter sustained her belief in this project until 1976, but she did not complete it and does not mention it after that time.

Although Carter was unknown to the man- or woman-on-the-street, her reputation among musicians had become well established by this time, and she worked in both American and international venues. By 1972 she had performed in Germany, France, Amsterdam, Holland, and Japan with such giants in the field as John Coltrane, Pharoah Saunders, Joe Henderson, Cecil McBee, Buster Williams, Jack DeJohnette, Billie Hart, J.J. Johnson, Ben Webster, Gene Ammons, Elvin Jones, Lee Morgan, Philly Joe Jones, Clifford Brown, and Ray Brown, among others.³⁸

On 12 December 1972 Carter told Art Taylor about a project dedicated to Ella Fitzgerald.

"I'm in the process of forming a foundation that will present scholarships in Ella Fitzgerald's name. I have put all the wheels in motion that will make it successful, and I hope I won't have too much of a problem. I want to do two shows a day in Harlem for a

³⁶ Arnie Cheatum, "Magic Moment: Betty Carter," East West Journal (Boston, March, 1973), 26-27.

³⁷ White, Jazz Talk.

³⁸ Miller, "An Interview," 37.

week, with individual singers at each show. For instance, Lena Horne, Sarah Vaughan, Carmen McRae, Aretha Franklin, Barbara Streisand, Morgana King, Vikki Carr, Nancy Wilson, Totie Fields and Moms Mabley - all women, in other words. We black people have never paid tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, and I don't think we should wait until it's too late."³⁹

Carter gave an important concert on Tuesday, 6 February 1973, at Brown Hall in the New England Conservatory. It was one of the first she was to give in the Boston area as a single. Her friend, Ora Harris, who later went on to become her booking agent, and a singer named Mattie Mangrum booked the date for Carter.⁴⁰ She still had Danny Mixon on piano, but now had George (Duke) Clemons on bass, and Greg Bandy on drums. In addition to some songs from the projected children's album and standard repertoire items that included "My Favorite Things," and "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most," Carter performed "Ego," (Why Did you Do It)," a tune based on Randy Weston's "Berkshire Blues" that she had recorded for Bush and Bet-Car and which she apparently dedicated to "all the men in the house who had a good thing and 'blew it.'" Surprisingly, she also performed an arrangement of the Jackson Five hit "Never Can Say Goodbye," that went through a variety of styles and rhythmic "grooves," from Latin to rock to straight four. Clearly despite her reservations about the pop scene, she did have some

³⁹ Taylor, Notes and Tones, 280-81. I have no information as to whether or not she followed through on this plan.

⁴⁰ Bill McLarney, "Boston Digs Betty Carter," Journal of New England (November, 1975).

willingness to explore the sounds she denounced as commercial. At 12:30 the following day Carter gave a master class at the New England Conservatory in which she stated unequivocally that "Jazz is black!" At this time she still had plans to do a tribute concert to Ella Fitzgerald with Aretha Franklin in April of 1973.⁴¹ Like the children's album these never came to fruition.

Carter performed at Boomers in New York City on 20 May 1974. Danny Mixon, still billed as her pianist, got mentioned in a review in the VOICE as her husband as well, but Carter disavows this. She has mentioned, however, that a younger musician helped her to feel good about her work during a difficult time in her life and it seems likely that Mixon was this person. Carter had Buster Williams on bass, and Chip Lyles on drums at this time, in effect reuniting the trio from her first Betty Carter Album session. Songs she sang included an up tempo "All the Things You Are" with the "Bird of Paradise" introduction, and the ballad "This Is Always." The review of the club date mentions that she planned to release her second album on Bet-Car (The Betty Carter Album) in July, recorded about two years earlier. This gives us a sense of how long it can take for an independent record producer to see a single album through from start to finish.

On Sunday, 22 September 1974 Carter was billed to perform at the Monterey Country Club in the Bronx with fellow

⁴¹ Cheatum, "Magic Moments," 26-27.

artists booked by Jazz Spotlight Productions, the Jimmy Heath Quintet and Tarika Blue. It is unclear whether she had changed the personnel of her trio by this date.

By the mid-1970s Carter seems to have recovered from whatever ill effects O'Brien's scam may have had on her career; and yet even as late as 1976 the Bush nightmare had not yet come to an end: "In the meantime O'Brien has the master and he's trying to offer it. He's trying to sell it to different people and fortunately for me I'm catching him every time he could place his deal. I catch him and stop him until the last time with Roulette and it was Roulette that bought the tapes. It wasn't until after [Morris Levy bought] the tapes that I found out."⁴² According to Carter, Morris Levy gave O'Brien a mere five hundred dollars for them.

In 1976 Roulette released the tapes as Finally Betty Carter, (SR5000) and 'Round Midnight, (SR5001). In his hurry to release the records, Morris Levy at Roulette neglected to find out that Atco had already released a Carter recording called 'Round Midnight: "Roulette's got one ['Round Midnight] out now. They didn't know about the other one and went ahead, bang-bang-bang."⁴³

Speaking of the quality of her performances on Roulette 'Round Midnight, Carter has said: "That's a live date you're dealing with, and when you're doing a live date you're doing your material. . . . [The material on 'Round Midnight]

⁴² White, Jazz Talk.

⁴³ Ibid.

wasn't supposed to come out at all."⁴⁴ Ironically, while Carter had supposed that producing herself for Bush would give her more artistic control over the quality of her output, it ended up giving her less control by making available to the public performances that she had not personally endorsed.

Of the tunes that got recorded, one of two renditions of "What's New," and "My Favorite Things" did not get released, but the decision to withhold these particular sides did not result from Carter's input: "'Round Midnight and Finally are both Bush tapes. 'Round Midnight's [an] out-take. [I] didn't know they were going to put them out. [Morris Levy] bought the tapes, didn't know what he had, put everything out . . . and I discovered that they're out and [then he] finds out that I own part of the company. But they're out there now. [I can't] pull them back."⁴⁵

To add insult to injury, another version of the tapes came out under a different label: "Joy . . . was the bootleg . . . [it] was the Finally album that was bootleg[ged] called "Joy," on Joy label. [The] same album [as] the one on Roulette, but it was sold illegally."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid. At the time of this interview Carter was under contract to Roulette records, and in the midst of making a record for Levy. This fact may explain the discrete manner in which she describes Levy's involvement with O'Brien. That he did not know the tapes O'Brien sold him were stolen property seems unlikely.

⁴⁶ White, Jazz Talk.

Carter ultimately forged an alliance of sorts with Morris Levy and she signed with the label in 1976. Frederic Dannen has described Levy as little more than an avaricious, power-hungry gangster who required the protection of a body guard and who eventually went to prison for tax related offenses.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, a hard won bond seemed to exist between Carter and him that enabled her to trust him in spite of, or perhaps because of, their disagreements. Carter's way of speaking about their relationship indicates the personal character of her interaction with him. Her description almost sounds like a love affair, although this seems unlikely:

Morris Levy and I have a kind of handshake agreement, he respects what I'm about. If we can't deal with each other it makes no sense for us to be together. I can't deliver for him if he and I aren't getting along, and he can't do a job for me if he doesn't like me, so we have that understood. That's the agreement. I'm personal with the man I'm with, if he says 'no' we fight and holler--he respects me enough to know that I will holler--and I know he'll holler. I've listened to him holler. But this is what I want, I'd much rather have it out in the open, on top, than underneath.⁴⁸

By the time Carter had caught up with the Bush tapes, all but her self-produced records had gone out of print. Carter continued to work in relative obscurity, undaunted by

⁴⁷ Frederic Dannen, Hit Men: Power Brokers and Fast Money Inside the Music Business (New York: Random House, 1990).

⁴⁸ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 23-24.

the meager prospects her efforts seemed to offer her for making it in the eyes and ears of mainstream America.

Naturally Carter's experiences with Bush and later with Roulette have had an effect on her ability to trust people in the music business. Regarding people ripping off her music, Carter told Leothee Miller as early as 1972: "We've got to take care of ourselves. We're ripping it off too. It's not only [whites who rip us off]." and later: "The only thing we can do about it is to preserve our own thing. Let's have the people . . . in the business who have the money and the backing pull it together and try to preserve it."⁴⁹ Now that Carter had her own label she would not have to expose herself to the risk of getting ripped off, and she could maintain artistic and financial control over her work at all times. Thus, while she labored in obscurity she at least had the satisfaction of knowing that her work was her own.

⁴⁹ Miller, "An Interview," 38.

Chapter 8: Breakthrough (1975-1979)

During the early 1970s Carter turned more and more to performing at colleges, where she sought to bring her unique approach to standards to a new generation of listeners: "In 1972, I performed at Antioch College in Ohio."¹ The large, mostly white audiences at colleges consisted of people who had been born after 1950. Having grown up to the sounds of rock, they were less familiar with the popular songs of the preceding era, and thus had less trouble with Carter's digressions from the original melody than older listeners did. Carter had previously made a special effort to get to black colleges, but had had little success at this time. In 1978 she stated, "I've been fighting for thirteen years to get into black schools in the States. They don't want to know about it."² She has revealed her consternation at the abandonment of jazz by black listeners: "There are about 100 black colleges in the country. I can't get into Howard, Fisk or Morehouse. But I can get into Dartmouth and Harvard. I did four days of workshops at Harvard with Dizzy. I can get into Goddard College, the University of Massachusetts, Brown, Northwestern University."³ By 1982 she had performed at thirty-five different colleges across the country.

¹ Betty Carter, press kit: unpublished fact sheet to accompany press releases: "Betty Carter Biography," Bet-Car Productions, late 1982.

² van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 32.

³ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 13. According to Lewis Porter, Carter did the workshops at Harvard in the early 1970s with Tom Everett.

Given the growing shortage of jazz venues, colleges provided Carter with an important means of support in addition to the access they gave her to a new market. Carter has claimed that she limited her performances in the greater New York area to keep from getting overexposed, and from becoming identified as a local New York singer; yet she has also described her time after Ray Charles as "painful times,"⁴ which suggests that the scarcity of work was not entirely due to her selectiveness. As mentioned earlier, by the mid-1960s she had acquired a reputation for rejecting the efforts of managers to run her career and she believed that those in a position to give her higher-paying gigs ignored her because they found her difficult to work with.⁵ Carter stayed afloat by returning to the Apollo Theater when necessary, and she takes understandable pride in having survived this perilous time in her career: "I went into the Apollo first in 1949 and kept going back until 1975. I never stopped working, I never went on welfare, and I brought up two sons."⁶

Sometime during the mid-1970s Carter acquired Jack Whittemore as her agent and around April 1975 work seemed to pick up: "I've picked my jobs recently; it's been getting better since April."⁷ In the summer of 1975, Carter had a

⁴ Jacobson, "Betty Carter Is Alive in Bed-Stuy," 100.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Schwartz, "The Jazz Singer," Newsweek (10 July 1978), 78.

⁷ Bob Blumenthal, "Betty Carter Sets Her Own Records," The Boston Phoenix (26 August 1975), Section 2, 4. At a presentation I gave on Betty Carter at Rutgers University, Newark, Orin Keepnews suggested that Carter owed her

well attended appearance at the Keystone Korner in San Francisco, which may have made up for her earlier disappointment there: "We did more business than Miles Davis, which shook us all up."⁸ During this same year she had a "highly successful" tour of Japan⁹ and she also had plans to sing at festivals in Europe.

Then early in August, Carter did something out of the ordinary. She took a break from her trio work to accept a starring role in a play-with-music called Don't Call Me Man. The play was written by a tenor saxophonist named Howard Moore, who also acted in the play¹⁰ along with Claude Bossette.¹¹ An old converted milk factory at 1386 Fulton Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant became the Billie Holiday Theater where Carter made her acting debut. In the show, Carter played the role of a "lowlife singer hung up on a no-account piano player," and she sang four of her own songs (and lyrics).¹² "The songwriter/pianist character uses the nightclub singer's character to get his songs over."¹³

Carter took the role on a whim, perhaps feeling that she had little to lose by exploring a different avenue for

increased success during this time to Whittemore's help. Jazz Research Roundtable, Institute of Jazz Studies, September 14, 1995.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Friedwald, Jazz Singing, 405.

¹⁰ Joans, "Betty Carter," Coda: Canada's Jazz Magazine 145 (March 1976), 10-11.

¹¹ McLarney, "Boston Digs Betty Carter," 24-25.

¹² Joans, "Betty Carter," 11 and Jacobson, "Betty Carter is Alive in Bed-Stuy," 100.

¹³ McLarney, "Boston Digs Betty Carter," 24.

exposure: "This is this year's new thing . . . every year the Kid does at least one new thing to keep her going. Money is a small thing, this is good for my artistic spirit."¹⁴ The play ran for two weeks in Brooklyn, and then, after a week's break, it moved to the Five Spot in Greenwich Village, during the last week of August, where it was not as well attended.¹⁵

Disc jockeys from WRVR and WWRL came to the performance, as well as sidemen from Roland Kirk's and Frank Foster's bands. In addition, a major article appeared in the village VOICE proclaiming that "Betty Carter Is Alive in Bed-Stuy," a fact that all but her devoted followers had seemed to lose track of. Mark Jacobson conveyed to VOICE readers Carter's uncompromising strength of character, a quality best exemplified by her capacity to define success on her terms: "I began to realize [that] . . . I had something bigger than being a star. I had this talent that could keep growing. That was something noone could ever take away from me, no matter what happened. Knowing that made me free."¹⁶ The small media coverage that Carter garnered from this little theatrical experiment gave the general public a new awareness of her talents. Ironically, her role in a shoestring production of a minor theatrical work gained her greater

¹⁴ Jacobson, "Betty Carter is Alive in Bed-Stuy," 100.

¹⁵ Blumenthal, "Betty Carter Sets Her Own Records," 4. Also see McLarney, "Boston Digs Betty Carter," 25.

¹⁶ Jacobson, "Betty Carter is Alive in Bed-Stuy," 100.

public recognition than she had known in fourteen years, since her work with Ray Charles.¹⁷

In the third week of August, and between her acting appearances, Carter had an engagement lasting a week at the Jazz Workshop in Boston.¹⁸ Although she had made a few appearances in the Boston-Cambridge area during the preceding three years, she had to convince Fred Taylor, a co-owner of the Workshop, to let her come.¹⁹ Accompanied by Danny Mixon, Milton Suggs (both for the last time), and Chip Lyles, she performed to a full house every night. Mixon had been with Carter since as early as 1971 and their relationship had been a productive one.²⁰ He went on to tour with Charles Mingus, and later recorded with Mingus' drummer Dannie Richmond.

Carter's material at this date consisted of repertoire she had performed in the past. She did not hesitate to open her set with a ballad, such as "What's New" or "Body and Soul," partly because her trio usually set the stage for it with an up-tempo instrumental. Other tunes she did include "Ego," "Don't Weep for the Lady," "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most," "Some Other Time" (with a bass and voice unison arrangement reminiscent of her Inside Betty Carter version), "Happy," "Swing, Brother, Swing," "Open The Door," a rendition of "You're A Sweetheart" on which she may have

¹⁷ McLarney, "Boston Digs Betty Carter," 25.

¹⁸ Blumenthal, "Betty Carter Sets Her Own Records," 4.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Mixon's entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* (p.783) mentions that Carter was indeed his wife during this time. If so, this parting had personal as well as professional significance for both Mixon and Carter.

scatted, and medleys that included the songs "Just Friends" "All The Things You Are" and "I Didn't Know What Time It Was." By this time she had trained her audiences to expect extended scat singing on the last tune of the set. Carter kept track of her record sales and distribution at this time and according to her calculations sixty percent of the correspondence about her records came from Massachusetts at this time."²¹

A four day stint at the Bottom Line early in September followed the Greenwich Village run of Don't Call Me Man. She performed to sellout crowds accompanied by a pianist with whom she had worked briefly during the mid-1960s, John Hicks, a new bass player, Stafford James, but keeping Chip Lyles on drums.²² Speaking in 1980, Carter said, "John Hicks came into my life about 1975, [in] April."²³ Before his earlier stint with Carter, Hicks had played with Art Blakey in the early 1960s and immediately after it he worked with Woody Herman, and with Charles Tolliver in the Netherlands. During the early 1970s he taught music at Southern Illinois University and worked again with Blakey, as well as recording with Lester Bowie. By 1975 he was able to bring a broad stylistic palate and a commanding technique to his work with Carter. While Carter's repertoire remained consistent from one gig to the next, with every change in personnel the

²¹ Blumenthal, "Betty Carter Sets Her Own Records," 4.

²² Conrad Silvert, "Betty Carter: Keystone Korner," Billboard, 25 October 1975.

²³ Yapple. BNY-80.

arrangements necessarily evolved to take into account the talents of her new accompanists and the new group dynamic that resulted.²⁴ In this regard the arrangements from John Hicks' tenure with Carter were the most effective to date.

During the fall 1975 she also appeared at the Village Vanguard, for perhaps the first time since she recorded herself there for Bet-Car records in 1970. Looking back on Carter's early efforts, Vanguard owner Max Gordon recalled:

I remember her when she was sort of getting going. I gave her a job maybe eighteen years ago, and I didn't use her again for about twelve years. Why? At that time I was running The Blue Angel, and I used to come down to the Vanguard to check out the place, count the money, see if the joint was still there. I happened to walk in on her last show. It was late, it was February, the snow was on the ground; there was nobody in the joint. And there she was, singing to a lot of empty chairs and tables. I could never get that picture out of my mind. She used to come around looking for work. 'Let's wait and see,' I'd say. Then finally she said, 'You should hear me again, . . . in a place other than the Vanguard.' So I went all the way up to Harlem to hear her at a place called Well's. I heard her and put her to work.²⁵

²⁴ Mason, "Mom is a chanteuse." True to form, she opened one of her sets with the ballad "Making Dreams Come True" and followed with songs that included "Seems Like Old Times," "I Remember You" (probably the medley from Finally), "Ev'ry Time We Say Good-bye" (Joans, "Betty Carter," 11.), "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most," "Happy," "Ego," and "Open The Door."

²⁵ Max Gordon, Live at the Vanguard (1978; reprint, New York: Da Capo, 1980) 57. Although we cannot be certain, the first date Gordon recalls could have been early in 1963, just after Carter's last sessions with Atco.

A number of fellow musicians attended her Vanguard date, including Cecil Taylor, Roy Brooks, Leon Thomas, and Rashied Ali.²⁶

At the end of September 1975, Carter returned to San Francisco for a week-long run at the Keystone Korner and sang to standing room only crowds. During her stay there she gave a seminar on jazz singing. As the sole remaining member of her earlier trio, Chip Lyles received billing as the leader of her backup group.²⁷

Around this time, Warner Brothers records apparently made Carter an offer as a part of its push to acquire jazz talent. But according to her she did not like the impersonal way in which large corporations deal with its artists. By then she had arranged a recording contract with Morris Levy, ostensibly because she preferred working for a smaller label. She may also have felt that by recording for Roulette she would receive some compensation for the stolen Bush tapes. Her contract led to the recording of Now It's My Turn. It also made provision for her to produce her own recordings and to record other artists for the newly created Roulette Birdland series. She had hopes of using her position at Roulette to encourage young talent, beginning with her recently acquired pianist, John Hicks.²⁸

²⁶ Joans, "Betty Carter," 11.

²⁷ Silvert, "Betty Carter: Keystone Korner." Silvert confirms that Carter outdrew Miles Davis at the Keystone Korner, although he is referring to her return engagement there.

²⁸ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 23.

That Carter had begun to turn her career around by the mid-point of the decade seems clear. During the first half of 1976 she was a substitute guest on NBC's "Saturday Night Live," when Anthony Perkins hosted the show: "It had to be [when] . . . somebody canceled out, because I [only] knew about it on a Monday. I had to be there on a Saturday, and I was petrified."²⁹ She performed with a re-formed trio, which now consisted of John Hicks, Walter Booker, and Clifford Barbaro. By this time Walter Booker, who had played with Carter (and Hicks) ten years earlier, had replaced Stafford James on bass, and Clifford Barbaro had taken Chip Lyles' place on drums. Carter sang "Swing Brother, Swing" and possibly "Can't We Talk It Over:" "I know 'Swing Brother Swing' was on there, and they were surprised about that. There were two different segments. . . . two shots, you know. . . . This chick had seen me work at the Bottom Line, and she got me recommended for the gig."³⁰

Now It's My Turn

Despite Carter's reservations about studio recording, she took her current repertoire and trio into Sound Ideas Studio on 9 and 10 March and again on 21 and 22 June 1976. The dates resulted in nine sides for Roulette. In addition to tributes to Billie Holiday ("Swing, Brother, Swing"), Charlie Parker ("Just Friends/Star Eyes") and Sonny Rollins

²⁹ Yapple, BNY-80.

³⁰ Ibid.

("Wagon Wheels"), Carter also recorded three originals, for which she is not credited on the record jacket. "Open the Door" has a different arrangement from its first incarnation from over ten years before; "New Blues (You Purr)," a ballad which does not follow the standard blues form or feeling, and "No More Words," a number which consists entirely of scatting.

Carter also recorded a little known Cole Porter number, called "Most Gentlemen Don't Like Love," which has remained a staple of her repertoire until recently. Her choice of this tune seems to have taken off from the song "Ego" as a vehicle for her disenchantment with men; however, its scathing wit comes across better when Carter has an audience to interact with than it does in the sterility of a sound studio. The lyrics, as Carter delivers them, read as follows:

Most gentlemen, they don't like love,
They just like to kick it around.
Most gentlemen, they can't take love,
'Cause most gentlemen can't be profound.

As madam Sappho in some sonnet said:
"A slap and a tickle
Is all that the fickle
Male ever has in his head."

Most gentlemen, they don't like love,
I been in love,
So I know what I'm talking of,
and, Oh!
To my woe
I have found,
They just like to kick it around.

So just remember when you get that glance,
A romp and a quickie
Is all little Dickie
Means, when he speaks of romance.

Most gentlemen, they don't like love,
They just like to kick it around.

In every land, girls, they're all the same,
A pounce in the clover,
And then when it's over,
Bye, and what is your name (baby)?

Most gentlemen, they don't like love,
They just like to kick it around.

So if your boyfriend some fine night should say:
"I'll love you forever
And part from you never,"
Now, ladies, it's your turn,
Kick him!

Most gentlemen, they don't like love,
I been in love,
So I know what I'm talking of,
and, Oh!
To my woe
I have found,
They just like to kick it,
They just like to kick it,
They just like to kick it around.

The men in Carter's life, from her father to her husband, and many of those she had tried to rely upon professionally, including agents, record producers, record company executives, and business partners had generally left her with a legacy of disappointment and mistrust. Even those who had helped her at first, like Miles Davis and Ray Charles, would not be exempt from reproach. Porter's song gave Carter an oblique way to direct her frustration at the males in the audience without invoking their ire: "It's got the greatest lyrics. . . . I had to test it out on some fellow musicians and ask them if they got offended by the lyrics--I'm thinking of the audience. They all laughed, so I figured I'm in

shape, I can do them . . . such cute lyrics. . . .I like it."³¹

If Now It's My Turn is any indication of Carter's approach to performing at that time, she had begun to scat significantly more during performances. Furthermore, the performances on the record sound more polished than any since Inside Betty Carter. This is in part because of the improved audio production. In addition to the technical advances from which this record benefits, however, Carter also exudes a clearer, more focused image of the message she wants to convey, which contributes to the self-assured air she projects.

Carter did not choose the title of the album, and she felt self-conscious about it: "I didn't even want that title, because who says it's my turn? It ain't your turn until it's your turn."³² Nevertheless, until 1980, Carter felt that, in this product, she had surpassed her previous efforts: "[Now It's My Turn] is probably the best album I ever did."³³ Toward the end of 1976, Roulette released Now Its My Turn, and it was favorably reviewed in Billboard magazine and ecstatically reviewed in Melody Maker, a London publication. At around this time Impulse reissued Out There and The Modern Sound, thus acknowledging and extending her

³¹ Nolan, "Betty Carter's Declaration of Independence," 24.

³² van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 32.

³³ Yaple, KJAZ-80.

renown. And with Gary Giddins' positive review of these releases, Carter again gained a mention in the VOICE.³⁴

Carter's romance with Roulette records did not last long. As of October 1976, Carter had engaged Roulette in a lawsuit over ownership of the rights to release 'Round Midnight, a situation which brought to a halt any of her other planned activities for the label. As late as the end of 1979 she was still in court over this matter: "That [record] is not supposed to be out. I shouldn't talk about that on camera. That's one of the albums that is in court."³⁵ According to a fact sheet from several years later, Finally and 'Round Midnight were sold to Roulette in 1981. This may mark the favorable resolution of Carter's suit against Roulette, which would have entailed some form of payment to Carter as a settlement.³⁶

In October 1976, Carter participated in the Berkeley Jazz Festival and as a result, obtained an interview in Rolling Stone. Carter had a sense of the significance of what was happening to her at this time. In April 1976, she had spoken candidly about how it fit into the larger scheme of her career. She had paid her dues and she felt ready to claim the success that she had earned:

³⁴ Gary Giddins, "Betty Carter Sings Like A Woman," the village VOICE (1 November 1976), 73.

³⁵ Yapple, LCC-79.

³⁶ Betty Carter, press kit: unpublished biography.

Paying of dues is shaping [of the artists style]. And it's living. You pay dues to live. But it is really shaping your self, your body. You're maturing.

20 years ago, 10 years ago, I wouldn't have been ready for what's happening to me now; I like what's happening to me now better than I would have liked it 10 years ago. I really dig it now. When I said that, the paying of dues, I meant, getting ready to do something. But don't forget, I had nerve enough to get on stage with people like Charlie Parker and Dizzie Gillespie; and that told me that I was ready for Lionel Hampton.³⁷

In a later interview she said, "though I had [a] rapport with audiences years ago, I didn't have what I wanted. I really didn't have range or depth then. No, there's something you have to feel inside that tells you you're ready--and I am now."³⁸

Nevertheless, she expressed reservations about the pace and magnitude of her recent accomplishments. After her Berkeley Jazz Festival appearance she told Joel Dreyfuss of Rolling Stone, "I'm afraid . . . It's almost like becoming commercial. You're overwhelmed. What if you don't have time to think, to be creative?"³⁹ Years of working in obscurity had conditioned Carter to believe that the musical establishment would only grant her access to the mainstream audience if she were to compromise her artistic standards. Suddenly it seemed that in addition to working more and drawing larger crowds, she was now also getting the attention of the media and the critics. In the last week of 1976,

³⁷ White, Jazz Talk.

³⁸ Don Nelsen, "Carter at Schubert," The Daily News (23 November 1978).

³⁹ Dreyfuss, "Betty 'Slow Pop' Carter," 18.

Carter and her trio returned to the Vanguard for a week's run to the favorable critical assessment of John Wilson.⁴⁰

The following year, when Carter appeared before an enthusiastic crowd at Fox Hole Cafe in Philadelphia, the trio consisted of John Hicks, a new bass player, Clint Houston, and Clifford Barbaro.⁴¹ Until 1977 Carter had not received an invitation to the prestigious Newport Jazz festival in New York, however she had ambitions to appear there. "George Wein doesn't respect me. I'll make him respect me."⁴² By June she had accomplished her goal, making a midnight appearance at Carnegie Hall for the Newport Jazz Festival. According to John Wilson Carter's performance overshadowed the main event of the evening, a get-together of Carter's fellow Detroiters, the Jones brothers.⁴³

In March 1978, after a week at the Bottom Line, Carter performed at the first Women's Jazz Festival at Memorial Hall in Kansas City, Missouri. In May, The New Republic published Michael Ullman's interview with her, giving her press coverage to a national readership. Her return appearance in the twenty-fifth Newport Festival in June at Avery Fisher Hall got favorable reviews in both The New York Times and Newsweek. In the former, Robert Palmer noted her unusual

⁴⁰ John Wilson, "Jazz: Betty Carter, Song Stylist," The New York Times (24 December 1976).

⁴¹ David Hollenberg, "Caught--Betty Carter: Blue Chip Performance," Down Beat 44, no.8 (1977).

⁴² Dreyfuss, "Betty 'Slow Pop' Carter," 18.

⁴³ John Wilson, "Superb Singing by Betty Carter Overshadows 3 Jones Brothers," The New York Times (27 June 1977).

repertoire, her reliance upon scat, and her recent emergence from relative obscurity into the front rank of jazz vocalists.⁴⁴ Tony Schwartz pointed out that "the very qualities that so distinguish her singing--aggressiveness, relentless experimentation, a fierce refusal to compromise--have long limited her appeal."⁴⁵

In that same year Carter was interviewed by Jazz Forum while on tour in Europe. She now had Ratzo Harris, bass, and Kenny Washington, drums, in addition to John Hicks on piano.⁴⁶ Later that year another important appearance occurred at the Schubert Theater on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. That spring, producers Joseph Papp and the New York Shakespeare Festival had included Carter in a jazz series at the Public Theater, but her fall concert represented the first time a jazz artist had ever performed on Broadway. She now had a new bass player, Cameron Brown, who had played for Archie Shepp, and she ended her performance with "Sounds (Movin' On)."⁴⁷

That fall, Linda Prince interviewed Carter for Down Beat magazine. In her interview Carter revealed her sensitivity

⁴⁴ Robert Palmer, "Betty Carter with Roach and Gordon," The New York Times (Tuesday, 27 June 1978).

⁴⁵ Schwartz, "The Jazz Singer," 78.

⁴⁶ van Rooyen and Brodowski, "Betty's Groove," 32. Carter has tended to use the summer to tour in Europe.

⁴⁷ Nelson, "Carter at Schubert." John Wilson heralded this event and then reviewed it in "Betty Carter Sings Jazz on Broadway," The New York Times, 24 November 1978 and "Jazz: The Songs of Betty Carter," The New York Times, 28 November 1978. My sister Keri and I attended that performance, at which time the seed for this dissertation was planted.

to the Down Beat Reader's and Critic's polls. The Readers Poll from the preceding year had indicated that listeners' attitudes towards jazz singers were changing: Flora Purim placed first and Carter placed fourth, just one vote ahead of rock star Joni Mitchell, and Carter reacted strongly to this: "The Critics Poll has been in my favor [she had placed second in them for the preceding two years] but the Readers Poll has been fixed. Why say fixed? I could be sued for that. But I don't believe in it."⁴⁸ Her years of living on the edge had toughened her and made her protective of her musical turf. When the interview took place Clifford Barbaro had just left the trio.

The pace of events continued to pick in the following year. New Year's Day 1979 found her performing at the Village Vanguard again with the same trio (Hicks, Brown and Washington).⁴⁹ By the end of February Carter had begun to tour Canada and had changed bassists yet again, now incorporating Curtis Lundy into the group.⁵⁰ She went to

⁴⁸ Prince, "Bebopper Breathes Fire," 14. David Geffen's Asylum label released Joni Mitchell's album Mingus in 1979, the year that Mingus died.

⁴⁹ Gary Giddins, "Betty Carter Reaches Out," the village VOICE (8 January 1975), 45. Carter's repertoire there included "Everything I Have Is Yours," "But Beautiful," "I Could Write A Book," "Alone Together," "Music Maestro Please," "The Trolley Song," and "All I Got." She ended her sets with extended scatting, most likely on "Sounds (Movin' On)."

⁵⁰ Alan Kellogg, "Betty Carter is remarkable," The Edmonton Journal (Wednesday, 21 February 1979). Tom Elsworthy, "Scatting at the Palms," The Edmonton Journal (23 February 1979). Carter's stay at the Palms lasted from Tuesday, 20 February to Saturday, 24 February.

Alberta sponsored by the Edmonton Jazz Society to sing at the Palms Cafe, and to Calgary, at the Pardon My Garden restaurant.⁵¹ By April she was back in New York: "Sarah [Vaughan] and I and Eddie Jefferson together did a concert at Carnegie Hall . . . which was a great thing for me to do. That was very good. Aren't I in big company?"⁵²

In June she again appeared at Carnegie Hall for the Newport Jazz Festival, now almost as a mainstay.⁵³ In July she performed for the first time in Hartford, at Bushnell Park, in a concert series called "Night Songs" sponsored by Peace Train. On 23 September she took the trio into Harlem to perform at Harlem World on Lenox and 116th.⁵⁴ That a photograph of Carter appears as an advertisement for the Boston Phoenix Classifieds indicates that Carter had achieved enough recognition to make a commercial endorsement (see Figure 8.1). The copy for the ad reads: "Sure, competition for an aspiring Betty Carter is tough, but advertising in the Phoenix Classified is proven effective . . . and that's worth singin' about." For Carter, her new success vindicated all those years of struggling in obscurity: "It makes you feel like the rest was worthwhile. You don't have to kiss

⁵¹ Randy Hutton, "One of the hottest singers in the business is in town," The Calgary Herald (Monday, 26 February 1979), D9.

⁵² Yapple, LCC-79.

⁵³ Curt Davis, "Palling around with Carter," The New York Post (25 June 1979), 33.

⁵⁴ Her repertoire included "Most Gentlemen Don't Like Love," "Open the Door," "Please Do Something," "Everything I Have Is Yours," "What's New," "Star Eyes," "I Was Telling Him About You," and "Sounds (Movin' On)."

Figure 8.1: Advertisement in the Boston Phoenix.



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nobody's behind, sell yourself, [or] be somebody you don't want to be. And you can still win."⁵⁵ She could even afford

⁵⁵ Schwartz, "The Jazz Singer," 78.

to joke about her success, saying, "don't say that there is a resurgence of interest in my singing. After all, there was never really any 'surgence.'"⁵⁶

Her appreciation of her latest successes did not necessarily improve her outlook on the jazz scene, however, despite general agreement that a bebop revival was taking place: "I'm still waiting and seeing. I hear people tell me jazz is on the up. I'm still waiting. . . . I gotta wait a little longer."⁵⁷ Over a year after she said this, Newsweek's cover displayed the headline Jazz Comes Back!⁵⁸ Even so, her suspicions lingered: "There's too much money for anything really creative to happen in jazz. . . . When jazz becomes popular, its like all music today: produced, controlled, computerized."⁵⁹ Given what she had been through, it would take more than this to raise her hopes for improvements in the status of jazz. The suddenness of her ascent must have seemed almost random, and certainly not entirely within her control: "I can't put my finger on why it has changed. . . . I haven't changed. I've just developed."⁶⁰ But the airplay she received on the radio during this period certainly did a lot to contribute to the public's awareness of her, and helped to partially account for her success: "College radio stations began playing my

⁵⁶ Owen McNally, "Jazz Singer Brings Magic To the Park," The Hartford Courant (Sunday, 29 July 1979), G1.

⁵⁷ White, Jazz Talk.

⁵⁸ Newsweek, 8 August 1977.

⁵⁹ Schwartz, "The Jazz Singer," 78.

⁶⁰ Wilson, "The Songs of Betty Carter."

stuff back [in 1975] and I was getting across to young listeners. College radio and word-of-mouth and appearances on college campuses were what did it."⁶¹ The college stations certainly gave Carter a way to evade the system of independent promotion that the major labels had developed to "buy" air time from radio program directors for new releases.

The Audience with Betty Carter

In December 1979, Carter took her trio, now seasoned by a year of touring together, and her sound technician, Joe Ferla, to the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco. There she produced the third record for her own label before a spirited and clearly devoted audience. Carter had just come from performing at several colleges, where she had gotten positive responses: "We just finished doing Kentucky State and Michigan State before coming here. What am I doing in Kentucky with nothing going--no records or anything? Those people responded to me as if I were in Europe somewhere. I was feeling good."⁶²

Carter had special feelings about San Francisco, where she felt her turnaround had begun: "I never did any large festivals until . . . this four year span. It will be five years next April 1980. . . . I never did Newport Jazz Festival before [my first major gig out here]. Never did a lot of trips to Europe, and all that started, I can say,

⁶¹ McNally, "Jazz Singer Brings Magic To the Park," G1.

⁶² Yapple, LCC-79.

right here.⁶³ This has been one of my pet places to come to because of the fact that my momentum started here: I've done the Keystone, Greek Theater, Berkeley, Oakland, whatever. I've done a lot of work here."⁶⁴ Tom Bradshaw, the owner of the Great American Music Hall, had wooed her from the Keystone Korner, where she had already proven her ability to draw. Carter may also have felt that she needed to move to a larger venue to house her expanding audience.

She had not recorded for three-and-a-half years, and she wanted the involvement of the audience to have an impact on her performance:

I knew I had to do something live. I knew that I could no longer go into the studio and record. Live is the only way that I wanted to get it down. Recording in a studio, and if I wait six months, that recording in the studio is going to be sitting, the tapes sitting in the studio. I got tapes sitting all over the city in studios where I've been tempted to put a record out, but I wait too long. I wait five months or six months, and by that time the tunes that I have done have changed. They are not the same tunes they were five months ago. That's the reason I have to do it live, and do it then and there and put it out, and don't hesitate. I got to go straight ahead; I can't wait.⁶⁵

Matthew Yapple, a graduate student at Temple University, had made arrangements through Jack Whittemore to make a documentary of Carter's performance in San Francisco: "If an audience comes there this weekend, they'll get recorded and

⁶³ Yapple, KJAZ-80.

⁶⁴ Yapple, GAMH-79.

⁶⁵ Yapple, BNY-80.

filmed. . . . Something is going to happen with [the documentary]. I can't tell you right now; we are going to have to see what's going to happen to it. I haven't anything to do with the film. That's [being done by] another firm; another person. I'm just involved with the recording date."⁶⁶ Yaple called the final product Jazz Is Betty Carter: Is she the last jazz singer?, and entered it in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters Degree in the Department of Radio-Television-Film at Temple University.

One significant feature of Yaple's project is the documentation it provides of Carter's work over the course of the three nights, 6, 7, and 8 December. Not only does the unedited footage provide us with alternate takes of the performances that made it onto the album, it also reveals that several cuts on the record are the result of splicing together different renditions of the same tune from the three-night engagement. Her performance of "My Favorite Things," for example, represents a distillation of the best moments from at least two of her three renditions. Part of the credit for the record's effectiveness and finish must therefore go to Joe Ferla. Regarding the documentary, Yaple's editing was nearing completion at the end of 1984, when Francis Davis interviewed him.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Yaple, KJAZ-80.

⁶⁷ Francis Davis, "In jazz, her power is touching with words," The Philadelphia Inquirer (21 December 1984). I owe many thanks to Francis Davis for initially putting me in touch with Matthew Yaple.

Several Carter originals got recorded on The Audience including a twenty-five minute version of "Sounds (Movin' On," in which Carter sustained her scatting through several dramatic tempo and register changes;⁶⁸ "I Think I Got It Now," a ballad; "Tight," now with a slower, more hip delivery than the version on The Betty Carter Album; "Fake," a relaxed jazz waltz; "So . . .," a confessional recitation about infidelity with a Latin feel, but with unusual interruptions of the tempo; and her theme song, "Open the Door." Her inclusion of this last song, as well as "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most" and "My Favorite Things" inevitably hearkened back to Inside Betty Carter. Although these tunes had attained the status of signature numbers, she had considerably reworked their arrangements. In a new arrangement of "I Could Write A Book," Carter's transition from an extended scat introduction to the song's lyrics gives us a clear illustration of the smooth integration of the two approaches that she had achieved by this time (see the analysis in Part II).

The two-record set that she released from the performances demonstrates the self-confidence she had achieved by this time: "I'm hearing more and thinking more than I've ever [heard and] thought in my life at this point,

⁶⁸ The resemblance of the opening of "Sounds (Movin' On)" to the beginning of Beethoven's Waldstein sonata may be accidental, but Carter has mentioned that she exposed her children to music of all kinds, including classical music and that she herself listened to it extensively. This may partially explain her interest in experimenting with larger forms.

musically. I'm having fun."⁶⁹ It ultimately got nominated for a Grammy award for best female jazz performance.

Her improved financial situation also must have helped her to feel confident: "It's not a million dollars, but I'm putting some money in the bank. I'm not starving. My kids are going to a private school. I'm paying for my kids' education too. I bought a house. This is my second home, I've bought."⁷⁰ In 1978, during a block renovation, Carter bought the three-story brownstone in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn in which she had lived since 1971:⁷¹ "New York kept me alive. It kept me thinking, my continuity going, because that's what the East will do for you, keep you on your toes. [That's where I] bought [my] home; in Brooklyn. It keeps you working hard. You don't get a chance to lay back, like you can do in California. So when California gets me, they get me on top of things. That's the reason I stay out there, to get my head together. I've been accepted in New York, too. They really kept me alive."⁷²

In 1980, Columbia Records planned a reissue of Meet Betty Carter and Ray Bryant and a first issue of the sessions she had done with Gigi Gryce in 1956, entitled Social Call:

Not only is [The Audience with Betty Carter] coming out, but Columbia is [also] putting one out . . . at the same time . . . that [record] is twenty-five years old.

⁶⁹ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁷⁰ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁷¹ Hinckley, "Betty Carter, Real Live."

⁷² Yapple, KJAZ-80.

Think about it. [Two records] twenty-five years apart. . . . I really appreciate that they . . . call[ed] me [to] say they were putting it out, and for me to get in touch with my lawyer, who is going to get in touch with their people. We are going to work out some sort of royalty deal. This is rare, because I had a double-pocket reissue on [ABC Impulse]. . . . [And the label] put it out and never said a word. [They] put two albums out at one time, and never bothered to even announce it. But Columbia did. . . . Both of the albums will be out at the same time, about April, or May.⁷³

At the outset of the new decade, Carter already had bookings well into the year ahead: "I'm doing a gig with Basie in August [1980], although it's not with his big band. We are just doing a show together [in Philadelphia]. I never thought I would get to that point, doing a gig with Count Basie."⁷⁴ As she approached her fiftieth year, after over thirty years of singing professionally, Carter had finally gained acceptance of her idiosyncratic approach. She had arrived.

⁷³ Yapple, BNY-80.

⁷⁴ Yapple, KJAZ-80.

Chapter 9: Maturity (1980-1996)

Carter began the new decade by parting company with her pianist of nearly five years, John Hicks. At that time she said of Hicks:

I think [John] wanted to leave too, so we . . . decided to part. . . . I had [him] for five years, . . . which I think is long enough for anybody to be with anybody, . . . so [during that period] I didn't have to hunt for a piano player. I had a drummer for four and a half years. . . . Every time I turned around, it was a new bass player. I guess I was just very hard on bass players. They didn't want to work that hard. . . .

Now I'm starting a new group. I have a [new] piano player now, [a] young guy [who is] twenty-four years old, Mulgrew Miller. I think that he's got great potential. And a bass player who I had last year with John Hicks and Kenny Washington on drums, who I had for a year too, Curtis Lundy, and Greg Bandy [on drums]. . . . [they all] have good potential. It's the new lift that I needed. It's an experience for them. I know more than they do, even though they don't think I do.¹

On 12 March 1980 Carter performed at Lucy Stone Hall at Rutgers University with Mulgrew Miller, Curtis Lundy, and Greg Bandy to a standing room only crowd of more than five hundred people,² and later in the month she went on to perform in her home town.³ During the course of the year

¹ Yapple, BNY-80.

² Della Green and Tom Nutile, "Betty Carter's Livingston College concert gives student audience something to learn," The Courier-News, 14 March 1980. Larry Ridley, who organized the event, had played with Carter in the early 1960s.

³ W. Kim Heron, "Betty Carter still scats, and still works," Detroit Free Press, 27 March 1980. Heron later reviewed The Audience and Social Call when they were released. "Betty Carter at her best" Detroit Free Press, 19 November 1980.

Carter fulfilled a dream of hers to take her music into a black college. On this occasion she was again filmed, this time by Michelle Parkerson, a videotape editor at WTTG-TV (Channel 5) who was associated with the Black Film Institute of the University of the District of Columbia. From footage of Carter's appearance at Howard University, Parkerson produced a documentary about Carter's life entitled ... but then, she's Betty Carter.⁴ At the film's premiere Mayor Marion Barry proclaimed 23 October 1980 "Betty Carter Day" in Washington D.C. A crowd of over three hundred filled the District Building for the event. In 1980 Carter also performed at the Montreux Jazz Festival.⁵

New Year's Day 1981 brought Carter and her trio, which now had Khalid Moss instead of Mulgrew Miller on piano, to the Bottom Line.⁶ Around this time The Audience began to receive positive reviews and during the last weekend in May, Carter received an "Indie" award from the National Association of Independent Record Distributors.⁷ In addition to the recognition she was receiving as a musician, she was now gaining recognition as a record producer as well.

In an interview with Leonard Feather Carter mentioned that in 1981 she worked with David Amram and 40 strings to an

⁴ Junnette A. Pinkney, "All That Jazz," The Washington Post, 24 October 1980.

⁵ Ullman, "On Jazz: Betty Carter," 78.

⁶ Stanley Crouch, "Betty Carter: A Sure Enough Jazz Singer," the village VOICE, 31 December--6 January 1981.

⁷ Richard Harrington, "Jazz Maverick Betty Carter," The Washington Post, 4 June 1981.

audience of 4000 in Brooklyn, but she did not specify when. According to Leslie Gourse, this date was with the Brooklyn Philharmonia in Prospect Park, which suggests that it may have taken place in the summer.⁸ Now a part of her yearly ritual, Carter again went to Europe that summer, where she appeared at New Morning, a club in Paris from Sunday, 21 June through Wednesday 24 June.⁹

By the fall she had returned to the United States, and on 10 September 1981 Carter participated in a tribute to Lionel Hampton at the Kennedy Center and White House. The performance was aired on PBS.¹⁰ Carter encountered Geri Allen, a young pianist with whom she later worked, in Pittsburgh at the "Jazz Monday" concert series, when she performed there in November to benefit The House of the Crossroads.¹¹ Sometime during this year Michael Cuscuna produced footage of Carter performing for a studio audience along with Sonny Stitt under the aegis of CBS Cable. Unfortunately, Cuscuna is unable to locate the footage.

⁸ Leonard Feather, "Betty Carter Be-bops To The White House," The Los Angeles Times, 23 August 1981. Gourse, Louis' Children, 327.

⁹ Tom Storer, "Betty Bebop Makes Paris Stop," The Paris FREE VOICE 4, no.6 (June 1981).

¹⁰ Gourse, Louis' Children, 326-334. Leonard Feather, "Betty Carter Be-bops To The White House." Carter had also played in Los Angeles shortly before.

¹¹ Pete Bishop, "Betty 'Bebop' Carter To Open Jazz Series," Pittsburgh Press, 4 November 1981.

Whatever Happened to Love

When Carter appeared at Fat Tuesday's to ring in the new year, 1982, she now had Lewis Nash on drums.¹² John Wilson complained about her overuse of ballads at this performance.¹³ Her ensuing tour of one-nighters through the Midwest brought her to Philadelphia's Ripley Music Hall in February and to Minneapolis on 14 March but by the end of the month she had returned to the East coast.

On 27 March 1982, Carter took her trio and a fifteen piece string group conducted by David Amram to the Bottom Line. Carter had anticipated her wish to work with a larger group back in 1980, and she now had the means to finance such a venture herself: "If [The Audience with Betty Carter] does anything like maybe I hope it does, with the new number of fans I've gained over the years, maybe then I will be able to hire 15, 16, or 17 pieces."¹⁴

After Carter's trio warmed up the crowd, she sang such numbers as "What a Little Moonlight Can Do," now in an extended arrangement; "Goodbye," Benny Goodman's closing theme, in a more complete version than the one she did with Ray Charles; "Everytime We Say Goodbye," also associated with Ray Charles, and with which Carter ended the first set.

¹² Amy Duncan, "Two Jazz Greats who span an era," The Christian Science Monitor, 5 January 1982.

¹³ John Wilson, "Betty Carter Is Singing In New Mood at Club," The New York Times, 21 December 1981.

¹⁴ Yaple, KJAZ-80.

Later in the evening she sang another song associated with her Ray Charles duets, "Cocktails for Two."

Carter released nine sides from the concert for the Bet-Car label on an album entitled Whatever Happened to Love and the record documents the remarkable power Carter could exercise over an audience. At the end of the Gordon Jenkins song "Goodbye,"¹⁵ for example, the audience remains rapt in silence for almost thirty seconds, held in Carter's thrall by her last unaccompanied note. Citing the lyrics of "Cocktails for Two" in the liner notes, Carter referred to the audience as the "principal ingredient," and the intensity of her performances on this record clearly comes from her profound and intimate involvement with it.

The record has a retrospective quality stemming from the inclusion of vastly reworked numbers from the earliest years of her career, including Gigi Gryce's "Social Call," which she had first recorded twenty-six years earlier. Carter had told Matthew Yapple in 1980, "I'm looking back now more than ever. I'm dealing with yesterday more than ever before, because to be at this point where anybody would be interested in my yesterdays is quite an achievement."¹⁶ The record includes three originals that she had recorded on Now Its My Turn, "With No Words" and "New Blues (you purrrrrrrr)," now with string arrangements, and "Abre La Puerta" which is none other than her theme song, now sung entirely in scat.

¹⁵ This song is incorrectly attributed to Cole Porter in the liner notes.

¹⁶ Yapple, BNY-80.

According to reviewer Stephen Holden, she also performed "Mean to Me" as a ballad,¹⁷ and Leslie Gourse claims that she sang "Because There's No You," and two other originals, one with choppy phrases (probably "Tight"), and another entitled "Jumps," but neither of these made it onto the recording.¹⁸ On "New Blues (you purrrrrrr)" an unnamed tenor player fills in between her phrases. After "With No Words" the trio jumped into the opening bars of Sonny Rollins' "Pent-up House," a device she often used as a hip show closer.¹⁹ The record jacket mentions that the date was coordinated by JoAnne Jimenez, who also may have acted as Carter's personal manager for a short time.

Carter's interview with Leslie Gourse took place at around this time, for it describes her Bottom Line date extensively. Gourse reminds us that, although Carter had now gained access to the high-priced gigs, at one time she "sang in all kinds of places, and not just exclusive ones." Without referring directly to the fatal shooting of Lee Morgan in 1972, Gourse conjures up the darker side of the

¹⁷ Stephen Holden, "Jazz Songs: Betty Carter," The New York Times, 31 March 1982.

¹⁸ A Polygram press release from July 1990, for Carter's later record, Droppin' Things, mentions that the record's title song was originally called "Jumps." At that time she claimed to have written it thirteen years earlier, dating it from around 1977.

¹⁹ Unlike many beboppers (see example 2.1 above, in which Ella Fitzgerald quotes several tune fragments in a matter of seconds), Carter is not usually prone to quote tunes in her solos, but she does occasionally entrust this job to her trio. On Inside Betty Carter, her arrangement of "Something Big" quotes Benny Golson's "Killer Joe."

gigging musician's lot: "[Carter] sang in Slugs . . . a notorious, long closed Lower East side club where musicians were underpaid and everyone was endangered because of the grim neighborhood."²⁰ By this time, Carter had five European tours behind her, as well as two tours to Japan and one to Brazil. Jack Whittemore died in the first years of the new decade, and in her press kit from this time Carter lists Willard Alexander, Inc. as her booking agency, and Tom Bradshaw from The Great American Music Hall as her personal manager, mentioning: "I have had four personal managers, each having [a] different ethnic background."²¹

By early April 1982, Carter was back on the road, now in the south, and Christopher Kuhl interviewed her for Cadence: The American Review of Jazz and Blues while she was in Atlanta, Georgia.²² In August she sang at Mount Hood Community College in Gresham, Oregon. Carter received important press in the 20 September issue of The New Yorker, where Whitney Balliett gave her an extensive feature article which includes important factual information about her early life.²³ On 29 October 1982 Carter was one of five honorees

²⁰ Gourse, Louis' Children, 335.

²¹ Betty Carter, unpublished fact sheet to accompany press releases: "Betty Carter Biography," Bet-Car Productions (possibly in 1983). The sheet curiously omits Now It's My Turn and gives 1976 as the date for The Betty Carter Album. This sheet also mentions Carter's association with Broadcast Music International (BMI).

²² Kuhl, "Betty Carter."

²³ Balliett, "Betty Carter," 110. As mentioned earlier, in Balliett's feature article he attributes a quote to Carter in which she inexplicably claims to have been born in 1929. The following year, in a phone interview with Jeff Edwards,

in "A Salute to Black Women" at the Blackburn University Center Ballroom.²⁴ She appeared with strings at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in November, at which time she had replaced Curtis Lundy with David Penn on bass.²⁵ In her interview on Jazz Alive, possibly at the end of the year, and in connection with an appearance with strings at Symphony Hall in Boston, Carter mentioned being second in the Down Beat critic's poll. During this period she gave a talk at the Berklee School of Music, where she met a fledgling pianist named Cyrus Chestnut, who later joined the ranks of Carter accompanists. At Berklee she invited him onstage to do "Body and Soul" with her, and has often recounted how his classmates chanted his name to get him onto the stage. In this year, Carter appeared in Eileen Southern's biographical dictionary.²⁶

Carter performed at Fat Tuesday's at the very beginning of 1983, around which time favorable reviews of Whatever Happened to Love appeared in the village VOICE, The Daily News, and The Boston Phoenix. After a stretch at the Bottom Line in March, Carter performed in Morocco. In April she was

Carter added to the confusion by reinforcing this date. Jeff Edwards, "Betty Carter happy to bring classic jazz to the south," The Jackson Daily News, 29 April 1983.

²⁴ Tracy L. Smith, "Salute to Black Women: Betty Carter," The Hilltop: The Nation's Largest Black Collegian Newspaper 60, no.5, 15 October 1982. (The Hilltop is Howard University's campus newspaper.)

²⁵ Stanley Crouch, "Betty Carter in Charge," the village VOICE, 4 January 1983.

²⁶ Eileen Southern, Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 66.

in Memphis, at the Madison House Old Poets Hall, and in Mississippi at the end of the month. By the end of May, when she performed in Milwaukee, Carter had pianist Benny Green with her, in addition to David Penn and Lewis Nash. That summer she appeared at the South Street Seaport, and by the end of 1984 she had replaced the latter two instrumentalists with Talik Shah on bass and Winard Harper on drums.

She was at the Blue Note for several nights in late April, 1985. In June, Carter performed with her trio in Berlin, and a CD of that date was released illegally by Repertoire Records under the title Jazz Buhne Berlin. Carter went to court over this bootleg and quickly had it withdrawn. She had not been in especially good voice for this performance and while it does not adequately represent her vocal quality, it does demonstrate her commitment to satisfying the audience. It also reveals that she had already begun to tamper with her arrangements of songs as recently recorded as those on Whatever Happened to Love. The CD has "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" at a much faster tempo, "The Man I Love," "With No Words," "Caribbean Sun," "Ev'ry Thing I Have Is Yours," "My Favorite Things," and "Sounds." When she performed later that year in Hartford, she still had the same trio.

According to the Wire interview published in February, 1986 Carter still had Green, Shah, and Harper then,²⁷ but by

²⁷ Graham Lock, "Betty Carter in Her Own Sweet Way--The Great Jazz Singer: Energy, Adventure, Aggression," Wire 24 (February 1986).

10 June 1986 she had replaced Talik Shah with Michael Bowie. She had added "Lover Man" to her repertoire by this time. In December, she appeared with them at the University of Hartford.

The Carmen McRae-Betty Carter Duets

In late January and early February 1987, Betty Carter and Carmen McRae performed six sold out shows together at the Great American Music Hall, accompanied by McRae's pianist and bass player, Eric Gunnison and Jim Hughart, respectively, and Carter's drummer, Winard Harper. According to later press data on the event, McRae had been singing at the Blue Note in New York when Carter came in to hear her, and ended up sitting in. This led to a casual invitation to do an album together. In preparation for the collaboration, Carter spent three days at McRae's Beverly Hills home where they chose the songs, tempos, keys and order of solos.²⁸

Carter, McRae and Tom Bradshaw, the owner of the Great American Music Hall and Carter's personal manager, had arranged to have the event recorded, and Carter was especially pleased with the results, suspecting that they stood a good chance of a major label picking up the sides and releasing them. Carter wanted Bradshaw to market the tapes to major labels, but instead he used the tapes to start his own label. Later that year he released on Fantasy/Great

²⁸ Clarence Atkins, liner notes The Carmen McRae-Betty Carter Duets (1996 reissue, Verve 314-529-579-2).

American Music Hall records eight of the numbers that Carter and McRae had sung together. Carter had not given Bradshaw the rights to the tapes, however, and soon she was again in court, this time to get the recording off the shelves. She felt that he had pre-empted her chance to use the tapes to leverage a deal with a major label. She has since not spoken to Bradshaw, who has moved to New Zealand: "It was the beginning of our relationship going down the tubes."²⁹ She called Richard Seidel of Verve and asked him if he was interested in the tapes. Originally he was not, but asked her to send him some other material she had. This ultimately led to her signing a contract to produce three records for Verve. The contract also included the reissue of her four Bet-Car albums, now in CD format, which would benefit from Verve/Polygram distribution and promotion.

In March 1987, after recording the duets with Carmen McRae, Carter brought her trio to Fat Tuesday's, and in August she participated in "Ladies First," the First Classic Jazz Series at Lincoln Center. She had Winard Harper on drums, Michael Bowie on bass, and Stephen Scott on piano. In a November feature article in The New York Times, possibly anticipating the sales that would result from the Verve reissues, Carter revealed that the four records that she had produced for her own label had each already sold between 25,000 and 30,000 copies. She also mentioned satellite offices of Bet-Car Records in Detroit and San Francisco,

²⁹ Bauer, unpublished interview.

where by now she had homes.³⁰ During five nights that winter she performed in Baltimore.

Early the following year a feature article in The Daily News Magazine brought Carter more publicity in anticipation of her late-January appearances at Fat Tuesday's with Ira Coleman now on bass.³¹ At this point in time she was on the verge of signing with Verve. Fresh from singing in Ann Arbor, Carter was still dealing with Bradshaw in court in February, while Verve had plans to release her first record for that label in the spring. In April, 1988 she still had Stephen Scott and Ira Coleman, with Troy Davis now on drums when she went to Raleigh, NC to perform at Duke University.

Look What I Got

Carter's first record for Verve was entitled Look What I Got. Discographic information about the record does not clearly indicate when it was made, but an examination of the record's personnel gives us a few clues for determining the time span within which the various sessions occurred. Benny Green, Michael Bowie, and Winard Harper played on six of the nine cuts, including the title cut. Stephen Scott and Ira Coleman played on the remaining three, with Lewis Nash playing drums on two of the latter cuts, "That Sunday, That Summer" and "The Good Life," and Troy Davis replacing Nash on the one remaining, "Make It Last." Don Braden played tenor

³⁰ Stephen Holden, "Our Perennial Songbirds," The New York Times Magazine, 15 November 1987.

³¹ Hinkley, "Betty Carter, Real Live," 13.

on four sides, two with each of these trios. From press notices and reviews we know that by May 1983, Benny Green had replaced Khalid Moss on piano, and at the end of 1984, Winard Harper had replaced Lewis Nash on drums. Not until June of 1986 had Carter substituted Michael Bowie for Talik Shah on bass. By early 1987 Green had left the group, so the sides with him on piano must have been cut during the second half of 1986.³² Ira Coleman joined Carter no sooner than January 1988, so the cuts with him on bass came after this. By April 1988, Troy Davis had joined Carter, so "Make It Last" seems to have been a late addition to the set, apparently included soon before the record was released. It shows no signs of having been hastily put together.

Carter has described how the tapes she had submitted to Richard Seidel included two instrumental cuts with Winard Harper's brother, Philip, on trumpet, and she had planned to include these on Look What I Got. But when she was signing with Verve, the Harper brothers and Seidel cut a separate record deal without telling her about it. As a result of their going behind her back, she decided to replace the two instrumental tracks with ones using her current trio. This explains the juggling of personnel on the record. The experience soured Carter's relationship with Seidel, as well as with Winard Harper.

³² Perhaps misled by the fact that the record was pulled together from previously unissued Bet-Car material, Bruyninckx gives two entries for this record in a recent edition of his discography: one in 1988 and another in the early to mid-1970s.

The record extends Carter's virtuosity in arranging, with the title track eliciting every ounce of sonority from the four musicians involved, and "The Good Life" creating a complex web of time relationships and timbral interactions (see the analysis of this song in Part II). The Nat King Cole hit, "That Sunday, That Summer," appears on the record in an ingratiating waltz tempo. The inclusion of tenor man Don Braden adds even more complexity to Carter's usually rich textures.

Carter received a favorable review for Look What I Got from Peter Watrous in July.³³ By then, Darrell Grant on piano had joined Coleman and Davis, along with Wes Anderson on saxophone, when she sang at the Bottom Line. Later in that month Don Braden added the fifth part when the group played at other engagements. It was around this time that Carter had begun to develop a reputation as a finishing school for young talent, serving a similar function to the one that Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, or Lionel Hampton's band had served of taking unseasoned but able-bodied musicians and preparing them for the artistic and professional realities of the music industry. Carter was now sowing seeds of continuity which her mentor Lionel Hampton had implanted in for her many years before. The role Carter adopted in the jazz community as teacher persists to the present time. One is hard pressed to check the listings of

³³ Peter Watrous, "The Voices You Hear Are Inimitably Their Own," The New York Times, 3 July 1988.

musicians playing in Manhattan in a given week, or pick up a new release, without encountering the names of her alumni, who are often playing together. Perhaps more importantly in the long run, she is setting an example that one hopes her alumni will go on to emulate, training up-and-coming jazz artists who will emerge as an active force in the jazz world over the forthcoming years..

By October, Look What I Got had been at the top of the jazz charts for four weeks. In November, Carter went to the Kaufman studios in Astoria to tape her appearance on the highest rated television program of the time, The Bill Cosby Show, in an episode which was scheduled to air on Thanksgiving. Carter had been invited by Cosby to appear on the show after they had both performed in the spring at a WBGO tribute to Lionel Hampton at Town Hall.³⁴ Cosby later sponsored the production of a video of the song "Look What I Got" in which he and his co-star Phylicia Rashad appeared with Carter, and another of the 1979 version of "Sounds (Movin' On)."³⁵ She also worked on a Coca-Cola commercial with him. Carter finished the year by performing at Fat Tuesday's.

³⁴ Michael Bourne, "On the set of Cosby's show, Betty Carter adds some jazz" Target: The Sunday Herald Times, 20 November 1988.

³⁵ James T. Jones, IV, "Betty Carter: Look What We Got," Down Beat, August 1989. Jones neglects to mention in the article that Carter is his aunt. He does point out that "Mr. Gentleman" is the name of an after-hours club in Detroit, as well as a tune on Look What I Got.

In the beginning of 1989 Carter's two recent records had both been nominated for Grammy's, and she had appeared on David Sanborn's syndicated NBC show, as well as "Sunday Today," "Good Morning America," and commercials for Listerine and Budweiser. By the end of February, after finishing a gig in Cambridge, Massachusetts, she went on to perform in Minneapolis. In the flurry of activity that had become her life, Carter was unprepared for the next career hurdle that she would leap.

On Wednesday, 22 February Look What I Got was honored with a Grammy award for the best female performance in jazz, having stayed at the top of Billboard's sales chart for six weeks. It was still on Billboard's Top Ten List along with the Dunhill reissue of her duets with Ray Charles at this time, and remained there for thirty-nine weeks. In fact these two records plus the duets with Carmen McRae had the rare distinction of being simultaneously in Billboard's top fifteen. A cameo appearance Carter made on a compilation of music from Walt Disney films, singing Snow White's "I'm Wishing," reinforces the impression that Carter had finally crossed over: "It took me longer to cross over with the white audience [than] Sarah and Ella and Carmen [had done];. . . [but] now that a large record company is involved it gives me some clout."³⁶ Verve promotion had even gotten her picture in Rolling Stone beneath rock stars Tracy Chapman and

³⁶ Bob Protzman, "Jazz singer Betty Carter hotter than ever: She's worked steadily, and she's done it her way," St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch, 26 February 1989).

Terence Trent D'Arby. Significantly, Carter had accomplished the feat of garnering a Grammy while retaining her own distinctive sound, but few of her listeners would have imagined the years of work that led up to this brief moment of triumph. Life went on, however, and shortly after her stint in the Twin Cities she went on to appear again at Rutgers University.

Droppin' Things

In January 1990, Carter returned to Fat Tuesday's. Early in May, Polygram, a division of Verve, released advance notices for Carter's appearance at the Bottom Line on 25 and 26 May 1990, where the label recorded her with a trio consisting of Marc Cary, piano, Tarus Mateen, bass, and Gregory Hutchinson, drums. In addition, she had Craig Handy, who had made a name for himself playing with Abdullah Ibrahim and the Mingus Dynasty, on tenor saxophone and veteran Freddie Hubbard on trumpet. A duet recorded on another occasion with Detroit native, pianist Geri Allen, "Star Dust/Memories of You" also made it onto the record. Carter produced the record.

Polygram released Droppin' Things on 18 September. It included four Carter originals, "30 Years," "Open the Door '90," "Droppin' Things," and "Dull Day (In Chicago)." Carter spoke of the first of these: "I did '30 Years' about 12 years ago, when there was a rash of gentlemen I knew who were leaving their wives after 20 and 30 years. . . . The title

was different then. It was 'Someone Else Will (Soon) Grow Old, Too.'³⁷ On her last recording of "Open the Door" in 1982, Carter had gotten as close as possible to an purely instrumental version of this song, then called "Abre La Puerta," when she abandoned the lyrics altogether in favor of scatting. On Droppin' Things she stepped out of the picture altogether and let Hubbard and Handy go to work on the song's changes. The meter changes in the title song brilliantly illustrate both the clumsiness of a love-struck person, and Carter's complex rhythmic sensibility, and they give the players a serious challenge. Judging from her acknowledgments in the closing seconds of the cut it seems clear that she ended her show with this number. Carter's vocal lines and Allen's harmonies for "Stardust/Memories of You," along with the tempo, effectively sustain a mood of loss and desolation for over twelve minutes and bring the lyrics of this old war-horse to such a profound level of expression that we will forever think differently of this song. The Bottom Line performance had also included "When It's Sleepy Time Down South," but it did not make it onto the album because Carter and Hubbard were both unhappy with the trumpeter's playing on the song. The entire record exhibits Carter at ease in her new role as recording artist for a major label.

By November 1990, Dwayne Burno had replaced Tarus Mateen on bass. In 1991, Blue Note acquired the Roulette catalogue

³⁷Betty Carter, Polygram press kit (September 1990).

and reissued Finally in a digital format. Amidst a busy touring schedule in 1991, Carter kicked off the American Music Series at SUNY Purchase in October. At that performance, she sang the short commentaries that customarily lead into each number, rather than speaking them. They unfolded easily over a continuously evolving backdrop of sound from the trio, and enabled Carter to make smooth transitions from one song into the next. In retrospect, it seems clear that she was preparing for her next major performance.

In March 1992, Jazz at Lincoln Center presented Carter in a program at Alice Tully Hall entitled "Betty Carter Big Band with Strings: The Music Never Stops." She performed the Sunday matinee at the Aaron Davis Center of City College in order to make the show available to those who could not afford the higher priced tickets at Lincoln Center. In addition to Carter's present trio, which now consisted of Cyrus Chesnut, Ariel Roland, and Gregory Hutchinson, the concert included two guest trios that featured several of Carter's former co-workers: Geri Allen, Cecil McBee, and Jack DeJohnette; and John Hicks, Lisle Atkinson, and Kenny Washington, along with six strings and a seventeen piece big band. Clarence Penn also played drums on a few numbers. Carter's design of the event, which entailed ninety minutes of continuous music, reinforces the impression that she conceives of an entire set as a large-dimensional structural unit. The program consisted of arrangements from the course

of her entire career, including Melba Liston's setting of "Make It Last" from Out There.

That spring, Carter was honored at the 19th Annual Conference held by the International Association of Jazz Educators in Miami, where she received an American Jazz Masters Fellowship from the NEA. Carter used the \$20,000 honorarium to help finance the big band concert at Lincoln Center. By August, when she appeared at the Blue Note, she had again made personnel adjustments, with Cyrus Chesnut and Clarence Penn still on piano and drums, respectively, but with Chris Thomas now on bass. At about this time, Carter began planning an annual concert at the Brooklyn Academy of Music intended to showcase up-and-coming musicians who had not yet received much exposure. As mentioned earlier, Carter's dedication to promoting young jazz talent continued the legacy of Hampton's having hired her forty-four years earlier.

It's Not About The Melody

In September, Verve announced the forthcoming release of Carter's third record for that label. The press release refers to Carter's recent honors: named "Female Jazz Singer of the Year" for the fourth year in a row by Down Beat's annual Critics Poll, and first on the preceding three Reader's Polls; 1992 American Jazz Awards for Album of the Year and Vocalist of the Year. That fall she sang to sold out crowds at the Blue Note in New York.

A feature in Vogue anticipated Carter's return appearance at Lincoln Center in February 1993, to participate in a concert entitled "Prelude to a Kiss: Jazz for Valentines." The "house band" consisted of former Betty Carter trio members Mulgrew Miller, Curtis Lundy, and Lewis Nash. Miller and Nash had each played with Lundy separately in the early 1980s, missing each other by about a year. Wynton Marsalis made a surprise appearance for Carter's final number.

In March, Verve released It's Not About The Melody. Unlike most of Carter's other records it contains very little of her previous repertoire, although she did get her delivery of "When It's Sleepy Time Down South" down on tape. Her version of "You Go To My Head," which takes her approach to back-phrasing to extreme lengths (see the discussion of this in Part II), had been well honed in performances over the preceding period as well. Like her big band concert, this record featured the accompaniment of several different trios, and a return performance by Craig Handy. It received the American Jazz Award for album of the year.

On 17 and 18 April 1993, Carter presented her "Jazz Ahead '94" concert. Carter had always prided herself on her ability to notice incipient talent, and the event included nineteen musicians that Carter had chosen from an extended audition process that involved taking suggestions from fellow musicians attending the International Association of Jazz Educators' Conference in Texas, and fielding tapes that young

hopefuls from all over the country had sent her. None of the musicians Carter chose had received serious exposure other than trumpeter, Marcus Printup, and drummer, Adonis Rose. In addition to the latter, Theodross Avery on tenor saxophone and Mark Subek on trumpet represented the Berklee College of Music. Tenor player Chris Byars had reached the semifinals of the Thelonious Monk Competition in 1991. Former Betty Carter drummer Gregory Hutchinson was also on hand, as well as pianist Jackie Terrasson who later joined Carter. The player's ages ranged from eighteen to twenty-seven, with most of them being in their early twenties. Carter performed a few numbers that evening with her own trio, Chesnut, Thomas and Penn, and with occasional backup from her showcased artists, including a seamless duet with Marcus Printup on "The Nearness of You." But most of the performance was devoted to the next generation.

Since this initial success Carter has continued to present her "Jazz Ahead" concerts. As of this writing she actively performs throughout the world, and remarkably, continues to grow as an artist. In 1994 she produced Feed The Fire with established artists Geri Allen, Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette, and toured with them to promote the record. Her continued presence in the music world exerts a strong influence on the evolving jazz revival, and she deserves a good deal of credit for the thriving jazz scene that we have today, in part, through the work of her former trio members. Her most important legacy, however, is her

ability to dramatize a song's lyrics while at the same time abstracting the melody, to function as singer and instrument, as storyteller and actress, arranger and improviser, as artist and entertainer all at once. Much of this legacy is documented on record only because Carter persisted during the adverse conditions of the 1960s and 1970s. Her belief in her own artistry and that of her colleagues will continue to inspire us to speak in our own voices, regardless of the personal cost.

Part II: Style Analysis

Introduction

Jan LaRue's Guidelines for Style Analysis¹ provides a set of criteria for determining which features contribute the most to the character and distinctiveness of an artist's music, and a thoroughgoing method for documenting how her music has changed over time. Although LaRue designed his approach for the study of western art music, one feature in particular makes it suitable for studying jazz. LaRue's approach stems, in part, from his reaction against the synoptic aspect of formal analysis, which freezes time into static blocks, and thus neglects to account for music's essential quality of flow. Edward Cone has also discussed how theorists often describe musical events in terms of a whole before considering how the accumulation of events generates the whole. Such analysis tends to emphasize how each moment contributes to the work's coherence, rather than how that moment may surprise us. He suggests that a diachronic analysis, which synthesizes our awareness of the work's structural goals with our involvement in the music's journey towards them, will produce a richer listening experience.² LaRue's guidelines integrate such a diachronic perspective into the music's analysis.

¹ Jan LaRue, Guidelines for Style Analysis (New York, NY: Norton, 1970).

² Edward T. Cone, "Three ways of Reading a Detective Story - Or a Brahms Intermezzo," Selected Essays (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989; written in 1977) 77-93. Cone addresses issues which relate to how the composer intends for the listener to experience the work, and how these intentions

Essentially, both Cone and LaRue argue in favor of balancing our experience of the music's ongoing process against our comprehension of the final product. Because improvised jazz places such a strong emphasis upon process, a diachronic analysis more closely reflects the performer's and the listener's experience than a synoptic approach alone does, for clearly, we cannot grasp improvised music whole until the improviser's generative process has completed itself. While a synoptic approach, such as the one adopted by Schuller, can reveal important aspects of recorded and transcribed performances, it often does not adequately represent the ephemeral, transitory aspects of either making or hearing a live, unrecorded improvisation. In writing about music, these latter aspects pose the most difficulty.

LaRue accounts for certain aspects of synoptic analysis by pointing out that a musical event, as we recall it, takes on a general shape or character. Furthermore, as Leonard Meyer has pointed out, at any given moment in a performance, we relate what we are hearing to our recollection of what we have heard.³ Based upon these recollections, we form expectations of what we will hear.

LaRue also accounts for the interaction between the synoptic and diachronic aspects of music by building his

must inform the work's performance. In order to do this, both performer and listener need to come to terms with the dynamic between being and becoming, by "living through" the music.

³ Leonard Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

analysis towards an understanding of the way the style accomplishes musical growth. For LaRue, "Growth" contains those elements that create unity and predictability, which he calls "Shape," and those aspects that create variety and surprise, which he calls "Movement." As LaRue uses the terms, Shape describes the way in which general trends in the music's unfolding affect our expectations, and thus create a context for the change that creates Movement. Thus, we measure the degree and rate of change over time against patterns established by what we have already heard. Conversely, in order for us to make sense of what we are hearing, stability must get established in some elements. LaRue's method, applied to a composer's entire output, allows us to distinguish the surprising elements from the predictable elements in his style, by studying the patterns that emerge in the way he creates Growth.

Carter's Roles

A style analysis of Betty Carter's work must take into consideration the various roles she fills, from singer to improviser to leader to arranger to composer. What is more, these roles must be looked at as a unity. Over the course of her career, she developed fluency in shifting from one role to another, so that, often, no clear line separates them. Especially from 1964 on, her music-making flows within a continuum that integrates all of these activities.

For example, when Carter sings a standard, she sometimes retains features of the original tune, as compared to the notated form. By making reference to her given material in this way, she functions within the conventions established for jazz singers, which invite us to recognize the tune she is singing. In making an arrangement, however, she has often substantially reworked the vocal line, in addition to whatever contributions she has made to the arrangement's texture (via instrumentation), rhythmic feel (or groove), chord changes (via harmonic substitutions, passing chords or pedal-points), recurrent figuration, and formal scheme (introduction, transitions and coda) and, finally, to overall growth.

We can therefore classify the elements of the vocal line that differ from the original, which she has worked out in advance, as a function of her arrangement. During her performance of this material, however, she adjusts her long-term plan in response to a variety of factors ranging from the condition of her voice, and the reaction of the audience, to music improvised by the rhythm section on a moment by moment basis, and the way her mood affects her immediate emotional reaction to the song's lyrics. When she does this, she clearly has crossed over into the role of improviser; but, the fluid nature of her shift in roles makes the precise moment at which she has done this difficult to determine.

The situation is compounded when she performs a tune that she herself has written, for the audience has no

yardstick against which to measure her variations. Finally, the interactive aspects of bebop lead certain of Carter's musical choices to function as signals to the rhythm section, and thus stem from her role as leader.

The complex relationships between the given material provided by the tune, the large-dimension plan of the arrangement, the pre-composed material, such as licks (or, formulas), the spur-of-the-moment decisions required of improvisers, and the responses of participating musicians give jazz its unique character as a musical style. All of these features bear directly upon my analysis of Carter's style.⁴

Carter's Style Periods

Betty Carter's recorded output reveals certain changes that occurred during the course of her career, and suggest a division of her work into three periods: early (1948-1963), middle (1964-1982) and late (1982-present). The division between her early and middle periods has a more abrupt quality than that between her middle and late periods, in part because of changes in the recording industry and the marketing of recording artists during this time, and because of Carter's response to these changes.

⁴ Because jazz encompasses many sub-styles we cannot generalize about a single, unified approach to jazz. However, for simplicity I have used the term "jazz" to designate a bebop-based approach, and many of my remarks about jazz do not apply to other sub-styles, such as fusion or free jazz.

The early period begins with Hampton and ends with her recording for Atco entitled 'Round Midnight. Three general factors give this period much of its character: her tendency to stay relatively close to the tune's notated form when she sings lyrics, a greater tendency than she exhibited later on to distinguish between her roles as a singer of lyrics and as a scat singer, and her reliance upon others for arrangements. Toward the end of this period the first feature gave way gradually to a new approach, to which we shall return. Aside from her sessions with King Pleasure and Ray Bryant, most of this period's recordings are scored for big band with or without strings. My discussion of her work from this time will mainly seek to establish the stylistic foundation of her vocal approach.

The middle period begins with her 1964-65 recording sessions for the United Artists label, which produced the record Inside Betty Carter, and ends with her 1979 recording, Betty Carter with The Audience. With the former we can sense that she has grasped the reins of her music with greater determination, and begins to treat tunes more freely than before. A gap in her discography during the important time from 1965-1969 has hindered my ability to document consistently the changes in her style throughout her middle period. During this time she worked exclusively in the medium of jazz trio and voice, which enabled her to refine her approach to arranging for this medium and integrate her approach to singing lyrics and singing scat into a forceful

expression of her style. Over time, Carter gradually increased her capacity to flow among her diverse roles, and her recorded work during this period establishes the originality of her contribution to jazz.

Carter's late period begins around the time of her 1982 recording, Whatever Happened To Love, and continues to the present. In her maturity, Carter has taken elements of her style and extended them, sometimes to such an extent as to seem mannered, but her work remains rooted in the principles that have guided it from the beginning. While she has occasionally made use of other formats besides trio and voice, most notably the use of strings in 1982, the bulk of her work continues to use this essential jazz medium. Her personnel has witnessed more frequent turnover during this time, and this has increased the rate at which her arrangements change. Her commitment to sustaining the bebop tradition by hiring young talent, much in the way that Hampton hired her, has given her a reputation for educating a new generation of players about the mechanics and the aesthetics of playing jazz. Since 1990, she has worked with established jazz musicians as well.

Carter's large performing repertoire has stayed remarkably stable over the course of her forty-seven year career. Her material consists mostly of standards, many of which have received little attention from other singers. Figure 1.1 shows the tunes which have reappeared throughout

Figure 1.1: Standards which Carter has recorded more than once, listed chronologically by first appearance.

Recorded four times

I Could Write A Book (Rodgers/Hart)
 Ev(e)'ry Time We Say Goodbye (C. Porter)
 You're A Sweetheart (McHugh/Adamson)
 (once unissued)

Recorded three times

By the Bend in the River (Edwards/Haig)
 What A Little Moonlight Can Do (H. Woods)
 Heart and Soul (Carmichael/Loesser)
 My Favorite Things (Rodgers/Hammerstein)
 What's New (Haggart/Burke) (once unissued)

Recorded twice

Frenesi (?) (once unissued)
 Social Call (G. Gryce)
 Something Wonderful (Rodgers/Hammerstein)
 But Beautiful (Van Heusen/Burke)
 All I('ve) Got (D. Cole)
 Make It Last (Paxton/Haynes)
 Remember, [You Forgot to] (I. Berlin)
 Cocktails for Two (Coslow/Johnston)
 Goodbye (G. Jenkins or, C. Porter)
 'Round Midnight (Monk/Williams/Hanighen)
 Good Life, The (Distel/Reardon)
 Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most
 (Wolf/Landesman)
 Isn't It Romantic (Rodgers/Hart)
 All the Things You Are (Kern/Hammerstein)
 Body and Soul (Green/Heyman/Sour/Egton)
 Girl Talk (Hefti/Troup)
 I Didn't Know What Time It Was (Rodgers/Hart)
 Sun Died, The (Charles/LeLande/Giraud/Gregory)
 Please Do Something (Green/Stept/Carter)
 Surrey with the Fringe on Top (Rodgers/Hammerstein)
 Caribbean Sun (C. Garnett)
 Everything I Have Is Yours (Adamson/Lane)
 The Man I Love (Gershwin/Gershwin)
 Sometimes I'm Happy (Youmans/Grey/Caesar)

her discography, and hints at the degree to which Carter has retained material. Carter has similarly made recurrent use of her own original material. Figure 1.2 shows her original

Figure 1.2: Betty Carter's original compositions, listed in chronological order of first recording.

Recorded five times

Open the Door [Abre la Puerta] (1964)

Recorded three times

No More Words [With No Words] (1976)

Sounds/Movin' On (1972)

Recorded twice

I Can't Help It (1960)

Ego (with Randy Weston) (1969)

(Please) Do Something (With Green/Stept) (1969)

Tight (1972)

New Blues (You Purrrrrrrr) (1976)

Recorded once

Who, What, Why, Where, When? (1962)

Happy (1972)

We Tried (1972)

What Is It? (1972)

Fake (1979)

I Think I Got It Now (1979)

So... (1979)

Just Like the Movies (Time) (1988)

Look What I Got (1988)⁵

Mr. Gentleman (1988)

Droppin' Things (1990) (originally entitled "Jumps")

Dull Day (in Chicago) (1990)

30 Years (1990) (originally entitled "Someone Else Will Soon Grow Old Too")

Make Him Believe (1992)

Naima's Love Song (with John Hicks) (1992)

Love Notes (With Mark Zubek) (1993)

What Is This Tune (With Jack DeJohnette) (1993)

B's Blues (1993)

⁵ Carter scatted on the chords to this song, and paraphrased the tune quite closely in the version of "Sounds/Movin' On" that occurs on The Audience with Betty Carter. This fact suggests that she composed "Look What I Got" at least as early as 1979. In her 1985 performance of "Sounds" in Berlin, she set the changes to this song in five-beat meter, but did not paraphrase the tune. Carter wrote "Droppin' Things" and "30 Years" well before she recorded them; probably in the early '80s, but certainly no earlier than 1976.

compositions, indicating the number of times she has recorded each tune. Carter's recording Whatever Happened to Love has an especially retrospective quality, for Carter had recorded eight of its nine songs before. It includes songs from as far back as twenty-six years.

Such redundancy of material belies the often startling differences between Carter's several versions of a given tune. It suggests the use of a comparative approach as a basis for studying how her style has changed over time, and thus for determining the nature of her growth as an artist. In the following chapters I will sometimes use such an approach with Carter's several performances of "I Could Write A Book."

This way of discussing Carter's music acknowledges an implicit feature of the jazz aesthetic: that originality is measured, not in terms of the choice or variety of repertoire but, rather, by the degree of inventiveness a musician brings to each rendition of the same tune. The relative infrequency with which Carter has recorded and the fact that she will not make alternate takes available gives the recurrence of tunes in her repertoire special meaning. It provides us with one of the few sources we have for making comparisons among renditions. Although bootleg recordings do exist in some private collections, for this discussion I have chosen to build my case upon performances that Carter herself has approved. The bootlegs that I have heard do not reveal any significant stylistic departures from Carter's overall

approach, but in my future research on Carter I plan to expand my sample base. (Appendix I is an index of song titles keyed to the recordings on which they appear.)

Chapter 1: Sound characteristics of Carter's music

In his Guidelines, Jan LaRue sets forth an approach to style analysis that systematically examines how five aspects of music contribute to the expression of style: Sound, Harmony, Melody, Rhythm and Growth. LaRue capitalizes these terms because, as major categories for consideration, they all function at the same level of analysis. In my discussion of Betty Carter's style, I will take each of these categories respectively and examine the way it contributes to her approach to music in the large, middle, and small dimensions. The ways that the categories overlap and interact with each other will also receive consideration. The first and most basic of these categories is Sound.

Jazz players and singers alike devote considerable attention to developing a distinctive and recognizable sound, for the jazz aesthetic assigns considerable importance to a musician's ability to stand apart on this basis. While a musician's timbre is not the only means of accomplishing this, it plays a crucial role in the process. This Sound ideal of jazz thus reflects the influence of vocal expression on instrumentalists, for a person's voice inherently has recognizable qualities.

LaRue's term "Sound" encompasses timbre, texture and dynamics. I will consider each of these aspects of Carter's music in turn.

Vocal quality

Carter's vocal timbre has a distinctive breathiness, especially in her high register, which she can increase or decrease at will, and which she often uses as an expressive device. She will also use a sudden exhalation of air for rhythmic effect. She uses vibrato sparingly, which gives her sound a certain starkness. Because the absence of vibrato predominates, when she does use it, most often as terminal vibrato,¹ it noticeably warms her tone. Her breathy, non-vibrato tone reminds me of the sound Miles Davis produced with a Harmon mute. As we shall see, this is one of several features of Carter's style that reveal Davis' influence.

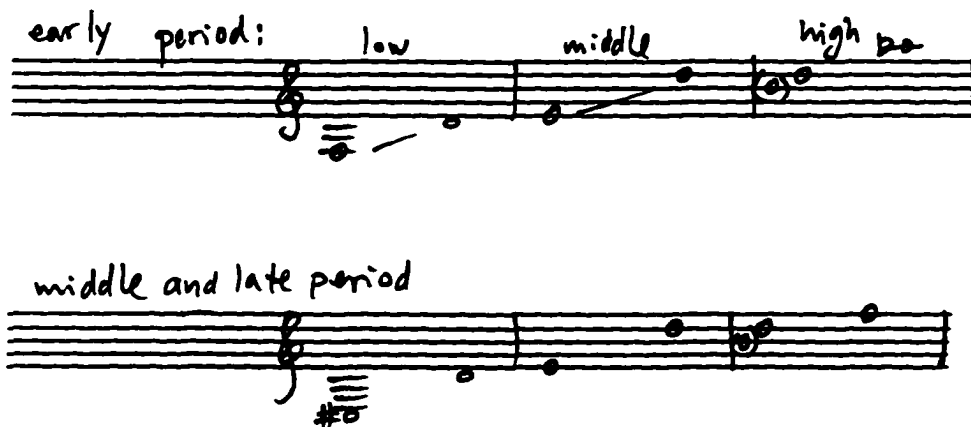
Carter's intonation is a significant part of her sound. Her bending of pitch comes from the blues and jazz tradition, and it creates tension with the tempered tuning of the piano. In addition to downward bends, during her early period, she occasionally produced an upward bend, accompanied by a sudden closing of the throat. (Her 1955 version of "I Could Write A Book" features this ornament. See Appendix II, transcription 4.) Carter may have adopted this from having heard Dinah Washington. (Washington's 1952 recording of "Trouble in Mind" gives an example of this.) Her tendency to sing slightly off-pitch at times can lead her to sound out of tune and Bill Crow has remarked that it gives her singing an

¹ Andre Hodeir, Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence, translated by David Noakes (N.Y.: Grove Press, 1956), 67.

almost keening, or wailing, quality.² In contrast to other singers, whose vibrato may obscure any flaws in intonation, Carter's limited use of vibrato leaves her intonation exposed. My transcriptions have only indicated the extreme instances of pitch bending.

Carter has three vocal registers with which to work, and as her career has progressed, she came to use them to greater effect. (See example 2.1.) From the example we can see that her range dropped about a third during the course of her middle period. Carter takes great pride, however, in the fact that she has not had to lower the keys of her songs in order to adjust to her overall drop in range.

Example 2.1: Carter's vocal registers.



² Bill Crow made this comment at a "Jazz Research Roundtable" discussion held at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark on 14 September, 1995.

In making an arrangement, Carter uses her registers as an important means of creating variety, not only within numbers, but over the course of an entire set. She will often reserve a certain register, and then use it for a specific expressive effect. Her 1976 and 1979 renditions of "Open the Door" demonstrate her use of her high register to create a powerful sense of movement (see Appendix II, transcriptions 14 and 15), as we shall see in our discussion of Melody. Carter's arranging also places certain tunes in a specific tessitura in order to create a particular mood.

Carter's low register has a dark, chalumeau quality upon which she capitalizes in ballads, and during pianissimo passages. The low tessitura of her 1979 renditions of "I Could Write A Book" and "Open the Door" (Appendix II, transcriptions 16 and 15, respectively.) give us a good illustrations of the expressive mastery she acquired over this range, but her first recording of "The Good Life" (Appendix II, transcription 9) demonstrates that, even as early as 1962, she could bring its warm tone to a ballad. This range expanded downward as Carter matured.

Her middle register is less distinctive timbrally, but is resonant and chesty. It is her most agile register with regard to pitch and dynamics. The fact that Carter's middle range has not changed significantly over time enables her to keep her material in the same key. The top notes of her chest voice (b, c' and d-flat' in the early period) have a

hoarse, throaty quality, and Carter often places critical expressive passages there for an intense sound.

Her high register consists of a clear head voice above the break, and it is her least agile range. In this register she generally sings sustained pitches, at a forte dynamic, which are typically reserved for climactic moments and strong endings. While she has lost some of her top notes over time, her ability to use this register effectively has increased.

Like most singers, Carter can bring her head voice down below the top of her chest voice, and she occasionally sings across the break between her middle and high register for expressive purposes. (See example 2.2.)

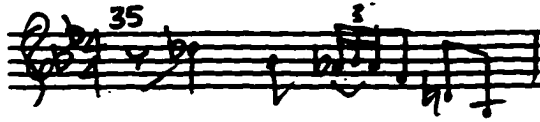
Example 2.2: Crossing the register break.



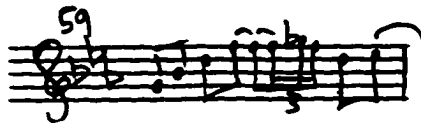
Related to this last element is Carter's characteristic use of the jazz turn (example 2.3). Especially in up-tempo numbers, when Carter sings this well-worn ornamental figure on a single syllable, her use of it has a peculiarly vocal quality, which leads me to include it as a characteristic (See example 2.3b.)

Example 2.3: Carter's use of the jazz turn.

a. "You're Driving Me Crazy"



b. "Red Top"



feature of her overall sound. Even when she sings Gail Brockman's trumpet line in her vocalise on "Red Top," she cannot resist adding a turn that is not in the original solo.

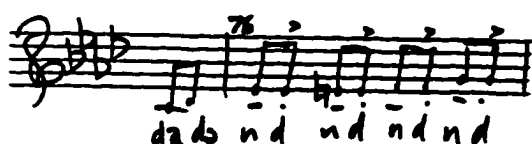
As we have seen, early in her career, Carter drew a firm line between singing scat and singing lyrics, and some generalizations apply exclusively to one approach or the other. As she developed her own sound, however, Carter began to blend the two approaches, such that, by her late period, her singing of lyrics approaches the spontaneity of her scatted solos, and her scatting has the rhythmic flexibility that she brings to lyrics. This path grows logically from the fact that she got her start by singing scat, and thus, from the beginning, was immersed in a phonetic laboratory in which she could explore the timbral possibilities inherent in phonemes. A few examples of her early scat solos show her coloristic use of phonemes. While Carter generally does this to evoke the phrasing and articulation of instruments, her phonetic originality also grows from her wish to increase her

means of producing accents, and thus expand the expressive possibilities. (See example 2.4.)

In example 2.4a, although both /n/ and /d/ get produced in the front of the mouth, the closed sound of the /n/ followed by the puff of air required to make the /d/ causes the off-beats to receive an accent. Example 2.4b gives an early instance of Carter expanding the phonetic vocabulary of scat, in this case using the sound /ʃiy/ to amplify the agogic accent that the highest pitch of the phrase receives. Similarly, in example 2.4c, Carter prepares an agogic accent on the climactic note of the phrase with the short, closed sound /wu/, and then opens up to a bright /wiy/.

Example 2.4: Carter's use of phonemes in early scat solos.

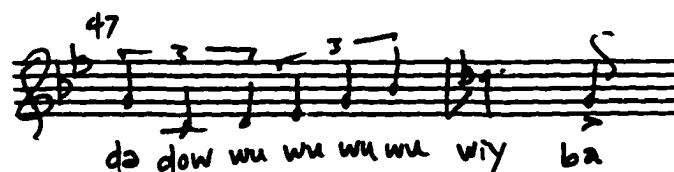
a. "Jaybird"



b. "Thou Swell"



c. "You're Driving Me Crazy"



It is largely because Carter treats phonemes as timbral elements that her delivery of lyrics so strongly contributes to her distinctive sound quality. My interest in this aspect of her work has led me to transcribe the lyrics she sings phonetically. (See Appendix III for a description of the Trager-Smith phonemes). Singers generally view consonants as obstacles to their ability to produce an open tone. Sarah Vaughan exemplifies this viewpoint, for the openness of her tone production results, in part, from her emphasis on vowels. Carter, on the other hand, uses consonants for rhythmic and expressive effect, and she sustains consonants, regardless of whether they carry pitch or not, using them as transitions between vowel sounds. (See example 2.5.) Her placement of final consonants plays a critical rhythmic function, often marking the beginning of a beat or a measure. The time she gives to producing consonants often delays the phrase. Carter's back-phrasing, in which she causes the vocal line to lag behind the tune's original placement in the harmonic structure, results partly from such delays.

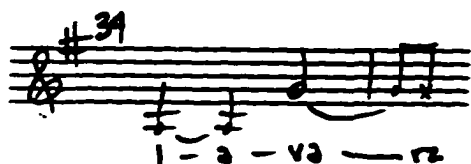
Examples 2.5a and 2.5b both show how she sustains the voiced initial consonant, /l/, in the words "lovers" and "lots of," in order to give them greater warmth. In examples 2.5c and 2.5d, Carter sustains the final unvoiced consonant, /s/, in the phrases "(I could) write a preface," and "I must (get in your heart)."³ When this latter phrase occurs in her

³ Later in this performance, at m. 160, she extends the same consonant, /s/, in the phrase "lots (of love)." In her 1979

1979 reading of the same tune, she stretches out both the /s/ in "must" and the /n/ in "in." (See example 2.5e.)

Example 2.5: Carter's treatment of consonants in her delivery of lyrics.

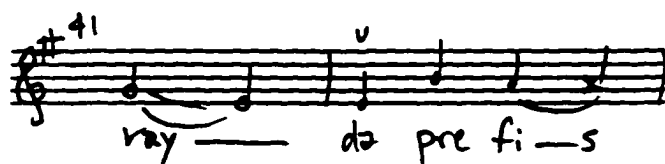
a. "I Could Write A Book" (1955)



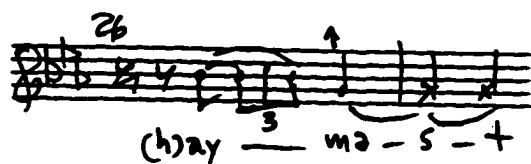
b. "Open the Door" (1964)



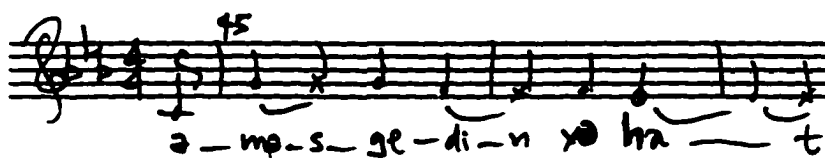
c. "I Could Write A Book" (1969)



d. "Open the Door" (1976)



e. "Open the Door" (1979)



version of "Open the Door," at mm. 119, 137 and 164, she gives us further demonstration of this technique.

Trumpeter/singer Clark Terry has expressed an awareness of the relationship between phonemes and melody in singing scat. Regarding pitch, Terry has stated, "You see, it's not 'ooooo' up there . . . but 'eeeeee.'" He adds, "You use certain vowels in certain areas [of your vocal range]. 'Aaaaa' is higher than 'ooooo.'" Whatever fits the material. When it comes to scat singing, we teach young singers not to use the same syllables. Not 'oooooooooshibeeeedooooo' all the time. We teach them there are twenty-six letters. Use whatever the rhythm and tempo are suited for."⁴ Carter does not follow the same "rules" as Terry, for she sings /uw/ on high pitches, as well as /iy/. Her exploration of the relationship between phonetic and musical materials as a means of creating Movement and Shape and expressing emotion reaches a deep level when she interprets lyrics.

Instrumentation

As mentioned earlier, the sound of Carter's music during her early period is governed by the instrumentation characteristic of big band arrangements, with the occasional addition of strings. This feature does not distinguish her from the many singers who recorded during the same time,

⁴ Leslie Gourse, Louis' Children: American Jazz Singers (N.Y.: William Morrow, Quill Edition, 1984), 145. Terry has made some interesting remarks about the relation between scatting and jazz pedagogy. "We've found that the most successful way to teach improvisation and phrasing with an instrument is to make the kids sing first. . . . Maybe knowing how to articulate, manipulate and attack on instruments is an ally for scatting."

however, her work with such arrangers as Quincy Jones, Gigi Gryce, Benny Golson, Melba Liston, Ray Copeland and Oliver Nelson did shape her aesthetic regarding arranging. Since then, she has made her own arrangements, and has relied almost exclusively upon trio instrumentation to support her singing, except for her work with strings in the early 1980s, and with big band in her concerts entitled The Music Never Stops in 1993. Limiting herself to the sound of the jazz trio has not hindered her exploration of timbre as a source of variety and structure, and in fact, having to work within its limitations has taught her to use all of the resources available in this medium.

In Carter's approach to arranging during her middle period, she generally made use of standard bebop roles for each instrument, and in this respect she reveals her indebtedness to the bebop tradition. The basis for this texture consists of a melody/accompaniment orientation with a strong polarity between melody and bass. The rhythm section instruments play well defined, but independent, roles in the ensemble, which consist mainly of each giving the solo vocal line rhythmic, harmonic, and dynamic support in idiomatic ways, while also providing timbral contrast. These roles play a strong part in giving the music its character, and as Carter developed, the flexibility with which she treated them increased.

Furthermore, the musicians' shaping of the music's evolving texture governs their interactions, and these

interactions lie at the heart of their aesthetic. One of the key strategies of improvisation, which consists of the soloist leaving spaces between phrases (or "airing out" the phrases), grows from the interactive aspect of jazz. The accompanists fill in these spaces with musical responses, which generate movement and feed the soloist musical material to draw upon in creating her solo. Likewise, the soloist's melodic gestures often influence the rhythm section's groove. No matter how great the fluidity of texture that results from these interactions, however, the soloist's line remains the focal point.⁵ From her middle period onward, one of Carter's major contributions to jazz singing and arranging has involved her engaging in this interactive dynamic more than most singers do, thus emulating the role of a horn in the ensemble. In her late period, Carter occasionally sings sustained lines during instrumental solos in support of the soloist.

The specific role that each player takes depends to some degree upon the tempo and genre in question. In up-tempo, common-time arrangements, which constitute a large portion of most singers' repertoires, the pianist plays chords, especially in the left hand, and usually in syncopated rhythmic designs, which provide accents off-the-beat. When the right hand does not play independently of the left, both

⁵ Ingrid Monson discusses this aspect of jazz in her Ph.D. dissertation entitled: Musical Interaction in Modern Jazz: An Ethnomusicological Perspective (N.Y.: NYU, 1991). She, too, makes use of aspects of Jan LaRue's approach.

hands play in rhythmic unison, with the top line designed to create melodic interest with the vocal line. The chords are voiced with timbral and dynamic, as well as harmonic and voice-leading, considerations in mind. The bass player usually keeps steady time by "walking" (with quarter-notes used predominantly in order to mark the beat, and stepwise motion used to lead to chord roots on the downbeat), but occasionally he may use some of Blanton's and LaFaro's rhythmic innovations. The drummer keeps steady time on the ride cymbal, using sticks, and emphasizes the back beats (2 and 4) with the high hat. Other pieces in the drum set are used for timbral color, and for filling in rhythmically, as mentioned earlier. The wide range of strokes available to a jazz drummer gives him access to an infinite variety of tone colors.

In ballads, of which Carter sings an unusually high proportion, the pianist usually plays more on the beat, and sustains the sound more, which softens the piano's tone, while the bassist plays with greater rhythmic freedom, and on rare occasions, uses the bow. He will often play in cut-time, emphasizing the changes in harmony with half-notes. For the drummer, brushes often get used to soften the attack, and to allow for a sustained tone on the snare drum, an effect which provides the timbral "glue" that holds the musical texture together. Sticks with soft heads may get used for crescendos on the cymbals, and for a warmer sound on the toms. There is more flexibility in meters other than

common time, and in Latin numbers, the bass line is more patterned.

Carter's arrangements often include passages in which she pairs her voice with individual instruments. She does this especially at the beginning of a song in order to contrast it with the preceding number in the set. Her 1964 record, Inside Betty Carter, illustrates her approach in this regard (no transcriptions are included for the following songs). She sings the entire first chorus of the song "Look No Further" with only bass, saving the remaining instruments for the more intense second chorus. The ballad "Beware My Heart" begins with just voice and piano. Her arrangement of "Some Other Time" juxtaposes piano/voice and bass/voice pairings effectively both for timbral contrasts and for mood changes. Eighteen years later, Carter's 1982 arrangement of "What A Little Moonlight Can Do," includes a near-literal statement of the original tune towards the end of the arrangement against a drum solo. Carter's sings a capella in her 1969 arrangements of "You're A Sweetheart" and "Body and Soul/Heart and Soul." In the former, she sings the verse of the tune unaccompanied, and in the latter, the instruments drop out during a transitional passage that leads to the second tune of a medley.⁶ Thus, in the middle and large dimensions, Carter uses Sound elements to articulate the

⁶ In singing unaccompanied, or with only drums, Carter demonstrates her ability to stay on pitch. In the passage referred to above, for example, she changes key from E-flat major to G major without the benefit of harmonic support.

formal scheme, and they therefore do much to give the music its Shape.

In the small dimension, Carter generally does not use instrumentation to emphasize phrase structure and function. Alternations of sound rarely occur in Carter's arrangements in any regular or predictable way (e.g. such timbral alternations as literal call-and-response patterns or trading fours). This relates to the fluidity of the music's texture mentioned earlier, for the interaction between the vocal line and the supporting rhythm section generally results in overlapping phrases. The rhythms in the accompaniment often complement the vocal line during pauses and sustained tones, and the overlapping that results has a contrapuntal effect. Vocal cadences often do coincide with structural harmonic cadences, for instance, at the end of an eight-bar section in a thirty-two-bar AABA; however, the rhythm section often marks the harmonic cadence in such a way as to generate continuity, and override its articulatory effect. At such moments, Carter and her musicians seem to acknowledge the Shape that Harmony gives the music by purposefully overriding it, thereby generating Movement.

Dynamics

Carter's dramatic sense leads her to use dynamics as an expression of her presence, in order to give the effect that she is either releasing or restraining her emotions, or that she is extending herself to or withholding herself from the

audience. In the largest dimension, Carter uses broad dynamic contrasts from one tune to the next, in addition to changes in tempo, meter, groove, and key, in order to create variety within a set.⁷

With regard to the overall dynamic level, the excited pace of events in up-tempo numbers usually suggests more volume than does the calmer mood of ballads. Regulating the group's dynamic level is one of the drummer's jobs, and so his playing has the most impact on the overall dynamics. In up-tempo arrangements, his use of sticks allows him to produce a lot of sound. In ballads, his use of brushes tends to limit the dynamic range within which he can work, and the type of accentuation that he can produce.

Carter also uses dynamics and accents to achieve growth in the middle dimension. Her arrangements and improvisations increasingly have come to take advantage of her capacity to use her vocal compass to project varying degrees of energy. In addition, the different ways that she varies the instrumentation often serve to create dynamic contrasts as well as the timbral ones discussed earlier. In the sixteenth measure of "Surrey with the Fringe on Top," (not transcribed) for example, Carter uses surprising accents to achieve a comic effect, no doubt with the addition of a

⁷ A set generally lasts anywhere between one-and-a half and two hours, and includes a sequence of songs designed to move the audience through a range of moods and emotions. I consider this the largest dimension because Carter needs to structure her sets so that they sustain the audience's attention.

sight gag to amplify the musical comment on the lyrics. She accomplishes this by singing at first with only bass and saving the piano and drums for the accents.⁸ In doing this she also marks a structural point in the tune. In her extended work, "Sounds/Movin' On," Carter uses sudden dynamic and tempo changes to distinguish each successive episode, almost in the manner of a theme and variations. By the latter part of Carter's middle period, as evidenced by such performances as her 1976 and 1979 renditions of "Open the Door," her command of dynamics had given her considerable mastery in shaping the music's growth and its emotional development, and she became more and more adept at making dynamic transitions. Her exploitation of the dynamic possibilities inherent in the instrumental resources available to her has continued to develop in sophistication to the present.

Within each song, dynamics frequently contribute to middle dimension growth, especially in her arrangements of up-tempo numbers. During her middle period, when these arrangements often consisted of two, or more, choruses, the second and following choruses acted as an amplification of the emotion of the first, and received an increased dynamic. This is not a novel approach, and many of Sarah Vaughan's and Ella Fitzgerald's performances, to name a few, use the same

⁸ In the 1970 version of this song, she also adds her voice to these accents, in order to reinforce them and to clarify her reaction to them. Judging by the audience's laughter this change increased the effectiveness of the passage.

format. Carter used this procedure in "Look No Further," already mentioned as an example of instrumentation, "I Didn't Know What Time It Was,"⁹ "Surrey with the Fringe On Top," "I Can't Help It" (1972), and "Wagon Wheels," to name a few. In such arrangements, the second chorus often shows an increase in tempo as well, either slight as in "I Didn't Know What Time It Was" or substantial, as in "Wagon Wheels."

In her earliest arrangements, Carter's use of dynamic contrast between the first and second choruses was an important source of movement, and it enabled her to intensify the emotion as she moved from the first to the second chorus. As Carter developed through her middle period, she refined both her sense of structure, and her use of dynamics to elucidate the structure. In her late period, her use of instrumental solos frees her from sticking to the two-chorus structure that dominated up-tempo arrangements from the first half of her middle period, and this had a liberating impact on her approach to dynamics.

Carter's 1988 rendition of "The Good Life" (not transcribed) provides an example of this. It begins with a plaintive, yet restrained, unmeasured and unaccompanied tenor saxophone introduction by Don Braden. The sax player drops

⁹ In my earlier analysis of this song, in "Billie Holiday and Betty Carter: Emotion and Style in the Jazz Vocal Line," Annual Review of Jazz Studies (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1993), 99-152, I examined the structural and emotional function of the musical elements of each singer's versions, in relation to the song's lyrics. There I considered Carter's use of dynamics, however I did not seek to account for the function that Carter's approach to dynamics had at this point in her style development.

out when the rhythm section begins what seems to be a vamp, in an up-tempo, Latin feel, on the tonic harmony. When the vocal enters shortly after, and the harmony changes, we realize that the rhythm section has in fact been playing the chorus proper, and that Carter has substantially delayed her entrance. This illustrates the extreme degree of back-phrasing she had come to use by this point in her career.

After she sings the lyric for the first chorus in a fairly uniform, yet highly nuanced, mezzo-forte dynamic, Carter drops out, the tempo changes dramatically,¹⁰ and the pianist, Stephen Scott, plays a climactic solo for the first twelve measures of the second chorus. Braden solos for the next four bars, increasing the intensification. When Carter enters for the second half of the chorus, the entire ensemble is now playing, and the group thus reaches its dynamic peak at this point in the arrangement. Carter remains in the original groove, however, and this superimposing of different grooves has the surprising effect of gradually releasing the tension created by the earlier tempo change and by Scott's and Braden's solos. In the extended coda that follows the second chorus, Carter and the group continue this feeling of release by sustaining a diminuendo over a vamp, and by repeating the final words of the song. While this tune does in fact use two choruses, in its use of dynamics to create

¹⁰ I will come back to this manner of changing tempos in my discussions of Harmony and Rhythm.

large dimension transitions and contrasts it is a far cry from Carter's earliest arrangements.

As a rule, Carter does not apply this procedure to ballads, however, mainly because, in ballads, she usually sings only one chorus. In the exceedingly slow tempos at which she takes ballads, almost any singer would find it difficult to sustain the song's mood and growth convincingly for an entire chorus, let alone for any more than this. Instead, Carter uses dynamics to follow the emotional journey of the lyrics to their climax. Her versions of "Body and Soul" give us the rare occurrence of her applying this procedure to a ballad. Significantly, she does not sing the second chorus in its entirety; but, rather, she returns to the bridge and sings just the second half of the tune. She changes tempo in the bridge, and sings the final return of the A section a capella. Both of these developments help her to sustain the dramatic line and the musical growth of the song beyond one chorus. Needless to say, such changes in tempo and texture imply dynamic changes as well.

The discipline of working with only a trio for night after night, one set after another, has taught Carter to utilize all of the musical resources available to her to create interest for herself, for her musicians and for the audience. Her mastery of dynamics enables her to sustain interest in her music for the duration of an entire set, and it gives her music its dramatic quality. She works within a wider dynamic range than most singers do and, as an arranger,

she uses dynamics to generate movement and to build suspense by making transitions and creating contrast. As we shall see, the flexibility with which she approaches the use of dynamics corresponds to her approach to tempo, and at times, key.

On the smallest dimension, Carter's use of dynamics relates to the accentuation of the lyrics, and functions to reinforce her phrasing and articulation in creating swing. She consistently opposes the irregular speech stresses of the text to the regular accentuation of the meter, especially in ballads, such that her barline and the rhythm section's barline rarely correspond. Because this and other uses of local dynamic changes relate to how Harmony, Melody and Rhythm create growth, we will consider them in terms of each of these elements.

Chapter 2: Harmony

In light of LaRue's use of the term Harmony, my discussion of this element will consider the vertical aspect of Betty Carter's music in all of its diverse ramifications. Thus, in addition to studying chords, I will also consider such related factors as the way that pitch choices in Carter's solos relate to chord roots, including her treatment of dissonance, and the way that scale degrees in her line relate to the tonality.

Jan LaRue has observed that, because of the sophistication of the harmonic system in western European music, "we can discern rather clear conventions of harmonic behavior . . . [that] help considerably with the task of style analysis, since we can make a much more knowledgeable evaluation of progressive, conventional and regressive tendencies in any composer's style."¹ This observation applies to jazz as well, for, in creating its own harmonic language, jazz builds upon and extends the western European harmonic vocabulary and syntax. It also applies to Carter's music inasmuch as the chord progressions which underpin the songs in her repertoire come from the western harmonic system.

In Carter's network of musical values, Harmony holds an important place. As we have seen, she grew up singing alto both in church and in school choirs, which increased her

¹ LaRue, Guidelines, 39.

sensitivity to Harmony and her ability to hear inner voices. Furthermore, in interviews she attributes much of the improvement she has made over time to her increased ability to sing "on the changes." Her reaction against fusion and free jazz further reveals her concern for Harmony, for it comes partly as a result of their rejection of the repertoire of jazz standards and the chord progressions that go with it.

The importance Carter gives to Harmony stems from her roots in bebop and she draws upon the harmonic practice of bebop and jazz styles based upon it. As a result, many of the ways in which Harmony contributes to Growth in a given performance result more from either the given material, or from choices made by her rhythm section, than by anything Carter herself does. Thus, while Carter's work reveals a profound awareness of the expressive possibilities of Harmony, ironically, the degree to which she remains within jazz conventions renders Harmony the least individualized aspect of her style.² For this reason, I will begin with a brief survey of jazz harmonic practice.

Using a now familiar procedure, jazz performers who work within the bebop-based tradition usually take a given melody, often referred to as "the head," and use its harmonic progression, otherwise known as "the changes," as the raw material for improvisations. A popular show tune, a blues or

² Bebop's idiomatic use of harmony has been detailed elsewhere at some length, most recently and comprehensively by Paul Berliner in Thinking in Jazz. Steven Strunk's article, "Harmony," in the New Grove Dictionary of Jazz (pp. 485-496) gives a useful overview of this subject as well.

an original composition may serve as the head, and audience members often indicate when they recognize it by applauding.

After playing the head the musicians proceed to take turns building improvised solos upon the changes. Musicians refer to each repetition of a complete statement of the changes as a "chorus," and the duration of a solo is experienced in relation to the chorus. A solo can last for a portion of a chorus, a whole chorus, or several choruses. To close the number, musicians play an "out chorus," which often includes a restatement of the head. Even though introductions, codas, and inserted material may elaborate upon this outline, it accounts for the general format of most small-group jazz performances.

In response to the "head-chorus-chorus-etc.-out chorus" structure of jazz, many writers have emphasized its "theme and variations" aspect. Lawrence Gushee, however, has drawn our attention to the rhythmic aspect of this procedure, by referring to it as the "timing cycle."³ Charles Hartman's observations about the use of chorus structure in his book Jazz Text relate bebop practice to African temporal sensibility and explain why Gushee's description reflects the jazz aesthetic. Hartman claims that "the continuousness of [African communal music] -- linked to a world-view in which

³ Lawrence Gushee, "Lester Young's 'Shoe Shine Boy,'" A Lester Young Reader, edited by Lewis Porter (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 226. Originally published in Daniel Heartz and Bonnie Wade, eds., International Musicological Society, Report of the Twelfth Congress, Berkeley, 1977 (Kassel: Barenreiter, 1981), 151-69.

historical process means less than cyclical stability-- reduces the status of beginnings and endings";⁴ and later, that "[in small-group jazz performances, the] string of solos can go on so long that it reduces the melody choruses [or, heads] at both ends almost to pro forma punctuation, making it clear that the performers feel less concern for structure [in LaRue's terms, Shape] than for continuation [in LaRue's terms, Movement]."⁵ We shall see evidence of this tendency in Carter's music. In asserting that the reiteration of changes serves a rhythmic function, Gushee draws our attention to the way that this use of Harmony operates to generate Growth. Carter's feeling, that the music will not swing unless it has changes, may derive from this factor.

Harmony in the large dimension

In the large dimension, a tune's changes contribute significantly to Shape in jazz, for they remain the same from one chorus to the next, and thus provide a crucial source of stability. In fact, because the changes provide one of the few predictable aspects of a jazz rendition, they serve as the fundamental means of giving it Shape. The repetition of choruses provides the basis for such large scale decisions as

⁴ Charles O. Hartman, Jazz Text: Voice and Improvisation in Poetry, Jazz, and Song (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 9.

⁵ Ibid, 10. Hartman immediately adds that "this is not a fault but an aesthetic, though not a modern European one." Hartman's remarks suggest a concrete way in which the African sensibility regarding time contributed to the formation of the jazz aesthetic.

when to end one solo and begin the next, or, in Carter's case, when to increase the emotional intensity to a noticeably distinct level, or when to change from singing lyrics to singing scat. The resulting changes in Sound also give Shape to the arrangement, by reinforcing this recurrent aspect of the Harmony.

In order to understand how the chorus structure of jazz contributes to Growth in the large dimension, we also need to know how the soloists make each chorus different from the preceding one, for it clarifies how Harmony also creates Movement. While we tend to experience such Movement in the middle and small dimensions, aspects of a solo operate to generate Movement in the large dimension as well. Carter's performances of "I Could Write A Book," from 1955, 1969 and 1979 give us a means of comparing how her approach to this issue changed over time.

Note how, on the top line of Appendix IV, the tune as it appears in the sheet music is transposed from the original key of C major to Carter's key of G major. We will consider her reasons for the key change later. Each chorus of Carter's successive performances is arranged under the original melody, aligned so that we can see the vertical relationships among them. In all of Carter's versions she has replaced the original chords with changes that move further away from the home key. Nevertheless, in retaining the ABAB' Shape of the original chord progression, all three

of Carter's versions return to the tonic mid-way through the song.

A cursory study of the top two lines reveals that Carter's 1955 rendition follows the original tune fairly closely. The second chorus of this version, not shown here, consists of a piano solo by Ray Bryant for half a chorus, and the return of the vocal for the second half, with slight modifications which do not warrant inclusion here. (See the Appendix for these.) The arrangement ends with a short coda which modifies the closing changes in order to induce closure. Significantly, the coda makes a closing reference to the most distinguishing passage of this version, the A-sharp in m.24 leading to the B-natural in m.25; but, instead of hearing it in relation to the E minor chord in m.25, it now occurs against a cadence to the tonic.

The third and fourth lines of Chart 1 show how Carter handled the same material fourteen years later. Notice that she sings both choruses in their entirety. In order to allow us to focus upon the vertical aspect of this performance, the chart does not show the tempo rubato of the first chorus, or the difference of tempo between the choruses, the latter of which also reinforces the performance's Growth. (See the Appendix for the tempo indications.) The difference in tempo has harmonic implications, for the slower tempos included in the first chorus allow Carter to use chromatically altered chord extensions more than she does in the second one. In addition, the tempo irregularities and the call-and-response

between piano and voice, which interrupt the rhythmic continuity of the piano's phrases, work only because the majority of these phrases end on a version of the dominant, or on a secondary dominant, and thus sustain the tonal suspense of the changes.

At first glance the two lines reveal that Carter has dramatically altered the line, in relation to both the original and her own 1955 performance. On closer look, both choruses reveal important similarities to the original line. Carter's next recording of this arrangement (not shown in Chart 1) was made within the following year. It bears a strong resemblance to this one (see Appendix II, transcription 12, for the 1970 rendition), so we know that most of the alterations constitute a carefully worked out arrangement of the vocal line, and not an improvisation in the usual sense. Nevertheless, the degree to which Carter has reinvented the melody creates the effect of soloing, and the small differences between the 1969 and 1970 versions invest each performance with freshness and spontaneity.⁶

The different ways in which Carter's two choruses handle scale degrees contribute to the Harmony's large dimension Movement, while similarities in this regard help to create Shape. For example, the first four measures of each chorus

⁶ On the other hand, the 1979 version of "I Could Write A Book" resulted from more spur-of-the-moment decisions, as a comparison with the version Carter performed at Howard University in 1980 reveals. The film, But Then, She's Betty Carter... includes footage of this performance, revealing an entirely different scat solo, and significant differences in the lyric's delivery as well.

emphasize $\hat{7}$ and $\hat{3}$ of the scale in different ways. By coming to rest on $\hat{7}$ instead of $\hat{3}$ in the second chorus, Carter introduces greater tension between the line and the changes. In m.7-8, on the words "and look," the Harmony moves from ii to vi via a ii-V-i in E minor. The vocal line of each chorus ornaments $\hat{5}$ in similar ways; but the flat- $\hat{7}$ in the first chorus (69A) has greater tension than the $\hat{6}$ in the second chorus (69B). In mm.9-12, on the words "write a preface on how we met," the vi leads via secondary dominants to the iii, and both lines move from $\hat{1}$ up to $\hat{2}$, and then down to $\hat{5}$; but, in 69B, the slide from $\hat{1}$ down to $\hat{6}$ delays the moves to $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{5}$ by a measure, shifting their harmonic function. In mm.15-16 of 69A, at mid-chorus, Carter sings the $\hat{5}$ which echoes the original tune in anticipating the dominant harmony of m.16, while Norman Simmons plays an altered version of the V chord. At the same location in 69B, Carter descends from $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{7}$ to $\hat{6}$, leaving the line suspended on the 9th of the chord.

The second half of 69B begins with Carter emphasizing $\hat{3}$ heavily ornamented with $\hat{4}$, thereby intensifying what she sang in mm.1-4 earlier in this chorus. In mm. 21-24 of both versions, the lines fall suddenly from $\hat{6}$ to $\hat{3}$, then rise a minor-7th to $\hat{2}$ before settling on $\hat{5}$, but 69B replaces the $\hat{3}$ that ornamented the $\hat{2}$ in 69A with a flat- $\hat{3}$. As the Harmony is headed towards E minor here, this last pitch has the bluesy quality of the flat- $\hat{5}$ in that key. The closing gesture of 69A, which descends from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{3}$, gets mirrored by the sudden ascent from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{3}$ in 69B. Carter's two choruses

resemble each other enough to establish a distinct Shape to her rendition of the tune, in the wake of her abandonment of the original line, and yet, differ enough from one another to sustain the rendition's forward momentum for two choruses.

Tonality in Carter's music

With regard to Harmony in the large dimension, the chorus structure of a jazz performance has important tonal implications, for it leads to repeated returns to the tonic. In this dimension, the chord changes produce local activity, rather than any significant and lasting departures from the tonic. While some exceptional jazz arrangements do change key, the Growth of a typical jazz performance does not depend upon such long-term tonal factors (as does that of, say, a sonata-allegro form).

Tonality strengthens the music's capacity to create beginnings and endings, and the anticipation of closure, by organizing pitch to increase the sense of directional movement. Put another way, closure results from the sense created by tonality, that we have departed from a specific harmonic area and will ultimately arrive back there again. That jazz relies upon elements other than tonality to create Growth in the large dimension is a reflection of the jazz aesthetic. The motoric rhythm of the bass and drums, the soloist's overlapping of irregular phrase lengths against the changes and her use of dissonance at phrase endings, allow her to avert closure, and thus, tend to counteract the

tonally static aspects of jazz. In Carter's case, for example, her extended arrangement of "What A Little Moonlight Can Do," from 1982, lasts over ten minutes, yet never leaves the key of B-flat.

Carter has described how she uses her keyboard skills to transpose tunes, in order to find the keys that situate the melody in her vocal compass for the best technical, coloristic and expressive effect. The key of her early "You're Driving Me Crazy," for example, makes her flashy performance possible by enabling her to display her entire range. The initial choice of G major for "I Could Write A Book" places the tessitura within her chest voice, which reinforces the tempo and dynamic in creating the calm, reassured mood she wishes to project. It also lends Carter's voice a certain mature quality that Ella Fitzgerald found harder to attain, due to her tendency to rely upon the wide compass and agility of her head voice, even in ballads.

Carter takes pride in her ability to keep a song in the same key in which she first sang it, for it signifies to her that her "pipes" are still in good operating condition. Over the course of her career, Carter's capacity to recompose the vocal line has allowed her to keep the keys of her arrangements stable. Chart 1 shows that, as her range changed, the new line she invented used a different tessitura and, partly because of this, different chord tones, than those of her earlier versions of the tune. Each rendition uses a distinct tessitura, and illustrates Carter's overall

tendency toward the end of her middle period to lower the tessitura. Her 1982 arrangement of "What A Little Moonlight Can Do," however, reveals that, even after twenty-two years, she could retain the original tessitura of an arrangement if she wanted to do so, which suggests that her choice of key does not entirely result from the exigencies of vocal production and tone color. To this day Carter's head voice retains its clarity, and she continues to rely upon it.

The order of tunes within a set often results in tonal contrast from one tune to the next. The mood, tempo and feel of the arrangement act as overriding criteria for determining what to sing next, however, especially for the opening and closing numbers of the set, which require a certain bravura. In this respect, she usually ends (and, less frequently, begins) a set with arrangements that display her vocal and expressive ranges to their full effect.

Harmony in the middle dimension

The head of a bebop arrangement establishes the duration and the harmonic structure of the chorus. In most up-tempo tunes, the chorus serves as an important harmonic module in the middle dimension, particularly with regard to tonality. Solos tend to augment the importance of the chorus, because musicians measure the duration of an improviser's solo by how many choruses it lasts. Before her late period, Carter's own arrangements rarely included instrumental solos. From her middle period on, however, she began to use them more, and

her recent recordings have increasingly featured her sidemen and guest horn players. The contrast in Sound that results from the timbre of each new soloist tends to reinforce the structural function of the chorus, despite the fact that entrances occasionally dovetail over chorus beginnings and endings.

Despite the importance of the chorus, in the middle dimension a shorter harmonic module tends to prevail. Within each chorus of a thirty-two-bar AABA or ABAB' song form, the repetition of a specific chord progression occurs frequently, usually at eight- or sixteen-bar intervals. These repetitions thus establish the eight-bar phrase as the primary harmonic module in the middle dimension, especially in ballads, when musicians sometimes solo for half or a quarter of the chorus. Repetitions in the melody and song lyrics during the head generally reinforce this harmonic feature of the music's Shape.

In Carter's arrangement of "The Good Life" from 1988, for example, the instrumental solos last for the first half of the second chorus, and then Carter reenters for the latter half of this chorus. Within the first half of the second chorus, Carter introduces some asymmetry, however, for the piano solo occupies twelve measures of the original Harmony, and the tenor saxophone occupies four.

The tonicization of secondary keys happens mainly in the bridge (the "B" section of a 32-bar AABA) or in the "B" sections of ABAB' forms; but, often it occurs at other times

in a tune as well. This creates the immediate effect of directional activity in the middle dimension. Such passages act as specific temporal-harmonic landmarks, which indicate where (or, rather, when) the musicians are in the timing cycle, in addition to creating tonal contrast and movement. For this reason, they tend to characterize the tune, and arrangements rarely modify these critical moments.

In the changes to "I Could Write A Book," for example, two harmonic moves in the middle dimension give the song's tonal movement its particular quality. The first leads through moves to the ii (A minor) in m.7, the vi (E minor) in m.9, and the iii (B minor) in m.12, to a tonicization of the dominant in mm.15-16 via secondary dominants falling through the circle of fifths. The second occurs in the tune's latter half, when the moves to ii and vi now lead instead to the IV (C major) in m.28, thus preparing us for the harmonic closure at m.31. That all of Carter's versions include references to these tonal movements demonstrates their structural significance in the changes.

The middle dimension is the most beneficial one in which to consider the harmonic aspect of Carter's lines. At this level of harmonic activity, Carter creates phrases within the scales that correspond to the local harmonic region. Thus, in the above description, her lines reflect the broad tonal moves created by the Harmony. (See Chart 1.)

Harmony and extended Shape

In her middle period, Carter started to explore extending her arrangements, most notably by modifying the head-chorus structure in a variety of ways. Her experiments with extended Shape began as early as 1969, in her arrangement of "Surrey with the Fringe on the Top," which lasts over eight minutes. The arrangement creates three large sections by using lyrics over the first two choruses, scat over the second two choruses, and then dispensing with the tune's changes. After singing the lyrics once, fairly closely to the original tune, she sings them again, now with a new line which is energized, in part, by its differences from the original. Next, she scats while the bass alone outlines the changes for the third chorus, with momentary exclamations from piano and drums (in an instrumentation reminiscent of her first chorus). The latter instruments join in for a climactic fourth chorus, which ends with the turnaround getting thrice repeated to make a codetta to this segment of her solo. At this point, less than a third of the way through the performance, Carter proceeds to scat on repetitions of the two measure turnaround and continues to do so for over five more minutes! Freed now from the constraints that such harmonic landmarks as a bridge imposes on a soloist, Carter gives her solo Shape and Movement via dynamic, melodic and rhythmic means. Passages of her composition "Sounds/Movin' On" also use a turnaround progression in a similar way.

To improvise on the turnaround is to dispense with whatever sense of middle dimension tonal movement the changes afford. Carter has several other ways in which she suspends our sense of directional movement. In several versions of her composition "Open the Door," for example, she extends the introduction by having the rhythm section vamp on the tonic chord. Her tune "With No Words," consists of a single chord root, elaborated upon by changes in the chord quality. Her ballad tempos are occasionally so slow that the chords seem nearly to dissociate from one another, and almost lose their tonal function in the chord progression. In such moments the chord becomes suspended in time, and functions locally as a drone, against which Carter superposes linear movement. On a textural level, the harmonic function is replaced by a wash of color against which Carter uses her voice to paint a passing flicker of light.

Harmony in the small dimension

In making an arrangement, the most significant ways that a musician can exercise control over the tune's Harmony, and thus personalize her version of a song, occur in the small dimension. In addition to devising voicings which increase or decrease the tension and color of the original Harmony, she does this by adding or removing ornamental harmonic movement. The coloristic use of harmonies borrowed from modes and keys other than tonic are sometimes already present in a tune's changes, and offer interesting possibilities to

the improviser; however, musicians generally introduce chord substitutions or passing chords into their arrangements, or omit certain chords, in effect finding new harmonic routes to the tune's primary destinations. Harmonic insertions can serve the function of marking significant points in the timing cycle with local changes of harmonic color, but they also act to influence Movement both by quickening the harmonic rhythm and by disrupting our expectations. While omitting ornamental harmonies can also disrupt the expectations of those who know the song in its original form, it has the converse affect on Movement in the small dimension by slowing the harmonic rhythm.

In bebop, the prevailing harmonic module in common time, which establishes the harmonic rhythm in the small dimension, is normally the half-note. Carter makes frequent use of a rhythmic technique in jazz which alters this norm. Referred to by various writers as "long meter"⁷ and "a two-tiered effect,"⁸ but generally called "double time" by jazz musicians, other musicians also use the technique, which works in the following way. When the rhythm section double times, the tempo of the rhythmic continuum doubles in relation to the prevailing harmonic module. Whereas a single measure of 4/4 in the old tempo may have originally contained two chords (one per half note), two measures in a new tempo (now twice as fast) each contain one chord. While the tempo

⁷ Martin Williams, The Jazz Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 76.

⁸ Schuller, The Swing Era, 523-24

has now increased, the rate of harmonic change has in fact decreased relative to the meter, and the prevailing harmonic module has therefore lengthened. During the course of her career Carter has come to use this technique with flexibility and inventiveness.

In Carter's own compositions, her characteristic harmonic rhythm has less regularity than standards do, which often makes the determination of a consistent harmonic module difficult. "Open the Door," for example, begins with a vamp on the tonic harmony. This helps create the transition from the tune's beginning to the end of the introduction, setting the stage for Carter's entrance. In each successive version of this song, the introduction is extended, which heightens the sense of movement that is created when the Harmony changes to the ii7 chord. At the beginning of the chorus, the harmony changes every four measures. By the end of the song, the harmonic rhythm has regularized and increased to one chord per measure. Its descending chromatic bass line leads to the tonic, reinforcing our sense of imminent closure.

Carter rarely adds passing chords in either her arrangements or in the harmonic implications of her lines. A rare exception occurs in mm. 39-40 of her scat chorus in "You're Driving Me Crazy." (See transcription 7 in Appendix II.) Instead, she reveals her sensitivity to the ways in which Harmony can increase or decrease Movement, by using static tonal areas to create lulls, which amplify the ensuing

harmonic movement. She uses the tonic harmony in this way in "Open the Door," and in "Sounds/Movin' On."

At times she also simplifies the changes, in order to reduce Movement. In her 1979 arrangement of "I Could Write A Book" (the bottom three lines of the chart) she exaggerates the move to the vi in m.9 by stretching out the ii⁰/vi-V⁷/vi. The A minor chord in m.7 smoothes the transition to vi, by pivoting between its role as the ii of G major and the iv of E minor. The way her line moves through mm.6-7, which differs significantly from her preceding versions, makes sense in harmonic terms, for here, she avoids the 5 of the scale. During her scat choruses, she emphasizes her arrivals on ii in m.7, on vi in m.9 and on iii in m.12 by arriving on the roots of each chord. By reinforcing these secondary tonalities in her line, Carter increases our sense of having moved away from the tonic; and, by forcing us to wait from m.5 to m.16 for the dominant, she heightens the drama of the return to I in m.17. Her lines at mm.16-17 (79a and 79b) take advantage of this release of tension by descending to the root of the tonic chord. When she sings the word "forget," in m.16 of the third chorus (79c), she leaves a flat-9th hanging over the dominant harmony, thus using the unresolved dissonance of the e-flat to sustain the tension through the cadence here, releasing it at the start of the next vocal phrase.

In her late period, Carter has exercised more control over voicings and melodic figuration in her accompaniments,

as the songs "Look What I Got" and "Thirty Years" demonstrate. Her 1982 arrangement of "Social Call" begins with a harmonically static introduction, which comes back later in the arrangement. Its tonal ambiguity produces an unsettling lull, which resolves when each chorus begins.

Soloing on changes

Andre Hodeir has made a useful distinction between two of the ways in which a jazz soloist may treat an improvisation: the first, a paraphrase solo, "retains definite melodic affinities with the theme phrase [i.e. the head] from which it springs;"⁹ while the second, a chorus phrase solo, "is a kind of free variation, which gets away from [the head] completely."¹⁰ While the first procedure beckons us to hear the soloist's contribution as elaborations upon the original melody, the second procedure transfers the structural weight of the improvisation from the tune's melody to the tune's Harmony.¹¹

⁹ Hodeir, Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence, 144-45.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Thus, one of the ways that we make sense of a chorus phrase involves shifting our attention from the head (as a point of reference), to the changes (as a source of structure). In this sense, the moment that we stop comparing what we are hearing to the head is a critical one.

Theorists such as David Chevan (in an unpublished paper presented informally at the CUNY Graduate School and University Center in 1990) and Henry Martin (in his forthcoming book) have explored relationships between the head and the chorus phrase, in an effort to establish a deeper connection between the two. Their work suggests that Hodeir's distinction may be one of degree rather than one of kind. Whether or not such a connection may be demonstrated, however, does not alter the fact that, unlike the chorus

While a tune's changes can play a strong role in lending a solo Shape, the small dimension harmonic rhythm of a tune will only influence the flow of melodic events to the extent that it limits a soloist's options with regard to pitch. Stated differently, in order to play on the changes, a soloist must display some degree of responsiveness to the Harmony. The common distinction made between vertical and horizontal tendencies in soloing is relevant here, for it offers us a scale with which to measure a player's responsiveness to the changes. On the vertical end of the scale is Coleman Hawkins, whose solos frequently arpeggiate the changes; on the horizontal end of the scale is Lester Young, whose solos often have a linear quality.¹² The way in which a musician handles dissonance, often called "tensions," is a factor in locating Carter's approach on this scale.¹³ Through Charlie Parker's innovations, bebop ostensibly increased the number of acceptable pitch choices for

phrase, the paraphrase sustains its affinity to the tune so much that it always bears a noticeable likeness to the head.

¹² Singers tend to take a horizontal approach when improvising. This may account for why Lester Young's approach sounds so vocal.

¹³ Steven Strunk has stated that, over the course of jazz history, the distinction between dissonance and consonance has become blurred. (Strunk, "Harmony," 486.) The use of chord extensions, poly-chords and other classifications of dissonance have increased a soloist's options by expanding the harmonic vocabulary of jazz; but, in using the term "tensions" to describe these techniques, the musicians acknowledge that increasing the density and complexity of a chord affects the music's vertical tension. The musicians may have arrived at the expression "tensions" by shortening the term "chord ex(tensions);" but this derivation seems less likely than the obvious one.

soloists, by further freeing the treatment of dissonance from western European rules of tonal voice-leading.

Carter tends toward the horizontal side of the spectrum, for, as we will see when we consider her melodic approach, horizontal considerations determine her pitch choices in the small dimension more than vertical ones do. This is demonstrated by the internal repetitions of her line, which lead her to restate pitches over different harmonies, and thus reinterpret the same pitches in relation to a new root. Notice how this operates in the following passages on Chart 1: 1979B, mm.5-6; mm.16-17; mm.18-19; mm.31-32; 1979C, mm.10-11.

Carter's horizontal approach to improvising offers one explanation for her tendency to reduce harmonic movement. Suspending the motion towards a tonal goal frees her to emphasize the play of melodic designs, and to musically dramatize the lyrics through melodic direction and contour. LaRue's remark, that Wagner avoids tight, independent harmonic structure because for him, "Harmony generates feeling controlled by changing dramatic situations" rather than abstract structure,¹⁴ is helpful in understanding Carter's approach in this regard.

Her horizontal approach may also explain why the large proportion of her repertoire does not contain tunes which depend upon complex harmonic movement for their effect. Such tunes show off a vertical approach best. Of her entire

¹⁴ LaRue, Guidelines, 51.

repertoire, "Body and Soul," and "All the Things You Are" may entail the most complex use of Harmony.

Carter's harmonic vocabulary

The control that Carter exercises over dissonance demonstrates the attention that she gives to the vertical aspect of her line. She sometimes anticipates pitches in the forthcoming chord, which indicates that she is able to listen ahead of the changes. In m.28 of "I Could Write a Book" (see 1979B on Chart 1), she sings E-flat against a C major chord, in anticipation of the following F7. Note that this pitch figured prominently at the parallel moment in her 1969 version of this tune. (See 1969A on Chart 1.)

The way Carter's vocal line relates to the changes in the small scale is conservative by today's standards, and, in this respect, she reveals her allegiance to bebop. Aside from rare instances, such as the transition between the first and second choruses of "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" (1982), one can always hear her pitch choices in direct relation to the chord root and the tonality at any given point in her music. In the rare cases when this does not apply, her use of atonality and extreme dissonance serves to illustrate a particular lyric. In "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" (1982) it evokes the lunacy that the moon induces; and, in "Girl Talk" (1970), it mimics the jive chatter of "dames."

Although Carter does not strive for harmonic originality, she will resolve vertical tension in unpredictable ways. The unusual dissonances which do occasionally occur in her lines generally result from the use of a melodic formula, or "lick," such as a diatonic or chromatic line superimposed upon the changes.

As Chart 1 shows, Carter makes ample use of chord extensions in her vocal line, especially when she seeks to increase Movement at phrase beginnings and endings; however, she generally stays close to the primary chord tones: root, 3rd and 5th. She emphasizes the root and the 5th of chords more frequently than one might expect, but generally over harmonies other than tonic. Carter tends to gravitate towards the major 7th of the tonic harmony at the beginning of a song, (compare mm.1-4 in all of the versions in Chart 1 except 1979B),¹⁵ and the ninth of the chord at the end (compare the endings of the 1969 and 1979 versions). Against the tonic harmony she also emphasizes the 6th, especially in pentatonic melodic gestures (1979B, m.19.) She also emphasizes the sharp-9th which generally slides up to the 10th, or down to the natural-9th, and the flat-5th sliding down to the 4th in blues/gospel gestures. Similarly, on the subdominant she will emphasize the flat-7th and the sharp-9th; and on the dominant, the 13th, the flat-13th, (or sharp-5th, depending on how she proceeds from it) the sharp-9th and

¹⁵ Carter's fondness for this tune may stem from the emphasis the original line gives to the 7th degree of the scale.

the flat-9 of the dominant. Less frequently does she use altered extensions on secondary dominants. She uses the flat-5th of the dominant less frequently than most beboppers for whom this dissonance became a trademark. Against the ii7 chord she sometimes emphasizes the 11th, in anticipation of the dominant, but, if she uses the 11th against a major chord (usually the tonic or the dominant) it occurs in a lick that moves directly to the 3rd of the chord, with the root soon to follow. (1979C, m.4; 1979B, m.31-32.)

The implications of Carter's approach to Harmony

In Carter's early period, Hodeir's distinction between paraphrase and chorus phrase takes the form of her own discrimination between singing lyrics, and singing scat. We know that, by 1948, Carter had so effectively established her ability to sing scat that Hampton hired her exclusively for this purpose. When she wanted to sing lyrics, Hampton would not let her, and, she ultimately quit the band over this dispute. Significantly, she did not attach much importance to her one foray into vocalise, on the tune "Red Top." Although she got to sing King Pleasure's lyrics to it, she did not have much freedom to embellish upon Gail Brockman's trumpet line. This evidence suggests that Carter initially heeded the singer's traditional roles, which consisted mainly of personalizing the rendition of a song by ornamenting the original tune, and occasionally inserting a chorus of scat.

Her 1955 rendition of the standard, "I Could Write A Book," illustrates this point well, for it stays fairly close to the original melody. Carter back-phrases as much as a half note at times, (see mm.10-11, mm.14-15, mm.26-27 and mm. 30-31) although delays of an eighth note predominate. Occasionally she anticipates instead of back-phrasing. Billie Holiday explored back-phrasing as a means of creating swing while singing lyrics, by syncopating the timing of certain words, or whole phrases.¹⁶ Carter has acknowledged Holiday's importance, and we can hear her influence in Carter's early approach to back-phrasing. From a harmonic perspective, the delayed timing of certain pitches in backphrasing introduces fleeting dissonances with the changes. The F-sharp m.9, for example, creates an accented passing tone.

In Carter's later recordings from this period, however, we can hear her begin to explore the threshold of Hodeir's distinction. Towards the end of her early period, and into the next, Carter often dispensed with the original tune for increasingly longer passages, in order to underline the emotion of the lyrics, and as noted earlier, to amplify the arrangement's growth. In locating the bulk of these

¹⁶ In an unpublished paper on Holiday's approach to time, entitled "Billie Holiday's Rubato: Toward an Analysis of Rhythmic Expressivity," Hao Huang and Rachel Vetter of Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado, convincingly argue that an underlying regularity in Holiday's phrases implies a slower tempo, but one related proportionally to that of the rhythm section. The paper was presented at the College Music Society National Convention in New Orleans in October 1987. Lewis Porter alerted me to the work of Huang and Vetter.

excursions from the original tune in the second chorus, Carter operated within the same conventions as Sarah Vaughan and Ella Fitzgerald. Her 1960 recording The Modern Sound of Betty Carter provides many salient examples of this, and her renditions of "Mean to Me" and "Stormy Weather" (not transcribed here) come immediately to mind. Carter may have felt especially motivated to go way beyond the original tunes in these cuts because of the strong associations they have with Sarah Vaughan and Lena Horne.

By the end of her middle period, Carter had completed a transition in her approach to tunes that, perhaps more than any other aspect of her singing, has come to define her style to the present time. This approach entails a virtual disregard for the original tune, and a greater inclination than any other singer to create an entirely new line while singing lyrics.¹⁷ The final chorus of "I Could Write A Book" from 1979 (see 1979C on Chart 1.), reveals how little of the original tune she had come to retain by that time. Her placement of the lyrics in the phrase shows that backphrasing plays a role in this transformation. More recently, in her performance of "You Go to My Head" (not transcribed) from her 1993 recording, It's Not About the Melody,¹⁸ she back-phrased as much as two measures behind the changes. In order to backphrase this much and sing on the changes, she had no choice but to rework the original melody entirely. This fact

¹⁷ Some singers, such as Carmen McRae and Lorez Alexandria, have approached Carter's inventiveness in this regard.

combined with the effect of hearing lyrics as much as two full measures later than usual, moved the tune beyond recognition.

The degree and type of control that Carter has exercised over the musical elements, including Harmony, has varied with respect to each of the roles she has filled. The traditional role of singer gave her much fewer musical options than the role of improviser, and she gradually relinquished the former in favor of the latter. From this standpoint, her development away from simply paraphrasing a tune's melody toward improvising chorus phrases on the tune's changes takes on cultural significance, for it represents her greatest challenge to the conventions of jazz singing, and at least partially accounts for her slow acceptance. While other singers have explored improvising while singing lyrics, generally we hear their vocal lines as paraphrases, rather than as chorus phrases. In the late 1950s, Sarah Vaughan had been known to solo while singing the lyrics, especially in the out chorus, but she did not exploit this approach as systematically as Carter came to do. Carter's path seems a logical one to have taken in light of her admiration of jazz instrumentalists.

I will speculate that Carter's exposure to one particular instrumentalist during the 1950s and early 1960s had a significant impact on her approach to Harmony, as both an arranger and a soloist. In several performances of the

song "My Funny Valentine"¹⁸ from this time, for example, Miles Davis probed the boundary between paraphrase and chorus phrase. By 1964 he had stretched the connection so far that one can hear only fragmentary references to the original tune amidst long passages in which he solos, and we ultimately never hear the melody of "My Funny Valentine" in its entirety.

In addition, certain of Carter's harmonic procedures which originated in her middle period bring to mind Davis' work from this time especially his modal experiments. In "If I Were A Bell," from 1956, Davis extended the arrangement by improvising over the standard turnaround progression (|I vi |iii V) as Carter would later do in "Surrey with the Fringe on Top."¹⁹ Davis explored the suspension of tonal movement in other ways as well. In such tunes as "So What," Davis revealed his willingness to discard local harmonic activity in the middle dimension. From the end of the bridge, which itself consists of eight measures of essentially E-flat minor Harmony, to the beginning of the bridge in the next chorus, soloists must improvise for a total of twenty-four measures (or, three eight-measure phrases) using a D-dorian scale. His innovations spawned other modal experiments, such as

¹⁸ Howard Brofsky, "Miles Davis and 'My Funny Valentine': The Evolution of a Solo," Black Music Research Journal, 23-45. Miles Davis, My Funny Valentine: Miles Davis in Concert (Columbia, CS 9106; recorded at Philharmonic Hall on 12 February 1964).

¹⁹ Musicians commonly refer to this way of extending an arrangement as the "Sonny Stitt turnaround." Lewis Porter, telephone conversation with the author.

Freddy Hubbard's "Little Sunflower," and Coltrane's "My Favorite Things," both of which probably influenced Carter's work. Coltrane experimented further with the abandonment of middle dimension harmonic movement in his original compositions; but, even in his arrangement of standards he minimized harmonic Movement. His arrangement of "Body and Soul," for example, replaces the chords in the first four measures with tonally static Harmony. The introduction to Carter's 1982 arrangement of "Social Call" suspends Movement in a similar way.

Chapter 4: Melody

Jan LaRue restricts his use of the term Melody to apply to "the profile formed by any collection of pitches." In excluding Rhythm from his consideration of Melody, he defies the accepted definition of Melody. In The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music, for example, Willi Apel asserts that "[melody] by its very nature . . . cannot be separated from rhythm To consider melody and rhythm as separate or even as mutually exclusive elements - as is often done - is misleading. If a distinction between these two elements is desired, the proper terms are motion and rhythm. . . . [Motion results] from the difference of pitches (high-low) . . . in a melody."¹

Each author qualifies his position. On one hand, LaRue concedes that "melodic patterns tend to coincide with rhythmic patterns."² Apel, on the other hand, makes reference to the distinction between pitch and duration. In considering these latter aspects of music separately, as they manifest themselves in Melody and Rhythm, LaRue's usage enables us to consider the separate impact of each upon style. By simplifying Melody in this way, LaRue's approach allows for the combination of motion and rhythm as one of several possible interactions. For example, with LaRue's

¹ Willi Apel and Ralph T. Daniel, The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960; 16th printing, 1974), 174 and 183-84.

² LaRue, Guidelines, 103.

approach we can account for the oft noted way that Charlie Parker accents the highest pitches of his melodic profiles through the interaction of Melody with Sound (specifically, dynamics).

In jazz, the interactions of Melody with other elements, play a crucial role in the musician's generative process. When successfully formed, the melodic line of the jazz soloist can communicate a change of groove to the rhythm section, through the line's contour rhythm (in which the regular repetition of a melodic profile can generate a sense of metric grouping). As we have seen in our discussion of Sound, certain registers, and even specific pitches, produce distinct shadings of tone-color and dynamic level. The use of extreme registers therefore has timbral, as well as melodic, implications (as in the case of Coltrane's use of extreme ranges in his late work). We will consider this aspect of Carter's music under large dimension Melody.

The interaction of elements may at times make it difficult to decide which element serves a structural function and which serves an ornamental function, especially in jazz where such distinctions do not have as much weight as in classical music. Does timbre serve merely an ornamental function in the solos of Bubber Miley, for example? The fact that a jazz musician may have spent years developing a sound indicates that timbre holds an important place in the jazz aesthetic. LaRue's emphasis upon Growth helps us to address this problem by revealing how each element contributes to

Shape and to Movement. Without a timbral scale to help us quantify changes in tone color, we will always have difficulty pinning down this elusive element of music; however, LaRue offers us a terminology with which to begin making difficult distinctions.

LaRue's concern about Growth leads to another idiosyncrasy of his definition of Melody. Unlike Apel, who describes melody as "a succession of musical tones,"³ LaRue leaves open the question of whether or not the profile of Melody occurs in- or out-of-time. Thus, while Apel incorporates the unfolding of the melody's profile in time into his definition, LaRue reserves this aspect of melody until his consideration of Movement. This additional simplification of the standard definition of Melody provides us with the flexibility to account for the ways that Melody contributes to Shape as well as to Movement.

General aspects of Carter's lines

Melody and Rhythm are important elements in Carter's music, as they are in all jazz improvisation, because she exerts more direct control over these elements than over others. The significance of Melody in jazz, and its interaction with Rhythm, comes from the emphasis jazz places upon soloing, which tends to put all the other elements in relation to the soloist's line. Despite the independence of each instrument's role, and the complexity it lends to the

³ Ibid., 174.

music's texture, the predominance of melody/accompaniment textures in bebop-based jazz reaffirms the significance of Melody in this style. In Carter's case, the study of her lines' melodic aspects is especially important, due to her horizontal approach to improvisation.

Several aspects of Carter's lines have already come under consideration in our discussion of Harmony. In that chapter, we considered the vertical aspects of Carter's melodic lines. We also saw there that during the first half of Carter's career, she observed the distinction between singing lyrics and singing scat. In the former genre she did this by referring to the given melodic material (paraphrase). In the latter genre she did this by inventing an original line (or chorus phrase).

From the late 1950s on, however, Carter's paraphrases have increasingly departed from the tune, and during the latter half of her career, the use of chorus phrase has come to dominate the approach she takes with all of her singing. The successive performances in Chart 1 (pp. 265a-e) illustrate this point well. The increased flexibility of Carter's later approach frees her to solo when singing lyrics, as well as when singing scat. While both genres use chorus phrase, however, the additional constraint that lyrics impose upon the singer lead the lines Carter improvises with lyrics to differ in significant ways from those she improvises with scat syllables.

Carter's increasing tendency over the course of her career to alter the original line and, eventually, hardly to anchor her vocal lines at all to their melodic sources, has both structural and aesthetic implications. As Carter's lines decreasingly came to resemble the Melodies of her given material, she made the listener's recognition of derived materials less important to his experience of her music than his capacity to follow her own melodic logic and expression. As a result, she has come to rely more upon internal musical consistency than upon reference to music external to her performance. This may explain why some writers have described her music as abstract.

Melodic recognition is an important aspect of the jazz aesthetic, however, and it occurs in all dimensions. The listeners' recognition of derived material gives a particular rendition of a tune, or a particular moment in a solo, a context in the musical culture, and therefore plays an important role in the experience of a jazz performance. In the large dimension, the head usually consists of given material, coming as it often does from the repertoire of jazz standards. In the middle and small dimensions, all solos make use of melodic formulas, or "licks," in varying degrees. Some licks are so well known that they have become the common property of every jazz musician. Such licks provide the currency in the jazz marketplace of musical ideas, and in order to buy a place in the musical culture, a player must have a thorough knowledge of them. A musician may also make

a passing reference to other sources, including standards other than the one on which she is soloing, classical melodies such as opera arias or symphonic themes, commercial jingles, and themes from television shows.⁴

Given the importance of tune recognition in the jazz aesthetic, Carter's increasing disregard for the head as a point of reference poses a challenge to the listener's need for familiarity. In addition, the head in a jazz arrangement has a stabilizing effect for several reasons besides its familiarity, especially in the large dimension. Any repetition of the head, such as its recurrence in the out-chorus, reinforces its fixed nature in contrast to the solos. In so doing, it generates Shape by resolving the tension and uncertainty that results from small dimensional Movement created by the solos. The fact that bebop musicians often perform the head in unison also contributes to its stabilizing affect by reinforcing its predictability. Classical composers have used melodic recognition similarly, as a way of signaling the return to the tonic at the beginning of the recapitulation in a sonata-allegro form.

Since the 1940s, under the influence of Sarah Vaughan, some jazz singers have experimented with using the out-chorus as an opportunity to create a new line while singing the

⁴ While some feel that such quotations mar a solo by damaging its internal structure, the ability to insert a quote reflects a certain kind of virtuosity that the jazz aesthetic validates. As pointed out earlier, unlike Ella Fitzgerald, whose scat solos are rife with quotations, Betty Carter does not quote. This provides further evidence of her impulse to seek internal logic to her solos.

lyrics. As in a standard return of the head, the return of both the vocal timbre and the lyrics rounds out the song's Shape; but the Melody itself now contributes more to Movement than to Shape by eschewing the stabilizing affect that a literal return of the head would provide. Vaughan occasionally took such an approach during the head, even as early as the second A section. During the 1950s she could count on the audience's prior knowledge, especially with such well-known tunes as "Honeysuckle Rose," in much the way Coleman Hawkins did with "Body and Soul." This suggests that an audience's prior experience with a repertoire is a factor in giving a particular performance Shape. Of course, Louis Armstrong had substantially reshaped the tune in the opening vocal chorus of his recordings early in his career. In fact, as a vocalist, he took a more distinctive approach in the 1930s than he did in the 1950s.

In the middle dimension, the Melody of the head helps to establish the temporal boundaries of the chorus as a whole, and the internal articulations that mark its sections. The internal repetitions of a melodic line in a 32-bar AABA or ABAB' form further reinforce the fixed nature of the head, and provide the listener with a grasp of its phrase structure.

Such repetitions can often give the song a trite predictability reminiscent of a commercial "jingle," by reinforcing the rhyme scheme of the lyrics, and they help to make the tune accessible and memorable. In fact, the Shape

of most tunes emphasizes the music over the lyrics, occasionally to such a degree as to place musical logic over linguistic logic. Until Oscar Hammerstein II's innovations in the musical theater, the manner of collaboration between composers and lyricists reinforced this tendency. Many of the show tunes that serve as raw materials for jazz were written at a time when the music was composed before the lyrics.⁵ The best lyrics conceal any evidence of this procedure by matching word to tune so ingeniously as to suggest that they were conceived at the same time.

Nevertheless, the aspects of music that generate Shape often tend to work against the ways in which the lyrics can provide Movement, by articulating the flow in ways that speech normally does not. From Bessie Smith on, jazz singers have sought to reassert the primacy of the rhythms and intonations of speech against the structure of song forms. Critics who decry the triviality of a song's lyrics do not recognize that its musical Shape may trivialize them. This may explain why Billie Holiday could turn "dross to gold," for her renditions often affirm the power of the word (or, more accurately, the

⁵ The practice of using "trunk tunes," or unearthing songs that had been put aside from an earlier production and changing the lyrics to suit the new dramatic situation, was widespread on Tin Pan Alley. But it even continued at least until Stephen Sondheim's collaboration on Gypsy with Jule Styne. Hammerstein himself remarked that "the lyrics for most of the popular songs and musical comedies in our country are written after the music." He goes on to add that, until his collaboration with Richard Rodgers he had always written this way. Oscar Hammerstein, II, Lyrics (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Books, 1985), 4-5. Hammerstein continues this brief but instructive passage by speculating about how this practice came about.

sentence, which has its own characteristic rhythms and inflections), as a controlling feature of a vocal performance.

Carter drew from Holiday's inspiration in this respect, and from Vaughan's with regard to inventing chorus phrases while singing lyrics, and followed them to their logical conclusion. Carter's mature approach to singing lyrics lends a through-composed quality to her lines which undermines the regularity of articulations and repetitions built into most tunes. While some of this results from her phrasing against the barline and the four-bar phrase division, her avoidance of exact repetitions of melodic material from one A section to the next also contributes to this effect, and increases the sense of Movement in her music.

This Movement has consequences upon the reading of the lyric, for it amplifies the emotional development of the lyric's narrative. In fact, Carter's approach grows from her concern that her performance work on a dramatic level and thus it tends to shift our attention away from the music and towards the words. In many cases, her phrasing repairs the logic of the language that the original Melody damaged. When Carter speaks of "improving" her material, a statement which can easily sound presumptuous when referring to the work of Cole Porter, Jerome Kern and others, I believe Carter means that her approach creates a more effective union of word and music. Carter's divergence from a tune often involves placing the climax at some point other than when it occurs in

the original version. This will also alter the meaning of the lyrics, by emphasizing words not emphasized in the original version. Certainly for her own purposes, Carter's reworking of her material gives her a better vehicle for expressing her reading of the lyric, thus enabling her to "act her part" more convincingly than a straight reading would.⁶ One only needs to imagine another singer faithfully reproducing Carter's version of a particular song to understand how deeply she personalizes her given material.

Large dimension Melody

Two factors influence Carter's approach to large dimension Melody: the placement of her songs in the set, and the length of her arrangements. Changes over the course of her career in her approach to large dimension Melody result partly from the role these factors have played in her music.

In her early period Carter did not exercise control over the large dimension, because she herself was not structuring the sets or arrangements. In her earliest work, when she sang single scat choruses for Lionel Hampton's band, she generally had less than a minute to show what she could do. When she began to record as a leader, each song averaged three minutes in length; and none of them lasted more than five minutes. These recordings document a sampling of the repertoire she used when singing on package tours, in

⁶ I focus on this particular issue in my article "Billie Holiday and Betty Carter: Emotion and Style in the Jazz Vocal Line."

showcases or sitting in. The wide vocal range of the up-tempo numbers enabled her to display her virtuosity, especially on scat solos, in a dramatically short time. At this time in her career, she could afford to expend her entire arsenal of vocal pyrotechnics in a single number because she did not usually have to sustain the audience's interest, or pace herself, for an entire set. When she did sing lyrics, her subtle alterations of the original tune had no significant large dimensional impact, beyond the choice to sing in a particular key and register.

Serious consideration of Carter's approach to large dimension Melody therefore begins with her middle period. In the early 1960s, when she began to take charge of her career, her recordings suggest that her approach to Melody changed accordingly. As she learned how to program her material effectively for whole sets, her sensitivity to the expressive potential of certain registers increased. By placing a portion of a song, or a whole song, within a limited range, Carter reserved other registers for emotional, timbral and melodic contrast.

The choice of key for an arrangement situates the vocal line in a particular tessitura. This registration of the tune contributes strongly to the overall character of the rendition, which affects the reading of the lyrics. In "I Could Write A Book" (1979) the relaxed quality of the performance grows largely from her predominant use of the chalumeau register.

Timbral considerations also influence her use of extreme registers within an arrangement, especially as her lines build to climactic points. The dramatic ascent to high E-flats in her arrangements of "Open the Door" from her middle period (in 1976, at mm.79-80, mm.98-101 and mm.169-72; and in 1979, mm.96-100, mm.114-18), for example, brings her into her clear, head voice, which gives the arrangement a culmination point, while also helping her to penetrate the stronger dynamic of the trio.

As early as the end of the 1960s, Carter had evolved a way of programming her sets so that certain arrangements served specific functions within the set, and this factor influenced their melodic characteristics. Her set closers, for example, which are generally the longest arrangements of the set, tend to display her vocal range more fully than the numbers in between. Such displays give the set a culmination point. Carter's 1969 recording of "Surrey with the Fringe on Top" gives us the first recorded example of the kind of long arrangement oriented towards extended scatting that Carter used as a set closer. In 1972 she recorded "Sounds" and in 1976 "Wagon Wheels," both of which can fill a similar function in the set. Set openers also made use of scatting in imaginative ways such as her arrangements of "I Could Write A Book" (1979) and "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" (1982). Because such opening numbers give her sets a point of departure they rely less upon extreme vocal range and tempo for their effect than her finales do. Carter has more

freedom of choice in her opening number because her trio generally begins the set without her, and she has been known to take the stage singing a ballad.

Generally speaking, stepwise diatonic movement predominates in Carter's melodic lines, and reinforces the horizontal character of her approach. A generally high degree of melodic density therefore prevails, and it has tended to increase as she has matured. Skips and leaps vary the melodic density by decreasing the rate of stepwise connections in a given passage, which intervening pitches now delay. Carter's leaps generally do not create compound melody (as Bobby McFerrin's often do) or illuminate the movement of inner voices (as Louis Armstrong's often do). When Carter does arpeggiate a chord, she often does so to make a transition to a new register. In addition, pentatonic scale segments, flatted scale degrees in blues-based licks and chromatic passages give Carter a means of creating melodic contrast to her largely diatonic vocabulary. A survey of the three renditions of "Open the Door" (Appendix II, transcriptions 10, 14 and 15) reveals how Carter creates contrast in her lines through the controlled use of the half-step.

Without totaling the changes in melodic direction between articulations, we can tell that Carter's melodic lines are characterized by a frequent rising and falling, which contributes to the unpredictable, wave-like quality of her lines. An examination of Carter's lines for peaks and

lows, and how she gets to them, reveals the ways that her pacing of melodic events contributes in the broadest terms to the Movement of an entire arrangement. During her middle period, Carter increased her control over this aspect of her music. The following examples will illustrate this point.

Carter's first version of "Open the Door" (1964), shows a tentative awareness of the potential for large dimension Melody to help sustain the linear tension of an arrangement. She situates the first sixteen bars (mm.13-28) within her low octave, and then moves into her mid-range for the next sixteen (mm.29-44), emphasizing the high B-flat below her break. Her leap up a diminished 4th to the song's highest pitch (a D-flat) initiates the bridge and draws attention to the surprising harmonic move to the flat-III harmony. Over the next eight bars (mm.45-52) Carter descends a tenth to a low B-flat, and the following eight bars (mm.54-60) echo this broad descent, bringing her line to a low G-flat at the end of the bridge. This effectively sets up the return of three distinct elements at m.61: the tonic harmony, the A section (now varied to accommodate new lyrics) and her low octave. In order to signal imminent closure, Carter builds the coda (m.73f) upon a descending root progression, and places it toward the bottom of her mid-range.

Carter's next recording of this song, in 1976, increases the tempo and double-times the meter, which extends each sixteen bar section to thirty-two. While its broad outlines resemble her earlier rendition, certain refinements project

Carter's greater assurance in the use of different registers. She uses her lowest register more effectively as a foil for what immediately follows, as in m.47 where it makes way for the varied A section, or at mm.74-80, and mm.96-100, where it sets up the highest pitches of the performance. In combination with their intensified dynamics (and the relaxed response to it eight bars later), these climaxes give the bridge greater definition than it had in its 1964 guise.

While Carter prepares the high E-flat in mm.169-72 less effectively than its predecessors, she now uses her high register to set up the startling plunge of a ninth to the word "love" in mm.173-75, thus reversing her earlier procedure. In delivering the word "love" in this way, Carter seems to recoil shyly from the expansive statement "I've got," as though she suddenly realized that she didn't want to play all of her cards at once. The gesture has the flirtatious quality of someone coyly diverting her gaze after having announced her amorous feelings. Such gestures add to the irony and complexity of Carter's readings of a lyric. While her closing gestures on the phrase "I've got love," at mm.181-84 and mm.190-93, recall this dramatic passage, they now fall a shorter distance. This fact, and the repetitions of text and melody help to release the tension of the earlier profile on these same words.

Only three years later, but with a different trio, Carter's arrangement of "Open the Door" bears the marks of further refinement and control. It has a generally lower

tessitura and a slightly more restrained quality. A scattered introduction over a vamp on the tonic harmony sets the tone for the whole song by descending to a low E-flat! From this point to the end of the bridge, Carter reserves the bottom of her range for the title phrase, which now descends the scale to a low G-natural (mm.32-35 and mm.68-73). As in earlier versions, her return to this range at the end of the bridge in m.126 sets up the return to the title phrase at mm.132-35 which initiates a varied restatement of the A section.

Carter's withholding of her high pitches provides further evidence of her registrational control, for she has gradually increased the tension through the first A section by saving notes above low E-flat for m.40. By then successively peaking on G-natural in m.45 and A-flat in m.60 she paces a climb that will culminate in the second A section, at the B-flat in m.74, She sustains this culmination for eight measures, until m.81, before pulling back for the bridge, as in the 1976 version. Note in m.96 how she sings the word "how" on the low E-flat, producing an expressive leap of an octave to emphasize the solo's apex.

In an extended coda, beginning at m.196, Carter restores the tonic vamp of the introduction, and returns to her low register, which now has the effect of rounding out the entire Shape of the arrangement. In order to accomplish this she has isolated the occurrence of high E-flats to their climactic appearance in the bridge, and eliminated the further recurrence of this pitch elsewhere. The net effect

is a more integrated structure than her earlier versions, which allows her to phrase the line more freely, and air out the phrases without sacrificing continuity and linear tension.

While the successive recordings of "Open the Door" reveal Carter's increased prowess with regard to large dimension Melody, her placement of a whole phrase or a portion of a phrase at the extremes of her vocal range rarely produces a sense of macroline, and in many ways, Carter's melodic lines seem to discourage the long term connection of melodic events. Frequent changes of melodic direction, the use of irregular phrase lengths and additive phraseology (a term I will come back to), for example, governs the flow of events and tends to promote listening on the local level, and relating each sense unit of the lyrics, or phrase of her scat lines to what immediately precedes or follows them.

The way that sections of Carter's scat solos coalesce around the local repetition of melodic fragments (transient licks) which subsequently get abandoned for fresh material further hinders long term melodic hearing. As in most jazz, the large dimension stability, and hence predictability, of Sound and Harmony leads Carter to rely heavily upon Melody and Rhythm to generate Movement, which hinders the usefulness of these elements as a source of Shape. In this respect, transcriptions of Carter's lines give them a misleading substantiality that, at least initially, eludes the ear, and belies her playful inventiveness with pitch. Because the

melodic organization of Carter's scatting does not contribute significantly to Shape in the large dimension, a Schenkerian or motivic analytic approach would not unearth significant relationships in her music. None of this is meant as a criticism of Carter's music, for she is operating from an aesthetic stance that does not place as great a premium on large-dimensional control as it does on the control over, and responsiveness to, immediate events.

Middle dimension

Within her early scat solos Carter reveals a sensitivity to pitch as a means of creating both registral and tonal points of reference and a long-term sense of Movement. As mentioned in our discussion of Harmony, the eight-bar phrase acts as the module for the middle dimension. Several factors can help us to understand the pacing of Carter's solos, and the ways in which she varies the Movement in them. The following discussion will focus upon how Carter uses the contour rhythm that results from the time between peaks and lows of each phrase as a source of Movement in the middle dimension. While it bears some resemblance to a Schenkerian middle-ground analysis, the focus here is on the melodic turning points themselves rather than linear connections that exist in Carter's melodic line.⁷

⁷ John Graziano has pointed out an important linear movement from A-flat down to E-flat, for example, which serves a different function in the Melody than the Movement from peaks to lows.

Carter sets the stage for her scat solo in "Jaybird," for example, with an introductory lick placed at the top of her chest voice, thus situating it in the strongest place within her entire range, just below her break. In the solo that follows, Carter has the highest peaks fluctuate between C-flat and C-natural. In doing this, she relates her solo harmonically to the head by emphasizing the scale degrees on which the original tune had climaxed in m.23 and again in m.37. Note that while the harmony of "Jaybird" uses the AABA harmonic structure of Gershwin's "[I Got] Rhythm" changes, the melody of the head follows an ABCA format.

In the first eight-bar module, from mm.46-53, Carter creates a rising line from her starting A-flat through peaks on B-flat in m.46 and on C-flat in m.49 (echoed in m.51) to C-natural in m.52. Carter generally increases the pace of this ascent. At first she lingers over a three measure descent to E-flat before suddenly rising to C-flat in a mere half measure, thus spending three-and-a-half measures overall to get to this initial peak. In only two measures time, she echoes the C-flat. A half measure later she climaxes the line on C-natural, thereby completing what amounts to an *accelerando* in contour rhythm.

Each sub-phrase in the following eight measures, mm.54-61, participates in an overall descent which roughly mirrors the ascent of the preceding eight. The response-like quality of the second eight bars, set over the same harmony as the first eight, lends symmetry and balance to the entire sixteen

bars of the solo's first half, despite the irregular phrase lengths. This helps to release the solo's initial burst of energy. Carter saves her lowest pitches in the solo to articulate its mid-point, producing a surprising degree of closure there.

From its lowest ebb, the solo's Movement resumes at the beginning of the bridge with Carter's sudden rise of an octave to a C-natural. Carter resolves this gesture four measures later, when she prepares us for the return to A-flat at the start of the final eight bars (m. 72 downbeat) by descending to B-flat at the upbeat to m.68. With broad oscillations in the final eight bars between C-flat and B-flat, Carter recalls her opening gesture. She finally comes to rest on A-flat in mm.74-77, and her singing in the last four measures of the solo revolves around A-flat and the E-flat below it. With the C-flats in the final eight bars, Carter has answered the prominent C-natural of the bridge, reversing the pattern of the first sixteen measures.

These peaks fall at the top of her chest voice, which adds intensity to them. Following the example of Charlie Parker, Carter also accents her melodic peaks. She accomplishes this with the phoneme /iy/, brightening the sound of all but a few of them (mm.46, 49, 51, 52, etc.). For closure she often relies on the sound of the phoneme /a/ with an added /t/ (/at/ in m.50), /p/ (/ap/ in m.58 and m.60), or without a final consonant (/a/ in m.53, m.55, m.63 and m.78).

The broad melodic gestures of Carter's solo in "Thou Swell" also reveal Carter's instinct for middle dimension pacing of melodic events. Carter ascends a twelfth in the span of one measure from the solo's lowest pitch to A-flat before settling on a lull that alternates between A-flat and A-natural for five measures. A skip up to B-flat interrupts this lull, before the line dramatically falls back to the bottom of her range, again within the span of a measure. The next phrase rises to a C-natural, the solo's highest pitch, and then follows the gentle descent of the original tune through the tonic pentachord on agogically stressed pitches: F-natural, E-flat, D-natural, C-natural, B-flat. Carter substitutes an F-natural for the A-natural leading tone with which the first half of the original tune closes. This F-natural acts as an inverted dominant pedal-point that prepares for the return of the A section. When Carter returns to the original tune and the song's lyrics for the second half of the chorus she stabilizes the end of the rendition.

The scat solo in "You're Driving Me Crazy" brings Carter's lightning quick changes of vocal register to a virtuosic zenith. Starting on a high D-flat, she plunges to the solo's lowest pitch, a thirteenth below, all in the span of two measures. This solo has certain structural similarities to her solo on "Jaybird." As in that solo, she here uses the highest pitches of the first half of the solo to emphasize the natural-[^]3 and flat-[^]3 of the scale (in this

case D-natural and D-flat). She also reserves the bottom of her range for anchoring the closure before the bridge, at m.52 in "You're Driving Me Crazy." At the bridge Carter returns to the natural- $\hat{3}$ in her upper register, now harmonically reinterpreted. While her line here moves freely within the range of an eleventh below this pitch, the peaks descend from $\hat{3}$ (in m.54) to $\hat{2}$ (in m.58), reaching $\hat{1}$ in m.61. Unlike the "Jaybird" solo, a 9-8 appoggiatura resolves over the tonic chord as the changes of the A section return. Here, in contrast to "Jaybird," Carter sweeps climactically up a thirteenth to a high G-natural in m.66 before closing on the $\hat{2}$ of the scale (the ninth of the tonic chord).

Although Carter later modified her way of shaping middle dimension Melody these three examples from her early work reveal a fairly consistent approach. In the latter two examples, an early gesture involving directional movement gets the listener's attention by traversing a wide stretch of her entire compass. A lull that produces local activity via the alternation of two pitches often follows, with which Carter sets up the next directional move. Reserving especially low pitches for major points of articulation, such as at the end of the bridge, allows Carter to build to a subsequent peak, or peaks. Compared with her treatment of Melody in "Open the Door," these early examples reflect the telescoping of melodic Movement into the shorter time span Carter had available to her to solo.

Small dimension

In the small dimension, Carter's lines consist of licks common to all jazz musicians. The respect that she has earned from instrumentalists results partly from her fluency in using the jazz improviser's vocabulary of melodic formulas. This applies especially to her scatting, but, as she has matured, it pertains increasingly to the lines she sings with lyrics as well. The following examples provide an inventory of Carter's licks.

Example 4.1 shows a lick that Carter used almost as a signature during her early period. It emphasizes the flat-3 of the scale, and often entails placing it against the major third of the tonic chord, which gives it a bluesy character. While it resembles a melodic figure from "Dippermouth Blues," Carter probably did not get it from King Oliver. One can find it in "You're Driving Me Crazy" at mm.49-50, in "Babe's

Example 4.1

"Jaybird"



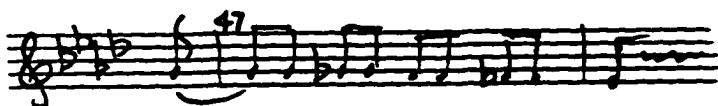
Blues" at mm.69-71, and in "I Could Write A Book" (1969 and 1970) at mm.56-57. From her middle period on one hears it less frequently.

Carter makes use of the bebopper's trademark chromatic descent in various guises throughout her career. Example

4.2a shows one of the four occurrences of this lick in "Jaybird." The unusual persistence of this lick here is probably due to its importance in the original tune, for other melodic figures from the head that Carter uses in this solo do not appear elsewhere in her work. In fact, this solo stands out from her later work for its melodic references to the head. Example 4.2b shows how Carter used the idea in her first recording of "Open the Door," and example 4.3c shows

Example 4.2

a. "Jaybird"



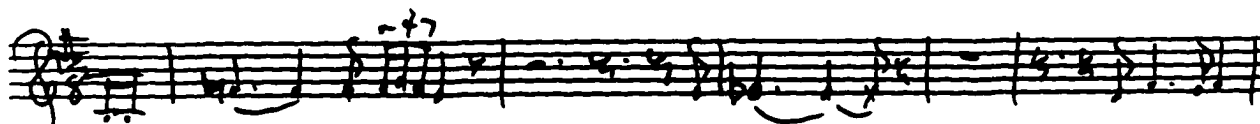
b. "Open the Door" (1964)



c. "Open the Door" (1976)



d. "I Could Write A Book" (1979)



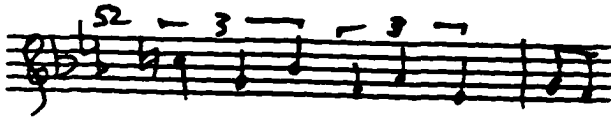
how she modified it in 1976. In her mature work Carter often ornaments the chromatic descent as she did in this latter example. Her 1982 version of "What a Little Moonlight Can Do" (not transcribed) provides an instance of this, in m.29 of her scat chorus. In her 1987 duet with Carmen McRae on "It Don't Mean A Thing (If It 'Ain't Got That Swing)" she built her second chorus (and later phrases) around a descending chromatic figure which elaborates upon an inner voice line (not transcribed).

Carter sometimes limits her unornamented use of the chromatic scale simply to filling a diatonic scale step with a chromatic passing tone, as in the beginning of her scat solo on "Thou Swell." In some instances of this lick she ends a phrase on the passing tone, usually creating a dissonance with the underlying harmony, and delays its resolution until the start of the next phrase. Example 4.2d shows an occurrence of this from "I Could Write a Book" (1979). Carter uses ascending chromatic lines less frequently, but we do find occasional instances of them. At m.76 in "Jaybird" she uses it shortly before bringing the solo to a close. She also uses it at m.4 of "I Could Write a Book."

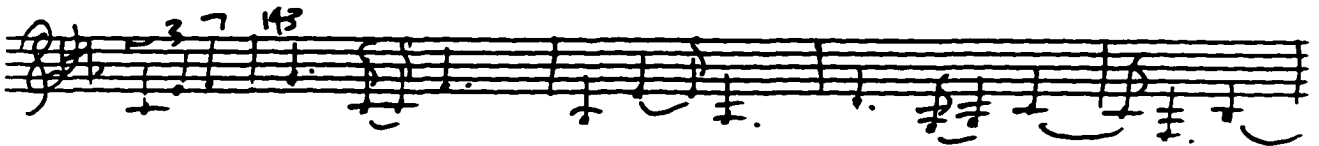
Example 4.3 shows several related figures Carter frequently uses at phrase endings. It consists of a descending diatonic scale, ornamented by downward skips on alternate notes. Carter often combines this lick with a

Example 4.3.

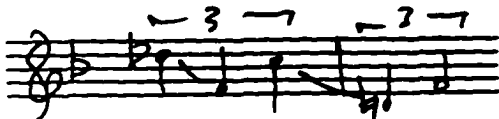
a. "Jaybird"



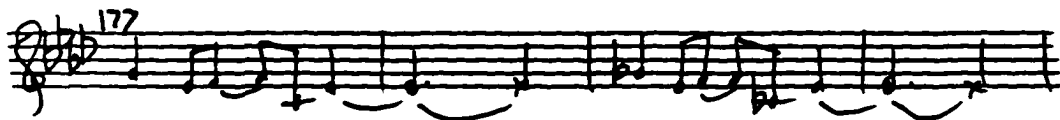
b. "Open the Door" (1979)



c. "Babe's Blues"



d. "Open the Door" (1976)



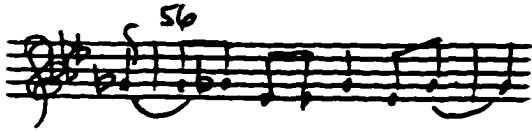
cross-rhythm, using the contour of the line to challenge the prevailing rhythmic continuum, such as the hemiola-like setting it receives in "Jaybird" (example 4.3a). Carter extends this lick for four measures at mm. 143-46 of "Open the Door" (1979) (example 4.3b) and it returns at m.197. The alternating interval may be consistent in size, as in the above examples, or inconsistent, as in examples 4.3c and 4.3d, from "Babe's Blues" and "Open the Door" (1976) respectively.

Carter uses a rocking figure consisting of the alternation of two pitches to create momentary lulls in the melodic activity of the line. Instrumentalists use such figures to evoke the intoning one might hear in a Baptist worship service. Ironically, when Carter uses it in her scat solos, a vocal idiom has "come home" via instrumental practice. In "Jaybird" this figure occurs at m.56 (example 4.4a) and later at mm.64-65 and mm.68-69. Example 4.4b shows an occurrence of this lick in the second chorus of Carter's scat introduction to "I Could Write A Book" (1979). While it often occurs on a minor third, it can also occur on any interval. Her scat solo on "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" (1982) makes use of this lick on the interval of a perfect fourth. Carter uses it on a minor second with lyrics, as in example 4.4c, the climactic passage at mm.49-50 in "I Could Write A Book" (1969 and 1970).

Pentatonic melodic motion occurs often in Carter's lines, and she uses it sometimes to prepare for altered scale degrees to produce a bluesy effect. M.25 of "I Can't Help It" and mm.58-61 of "Babe's Blues" provide examples of this approach. On a few occasions, Carter has used an established lick that grows from the combination of pentatonic motion with altered scale degrees. Example 4.5 shows a related figure, which one can also hear at m.7 of "I Can't Help It." In it, Carter elaborates upon a segment of a pentatonic scale (F-natural, A-flat, B-flat) with chromatic neighboring tones (E-natural to F; C-flat to B-flat).

Example 4.4

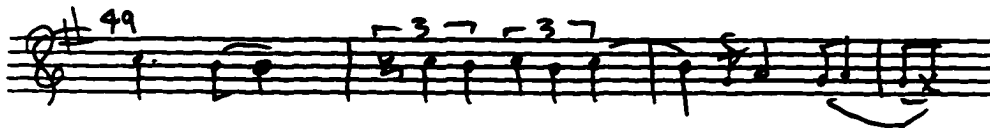
a. "Jaybird"



b. "I Could Write A Book" (1979)



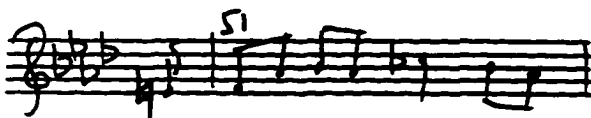
c. "I Could Write A Book" (1969/1970)



I have mentioned Carter's use of the jazz turn before, and its ubiquitousness in her lines reflects the influence of Charlie Parker. The degree to which it pervades Carter's lines may be the single most characteristic feature of her

Example 4.5

"Jaybird"



melodic style. Occasionally, she uses it twice in succession to ornament a stepwise descent. Example 4.6 shows several instances of this.

Example 4.6

a. "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" (1958)



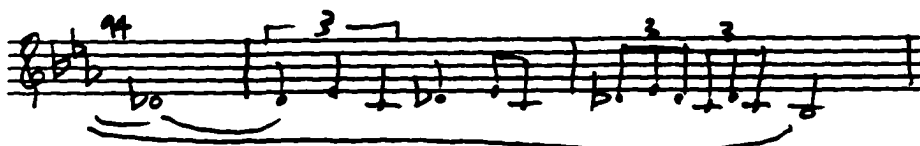
b. "I Could Write A Book" (1969/1970)



c. "I Can't Help It" (1972)



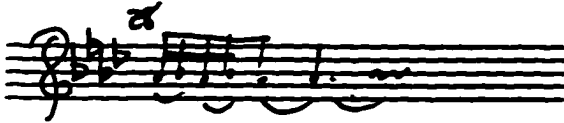
d. "Open the Door" (1976)



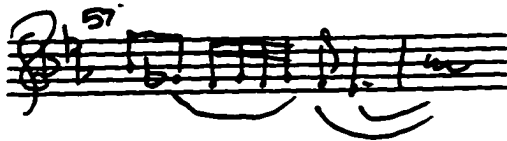
Example 4.7 shows various occurrences of a trill like figure. Her use of this lick occurs as early as her 1962 version of "The Good Life" (example 4.7a). She closes her 1969 and 1970 versions of "I Could Write a Book" with it, at m.68. We hear it in "Open the Door" (1964) at m.57 (example 4.7b). (In her 1976 rendition of this tune an inverted variant of this lick occurs at m.136 and at m.153, but in general this version occurs less frequently.) In "I Can't Help It" (1972), it occurs twice, at m.71 (example 4.7c) and again at m.77. Carter seems to have no particular pattern to

Example 4.7

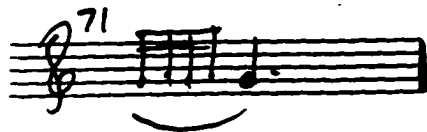
a. "The Good Life" (1962)



b. "Open the Door" (1964)



c. "I Can't Help It" (1972)



its use, other than to give rhythmic excitement to the line.

Example 4.8 shows a related figure, which involves scooping up on repeated pitches, and then falling a second. This figure also appears in her 1969 and 1979 renditions of "I Didn't Know What Time It What" (not transcribed here).

Example 4.8

"The Good Life" (1962)



Another frequent device consists of a descending gesture built of arpeggiated chord tones approached from below with chromatic appoggiaturas. Example 4.9a shows an instance of

this in "Open the Door." Note in this example, as in example 4.2d, that Carter delays the resolution of the non-harmonic tone until the start of the next phrase. She retained this lick in her 1976 version of the song, but modified it when she performed the song in 1979, in part because her backphrasing changed its harmonic environment. In example 4.9b this lick elaborates the descending fourth from B-natural to F-sharp. Her 1982 version of "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" made considerable use of this lick, and it occurs in most of her solos, if only to elaborate upon two chord tones.

Example 4.9

a. "Open the Door" (1964)



b. "I Could Write A Book" (1979)



Finally, Carter makes use of the descending tonic pentachord, often as a way of decreasing the tension of the preceding passage, or to signal an imminent close. In the instances shown in example 4.10, Carter gets to the tonic before the downbeat, so that the arrival on G-natural does

not create too strong a sense of closure. In Carter's mature work, this figure crops up often.

Certain patterns of scale degree movement occur with such frequency as to lend them a formula-like status. Carter's fondness for melodic motion from $\hat{7}$ to $\hat{6}$ in the scale, for example is manifest in both direct and indirect

Example 4.10

"I Could Write A Book" (1979)



form. Her movement from chromatically altered scale degrees by semitone, especially the flat- $\hat{7}$, the flat- $\hat{3}$, and the sharp- $\hat{2}$ often creates a bluesy effect. The alternation between the natural- $\hat{3}$ and the flat- $\hat{3}$ (or, more correctly, the sharp- $\hat{2}$) of the scale lies behind more than a few of her melodic ideas, and she also uses the flat- $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{4}$ movement occasionally for a bluesy sound, especially over minor chords or in minor scales.

As opposed to many of Charlie Parker's licks, few of Carter's formulas have a strictly harmonic basis which further reflects her horizontal approach. In her early work, a few instances of overt arpeggiation occur, such as the ascending arpeggios in "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" at m. 66 and in "You're Driving Me Crazy" at m.65. In both cases she outlines the C-minor ninth chord that functions as the ii

in B-flat major. In m.47 of the latter song, Carter also arpeggiates this chord, and in all cases it serves to move her rapidly into her top register. By the end of her early period, such showy gestures become rare due to the different pacing of her songs and solos.

Carter's lines have a general descending profile that often matches the intonations of speech, even when she scats. The most frequent profile consists of a short ascending motion to a high pitch (occasionally the highest pitch of the phrase) and then a more gradual, wave-like descent, which often ends with a sudden and brief ascent to the final note of the phrase. This last gesture usually undercuts the phrase articulation slightly by inviting a continuation. When she wants to give the phrase a stronger close, its final notes descend as well. This general profile dominates her early work to such a degree that it is striking when a solo makes little use of it, as happens in "You're Driving Me Crazy." While this solo uses her signature lick, and has structural features similar to her solo on "Jaybird," the distinct approach Carter brings to this solo's melodic profile suggests that she may have worked the solo out in collaboration with one of her arrangers. Certainly the arrangement in the last eight bars of the solo makes it clear that Carter is not improvising here.

As Carter has matured, her approach to generating a flow of ideas has gotten smoother. At first she tended either simply to repeat ideas or to seek contrast from one melodic

gesture to the next, but gradually she came to relate her ideas to what immediately preceded them in ever more subtle ways. One particular approach, which I will call additive phraseology, consists of beginning a phrase with material taken from the ending of the preceding phrase. This approach to continuation contrasts with parallel phrase construction, which creates a sense of large-dimensional manipulation of materials by relating long time spans to one another. While Carter hints at the use of additive phraseology in "Jaybird," (in the way that mm.51-53 relate back to mm.48-9), the solo stresses an almost motivic connection to the head, which leaves less room for the sort of complex internal connections that additive phraseology creates.

"Thou Swell" gives us a clearer example of this procedure. The closing idea of her first gesture (at m.69) generates a response (at mm.70-71) that makes an effective transition to the phrase that ends the first eight bars, at mm.72-74. "You're Driving Me Crazy" has two clear instances of additive phraseology. Carter begins the phrase starting at m.42 with the same idea that ended the preceding phrase. The forward propulsion of this response continues to m.45 where it elides into the next phrase. At the pickups to m.49 and m.50 Carter reiterates the "Dippermouth" lick, whose repetition sets up the surprising continuation from the pickup of m.51 to m.52. In both cases, the restatement of an idea serves as the point of departure for a new melodic path.

In "Babe's Blues" Carter's phrase construction reaches a new level of sophistication, because the Movement generated by it carries across phrase articulations. The F-natural at the end of m.57 accomplishes such a smooth transition between the phrase ending in m.57 and the following phrase (m.58-61) that we cannot easily pinpoint where one phrase ends and the next begins. The rising gesture at m.61 serves as both an ending to the preceding phrase and a set-up for the response in m.62. Its varied return at m.63 of the next phrase echoes this function, as m.64 echoes m.62; however, the Shape that this parallelism suggests gets undermined in mm.64-65 when Carter smears the gesture rhythmically across the barline to lead to the next phrase.

Carter's scat introduction to "I Could Write A Book" (1979) illustrates the state this procedure had reached by the end of her middle period. Phrase endings often suggest either the entire phrase that follows, or, more often, its initial gesture, and each phrase seems to grow from the one that preceded it. In the way that one phrase flows into the next Carter generates a perpetually unfolding logic. One of many examples occurs after a long, complex phrase which itself has internal repetitions that bear complex relationships to one another, at mm.43-48. Carter picks up the last five notes of this phrase to start the next, thereby articulating the return to the tonic at the midpoint of the chorus while also generating continuity and Movement to sustain the solo's Growth.

Sometimes this dovetailing of musical ideas grows from Carter's use of material suggested by the rhythm section. In m.28, Carter's melodic gesture answers John Hicks' fill in the preceding measure, and thus acts as a response. While this borrowing may seem to weaken the internal logic of her line, it increases the relationship between the melody and the accompaniment, and it ultimately gets integrated into Carter's generative procedure in the following phrases.

Carter uses repetition, development and response less systematically when soloing on lyrics, but it does occur. Perhaps the most ingenious example in "I Could Write A Book" (1979) comes at the transition from scatting to singing at m.65. Here Carter makes the lyrics seem to grow from the scat solo by elaborating upon the melodic gesture from the preceding measures. By the time the line reaches a stopping point, in m.68, the lyrics have taken over as a new source of Movement.

As Carter uses it, additive phraseology thus consists of a manner of continuation that uses development or response to generate melodic relationships. Each successive statement of a melodic idea adds new material onto the ending of the preceding melodic idea. Rhythmically this approach to phrase construction tends to disrupt the regularity of the rhythmic continuum, by having phrase articulations fall at unpredictable times. The rhythmic displacement of repeated melodic ideas also weakens the potential for parallelism between phrases. By undermining the potential for regularity

of phrase structure, Carter's approach to phrase construction functions similarly to syncopation expanded to the level of hypermeter and, in so doing, it promotes Movement. As mentioned earlier, it also encourages us to listen to local relationships rather than large scale connections. These last features relate Carter's generative procedure to her horizontal approach to improvisation, and also to the bebop origins of her style.

When singing lyrics, Carter's lines often follow her own speech inflection and break according to the sense units that she wishes to emphasize in the text. Chart 2 shows how this works in the song "I Could Write A Book." At the top of the chart, the song's lyrics are respelled phonetically, with each syllable separated by a slash (/). Under the text, and aligned with each syllable, are the 1955, 1969 (both choruses), and 1979 versions of the song. Major breaks are indicated with full barlines, minor breaks with a half-barline, and partial breaks with a comma.

Because Carter hews closely to the original tune in the 1955 version, its Melody contains few of Carter's speech inflections. In spite of the obvious melodic differences between her 1969 and 1979 versions, however, the similarities in the way that Carter intones the text and breaks the line reveal a certain consistency of approach. For example, in the first eight bars, the words "they asked me," "could write a book" and "way you walk" all receive descending lines. In the first instance especially, Carter thereby alters the

meaning slightly, by shifting the emphasis away from herself as the song's narrator. Her changes also affect the prosody in positive ways. By ascending a step on the word "about," Carter places the emphasis on the second syllable, where it belongs. The profile of "whisper and look" in 1969A follows

Chart 2. Comparison of the melodic contour of four renditions of "I Could Write A Book," aligned by syllable.



Handwritten musical notation on four staves. The lyrics above the first staff are: *end/so/sim/pol/siy/krit/ar/so/plat/iz/jos/tu/tel/sem/et/ay/iar/yaw/a/lat/*. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

Handwritten musical notation on four staves. The lyrics above the first staff are: *ten/so/waul/dis/ka/vurz/az/may/but/endz/men/tu/meyk/tu/la/vurz/ar/frenz*. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. Below the staves, there are several handwritten labels: *1969A*, *1969B*, *1969B-coda*, *1979C*, *1979C-coda*, *1955-coda*, */it/*, and *Amu/*.

the original tune, but in the other two versions she removes the awkward tonic accent on the second syllable of "whisper," and after the first syllable, all three use a falling profile.

The next eight bar segment shows a slightly more varied approach to pitch setting. Unlike 1969A, Carter accents "write" in both 1969B and 1979, and in 1969B she also accents the first syllable of "preface." In all three she sets "met" similarly. In 1979, Carter accents "world" more strongly than in the other versions, but in 1955, 1969A and 1969B she follows the original tune. Ascending on the words "and the world," she stresses the last word rhythmically as well, by lingering on it. By descending on the word "never" in all of her renditions, Carter uses pitch to reinforce its accentuation, unlike the original tune. In the 1969 and 1979 versions, Carter descends on "forget," curiously inverting the accentuation of the word.

In the next eight bars of the later versions, Carter restores the stress to the first syllable of "simple" with the falling contour she gives to it. When she sings "secret of my plot" in these versions she follows a general descent that parallels the opening measures of the song. This descent creates a foil for the highest pitches of each chorus, which lie ahead. With the contour she gives to "is just," she accents the second word rather than the first. On "tell them" she stresses the verb "tell," which adds urgency to her expression. In both 1969A and 1979 she accents the

word "love" by skipping up to a B-natural, while in 1969B she accents the word "you," (as though the subtext were "not someone else"). While in 1969A and 1969B she follows a general descent on "a lot", in 1979 she illustrates the word "lot" with a mild ascent to a B-natural followed by a descending six-note melisma. This passage contains the highest pitches of the 1979 version thus far, and here she establishes the upper limit of the song's range to its forceful ending.

In the final section, Carter sings "the world discovers" similarly in all three versions, accenting "discovers" in a way that emphasizes the excitement of the discovery (unlike the original, which seems to gloss over this compelling verb). From this point on, Carter takes a different approach to the lyrics in each version. In 1969A, she bottoms out on the phrase "how to make" before leaping dramatically to "two (lovers)" (as though it were the number of lovers that was in question - clearly the long vowel on the word "two" was too, too tempting to resist), and closes the chorus with an assertive leap up to "friends." In 1969B, Carter accents the word "my" (as though the authorship of the "Book" were in question), and then proceeds to juxtapose "lovers" and "friends" at opposite ends of her mid-range. Carter closes this version by hammering at the words "how" "make" "lov(ers)" and "friends," returning to the strong register she had used for "simple, simple secret of (my plot)," at the top of her chest voice. In 1979 she also accents the word

"my," although not as fiercely as she does in 1969B. She then proceeds to accent "how," "lovers" and "friends."

A comparison of the 1955 and 1979 codas, shown at the bottom of the chart, reveals that, in the coda of Carter's 1979 version, she returns to her earlier concept in many ways. All three codas show Carter sustaining the Movement of the song to its conclusion, with the final phrase serving as a summation. The faster tempo of the 1969 version's second chorus (1969B) leads to fewer, and shorter breaks between sense units, with Carter driving past the point at which she had made an articulation in the other versions to the finish.

No single variation in the later versions is solely responsible for producing a different reading from the original, but taken together, each contributes to a more convincing delivery of the lyrics than the original setting does. More than Carter's speech-like inflection of the line, tempo determines the overall mood of the setting, yet through the former she reveals the emotion that certain words evoke for her. A highly personal, highly stylized delivery results; one that has the dramatic overtones of acting. Carter has said that a jazz singer must act to give the lyrics an effective reading.

The intensity of the 1969 version does not grow from the text as much as it does from Carter's need to produce a strong finish to the three-song medley. The first chorus serves as a "slow movement" while the second provides the "grand finale." Thus, while Carter respects the speech

accentuation in the small dimension, she sacrifices a personal rendering of the song's meaning in order to produce an effective, and dramatic, large dimension structure.

The mellowness and warmth of the 1979 version, on the other hand, helps to give the lyrics a more convincing reading. Carter's self-assured reading projects a calm certainty in the love that she sings about; a certainty that the 1969 version does not convey. With the scat solo that precedes the lyrics, Carter helps to set the confident tone. She does this in part by her logical presentation of musical ideas, which implies that the world is an orderly place for these lovers. By reserving the high register for mm.56-60, only measures before the lyrics arrive, Carter sustains the Movement over the first two choruses, and sets us up for the strong finish, which echoes the climax of the scat solo. By having the song's closing measures refer back to the end of her scat solo in this way, Carter creates a sense of overall balance which gives the performance Shape. Carter has thus struck a convincing balance between Shape and Movement in all dimensions of this performance.

Chapter 4: Rhythm and Growth

The creation and organization of levels of time holds a high priority in jazz, so much so, in fact, that jazz often places the other elements of music in the service of the music's temporal structure and momentum. This focus on Rhythm has parallels to African music, but it also results from the emphasis jazz itself places on Movement. The degree to which our explorations of Sound, Harmony and Melody in the music of Betty Carter have included rhythmic considerations indicates the importance of Rhythm in jazz.

In pointing out that "Rhythm is Movement in microcosm,"¹ LaRue establishes an important relationship between levels of time and the music's dimensions. Furthermore, the weight he gives to Movement in his analytic approach contributes to his discussion of rhythm's influence on the other elements. For these reasons, I have already touched upon many points about Rhythm and Growth in the preceding discussion.

Jazz Rhythm manifests the relationship between vocal and physical expression in the way that it explores the superposition of unmeasured speech rhythms over the regularized grooves of dance movement. The phenomenon of swing stems from the tension between these two rhythmic impulses.

Jazz Rhythm also has parallels to the West African impulse to fill in gaps, which generates Movement by

¹ Guidelines, 104.

producing a high degree of syncopation. Combined with a fluid approach to polyrhythm, this impulse generates the horizontal flow so basic to swing. In addition to coordinating events in time, which emphasizes the Shape-giving vertical organization of time, jazz rhythm must at any moment also sustain a rhythmic environment that allows for the discovery of possibilities as yet unknown both to the musicians and the audience.

This point needs elaboration because it differs so much from the western concept of rhythm. Because of the highly volatile nature of jazz Rhythm, which gives the music extreme unpredictability in the small dimension, jazz Rhythm encourages involvement in the immediate moment. It enables all concerned, musician and audience alike, to remain present in the music, and free to respond in fresh ways to the musicians' emerging expression.

The improvisation of melody and accompaniment in jazz, and the interaction that results, also entails an approach to artistic control that differs from the way classical composers give their music Shape. In some respects classical performance comes closer to the way a jazz musician gives the music Shape and Movement, conducting even more so. The fact remains that the nature of planning in classical music, even for the performer, is essentially different than the way a jazz musicians deals with planning. The flexibility that jazz requires with respect to musicians' sharing of control over the molding of music in time resembles the brilliance of

a successful basketball team that effectively moves the ball around the court. This openness to possibilities gives the Growth of a jazz performance an essential quality of discovery that primes the pump of Movement, and drives the music onward into the future.

For this reason, too great an emphasis upon Shape in the large dimension may misrepresent a fundamental impulse behind the music. The repetitions and articulations in jazz go beyond the need for a predictable delivery of ideas to provide a springboard for Movement, or a backdrop against which it emerges. In this way jazz tends to keep us immersed in the music's unfolding. Carter's use of additive phraseology, discussed earlier, provides a case in point.

Large Dimension Rhythm and Growth

We have already considered several ways in which Carter has organized her sets to sustain the listener's attention through the use of register, tonality, dynamics and instrumentation. The organization of her sets has had a strong impact on the way she approaches the making of an arrangement, and the order in which she presents them within the set. Since Carter began putting together her own arrangements on a regular basis, she has shown an interest in singing arrangements that vary widely in length. Some of the resulting arrangements, which have extended for as long as ten minutes or more, challenge her and her trio to sustain the listener's attention over longer and longer time spans.

Our prior discussions of "Surrey with the Fringe on Top" and "Open the Door" have considered her use of other musical elements towards this end. For a time Carter used medleys to explore long term form ("Body and Soul"/"Heart and Soul" and "I Didn't Know What Time It Was"/"All the Things Your Are"/"I Could Write A Book"). Her eventual abandonment of this approach, and her ambitious arrangements of "Sounds/Movin' On" and "What a Little Moonlight Can Do" suggest that Carter has sought to make her music more and more internally consistent as she has matured, which has led her to unify her material. The absence of quotation in her improvisations reinforces this conclusion. Perhaps her appreciation of classical music inspired her to explore this path.

Tempo has also given Carter a rich source of variety between numbers. The broad distinction between two basic types of arrangement, up-tempo number (known as a rhythm number in the theater) and ballad, serves a crucial function in directing the flow of rhythmic energy over the course of a set. Carter uses extreme tempos to emphasize the difference between the two, thereby heightening the Movement provided by the contrast. While the distinction between up-tempo number and ballad stems from a difference in tempo, each of these genres dictates a different approach to other elements as well. During her late period, the tempo of certain arrangements has tended to increase over the course of

successive performances.² Successive performances of the version of "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" that she developed in the 1980s, for example, have gotten faster, and this has happened somewhat with "Open the Door" as well.

Within arrangements, Carter has also used tempo contrast effectively to create Movement, especially in long arrangements, such as "Sounds/Movin' On" and "What A Little Moonlight Can Do." Sometimes changes of tempo also help Carter enact the story of a song, and to convey her evolving response to events in the lyrics. In her 1979 performance of "The Trolley Song" (not transcribed here), for example, the change from the anxious tempo of the verse into the slower, heavy-swinging groove of the refrain expresses the narrator's displacement from objective time to subjective time. This shift resonates the shift in awareness that she undergoes in response to the presence of a new passenger on the trolley. It alters her awareness of the sounds and movements of the trolley, and the sound effects in the lyrics give Carter an opportunity to explore the line between scat and onomatopoeia. Carter's novel arrangement challenges Judy Garland's claim to this tune. While Garland's arrangements occasionally makes use of tempo rubato, Carter has rarely used this technique; the rhythmic flexibility and

² Carter may have learned this from Miles Davis, who has also been known to increase tempos on successive performances of such songs as "So What" and "All Blues," although he obviously did not do so in all cases.

responsiveness of her line serves a similar function without altering the metronomic impulse that the trio maintains.

Tempo, meter and harmony combine in new ways when Carter double-times. (As mentioned earlier, this turns a 32-bar tune into a 64-bar structure in which each chord now lasts twice the number of beats it did originally). Some songs double-time for the entire arrangement, as in Carter's early version of "What a Little Moonlight Can Do." Carter's choice of tune here is a tribute to Billie Holiday, and she reinforces the song's association with Holiday by incorporating the double-time approach that Holiday's sidemen took in her several versions. Carter's 1982 version of this tune recalls the double-time of her earlier version, even though she has set the opening chorus in five-beat meter! Carter built the 1976 and 1979 versions of her Latin number, "Open the Door," around a double-time approach as well.

Within some arrangements, Carter has used double-time as a means of creating rhythmic contrast and an increase of Movement, especially in the bridges of certain ballads. In "Body and Soul," and "Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most" (1964), to name a few, this approach helps her to differentiate the bridge, and to emphasize the return of the A material, despite the excruciatingly slow tempo she has chosen.

The middle dimension and rhythmic continuum

LaRue's use of the all encompassing term "continuum" for "the whole hierarchy of expectations and implications in rhythm, [and] the multidimensional structure of motion that carries through sustained tones and intervals of silence"³ applies to all levels from subdivision to hypermeter.

"Continuum" thus refers to the underlying rhythmic template which organizes time in a variety of coexisting and mutually reinforcing levels. LaRue's distinction between continuum and surface rhythm helps to describe certain aspects of jazz rhythm in general and Carter's rhythm in particular. Jazz musicians use the terms "groove" and "feel" to describe nuances of the continuum that affect the way they phrase and articulate.

In jazz, the rhythmic continuum takes on a polymetric richness from which the musicians continually draw in order to create the rhythmic variety of the surface rhythms. Furthermore, the visceral experience of the continuum is critical to a good jazz performance, for, not only does the continuum coordinate the activities of several musicians playing together, but it also provides the basis for swing, a crucial ingredient in the successful performance of many jazz styles. In order for swing to work, the ensemble must project the groove successfully and clearly, and the listener must feel it. The dance impulse of jazz thus comes from the

³ Guidelines, 90.

rhythmic continuum established during the swing era, and this impulse lies behind many of the styles that followed swing.

The jazz rhythm section therefore has certain routines which manifest diverse levels within the rhythmic continuum, thus bringing it to the level of surface rhythm, and against which the soloist swings. The beat gives all other levels of the continuum a focal point around which they coalesce. Swing reinforces beat as both a vertical and horizontal phenomenon, or, in LaRue's terminology, the forward propulsion of swing creates Movement which we experience against the vertical articulation of the groove. In noting that "if we consistently find phrases in which contour rhythm conflicts with continuum, . . . then conflict becomes part of the composer's rhythmic typology,"⁴ LaRue inadvertently clarifies one of the ways in which swing operates. As in the case of Billie Holiday, whose rhythmic approach strongly affected the way Carter thinks about time, Carter has the capacity to convey and subvert the continuum at the same time in the delivery of lyrics.

Over the course of her career, Carter's ability to express the continuum while also swinging against it has become clearer and more assured, and reflects another aspect of her integration of singing scat and singing lyrics. The consistency with which she avoids the downbeat when starting a phrase has the paradoxical effect of asserting it, for each phrase seems to grow from the rhythmic impulse to react

⁴ Guidelines, 104.

against it. Furthermore, Carter has gradually come to terms with larger levels of continuum in her vocal line, expressing with greater subtlety the relationship between these levels and her surface rhythm. Her later versions of "Open the Door," especially the one from 1979, show how she projects a sense of the four-bar phrase in her line while retaining rhythmic independence from it. Her line expresses the continuum more overtly when she scats and sings up-tempo tunes than when she sings ballads. With lyrics she tends to sing longer durations, in part as a response to long vowels in the lyrics. As we have seen, certain rhythmic delays in the line result from her taking time to enunciate consonants. We can attribute her approach to ballads especially to Billie Holiday's influence, specifically with regard to back-phrasing.

I have coined the term "fluid polymeter" to describe a particular aspect of the interaction between continuum and surface rhythm of which Carter makes frequent use, especially when "riffing" (repeating a melodic fragment to increase the rhythmic intensity of the line). Fluid polymeter consists of setting up a pattern in the surface rhythm which establishes a periodic accentuation opposed to the prevailing meter. Musicians have two ways of achieving this effect. In the divisive method, the measure gets divided into equal note values other than the beat, as in the case of half-note triplets in a four-beat measure. In the additive method, subdivisions of the beat are grouped into note values that

state or imply a new pulse that cuts across and challenges the established beat, as happens when triplets are grouped in twos, or eighth notes in threes. This latter form of fluid polyrhythm occurs in the "secondary rag" technique found in ragtime. The fluidity of Carter's approach to polymeter comes from the way it happens on such a transient basis. Example 4.3, above, shows some instances of fluid polymeter, illustrating as well how a particular lick may have rhythmic as well as melodic features.

In devising a continuation from one phrase to the next, Carter started out by relying almost entirely upon recurrence and contrast in her music, although her playfulness with phrase beginnings and endings gave her a rudimentary tool for development. As she has grown, her capacity for development and response has increased, and the relationships among phrases, both in her scat and in her lyric singing, have increased in subtlety and complexity. Nevertheless, as observed in our discussion of Melody, these relationships tend to operate locally, and Carter does not seek to unify her music through large dimension motivic correspondences. Perhaps from hearing instrumentalists play in person, Charlie Parker foremost among them, she learned that extended soloing does not require motivic development, or organic unity, in order to satisfy the jazz aesthetic. She has evolved other means, no less rich, for exercising control over her medium, and for communicating her authority as a musician.

Small dimension

From Carter's middle period on, her rhythmic vocabulary has expanded, as she moved away from the limited rhythmic vocabulary of the bebop solo line, which consists largely of eighth- and quarter-notes. Ballads have a richer rhythmic palette than do up-tempo numbers, in part because of the greater opportunity they provide to fill in spaces between beats.

When singing lyrics, speech rhythms motivate many of Carter's rhythmic gestures, as in m.100 of "Open the Door" (1979), when she sings the words "try to avoid me." The true test of this feature of her style comes when we compare the A sections of a song to one another. Inevitably we discover that Carter has accommodated the line to the new lyric, and thus the new meaning, of each A section. Try exchanging the vocal line to one A section of a song for any other, and you will discover how Carter's resetting of the lyrics captures every prosodic and expressive nuance of her reading.

Carter uses speech accentuation to contradict the beat and the barline, another technique that she, and a score of others, learned from Billie Holiday. The use of this technique asserts the priority of speech rhythm over metric accent in the vocal line. While ostensibly an extension of the principle of swing, it effectively shifts the focus of the performance to the lyrics. LaRue states that

composers whose native language is English, unfortunately, must deal with the somewhat anti-musical predilection of English words for the combination of a short, stressed syllable with a longer, unstressed syllable, as in the word "never" The frequency of such syncopated words in English texts, however, vastly exceeds the number of syncopes that can gracefully be absorbed into the music, so the setting of an English text can be regarded as a major test of any composer's imagination and ingenuity."⁵

In solving this problem anew with each rendering of a lyric, many a jazz singer passes LaRue's test with flying colors. Syncopation flourishes in the rhythmically fluid accompaniment provided by the supporting instruments. This creates a natural surrounding for the syncopations inherent in the English language. Carter has referred to the process of delivering her lyrics on an improvised melody as "folding the line,"⁶ indicating that she has given this procedure some thought.

Text influence

A song with lyrics, especially a ballad, generally tends to be an exploration of a single emotion, or it stays within an emotional range. As Carter's style developed, she increased the emotional range, and in some arrangements she moves through several emotional qualities. In "Sounds/Movin' On," for example, she takes a more episodic approach to expression. Over time, she has sought to sustain the

⁵ LaRue, Guidelines, 150.

⁶ White, Jazz Talk.

expression of a single emotion or mood over greater time spans.

As we have seen, the distinction between scatting and singing lyrics is central to any consideration of Carter's work, because she herself made a distinction between the two in her formative years. Scatting represents a freeing of the singer from the constraints both of the phonetic and semantic influences of speech. People have sung nonsense in western and non-western cultures for centuries, and it has served a variety of purposes, including copying sounds, instrumental or otherwise, or concealing meanings. Scatting can imitate the unformed speech of an infant and mimic the playful way that a child toys with vocal sounds before they receive verbal meaning. Bobby McFerrin has exploited this aspect of scat to humorous effect. On the other hand, it can have the character of uttering the unspeakable, of speaking in tongues or it can copy the behavior of the possessed. At times Joe Carroll has crossed the threshold of coherence in this way. Even so, such music is not entirely without meaning, for the musical values that shape the vocal line bring an array of non-verbal associations. Conversely, the jazz singer's use of the English language manifests an African-American fascination with the sonic properties of speech that has West African parallels. For this reason, one can listen to a jazz vocal line with lyrics as though it were a horn line, with the phonemes suggesting the phrasing and articulation of an instrumentalist. Conversely, one can also listen to a horn

player's line as though it had words, a remark sometimes made about Lester Young's solos.

The extreme degree to which Carter backphrases sets her apart from all other jazz singers. As mentioned earlier, it leads her to recompose the vocal line in order for it to work harmonically, and thus it reveals a particular brand of virtuosity that few musicians have. The displacement of lyrics by as much as two measures forces the listener to hear the words of the song divorced from their association with the standard melody. This is the most challenging aspect of Carter's art and it may account for her slow acceptance. However, Carter's approach to backphrasing frees her to interpret the lyrics against the tune's harmonic backdrop, unconstrained by the limitations of the prescribed melody. In this way it is the key to her delivery and expression, and as such, is the predominant defining feature of her style.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Scholars from different disciplines, such as Gunther Schuller and John Miller Chernoff, have observed the importance of vocal expression in the music of West Africa.¹ Several factors reinforce the soundness of this observation. The languages of many West African ethnic groups, some of which are tonal languages, make little distinction between speech and song. In these languages, speech has a musical quality. These languages allow for the use of talking drums to "speak" in accentual, durational (and, in the case of tonal languages, in pitch) designs that evoke speech patterns, and which can often convey specific verbal content. In addition, the belief that instruments have voice, and that they give humans a way to communicate with the world of the supernatural, underlies much West African music making. The fact that West African drummers use spoken syllables in order to learn drumming patterns further strengthens the connection between vocal and instrumental usage. All of these factors suggest that the West African uses instruments as a way to extend the expressive power of his voice.

The precise ways in which West African culture has survived the enforced migration and enslavement of West Africans remains a matter of speculation. In preaching, the

¹ John Miller Chernoff, African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 75-80. Gunther Schuller, Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 3-62.

African-American church has indisputably become a forum for the exploration of the musical qualities of speech. In the African-American manner of delivering sermons, the manipulation of such musical elements as accent, duration and pitch, elements which normally occur in English speech as a means of clarifying emotional expression, allows the preacher's voice to evolve naturally into song-like speech, and full blown song. Many jazz musicians have grown up with the sound of such fluidity of expression ringing in their ears.

The trombonist, Lawrence Brown, who played with Duke Ellington, came of age musically in this environment, and in the 1943 film, Cabin in the Sky, he reveals his church roots. The film features Ellington's band, and in the number "Goin' Up," Brown plays a solo in a night club, Jim Henry's Paradise. Krin Gabbard draws our attention to the spiritual aspects of this scene in his book, Jammin' At The Margins. "All movement quickly stops . . . when Lawrence Brown takes a preacherly trombone solo. . . . After jiving to the song's early, up-tempo sections, the congregation of dancers stands in rapt attention from the moment that the trombonist plays his first, clearly enunciated notes. Brown soon involves the crowd in a call-and-response pattern. After each phrase of his sermon, the crowd shouts back."²

² Krin Gabbard, Jammin' at the Margins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 183.

Lewis Porter has written of how Coltrane based the last movement of A Love Supreme upon the poem of the same name that is printed in the record's liner notes.³ Coltrane modeled his performance of "Psalm" so closely on this poem that every note he played corresponded to a syllable in the written text. Furthermore, Coltrane's "wordless recitation" of his poem follows the procedures that black ministers use for the intonation of psalms.

In a more general sense, the Charles Mingus composition, "Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting," recalls the ecstatic fervor of a Baptist congregation. A jazz title does not have to make a direct reference to the church, however, in order for us to associate the music with religion. Jazz has an intense spirituality, and many jazz solos echo the literally enthusiastic intonations of preaching.

Amiri Baraka has written that "the purely instrumental music of the American Negro contains constant reference to vocal music."⁴ Musicians such as Tricky Sam Nanton and Bubber Miley, who could sound as though they were talking with their instruments, give us clear examples of the relationship between vocal and instrumental sounds in jazz.

Other examples abound of how both singer and player often achieve the highly personal sound they seek by

³ Lewis Porter, "John Coltrane's A Love Supreme: Jazz Improvisation as Composition," Journal of the American Musicological Society 38, no.3 (Fall 1985), 613f.

⁴ Amiri Baraka, Blues People: The Negro Experience in White America and the Music That Developed from It (New York: William Morrow, 1963), 28.

borrowing timbre and phrasing from speaking, and from each other. On Bobby McFerrin's recording, The Voice, unaccompanied scat solos evoke the sound of the babbling of an infant, and an angry man's incoherent ranting. On the recording of Al Jarreau's European tour, Look to the Rainbow, he sings a scat solo that reinterprets the sound of a jazz drum solo, thus bringing the circle back around to where it began.

In light of the ways in which vocal expression inspires the playing of jazz instrumentalists, and in light of the connection between story-telling, acting, dancing, speaking, singing and playing an instrument in African culture, the virtual neglect of singers in the theoretical literature on jazz is surprising. The relative scarcity of vocal transcriptions indicates the extent of this neglect. In writing about Betty Carter, I have sought to rectify this situation, not only because of the intrinsic merits of her music, but also because of the potential this study may have for a broader application. I believe that as we come to study the work of singers more seriously than we have, we will gain important insight about instrumental performance and the jazz aesthetic.

The ineffable aspects of music will make linguistic models difficult to apply with consistency. Nevertheless, with information from further research into jazz singing, we may, for example, gain insight into those rhythmic and melodic gestures of jazz instrumentalists, which sometimes

have a speech-like quality. For example, the rapid flurry of activity in Charlie Parker's sixteenth-note passages serve several functions at once, including virtuosic display and contrast. They also act as a distracting interjection that interrupts the flow of the solo in order to clear the air for the next melodic gesture. In such passages, Parker sounds as though he is saying, "forget about what I just said."⁵ In order for us to understand an important way in which a given gesture fits into an instrumentalist's solo, and the strategies employed by musicians to give voice to their emotions, and to communicate them, we will need a better understanding of what the singers do, and how they do it. In addition, the work of singers has interest in its own right. In closely examining the work of one of jazz's greatest exponents, I hope I have demonstrated the importance of understanding the art of singing jazz.

⁵ Or, as Lewis Porter has observed in a private conversation with the author, as though he is changing the subject.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Index of Song Titles

Index of Song Titles
(in alphabetical order)

All I ('ve) got (D. Cole)	PJ58; Ve88
All or Nothing At All (Lawrence/Altman)	Ve93
All the Things You Are (Kern/Hammerstein)	R69a; BC70
All Through the Day (Kern/Hammerstein)	R69a
Alone Together (Schwartz/Dietz)	Pa61
Am I Blue (Akst/Clarke)	GA87
At Sundown (W. Donaldson)	Pa60
Babe's Blues (Weston/Hendricks)	PJ58
Baby It's Cold Outside (F. Loesser)	Pa61
Benson Boogie (?)	MC48
Beware My Heart (S. Coslow)	UA64
Blue Bird of Happiness (Harmati/Heyman)	PJ58
Blue Moon (Rodgers/Hart)	R69a
Body and Soul (Green/Heyman/Sour/Egton)	R69a; BC70
B's Blues (B. Carter)	Ve93
But Beautiful (Van Heusen/Burke)	PJ58; GA87
By the Bend in the River (Edwards/Haig)	PJ58; R69b; BC70
Call Me Darling (Reisfeld/Fryberg)	At62
Can't We Be Friends? (Swift/James)	Ep55
Can't We Talk It Over? (Washington/Young)	BC79
Caribbean Sun (C. Garnett)	BC79; RR85
Children Learn What They Live (D.L. Nolt)	BC72
Cocktails for Two (Coslow/Johnston)	Pa61; BC82
Day Dream (Strayhorn/Ellington/LaTouche)	Ve93
Deep Night (Vallee/Henderson)	BC79
Dip Bag (B. Carter)	Ve92
Do Something (See "Please, Do Something")	----
Don't Weep for the Lady (D. Singh)	Pa60
Droppin' Things (B. Carter)	Ve90
Dull Day (in Chicago) (B. Carter)	Ve90
Ego (Weston/Carter)	R69a; BC70
Either It's Love Or It Isn't (Fisher/Roberts)	BC79
Everybody ('s) Somebody's Fool (Hampton/Adams/Adams)	At62
Everything I Have Is Yours (Lane/Adamson)	BC79; RR85
Ev(e)'ry Time We Say Goodbye (C. Porter)	Pa61; R69b; BC82; RR85
Fake (B. Carter)	BC79
Feed the Fire (G. Allen)	Ve93
For All We Know (Coots/Lewis)	Pa61
For You (A. Dubin)	Pa60
Foul Play (N. Mapp)	PJ58
Frenesi (?)	GG56; (1960)
Girl Talk (Hefti/Troup)	R69a; BC70
Gone with the Wind (Wrubel/Magidson)	Ep55
Goodbye (G. Jenkins or, C. Porter)	Pa61; BC82
Good Life, The (Distel/Reardon)	At62; Ve88
Happy (B. Carter)	BC72
Heart and Soul (Carmichael/Loesser)	At62; R69a; BC70

Hucklebuck, The (Alfred/Parker)	MC48
I Can't Help It (B. Carter)	PJ58; BC72
I Could Write A Book (Rodgers/Hart)	Ep55; R69a; BC70; BC79
I Cry Alone (Bacharach/David)	BC82
I Didn't Know What Time It Was (Rodgers/Hart)	R69a; BC70
I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire (Marcus/Benjamin/Seiler)	Pa60
If I Should Lose You (Robin/Rainger)	Ve93
I'll Buy You A Star (Schwartz/Fields)	BC79
I Love Music (Boyd/Smith)	Ve90
Imagination (Van Heusen/Burke)	Ve88
I'm All Smiles (Leonard/Martin)	Ve93
I'm Pulling Through (Kitchings/Herzog)	R69b
I Only Have Eyes for You (Warren/Dubin)	R69a
In The Still of the Night (C. Porter)	
I Remember You (Schertzinger/Mercer)	R69a
I Should Care (Cahn/Stordahl/Weston)	Ve92
Isn't It Romantic (Rodgers/Hart)	UA65; GA87
It Don't Mean A Thing . . . (Ellington/Mills)	GA87
I Think I Got It Now (B. Carter)	BC79
It's A Big, Wide, Wonderful World (J. Rox)	UA65
It Takes Two to Tango (Hoffman/Manning)	Pa61
I Was Telling Him about You (?)	Rt76
I Wonder (Grant/Leveen)	At62
Jaybird (J. Johnson)	MC48
Jazz (Ain't Nothin' But Soul) (N. Mapp)	Pa60
Just Friends (Klenner/Lewis)	Rt76
Just Like the Movies (time) (B. Carter)	Ve88
Just You, Just Me (Klages/Greer)	Pa61
Let's Fall in Love (Arlen/Koehler)	GG56
Look No Further (R. Rodgers)	UA64
Look What I Got (B. Carter)	Ve88
Love Notes (Zubek/Carter)	Ve93
Love We Had Yesterday, The (P. Watson)	Ve92
Lover Man (Davis/Ramirez/Sherman)	Ve93
Make Him Believe (B. Carter)	Ve92
Make It Last (Paxton/Haynes)	PJ58; Ve88
Making Dreams Come True (?)	Rt76
Man I Love, The (Gershwin/Gershwin)	RR85; Ve88
Mean to Me (Ahlert/Turk)	Pa60
Memories of You (Blake/Razaf)	Ve90
Moon Is Low, The (Freed/Brown)	UA65
Moonlight in Vermont (Suessdorf/Blackburn)	Ep55
Most Gentlemen Don't Like Love (C. Porter)	Rt76
Movin' On (See Sounds/Movin' On)	
Mr. Gentleman (see Tight) (B. Carter)	Ve88
Music, Maestro, Please (Wrubel/Magidson)	Rt76
My Favorite Things (Rodgers/Hammerstein)	UA64; BC79; RR85
My Reverie (L. Clinton)	Pa60
My Shining Hour (Arlen/Mercer)	R69b
Naima's Love Song (Hicks/Carter)	Ve92
New Blues (you purrrrrrr) (B. Carter)	Rt76; BC82

New England (?)	UA65
No More Words [With no words] (B. Carter)	Rt76; BC82; RR85
Nothing More to Look Forward to (R. Adler)	At62
Once In Your Life (?)	UA65
Once Upon A Summertime (Bacri/LeGrand/Mercer)	Ve92
One Note Samba (Jobim/Mendonca)	At62
On Our Way Up (Sister Candy) (F. Roach)	BC72
On the Alamo (Jones/Kahn)	Pa60
On the Isle of May (Kostelanetz/David)	PJ58
Open the Door [Abre la Puerta] (B. Carter)	BC79; UA64; Rt76; BC82; Ve90
People Will Say We're in Love (Rodgers/Hammerstein)	Pa61
Please Do Something (Green/Stept/Carter)	R69b; BC70
Red Top (G. Ammons)	Ps52
Remember, [You Forgot to] (I. Berlin)	Pa60; R69a
Rock-a-bye Baby (?)	(1960)
'Round Midnight (Monk/(Gonzales)/Williams/Hanighen)	At62; R69b
Runaway (?)	GG56
Seems Like Old Times (Lombardo/Loeb)	R69a
Shine On Harvest Moon (Public Domain)	At62
Side by Side (H. Woods)	Pa61
So... (B. Carter)	BC79
Social Call (G. Gryce)	GG56; BC82
Some Other Spring (Cahn/Styne)	UA64
Something Big (R. Adler)	UA64
Something Wonderful (Rodgers/Hammerstein)	PJ58; R69b
Sometimes I'm Happy (Youmans/Grey/Caesar)	GA87; Ve93
Sophisticated Lady (Ellington/Mills/Parish)	GA87
Sounds (Movin' On) (B. Carter)	BC72; BC79; RR85
Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most (Wolf/Landesman)	UA64; BC79
Stardust (Carmichael/Parish)	Ve90
Star Eyes (Raye/DePaul)	Rt76
Stay As Sweet As You Are (Gordon/Revel)	Ve92
Stolen Moments (you belong to her) (Nelson/Fisher)	GA87
Stormy Weather (keeps rainin' all the time) (Arlen/Koehler)	Pa60
Sunday, Monday, or Always (Van Heusen/Burke)	BC72
Sun Died, The (Charles/LeLande/Giraud/Gregory)	R69a; BC70
Surrey with the Fringe on Top (Rodgers/Hammerstein)	R69b; BC70
Tell Him I Said Hello (?)	GG56
That Sunday, That Summer (Weiss/Sherman)	Ve88
Theme from Dr. Kildare (See "Three Stars Will Shine Tonight")	
There Is No Greater Love (Symes/Jones)	UA65
There's No You (Adair/Hopper)	Pa60
Thirty Years (B. Carter)	Ve90
This Is Always (Warren/Gorden)	UA64
Thou Swell (Rodgers/Hart)	Ep55
Three Stars Will Shine Tonight (J. Goldsmith)	At62
Tight (B. Carter)	BC72; BC79
Together (DeSylva/Brown/Henderson)	Pa61
Trolley Song, The (Martin/Blane)	BC79

Two Cigarettes in the Dark (Pollack/Webster)	At62
Wagon Wheels (DeRose/Hill)	Rt76
Way You Look Tonight, The (Kern/Fields)	Ep55
We'll Be Together Again (Laine/Fisher)	Pa61
We Tried (B. Carter)	BC72
What A Little Moonlight Can Do (H. Woods)	Pa60; BC82; RR85
What Is It? (B. Carter)	BC72
What Is This Tune? (Carter/DeJohnette)	Ve93
What's New (Haggart/Burke)	R69b; GA87
What's the Use of Wond'rin' (Rodgers/Hammerstein)	Ve90
When I Fall in Love (Young/Heyman)	At62
When Its Sleepy Time Down South (Rene/Rene/Muse)	Ve92
Who, What, Where, When? (B. Carter)	At62
Why Him? (Lerner/Lane)	Ve90
With No Words (See No More Words)	
You and I (M. Wilson)	Pa61
You Go To My Head (Gillespie/Coots)	Ve92
You're A Sweetheart (McHugh/Adamson)	UA65; R69a; BC72
You're Driving Me Crazy (W. Donaldson)	PJ58
You're Getting to Be A Habit with Me (Warren/Dubin)	PJ58
You're Mine, You (Greene/Heyman)	Ve92

Appendix II: Transcriptions

$$! = 224 - 232$$

Handwritten musical score for a song, featuring 12 staves of music. The notation includes notes, rests, and lyrics in a non-Latin script. The lyrics are written below the notes, often with horizontal lines indicating the melody. The score is numbered 44, 47, 50, 53, 56, 59, 62, 65, 68, 71, 74, and 77. The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, likely a form of Chinese or Japanese. The music is written in a single system, with the lyrics following the notes. The score is handwritten and appears to be a personal or working draft.

2. Red Top

Gail Brockman (47)

♩ = 116-120

ay wu dtey ko sow low — ba day kzentsta p ay —

55 vgada gow raydanspinig itso si-nādayno li talredta p ay gada gow

58 ray-da na spi ni — vgada gow rē — ndānrendan-ti ay tā mvaldān hēnd

61 fohl wen ay drap mohninglohriy nāw yunnōn 30 shohriy av 30

64 lida red tap

J=126

[illegible]

4. I Could Write A Book

Carter (5)

Handwritten musical score for the song "I Could Write A Book" by Carter (5). The score is written on 12 staves, each with a measure number on the left. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 11/4. The tempo is marked with a quarter note equal to 114. The score includes lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are in a non-English script, possibly a constructed language or a specific dialect. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. There are also some markings like "3" and "30" above the staves, and "3" and "30" below the staves. The score ends with a double bar line and a final measure.

Lyrics (from top to bottom):

if æy /eh sɔmiy /ay — ke dray ct

o be — k æ bɛw t æ wey yuw woh kan

wi spa r — æn lu — k ay

Kedray — dɔ pre fe — san hæw wiy me

t æn æw ur — lɛw dne

væ fɔr ge — t ænd æ si — mpu — ls iy

kri tæ — væ pla — t i — zjæ

stæw tæ læ — m æy tæy iæ vyuw æ bæ

t ænd æw ur — ldi skavæ

rz hæw mæy bæ ke — ndz hæw tæw mæy — ktæw

væ — rz æ — vfre

— (ndz) ænd æ

Handwritten musical score on a 12-staff system. The first eight staves contain musical notation with lyrics in a non-Latin script. The remaining four staves are empty.

Lyrics (from top to bottom):

si — mēl — siy — krit a — vāo pla —

t i — zjə — s — tuw tel æ — m — æg tay — la vnuw — a

la — t æ ndæ wur di

sko vu — rz hwen may bu ke — ndz hæw

tuw mey — ktuw — la vā — rz æ v fre

— ndz hæw — tuw mey — k — tuw la — vā — rzæ —

— vfre — ndz

5. I Can't Help It

Betty Carter
(58)

$\text{♩} = 54, 56$

ay kaen thel pi t jatsəwəy jətaɣa m

ay kaen thel pi t ay downthow hɛw tuw sɔ

m ay tray tuwduwəθɪŋzay fiy lin say

hang back

d ændbiylyvmiɹæbɔ rɪx li lay t

hɛv yuw kənsɪdɔr dwædi-tɔ ztuw yohrsow

yuw sɛli (t) wɛnyuwpɛy sɛmɔ ʒɔrɔw biy

hang back,

yɔ selfdɪh (ə) ɪnwɔ t yuw kɛwzɔw biy

ay nɛtʃɛɹɪjɪw aɪnɪy-dɪnw kɛnt yuwsɪy

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EL CUEAPO STAC.

17 *4* *2* *2*
 saw traymiy — æ — meybiy — y — l ə v miy — kazay —

19 *1* *2* *3* *4* *5* *6* *7* *8* *9* *10* *11* *12*
 — kənthel pi — t *æ ts əwley with reverb* *æ tay æ*

21 *m* *reverb* *m*
æ ts əwley *æ — tay æ —*

23 *reverb off* *(m)*
 ay əwnt now hœw tuw sœ —

25 *m*
 m ay — tray tuwduw æbɪŋ z ay fɪx in say

27 *(z)*
 d ænbɪvliymɪy ætsə rɪy l diylay

29 *(z)*
 hæ v yuʊ kən si dər dʊət itdɔ z tuw yɔh r sɔw —

31 *4*
 wɔʊsdi — t wɛnyuʊ pley sɔw ædər ə rɔw — biy vœh

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33 *sel — f dih — in wətyuŋ ɛwzəntiɪ*

35 *aylɔt ɛɛnɪyɔw — ɔyniɔd yuŋ kɛnt yuŋsi* *free*

37 *sən traymiɪ æ meɪbiɪ yuŋla miɪ kɔɪzay lɛən*

39 *theɪpi — (ɛ) ʒætʃə — w — ey ʒæ — t ay —*

41 *æ — (m)*

Betty Carter (SE)

Handwritten musical score for "Betty Carter" (labeled "Betty Carter" in the top right). The score is written on ten staves, numbered 49 to 73. The tempo is marked "♩ = 126-132". The lyrics are written below the notes. The score includes various musical notations such as treble clefs, key signatures (one flat), time signatures (3/4), and various note values (quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes, rests). There are also some handwritten annotations like "3" above notes, indicating triplets. The lyrics are in a stylized, possibly phonetic, script. The score ends with a double bar line on staff 73.

7. You're Driving Me Crazy

Betty Carter (58)

$J = 216-224$

35 wiy dow yu da da da lay da h a ba da an

37 ba a di da la di di l ya dey an

39 low ba dow bun ba ba duw an di da la dow ba di da la duw pa

41 wiy wi ba hay a dey ha duw pa hay a da pa

43 he da la ba pr biy ba di da la da dow da pa wiy pa di da la

45 de sa diy ba a wiy ba ba ba di day day

47 da dow waw wu wu wu wiy ba ha di da la

49 wiy da liy da ha di da la bi da liy da ha di da la

51 wiy dow bow hiy a da day on duw ba

53 yok yok ya ka wiy ka wi ka duw diy

55 alya di da la di da la da he da di da la di da la di da la

57 a a la ba wiy ba duw bun wiy dan yey

Handwritten musical score for a song, measures 59-69. The notation is in a single system with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The lyrics are: a hey lya do ba da duw — iy buw wiy ba do la biy do liy ba ba de de di do la be duw ba dido la buw ba ba ba ba di wiy wi do luw bap yi do luw bap wi do luw bap wiy duw.

59 a hey lya do ba da duw — iy buw

61 wiy ba do la biy do liy ba ba

63 de de di do la be duw ba dido la

65 buw ba ba ba ba di wiy wi do luw bap

67 yi do luw bap wi do luw bap wiy

69 duw

8. What A Little Moonlight Can Do (Carter, 1960)

$\text{♩} = 144$

uw wot alidol muw nlay tkæn

dun wot alidol muw nlay tkæn

uw wot alidol muw nlay tkæn

dun tan yuu

yoh rin la v ya ha to fla da ri

nah ldey loh y yuw on liy sta da biy

Koh zyoh rts y jas wil nat ata as

wur (d) ay lov yuw

(uw) wot alidol muwnlay tkæn

dun

wen da hway l til alidol muwn biym kam

z piy pi y Oruw

Handwritten musical score for a song, featuring ten staves of music with lyrics in a non-Latin script. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Lyrics (approximate transcription):

29 yuw l get bow yuw kæn triy zis thim æn
 31 oh lyuw sey hwen yuw hærkis thim iz
 33 uw hwæt ælidæl muwn lay
 35 kæ nduw
 37 (6) (tenor solo) (tutti) 6 (piano) 2 tutti 2
 53 uw hwæt ælidæl muwn layt kæn
 55 duw
 57 wey dæ way til ælidæl muwn biy mæn
 59 piy pi æruw
 61 yuw l get bow yuw kæn triy zis thim ænd
 63 oh lyuw sey hwen yuw hærkis thim iz
 65 uw hwæt ælidæl muwn nlayt kæn

Handwritten musical notation on three staves, measures 67-81. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff (measure 67) contains a half note on G4, a whole note on A4, and a half note on B4, all connected by a slur. The second staff (measure 69) contains a half note on G4, a whole note on A4, and a half note on B4, all connected by a slur. The third staff (measure 81) contains a half note on G4, a whole note on A4, and a half note on B4, all connected by a slur. The notation is handwritten and includes some additional markings such as "dww" and "(uw)".

9. The Good Life

(Carter-62)

$\text{♩} = 56$

ow — do — ga day — f fulav

fa nsiyntuwbiy diy ay diy

(1) ye — sōgu day — (f) le

tsuwhay dohl do sōdne syuw fiy

yaw wow ntri y liy

foh lin to — V fohyunkenttey — k do deh —

ns sow — liya — ne — st wi —

— yoh se — (f) downtray twofyk row meh —

B The
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Handwritten musical score with lyrics in Chinese characters and Pinyin. The score consists of nine staves, each with a measure number on the left and lyrics below the notes. The lyrics are written in Chinese characters and Pinyin.

16 (eh) — ns i(yt) sōa gudlay — f tanbiy

18 friy — æn e ksplohr ʒhiy æn now

20 — (ow) — (n) lay kōa har-dey — ks hwenyuu

22 lər — n yuu mōsfey sōe — m a low

24 — (n) pliy zriy member

26 ay stial wantyuu — ændin key — s yuu

28 wanda hway — wel — j æs wey kō — (p)ki —

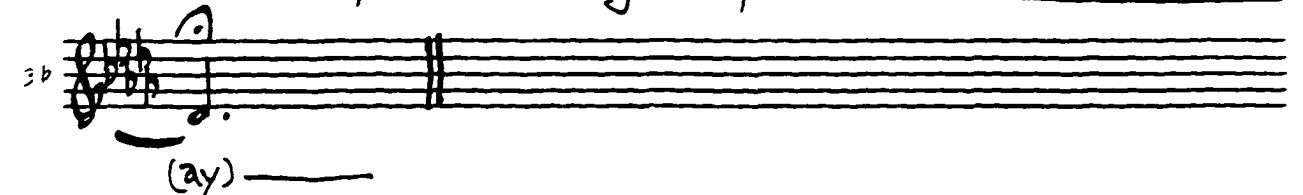
30 sōa gudlay — f gudbay

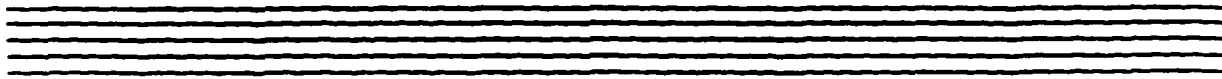
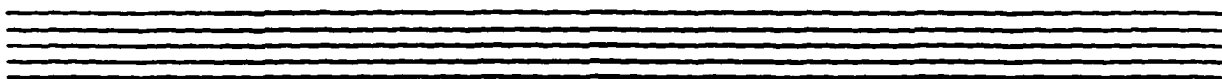
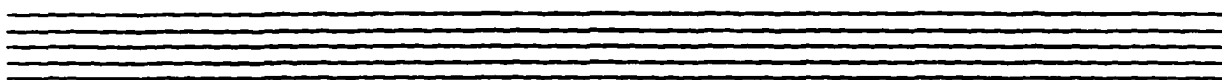
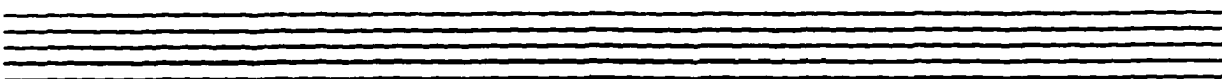


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32 
wel — ja s way ka — p ki —

34 
— sō gud bay — f gud bay —

36 
(ay) —



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10. Open The Door

(Carter, 64)

$\text{♩} = 120$
 $\text{E}^{\flat}$: 2 drums I 2 +bass I +piano 8

I
 ow pin to dohr dih

ii⁷
 27 m as gidin yoh ha-

IV^{b7 13}
 yoh may Li i

ha d tuw

I
 biy traw V⁷
 sow piy

I
 kam ow pin to dohr

dih

Handwritten musical score for a song, featuring ten staves of music with lyrics in Chinese characters and Pinyin. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X) are used to indicate chord changes. The lyrics are written in Chinese characters with Pinyin below them. The score is written on ten staves, with the first staff starting with a key signature of two flats and a time signature of 4/4. The lyrics are: 2nd 2en po haps yuwl fay, yunvhae dmiy an yohr may, now mze tor, haw yun tray, tw, a voy dmiy yunkzen, gedz wey swiy z liy, fyuw wi lnat kam tw.

fyuw wi lnat kam tw

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miya — ka. — m — tur yuw

ow pin ɛə dohr

ply 2 hway

may kniybe — gænd be — hway for ɛə

miy tay kəi — s —

kæn tyuw — siy

ayv gat lo plen

tiy ləv tur gi — v tur yuw

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'EL CHEAPO' brand

Handwritten musical score for guitar. The score is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music consists of several measures with various chords and melodic lines. Chords are labeled with Roman numerals and accidentals: iv^7 , iii^7 , $bIII^7$, ii^7 , I , bII^7 , and iii^7 . The lyrics are written below the staff: "ayrgatla", "l-a-tsa", "v", "lar", "vhwgi", "v", "tuw", "yuv", "ay-vga", "Ha", and "(v)". The piece ends with a "fade I" instruction.

11. I Could Write A Book

(Carter '69)

Handwritten musical score for "I Could Write A Book" (Carter '69). The score is written on 12 staves, numbered 1 through 12. The tempo and meter markings are as follows:

- Staff 1: *frady* $\text{♩} = 118$ *rit. accel.* $\text{♩} = 168$ $\text{♩} = 84$
- Staff 5: $\text{♩} = 152$ *rit.* $\text{♩} = 152$
- Staff 9: $\text{♩} = 100$ $\text{♩} = 152$ $\text{♩} = 84$
- Staff 13: *rit.* $\text{♩} = 84$ *rit.* $\text{♩} = 168$
- Staff 17: $\text{♩} = 84$ *accel.* $\text{♩} = 336$ $\text{♩} = 84$
- Staff 21: $\text{♩} = 168$ *rit.* $\text{♩} = 168$
- Staff 25: *rit.* $\text{♩} = 84$ $\text{♩} = 116$
- Staff 29: $\text{♩} = 84$ $\text{♩} = 264-276$
- Staff 33: $\text{♩} = 84$
- Staff 37: *delayed* $\text{♩} = 84$
- Staff 41: $\text{♩} = 84$
- Staff 45: $\text{♩} = 84$

The lyrics are written below the notes. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The final staff (45) ends with the word "(curl)".

M-780
12 Staves

THE BOSTON MUSIC COMPANY

49 *si meol simpal siykrita vmay ple t i = z jus tuw*

53 *to loem jætay lar vyuw la-t æn dæa*

57 *wur l di sta vurz æ may bnt en z hæn tuw mey*

61 *k tuw l2 vurza fren (z) wæw tun*

65 *mei k tuw l2 vurzar fre n z*

accel. . . . l = 126

12. I Could Write A Book

(Carter, 70)

if ðey æ skniy (a) bet) ayku raydo bu k

5 wey yaw wolk ænd wispa (r) æn lu k ay kud

9 ray do pre fis æn hæn why me t æn may

13 nurl (d) wud neva fohr ge ow æ

17 sim pøl siykri far iz jus tuw

21 tel æem ææ tay lavyaw æ - ta ænd ææ

25 nurl - di sto væz hæn may buk æn - dz ow hæn tuw

29 mey - k tuw væz æv fre næ

33 if ðey

37

41

45

M-780
12 Staves

THE BOSTON MUSIC COMPANY

Handwritten musical notation on five staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation is written in a fluid, handwritten style. The first staff is numbered 49, the second 53, the third 57, the fourth 61, and the fifth 65. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Seven empty musical staves, each consisting of five lines, arranged vertically. These staves are provided for additional musical notation.

13. I Carit Help It

♩ = 148

(Carter, 72)

4 3

a — (h)

9 kənt hel — pi — t ʒæts ʒə wey ʒætay

12 æm (h)ay kənt hel — pi — t

15 a downow — hœw də ʒæ — m ay tray də

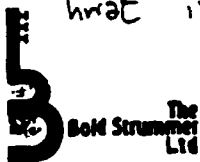
18 duw ʒə ʒi — ʒz ay fiy — lin — say — d biy

sharp... sharp...

21 liy — vmiy i ts a riyl diy lay

24 (t) hæ v yuw kən — si — dər — d

27 hwæt it dəz tuwyoħr sow | yə s — e li — t hwən



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sharp

30 yuw pley sãma — zã — zrow — 1 Sow biy —

33 yã se — Ifdih — 2 inwat yuw zãw zãw

even eights . . .

36 biy downlet zãem key — nãyuw —

39 zãey niydyuw — kãe nãe — siy — Sow trayi — (t)

42 an mey — biy — yuwlay kit kãza —

45 kãenthe — lpi — (t) zãe — ts

48 zã wey — zãe — day — zã

51 m a — (changing slightly to /eh/)

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EL CHAPC BRAC.

54 (eh)

57 8 hɛ v yuw kən si də

67 d hwa titdə z tawya sow — | yə se li — t wen

70 yuw pley sənə ɔə zrow — | sow bi yə

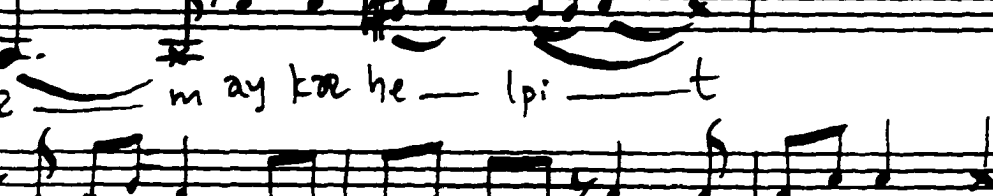
73 se — l f di h — ɔ z In wha tyuw ɛw z to

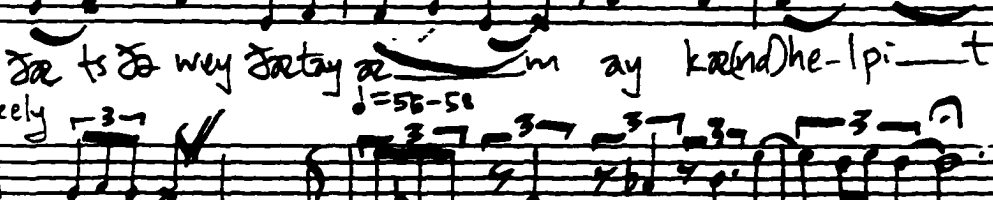
76 bi y — down let tæm ɛy — n j yuw —

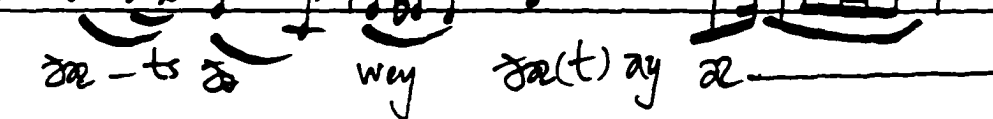
79 ɛy ni y dyuw kɛ n ɔ si y — sow tray i —

82 t an mey — bi y — yuw lay kit kəza

85 
kænte lpi t æt sœ wey æt tay

88 
æ m ay kæ he lpi t

91 
æt sœ wey æt tay æ m ay kæ (nd) he lpi t

94 
æt - sœ wey æt (t) ay æ (m)



'EL CHEAPO' Brand.

14. Open the Door

(Betty Carter, 1976)

♩ = 170-172

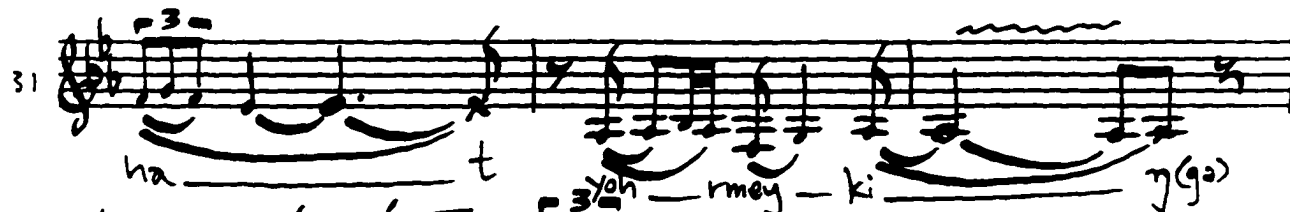
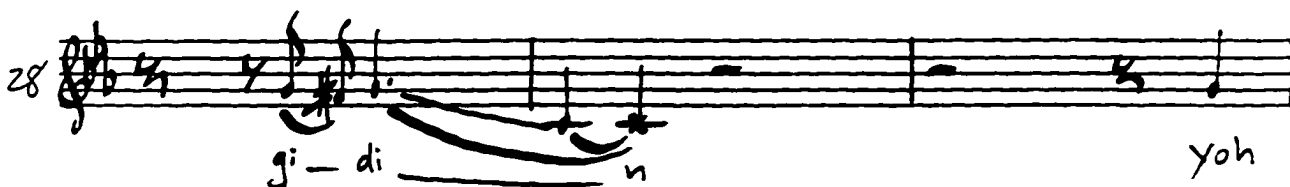
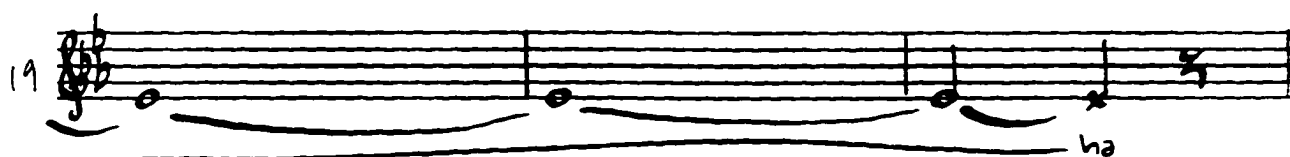
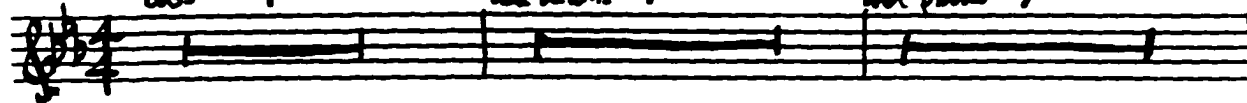
Latin

bass

4

add drums 4

add piano 7



Handwritten musical score on ten staves, numbered 37 to 58. The notation includes notes, rests, and various musical symbols. Below the notes are handwritten lyrics in a phonetic script.

Staff 37: *tuw biy traw*

Staff 40: *tuw biy traw*

Staff 43: *Siw pliy ka*

Staff 46: *Siw pliy ka*

Staff 49: *m ow pi*

Staff 52: *n x deh*

Staff 55: *(a)r may deh a*

Staff 58: *hwe n'oe n pa hre*

61
 — p — s yaw-wi-l fay —

64
 tadyuwa mey miy a-n yoh —

67
 may — (n) —

70
 now —

73
 (cw) — mr — to —

76
 hæw —

79
 yaw — tray —

82
 twa roy — dmiy —

85 yuw kən t (ŋ)ge də

88 wey (hə) Sow iy zliy

91 (iy)

94 (iy)

97 (w) i f yuw

100 (uw) wi lna

103 t ka m tə miy chray

106 al ka m

Handwritten musical score with lyrics and musical notation. The score is written on ten staves, numbered 109 to 130. The lyrics are in a non-Latin script, possibly Georgian, and are written below the musical notation. The notation includes notes, rests, and various musical symbols.

Staff 109: *begins on 4th beat*
 tuw (y)uw

Staff 112: ow

Staff 115: pin — do — doh — (h)

Staff 118: pliy — z

Staff 121: hway meyk miy be gan be gnte gan be

Staff 124: gan be gan be g (m)be

Staff 127: g be — g way — tch rā-rmiy

Staff 130: (iy)

133 (h)lay — (k) æ

136 kœ — ntyuw — siy

139 (iy)

142 (iy) ay — vga —

145 t la — v plenti la v tæ

148 gi — (v) tuw yuw

151 (iy) — (hæ) ha — ga —

154 (a) — t la — ow

Handwritten musical score on ten staves, numbered 157 to 178. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs, along with handwritten lyrics and performance markings.

Staff 157: (ow) —

Staff 160: ha (ow) la — t — a — la — (v)

Staff 163: tuw gi — tuw —

Staff 166: (uw) (ha) ay —

Staff 169: (ay) ga —

Staff 172: t — la —

Staff 175: la — la —

Staff 178: (a) — v — la — v

181 hay — v ga — tla —

184 — v ay — rga —

187 tla — v

190 (h)ay — rga — tla — v

193 ay — rga — tla —

196 (a) — (v)

15. Open ³⁹⁶the Door

(Carter, 79)

$\text{♩} = 208-216$ bass 8 + drums

mp

do

11

do

14

+ piano

n duw— duw— duw—

hm

17

duw— duw— ay duw—

20

duw wiyun iyaw

23

duw—

26

le dey dey dey dey dey dey

29

dey—

Handwritten musical score for a vocal line, featuring lyrics in a non-Latin script. The score is written on ten staves, each beginning with a measure number (32, 35, 38, 41, 44, 47, 50, 53) and a treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes, often with horizontal lines indicating long notes or breaths. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte). The lyrics are: *ow po n do*, *doh r*, *ma di*, *ho*, *a ma s ge di n yo ha*, *(a) - t*, *yoh mey*, *king it*, and *ha*.

32 *mf* *ow po n do*

35 *doh r*

38 *f* *ma di*

41 *ho*

44 *mf* *a ma s ge di n yo ha*

47 *(a) - t*

50 *yoh mey*

53 *king it* *ha*

56 (a) — d

59 ya — mey — kingit ha d tuwbiy truw —

62 (uw) — sa pliy —

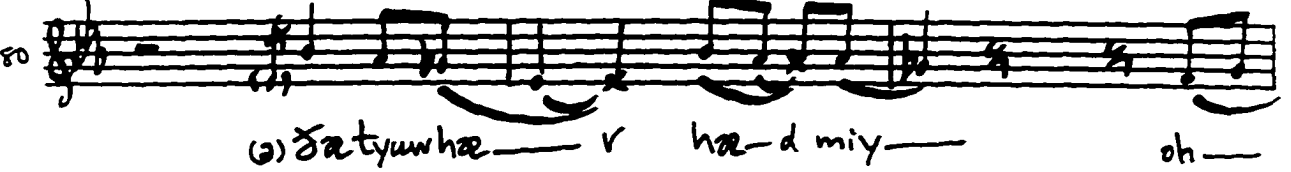
65 (iy) — z

68 ow — pe — n ja —

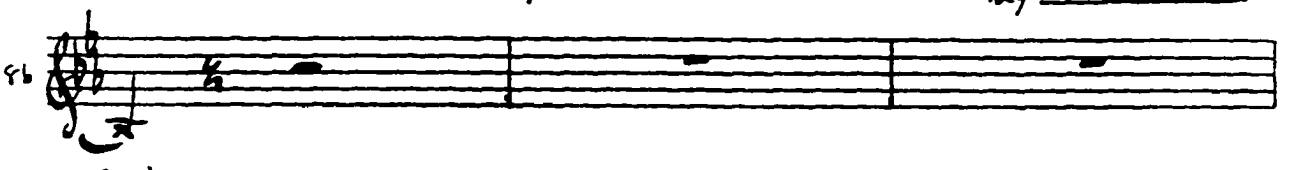
71 (ə) — doh — (hə)

74 *mf* ma dih — (hə) æn ʒe

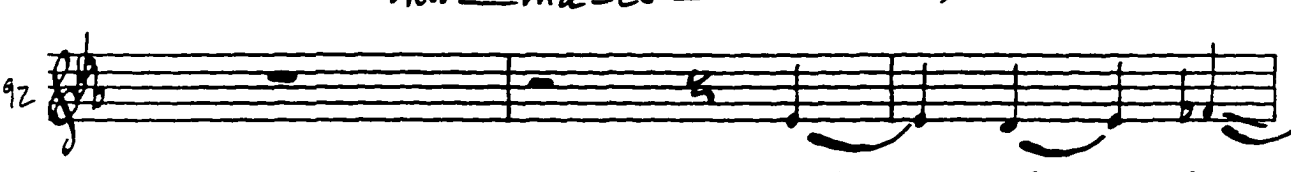
77 (e) — npə — hæ — psya — l fay — (n)

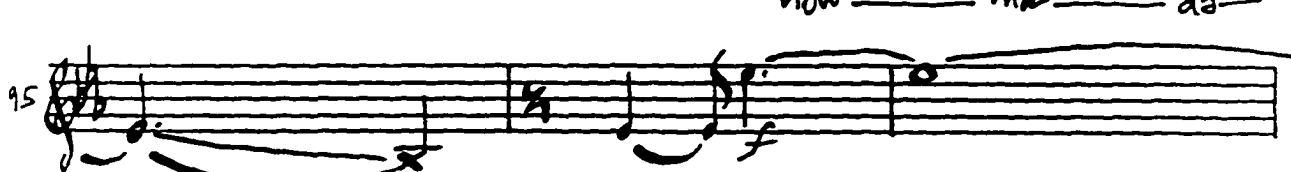
80 
(a) Ša tyuwhæ — r hæ-d miy — oh —

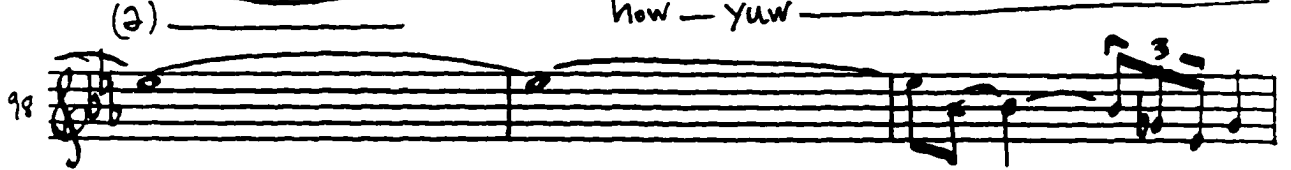
83 
(oh)n yoh — may —

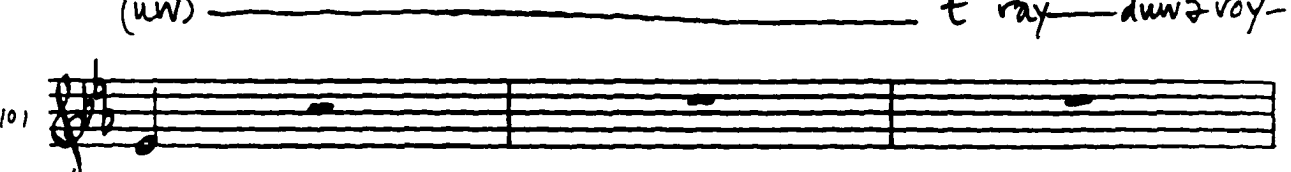
86 
(no)

89 
now — mæ-tæ — (hæ)

92 
now — mæ — da —

95 
(a) how — yuw —

98 
(uw) t ray — duwə-voy —

101 
dmiy

104 *mf* (h) yuw-kænt gedə-wey —

107 sow iy — z liy —

110 sow iy — z liy —

113 (h) i — fyuw —

116 (uw) —

119 wi — l — n — a — t kə — m

122 *mf* tɯw — miy —

125 al kə — m — tɯw yuw

Handwritten musical score for a song, featuring eight staves of music. The lyrics and phonetic notations are as follows:

128 (uw) —

131 (uw) — on — po — n

134 doh — r — (ho) — ply —

137 (iy) — z — s —

140 way meyk miy

143 be — gn be — gn be — gn be — gn be —

146 (e) gæn be — (g)

149 way — toh — ræ — rmiy lay —

152 *kāi* — *s*

155 *mp*
kehntuw siy —

158 *ay* — *v*

161 *ga tla* — *(v)*

164 *f*
ple ntiy-l-a — *v* — *ta gi* — *v*

167 *kehntuw* — *siy* —

170 *(iy)* —

173 *(iy)* —

Handwritten musical score on ten staves, numbered 176 to 197. The notation includes notes, rests, and various musical markings such as *mf*, *hang back*, and *hang back* with arrows. The lyrics are written below the notes.

176 (y) — 3a — day — vga — tla — v

179 la ta vla — vtuv gi

182 vtuv gi — v

185 *mf* tuw — yuw

188 (uw)

191 (uw)

194 (uw)

197 *mf* la — vtuv gi vtuv yuw

197 *hang back* *hang back*

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff, showing measures 200 through 221. The notation includes notes, rests, and lyrics in a non-Latin script, likely representing a vocal melody. The lyrics are written below the staff, often with horizontal lines indicating long notes or breaths. The notation is in a single system, with measures numbered on the left.

Measures and lyrics:

- 200: (uw) — dim... hay ga—
- 203: tla — v
- 206: ta gi — v ta yuw — (ha)
- 209: ay — vga — t la — v
- 212: tuw gi — v tuw—
- 215: (uw) yuw — hay — v — ga tla —
- 218: (a) — (v)
- 221: ta gi — v

Handwritten musical score for a song, featuring seven staves of music. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes, and there are various performance markings such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Staff 1 (Measures 224-227):
Lyrics: *tagi*
Markings: *slow fade*, *v*

Staff 2 (Measures 230-233):
Lyrics: *tuw - yuw*
Markings: *(uw)*

Staff 3 (Measures 236-239):
Lyrics: *(uw)*

Staff 4 (Measures 242-245):
Lyrics: *(uw)*

Staff 5 (Measures 248-251):
Lyrics: *(uw)*

Staff 6 (Measures 254-257):
Lyrics: *(uw)*

Staff 7 (Measures 260-263):
Lyrics: *(uw)*

16. I Could Write A Book

(Betty Carter, 1979)

[A] 1-140-144

1- ey - n dey diydawdiydidiydaw

hang back

duw da da dowa diyd diyd da da da dow (n) lo dadow dey dey lad

low dow ley ow ley ow ley

nasal

yow uw duw da dey

hang back

duw duw duw diyd duw low dow lowdow lowdow lowdow

low to dey dey skenywastintan

lowdow duw duw low de

low dey bow da ba low bow baya

B The
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Ltd

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[B]

25 dohdot daydoh diŋ (a) kurdistandiy yow

28 la la low la liyŋ

31 ley u dey u **[A]** ley ka ba da

34 dey da da da da da dow—(n) ba

37 *hang* liydaw diydawdiy liydaw diydaw dundundundaw dey

40 **[B]** dey—(n) bow dey bow dey m bey

43 da dow bebe be be be dow be be be bep be be be be bow bey be bow be bey

46 baba dow la low leyŋ le ley low la la leyŋ liyla low la ley la low le le le low

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“EL CHEAPO” BRAND.

49 **A**

le ley le le low ley dey dow la low bow bow bow dow la bey bey

52

bey bey jan hi — ks —

55 **B**

ba pla — de —

58

la bow la dla dla daw da (a)

61

la dlow la dlow dlow — mblyə dey

64 **A**

hang →

(m)bulya dey i — f ʒey æ — s — miy

67

a kudrayda bu — (k)

70

a bɹwɹəsiweyɹə wəh — (k) (h)ændwi — spə rændlu — k

B The Bold Strummer Ltd

“EL CHEAPO” brand.

73 B

ay — kudray — dāpřefos an hřew —

76 wiy — me — t řen řo wur lřwāne — vā

79 fohřge — t A

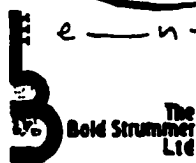
82 řā si mřā l siy křitā vřay pla — t

85 hang back i z juř tur řel řem — řāt ay

88 B la — vywā la — t

91 n řo wur lřis kō — vā — z řez mā bu — k

94 e — n — dz hředā mey křit

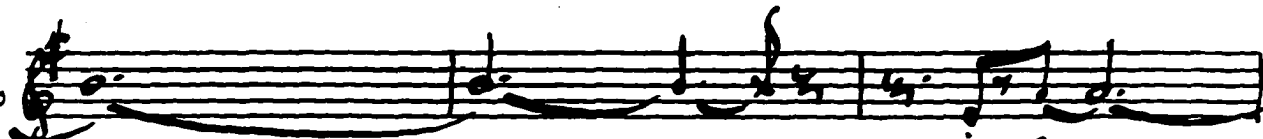


"EL CHEAPO" BRASS.

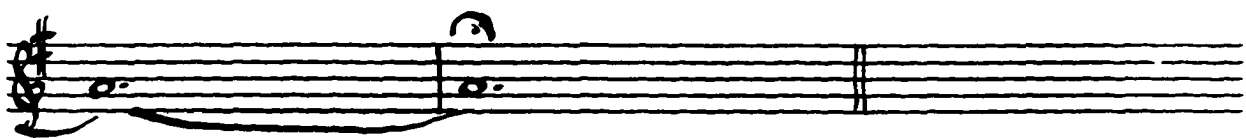
CODA

97 

hæw-tun mey-k tun lovur

100 

2 or fre

103 

12

Appendix III: The Phonetic Transcriptions

The Phonetic Transcriptions

The Trager-Smith Phonemes give us an answer to George Bernard Shaw's quip that an Englishman could spell the word "fish," ghoti, by using the gh in "tough", the o in "women", and the ti in "motion." Phonetic spellings such as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), allow us to notate the sounds of spoken and sung English with a logic unavailable to us through the use of standard spelling. They reveal the consistency of sound that lies behind such poetic devices as assonance and rhyme, despite the frequent inconsistency of spelling peculiar to English. I have chosen to use Trager-Smith phonemes rather than the IPA because they help to clarify certain structural features of the English language having to do with how speakers and singers produce speech sounds. Following standard practice, phonemes will always get shown between slanted bars (/a/).

Figure I below shows the consonants arranged according to their vocal production. Those consonants on the left of the chart get produced toward the front of the mouth, and those on the right of the chart get produced toward the back of the mouth. As we shall see, the notation of consonants resembles standard spelling more than the notation of vowels, so we will begin with the former. Notice, for example, the one-to-one correspondence between standard English spelling of the following sounds with their Trager-Smith phonemes:

/p/, /t/; /b/, /d/; /s/, /v/; /m/, /n/; /l/ and /r/.

Figure I: Consonants

pop /p/				tight /t/		kick /k/
Bob /b/				did /d/		gag /g/
					church /tʃ/	
					judge /dʒ/	
	fife /f/	thin /θ/	sass /s/		shush /ʃ/	
	valve /v/	this /ð/	zebra /z/		measure /z/	
mum /m/			nun /n/			sing /ŋ/
			lull /l/	rear /r/		

In order to identify a sound with one and only one symbol, T-S phonemes distinguish among certain sounds for which we have several standard spellings: the phoneme /k/ gets used for the hard "k" sound wherever it occurs ("kite" = /kayt/, "cat" = /kæt/, and "quit" = /kwit/). The phoneme /g/ gets used only for the hard "g" sound ("gag" = /gæg/), which reserves /j/ for both "j" and soft "g," ("judge" = /jəʒj/). The phoneme /z/ gets used for "zebra" (ziybrə/ and "xylem" (/zayləm/)

Likewise, the phoneme /f/ applies equally to the initial consonants in "fife" (/fayf/) and "phase" (/feyz/) as well as the final consonant in "rough" (/rəf/). The standard use of two letters (ph and gh) for /f/ in the latter two words misleadingly suggests the presence of a consonantal cluster. For the same reason the words "church" and "shush" each use a single phoneme, /tʃ/ and /ʃ/ respectively, for their initial consonant sound (producing /tʃurʃ/ and /ʃəʃ/). The T-S system distinguishes between the initial consonants in the words "thin" and "this" with the following symbols: /θ/ (/θin/) and

/ʒ/ (/ʒis/), respectively. It uses the symbol /ʒ/, which the French write as j, for the sounds made by j in the word "measure," and z in the word "azure." Lastly, the final consonant in the word "sing" appears as /ŋ/ (/siŋ/). In the above ways, the Trager-Smith phonemes account for disparities between the sound and standard spelling of consonants.

The elegance of the Trager-Smith system is revealed most, however, in the realm of vowels, otherwise known as vocalic nuclei. By giving us a graphic representation of the ways that short and long vowels get produced differently, the T-S phonemes clarify an important structural feature of the English language. In order to demonstrate how this works, I will begin with short vowels, or simple vocalic nuclei.

In Figure II we notice that several of the phonemes for short vowels resemble the letters often used for them.

Figure II: Short vowels

pit	/i/		put	/u/	
pet	/e/	cut	/ə/	Paul	/oh/
pat	/æ/	pale	/eh/	pot	/a/

The phonemes /i/, /e/ and /u/ get used to notate their corresponding short vowel sounds, as in "pit," "pet" and "put" respectively, the first two exclusively so. We spell the latter sound in several ways, however, and therefore need to use /u/ to show the vowel sound in words such as "would"

and "look" (/wud/ and /luk/). The phoneme /a/ represents the short "o" sound, as in "par," as well as the vowel sound in words such as "odd" and "John" (/ad/ and /jan/). The reason for this choice of symbol will become clear in our discussion of long vowels, or complex vocalic nuclei.

The letter a serves so many phonetic masters that we need at least four phonemes to account for the ways it gets used. For the a in "pat" we use the phoneme /æ/ (/pæt/); for the a in "pale" as well as the ai in "pail," the ei in "veil" and the au in "laugh" we use the phoneme /eh/ (/pehl/, /vehl/, /lehf/). For the a in "all" as well as the o in "song," the oa in "oar," the aw in "law" and the au in "caught" we use the phoneme /oh/ (/ohl/, /soh/, /ohr/, /loh/, and /koht/). The role of the /h/ in these last two phonemes (/eh/ and /oh/) will become clear shortly. For the a in "above" as well as the o in the same, the u in "up" and the ou in "rough" we use the schwa symbol, regardless of whether or not the syllable receives a stress (/ə/ (/əbav/, /əp/ and /rəf/).

The semi-vowel phonemes listed below, often called glides, act as consonants when they occur before vowels, for example in the words "yes," "hat" and "with."

Figure III: Semi-vowels

yes /y/

hat /h/

with /w/

When semi-vowels occur after a simple vocalic nuclei the combination of the two produces a complex vocalic nuclei, both in long vowels and in diphthongs. Significantly, the phoneme for each glide indicates the modifying influence of the shape of the mouth on the production of the vowel. In the /y/ glide the tongue moves forward and higher and the lips spread, or widen; in the /h/ glide the tongue moves toward a central position without any spreading or rounding of the lips, and in the /w/ glide, the tongue moves back and higher and the lips round. Say the phrase "two tall trees" to experience the changes made by the mouth in order to produce each vowel sound (/tuw/tohl/triyz/).

Figure IV, shows the long vowels and some of the diphthongs that occur in the English language. Those on the left show the effect on the simple vowels /i/, /e/, and /a/ produced by the widening of the lips shown by /y/. Those on the right show the effect on the simple vowels /u/ /o/ produced by the rounding shown by /w/. The two complex nuclei in the middle of Figure IV show the diphthongs /yuw/ and /oy/.

Figure IV: Long vowels and diphthongs

beat /iy/	dispute /yuw/	boot /uw/
bait /ey/	boy /oy/	boat /ow/
bite /ay/		about /æw/

Figure V shows how to apply the T-S system to the lyrics of a song.

Figure V: "I Didn't Know What Time It Was," spelled phonetically using the Trager-Smith phonemes.

I didn't know what time it was.
/ay/didn/ now/ wət/taym/it/wəz/

Then I met you.
/θen/ay/met/yuw/

Oh, what a lovely time it was.
/ow/ wəd/ ə/levliy/taym/it/wəz/

How sublime it was too!
/həw/sə blaym/it/wəz/tuw/

I didn't know what day it was.
/ay/didn/ now/ wət/dey/it/wəz/

You held my hand.
/yuw/held/may/hənd/

Warm like the month of May it was
/wohrm/layk/ ðə /mənθ/əv/mey/it/wəz/

And I'll say it was grand.
/ænd/ ayl/ sey/it/wəz/grænd/

Grand to be alive, to be young.
/grænd/tuw/biy/ əlayv/ tuw/biy/yəŋ/
to be mad, to be yours alone!
/tuw/biy/məd/tuw/biy/yohrz/ əlown/

Grand to see your face, feel your touch.
/grænd/tuw/siy/yohr/feys/ fiyl/yohr/təʃ/
hear your voice say I'm all your own!
/hihr/yohr/voys/ sey/aym/ohl/yohr/ own/

I didn't know what year it was.
/ay/didn/ now/ wə t/yihr/it/wəz/

Life was no prize.
/layf/wəz/nəw/prayz/

I wanted love and here it was
 /ay/wantid/ləv/and/hihr/it/wəz/

Shining out of your eyes.
 /ʃayni ŋwt/əv/yohr/ayz/

I'm wise and I know what time it is now!
 /aym/wayz/and/ay/now/ wət/ taym/it/iz/nəw/

Appendix IV: "I Could Write A Book"

Handwritten musical score for piano and voice, featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment across multiple staves. The score includes lyrics and various musical notations such as notes, rests, and chords.

Vocal Line:

- Lyrics: "If they", "I asked me", "I could write a book", "a - bout the"

Piano Accompaniment:

- Chords and notes are written across the piano staves, including a complex section with many beamed notes.

Staff Labels (Left Margin):

- 1955
- 1969A
- 1969B
- 1979A
- 1979B
- 1979C
- 55
- 69A
- 69B
- 79A
- 79B
- 79C

Chord Symbols (Below Piano Staff):

- I iii⁶ I
- I vi ii⁷ I⁷ I vi ii⁷ I⁷

orig 5 way you walk and whisper and look ————— I could

1955

1969A

1969B

1979A

1979B

1979C

orig 9 write a preface on how we meet and the

55

69A

69B

79A

79B

79C

ori. 13 world would never for- get ——— And the

1955 V^6 bIII^3 vi^7 $\text{IV}^{\frac{7}{2}}$ $\text{V}^{\frac{7}{2}}$ ii^7 V^7 $\text{I}^{\frac{7}{2}}$

1969A

1969B

1979A

1979B $\text{ii}^{\frac{7}{2}}$ $\text{II}^{\frac{7}{2}}$ ii^7 $\text{V}^{\frac{7}{2}}$

1979C

orig 17 Sim ple se cret of the plot ——— it just to

55 I iii I V^7 I V^7 I

61A

69B

79A

79B vi ii^7 V^7 I vi ii^7 V^7

79C

ori. ²⁴ tell them that I love you a lot ————— Then the

1955

1969

1969B

1979A

1979B

1979C

25 world dis — cover as my book ends how to

55

69A

69B

79A

79B

79C

or. 29 make two lovers of friends

1955 I⁶ + I⁶ ii⁷ V⁷ I (ii V⁷)

1969A

1969B

1979A

1979B

1979C

33

55

69A

69B

79A

79B

79C

79C (coda) 37

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The symbol in brackets following each entry indicates the code used to designate recordings for Appendix 1: Index of Song Titles. For each artist the entries are arranged chronologically.

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- . Out There. Progressive Jazz 90 (1957; Produced by Peacock in Houston, TX. Released in 1958) [PJ58].
- . The Modern Sound of Betty Carter. ABC-Paramount 363. (1960). [Pa60].
- . What A Little Moonlight Can Do. Reissue by Impulse, ASD-9321, in 1976 of Progressive Jazz 90 (1958) and ABC-Paramount 363 (1960).
- . I Can't Help It. Later reissue by Impulse! of above on CD, GRD-114.
- . Ray Charles and Betty Carter. ABC-Para. 385. (1961; reissue by Dunhill Compact Classics, DZL-039, in 1988). [Pa61].
- . 'Round Midnight. Atco-33-152. (1962; listed as Atco 6239 in Bruyninckx; with Claus Ogerman and Oliver Nelson. Reissue by Atco on CD7 80453-2.) [At62].
- . Inside Betty Carter. UAS-5639 (1964; listed in Down Beat (August, 1989) as Bet-Car 1000. Reissue by Capitol Jazz CDP 0777 7 89702 2 4 with previously unreleased material from sessions in 1965.) [UA64 and UA65].
- . Finally Betty Carter. Roulette SR-5000. (1969; produced by Bush records; Released by Roulette in 1975; sold to Roulette in 1981. Reissued by Roulette on CD, CDP 7953332.) [R69a].
- . 'Round Midnight. Roulette SR-5001. (1969; released by Roulette in 1975; sold to Roulette in 1981. Reissued by Roulette on CD, CDP 7 95999 2.) [R69b].
- . Betty Carter: at the Village Vanguard. Bet-Car MK-1001. (1970; reissue by Verve, 314 519 851-2.) [BC70].
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