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The Evolution of Improvisation in Early Jazz Piano Pedagogy*

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ABSTRACT: This article engages the history of jazz theory, investigating how the concept of improvisation evolved pedagogically in jazz piano methods from ragtime to the early 1930s. Early jazz theory publications did not teach improvisation as currently conceived, but rather how to play popular songs as *songs* with their melodies recognizable as such. In the 1910s, this primarily meant how to "rag" melodies, and then, in the 1920s, how to insert "breaks," or short, improvisational fills. In the early 1930s, however, a new understanding of improvisation emerged for pianists. Building on the idea of breaks, the *Vincent Lopez Modern Piano Method* (1933–34) taught students to play "hot," to improvise on a tune's form and harmonies with an admixture of the blues. Further, the Lopez method seems to have been the first publication to identify a blues scale, and it anticipates chord-scale theory by equating "blued" chords and blue scales. This article first describes these breakthroughs in detail, then sums up the "hot" approach to improvisation found in the Lopez method, citing writings by Louis Armstrong and others regarding the importance of "hot jazz." By the 1930s, influential critics were advocating this music, rooted in the blues and Black music, as more authentic and artistically valid than conventional popular music. In proceeding from ragtime to the 1930s, this article demonstrates a three-step evolution of jazz piano pedagogy: from ragging tunes, to the use of breaks, to outright improvisation.

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Introduction and Overview

[0.1] Aside from experimental/avant-garde performance or hybrid types of the genre, jazz is usually associated with improvisation on songs, in which the form and chord progression of a given tune underlie soloists' "choruses," improvisational cycles through the form. Improvisations may also be influenced by a tune's melody, although a clearly identifiable interpretation of a tune, a "paraphrase," is usually distinguished from freer improvisations that may offer no clue as to their source. Now, early jazz recordings can be cited in which choruses depart strikingly from the

original melodic material,(1) but such free flights of invention were not encouraged by the pedagogical materials of the day, particularly those for piano, which tended to stress the importance of a song's melody. The *desirability* of jazz improvisations freed from the constraints of the originating song seems to have gained force through the later 1920s into the 1930s.(2)

[0.2] Piano methods are particularly attractive for studying the evolution of jazz improvisation in the early twentieth century, as the instrument was common in households, served as the standard composers' and arrangers' tool, was strongly associated with ragtime, enabled performance by a single player, and could address harmonic as well as rhythmic and melodic aspects of the music. None of the piano methods I have found, including works from the 1890s through the 1920s, describes or advocates improvisation as currently understood.(3)

[0.3] Early on in jazz history, the identifiability of a tune was important. Early jazz, whose complex genesis involved numerous cultures, was a notoriously loose term, ranging over various forms of popular dance music, ragtime, stride piano, commercial (or "vaudeville") blues, "novelty music," "concert jazz," and boogie-woogie: all informally lumped together as "jazz." Nonetheless, the core of jazz performance, at least until the early 1940s, centered around the popular songs of the day, which were often performed for dancing.(4) Following suit, the contemporary pedagogical methods emphasized playing popular songs as *songs* with their melodies recognizable as such, but also how to perform them in the current fashionable style and with greater panache. Pianists playing in groups needed, of course, to follow the roadmaps provided by the arrangements, whether written or worked up by the band, and tailor how and what they played to the instrumental makeup and size of the ensemble. Piano methods, however, focused on solo performance, first with instruction on how to "rag" melodies, and then, in the 1920s, proceeding to introductions, endings, and—most importantly for the future conception of the music—"breaks," that is, short, improvisational song insertions. Breaks became particularly significant during the 1920s, as reflected in jazz piano pedagogy.

[0.4] The *Vincent Lopez Modern Piano Method* (1933a, 1933b, 1934a, 1934b), however, features a more modern approach to jazz improvisation.(5) Referring to choruses divorced from the original songs as "hot," the Lopez method teaches students to devise original "figures," or melodic-harmonic fragments that may be enhanced through "blue playing," which is to say elements abstracted from the blues and Black culture. As explored in Part 4, this article's conclusion, "hot jazz" was the term critics and players were using by the late 1920s and early 1930s to separate what some considered more authentic jazz from generic popular music. The Lopez method advocates this perspective, demonstrating techniques for playing "hot" and "blue."(6) By investigating how the concept of improvisation evolves pedagogically from ragtime, through breaks, to the Lopez method, this article engages early jazz theory and what may be the first jazz piano method to advocate outright improvisation.(7)

[0.5] Part 1 of this article begins with piano pedagogy in the ragtime era, in which improvisation involves "ragging" melodies. The practice can be understood as a play-by-ear counterbalance to the carefully composed work of, say, Scott Joplin, which calls for note-by-note performance.

[0.6] The article continues in Part 2 by surveying jazz piano pedagogy in the 1920s. There, improvisation turns from ragging melodies to enhancing song performance, including what seems to be the paramount focus: the insertion of breaks. The methods mostly instruct the student to memorize sample breaks, then apply them as needed to their song performances.

[0.7] Part 3 of the article presents the Lopez method's approach to creating hot jazz choruses, thereby shifting the concepts of improvisation found in the surveyed ragtime and 1920s piano methods. Beginning with "blue" harmonies, the Lopez method proceeds to "blue scales" and the creation of figures, which can be understood as a generalization of breaks. In its identification of a "blue scale," the Lopez method antedates Sargeant's study of the blues and jazz theory ([[1938] 1975) by four years and hints at later chord-scale theory by equating "blued" chords and blue scales. To illustrate the application of these ideas to music examples, I discuss two pieces from the Lopez method and their illustrative "hot" choruses. These pieces are not only representative of late 1920s solo jazz piano but were also apparently inspired by recordings of Fats Waller.

[0.8] Part 4 of the article begins by summarizing the properties of the improvised figures, as conceived by the Lopez method, that reflect the improvisational "formulas" of later jazz theory. It concludes with citations of Louis Armstrong and other critical voices from the 1930s on hot jazz, followed by suggestions for future research.

1. The Pedagogy of "Ragging" Tunes

[1.1] Playing by ear is, of course, a musical practice as old as music itself, but in the 1890s, as the popular music industry was expanding and the ragtime era was beginning, the idea was floated that accompanying popular melodies by ear could be taught. La Motte (1894, 1) calls such free playing "vamping": "Vamping is an Art, by which Any Person musically inclined or gifted, having a knowledge of the notes, can, after a few hours' practice, learn to play by ear an accompaniment on the pianoforte or organ to any song, in any key, without going to the trouble and expense of taking lessons in music."(8) **Example 1** is an excerpt from the La Motte manual with vamping illustrated. There, a I–ii^6–V^7–I chord progression appears with three different figurations that a player might improvise, "giving variety which greatly enhances the accompaniment" (8).(9) La Motte's figurations are presented as improvised accompaniments for a melody either sung or played by another instrument.

[1.2] La Motte 1894 is oriented towards improvising song accompaniments in popular sheet music style. As ragtime grew in popularity through the 1890s, however, so did interest in ragtime improvisation, which was called "ragging." The first publication on how to rag was Harney [1897] 1963, whose instructions, unfortunately, are brief.(10) A more comprehensive example of the techniques involved in ragging follows below, but mention must first be made of Joplin [1908] 1988, a four-page publication with six exercises offering advice from the finest composer of the genre. **Example 2** reproduces its first page.

[1.3] As his introductory remarks make clear, Joplin aims his exercises toward helping pianists acquire the feel of standard ragtime syncopation. Such skills will enable them to play "the real ragtime of the higher class" more effectively; that is, he hopes "to assist amateur players in giving the 'Joplin Rags' that weird and intoxicating effect intended by the composer." Notice that the text accompanying Joplin's Exercise No. 2 refers to vamping as a practice "for those that are careless with the left hand." Accordingly, there is no discussion of ragging popular songs in the publication, whereas this was Harney's [1897] 1963 principal concern; and indeed, Joplin's comment on vamping suggests that he did not approve of the practice—or at least felt that it should be avoided when playing notated ragtime works.

[1.4] Harney [1897] 1963 and Joplin [1908] 1988 both assume keyboard fluency, whereas Christensen 1909 is a more complete piano ragtime method. The work begins with keyboard and music rudiments, followed by a breakdown of characteristic ragtime syncopations, which he calls "movements."(11) **Example 3** shows Christensen's explanation of the first ragtime movement, how it syncopates a given chord into the eight eighth-note subdivisions of the bar; these also appear as eight sixteenth notes in a $\frac{2}{4}$ bar.

[1.5] **Example 4** shows the second and third ragtime movements in comparison to the first movement. Under each is the resulting syncopation of two dotted-eighth notes, then eighth note. The third movement also suggests, in effect, a more complex rhythm of sixteenth, eighth, dotted-eighth, eighth.

[1.6] More akin to Harney [1897] 1963 than to Joplin [1908] 1988, Christensen 1909 teaches students how to "rag" popular melodies. **Example 5** shows different ways that Christensen's first ragtime movement might be realized in a bar of music.

[1.7] Tunes might have, for example, one, two, three, or four chords per bar under melody notes as chord tones. Christensen approaches each of these scenarios in turn. Staff a begins with C5 over a C harmony. Staff b shows that a one-beat change of melody and harmony might take place at the fourth sixteenth note (marked by the vertical line). The third and fourth bars of staff b show the second chord falling on the "and" of beat two; here, the ragged version suggests syncopating the

first chord at the fourth sixteenth note, then the second chord at the seventh sixteenth note. In staff c, a G-major harmony supports a B4–D5–G5 melody in three rhythms, although Christensen recommends the same ragtime interpretation for each. Finally, staff d suggests a way to accommodate four chords in a bar.

[1.8] **Example 6**, along with **Audio Example 1** and **Audio Example 2**, superimposes a lead sheet of the first phrase of "Home, Sweet Home" (Bishop and Payne 1823) over Christensen's ragtime arrangement (16).[(12)] In m. 1 of Ex. 6, the first ragtime movement animates the E4 of the original. In m. 2, Christensen applies the second movement and follows Ex. 5b by changing to the second note at the fourth sixteenth. Christensen's overall arrangement continues by alternating the first movement in the odd bars and the second movement in the even bars. In m. 5, the first movement accommodates the non-chord neighbor E4. In place of the V^7–I cadence of the original (mm. 5–7), the arrangement substitutes a V^7/ii–ii–V^7–I progression beginning in m. 4. The bass line is fashioned through arpeggiation, an effect somewhat akin to the "walking bass" of more contemporary jazz styles.

[1.9] In teaching students how to apply his ragtime movements to song melodies, Christensen 1909 conveys an improvisational approach that preserves the recognizability of the original. The remainder of the volume shows further application of these principles to other melodies along with original rags by Christensen.

[1.10] Beckerman 1918 is also a complete piano method. He approaches ragging a tune in a section beginning on p. 33 (**Example 7** / **Audio Example 3**). Using the melody of "O Come, All Ye Faithful," Beckerman offers two techniques: one relies on only the chord tones of the harmonies while the other introduces non-chord "passing notes."

[1.11] **Example 8** / **Audio Example 4** shows Beckerman's two options for ragging the tune. Aside from the commentary seen in Ex. 8, Beckerman does not provide details on how the "passing notes" of his second example are chosen or used in place of the more conventionally arpeggiated chord tones.

[1.12] The final ragtime method to be considered is Winn 1920, which, again, teaches players how to rag melodies via characteristic rhythms. Among its distinctive features is "discord bass," which is "so called because of the liberal employment of passing tones, which, when introduced in a fundamental chord, produce a discord (dissonance). . . It is most effective when used in contrary motion to the melody or when the melody part is stationary or moves slowly" (14). **Example 9** shows the six-bar opening phrase of "America" ("God Save the King/Queen"). Winn's arrangement follows as **Example 10** / **Audio Example 5**.

[1.13] In Winn's terminology, the "1st Chord of C" is I and the "3rd Chord of C" is V^7 (the "2nd Chord of C" being IV). In converting the tune to ragtime, Winn chooses not to retain the $\frac{3}{4}$ meter (in the manner of a ragtime waltz) but rather expands each $\frac{3}{4}$ bar into two $\frac{2}{4}$ bars. These expansions motivate adding notes to the tune that are not arpeggiations of the harmony, for example, the Bs in m. 1 or the D♯s in m. 5. The "discord bass" of the arrangement creates two sharp clashes with the ragged right-hand melody: the C–C♯ in m. 3 and the E–E♭ of m. 12. The F neighbor tone in m. 6 also clashes against the C harmony, although it does form a double neighbor motion with the D♯ of the left hand with both resolving to E in m. 7. The V^7–I cadence in mm. 10–11 is chromaticized by the D♭ in the bass that mimics the later tritone substitution of jazz harmony.

[1.14] A form of improvisation, transforming "straight" songs into ragtime requires that players parse the harmony into syncopated arpeggiations with possible harmonic substitutions and non-chord tones, all the while modifying the phrasing of the original as needed. For some tunes these procedures are straightforward, while others require more ingenuity. In all cases, however, the ragtime version of a piece is expected to remain recognizable.

2. The Pedagogy of Breaks

[2.1] As with ragging tunes, the insertion of breaks keeps the original melody at the forefront. Breaks are defined in the pedagogical literature as early as Confrey (1923, 5): "The word 'break' is used to indicate the substitution of a piano figure for any part of a given melody. The chorus of a $\frac{2}{4}$ or $\frac{4}{4}$ popular song is generally thirty-two measures in length and in most instances a 'break' may be used to substitute the fifteenth and sixteenth measures." The term "break" is used in two ways: it may refer to the formal position in a piece where the figures, the musical material, are inserted; but it may also refer to the figures themselves. With a history reaching back to the first decade of the century, breaks became a major concern of 1920s pedagogy.(13)

[2.2] Certain breaks feature a syncopated pattern, a cross-rhythm that has been called "secondary rag" (Berlin 1980, 130–34), as seen in **Example 11**. System a locates the secondary-rag pattern in a ragtime composition as early as 1905. Its "three sixteenths" cross-rhythm is bracketed there and appears in all the remaining excerpts of the example.(14)

[2.3] The breaks in Ex. 11 all include "blued thirds" relative to the prevailing harmony, the first of which is circled in each excerpt.(15) A "blued third" is the minor third juxtaposed—sometimes as a simultaneity, sometimes as an incomplete neighbor or grace note—with the major third in a major triad or major-minor seventh chord. It is frequently spelled as a raised major second. As the blues expanded in popularity through the 1910s and especially the 1920s, it was taken up by the piano pedagogues. They do not concern themselves with defining the blues, showing concern for blues authenticity, or specifying the particulars of blues practice, but their general sense of the genre may be inferred, as summarized by the following points:

- Originating in Black culture, the blues is more significantly a popular-music practice than a folk practice (for the purposes of teaching performance).(16)
- As a popular-music practice, blues performers play identifiable songs, although improvisation may be brought to bear on those performances.
- Blues compositions are not limited to the familiar twelve-bar form.
- Non-blues popular songs may be performed in blues-oriented fashion.
- The genre features characteristic melodic figures.
- Harmonically, the blues may be referenced by the inclusion of major-minor seventh chords as possible tonic harmonies and triads and seventh chords "blued" by a major-minor third juxtaposition.

The "blued harmonies" of the last bullet point are featured in numerous breaks. An important feature of the Lopez method, they are discussed more fully in Part 3.(17)

[2.4] The insertion of breaks into tunes probably has its roots in blues practice, as described early on by Niles: "[The break] affords to the improviser, for one thing, a space in which his next idea may go through its period of gestation,—and thus is important to him. But to us it is of far greater interest that, assuming he isn't compelled to concentrate on what is to follow, he can utilize this space, not as a hold, but as a *play-ground* in which his voice or instrument may be allowed to wander in such fantastic musical paths as he pleases, returning (not necessarily but usually) to the key-note, third, or fifth, yet again before the vacation is over. . . [These are called] 'the break,' or 'the jazz'" (1926, 16; his italics). The blues practice Niles describes would be, in part, improvised. That is, the tune being performed would be largely fixed,(18) occupying (mostly) the first two bars of each four-bar phrase, while the breaks would be improvised. Hence, Niles writes "improviser" and equates the terms "the break" and "the jazz." Because mm. 3–4 of each blues phrase typically provides an opportunity for breaks, the practice may have migrated to non-blues tunes where the melody similarly rests (typically mm. 7–8 of an eight-bar song section). Because improvised breaks depend on given harmonies during moments of melodic inactivity, they can serve as stepping stones to outright improvisation.

[2.5] Zez Confrey (1895–1971) was well known in the 1920s as both a pianist and a composer of "novelty" piano works, which expanded upon ragtime conventions. Confrey's 1923 publication on novelty piano features numerous breaks. **Example 12** / **Audio Example 6** shows the first half of his "Simple Melody in C major to demonstrate breaks, which may be substituted for the 15th and 16th

measures." **Example 13** / **Audio Example 7** shows the same piece with a sample break in mm. 15–16 in place of the sustained G4 of Ex. 12.(19)

[2.6] Among the three breaks suggested by Confrey for his "Simple Melody," the one appearing in Ex. 13 is derived from his most famous composition "Kitten on the Keys" (1921). **Example 14** / **Audio Example 8** shows how the derivation was achieved.

[2.7] "Kitten" begins with groups of three in the right hand and contrasting groups of four in the left hand. The blue G♯s and C♯s in mm. 1–2 that resolve, respectively, to A and D are circled, as are similar blued notes through m. 6.(20)

[2.8] In system b, mm. 5–6 of the main theme are transposed to C with lines connecting the corresponding notes of the break to system c, the break itself (see Ex. 13, mm. 15–16). In addition to the "Kitten" break, Confrey's provides a diatonic break with a "secondary rag" cross-rhythm, as shown in system d.

[2.9] Confrey's suggested breaks throughout the volume are organized per key, although some are transpositions of earlier breaks adjusted to accommodate awkward fingerings. Transposition of breaks, after initial demonstration in C, is standard in breaks pedagogy, as is the suggested memorization of the given samples.

[2.10] In addition to Confry 1923, breaks are addressed in Waterman (1924, 56ff), Shefte (1925, 1927a, 1927b, 1927c), Mayerl (1927), and Sims (1928, 47–50). Their treatments are similar to Confry 1923, so I'll focus on items of interest.(21) None of them teaches students to rag popular songs, which suggests that ragging tunes in the 1920s was considered passé.(22)

[2.11] The Waterman volumes 1917–22, 1918–21, and 1918–22 teach what the author calls "forms," which are various techniques for accompanying a given melody: "The object is to rearrange the sheet music—retain the original melody—build up the original harmony—by substituting fixed musical Forms" (1918–22, Foreword). Waterman 1924 expands on the earlier volumes, its first title page prominently displaying "Piano Jazz," while a second title page appears as "Waterman's Piano Forms—A Course of Invention." Sensitive to the latest trends, Waterman 1924 includes a "Jazz Hints" section (32) along with a "Hot Rhythms" section (33). Similarly, material that had appeared as a six-page "Effects for Embellishment" section in Waterman 1918–22 (nonpaginated) has been expanded to "Space Fillers and Breaks" (56–68) with hundreds of samples. **Example 15**, with breaks 145–147 (also called "Forms"), is from a section on five-beat melody notes sustained over a tonic harmony (Waterman 1924, 60).

[2.12] Regarding Waterman's symbols in Ex. 15, V (top staff) is the sustained "voice" or melody note on the downbeat, while C with a dash over it (second staff) denotes a C tonic chord. In break 145, the D♯–E motion suggests a blued tonic harmony; break 146 implies a C^{6}_{9} chord via a pentatonic figuration in fourths; and break 147 is based on the secondary rag pattern. Waterman's explanatory text notes that "forms" may be "blue" and advises the player to be tasteful: "It is obvious a blue-form will not fit a sweet ballad. Be consistent."

[2.13] The most prolific of the jazz piano pedagogues in the late 1920s may have been Art Shefte. Shefte issued three publications devoted entirely to breaks (1925, 1927a, 1927b) and addressed the topic in his extensive *Rapid Course in Modern Piano Playing* (1927c).(23) **Example 16** reproduces a page of the Shefte C triad breaks from his *Blue Breaks* volume (1927a; the B2s in the break at the bottom of the page should be B♭2s). The downbeat of the second bar of the first break, interestingly, has a chord more associated with the 1940s and its bebop innovations than the 1920s, a $Bb^{9(\sharp 11)}$.

[2.14] Rather than prolonging a single chord throughout, the Shefte breaks in Ex. 16 vary harmonically. They all proceed from tonic to dominant (except for the third break, where a blued I could support the D♯), but several feature additional chord progressions as well.

[2.15] Breaks were significant enough in the 1920s that at least one volume devoted to the topic was published in England. **Example 17** shows the first page of Mayerl (1927, 4).(24) Each break begins with a G^{7} chord as whole note followed by two-bar breaks elaborating that harmony. The first

break duplicates a Confrey break (see Ex. 14, system d), showing the wide currency of Confrey's work. The third break, labeled "A Blues Break," displays considerable harmonic sophistication. Sharp trichords, with prime form (016), on beats two and four of the first bar resolve their blue notes to dominant G^{13} chords implied by (027) trichords. First, on beat two, the $\flat\hat{7}$–$\hat{7}$ motion within the G^7 harmony resolves to a (027) trichord as A5–B5–E6; then, on beat four, the $\flat\hat{3}$–$\hat{3}$ motion resolves to a different (027) trichord, D5–E5–A5. After these motions, the second bar prolongs G^{13} through a passing motion G4–F♯4–F4 with F♯4 as a chromatic non-chord tone.

[2.16] As with the previously examined methods, Sims 1928 aims to enhance players' song performances.(25) The author also suggests an etymology for "break": "'Break' is a term borrowed from the old time stage dancers. In that connection it referred to the conclusion of a 'step'" (47).

[2.17] In contrast to its competitors, Sims 1928 encourages players to devise their own breaks: "There are many volumes of Breaks on the market and some of them are exceedingly valuable to a student who wishes to analyze their construction and ascertain what has been done in the *past*. All that any printed matter can do is to point out the fundamentals. Remember that the *live ones* are always *several jumps ahead*" (47, his italics). Then follows a section "How to Build Your Own Breaks." **Example 18** shows how a player might treat a two-bar half cadence on $B\flat^7$ via previously learned "rhythmical figures."

[2.18] The Sims method then varies the first figure of the example and encourages the student to do likewise to "show our originality." Four of these variants appear in **Example 19**.

[2.19] By teaching players to create original breaks, the Sims method discourages memorization. Accordingly, it could be seen as a next step towards a freer performance practice.

3. From Breaks to Hot Choruses in the Lopez Method

[3.1] As compared to the methods surveyed in Parts 1 and 2, the Lopez series (1933–34) is unique in that it teaches the student to reach beyond a song's melody by devising original "figures" for playing "hot choruses."(26) The idea of breaks, explored in the previous section, is expanded conceptually in the Lopez method. Earlier, I referred to breaks as a possible stepping stone to improvisation; two further threads connect them: in some cases, breaks and figures are interchangeable, and both may reference the blues.

[3.2] The third volume of the Lopez series (1934a) opens with the blues.(27) **Example 20** reproduces its first page with "sub-labels" (20-A, 20-B, etc.), which I have overlaid next to the music excerpts for ease of reference. Although the section is titled "BLUES," it does not teach the student to play the blues but rather "blue playing," which are the first two words of the text. The singular form of "blue" appears consistently. The second paragraph includes three phrases that I italicize as particularly germane: "In order to play *blue and hot* convincingly and with ease, practice the following exercises over and over. The more you play these *blue chords and scales*, the easier it will be for you to *improvise and invent* figures and melodies. You will find that after the proper practice, blue figures will 'spout' right out of your playing with no conscious effort."

[3.3] The text in Ex. 20 continues: "There are two blue notes in every Seventh chord: the Minor 3rd which is added to the chord, and the 7th of the chord." That is, a seventh chord(28) has an intrinsic blue note, its "given" seventh, but it also may take on a second blue note: the minor third as accompaniment or embellishment of the major third. The method proceeds not from a key but rather from single chords, often sevenths, which may be understood as momentary tonics. The method also notes that a major triad may itself be "blued"; that is, it has "only one blue note which is the minor 3rd," a remark that recalls the importance of triads in early jazz and blues.

[3.4] Sub-labels 20-A and 20-B show horizontalizations of a C^7 chord with an additional E♭4. The E♭ and B♭ are each labeled a "Blue note," and the E♭ is also labeled a "Minor 3rd." The B♭, in an open notehead, is both a chord tone and blue note, but the major and minor thirds differ in status: the E (open notehead) is a chord tone, while the E♭ (smaller filled-in notehead) is not.

[3.5] Sub-label 20-C is preceded by the instruction: "To insert a *blue break* or *figure* in a measure, all we have to do is break the chord any way we wish, run up or down, but get the Minor 3rd or 7th in the figure in order to make it sound BLUE." My added italics emphasize the point, made earlier, that breaks may sometimes serve as figures and vice versa. In the "Blue figures" of sub-labels 20-C and 20-D, the E♭ and E are treated as adjacencies: the E♭ depends on E, which then proceeds to C. Nonetheless, other than the directive "get the Minor 3rd or 7th in the figure in order to make it sound BLUE," what makes the music sound blue is not explored further.(29)

[3.6] For sub-label 20-E, the preceding text notes that "The 2nd [D] and 6th [A] may also be added to this [C^7] chord, giving us more tones to work with." The result is a "Blue chord or Scale." The method has arrived at a C blues scale by beginning with C^7, bluing the third, and then providing notes to connect the root to the minor third, and the fifth to the flatted seventh.(30) The $\hat{4}$, F, is omitted.(31) In the following text, the "Blue chord or Scale" in sub-label 20-E is called "the finished chord"; by equating them, the method anticipates later chord-scale theory.(32) The method also notes that from "the finished chord," *all blue playing is derived* (my italics), showing the fundamental importance of that chord-scale. The box at the bottom of the page adds that a blue note can itself be "blued" via grace notes to $\flat\hat{3}$ and $\flat\hat{7}$.

[3.7] The instructions preceding sub-label 20-F state, "Now let us take the finished chord from which all blue playing is derived and play it around the cycle of chords," which "will train the ear to *fake* and hear new figures." I have italicized "fake": the goal is for the student to compose "new figures" spontaneously. As seen so far, by "bluing" harmonies a player can reference the blues without necessarily playing the blues.(33)

[3.8] The next page of the BLUES section (**Example 21**) opens with the twelve blues scales. These are called "chords of the cycle with the 2nd, 6th, and minor 3rd added," further reinforcing the chord-scale connection. The remainder of the page (sub-labels 21-B through 21-N) demonstrates "Blue and Hot Figures," melodic fragments that may be used on C harmonies. The student is instructed to learn and then transpose them "to all keys."

[3.9] As compared to the previous page of the method (Ex. 20), some of the "Blue and Hot Figures" of Ex. 21, "made from the Blue Chord," feature an important conceptual change: full and half cadences that instantiate or imply local keys. Sub-labels 21-E, 21-G, 21-M, and 21-N, for example, all end on half cadences, where the ♭3 (E♭) of the tonic C chord is sometimes spelled as ♯5 (D♯) of the dominant G. Sub-labels 21-M and 21-N also feature (weak) full cadences to the downbeat of their second bars (a typo in sub-label 21-N puts its barline a beat late). Full cadences are also implied in sub-labels 21-D and 21-F, although they lack dominants.

[3.10] Niles (1926, 23) cites dominant–tonic cadences with the $\flat\hat{3}$ migrating back to the V^7 chord (effecting $V+^7$) as exemplary instances of the blue third (**Example 22**). Similarly, sub-label 21-N in Ex. 21 features a $\flat\hat{3}$–$\hat{1}$ motion over an implied V^7–I. Thus, the blue third of the tonic chord—that is, the blue third of the overall key—may appear as an altered chord tone of another harmony. The Lopez method, however, cites only individual chords as harmonies to be blued.

[3.11] In sub-label 21-M, the five-beat linear-tenths pattern in the left hand is circled and labeled as "LH-pattern-A." It begins with a two-beat tonic prolongation; then, after an implied passing diminished seventh on beat 3, beat 4 subtly tonicizes the next bar's downbeat. The pattern returns in sub-label 21-N and appears elsewhere in the text, as I will note in later examples.

[3.12] The "Blue and Hot Figures" of Ex. 21 contain other points of interest:

- Relying on the given C7 blue scale (sub-label 21-A), the figures all avoid $\hat{4}$ (F).
- In sub-labels 21-F, 21-I, and 21-M, a D–E♭ dyad appears, that is, the blue third "blued," as recommended in the box at the bottom of the previous page (Ex. 20).
- In sub-label 21-M, the F♯–G simultaneity can be understood as a blue fifth.
- A common $\hat{6}$–$\hat{1}$ cadential motion also appears in sub-labels 21-F and 21-M. In each, the $\flat\hat{3}$ on beat 3 imparts a blue color to the cadence.

- The first bar of sub-label 21-N puts a A4–E5–A5 chord over an E♭2–G♭3 bass and an E♭ octave over a D2–F3 bass—both surprisingly sharp clashes.
- The half cadence in sub-label 21-N expands the whole-tone tetrachord $G+^7$ into a dominant-functioning series of whole-tone chords.

[3.13] The next two pages of the blues presentation in the Lopez method (133–34, **Example 23**) continue from the model figures given in Ex. 21 by encouraging students to develop their own. Page 133, which presents contour diagrams of rhythmic patterns ranging from three beats to two bars, appears to be unique; I've found nothing like it in other early jazz methods.

[3.14] The second page (134) of Ex. 23 shows sample interpretations of the contour diagrams. The text under the first subtitle, "MAKING FIGURES," assures students that improvisation is not especially difficult: "Making a 'hot' or 'blue' melody is nothing more than joining different figures together so that they make a well sounding melody. . . A 'hot chorus' is made by combining figures made from the chords in each measure of the song and using this hot melody in place of the regular melody." These sentences distill the basis of much jazz pedagogy.(34)

[3.15] The second subtitle of page 134 in Ex. 23, "HOW TO MAKE 'HOT' and 'BLUE FIGURES'," further underlines the close ties between hot jazz and the blues advocated by the Lopez method. For these sample realizations, note placements in the diagrams denote direction only; for example, three descending notes in a diagram may be steps ("Chart 4") or thirds ("Chart 9"). On this page, the first sentence of the second paragraph ("These 'hot' melodies you invent may be added to any song in solo playing as a TRIO . . .") in effect acknowledges that improvisation was more likely on the trio of a multipart composition (such as a rag) than on an earlier section. I was struck by an unusual locution in the penultimate sentence of the third paragraph: "This will then 'jibe' with the harmony in the music and there will be no 'wet' notes." It's unfortunate that the author doesn't explain "wet" notes further or give us a few examples.

You're in My Dreams

[3.16] After two pages of material on harmony and chord patterns (135–36, not examined here for reasons of space), the method turns to "The 'Hot' Chorus on the Modern Melody" (**Example 24** / **Audio Example 9**). From the A section of Jim Smock's tune "You're in My Dreams," three improvised choruses follow as samples, each based on the eight-bar excerpt. The student is directed to apply the given left-hand bass to each sample, a procedure recreated in the audio example.(35)

[3.17] "You're in My Dreams" bears an interesting resemblance to take 1 of Fats Waller's 1929 recording of "I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling," showing that the Lopez method examples are consistent with the style of a major jazz pianist. **Example 25** / **Audio Example 10** / **Audio Example 11** superimpose sample A sections from both pieces, with the Waller preceding Smock in the audio playback.(36) Moreover, it was suggested earlier (note 5) that Smock was the ghostwriter of the Lopez method; the resemblance of two of his pieces to previous Waller recordings strengthens this possibility somewhat, as it shows the depth of Smock's involvement with the method. (Similarly, I compare Smock's "Hot'n Blue" to Waller's "Numb Fumblin'" below [3.25–3.26].)

[3.18] Each piece in Ex. 25 opens on E♭ tonic harmonies, then in m. 2 backtracks in the circle of fifths, the Waller to D^7 and the Smock to G^7; each piece then proceeds through the fifths cycle to a tonic cadence at m. 7. From mm. 1–2, each melody proceeds through G5–B♭5–C5–(E♭6)–D6, while, in m. 4, the melodic motions G♯5–G♮5 effecting a $C+^7$ to C^7 chord are identical.(37) Neither excerpt evokes the blues with the brief exception of Waller's G♭5s (blue thirds) at m. 7.(38)

[3.19] All three of the sample hot choruses in Ex. 24 feature blue figures. The first half of the "I Hot" sample improvisation combines them with references to the original melody. Measure 1 inverts the contour of the upward-arpeggiating E♭6 of the original, then adds a G♭6 blue third in passing. Two references to the original tune then follow in mm. 2–3: first, a leap to G6, and second, a C6–B♮5–B♭5 motion. The melody in m. 3 is then blued by the leap from B♭5 to the blue E♭6 (which resolves to E♮6). Measure 4 also recalls the original, syncopating its G♯–G♮ motion.

[3.20] From m. 5 to its conclusion, the "I Hot" chorus omits clear references to the original. As a pickup to m. 5, the C6–B♮5–B♭5 idea from m. 3 is repeated but now resolves to A. Smock's C♯6 in m. 5 alters the F^7 to a $F+^7$ chord. The chorus's final blue references are, in m. 6, the $\sharp\hat{5}$–$\hat{5}$ of the $B\flat^7$ followed in m. 7 by the $\flat\hat{3}$–$\natural\hat{3}$ of E♭. Here, a cadential completion to $\hat{1}$ is omitted to help propel the music through to the half cadence of m. 8. There, the F5–B♭5 figure on the dominant recalls the rising fourth D6–G6 of sub-label 21-E (Ex. 21).

[3.21] With fewer blues references than the first chorus, the "II Hot" chorus (Ex. 24) is characterized by insistent rhythms, particularly the 16th-to-dotted-8th syncopations in mm. 1 and 6. These rhythms did not appear in the Ex. 21 sample figures but do "reverse" the dotted-8th-to-16th rhythmic contour #14 of Ex. 23 (page 1). Measure 1 of the "II Hot" chorus is blued by the accented G♭5, a modification from its passing-but-unaccented appearance in m. 1 of the "I Hot" chorus. In m. 5 of the "II Hot" chorus, a blued $\flat\hat{3}$, A♭, resolves to the A♮ of the F^7. In m. 6, the blue arpeggiation F♯–E♭–C supported by $B\flat^7$ proceeds to E♭/E♭ in m. 7, an instance of the $\hat{6}$–$\hat{1}$ cadence seen in sub-label 21-M (Ex. 21).

[3.22] The "III Hot" chorus in Ex. 24 begins by directly quoting the melody but departs from it in m. 2. Then, beginning in m. 2, the C6–B♮5–B♭5 –G♯5–G♮5 melodic motion from mm. 3–4 of the original tune is stretched, concluding in m. 4. Similarly, C6–B♭5–A♭5–G5 in mm. 5–7 of the original is transformed into the cadential B♭5–C6–G♭5–E♭5 in mm. 6–7. At the cadence, a blue tonic ($E\flat^7$) substitutes for the original $E\flat^6$.

[3.23] Both the "I Hot" and "III Hot" choruses refer to the original melody with varying degrees of directness, while the "II Hot" chorus does not. All three choruses feature independent ideas, some of which are blued and echo previous recommendations (Exx. 21 and 23) but are otherwise wholly new. Students, in this way, are encouraged to develop their own approach, with or without reference to the original tune.

Hot'n Blue

[3.24] After Smock's tune "Hot-Cha-Cha" (138–39, not examined here), the Lopez method turns to a piece with blues chord changes, Smock's "Hot'n Blue" (**Example 26** / **Audio Example 12**).[(39)] Despite its relaxed character, "hot" appears in the title, showing that the word does not refer to tempo or intensity. A comment preceding the score refers to it as "a special Chorus or Trio." More precisely, the piece features three blues choruses, the second one hot.

[3.25] The opening of the "Hot'n Blue" theme recalls Fats Waller's 1929 recording of "Numb Fumblin," which has a corresponding mood, similar melody with grace notes to B5, stepwise left hand with triads voiced in tenths, and G-major key. The openings of the two tunes are superimposed in **Example 27** / **Audio Example 13** / **Audio Example 14** with the Waller heard first.[(40)] As with "You're in My Dreams" and "I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling" (Ex. 25), Smock's piece recalls the work of a leading jazz pianist, again suggesting his in-depth involvement with the method's examples.

[3.26] Despite their similarity, the excerpts in Ex. 27 differ interestingly. Waller repeats blue figures ending on B5 while Smock alternates B5 and the blue B♭5. Under the ostinato right hand, the Waller scalar descent subtly tonicizes C major en route to the G major tonic return at m. C1-3, while Smock's left hand twice tonicizes G via LH-pattern-A (both instances bracketed).[(41)] In Smock's piece, the B♭s and B♮s of beats 2 and 3 (in both bars) clash intriguingly: when one hand has the B♮, the other has B♭, as shown by the crossed voice-exchange lines. This puts a $\hat{3}$ *over* the blue $\flat\hat{3}$, a minor ninth, on the third beat of each bar (at the passing $B\flat^{\circ 7}$). Further, at beat 4 of m. 1, the B♭5 in the right hand colors the D^7/A chord with a ♯5, creating another minor ninth against the A3. In essence, the static blued tonic harmony of the right hand creates lively clashes against the chordal LH-pattern-A.

[3.27] Although "Hot'n Blue" (Ex. 26) consists of an introduction and three choruses, its theme does not fully align with the first chorus. Labeled "THEME" at m. C1-1, it extends only through m. C1-8, as this is the material that is reprised at the third chorus. The theme is interrupted by breaks,

labeled in mm. C1-3–C1-4 and C1-7–C1-8. Measures C1-11–C1-12 are not labeled as a break, so the final four bars might be understood as a cadence and transition to the second chorus, separate from the theme. The second chorus, then, is the hot variant. Interestingly, the break (unlabeled) in mm. C3-7–C3-8 duplicates the break (marked) in mm. C2-7–C2-8. Smock returns to this break and the last four bars of the second chorus to end the piece, probably because it provides a stronger sense of closure. The duplication of mm. C2-7–C2-11 and mm. C3-7–C3-11 lends further support to the idea of an eight-bar theme (C1-1–C1-8) within the twelve-bar first chorus.

[3.28] The breaks interspersed through "Hot'n Blue" vary considerably. The first, in mm. C1-3–C1-4, sustains the melody's G5 for a bar, after which a Mixolydian scale in triads descends, "leading into C7" at m. C1-5. For the second break (mm. C1-7–C1-8), the G°/B♭ triad on beat 3 (part of LH-pattern-A) is expanded to an $E♭^7$ chord. Then, under the G^6 chord in m. C1-8, the melodic left hand implies a G^7 chord with a blue B♭3 resolving to B♮3, the G^6 and G^7 jointly effecting a G^{13} that proceeds to D^9 in m. C1-9. There, the dominant harmony, extended to the ninth (labeled in the score) is used "for a fill." For the transition to the second chorus in mm. C1-11–C1-12, the G°/B♭ of LH-pattern-A supports a blue third, B♭5; after the downbeat tonic in m. C1-12, the D+ triad on beat two retains the timbre of the B♭ blue note.

[3.29] The second chorus of "Hot'n Blue" begins with three bars of LH-pattern-A, as in the theme. Against it, the blue phrase in m. C2-1 juxtaposes an on-the-beat B♭ blue third over the G/B triad. As with the hot variants of "You're in My Dreams" (Ex. 24), 16th-dotted-8th syncopations in m. C2-2 recall standard blues licks. The four-bar opening phrase prolongs the G blue triad in the right hand against the LH-pattern-A. There is no break in mm. C2-3–C2-4 of this chorus, however, as the blues figure extending from m. C2-1 ends the phrase at the downbeat of m. C2-4; that bar's last two beats provide a pickup to m. C2-5.

[3.30] At m. C2-5, the second phrase of the second chorus deviates from the expected C^7 by continuing the G^7 harmony. Smock probably intended this effect, as beats 3 and 4 of m. C2-4 prepare the G^7 smoothly; still, some explanation for omitting the customary IV would have been welcome. The break at the end of the second phrase (mm. C2-7–C2-8) features a triplet figure comprising the four perfect fourths available in the G pentatonic set (B–E, E–A, A–D, D–G).(43) In m. C2-7, the break results in a particularly poignant sonority at beat 3: A–B♭ and D–D♭ half steps between the fourths figure and LH-pattern-A.

[3.31] The third phrase of the second chorus (mm. C2-9–C2-12) not only substitutes new melodic material but also alters the harmony of the corresponding bars in the first chorus. At m. C2-9, the downbeat sonority supports G5, the eleventh, which initiates a 4–3 motion to D^9. The harmony is embellished further at m. C2-10 by an arpeggiated A^9 (V^9/V) leading to D^{13} at beat 3. In m. C2-11, beat 3, an F^9 chord introduces the half cadence at m. C2-12. The F^9 is new to the piece, returning only at m. C3-11, the piece's "G Ending," where it proceeds to the final G^6.

[3.32] The theme returns for the third chorus. It deviates from its initial presentation beginning at mm. C3-7–C3-8, where the "fourths break" from the second chorus returns. As suggested earlier, conceiving of the theme as eight bars allows the third phrase of the second chorus (mm. C2-9–C2-12) to return as the final phrase of the piece.

[3.33] Related to breaks are "endings," which are like breaks but are especially cadential and built around a tonic harmony. **Example 28** (1934b, 200) shows the Lopez "BLUE BREAKS and ENDINGS" for C and C^7 chords. This page further demonstrates how breaks and figures may sometimes be identical—and, yet again, LH-pattern-A returns (only the first one circled).

[3.34] Regarding the C-triad breaks in Ex. 28, #3 is virtually the same as figure sub-label 21-E (Ex. 21). Further, break #4 duplicates sub-label 21-N, and #6 duplicates sub-label 21-M.

[3.35] The four blue breaks on C^7 (Ex. 28) include an F key signature, implying C^7 as V^7. However, the C^7 chords may also be understood as tonics with the F key signature used for notational convenience. Again, some of these breaks duplicate Ex. 21 figures; break #1, for example, is the same as sub-label 21-C. The C^7 breaks sometimes highlight the blue B♭ as the characteristic tone of the chord, for example, in #1, beat 3 of m. 1; or, in #2, beat 2 of m. 1 and beat 1 of m. 2. One wonders

why C^7 break #3, which duplicates sub-label 21-I, is grouped with C^7, since it contains no B♭. In break #4, LH-pattern-A appears as arpeggiated tenths, a standard practice in solo jazz piano.

[3.36] As comparison of Exx. 21 and 28 shows, breaks that a player may have devised per the advice of the 1920s pedagogues can sometimes double as figures for hot choruses. Thus, the improvisational approaches of the 1920s helped prepare the jazz piano practices of the 1930s.

4. Summary and Conclusions

[4.1] The Lopez method teaches aspiring jazz pianists to devise figures for improvising original choruses.(44) **Example 29** summarizes the attributes of these figures. Some of the terms appearing in this table, for example "formulas" or "tonicization," are included to show the method's anticipation of later concepts in jazz theory and pedagogy.

[4.2] The first point of Ex. 29 provides a definition: figures are distinct melodic fragments, perhaps associated with a left-hand part, which may be connected to create an improvised chorus. Interestingly, the method does not engage just *how* the figures are to be connected; if they cohere weakly, the result may recall Schuller's remark that "the average improvisation is mostly a stringing together of unrelated ideas" ([1958] 1986, 87).(45)

[4.3] Secondly, invented figures are comparable to improvisational "formulas." In devising figures, the player is in effect creating a library that might underlie an improvisational style, recalling Owens's pioneering précis of Charlie Parker's melodic formulas (1974, vol. 2, 1–10). From the perspective of an analyst, accordingly, a chorus may be segmented into such figures, which may or may not reflect the player's original conceptions of them.

[4.4] As for the third point in Ex. 29, the figures in the Lopez method vary in length. Although seemingly insignificant, figures as brief as even two beats appear in Owens (1974, vol. 2, 1–10) and may be important to a player's style.

[4.5] The fourth item of Ex. 29 notes that players may associate figures with single chords, often considered as momentary tonics with the figures in "chord-scale" relationships with them. Chords may be "blued" and are considered equivalent to their associated "blue scales," so that derived figures may reflect blues practice. The Lopez method anticipates chord-scale theory by some twenty years, that is, before Russell 1959 and its later establishment as a staple of jazz pedagogy.(46) Figures may also be able to function as breaks.

[4.6] The fifth item of Ex. 29 recalls that figures may be associated with common chord progressions, sometimes functioning as breaks but also, when particularly cadential, as endings. When figures span progressions, a tonic's blue third may alter a tonicizing V^7 chord as ♯5, creating a $V+^7$ chord. Breaks, so important to 1920s jazz pedagogy, are in effect generalized by the Lopez method, which expands them into figures for possible use throughout a chorus rather than at moments of rest in the original melody.

[4.7] The sixth item in Ex. 29 notes that chorus figures may or may not reference the original tunes motivically. Certainly, playing tune "X" and naming the overall performance "X" are likely to affect the improvisations, bringing about connections between improvised choruses and the original tune, whether intentional or not. In general, the relationship between the original melody and its improvisations will range from obvious to indirect to non-existent.(47)

[4.8] Finally, by improvising choruses, particularly choruses with "blued" figures, the student is reflecting the practices of "hot jazz." Learning to play "hot" is a point of emphasis in the Lopez method, which reflects the era's evolving attitudes towards jazz. Although the adjective "hot" had been applied to jazz, its attributes, and its artists early on,(48) by the 1930s writers were using the term to distinguish authentic jazz from more generic popular dance music. Charles Edward Smith, a critic who early on drew this line in the sand separating the worthy from the unworthy, regarded "jazz" and "hot" as synonymous and to be distinguished from "popular" and "sweet" (1930, 502). He was followed by Robert Goffin's exploration of "le jazz hot" (1932, 95ff) and, in English, "Hot

Jazz'" ([1934] 1999). "Hot" or "Hot Jazz" then appeared in the titles of several significant publications: Panassié [1934] 1936, Delauney [1936] 1938, Sargeant [1938] 1975, and Harap 1941.(49)

[4.9] From the perspective of one of its most important artists, Louis Armstrong, in 1936, defined hot jazz as follows: "And right here I want to explain that 'hot,' as swing musicians use the word, does not necessarily mean loud or even fast. It is used when a swing player gets warmed up and 'feels' the music taking hold of him so strong that he can break through the set rhythms and the melody and toss them around as he wants without losing his way. That creates new effects and is done whether the music is loud or soft or fast or slow" ([1936] 1999, 74).(50) Such a conception of "hot jazz" seems to be reflected in the Lopez method.

[4.10] Goffin associated hot jazz with Black music and noted that "jazz would have died a natural death long ago but for this 'hot' which has always been its unfailing stimulation, its purest mode of utterance, and to all intents and purposes its *raison d'être*." He referred to the more commercial product as "melodic jazz." After citing exemplars Paul Whiteman and Jack Hylton—and note that he could have also listed Vincent Lopez—Goffin continued, "Melodic jazz has contributed nothing to music and will only be remembered for its unspeakable insipidness; whereas hot jazz is a creative principle which can scarcely fail to affect the music of the future in the most original and unexpected directions" ([1934] 1999, 83, 84). Harap, in a scholarly publication, referred to hot jazz as "based on the blues" and "the most valid and vital music created in America in this century." He contrasted it to "the prevalence of 'commercial' jazz, a diluted form of the authentic jazz that verges on the insipid" (1941, 48, 49). Earlier, Charles Edward Smith had written, "Popular can boast of nothing more than banality" (1930, 502).(51)

[4.11] However, restricting the scope of jazz to hot jazz only was by no means universally accepted; much music of the time popularly called "jazz" continued to be based on maintaining the integrity of songs' melodies throughout—a view that these critics combatted vigorously. This is not surprising, of course, as conceptions of what constituted jazz ranged over various styles and substyles, not all of which featured hot improvisation.

[4.12] The roots of hot improvisation on the piano can be traced to the rhythms of ragtime, whose pedagogy taught players to embellish and syncopate popular melodies while keeping them recognizable. Such transformations to ragtime style were not automatic, as a player would need to internalize characteristic syncopations, understand and perhaps extend a tune's harmony, and, if necessary, embellish its melody. Parsing the harmony was a skill necessary for the insertion of breaks, too, as ragtime style faded in popularity during the 1920s and breaks became the latest vogue. After memorizing breaks, players might learn to devise their own and eventually move on to figures, filling an entire song or one of its sections with them and referring to the original tune as inspiration might move them. Incorporating blue notes into breaks and then into figures further helped pinpoint such playing as hot. That breaks could sometimes be substituted for figures probably hastened the embrace of free improvisation on a song's form and harmony, the foundation of contemporary jazz pedagogy.

[4.13] Early jazz pedagogy is an area calling for further study, as these works illuminate instrumental practice, provide insight into the formation of jazz styles, and reinforce the foundations of jazz music theory.(52) Among specific topics that might be analyzed in more detail are blue notes, the formats and locations of breaks, chord voicings, substitute chord progressions, accompaniment patterns, and syncopation. A complicating factor in determining who may have innovated a particular idea or when it appeared is that publishers sometimes issued volumes that combined earlier material with emended or new material.(53) Further, terms may be idiosyncratic (such as Christensen's "movements" or Waterman's "forms") and may overlap only partly with terms used by other writers.

[4.14] Future research might also attempt to ascertain how these pedagogical materials impacted players of the era, both amateur and professional. Toshiko Akiyoshi studied the Lopez method (see note 6), but comments from prominent musicians on the methods they worked from seem rare. Nor does there seem to be a way of determining how methods influenced lesser-known players (those not interviewed or written about) other than general availability. A study such as Daley ca. 1926 was innovative, but how many players were aware of it? Can we assume that publications still

available from used book sellers, reissued, or collected by libraries achieved respectable circulation? A related issue future research might investigate is why Chicago emerged as a key publication center for ragtime and early jazz methods.

[4.15] The decisive step in jazz piano pedagogy, both advocating the blues and hot choruses and foreshadowing contemporary approaches to improvisation, seems to have been the Lopez series. As such, it is ironic that Vincent Lopez, an artist whose hot jazz credentials were tenuous at best, appears as the series namesake. However that came to pass, the Lopez method offers an intriguing, forward-looking pedagogical snapshot of jazz theory at the beginning of the 1930s.

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Appendix: List of Pedagogical Sources

The sources examined for this article are listed below, including pedagogical publications not targeted for piano but mentioned in the notes. The work cited is representative rather than exhaustive, with Christensen and Shefte seemingly the most prolific of the piano pedagogues. A pdf copy of Waterman 1924 is available at the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University-Newark, and a printed copy of the three-volume Shefte 1927c at the Indiana University library. La Motte 1894, Joplin [1908] 1988, Beckerman 1918, Winn 1920, and the two Christensen publications (as well as others) can be examined and downloaded at Tjaden 2006; I've also provided an additional download option for the La Motte. Other items were purchased at Ebay.com, Amazon.com, qPress.com, various online booksellers and publishers, and acquired from colleagues. The qPress company reprints the original pages, but omits the original title pages with copyright information, hence my "ca." dates, as determined from other sources.

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Footnotes

* I would like to thank Keith Waters and Lewis Porter for comments on drafts of this article. Lewis also provided some of the pedagogical materials mentioned. Thanks also to the anonymous reviewers of this article for *MTO*, who offered many helpful suggestions.
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1. For example, Louis Armstrong's out-chorus on "Cake Walking Babies from Home" (Clarence Williams' Blue Five [1925]) or Frankie Trumbauer's and Bix Beiderbecke's solos on "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans" (Frankie Trumbauer and His Orchestra [1927]).
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2. A jazz solo, when not paraphrasing the original song, may still reference it motivically, as explored in numerous publications, e.g., Martin 1996a, Larson 2009, or Givan 2010.
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3. For the pedagogical publications appearing in this article and notes on locating them, see the Appendix. Although I have not seen every ragtime and 1920s jazz piano method, I have aimed for a sample that represents the field and its pedagogical outlook fairly. Also, all the piano methods surveyed in this article use public domain songs or original material for examples, presumably to avoid copyright obligations.
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4. See, for example, Crawford and Magee 1992, a study of the jazz repertory through 1942 as issued on recordings; it is dominated by popular songs and song-like jazz compositions.
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5. Vincent Lopez (1895–1975) was among the most popular bandleaders of the 1920s and early 1930s. Beginning as a pianist, he later led his own large dance ensembles with a career that extended to the 1960s. Associated with the "sweet" popular style of the 1920s, he is no longer well known and may best be remembered as having pioneered dance band radio broadcasting in 1921 (Lopez 1960, 162–64). Although he is the Lopez method's namesake, he was probably not its author. Then, as now, the popular-music business was highly competitive, and so it seems unlikely that Lopez, a major celebrity, would have had the time or interest to write a four-volume piano method that covered such routine matters as music rudiments and keyboard fundamentals.

Further, the Lopez autobiography neither mentions the series nor evinces any interest in piano pedagogy. Rather, Jim Smock, a composer-arranger in the Chicago area, was more likely the author of the series. Except for one piece, all songs in the series not in the public domain are by Smock. As possibly clinching evidence, a small advertisement appeared in *The Chicago Sunday Tribune* (Smock 1935) that promotes a music school run by Smock; the ad highlights the "Vincent Lopez Modern Piano Method" and refers to Smock as "author and composer."
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6. At least one book of the Lopez series was studied early on by pianist-composer-bandleader Toshiko Akiyoshi in Japan during her formative years, showing the extent of the method's reach. As she explained, "Meanwhile, Mister Fukui [a record collector who helped introduce Akiyoshi to jazz] sent me the book, *How to Play Jazz Piano* [possibly *Modern Piano Method*, 1933], it was a piano *kyōsoku hon* [method book] you know, like a lesson book, written by Vincent López. . . . So, this was really exciting to me, and I was trying to play. . . . I copied everything" (Akiyoshi 2008, 17).
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7. The evolution of jazz piano improvisation proposed in this article correlates with Gushee 2009, an essay on the term "improvisation" (and related words, such as "fake" and "interpolate") in early jazz. Interested primarily in lexicographical matters, Gushee provides no music examples. For a music-theoretical overview of the era, see Homzy 1971. Prouty 2023 (11–49) examines early jazz trombone pedagogy. Paralleling my study of jazz piano pedagogy, Prouty observes a three-part evolution: the "novelty" use of glissandi in the later 1910s, an emphasis on breaks and the growth of freer playing in the 1920s, and the acceptance of freer playing by the 1930s.
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8. Text quotations from pedagogical works preserve word forms (e.g., "7th" or "seventh"), capitalization, underlining, use of bold typeface in the body of the text, and italicization unless otherwise noted.
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9. The term "vamp" remained active at least through the early 1910s. Gushee (2009, 266) quotes a comment by George Burt Stone from the May 1912 edition of *Jacobs' Orchestra Monthly* (73): "to 'vamp' a part means to improvise or, to use a slang expression to 'fake it.'" Gushee adds, "This is a term with a noble pedigree, going back at least to the 18th-century musician and lexicographer Charles Burney."
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10. Ben Harney (1872–1938) was an early popularizer of ragtime. His advice on ragging tunes in [1897] 1963 is quoted in Homzy (1971, 11–15), which also includes excerpts from Harney's examples. Berlin (1980, 24–25) assesses Harney's importance and reproduces the original theme and first five bars of his ragtime version of "Annie Laurie" (68). Harney's *Rag Time Instructor* may have been ghostwritten by Theodore H. Northrup, who is credited as arranger on the title page and whose composition "Plantation Echoes" concludes the nine-page publication.
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11. Christensen 1909 is a later edition of a ragtime method first published in 1904. Homzy (1971, 15–18) provides an overview of Axel Christensen (1881–1955), perhaps the most prominent of all ragtime pedagogues, along with his ragtime movements. See Tjaden 2006 for Christensen publications and works that can be downloaded.
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12. Christensen 1909 assumes that his students know "Home, Sweet Home" and does not include a "straight" version. The lead sheet staff in Ex. 6 shows the basic melody and chord progression. Aside from two excerpts from Fats Waller recordings (Ex. 25 and Ex. 27), the audio examples in this article are computer playbacks of the notation files.
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13. The importance of breaks in 1920s jazz pedagogy is corroborated by Knowlton ([1926] 2002, 762) and an anonymous series of articles in the May 1927 issue of *The Etude* called "More 'Hot and

Dirty' Breaks" (2002, 867–68). A later series of articles by Cunliffe ([1929] 2002) explains syncopated breaks for "aspirants to jazz-band piano-playing" (957) and cites various publications, including Mayerl 1927 (discussed below). Prouty discusses breaks in early jazz trombone publications attributed to such players as Miff Mole, George Crozier, Glenn Miller, and Tommy Dorsey (2023, 35–49). Jelly Roll Morton, in a famous comment, claimed that breaks were a necessary feature of jazz, but this was some ten years later, from the 1938 Alan Lomax interviews.
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14. For the term "secondary rag" in the 1920s, Berlin quotes Knowlton ([1926] 2002, 761), whose source was a "Negro guitar-player." Secondary rag, as a type of tresillo pattern, has been explored more broadly in contemporary music theory, e.g., Biamonte 2014, Cohn 2016, and Kinne 2023.
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15. In Ex. 11, staff b is the only excerpt not taken from a cited publication. Niles may have copied it from a published score or recording, or as he recalled it from live performance.
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16. Titon usefully distinguishes between "vaudeville blues" vs. "downhome" or "country" blues (1977, xv). Vaudeville blues, as part of popular culture, featured such performers as Bessie Smith, Alberta Hunter, et al. See Stearns (1956, 75–81) for a classic summary of the genre in relationship to jazz and Niles 1926 for a cultural, historical, and musical explanation of the blues as understood by the mid 1920s.
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17. The earliest examples labeled as "blues" in a piano method I've found are in Waterman 1918–22, in a section called "Effects for Embellishment" (unpaginated, but identified "Copyright 1920"), e.g., half-step dyads labeled "Bass Blues" and "Treble Blues." The ragtime methods discussed in Part 1 do not mention the blues, although their pieces and arrangements might reference the genre. The D♯ in m. 5 of Winn's arrangement of "America" (Ex. 10), for example, might be heard as a blue third (E♭) proceeding to E♮. Another example, appearing as early as 1905, is the A♯, which might be considered a blue third in "The Cannon Ball" (Ex. 11).
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18. I write "largely fixed," because, of course, as an oral practice, the "same" song may differ considerably depending on the performer(s). Niles's reference to mm. 3–4 as the "space to contemplate their next ideas" probably refers to fully improvised blues practice. The quotation then continues ". . . it is of far greater interest that, assuming he isn't compelled to concentrate on what is to follow"; that is, the performer knows the next phrase of the song. Accordingly, Niles focuses more on established pieces than on free blues improvisation. Regarding blues composition, Handy writes, "In the folk blues the singer fills up occasional gaps with words like 'Oh, lawdy' or 'Oh, baby' and the like. This meant that in writing a melody to be sung in the blues manner one would have to provide gaps or waits" ([1941] 1970, 125–26).
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19. Confrey might have also placed a break in mm. 7–8 but, following the quoted instructions, he suggests breaks only for mm. 15–16 throughout the volume.
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20. In Ex. 14, the C♯s in mm. 1–2 (♯5s per the F chord) and the C♯ and D♯ in m. 3 (♯4 and ♯5 per the G^7 chord, respectively) are circled, as their effect is similar to the G♯s of mm. 1–2 and hence might be heard as blue.
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21. These methods, deserving of fuller consideration, also engage rhythm, harmony, and other factors to help the student spice up the arrangements of published popular songs.
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22. Interestingly, Christensen 1925, an update of Christensen 1909 (discussed in Part 1), adds the word "jazz" to its title, although it continues to teach ragging tunes. Yet even Christensen 1925 does not avoid breaks entirely: amidst its ragtime exercises and pieces, there is a page titled "A Few

Breaks" (31) with twelve samples but without comment or explanation. Similarly, Waterman 1917–22 teaches the student to rag melodies (58–72), a unit omitted from the later Waterman volumes (1918–21, 1918–22, and 1924).
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23. Shefte 1927c, a complete piano method, may be the most significant predecessor to the Lopez method. Shefte's work is described further in note 26.
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24. Billy Mayerl (1902–59), a leading English pianist and composer, performed the English premiere of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1925 and established the Billy Mayerl School of Modern Syncopation in 1926 (Mayerl 1927, 2).
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25. Lee Sims (1899–1966) was a prominent pianist and composer. In an interview, Art Tatum once referred to him and Fats Waller as the pianists who influenced him the most (Kammen 1953, 0:39–1:14). The Sims method was probably ghostwritten, the title page proclaiming in large print: "Edited by Carleton L. Colby."
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26. Part 3 is devoted entirely to the Lopez approach, as I have not found a comparable piano method that teaches "hot" improvising. Art Shefte, whose "break" books were discussed in Part 2, would seem to be the most likely competitor, and indeed the title of Shefte's *Piano Improvising*, vol. 1 (1936) signals a freer approach. But rather than teaching hot improvisation, Shefte 1936 continues to emphasize song performance: "You are taught how to form **full piano arrangements** of popular songs, working from the published song copies and adding full chords in the treble, and a full professional style bass (left hand) according to certain simple rules of harmony. After a few months experience in building-up arrangements according to the instructions herein, students learn to do this **'at sight'** . . . to improvise their arrangements from printed music and 'by ear,' but **SYSTEMATICALLY**" (foreword; emphasis and ellipses in the original). Even Shefte 1951, the third volume of a "completely revised edition" of Shefte 1927c, does not teach improvisation, but rather "train[s] players to 'build up' the arrangements of **popular** and **standard** music into genuine modern professional styles" (1, emphasis original). Shefte (1899–1975) was a productive pedagogue whose approach to harmony and the keyboard is worth further study.
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27. Books I and II of the Lopez series prepare the more advanced topics in Book III. In a previous article, I quoted a Book II passage on the added-sixth chord (Lopez 1933b, 100–01) as evidence of the chord's new-found popularity (Martin 2023, [2.5]–[2.7]). In fact, both Waterman and Sims had taught the added sixth earlier (1924, 19 and 1928, 25–33, respectively). However, for them the chord type was an option, whereas the Lopez passage directs students to use it consistently.
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28. Unless otherwise noted, "sevenths" and "seventh chords" refer to major-minor sevenths.
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29. None of the methods examined details blue-note usage. Shefte devotes an entire volume to blues breaks (1927a) but does not say why or how they are blue. The opening pages of Shefte 1927a (Ex. 16) and Mayerl 1927 (Ex. 17), for example, show "blue breaks" without further comment. What makes early jazz piano performances and works "sound blue" is a topic deserving further study: because "microtonal" blue notes are not possible on the piano, its blue notes must be "chromatic." For the microtonal-chromatic distinction and publications that debate issues regarding blue notes, see Temperley, Ren, and Duan (2017, [1.2]–[1.3]).
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30. Sargeant ([1938] 1975), e.g., 160–70) is generally considered the first theorist to identify a blues scale (e.g., Chodos [2018, 144] and Homzy [1971, 37]) and the first to analyze it and blue notes in detail; but, as per Ex. 20, a blues scale appears in the Lopez method some four years earlier. See Chodos 2018 for the various blues scales proposed in the earlier twentieth century, beginning with

Sargeant. Chodos considers the scale (1–♭3–4–♯4–5–♭7) to be "the one universally recognized among jazz musicians today" (152), a scale not devised by Jamey Aebersold but perhaps first identified in print by him (Aebersold 1967, 40). For Aebersold's contributions to jazz pedagogy, see Thibeault 2022.
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31. Omission of $\hat{4}$ may anticipate its status as an "avoid note" in later jazz theory (say, in the Ionian or Mixolydian modes).
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32. Russell 1959 is perhaps the prototype of modern chord-scale theory. Thibeault (2022, 70) recounts how David Baker studied with Russell at the Lenox School of Jazz in Massachusetts in 1959. Baker then imparted the theory to Aebersold in the early 1960s.
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33. For a notable group of blues-influenced performances outside the twelve-bar form, see Gushee's analysis of four Lester Young solos on "Shoe Shine Boy," a tune based on a rhythm changes variant. From the solos, Gushee infers a group of "blues clichés," his ζ [zeta] list ([1977] 1991, 244).
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34. An earlier pedagogical resource, intended for "lead instruments," calls a chorus freed from the original melody a "dirt chorus": "The difference between a hot chorus and a dirt chorus is that the Hot chorus has about one-half of the original chorus in it" (Daley ca. 1926, 46). The May 1927 issue of *The Etude* (cited in note 13) refers to the Daley volume and provides this definition: "'Dirt Playing' is the result of embroidering a rhythmical pattern around the harmony of each measure throughout the entire composition. This 'dirt' (sometimes known as 'sock') pattern bears little resemblance to the original theme, except for the fact that it employs the same harmony in each measure" (*Etude* [1927] 2002, 868). Gushee writes that the term "dirt" "was common during the late 1920s and early 1930s" (2009, 275), although it's missing from the piano methods I've examined. Because Daley equates dirt and "sock" choruses (46 and *The Etude* quotation), both terms may have been applied to the climactic out-chorus of a band performance if the lead instruments forgo clear reference to the theme (e.g., Armstrong's out-chorus of the Clarence Williams recording cited in note 1).
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35. In the "Regular Melody," the right-hand E♭s of m. 3 are probably typos for E♮s; similarly, in m. 4 the melody's G♯–G♮ motion is not matched by the fourth-beat chord of the left hand. I make these corrections on the audio realization. For the complete song "You're in My Dreams," see Book II (1933b, 83).
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36. The Waller excerpt, transcribed by Machlin (1985, 22), is the second A of an AABA refrain (with Machlin's F♯5s respelled as G♭5s in m. 7). It is juxtaposed with the first A section of Smock's piece. In the computer realization of the Smock tune, I have approximated Waller's tempo and made occasional minor edits to the left hand to accommodate the right hand.
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37. For right-hand melodies in chords and octaves, I refer only to their upper notes.
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38. After a modulation to C major, Waller's chorus beginning at 1:58 becomes freer and features several blues figures as the ending approaches.
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39. I've added measure numbers to Ex. 26; m. C1-5, e.g., denotes measure 5 of chorus 1.
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40. The Waller transcription is from Scivales (n.d., 102).
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41. The tail of LH-pattern-A concludes the Waller excerpt, as bracketed. Is this the source of Smock's repeated use of it? It appears throughout "Hot'n Blue," where I've circled it at the beginning of all three choruses, as well as elsewhere in the method.
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42. These breaks return, unlabeled, in the theme's reprise at mm. C3-3–C3-4 and C3-7–C3-8. As noted earlier in [2.1] and [2.4], breaks typically occur where the melody sustains a note for one-to-two bars. In the blues, these usually occur at mm. 3–4, 7–8, and 11–12 as "responses" to the "calls" of mm. 1–2, 5–6, and 9–10, as first pointed out by Niles (1926, 16).
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43. There is an apparent typo in the break: the second dyad of the first triplet should maintain parallel fourths as A5–D6, as seen in the break repeated in mm. C3-7–C3-8.
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44. In addition to playing blue, the Lopez method discusses other hot techniques beyond the scope of this article, for example, "hot chords" (1934a, 156–59). References to "playing hot" appear in earlier jazz piano methods as well. As pointed out earlier, Waterman cites "hot rhythms" (1924, 33). Sims comments intriguingly on blue effects in conjunction with dominant seventh chords: "One freak use of the Seventh is typical of the Blue type of music; in this case the Seventh leads around the cycle [the circle of fifths] in the wrong direction" (1928, 40, his italics), e.g., the progressions F^7–C and $A\flat^7$–E♭. Boogie-woogie piano, whose first recordings were in the 1920s, became popular in the 1930s. As a genre, it may also be considered hot, since it is based both on the blues and on improvising figures over characteristic bass patterns. However, I have not been able to locate pedagogical books on boogie-woogie that antedate the Lopez method.
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45. This comment is quoted by Gushee, who calls it "Schuller's dictum" ([1977] 1991, 238).
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46. A self-published edition of Russell 1959 appeared as early as 1953 (Ratliff 2009). For its history and significance, see Hannaford 2021. See Thibeault 2022 for a history of chord-scale theory and the Aebersold "play-a-long books." For chord-scale theory as taught in the 1990s at the Berklee College of Music, see Nettles and Graf 1997.
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47. Brian Kane calls the relationship between an improvisation and the tune it is named by "nomination" (2024, 93–124), where its implications are explored in depth.
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48. The Oxford English Dictionary cites examples in print of "hot" as applied to jazz as early as 1918. Three notable early usages: Paul Whiteman's hit recording of "Hot Lips" (1922), "Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five" (1925), and "Jelly Roll Morton and His Red Hot Peppers" (1926).
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49. Associations also adopted "hot" to refer to authentic jazz, e.g, the Hot Club of France (1932) and the United Hot Clubs of America (1935) followed by the Hot Record Society, "founded expressly as a rival of the United Hot Clubs" (Gennari 2006, 75–77, 93).
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50. Armstrong [1936] 1999 was ghostwritten but the opinions expressed are consistent with his outlook and even his verbal style.
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51. Gennari 2006 explores the complex issues regarding such distinctions and value judgments made by both Black and white musicians and by critics regarding jazz authenticity and its roots in the blues and Black music.
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52. Nor have histories of jazz education adduced the relevance of early jazz pedagogy, at least until recently (e.g., Prouty 2023). Rather, "the period from the beginnings of jazz up until the 1940s is usually treated as a kind of pre-historic era, with little or no written records on learning activities, at least until the 1930s" (Prouty 2005, 81–82).
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53. The Waterman publications 1917–22, 1918–21, and 1918–22 exemplify the difficulties of untangling chronologies and citing works accurately. Among these volumes, sections are repeated, others omitted, and new material added in such a way that suggests continuous updating. The availability of these methods as "correspondence courses" may have motivated their ad hoc formats, as Waterman 1918–21 and 1918–22 are unpaginated. In these volumes, interior pages will sometimes have separate copyright dates, which explains the ranges of years I've chosen to designate the volumes. Further, the secondary title pages of Waterman 1917–22 and Waterman 1924 list copyright dates as early as 1912. Adding to the complexity is that Waterman 1917–22 cites the "Hagon-Waterman Piano School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin" on the title page, while the other volumes omit a publication location and drop "Hagon" from the name of the school. Not only do the Waterman and other volumes sampled in this article deserve further study, but the pedagogical works cited in Prouty 2023 and Gushee 2009 also provide material. Prouty suggests that Fillmore 1919 is "almost certainly the first method book for jazz trombone playing and possibly for jazz as a whole" (2023, 17). In a 30-year-old overview of jazz theory focusing on the growth of scholarly work, I mention early pedagogy but cite only Armstrong 1927a and 1927b (Martin 1996b, 7). For their provenance as transcriptions, see Prouty (2023, 46–49). A fascinating early publication that features transcriptions of issued jazz recordings is Panico ca. 1923, a cornet method, which, like Daley ca. 1926, provides detailed instruction.
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