THE INTERSECTION OF CLASSICAL MUSIC AND JAZZ: CHARACTERISTICS AND VALUE FOR RESEARCH, PEDAGOGY, AND PERFORMANCE

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INTRODUCTION

The intersection of classical music and Jazz contributes to expanding compositional vocabulary, methods of ensemble organization, and performance practice. This process is manifested not only in combining melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and timbral elements from different styles, but also in inheriting, transforming, and reorganizing their functions within the structural framework of a work. Therefore, studying this intersection requires moving beyond the simple identification of isolated stylistic features toward clarifying how musical elements are organized, how they interact, and how they assume new functions in composition, arrangement, and performance.

On this basis, this paper investigates the intersection of classical music and Jazz through two seminal works: Baroque and Blue by Claude Bolling and Rhapsody in Blue by George Gershwin. Utilizing full-score analysis combined with comparative perspectives from international scholarship, this paper focuses on clarifying the methods of inheritance, transformation, and interaction among musical elements, with particular emphasis on the functional shift of musical voices and ensemble relationships. Ultimately, it identifies the characteristics of this intersection process and evaluates their significance for research, pedagogy, and performance, with a specific focus on the domain of the double bass.

FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MUSICAL ORGANIZATION IN CLASSICAL MUSIC AND JAZZ

Classical music and Jazz developed within distinct historical and cultural contexts, each possessing unique characteristics regarding composition, ensemble organization, and performance. In Western classical music, melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements are typically organized according to principles of thematic development and formal structure. Melodic lines may move independently or combine through contrapuntal and harmonic

relationships; the function of each voice is defined and transformed according to the work's overall progression.

In Jazz, musical organization is tied to the synthesis of compositional structure, rhythmic interpretation, improvisation, and ensemble interaction. Defining features such as swing feel, syncopation, extended harmonies, and chromatic movement contribute to forging the Jazz language. However, these elements are not exclusive to Jazz, nor does improvisation exist solely within this tradition. Differences also emerge in the organization of time, thematic development, and the degree of performer autonomy in relation to the written score.

Thus, the distinction between classical music and Jazz lies not merely in the elements employed, but in their functions and structural relationships within a work. A given musical element may appear in both traditions yet serve different roles depending on the organization of harmony, rhythm, and performance mode. This provides the framework for examining the intersection of classical music and Jazz through the lens of inheritance, transformation, and functional reorganization.

MODES OF INTERSECTION AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF MUSICAL MATERIALS

The intersection of classical music and Jazz is not merely a combination of elements from two styles, but rather a process of altering their organization and functions in composition, arrangement, and performance. This process can be examined through four primary modes: inheritance, transformation, functional reorganization, and interaction. These modes are closely interrelated, contributing to the formation of new features in musical language and structure.

Inheritance involves maintaining the characteristics of musical materials or organizational principles within a new environment. Transformation manifests through changes in melody, harmony, rhythm, or the interpretation of materials. Functional reorganization occurs when a musical element or instrument assumes a different role in relation to other ensemble components. Meanwhile, interaction is the process in which different elements and organizational methods participate together in shaping musical structure through combination, contrast, or stylistic transition.

Thus, intersection does not necessarily result in a complete blending of stylistic traits. A material may be preserved while its function changes, or its form may be

transformed while retaining its original role. Therefore, studying intersection requires identifying which elements are inherited, which are transformed, and how they impact voice functions, ensemble relationships, and performance methods. This forms the analytical basis for examining the modes of intersection in Claude Bolling's Baroque and Blue and George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue.

INTERSECTION BETWEEN BAROQUE AND JAZZ LANGUAGES IN CLAUDE BOLLING'S BAROQUE AND BLUE

Baroque and Blue, the first movement of Claude Bolling's Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano Trio, exemplifies the intersection of classical music and Jazz through the contrasting organization and interaction of materials and ensemble methods. In a 2018 study, Minhee Kim notes that Bolling employs a relatively traditional Jazz harmonic language while placing Jazz styles alongside passages inspired by historical music styles. This perspective indicates that intersection in the work does not necessarily lead to total fusion, but can be forged by maintaining distinct characteristics and organizing their relationships.

Organization and Interaction Among Melodic Lines

In measures 1–33, the Flute and Piano present the musical materials while the Double Bass and Drums remain inactive. The melodic lines display sequential movement, call-and-response dynamics, and relatively independent linear motion, recalling the polyphonic organizational thinking of Baroque music. At measure 34, marked Swing, the Flute pauses, and the Piano shifts to present the primary material within the Jazz rhythm section. This change creates stylistic contrast while reorganizing instrument functions—shifting from a Flute–Piano relationship to a Piano–Double Bass–Drums interaction.

Thus, intersection is forged through inheriting melodic organization principles while changing the ensemble environment. Materials need not be completely altered; rather, they can be placed in new relationships to generate contrast and continuity across musical sections.

Harmonic and Rhythmic Transformations

The stylistic transition is clearly marked at measure 34, where the piece shifts to a 4/4 meter with a Swing indication, joined by the Double Bass and Drums. The Piano utilizes flexible rhythmic patterns and chromatic movements, while the Double Bass

moves predominantly in quarter notes, establishing the harmonic foundation and sustaining rhythmic momentum. At measure 50, the Straight instruction appears along with the return of 3/4 meter, with the Flute and Piano resuming the primary material.

These shifts demonstrate that rhythm functions not only as a stylistic marker but also actively participates in organizing formal structure. Furthermore, Jazz characteristics cannot be defined solely by the presence of chromaticism or extended chords; rather, one must examine how these elements are organized in relation to harmony, rhythm, and performance practice.

Role of the Double Bass in the Intersection and Ensemble Organization

At measure 34, the Double Bass enters pizzicato, joining the Piano and Drums to form a Jazz ensemble unit. The bass line establishes the harmonic foundation, maintains rhythmic propulsion, and links harmonic anchor points. In this relationship, the function of the Double Bass is defined not only by individual pitches and durations, but through its coordination with the Piano and Drums.

The entry and omission of the Double Bass in different sections alter acoustic density and ensemble organization. However, pizzicato execution or chromatic movement per se are not exclusive to Jazz; stylistic significance derives from their function within the whole. Thus, Baroque and Blue demonstrates intersection by maintaining distinctiveness and reorganizing inter-instrumental relationships, in which the Double Bass plays a crucial role in establishing the harmonic-rhythmic foundation of the Jazz group.

SYNTHESIS OF JAZZ LANGUAGE AND SYMPHONIC MUSIC IN GEORGE GERSHWIN'S RHAPSODY IN BLUE

George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, premiered in 1924 with orchestration by Ferde Grofé for Paul Whiteman's orchestra, demonstrates a mode of intersection distinct from Baroque and Blue. In this work, elements influenced by Jazz and Blues are integrated into the thematic construction and development of a concert hall composition. David Schiff (1997) cites Gershwin's ambition to transcend the narrow view of Jazz as mere dance rhythm, aiming toward a musical structure with broader expressive scope.

The opening section, featuring the iconic Clarinet line and glissando, demonstrates the synthesis of melodic material and Jazz-influenced performance interpretation.

Subsequent themes employ chromatic motion, flexible rhythmic figures, and Blues-inflected characteristics, organized into contrasting musical sections.

Within the work's structure, these elements serve not only as stylistic indicators but actively construct themes, generate contrast, and link musical sections. Intersection is thus manifested in functional transformation: Jazz- and Blues-influenced materials become developmental engines within a large-scale concert work.

Synthesis of Harmony and Rhythm in Compositional Language

Gershwin combines chromatic motion, extended harmonic sonorities, and syncopated rhythmic figures with methods of thematic development in concert music. These elements contribute Jazz color while simultaneously directing harmonic motion, building musical phrases, and creating contrast between sections.

However, intersection cannot be defined purely through chord construction or syncopation, as similar elements exist within classical music. What must be examined is their structural function. When integrated into thematic development and formal progression, Jazz-influenced features are reorganized to fulfill both stylistic and structural roles.

Role of Orchestration and Ensemble Organization

A significant aspect of Rhapsody in Blue is the existence of multiple orchestrations, ranging from the 1924 Paul Whiteman orchestra version to Ferde Grofé's 1942 full symphonic arrangement. In Arranging Gershwin (2014), Ryan Raul Bañagale underscores the role of arrangements and contributors in shaping the work's history, thereby re-framing the concept of a composition as a fixed product of a single composer.

This perspective highlights orchestration as a locus of intersection. As materials are redistributed among instrumental families, timbre, density, and ensemble relationships shift. For the bass line, changes in instrumentation raise questions regarding how low-register functions are distributed across instruments and how they relate to harmony and rhythm. Direct comparative analysis of score versions is necessary to determine which functions are preserved or transformed.

Thus, Rhapsody in Blue demonstrates intersection primarily through integrating and developing Jazz and Blues materials within a symphonic concert framework, while expanding performance possibilities through orchestration. As David Schiff notes, the performance history of the work reveals tensions between strict adherence to the score

and improvisatory flexibility, a central issue in recognizing Jazz identity within concert hall environments.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO MODES OF INTERSECTION

Examining both works reveals that the intersection of classical music and Jazz relies on shared processes of inheritance, transformation, and functional reorganization of melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and ensemble elements. However, the modes of realization differ significantly.

In Baroque and Blue, Bolling primarily employs contrast and interaction between Baroque features and the Jazz Trio format. Stylistic transitions are clearly delineated through material distribution, metric shifts, and instrumental participation. Conversely, in Rhapsody in Blue, Gershwin integrates Jazz and Blues elements directly into the symphonic composition structure, with orchestration further shaping the presentation of material and ensemble relationships.

Thus, the two works demonstrate that intersection can be achieved either by preserving distinctiveness to create interaction, or by integrating stylistic features into an entirely new structural synthesis. In both cases, the value of the intersection lies not merely in the musical elements utilized, but in the functional shift and altered relationships among them in composition, arrangement, and performance.

CONCLUSION

The intersection of classical music and Jazz is reflected not only in combining melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and timbral elements, but in inheriting, transforming, and reorganizing their functions across composition, arrangement, and performance. This process creates new modes of musical organization while transforming voice relationships and performance realization.

Through Claude Bolling's Baroque and Blue and George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, this study clarifies two representative modes of intersection. In Baroque and Blue, intersection is forged primarily by maintaining stylistic contrast and interaction between Baroque characteristics and Jazz ensemble practice. In contrast, Rhapsody in Blue demonstrates the integration and thematic development of Jazz and Blues elements within a symphonic concert structure. Both cases show that intersection does not necessitate

erasing distinct stylistic identities, but can emerge through functional shifts and altered structural relationships.

Research findings indicate that transformation of material and transformation of function are not identical. An element may preserve its outer form while assuming a new role in a different ensemble context. This insight expands methods of score analysis while offering valuable foundations for pedagogy and performance. Specifically, for the Double Bass, defining harmonic, rhythmic, and interactive functions with other instruments is of vital importance when approaching and performing cross-stylistic musical works.

Ultimately, the value of the intersection of classical music and Jazz lies not only in expanding compositional language, but in establishing novel methods of ensemble organization and performance practice. Approaching intersection through the relationships among material, function, and performance mode bridges scholarship, education, and artistic practice, while opening future research avenues on the evolving roles of instruments in multi-stylistic musical environments.

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APPENDIX

Score Excerpts Reference:

1. Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano Trio, Movement 1: 'Baroque and Blue' – Claude Bolling (Full score excerpts, mm. 1–78).

2. Rhapsody in Blue for Piano and Orchestra – George Gershwin (Score manuscript & piano reduction excerpts).