

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS: JAZZ AND EVERYDAY AESTHETICS

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“We were living at the time in a tiny ground floor apartment in which I was trying to write,” recalls Ralph Ellison in “Living With Music” (Ellison 2002, 3-14), his autobiographical account of Harlem in the early 1950s. “I say ‘trying’ advisedly,” he continues. “To our right, separated by a thin wall, was a small restaurant with a juke box the size of the Roxy. To our left, a night-employed swing enthusiast who took his lullaby music so loud that every morning promptly at nine [Count] Basie’s brasses started blasting my typewriter off its stand. Our living room looked out across a small backyard to a rough store wall to an apartment building which, towering above, caught every passing thoroughfare sound and rifled it straight down to me. There were also howling cats and barking dogs, none capable of music worth living with, so we’ll pass them by” (Ibid, 4).

By focusing on the multitude of sounds and songs, rhythms and riffs, voices and vocations, that characterized his particular neighborhood, Ellison’s essay explores music’s everyday meaning: how it comes to inhabit the places we inhabit, the things we do, our view the world, and the people we know and engage with on a daily basis. He charts the changing relationship between his musical values and his day-to-day routines and habits, including working, conversing with family and friends, making trips to the store, looking out the window, or listening to a record. For him, music is inseparable from our sense of social being; it speaks to questions of who we are and what our lives have come to mean. It heightens our quarrels just as easily as it can heal old wounds. It marks the processes of growing up, settling down, and growing old; yet still carries within it echoes of lost time and dreams of escape.

Ellison’s sketch provides a useful a starting point for thinking about everyday aesthetics in the context of jazz studies. His meditation on the problems of reconciling his own aesthetic values with those of his noisy neighbors raises some fundamental questions about how we account for our experiences of the music in terms of concepts such as the familiar, the ordinary, the vernacular, and the commonplace. His evocation of everyday life, with its uneven, fluid and varied musical landscapes, opens onto a different sense of jazz’s history that is subterranean and dispersed, as focused on the uneventful in our lives as much as it is about the unremarkable. In this chapter I want to discuss how this everyday sense of jazz shapes our perception of its value, and what this can tell us about why the music matters to people, as well as how it comes to matter to them.

Everyday life

Everyday life became a major theme for philosophers, ethnographers, historians, sociologists, cultural theorists, and artists in the early twentieth-century, and it continues to inform some of the most important debates in all of these fields (Highmore 2002). The use of the term, however, is often vague and paradoxical. It has been applied on the one hand to experiences that are common to everyone, such as eating, sleeping, walking or talking; on the other hand, it is used to describe social practices that are

somehow excluded from or in some way resist incorporation into the standard narratives of modern life. Philosopher Henri Lefebvre sums the problem up nicely. “Everyday life,” he argues, is defined by “...‘what is left over’ after all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis...Considered in their specialization and their technicality, superior activities leave a ‘technical vacuum’ between one another which is filled up by everyday life. Everyday life is profoundly related to all activities and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground. And it is in everyday life that the sum total of relations which make the human - and every human being - a whole takes its shape and its form. In it are expressed and fulfilled those relations which bring into play the totality of the real, albeit in a certain manner which is always partial and incomplete: friendship, comradeship, love, the need to communicate, play...” (Lefebvre 1991, 97).

Much of the debate about the meaning and significance of everyday life focuses on finding ways of registering its openness, ambiguity and indeterminacy, without undermining the specific qualities and practices that have come to define it. Given its elusiveness, however, this is an especially challenging task. After several years of studying the “obscure heroes” of the ephemeral, those “walking in the city, inhabitants of neighborhoods, readers and dreamers,” Michel de Certeau and Luce Giard conclude that we hardly know anything about the lives of these people all. It is difficult to make sense of “...the types of operations at stake in [their] ordinary practices, their registers and their combinations,” they point out, “because our instruments of analysis, modeling, and formalization were constructed for other objects and with other aims” (de Certeau, Giard, and Mayol 1998, 256). Studying ordinary culture, in their view, is first of all “...a practical science of the singular, which takes in reverse our thinking habits in which scientific rationality is knowledge of the general, an abstraction made from the circumstantial and the accidental” (Ibid, 256).

Music and everyday life

There have been a number of influential studies of the relationship between music and everyday life over the last few decades. Sociologists such as Simon Frith and Tia DeNora have explored the value that listeners attach to music and how it shapes their individual and collective identities. According to Frith, “...music gives us a way of being in the world, a way of making sense of it... (Frith, 1996, 272). It is particularly important to our sense of self because of its “...unique emotional intensity—we absorb songs into our own lives and rhythm into our own bodies...Music, we could say, provides us with an intensely subjective sense of being sociable...it articulates and offers immediate experience of collective identity” (Ibid, 273). DeNora underlines this aspect of musical experience, too, through her study of ways in which different groups of women in the United Kingdom and the United States engage with, and use, music in their lives. She concentrates on the intimate connections that her subjects have developed with music, from its value as a mode of understanding, to its use as a therapeutic resource for health and wellbeing. Ultimately, music functions in her analysis as a medium for the construction of social reality; it speaks to our consciousness of self and society, as well as defining the limits of our bodily conduct and collective agency (DeNora 2000, 151-163).

Ethnomusicologists have undertaken similar studies. Crafts, Cavicchi, and Keil, for example, highlight the multiple contexts in which musical experiences take shape and the complex ways in which different social groups locate music’s value and meaning (Crafts, Cavicchi, and Keil 1993). Their study of people ranging from four to eighty-three years old in the United States reveals the intricate and variable roles that music plays in people’s lives, and the authors offer a rich medley of insights into how music structures their subjects’ daily life. Even as he addresses similar questions of music’s value and meaning,

Ronald Radano develops a very different perspective on the social dimensions of musical experience in his analysis of the Muzak Corporation. Rather than offer an interpretation of the musical object, Radano proposes a shift in our focus towards the listener, in order to understand the ways in which Muzak has reshaped our sonic environments and, in turn, recalibrated our experience of the everyday (Radano 1989, 449).

The ubiquity of prerecorded background music in public spaces such as shopping malls, airports, hotels, cafes and offices signals a fundamental transformation in our relationship to the main sources of musical value and cultural authority. "Today," Radano writes, "individuals commonly develop musical taste not from private or institutional instruction but from listening to the radio and Music Television [and other electronic media]; accordingly, taste finds its form in the offerings of the culture industry and the listening practices that have developed during the age of recording" (Ibid, 457). These changes to our listening practices and sonic environments are so profound that the older models of musical analysis and interpretation seem largely irrelevant. Instead of denouncing its effects on everyday life, he proposes that we develop a different approach, which begins to explore "...the varieties of meanings these modes of production encourage and in turn the kinds of musical forms they inspire" (Ibid, 458).

Music psychologists have also undertaken numerous studies of people's subjective experience of music in ordinary situations, including gyms, churches, schools, and other public spaces, in order to better understand the ways in which music affects emotional states, shapes our perception of the world, and enhances subjective identification. Their approach aims to capture the richness and diversity of everyday musical experience while also taking into account the social context in which music listening occurs, and the meanings the people attach to it. In a wide-ranging survey, Sloboda, O'Neill, and Ivaldi report that among their respondents, music as a cue to reminiscence (nostalgia) was the single most frequently cited use. "The activities which music accompanied," they point out, "were predominantly domestic or solitary, and included doing housework, studying, driving, resting. Indeed some respondents made a point of qualifying their use of music (for example "the car is the only place where I can listen to it loud enough without annoying other people"). Several respondents made explicit links between activities/contexts and their psychological functions (for example on arrival home from work "music lifts the stress of work: it has an immediate healing effect"). In other cases, a clear and almost unbridgeable gap was implied between the private world where music can be part of a deeply personal "emotional repair process" and the public world where appearances must be kept up" (Sloboda, O'Neill, and Ivaldi 2001, 13). A notable theme in many of these studies is that music is rarely the primary focus of people's day-to-day activities. Participants frequently talk about doing something else, such as housework or travelling or eating out, with music as the accompaniment to that activity (Ibid, 22).

Everyday aesthetics

Since at least the eighteenth century, the field of aesthetics has been concerned mostly with the experience of natural beauty and works of fine art. The term "everyday aesthetics" refers to a recent movement among philosophers and cultural theorists that questions this preoccupation and explores instead the possibility of an aesthetic experience related to daily activities, feelings, affects and objects (Irvin 2008, 29-44). Scholars who focus on the concept also raise important questions about the cultural and political purpose of longstanding aesthetic distinctions, particularly those that currently stand between the fine and popular arts and between aesthetic and non-aesthetic experiences, and they seek to challenge many of our assumptions about what counts as a work of art. John Dewey's *Art as Experience* is a founding text for many of the thinkers and artists who make up this movement, especially his claim that "...the esthetic is no intruder in experience from without, whether by way of idle luxury or transcendent reality, but...is the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to normally complete

experience” (Dewey 1934, 48). Furthermore, for Dewey, because human experience is cultural and historical, art is fundamentally a social practice. Aesthetic understanding, he argues, emerges from creative processes, not independently of them; art, in its form, “...unites the very same relation of doing and undoing, outgoing and incoming energy, that makes experience to be experience” (Ibid, 50). Although Dewey remains a key reference point for anyone engaged with these kinds of issues, there are also connections to continental philosophers such as Husserl, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger, the ordinary language philosophy pioneered by J. L. Austin, and the ethnography developed in France by Marcel Mauss. Collectively, these thinkers speak to an interpretive practice that aims to get back to the things themselves by locating meaning and truth in the particular and the ordinary. Their ambition was to develop a science of the concrete by exploring the logic of common sense words and everyday actions, and thus return our understanding of experience to the very ground of human being (Cavell 1988, 153-178, Stewart, 2007). As Mauss observed in the 1920s, a tin can “...characterizes our societies better than the most sumptuous jewel or the rarest stamp (Mauss quoted in Fournier 2005, 277). Such shifts in perspective involve us in a profound (and on-going) process of revaluing our cultural practices and values, especially our relations to the forms and contents of everyday objects and events, along with the terms through which we account for their significance in our lives.

This raises several questions: what connects aesthetic sensibility to our everyday lives? How can we know what counts as an aesthetic experience in this context? And how does everyday life give rise to, or provide the basis for, an aesthetic expression or experience? For the philosopher Kevin Melchionne, everyday aesthetics “...concerns our recurring, daily routines rather than episodic events or projects. Dwelling, the cleaning, inhabiting, enjoying of the home, is a daily activity made and remade on a regular basis. By contrast, interior decoration is rarely done, only once every few years at its most frequent” (Melchionne, 2013). He suggests that those experiences that are common to us can have an aesthetic content that may well be more important than any experience we have might have of an artwork in a gallery or musical performance in a concert hall. For example, taking out the trash is a regular activity we all at some point (may have to) do. Depending on when and where this happens in our daily routine, what began as a chore maybe undergo aesthetic transformation. It might involve a murmured exchange of pleasantries at dawn with a neighbor similarly occupied, or the pleasure to be found in the noise of the city as it passes from day into night.

Friends and neighbors

I now want to return to the concept of the everyday within jazz and consider an example that exemplifies many of the issues I have raised so far. Try to imagine what it was like to visit saxophonist Ornette Coleman’s loft apartment in SoHo in the early 1970s. There were countless people coming and going, and many of them were involved in one way or another with the performances of music and dance that Coleman was hosting there most days (Heller 2017, 34-35). The numerous performers and friends who stayed in the loft recollect what a special place it was, and not just for musicians and other artists who gravitated towards its supportive atmosphere, but also for locals who drifted in and out of the space. “We would arrive in New York from Sweden every year and my dad would head off to see Ornette almost as soon as we landed,” the singer Neneh Cherry recalled. “...It [the loft] was a special place – a hub for musicians and poets and artists. Very free, very open. A lot of my memories come from the time – watching them play together, listening to them rehearse, always this music being made... Around the time that Friends and Neighbors (1970) was recorded, my mother made a tapestry that hung behind Ornette’s group as they performed. It hangs on a wall of our house in Sweden now. I remember we’d turn up

sometimes and Ornette would be there alone, with just his saxophone and his music on the stand, always practicing” (Cherry 2015).

Throughout the 1960s, Coleman had made several attempts to take control of his own financial affairs and secure some degree of artistic autonomy in the face of what he saw as the deeply ingrained racism and exploitative practices of the music industry. “I don’t feel healthy about the performing world anymore at all,” Coleman explained to fellow musician Arthur Taylor. “I think it’s an egotistical world; it’s about clothes and money, not about music. I’d like to get out of it, but I don’t have the financial situation to do so. I have come to enjoy writing music because you don’t have that performing image...I don’t want to be a puppet and be told what to do and what not to do...” (Taylor, 1993, 35). This dissatisfaction and frustration led him to think about alternatives for creating and presenting his music, and the possibilities for fostering a community of artists who could make a living outside of the established circuits of wealth, power and ownership that for him characterized American society. One alternative that emerged for him during this period related to where he lived. In April 1968, Coleman was part of a group that obtained a seven story building on 131 Princes Street (Shoemaker 2018, 125). Initially, he acquired the second and third floors of the building, and then later on, he agreed to take over the first floor for his own projects (McRae 1988, 56). He envisaged the loft as an independent performance venue for improvised music and experimental dance, an exhibition space and a meeting place for musicians, writers, visual artists, poets, critics, and filmmakers, and a neighborhood space, that was open to anyone. To this end, he encouraged people to rehearse, perform and record there at all hours of the day and night. The atmosphere was informal, it was decorated with African décor and original paintings and tapestries, and at any one time, there were friends and relatives living in the apartment with Coleman. Audiences attending the concerts were not asked to pay or make donations, although they often left other artistic works as gifts (as Neneh Cherry’s mother did), and all the events held there were based on the same principles of self-sufficiency that had formed the basis of some of Coleman’s earlier concert experiments in the mid-1960s (Litweiler 1984, 53, Litweiler 1994, 138-39).

Several firsthand reports confirm the importance of the loft, referring to it as a meeting place for a new generation of African-America improvisers and composers, many of whom were struggling to establish themselves in New York, as well as other key figures in the musical and artistic avant-garde. In an interview in 1978, the violinist Leroy Jenkins recalled that when he first arrived in New York from Chicago in the early 1970s, “...we stayed downstairs at Ornette’s Artist House, which at the time wasn’t decorated. It was cold down there, where we slept. Ornette gave us a mattress but he didn’t realize how cold it was. One night something happened and he came downstairs to wake us up. He said, “Wow, your cats better come upstairs...I spent three months up there, staying at his house, doing everything. Answering the door, helping him copy music, arguing about his harmolodic theory” (quoted in Primark 1979, 24, 50). It offered them a context in which to negotiate the particular and often daunting problems presented by the New York artistic world (finding a place to live, meeting other musicians, making friends, covering living expenses, finding work, for example), but also a place in which they began to find their way to a sense of what their (the new) music meant to them (Lewis 2008, 325-88). “Ornette would give out the space to musicians,” remembers drummer Rashid Ali. “It wasn’t even about renting the space. He would give it to you for almost nothing. We would produce and perform our own concerts there. We were the producer, the performer, did all the legwork, the P.R. work and everything like that in order to get people to come” (quoted in Heller, op. cit. 35).

The most detailed account of the loft comes from a Japanese journalist, Kiyoshi Koyama. His feature article, “Ornette at Prince Street,” was published in Tokyo, in the October 1969 issue of *Swing Journal*, and contains a wealth of detail about the living space, several striking photographs of Coleman playing billiards, rehearsing, and working, as well as a description of a rehearsal with Ed Blackwell, Don Cherry, Charlie Haden and Dewey Redman. “When we visited,” Koyama writes, “Ornette’s home was still being

remodeled. He bought it last April, and his architect friend is turning the third floor into a loft apartment. Underneath the window facing Prince Street are a pool table, a stereo, and a desk for composing. In the middle of 3500 square foot room there is a large table, while on the other side there is Ornette's bed, a sauna, and a shelf with tapes and records. The kitchen, still under construction, is surrounded by a mazelike group of walls. The whole set-up feels a lot like an art gallery. Even the elevator door is a piece of art!" (Koyama quoted in Hayes and Whately 2015).

The loft was not without its problems, however. Coleman had acquired the building early on in the phase of loft conversions in SoHo, before New York City officials had established how these buildings would be regulated. John Snyder, who was Coleman's lawyer at the time, recalls that, "He had bought two floors in the building, and it was not really set up legally correct. So he got into a lot of disputes with his neighbors over noise. He said he owned his spaces, he could do what he wanted, which was not entirely the case" (quoted in Litweiler 1994, 154). After Coleman was evicted from the bottom floor of the Artist House, following legal action by other owners, it became Snyder's job to prevent his eviction from the second floor. What had begun as a utopian vision of a community of experimental artists living and creating together ended when Coleman abandoned the loft altogether in the mid-1970s (Ibid, 154-55).

What has always interested me about this account is the tension between the optimistic title of the recording he made in the loft in 1970—*Friends and Neighbors*—and Snyder's somewhat resigned comment that Coleman "got into a lot of disputes with his neighbors over noise." Every time I listen to the record, and look at the photos of Coleman's home in that period, I find myself coming back to a comment in Jacques Attali's book *Noise*, about the politics of contemporary music: "Free jazz...created locally the conditions for a different model of musical production, a new music. But since this noise was not inscribed on the same level as the messages circulating in the network of repetition, it could not make itself heard" (Attali 1985, 140).

As we know from Ellison's account, there is nothing so ordinary as a neighborly dispute about noise. But who were Coleman's neighbors that they objected to his music? Were they the same neighbors who joyfully sing along with Coleman on the first track of the recording? Were his friends and neighbors the same people? And when they complained about the noise, was it because they were fed up, unable to sleep, on edge, unhappy about living next to a group of musicians, or were just plain intolerant? And what was the problem with what they heard? Was the music simply too loud, or was there something else going on? One of his neighbors was a composer, Emmanuel Ghent, with whom Coleman collaborated on several occasions, so we can safely assume he was not involved (Hayes and Whately op. cit). Who were these others, though, who felt that the activities taking place on Coleman's floors were in some way at odds with their own everyday existence?

There are no easy answers to these questions. As far as I can tell, no one who visited the Artists House in this period thought to ask Coleman or his neighbors about these issues, and his biographers have devoted only one or two pages at most to the history of the loft. There were number of reviews of the concert series that Coleman produced there, under the title "New and Newer Music," but it was rare for the reviewers (even the most sympathetic, such as John Rockwell or Robert Palmer) to display any significant interest in what was most ordinary or uneventful about these events (and when they do, it was accidental: they were simply setting the scene for their review). While thousands of words have been devoted to documenting and explaining the studio-backed 1961 recording, *Free Jazz*, hardly a critic has found a way to say anything interesting or insightful about the self-produced *Friends and Neighbors* other than to note its presence in Coleman's discography, and comment on the unusual context for its production (Jost 1994, 65, Litweiler 1994, 137).

My view is that this is in some sense a failure of jazz criticism to understand its subject; but, equally, an indication of the difficulty of chronicling musicians' everyday existence without focusing

solely on the sensational or unconventional aspects of their lives (sexuality, addiction, violence, and so on), let alone finding an adequate set of critical and conceptual terms with which to make sense of the changing contexts for musical practices (Lewis 2008, 353-70). Elsewhere in his book Attali notes that "...in noise can be read the codes of life, the relations among men (sic)" (Ibid: 6). If we take Coleman's disputes with his neighbors as more than just an isolated incident, but involving the problem of living and playing music with others, then *Friends and Neighbors* assumes a new significance in our understanding of post-1960s jazz. This is a point that Edwards and Whately highlight in their article as well, when they note that Wilmer's iconic photo of Coleman rehearsing with Dewey Redman, Ed Blackwell and Charlie Haden is a memorable image, "...not only because it captures the warmth and commiseration of the men's working relationship, but also because it seems to imply a link between that collaborative spirit and the setting — as though that relaxed intensity was engendered by, or flourished in, the stark, open atmosphere of a prototypical loft, airy and unadorned" (Edwards and Whately, *opt cit.*).

In the nine years between the release of *Free Jazz* and the recording of *Friends and Neighbors* in his loft, Coleman was primarily focused on securing a social space in which jazz was supported as a distinctive art form and creating a situation within which African-American jazz musicians were acknowledged and respected for their contribution to American culture. In an interview with the journalist A. B. Spellman, a few years before he acquired the loft, Coleman remarked that the "...insanity of living in America is that ownership is really strength. It's who owns who's strongest in America. It's strategic living" (Coleman cited in Spellman 1985, 131). The reconstruction of downtown New York seemed to present just this sort of strategic opportunity for him and his many collaborators, especially those who were interested in the emerging forms of avant-garde and experimental music that were taking shape in New York in this period (Rockwell 1997).

As a number of influential studies have shown, beginning notably with a 1963 essay by the jazz poet and critic Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) on the downtown loft scene (Jones 1971, Lewis, 2008), the opening up of former factor buildings or warehouses for use by artists became an integral part of jazz cultures in New York from the early-1960s, and was inseparable from the immense changes in urban space that were transforming the whole city in this period (Harvey 1999). SoHo was an exemplary case in this regard, because the city's planners and developers did not consciously set out to attract performing and visual artists to the area (Zukin 1989); the loft scene emerged in the vacuum left by the protracted debates about the proposed redevelopment of lower Manhattan. The two decades of uncertainty about the plans for the area resulted in serious disinvestment, as tenants moved out, landlords ceased maintenance of their buildings, and squatters and drug users moved in (Heller, *op. cit.*, 28). However, once groups of artists started to make use of these spaces, urban regeneration through the arts became part of a coordinated citywide project of revitalizing old industrial sites as objects for new forms of capital investment. What these studies demonstrate above all is that the emergence of the loft scene in SoHo involved a fundamental re-positioning of the social spaces and relations of artistic production that would have profound implications for musicians throughout the city (Lewis, *op. cit.*).

Friends and Neighbors was conceived in many ways as a response to this process and proposes, to some degree, a temporary solution. Each of the pieces on the recording oscillates between the abstract and concrete, the personal and the impersonal, and the local and the global, without the performers trying to resolve their performances in either direction. The opening sing-along, one of two title tracks, begins with Charlie Haden's funk-inspired bass riff (FGGFGBbG-1), and then the voices enter: "Friends and neighbors that's where it's at; friends and neighbors that's where it's at; friends and neighbors that's a rap; hand in hand that's the score; all the world, small, small, small...Ow!" The chant echoes songs such as "It's a Small World After All," or the "Sesame Street Theme Song," and acts as the signature tune for the collective claims of the Artist House as a neighborhood space. At the same time, the song parodies not just a folksy community song, but sounds like an advertising jingle as well, so it is not at all clear what

kind of community the people gathered for the recording are aiming to produce. The chant is then enfolded within, and transformed by, a dense and relentless sequence of motivic associations and sound manipulations that develop between Haden on bass, Dewey Redman on tenor saxophone, Coleman on alto saxophone, violin and trumpet, and Ed Blackwell on drums. In the final section, the friends and neighbors return with a renewed sense of the homeliness or ordinariness of the artistic space: “friends and neighbors, that’s where it’s at...etc.” The questions that this opening track sets up (and which the rest of the album goes on to explore) are the problems involved in the transformation of a highly localized moment of collective practice—that specific group of people performing at that particular moment and in that place—into an abstract musical commodity (the recording) produced for global consumption. What I want to suggest is that we can really only start to make sense of this recording once we focus on the series of mediations at work within it; that is, the movement from the everyday experiences of the people who lived and worked at Coleman’s loft, to the processes of urban regeneration taking place in Manhattan’s downtown areas and, then, to the increasingly dominant role played by finance capital on Wall Street (Jameson 1998, 136-161). Those uneventful or ordinary periods of time (hours, days, weeks...) in-between performances or gatherings in the loft, when people were simply talking, eating, sleeping, listening to one another practice, making a tapestry, hanging out together, or playing pool, were critical to the form of the music they created there, and why it was important to them (Abrahams 2005, 83-95).

This leads me, finally, to an important comparison. In my view, Free Jazz was Coleman’s attempt to disconnect the most rudimentary elements of music – tone, timbre, harmony, melody, rhythm – from their associations with the exploitative, yet intimate world of jazz clubs, bars, juke joints, restaurants, hotels and recording studios, that jazz musicians mostly relied on for their livelihood. The use of Jackson Pollock’s 1954 painting *White Light* on the cover of the recording signaled this shift as much as anything we hear on recording. Almost a decade later, *Friends and Neighbors* offers a very different understanding of jazz’s meaning and value. By blurring the boundaries between who is performing for whom, the recording forces us back into that world, in order to deal with its contradictions and its limitations, but also to identify its possibilities. The larger point here is that along with the help of his friends and his neighbors, Coleman was attempting to reconceive of jazz as a musical practice that was continuous with, rather than distinct from, everyday life; it was music arising not from the separate activity of artists who renounce their relationship to the world, but from within the attempt to live with, and by, the noise of others. As Ellison so eloquently puts it, “In those days it was either live with music, or die with noise. And we chose rather desperately to live” (Ellison op. cit., 3).

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