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Down beats and rolling stones: the American jazz press decides to cover rock in 1967

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Abstract

This article explores the relationship between jazz and rock criticism in 1967, and in particular, the relationship between the American publications *Down Beat* and *Rolling Stone*. It examines the motivations of jazz publications like *Down Beat* and *Jazz* to start covering rock music in the summer of 1967, and how such coverage worked in practice. It then focuses on Jann Wenner and the birth of *Rolling Stone*, taking into account how other magazines, both music-focused and otherwise, influenced Wenner's conception of what would eventually become the most authoritative rock magazine in the world.

It is often assumed that the American jazz and rock press bear very little relation to one another. In one of the earliest scholarly assessments of the history of the American music press, Simon Frith alleged that 'in the 1950s and early 1960s, the USA had no music papers between the trade press on the one hand...and the teeny-bop magazines on the other', disregarding the numerous American jazz publications in existence during that period (1983: 168). As for the development of the rock press, Frith argued that it emerged from two other sources: first, the underground press, such as the *LA Free Press* and the *Berkeley Barb* in 1964, and second, the arrival of new specialist music magazines, beginning with *Crawdaddy!* in 1966 and then followed by papers such as *Mojo-Navigator*, *Creem*, and most importantly, *Rolling Stone* (1983: 168–69). Subsequent accounts of the music press have often followed this line of argument, historicizing rock journalism in a way that effectively writes jazz critics and publications out of the picture, despite the fact that they covered rock music in significant ways at key moments in rock history. There have been a few notable exceptions to this trend, such as Steve Jones and Kevin Featherly (2002) and Bernard Gendron (2002), who have pointed out certain interactions between the

narratives of jazz and rock criticism, but they too have stopped short of developing any extended comparison between the jazz and rock press, nor has there been any extended account of how the American jazz press reacted to the rise of rock music.

In this article I will demonstrate that the importance of the jazz press in early rock criticism has so far been underplayed. Such a thesis is worth investigating not least because of the many similarities between the histories of jazz and rock discourses: both are popular musics that experienced a shift in their discursive contexts as they moved from being primarily viewed as ephemeral or frivolous to being substantial and serious, and as Jones and Featherly have argued, both are unified in their focus on issues of race, authenticity and mass culture (2002: 19). A project that would fully examine the relationship between jazz and rock criticism is beyond the scope of a single journal article, so for the purposes of this essay I have chosen to examine a particular moment of overlap between the American jazz and rock press in 1967.

Historians seem to agree that 1967 was a pivotal year in rock music's bid to be taken seriously as an art. It was the year of the Monterey Pop Festival, an event which, apart from showcasing the musicians involved, brought striking images of the rock audience as both a significant culture and commercial market to the attention of the mainstream press and record companies. It was the year that the Beatles released *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which received unprecedented analysis in the highbrow press and, more than any other album, provoked music critics across the board to reconsider rock as something more than mere entertainment. Finally, it was the year of the birth of *Rolling Stone*, which would grow to become the single most important and authoritative rock periodical in the world, establishing a canon of music, writers and aesthetic criteria for rock music that would continue to influence pop discourse forty years later.

But if 1967 marked the emergence of new ways of thinking about rock, it also marked the point at which other pre-existing musical discourses were found to be lacking when applied to rock music. The success of *Rolling Stone* rests on top of another, much less-discussed story, namely the failure of the existing music press in 1967 to address rock culture in a way that brought together the two key audiences necessary for any profitable periodical—advertisers and a mass readership. And it was not for lack of trying: in addition to well-known rock predecessors to *Rolling Stone* like *Crawdaddy!* and *Mojo-Navigator*, there were also several established American jazz magazines, such as *Down Beat*, that publicly changed their editorial policies to include rock coverage that summer, months before the first issue of *Rolling Stone* hit the newsstands in November.¹

1. The *Down Beat* logo has changed numerous times over its history, and in 1967 it would have read as an all lower-case *down beat* (the current logo is all upper case). In this article, however, I will refer to the title as *Down Beat*.

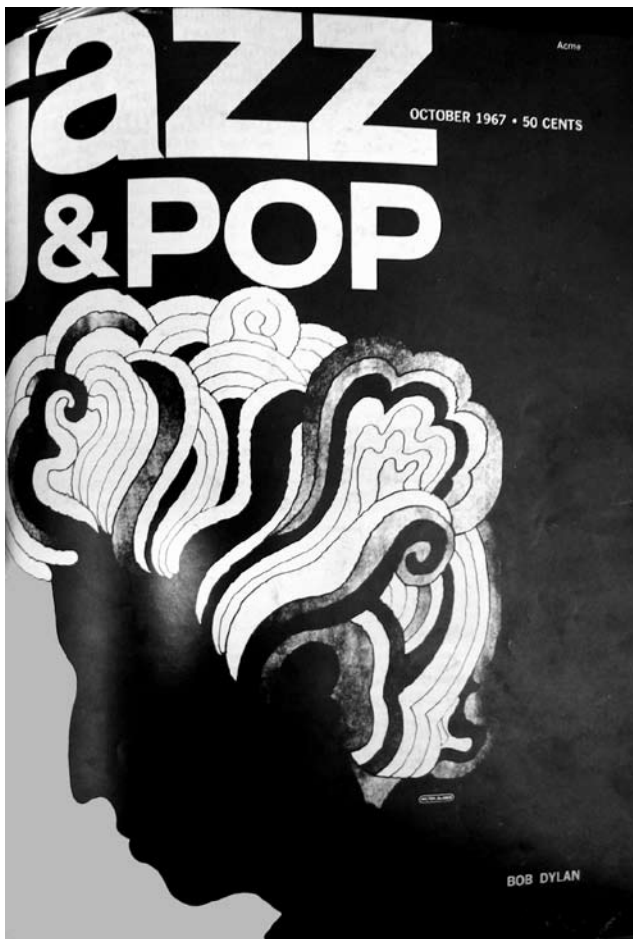
'*Down Beat*, as the world's leading publication dedicated to America's only original art form, has watched musical fads come and go, but has never overlooked significant trends or changes in our music', wrote editor Dan Morgenstern in June 1967, as he announced the magazine's new policy of including rock music in its coverage (1967: 13). He had just taken over as editor-in-chief from his friend Don DeMichael, who had held the position for the previous six years. Morgenstern continued:

The fact that many of the most gifted young rock musicians are showing an increasing awareness of jazz (from the bedrock of the blues to the 'new thing'), as well as the growing sophistication of [rock] music itself, are significant trends of great potential. *Down Beat*, without reducing its coverage of jazz, will expand its editorial perspective to include the musically valid aspects of the rock scene. Jazz, itself the result of the convergence of many different strains and influences, has survived as an art because it has remained capable of change and expansion. Rock-and-roll, an offspring of rhythm-and-blues, partakes of the same process... There are straws in the wind that the future paths of jazz and rock may converge—already, there is much interaction—but whatever the future may hold, the music of today's young America is vital and provocative. There is no better medium for creative reportage and commentary on these fascinating happenings than *Down Beat*, whose staff and contributors are uniquely qualified observers of...the contemporary music scene and represent a broad spectrum of opinion. As is our coverage of jazz in all its aspects, our selective approach to rock will be stimulating, informative, and always concerned with encouraging high musical standards. It will be interesting, we predict, even to those of our readers who have yet to be convinced that this new music has artistic merit and is related to jazz. Of them, we only ask an open mind (ibid.).

Only a month later, another American jazz publication, *Jazz*, would follow suit, changing not only its coverage but the very title of the magazine from *Jazz* to *Jazz and Pop*. And both *Down Beat* and *Jazz* were years behind the British music weekly *Melody Maker*, which had been jazz and dance-oriented for many years but began covering rhythm and blues and rock music as early as 1964.

What was happening in the jazz press to prompt these amendments in editorial scope? Did they see themselves as providing readers with a large-circulation magazine that took rock seriously? Were jazz critics becoming overwhelmed by the aesthetic significance of rock music, or were there commercial concerns fueling the change? Morgenstern wrote that *Down Beat* was 'uniquely qualified' to report on these events, and it certainly was: the publisher boasted that 'music enthusiasts spend more money to read [*Down Beat*] than the total spent to read all other music publications published in the US', making *Down Beat* by far the biggest audited music magazine in America (1967a: 51). The fledgling *Rolling Stone* also claimed to be intent on covering the rock scene, but its first issue sold a measly 6,000 copies; *Down Beat*, on the other hand, dwarfed that circulation twelve times over (Draper 1990: 70).

In the following sections, I will explore the motivations of the jazz press to expand their coverage to include rock. I will focus in particular on the case of *Down Beat* magazine, but will also provide context by discussing other publications such as *Jazz and Pop*, *Melody Maker*, *Crawdaddy!*, *Mojo-Navigator*, and briefly outline some of the other outlets for rock criticism at that time. Finally, I will relate the American music press landscape of 1967 to Jann Wenner and the birth of his own magazine, *Rolling Stone*, examining what influences Wenner took on board from existing conventions in the music press, and how he synthesized them to create a new kind of music periodical that would eventually have a profound role in shaping the accepted narratives of rock history.



Jazz and Pop magazine, October 1967

Motivations for the American jazz press to cover rock

Much as we tend to think of jazz and rock as separate musical traditions, it does not follow that their listening audiences are mutually exclusive, and this is no less true today than it was in the 1960s. Jazz and pop music were forever interacting with one another, but it has not always been an easy relationship. For instance, many members of the jazz community had a strong and largely negative reaction to the birth of rock'n'roll in the mid-1950s. An editorial from *Down Beat* summed up the sentiment: 'if with regret, we've no choice but to admit rock'n'roll is part of our national culture, for the present, anyway. To eradicate it, or at least to demote it, seems to be a matter of urgency...rock'n'roll has got to go' (1956: 39).

Since that time, rock'n'roll was dismissed at various points as simplistic, vulgar and crassly commercial youth music; in fact, such discourse bore a great resemblance to early critiques of jazz in the 1920s and 1930s.² But this all changed in the middle of the sixties, when rock artists began to break down the conventional barriers between high and low art; to mention only the most influential examples, the Beatles incorporated techniques from avant-garde *musique concrète* and symphonic orchestration, while Bob Dylan drew inspiration from modernist poetry for his song lyrics. Bernard Gendron (2002) made a convincing argument that a fundamental shift in critical attitudes towards rock music occurred between 1963 and 1968: relying mainly on news and feature articles from broadsheet newspapers and the middle-brow press in the earlier years and then including the coverage in specialist rock and jazz magazines that began to appear in 1966–68, Gendron argued that the incorporations of the avant-garde into rock music provoked a discursive shift and ultimately led to a 'cultural accreditation' of rock in the 1960s.

Rock musicians were also borrowing ideas from jazz. Members of Cream, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, the Byrds, the Blues Project, the Grateful Dead, and Big Brother and the Holding Company were all interested in jazz music and used jazz elements in their own music.³ And a young generation of jazz musicians such as Gary Burton, Charles Lloyd and Larry Coryell were embracing rock music and incorporating it into their jazz output. Coryell described his early days in New York in 1965 as follows: 'we were saying, we love Wes [Montgomery], but we also love Bob Dylan. We love Coltrane but we also love the Beatles. We love Miles but we also love the Rolling Stones. We wanted people to know we are very much part

2. I have discussed this topic in a paper called 'Comparing the Shaming of Jazz and Rhythm and Blues in Music Criticism', presented at the Experience Music Project Pop Conference in Seattle, 30 April, 2006.

3. For an extended discussion of the influence of jazz on rock musicians during this period, see Stuart Nicholson's *Jazz-Rock: A History* (1998).

of the contemporary scene, but at the same time we had worked our butts off to learn this other music [called jazz]' (quoted in Nicholson 1998: 29). By 1967, musicians from jazz and rock backgrounds were beginning to get together to jam and form large ensembles like Blood, Sweat and Tears and Chicago; although these two bands would not release their debut albums until 1968, they were merely the most visible signs of growing relations between certain parts of jazz and rock cultures.

These early interactions between rock and jazz musicians were representative of similar interactions at the level of amateur musicians and audiences, and this had an important impact on *Down Beat* magazine. Contrary to popular belief, the readership of *Down Beat* was not primarily an older generation that had grown up with jazz, but young males in their late teens and twenties—very much the same age and gender demographic that *Rolling Stone* would appeal to in the near future. According to Dan Morgenstern, *Down Beat's* editor from 1967 to 1973, research showed that the magazine's readership was primarily male high school and college students, who stopped reading the magazine once they left education and entered the work force (Morgenstern 2005). There were also a number of veteran subscribers, of course, who had maintained an interest in jazz throughout their lives, but the mainstay of the readership had been young students from the mid-1950s onward.

Down Beat had started out in 1934, and during its early years it was read primarily by dance band musicians. But the magazine survived the decline of the swing era by re-inventing itself as a consumer publication for serious fans, and crucially, young learning musicians. In particular, an advertising manager named Charles Suber, who joined the magazine in 1953, remembered that attending a high school jazz festival in 1956 inspired him to rethink the reader–advertiser relationship at *Down Beat*: 'We had this burgeoning school jazz movement with several hundred thousand kids and a generation of educators who came out of the swing band period. It was not only a growing audience. Most of our best circulation that the advertisers wanted to pay for came directly from this market' (quoted in McDonough 1995: 14). The rise of the stage band movement in America meant that significant numbers of high school students were being turned on to jazz music, and since *Down Beat's* main advertising revenue came from instrument manufacturers during its days as a magazine for working musicians, it was a relatively easy transition for manufacturers to turn their marketing efforts towards younger, learning musicians looking to buy instruments.⁴

4. The term 'stage band' is not widely used outside of North America, and refers to a school or college ensemble with big band instrumentation designed to play jazz and pop charts, as opposed to a concert or symphonic band. 'Stage band' was seemingly invented to be a euphe-

This advertising base would remain largely unchanged by 1967. *Down Beat* was clearly trying to capture and expand the market of student musicians. Since the 1950s, special issues dedicated to a particular instrument had been an important strategy for the magazine, and the publisher could be seen boasting in the magazine's pages to both readers and advertisers that according to surveys, 'DB readers each own 2.1 instruments' (1967b). For a bi-weekly publication, the number of annual special issues were at risk of overwhelming the regular issues: brass, big band, drums, guitar, education, readers' poll, and critics' poll editions of *Down Beat* were all published on an annual basis. However, a key difference between the 1950s and 1967 was that young amateur musicians were now buying far more electric six-string guitars, bass guitars and drums than they were trumpets, trombones or saxophones. *Down Beat* had a potentially high-spending readership of learning musicians who were listening to at least as much rock as jazz, and instrument manufacturers were eager to exploit that market. The signs were there as early as 1965, when there were advertisements in *Down Beat* for Vox guitars and amps that featured pictures of the Beatles and used the slogan 'The Sound of the Longhairs' (1965: 49). But these ads were totally at odds with the content and editorial direction of the magazine.

Most of the staff at *Down Beat* rarely listened to rock, but the magazine's advertisers urged its owner, John Maher, to put pressure on editors to openly include rock coverage. As editor Dan Morgenstern recalled, the advertisers 'had been pressuring the old man [Maher] about including rock because they were saying "these young musicians you're talking about, of course most of them today are playing or listening to rock'n'roll and not jazz". The line was that there were threats or veiled threats of reducing or withholding advertising if this wasn't going to be done' (2005). Ordinarily Maher appreciated the need to separate advertising from editorial, but at the time the decision to include rock coverage was argued to be a matter of 'the survival of the magazine' (ibid.).

To make this decision more palatable to jazz readers, Morgenstern cited the increasing sophistication in rock music and the growing interactions between jazz and rock as the reasons for the magazine's new editorial policy. This was all true, of course, but the third reason remained unwritten: advertisers believed there was an untapped market of young people buying rock records and musical instruments, and since *Down Beat* was the most obvious vehicle to market and promote these products, they wanted the content of the magazine to better reflect and attract this new kind of readership. 'There wasn't ever enough space to cover everything

mism for 'jazz band', since there would still have been opposition by some to the teaching of jazz in schools in the 1950s.

we would have liked to cover in the jazz world itself, let alone rock' he recalled, feeling that the decision to include rock coverage would never have happened without pressure from the advertisers (*ibid.*).⁵

Down Beat was not alone in beginning to include rock in its musical scope. Just one month later, the New York-based *Jazz* magazine changed not only its editorial policy, but the very title of the magazine; in August of 1967, *Jazz* suddenly became *Jazz and Pop*. *Jazz* began in 1962 as a venture subsidized by record producer Bob Thiele and operated by his partner Pauline Rivelli. Dan Morgenstern was hired as editor at the outset, and Rivelli, who was initially designated managing editor, learned from him the fundamentals of running a music magazine. By 1967, Rivelli had been editor-in-chief for several years and in August she wrote an editorial explaining the change:

With this issue, *JAZZ* magazine moves in a new direction, with a new name. By increasing coverage to the most musically vital aspects of popular music, we hope to bring serious attention to the revitalization now occurring in American music...1967 has witnessed the birth of a serious American pop music which encompasses jazz, rock, folk and blues... Jazz, pop, classical, folk...these are crude descriptive categories at best, and they better apply to the in-group exclusiveness of their audiences than to musical sounds. At least so far as the music is concerned, there are no neat boundaries (1967: 5, 17).

Jazz magazine was founded on many of the same principles as *Down Beat*, including an effort to appeal to young musicians. A notice soliciting advertisers in the magazine read: '*Jazz & Pop* continues to help in the development of the Stage Band Movement. The majority of our readers are Student Musicians... For its advertisers, *Jazz & Pop* provides the most direct access to the buying musician and the things of quality he needs...top line instruments and accessories, equipment, materials and recordings' (*ibid.*: 17). The tendency to construct its readers as musicians rather than general consumers was perhaps partly due to the influence of Charles Suber, the same man who had originally formulated the idea for *Down Beat*. Suber had been fired by *Down Beat* owner John Maher in April 1962; according to McDonough, 'the two men had differences on a range of issues, and when Suber began saying publicly that he was thinking of starting a new maga-

5. Morgenstern's announcement also coincided with the departure of Don DeMichael, who had edited *Down Beat* since 1961. At first glance one might assume that the change in editorial policy and DeMichael's leaving were linked, but Morgenstern contended that this was not the case; he had worked under DeMichael as an associate editor for several years, and the two were good friends. DeMichael had been planning his departure for some time. According to Morgenstern, 'Don had been editor for seven years, which was a very long time to be in that catbird seat, and he was ready to go. We talked a lot about all this [leaving and changes in editorial policy], so that wasn't what triggered it' (2005).

zine, Maher replaced him' (1995: 15). Suber went on to work as the educational consultant for the newly founded *Jazz* magazine, and then in 1968 Maher suffered a heart attack and asked Suber to rejoin the *Down Beat* staff, where he would once again work as the publisher as well as the primary staff member in charge of advertising. Suber was heavily oriented towards jazz education; by the late 1960s he had become very excited by the possibility of a jazz renaissance fuelled by big band rock groups like Chase, Chicago, and Blood, Sweat and Tears. Suber felt that these new attempts to fuse jazz with rock would hold an obvious appeal for any students in high school stage bands, and further might bridge the gap between rock and jazz for many young rock fans who would not otherwise have listened to jazz.

As Pauline Rivelli put it in her editorial, 'let's face it. Jazz needs popular music...economically as well as aesthetically' (1967: 17). There were clearly commercial considerations influencing the decision of jazz magazines like *Down Beat* and *Jazz* to start including rock coverage. But it was not quite so simple: both *Down Beat* and *Jazz* were experiencing all-time circulation highs *before* they made their announcements to cover rock, and there *were* signs of increasing interactions between jazz and rock music. Instrument manufacturers, and to a lesser extent, record companies, saw *Down Beat* as a reliable way of reaching their target market of young consumers. As a magazine that claimed to be the biggest consumer music periodical in America with an established distribution system and steady advertising income, *Down Beat* especially had much to gain by including rock music in its coverage. There was a significant demographic of school band students, who grooved not only to the Beatles, but to Buddy Rich and Count Basie versions of Beatles songs. This element of youth culture is not necessarily what comes to mind when historians and documentaries conjure images of a subversive rock listening audience of the 1960s, but clearly there were significant numbers of high school students who were avid listeners of music, learned instruments through school band programs, and listened to at least as much rock as jazz.

***Down Beat* rock coverage in practice**

There was initial concern amongst the *Down Beat* staff that the editorial change might provoke a backlash from readers and result in subscription cancellations; but despite a few nasty letters complaining about the 'banal chord pounding and two syllable phrasing' of most rock'n'roll, Morgenstern recalled there was far less reaction from readers than expected, and the number of subscription cancellations were 'absolutely insignificant' (1967b: 8). There were also numerous letters praising the decision to include rock: a 15-year-old reader, Michael Alvino, epitom-

mized the ideal type of consumer that *Down Beat* was trying to attract with the change: 'I dig jazz and dig rock also. But no one published stories on rock... I have plenty of records both rock and jazz and now that *DB* will report rock I think that I will become a steady reader and may subscribe' (1967a: 7). Another rock fan wrote that with 'so many teenie-bopper fan magazines around now', she was 'surprised and pleased to find a magazine like yours on the stands', which covered rock and pop music (1967b: 8). Some readers clearly perceived an absence of rock journalism, and saw *Down Beat* as filling that void—after all, the magazine introduced rock coverage a full four months before the first poorly distributed issue of *Rolling Stone* ever appeared. *Down Beat* would also have been more likely to appear on a variety of newsstands throughout cities in North America and even elsewhere in the world, and it was not uncommon for school libraries to subscribe to it; therefore *Down Beat* would have reached an entirely different audience of young readers who might have been interested in rock coverage but unaware of other early sources of rock criticism, such as *Crawdaddy!* magazine or Richard Goldstein's 'Pop Eye' column in the *Village Voice*.

Once the staff decided that they would include rock coverage, they encountered the problem of *how* it should be covered. It would be important that the rock coverage appeal to rock fans without alienating the existing jazz readership. Morgenstern wanted to get writers who were conversant with jazz to the extent that they could make references or comparisons and put rock into a context which made sense to jazz fans. He also thought it was a good idea to encourage jazz fans to read the rock coverage: 'we thought if there was some sort of equilibrium established it would be good for both jazz and rock' (2005). But none of the staff at *Down Beat* were interested in rock music themselves. Cost-cutting had meant that former editor Don DeMichael was forced to close down the magazine's LA office earlier in the sixties, and Dan Morgenstern's moving from New York to Chicago effectively closed down the New York office as well. In the Chicago headquarters was the core team of Morgenstern and his associate editor, Bill Quinn, a capable jazz editor but with no interest in rock music.

Morgenstern got in touch with James Gabree after reading an article about rock culture that Gabree had written for *Playboy*, and hired him to write a series of articles for *Down Beat* called 'The World of Rock', providing a critical overview of the contemporary rock scene. Gabree wrote his first article with a disclaimer that pointed out the lack of serious, professional criticism devoted to rock music:

It is hard to believe that a music this vital needs an 'introduction' at all. And yet, despite a spate of articles on rock in the press in such ordinarily snooty journals as *Esquire* and *The National Review*, it is clear that among lovers of 'legitimate' music, rock is still held in high disrepute. Serious criticism of popular music

other than jazz and folk has been sparse, so much so that much of our attention over the next few issues will have to be devoted to developing a method of analysis. Many of the concepts used in discussing jazz and folk can be applied to rock as well. But since rock is less clearly 'art', it is more difficult to assess. The pop music press is of no help: from prepubescent *16* magazine to megacephalic *Crawdaddy*, pop critics seem to feel compelled either to trivialize the music or to smother it under a blanket of pedestrianism (1967a: 19–20).

Gabree's most controversial article appeared in *Down Beat* a few months later—a cover story entitled 'The Beatles in Perspective'. Here he challenged the artistic significance of the band only a few short months after they had released their breakthrough *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Gabree argued that 'the Beatles never have been in the vanguard of pop music', and that 'very few are willing to take the foursome's work for what it is: an introduction to a world of creative adventure, of which the Beatles are merely the popularizers, not the creators' (1967b: 22). The amount of letters received condemning Gabree's article was unprecedented in the history of the magazine (*Down Beat* 1967c: 8), and articles appeared in future issues of both *Down Beat* and the short-lived *Cheetah* rock magazine debated Gabree's claims.

Reviews of rock albums also started to appear in a discourse that might have appealed to the jazz reader unfamiliar with rock music. The first rock review was a five-star rave about the Grateful Dead's debut, written by Edward A. Spring, who felt that 'jazz fans should find this LP a good introduction to some of the better rock music', and went on to recommend that 'along with the recent Beatles albums, the Byrds, the Lovin' Spoonful, Paul Butterfield, and Bob Dylan, I find the Grateful Dead outstanding, and I especially recommend them to jazz fans' (1967: 31). Reviewer Mark Wolf also awarded five stars to *Their Satanic Majesties Request* by the Rolling Stones, but struggled to connect the album to jazz music, vaguely remarking that *Satanic Majesties* was comparable to Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz* because they were both 'exceptional' albums and 'revolutionary events' in the respective worlds of jazz and rock, or noting that 'this music is not unlike Coltrane's, in that the listener can't be left unaffected by the message presented' (1968: 30). Such reviews were poorly written and conceived, but Morgenstern felt unable to effectively exercise editorial control since he did not listen to rock himself. As he put it, the rock coverage in *Down Beat* 'probably could have been done better if we had been a little more knowledgeable about rock, but we were not' (2005).

It would have been an exciting time to be reading *Down Beat* in the year following its decision to include rock coverage in the magazine, since its writers were clearly straining the magazine to cover contrasting ideologies. The April 4, 1968 issue, for instance, featured Janis Joplin on the cover and an interview with Jimi

Hendrix inside, as well as a 'Guide to Jazz for Flower People'. *Rolling Stone* may have been offering the controversial free gift of a roach clip to new subscribers during this time, but *Down Beat* was not far behind, offering a free copy of the Grateful Dead's debut album as their subscription gift in that issue. But the record and live concert review sections bore no indication of an interest in rock culture: in fact, no rock albums were reviewed whatsoever in the issue—instead, the leading reviews were releases from Stan Getz, Herbie Mann and Cal Tjader. This inconsistency was typical, where a 'rock and pop' heading would appear in the record reviews section only to disappear in the following issue. The tension was also reflected in feature stories. In the issue following Janis Joplin's cover story, April 18, 1968, the main features were a story on Count Basie and an extended discussion of a Woody Herman big band concert, along with free sheet music for a jazz tune by Horace Silver called 'Psychedelic Sally', featuring lyrics parodying psychedelic culture ('You're my saving grace, Psychedelic Sally/Give your soul some time, who! / Meditate and save your mind, Psychedelic Sally/I'm in love with you, Psychedelic Sally').

However, some *Down Beat* writers took a more positive approach to rock and to its relationship with jazz. Critics were certainly noticing the interactions. Harvey Pekar (who later gained a cult following as the writer of the realist comic strip *American Splendor*) devoted an entire feature article to examining what the present experiments in rock music meant for the future of popular music as a whole. 'What we may be witnessing', he ventured, 'is the creation of a new, as yet unlabeled form of music, as America around the turn of the century saw the development of jazz... Jazz grew from the synthesis of several forms: European popular and Afro-American folk musics; marches; ragtime, etc. A similar synthesis is now taking place in "popular" music' (1968: 20). Another critic, Bob Perlongo, wrote about the 'kinship' the Beatles had with jazz, which to him became especially evident on the *Sgt. Pepper* album: 'Lovely Rita...is a wild-away affair that, oddly enough, is very much like something Woody Herman and Chubby Jackson might once have done. And stranger still are the ghostly echoes of Pres of the Kansas City Six days in the clarinet in the background on When I'm Sixty-Four... That the Beatles are apt students of the jazz idiom is well illustrated by this exceptional album' (1968: 31).

Rock coverage in *Down Beat* was problematic for two reasons: first, the lack of expertise and interest among the editorial staff resulted in rock coverage often occupying only ten percent of the magazine's content; second, rock was often covered in a way that would appeal to jazz fans, using criteria originally designed for jazz music, and such connections were often far from credible—Perlongo's *Sgt. Pepper* review above is one example. In practice, then, *Down Beat* critics were writing about rock for an audience that they assumed were also jazz fans, even though it was entirely possible that *Down Beat* readers listened to rock for differ-

ent reasons than the reasons they listened to jazz. Despite these problems, *Down Beat's* circulation figures in 1967 were at their highest ever, and would increase over the next few years. *Rolling Stone* may have been seen as more influential and representative of the counterculture according to the history books (Draper 1990; Goodman 1998) but its circulation was still less than *Down Beat's* rising circulation by the end of 1969, and it could be argued that most of *Down Beat's* readership represented a different but equally significant segment of the rock audience.

The emergence of a rock-centered American music press

Meanwhile, American rock fans were beginning to start magazines of their own, with three in the 1966–67 period being particularly significant: Paul Williams launched *Crawdaddy!* magazine in February 1966, now generally acknowledged to be the first American rock magazine; six months later the team of David Harris and Greg Shaw created *Mojo-Navigator* magazine, a San Francisco-oriented publication now cited as a prototypical example of the fanzine, especially because Shaw would go on to create several more important music publications; and finally Jann Wenner and Ralph Gleason launched *Rolling Stone* in November 1967.⁶ In their excellent overview of the history of rock criticism, Lindberg *et al.* (2005) describe how rock critics also began to appear in other non music-specific publications, particularly the underground press, daily newspapers, weeklies and monthlies; but they conclude that it was the specialist music magazine press in particular that formed the nexus of rock criticism: 'it was the profile of these magazines and the positions developed by their main writers that drew the contours of the field' (2005: 132).⁷

Paul Williams made it clear from the first issue of *Crawdaddy!* that rock was the primary focus of his publication, and that it differed from other writing about rock because it took the music seriously:

You are looking at the first issue of a magazine of rock and roll criticism. *Crawdaddy* will feature neither pin-ups nor news-briefs; the specialty of the magazine is intelligent writing about pop music. *Billboard*, *Cash Box*, etc., serve very well as trade magazines; but their idea of a review is: 'a hard-driving rhythm number that should spiral rapidly up the charts just as (previous hit by the same group) slides'. And the teen magazines are devoted to rock and roll, but their idea of discussion is a string of superlatives below a fold out photography. *Crawdaddy* believes that someone might be interested in what others might have to say about the music they like (Williams 1966a: 1).

6. *Creem* was another very important early rock magazine that appeared in 1969 to rival *Rolling Stone*, but for this article I am restricting my discussion to the pre-history of rock magazines, ending with the birth of *Rolling Stone* in 1967.

7. The significant exceptions to this rule were Richard Goldstein, who wrote an influential rock column in the *Village Voice* from 1966–69, and Robert Christgau, who wrote a column for *Esquire* from 1967–68 before taking over Goldstein's position at the *Voice*.

Williams argued that his magazine fulfilled a need for serious, intelligent criticism of rock music that was not being met elsewhere. He was also clearly aware of a tension between jazz and rock criticism, and indicated in the second issue of *Crawdaddy!* that a feature in a forthcoming issue would be contrasting critiques of a Ramsey Lewis album by a jazz critic and rock critic, illustrating what happened when conflicting criteria were used to evaluate the same music (1966b: 1).⁸

Mojo-Navigator editor David Harris also once wrote explicitly about the problem of jazz critics judging rock, and critiqued a San Francisco critic for trying to write an article about rock music using the aesthetic criteria of jazz, which he felt constituted 'an attack by a jazz buff on a music which he doesn't understand...one cannot write a criticism of a music which alienates one from the outset; it is absurd for someone who doesn't seem to like rock'n'roll to try to evaluate the merits of various bands' (1966: 7). Therefore the founders of the early rock magazines not only distinguished themselves from the music trade press and teen music magazines, but also from the established world of jazz criticism.

Meanwhile in San Francisco, a 21-year-old named Jann Wenner and his mentor, Ralph Gleason, were about to start up a new magazine aimed directly at the rock audience. Wenner had previously written music columns for the University of California Berkeley campus paper, the *Daily Californian*, and a short-lived Sunday edition of Warren Hinckle's *Ramparts* magazine. By 1967 he was determined to create his own music magazine, and contacted both Paul Williams and Greg Shaw, asking them for advice on how they ran their operations. Williams remembered that 'Wenner got together with me and asked a lot of questions before he started *Rolling Stone*', while Shaw, who lived in San Francisco, claimed to have been regularly questioned by Wenner:

I'd known Jann Wenner for a year or so in San Francisco. He used to come over to my flat and sit there and watch me turn the crank and ask me questions: 'Why do you do this? How does this work? How do you know to put interviews in the front and record reviews in the back?' I kind of gave him a basic course in putting magazines out. I mean, that's a bit of an exaggeration, but he did hang out and he did ask all those questions (Williams and Shaw, quoted in Gorman 2001: 54).

In the first issue of *Rolling Stone*, Wenner wrote a statement outlining his vision for the magazine:

We have begun a new publication reflecting what we see are the changes in rock and roll and the changes related to rock and roll. Because the trade papers have become so inaccurate and irrelevant, and because the fan magazines are

8. Williams announced that the comparative reviews would be featured in the next issue of *Crawdaddy!*, but they were never published.

an anachronism, fashioned in the mold of myth and nonsense, we hope that we have something here for the artists and the industry, and every person who 'believes in the magic that can set you free' (1967: 2).

Wenner's key idea was to produce professional reportage of the music he loved; *Rolling Stone* would be like a news magazine, such as *Newsweek* or *Time*, but with rock'n'roll as its primary focus. He hired Michael Lydon, a *Newsweek* correspondent, as *Rolling Stone's* first managing editor whom, as Draper noted, Wenner thought 'would be perfect for *Rolling Stone*: young and hip, but a professional, embracing professional standards' (1990: 63). After Lydon left the magazine to pursue a freelance career, he put Wenner in touch with John Burks, another *Newsweek* correspondent whom Wenner would hire as *Rolling Stone's* managing editor. Burks, who would stay with the magazine during its formative early years, remembered that:

We were definitely following out a news magazine concept. The original news magazine idea, the way *Time* did it, would be you read newspapers from over the US and the world and condense them for next week. And at the start we did relatively more of that and relatively less original reporting. And then by the time I'd left the staff was big enough that...we had sources we just didn't have in the first place, so a lot of it became original stuff. But in the beginning there was a lot more cadging, I say without shame (Burks 2005).

Wenner was clearly influenced by existing music publications. In addition to researching the practices of *Crawdaddy!* and *Mojo-Navigator*, Wenner had been particularly impressed by the British music paper *Melody Maker* after spending the summer of 1966 in London (Draper 1990: 49, 58). In their study of the rock press, Lindberg *et al.* explained that 'the long tradition of jazz criticism [was] a central influence on the emerging pop and rock criticism at *Melody Maker* in this period' with four major consequences:

(1) jazz critics' criteria were applied to rock criticism; (2) [the new rock critics hired at *Melody Maker*] were influenced by the journalistic standard and musical knowledge of jazz critics [at the publication]; (3) a new sensibility regarding individual musical skills and expressive abilities among beat, rock and R & B musicians was adopted from a jazz listener and critic's point of view—an approach unforeseen in earlier 'fan' or 'trade' magazines, and (4) the idea of conceiving rock as more 'serious' music (not simply 'commercial') was apparently influenced by jazz criticism (2005: 91).

The editors of *Melody Maker* may have rejected Wenner's attempt to do freelance work for the magazine while he was there, but he maintained contact with the staff after returning to San Francisco. In the early issues of *Rolling Stone*, Wenner actually reproduced entire articles from *Melody Maker* and continued to use it as a key source for content and story ideas throughout the early years of the maga-

zine (Draper 1990: 96). Managing editor John Burks remembered that the *Rolling Stone* office subscribed to both *Melody Maker* and *New Musical Express*, 'and stole from them liberally—"stole" meaning rewrite and freshen up a little bit' (Burks 2005). In addition, Draper reported that 'Ralph Gleason suggested contacting *Melody Maker* with an offer to trade copy. Thus came an up-to-date column on the London scene by Nick Jones, whom Jann promptly dubbed *Rolling Stone's* "London correspondent" ' (1990: 67). Music criticism ran in the Jones family; Nick's father was Max Jones, 'the most prolific and influential jazz critic to have worked at *Melody Maker*' (Lindberg *et al.* 2005: 89). In addition to reporting the London scene, Nick Jones was also interested in increasing interactions between jazz and rock. Like writers at *Down Beat*, Jones had been taken with the new Gary Burton quartet featuring guitarist Larry Coryell, writing that it was 'refreshing and hopeful for the world of music to discover just how few barriers there can be between two musical forms that are usually fiercely repelling each other' (1968: 18). Finally, Wenner initiated an agreement to trade advertisements with *Melody Maker*, where it would run ads for *Rolling Stone* subscriptions and vice versa. Dan Morgenstern remembered that Wenner had approached *Down Beat* to do a similar ad exchange; Morgenstern thought this was a great idea, but *Down Beat* owner John Maher was against it, and Morgenstern never heard from Wenner again (2005).

Wenner had little interest in jazz, and the magazine reflected his rock'n'roll tastes. He saw rock criticism as a different project than jazz criticism: a glimpse of this point of view can be found in his introduction to *The Rolling Stone Record Review*, a compilation of album reviews published in the magazine between 1967–70: 'unlike literature, where a huge body of example and theory have set forth the modes of criticism, popular music criticism has had few guidelines. Jazz men developed some, but rock and roll critics, finally descending upon us circa 1967, were mere babes in the woods' (1971: vii). When he explained the purpose of the compilation, he also qualified that 'although we frequently reviewed and recommended great classics in contemporary jazz and blues, we have decided not to include that here, as a vast body of literature already exists in these areas which we could barely improve on' (1971: viii). Wenner probably chose to leave out those jazz and blues reviews for exactly the reason he stated, and yet the result was that a part of *Rolling Stone's* early identity was suppressed. In fact, several *Down Beat* critics contributed to *Rolling Stone* in its early years, two of its most significant early staff members—consulting editor Ralph Gleason and managing editor John Burks—were serious jazz fans, and there is evidence that Wenner himself was aware of and influenced by some of the practices of jazz publications when he first conceptualized *Rolling Stone*.

Besides Wenner, the other important figure in getting *Rolling Stone* off the ground was Ralph Gleason, co-founder and consulting editor of the magazine. Gleason had earned his reputation as one of America's most important jazz critics, writing for a wide range of publications including *Down Beat* and contributing a regular column to the *San Francisco Chronicle* which was syndicated to over sixty other newspapers. Gleason was able to consider contemporary issues in the rock scene, like the problem of musicians being exploited by their recording and publishing contracts, and give them a sense of historical perspective by relating them to similar events in jazz history. Draper wrote about Gleason's role at the magazine in its early years:

Ralph Gleason provided the magazine's broadly based musical perspective. 'For having next to no physical presence in the office', said Ben Fong-Torres, 'he was a *great* presence. He was the patriarch, though he didn't come across as that old, and we looked to him for guidance. If I were to smell a payola story, I could always send it past Ralph and he would just say, 'Look, this is garbage—here, these are some editorials from five years ago, copy 'em for your files, what you're talking about is part of a typical six-year cycle, and what you guys really ought to be is studying the jukebox industry, now that's where the scandal leads'. He could put you back in your place, or up on a higher level, whichever the situation called for. He was our encyclopedia (1990: 98).

Gleason contributed a column to *Rolling Stone* called 'Perspectives'—a title he had originally used for his regular music column in *Down Beat* in the 1950s—and he occasionally drew on his wealth of experience as a jazz critic to consider how the psychedelic San Francisco scene fitted into the long history of American popular music. If he was advocating that young bands should understand how music publishing worked, he would bring in an example of Louis Armstrong selling his early hits (1967: 10); if he discussed the explosive growth of the record industry in the 1960s, he would compare it to what it would have meant for Benny Goodman to have a hit record in the swing era (1968: 10). As John Burks recalled, most of all:

Rolling Stone writers respected Gleason as representing outsider culture whether or not they listened to jazz... Jazz guys have always been outsiders, underdogs, and what they were doing, jazz, was making a commentary on American life... Now here comes rock'n'roll, Jefferson Airplane and Bob Dylan, and they have an outsider message which is not mainstream, it's not the establishment version, nor was jazz—so they had these things in common (2005).

Gleason was a mentor figure not just to Wenner, but also to most of the early staff at the magazine.

A final point worth considering is Burks's concept of the 'outsider message' in *Rolling Stone*, a message which was all but lost in *Down Beat* during the late

1960s. Jazz critics and musicians had been split throughout the 1960s into two opposing camps: avant-garde and free jazz on the one hand versus the more established forms of jazz on the other. The split was fragmenting an already small jazz community, and in his year-end editorial, Dan Morgenstern openly hoped that 'the factionalism that has split the jazz community for so long showed signs of waning' (1968: 12). With jazz sales at a discouraging low, Morgenstern encouraged solidarity, organization and the lobbying for government funding of jazz, just as supporters of symphony orchestras had done for classical music. It was with these concerns in mind that Morgenstern looked to the growing interactions between jazz and rock:

There is, of course, the potent question of the future relationship between jazz and rock (or pop, or what have you). Some strong voices herald the rapprochement, while others issue strident nays... Whatever the prognosis, a particularist, exclusive, and non-proselytizing ill behooves jazz in its present predicament, which, briefly stated, is the crying need for a bigger audience. If rock offers a bridge, jazz would be foolish not to cross it (ibid.: 12–13).

If *Rolling Stone* was confident in promoting an outsider message, as Burks suggested, it was perhaps because the 'outsider' rock audience actually represented a healthy and commercially viable market. But if some members of the jazz community had historically relished in their outsider status, this was no longer the case for Morgenstern: instead, he fostered inclusivity at *Down Beat*, which meant welcoming not only rock, but also the rivaling factions within jazz, and even support from the state. This difference in editorial philosophies ensured that rock would be covered very differently in the two magazines.

Conclusions

On the whole, jazz critics at *Down Beat* in 1967 tended to write about rock in a way they felt would appeal to rock fans with a minimum risk of alienating jazz fans. Many of them were especially excited about potential musical exchanges happening between jazz and rock; but most of all, the rock coverage in *Down Beat* was determined by commercial considerations, from the advertising pressure that prompted its introduction to the hopes that rock consumers might begin to support jazz if the two musics were presented alongside one another. By contrast, the staff at *Rolling Stone* were able to begin constructing a discourse for rock and its audience without any such jazz-based ulterior motives, but not, of course, from scratch: when Jann Wenner created *Rolling Stone*, he tried to fuse the idea of a music publication with style, format and layout standards of magazines like *Ramparts*, *Time* and *Newsweek*. He contacted key staff members at early rock magazines like *Crawdaddy!* and *Mojo-Navigator*, as well as older jazz-oriented publications like

Down Beat and *Melody Maker*. Unlike teen idol magazines, *Rolling Stone* aimed to provide serious reportage and intelligent analysis of a music scene, and unlike the music trade papers, it targeted a consumer audience for whom rock was of great cultural importance. Jazz-oriented publications provided models of commercially stable consumer magazines that took music seriously, while early rock magazines pointed the way towards a viable rock aesthetic.

While *Rolling Stone* would go on to become an authoritative historical source for the rock era, it is worth revisiting the landscape of the American music press at the birth of the magazine in 1967, because at the time its future canonic status was not inevitable or predictable. There were other ways of writing about rock; one could look at rock from a jazz perspective, for instance, and why not? Music historians have rarely tended to go to *Down Beat* for an account of rock in the late 1960s, just as they have largely ignored the *Rolling Stone* coverage of late 1960s jazz. There was much contemporary discussion amongst critics from both the jazz and rock camps that these two traditions were interacting in new ways during this period; what could a comparison of those two perspectives tell us about how jazz and rock are constructed as historical narratives, genres and cultures? The late 1960s were a rich period of musical interaction between jazz and rock, as was the process of experimentation in the music press in the coverage of these trends, and there is much work to be done in future research.⁹

Above all, these magazines were commercial practices; *Down Beat* and *Rolling Stone* did not produce musical discourse in a vacuum, but rather under a very specific set of circumstances. Contemporary journalists, historians and scholars routinely look to the pages of *Down Beat* and *Rolling Stone* to see how musical events were reported as they were unfolding, but rarely do they reflect on the historical particularities of those periodicals—how particular writers, editors, advertisers, and other factors shaped the press discourse that in turn influenced the dominant narratives of music history. By digging behind the discourse of the printed page, conducting interviews with key staff members and paying attention to how music magazines worked as commercial enterprises, we can more accurately explain why jazz and rock were discussed as they were. If journalism is the first draft of history, as the saying goes, then music journalism could be considered the first draft of music history. By considering the historical particularities of how jazz and rock criticism were written, and especially by comparing the two to see how they represented one another, we can hopefully better understand the construction of jazz, rock, and their histories.

9. This article is part of a larger research project by the same author on the relationship between jazz and rock in the music press during the 1950s and 60s.

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