

Much more than can be included in a review “OOZE[S]” (189) out of the pages of this collection, and a wide range of readers should pick it up to experience for themselves the wealth of layers that makes it an indispensable book on American culture. Tate’s prodigious knowledge, broad vision, and deep compassion seep through the sharp critiques that slice into the core of America. His writing bursts with densely packed references, attention to sound and texture, and signifying play to produce distinctive prose and poetry that are gripping, nuanced, and expansive. Tate’s embeddedness in community generates not only the text of interviews but also the descriptions of their settings, and allows for reviews of not only albums and books, but also rallies, protests, and parties. It also opens up into collective forms of criticism, as Tate repeatedly cites friends, colleagues, and even fellow concertgoers (George Clinton and Vernon Reid offer innumerable insight throughout the collection). Readers from many different contexts will find this collection pertinent: lovers of music, art, dance, film, comedy, and literature; cultural and critical race theorists; and scholars and writers in the fields of American and African American studies. This collection certainly ought to be of interest to scholars from across disciplines in music departments as a central text about aesthetics and social issues surrounding music in the United States of the present moment. Scholars of jazz-related topics both past and present especially have much to draw from this collection, which locates jazz within the broader landscape of black arts in America.

TAMAR SELLA

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*Message to Our Folks: The Art Ensemble of Chicago.* By Paul Steinbeck. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

*Message to Our Folks* is a well-researched, detailed study of one of the most fascinating groups of Black musicians in the history of creative music. Steinbeck’s history and biography are rich and insightful for scholars interested in the origins of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), great Black music, and the Chicago scene in the mid-twentieth century. The Art Ensemble’s complicated origin story also intersects with many other characters of interest such as Eddie Harris, Andrew Hill, and Jack DeJohnette. Collectively, these biographies offer a window into the larger historical and political conditions that underlay the development of the Black arts movement.

The tale of the Art Ensemble’s journey to France and around Europe from 1969 to 1971 is worth the price of the book on its own. The stunning triumph and legendary success the group enjoyed on this trip are illuminated in their most telling

details, and Steinbeck provides a fascinating account of the Paris scene at that time. The account of how the group managed to survive will be of interest not only to scholars but also to working musicians wondering how such a successful European tour might be repeated (and why it may no longer be possible). Steinbeck argues that the perception of the Art Ensemble as essentially political activists was an effect of the exoticization of Black Americans that was common in France at that time. Although that perception played a role in the group's success in France, it was also a serious problem. The political implications of the Art Ensemble's performances were beyond their control, sometimes increasing their appeal and attracting audiences, other times distracting from the richness of their performances, and ultimately figuring greatly in their decision to return to the United States in 1971.

Steinbeck's book has an innovative structure that intersperses chapters of history, biography, and cultural analysis with chapters of musical analysis. In chapters 4, 7, and 9, Steinbeck analyzes three recordings: *A Jackson in Your House*, *Live at Mandel Hall*, and *Live at the Jazz Showcase*, respectively. These analysis chapters distinguish Steinbeck's work from other historical studies, such as George Lewis's *A Power Stronger Than Itself*, and they provide a substantial new contribution to the literature. Steinbeck's dexterous use of Western musical notation—to encapsulate music that often stretches the limits of that system—is supplemented by thick description of each recording, allowing nonmusic-reading scholars and laypeople to engage with the discussions without difficulty.

In these chapters, we are not only introduced to the social and aesthetic contexts that situate these recordings, but we also gain insight into the way the musicians thought about their music. The analyses are further enriched by Steinbeck's interviews with the musicians themselves (for example, Don Moye's recollections about the concert at the University of Chicago's Mandel Hall in 1972). The book contains some of the unique terms and concepts they used to talk about their compositions—for instance, the concept of the *intensity structure*—and it discusses the way they incorporated flexibility and space into the plans for their highly ordered yet also highly improvised performances.

Steinbeck analyzes the Art Ensemble's work in terms of dual layers of musical and theatrical meaning. For instance, at one point his analysis of *A Jackson in Your House* moves from musical analysis to analysis of a character who emerges in the vocal, revealing telling stories of the ensemble members' sometimes-traumatic time in the military. This allows Steinbeck to dispel the notion, prevalent in French music journalism, that the group's work was anything as simplistic as antiwar propaganda. Steinbeck offers some of the most penetrating critical analysis of the Art Ensemble's overall aesthetic—particularly its elements of parody and subversive play—when he argues that the group's shocking irrationality constituted a complex and unconventional modality that draws attention to the unreasonable nature of the American power structure.

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Steinbeck also attempts to answer a question that has long-fascinated scholars not only of the Art Ensemble but also about their parent organization, the AACM: how can one account for their longevity? He points out that the Art Ensemble is uniquely long-lived among AACM ensembles, and he argues that the reason may be found in the group's scrupulously egalitarian brand of cooperative economics married to its commitment to individual autonomy. The book also emphasizes the importance of the band's ethos of self-determination, exemplified by their corporation AECO.

The Art Ensemble was characterized by intermedia presentations—drawing from a vast reservoir of musical styles, countless instruments, and theatrical, poetic, and visual elements. This book traces the origins of this bewildering diversity of creative and performative material that dazzled audiences, from Joseph Jarman's poetic and theatrical proclivities, to Malachi Favors' innovative use of *little instruments*, to the repertoire not only of compositions but also of *styles* of music, which the group rehearsed consistently in preparation to deploy them in improvisation at any moment.

And this panoply of performance styles represents the inclusiveness and diversity invoked by the Art Ensemble's motto "Great Black Music: Ancient to the Future." This terminological act of self-determination incorporates and integrates the boundless creativity that spans Africa and her diaspora, which the Art Ensemble so vividly exemplifies. Steinbeck's *Message to Our Folks* is an excellent work that deepens our understanding of a unique and outstanding group of musicians.

ADAM ZANOLINI

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**Erroll Garner: No One Can Hear You Read.** Directed by Atticus Brady. New York: First Run Features, 2013.

Erroll Garner is enjoying something of a renaissance these days. The questionable omission of the pianist in Ken Burns's nineteen-hour film series *Jazz* (2001)—a move that brought down a hail of invective from Garner fans, including Garner's longtime manager Martha Glaser—is slowly being set to rights. A steady stream of audio and video documentation of Garner's piano mastery has more recently been made available to the public: DVDs of footage recorded in 1963–64 by the BBC (*Erroll Garner, In Performance*, 2002) and in Belgium and Sweden (*Jazz Icons: Erroll Garner Live in '63 & '64*, 2009); a reissue of the legendary *Concert By the Sea* (2015), containing interviews and eleven previously unreleased tracks; and a brand-new Garner album, *Ready Take One* (2016), which includes six previously unreleased Garner originals.

If Burns's defense that Garner was not a "seminal innovator" seems untenable in light of these new reminders of Garner's originality and influence, it is worth asking whether the slow development of Garner scholarship is at least partially to blame for

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