CINQ ÉTUDES DE JAZZ:

A STUDY OF JAZZ AND MODERNISM

by

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ABSTRACT

When Erwin Schulhoff’s *Cinq Études de Jazz* appeared in 1926, the major cities in the United States and Europe were witnessing a global jazz phenomenon. Paris was among the major cities and cultural centers where the spirit of jazz ventured beyond the dance hall. Although the French reception of jazz has been thoroughly documented, this study offers a unique vantage point through a close musical analysis of this work.

Schulhoff was a Czech composer who used his vantage point as an outsider to witness the influence of jazz on French culture and modern art. Besides the musical analysis, this study treats Schulhoff’s *Cinq Études* as a documentary by examining the unfolding of developments in the arts during the seventy-year period that preceded the 1920s. By examining the concurrent emergence of the European avant-garde and jazz, along with their similar ethos as a reaction to the sociopolitical climate of the time, this document seeks to implore the reader to consider that jazz—not simply a mere influence to modernism—is itself a branch of modern art.
DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to the memory of my father, Jerry Charles McMillan (1947-2010). His unconditional love and unwavering support of the fleeting interests of a hyperactive child instilled in me the grit and perseverance to pursue my dreams.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my professor, Kevin Chance, for his support and mentorship over the past five years. He saw beyond my eccentricities and fears and insisted that I only needed to take a moment to get centered, breathe, and listen. I would also like to acknowledge my committee members and professors at the School of Music for their time, dedication, and welcoming spirit. I would like to thank my wife, Latasha McMillan, for her steadfast support over fifteen years of marriage. I would like to thank my mother, Doris McMillan, for cheering me on and calling me regularly to check on my wellbeing during the final stages of this process. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for encouraging me to pursue my dreams and stay true to myself.
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INTRODUCTION

What’s in a name? Every object in our world has been given an objective marker of identification, which most people never give a second thought to. It takes a deeper and more intimate understanding of an object to realize that its given name can be a gateway to the unveiling of a complex web of circumstances. A simple name can therefore be a portal to a reservoir of historical significance and insight with far-reaching implications for posterity. Such is the case with the title *Cinq Études de Jazz*, a piano work with a French title, composed by Erwin Schulhoff (1894-1942), a Czech composer of German ancestry and Jewish heritage. This study will reveal the complex web of events that undergirds the title. This web is woven from the volatile sociopolitical climate of fin-de-siècle Europe, a world undergoing a shift in cultural paradigms. The forefront of this shift was the public’s relationship to the arts and popular culture, particularly the French reception of jazz, an innovative and fresh art form that holds the distinction as one of America’s contributions to modern art music.

*Cinq Études de Jazz* was composed in 1926\(^1\) and published by Universal Edition in 1927.\(^2\) The date of publication places this work in the midst of the decade known as the Jazz Age. This name represents the profound influence of jazz on popular entertainment, fashion, architecture, and the creative works of the European avant-garde. In France, jazz captured the imaginations of the French public and avant-garde artists who frequented the numerous cabarets and dance halls of

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Paris and Montmartre.

The cabaret, which has origins as a meeting place for modernist painters, writers, and composers, became a symbol of urban nightlife during the 1920s. Its patrons were disillusioned by France’s involvement in World War I, where millions of people were killed or disabled in combat. The public embraced the exotic sounds and rhythms of jazz as a way of healing and reinvigorating the war-weary people.

While the public danced to jazz music, European avant-garde artists used jazz as an inspiration for their work. The work of these artists was a continuation of a trend that had begun in the late nineteenth century, when artists searching for a fresh aesthetic began to seek inspiration from exotic sources. These trends were concurrent with an increase in colonialism among European nations, particularly France, who had begun colonizing African kingdoms and principalities such as Dahomey and the Belgian Congo. Many progressive artists of this time were against these practices and used their art as a reaction against it. Even though these artists were disillusioned by these practices, they nevertheless benefitted from being exposed to the African art that the French government and press brought back to France. This art, known as l’art nègre, would go on to inspire the aesthetic pursuits of artists and inspire movements such as cubism and fauvism.

The European fantasies that developed around l’art nègre in the first two decades of the twentieth century set the tone for the French public’s reception of jazz music. The importing of jazz to France was largely due to the black soldiers from the United States stationed in France.

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6 This refers in part to techniques such as abstraction and distortion which was inspired by artifacts such as masks and sculptures.
During the war. These soldiers toured Britain and France and exposed the audiences to ragtime, the immediate predecessor of jazz. This music titillated French audiences, who reveled in the syncopated rhythms of the new music. A refreshing form of entertainment developed out of the French fantasy of primitive and sexually-charged black entertainers, whose ability to improvise represented democracy for the artists and healing for the war-weary public.\footnote{Matthew Jordan, \textit{Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity} (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2010), 39.}

I therefore restate my question, what’s in a name? This set of etudes with a French title, written by Erwin Schulhoff, a Czech, has provided a set of piano pieces that serve as a commentary on the nexus of modern art and popular culture, and jazz serving as a unifying force between the two. This complex web of circumstances is untangled throughout these four chapters. The first chapter provides a biography of Schulhoff, which shows how the composer’s life coincided with the rise of both modern music and jazz. With the backdrop provided by the first chapter, the second chapter offers a short history on the emergence of modernist art. The intent is to establish a narrative of how the trends of the nineteenth century gave rise to the confluence of art music, popular music, and exoticism. The third chapter examines French culture and its role in incubating the nexus between art music and popular music as a unifying force. An analysis of each of the five etudes follows with the intent of demonstrating this set of piano pieces as a portal to that complex web of circumstances woven from the synthesis of these aforementioned elements.
CHAPTER 1
THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF ERWIN SCHULHOFF
1894-1917

The Cultural Background of an Innovative Composer

Erwin Schulhoff (1894-1942) was a Czech composer and pianist of German descent. His maternal grandfather was the leader of the local theatre orchestra in Frankfurt. His great uncle, Julius Schulhoff (1815-1898), was an accomplished pianist whose musicianship at the keyboard was held in high esteem by the famous piano pedagogue Theodor Leschetizky.8

At the time of Schulhoff’s birth, Czech composers had been promoting Czech nationalism through a repertory of large-scale works, such as opera. In addition to the national canon of large-scale works, Czech composers also favored the small-scale salon pieces that were popular among other Romantic composers. The generation before Schulhoff was thus firmly rooted in the romantic aesthetic, and the works of Brahms and Schumann would serve as the earliest models for Schulhoff during his formative years as a composer.9

The decade of Schulhoff’s birth, the 1890s, was also a time of immense change in global affairs, and the arts reflected this change. Trailblazers from the mid-1800s, such as Wagner, created works that increasingly broke conventions for the sake of expression. Wagner used chromaticism among his expressive devices while Debussy explored modality and exotic scales.

8 Bek, “Schulhoff, Erwin.”
9 Ibid.
Early Years and Formal Music Education

Schulhoff’s musical talent was recognized at a young age. By 1901, fellow Czech composer Antonin Dvořák recommended that the child prodigy pursue a musical career. Over the next decade, Schulhoff pursued his formal music education at several institutions, where he came under the tutelage of several influential piano teachers and composers. In 1904, after a few years of private study, he entered the Prague Conservatory, where he studied for a brief period with Jose Jiránek, a student of Smetana. From 1906 to 1908, he studied at the Horaksche Klavierschule, where he furthered his piano studies with Willi Thern. In another two-year residency, he studied composition with pianist and organist Max Reger (1873-1916) and music theory with Stephan Krehl at the Royal Conservatory in Leipzig. The years 1911-1914 were fruitful for Schulhoff and, after a year’s break due to his concert tour of Germany, he studied at the conservatory in Cologne. Schulhoff’s gifts as a musician and composer were evident by the number of accolades he received during this time, including the Wüllner Prize and the Mendelssohn Prize for piano performance.

As a young composer, his work showed the influence of the music of composers such as his teachers Max Reger and Richard Strauss (1864-1949). The music of these composers represented the late Romantic aesthetic, influenced Schulhoff during these formative years. A turning point in his artistic development, however, occurred in 1912. He was exposed to the music of French composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918). Debussy’s work resonated with the aesthetic principles of the symbolist poets and writers. Schulhoff’s exposure and interest in Debussy’s work represents an early foray into the aesthetic pursuits of the French modernists. This focus exemplified an ongoing shift in Schulhoff’s personal aesthetic that intensified in the years to come.

10 Ibid.  
War Years and Shifts in Aesthetic

After his encounter with Debussy, the year 1914 marked a great transition in Schulhoff’s composing career. His formal education was coming to an end just as World War I was beginning, and he was enlisted into the Austrian army. In a plight commonly experienced by young enlisted men, Schulhoff was badly affected by the war. It left a negative imprint on his psyche and challenged his personal values and ethics, and he emerged from the war as a socialist. A search for a new musical aesthetic commenced alongside the shift in his personal belief system, and he found that post-Romantic aesthetics no longer suited him.12

Dresden Years

By 1919, Schulhoff arrived in Dresden to live with his sister Viola, who studied painting there, and together they moved to an area filled with musicians, painters, and writers. Schulhoff and his new acquaintances constituted a Who’s-Who society of influential artists. Chief among its ranks were the painters Otto Dix and Otto Griebel. Schulhoff’s work during his time in Dresden has been categorized into two groups, reflecting influence from the Expressionist and Dadaist aesthetic. Works of the Expressionist aesthetic include Zehn Themen and Elf Inventionen. The other group of works, adhering to the Dadaist aesthetic, include Fünf Pittoresken—one of his earliest works to feature the influences of American Jazz.13

As the jazz age was dawning in the United States, Schulhoff was searching for a new musical aesthetic suitable for his expressive purposes. Grosz had exposed him to jazz recordings,

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12 Bek. “Schulhoff, Erwin.”
13 Ibid.
which Schulhoff enthusiastically received. His meetings with Grosz led Schulhoff to discover that Dadaism as an aesthetic system resonated with him in a way that the Expressionist aesthetic could not. Schulhoff dedicated his Fünf Pittoresken to Grosz. Another work, Sonata Erotica, for female voice and piano, where the singer, through a series of sighs, cries, and other vocalizations imitates the sounds of sexual intercourse, shows the influence from the Dada aesthetic.

**Post-Germany**

By the late 1920s, the influence from the Dadaists had begun to wane, but Schulhoff’s work continued to show the influence of American jazz. It was during this phase that Schulhoff was beginning to enjoy a bit of success in his career. He appeared on radio stations, such as the BBC, participated in festivals, championed the music of contemporary composers, and worked closely with other Czech composers. His performances of piano compositions by Czech composer Alois Haba, known for his quarter-tone compositions, were particularly notable. Amid public successes and the fellowship with composers he experienced upon returning home to Prague, Schulhoff committed to finishing works he had started during his time in Germany. Among these works were his ballet Ogelala, which proved unsuccessful after three performances, and his String Sextet. The String Sextet, a work particularly exemplary of a composer who had studied with the German Expressionists, features a decisively atonal first movement, followed by three movements inspired by folk elements. Schulhoff also wrote the tragicomedy Plameny (a two-act opera) during this period. This work proved a failure during Schulhoff’s lifetime; the ingenuity of this polystylistic work would not be recognized until 1995. It featured musical styles that evoke Mozart, Wagnerian drama, and jazz.  

14 Ibid.
The year 1932 marked yet another change in Schulhoff’s aesthetic. His Second Symphony, with its neoclassical elements and the use of jazz for the last time in the third movement, exemplifies a composer who had begun to move away from the trend of unabashed expression. This interwar shift in aesthetic had ideological roots. In the 1910s, the young Schulhoff had begun his search for a new aesthetic after WWI. His works then reflected the intense expression of German artistic and literary circles. As the political climate intensified, leading up to the next World War, his aesthetic shifted yet again, alongside his evolving ideology. After his visit to the Soviet Union in 1933, Schulhoff became a follower of Stalin’s doctrine of social realism. This doctrine would become the ideological underpinning of all his further creative works. Josef Bek, Czech musicologist and a prominent Schulhoff scholar, asserts that this decision was a “mistaken critical reflex,” a reaction instigated by Schulhoff’s experience of German fascism. Because of Schulhoff’s Jewish heritage, he suffered, along with many other artists, from the horrors inflicted upon them by the denial of civil rights under the political regimes of interwar Germany. The Soviet brand of social realism was therefore appealing to Schulhoff.

The creative output of Schulhoff’s last decade comprised several large-scale works that reflect his interest in neoclassicism. The last six of his eight symphonies were composed during this period. The aesthetic of these works is a striking contrast to contemporary European avant-garde aesthetics. Expression was simple and orderly along with meticulous crafting of motivic material. In the case of Schulhoff’s last symphonies, Bek again asserts that the mistaken “critical reflex” of his ideological shift to social realism is apparent in Schulhoff’s “struggle to comply with the intensive dogma of socialist realism.”

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15 Bek, “Schulhoff, Erwin.”
16 Ibid.
Schulhoff continued to compose within this aesthetic while making a living through his posts as a pianist for the radio and as a pianist in Janislav Ježek’s jazz orchestra. These posts continued until 1939, when Czechoslovakia was occupied by German troops, and Schulhoff had no employment. His living conditions had already declined in previous years, which led to his efforts to emigrate to the West and then to the Soviet Union. These attempts failed, and he was arrested in Prague in 1941. He died in 1942 after eight months of internment in a concentration camp in Wulzburg, Bavaria.

Even as he had little success, and suffered in the end, Schulhoff’s life is nevertheless exemplary of modernist composers, who sought a fresh approach to expression in their creative works. This trend intensified during the middle of the nineteenth century with the appearance of manifestos that led to “isms,” for example Symbolism17 and Expressionism18. Although the aesthetic principles of these movements largely applied to poets, writers, and painters, composers were also inspired, creating sonic representations of these aesthetic principles. The next chapter will discuss the impetus for the change of aesthetic that gave rise to the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century.

17 Symbolism was an aesthetic movement originating with French poets of the mid–late nineteenth century such as Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine, and Stéphane Mallarmé. This movement involved the use of symbols such as wordplay and free verse to ascertain the hidden meaning behind the work. Symbolism, along with Primitivism, was among the movements of the nineteenth century that began to reject the tenets of realism, which itself was a reaction against the excesses of Romanticism.

18 Expressionism was a modernist aesthetic movement that developed in Germany before World War I which sought to depict the subjective emotional experiences of the artist creating the work. Arnold Schoenberg was among the composers who championed these aesthetic tenets in his work. One such seminal work is “Pierrot Lunaire” (1910).
CHAPTER 2
THE DAWN OF MODERNISM: THE FULFILLMENT OF ROMANTIC IDEALS

Historical Overview

If modernism is a fulfillment of the aesthetic values of Romanticism, the journey to fulfillment is very broad and led to a variety of trends in art music of the early twentieth century. These outcomes ranged from the expressionism of the Germans to the surrealism of the French painters. The move toward modernism reflects a trend of emancipation from formal conventions such as tonality for expressive purposes. This trend was fueled by the move away from the balanced structure of classicism, which allowed expression to dictate the structure, and gathered more momentum after middle of the nineteenth century with the appearance of works such as the operas of Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and the tone poems of Strauss. The music of these composers and their contemporaries became increasingly chromatically saturated; thus dissonance became increasingly emancipated to the point of becoming functional on its own terms, rather than used as an embellishing function within the confines of a tonal progression.

As the German Romantics experimented with chromaticism, its derived harmonies, and newer forms, the French poets exploited the lyricism of the French language. The French, in their attempts to move beyond realism, also championed the aesthetics of Primitivism which, in accord

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20 Wagner’s seminal work, Tristan und Isolde, is among the operas that pushed the boundaries of romanticism and had a marked influence on modernist composers.
21 Strauss, whose opera Salome exemplifies the aesthetic shift from Romanticism to Modernism, was an important early influence for Schulhoff.
22 Realism is an aesthetic movement of the mid-nineteenth century that aimed to reject the excesses of Romanticism in favor of a realistic depiction of nature and everyday objects.
with their fantasies of the noble savage, channeled the raw expressive power of African art via the distortion of shapes and lines. This approach of channeling the exotic was in keeping with the ethos of the Symbolist—the desire to suggest the meaning in contrast to the explicit and rational conveying of ideas. Thus, with the creative aspirations of the French visual artists and poets, a nexus between popular music and art was established—a claim justified by the early French embrace of jazz music as an exotic form of entertainment. The syncopation and blue notes of jazz music were sonic representations of distortion; the spontaneity of the jazz solo resonated with the precepts of aesthetic movements such as Dadaism and Surrealism.

Exoticism

Exoticism is defined in the broadest sense as a fascination with the perceived allure of some distant culture or place. When one describes exoticism, this broad definition may likely come to mind. Art inspired by this broad characteristic would be explicitly exotic in its approach; exotic elements would be readily apparent to listeners or viewers. The artist essentially creates for the audience a showpiece that is appealing to Western ears and fantasies. In the Turkish marches of Classical composers, such as Beethoven and Mozart, the exotic was represented in ornamentation, articulation, and in melodic and rhythmic gestures. The Classical aesthetic, which dictates strict adherence to balanced phrasing and formal structure, is preserved. By the late nineteenth century, however, composers’ approach toward exoticism became increasingly nuanced. The artistic world

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23 Nicholson, 158.
24 Dadaism traces its beginnings to a gathering of artists—Hugo Ball and Tristan Tzara among them—who met and gave performances at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, Switzerland. These artists questioned the definition of art. The artists’ challenge of the accepted definition of art resonated with their revolt against the sociopolitical status quo of the time which included the move towards a capitalist society. They believed that such ideologies led to World War I. These artists espoused techniques such as collage, cut-up technique, photomontage, and ready-mades. These techniques involved the use of everyday objects to create works of art.
of the 1890s—the decade of Schulhoff’s birth and the beginning of the global exposure to ragtime—saw the flourishing of numerous artistic movements, all falling under the umbrella of the fledgling modernist movement. These movements demanded a mode of expression that existing formal structure and conventions could no longer support. Exoticism would thus find its utility as an integral component of the aesthetic framework of these movements, as opposed to its former use as a novelty within the Classical aesthetic.

This nuanced approach to exoticism demands a more detailed description. Ralph Locke\textsuperscript{26} suggests that fin-de-siècle artists used three types of exoticism. He called the first type “overt exoticism,” the most basic form used throughout the history of western music. He suggests two other types, “submerged exoticism” and “transcultural composing.” Submerged exoticism most aptly reflects the prevailing sentiments in the artistic world of the late nineteenth century. One such sentiment, according to Locke, is the search for originality. This sentiment is antithetical to the overt form of exoticism, which like the balanced aesthetic of classicism, was deemed too formulaic.\textsuperscript{27} As overt exoticism fell out of favor around 1900, the conception of art no longer adhered to Aristotelian principles—a reflection of things tangible and mundane in the past and present.\textsuperscript{28} Artists were beginning to push the boundaries of Romanticism and embraced the strange, the fantastic, and the subconscious mind.

The French symbolists used submerged exoticism as an aesthetic device. In an attempt to justify this claim, one might survey Debussy’s work. Debussy had already begun to experiment with this concept in the 1890s in his Prelude \textit{L’Apres-midi d’un Faune}. He “submerged” exotic elements into the melodic lines. The submerged exotic artifact in this work was the \textit{arabesque}, a

\textsuperscript{26} Ralph Locke served on the faculty at Eastman School of Music and has written extensively on the subject of exoticism.

\textsuperscript{27} Ralph Locke, \textit{Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 216.

\textsuperscript{28} Locke, 216.
term that describes the delicate curved lines and ornate calligraphy of Islamic and Middle Eastern art. In adherence to Symbolist principles, Debussy used a nonmusical object to influence the contour of the musical lines. Such compositional techniques bring about an aesthetic that communicates sensuality and an improvisatory quality to the music, which effectively channels sensuality in the curvaceous patterns and corresponding rhythmic fluidity. Debussy, notes Caroline Potter, “seems to have considered lines arabesque-like if they were continuously evolving and growing organically rather than being divided into musical phrases.”

This perception of an organic genesis and development of a musical line, in contrast to the Classical aesthetic of formulaic phrase structure, reflects Debussy’s embrace of the aesthetic tenets of the Symbolist poets. In order to understand the influence of Jazz in European art music, we might well consider the work of the Symbolists, whose philosophies—rooted in large part by liberation of carnal desires—were in accord with the sentiments that led composers to channel the perceived exoticism of jazz.

The Exotic Origins of Jazz

In the controlled environment of the slave plantation, African descendants faced difficulty in maintaining the customs of their ancestors. They faced forced assimilation into a new culture and adopted the religion, language, and cultural customs of the plantation owners. In this process of acculturation, however, slaves intermingled the cultural nuances of their ancestral culture with the customs of their adopted culture. The resulting syncretism gave rise to a distinctive African American folk music that will serve as an important precursor to jazz. This music, which consisted

29 Ibid., 219.
30 I’m referring to the balanced and relative predictability (compared to the freer forms of a romantic tone poem, for example) of the structures of phrases, which was a hallmark of classical form.
of work songs, spirituals and field hollers, was highly rhythmic. With new African slaves constantly arriving in the United States, African American folk music retained its ancestral influence. The African slaves exhibited an ability to play with time in subtle ways that was intriguing to the fresh ears of those accustomed to European folk and art music.32

The research of Jonathan Bellman, Gunther Schuller, and Locke demonstrates exoticism as an increasingly versatile tool for composers seeking a unique voice. In Bellman’s definition of exoticism, he cited the feelings of fear, allure, and an attraction to the incomprehensible.33 It is therefore helpful to apply the constituent elements of exoticism to common Eurocentric views of African culture.

1. Fear: Some Europeans stereotype African culture as savage; this is a common, subjective view held, notably among imperialists, of indigenous cultures who have not modernized.

2. Allure: Things that are feared tend to stir curiosity. The view of African culture as savage would therefore have a tendency to incite allure. The stereotyping of African culture as primitive, however, brings with it the perception of eroticism. This perception came from the observation of the African’s propensity for movement and rhythm. These elements of African cultural practices were particularly alluring for Europeans. During the Middle Passage of the 1600s to the 1800s, slaves had brought their musical aesthetic across the Atlantic. This aesthetic was permanently etched into their memories and expressed through the musical instincts of their descendants. Ted Goia, inspired by the writings34 of British architect Benjamin Latrobe,35 gives an account of the Black Atlantic aesthetic:

32 Goia, 8.
35 Talbot Hamlin, Benjamin Henry Latrobe (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 4
A dense crowd of dark bodies form into circular groups—perhaps five or six-hundred individuals moving in time to the pulsations of the music, some swaying gently, others aggressively stomping their feet. A number of women begin chanting. The scene could be Africa. In fact, it is nineteenth century New Orleans.36

Eurocentric observers looked on in awe at the Afrocentric aesthetic and functional utility of music. This primitive sensibility of rhythm—expressed through the stretching and bending of time, polyrhythms, and the nuances that fascinated Europeans—resonated with the aesthetic aims of the Cubists, Dadaists and Surrealists.

3. Incomprehensible: The incomprehensibility of their so-called primitive sense of rhythm makes the performance practices of African music exotic from a Eurocentric point of view.

In the shifting sociopolitical climate of the late eighteenth century, exoticism in the arts had become increasingly prevalent. This was a consequence of the times. In the dawn of the modern age, advances in technology, transportation, and telecommunication made the world smaller, thus providing easier access to distant lands. There were also shifts in social consciousness that precipitated an increase in exoticism, along with increased discretion with which to integrate exotic elements in music. The artistic movements that emerged from the literary and artistic circles of Europe all held in common a desire to formulate an aesthetic blueprint; thus composers and performers expressed music in fresh and innovative ways.

36 Goia, 2.
The early evolution of modern art included the concurrent timing of the Jazz Age and the fulfillment of the aims of the progressive artists of the late Romantic era. Even though art is constantly evolving, I use the word “fulfillment” within this context to describe the synthesis and codification of the aesthetic aims of the fin-de-siècle artists by the 1920s.

In 1920s Paris, many of the aims of the fin-de-siècle artists were codified in the ethos of Surrealism. Surrealism was an artistic movement in Paris during this time, when jazz was becoming a phenomenon on both sides of the Atlantic. Schulhoff, influenced by the Surrealist aesthetic at the time, gave concerts in Paris in 1927. Because *Cinq Études de Jazz* was published in 1926, it may have been among the works performed in these concerts. It is probable Schulhoff performed the etudes in taverns and cabarets in Paris, especially in the bohemian neighborhood of Montmartre when he was on this tour.

A study of the ethos of Surrealism reveals a sympathetic ethos to jazz. The properties of Surrealism were conceived in the minds and creative works of the late Romantics, born in the works of the Symbolists, nurtured in the cabarets of fin-de-siècle Montmartre, and fully realized in the works of artists such as Salvador Dali (1904-1989) and Max Ernst (1891-1976).
Sociopolitical Reaction as an Impetus for Artistic Expression

In addition to fulfilling the aesthetic aims of Romanticism, the creative works of the modernists were reactionary. European colonialism, especially French colonialism, had reached an apex in fin-de-siècle Europe. France was entering the era of its Third Republic with the deposition of Napoleon III, and the Golden Era that ensued created a cultural divide between these artists and the bourgeoisie. These artists, many of whom were anarchists, used their work to protest against acts of European imperialism and capitalism. When the French press brought back stories and images from the African colonies to stir the imaginations and fantasies of the public, the artists were inspired by the primal aesthetic of these images and museum artifacts.

In the ensuing decades, artists such as Pablo Picasso—among the artists who followed anarchist political philosophies—would channel the Primitive aesthetic of *l’art nègre*, the French term for African art. The works of artists such as Henri Mattise (1869-1954) and Georges Braque (1882-1963) channeled Primitivism as a reaction and satire against bourgeoisie values. These artists needed the appropriate stage to exhibit their work, one that would shield them from public scrutiny in the early conception of their artistic ideas—an atmosphere which would allow experimentation and foster the exchange of innovative ideas. In fin-de-siècle Europe, these artists found this atmosphere in the fin-de-siècle cabaret.

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40 This era of economic prosperity was known as the Belle Époque. It was also a time of academism in the arts which set the progressive at odds with current artistic tastes.
43 Bertram Gordon, 65.
Montmartre and the Fin-de-siècle Cabaret

In fin-de-siècle Paris, Montmartre, the historic district overlooking Paris, was a haven for bohemian artists. Alcohol and rent were cheap; drug use and prostitution were prevalent. As such, Montmartre also had a thriving nightlife, where hedonistic and exotic forms of entertainment flourished throughout the streets of the neighborhood. While France was at the height of its imperial practices during La Belle Époque,\(^45\) the bohemian artists had found a gathering place around the cabaret. Within this setting, they were able to experiment with fresh forms of artistic expression and use their work to critique bourgeoisie values.

Cabaret artists represented the working class and created works to reflect the realities of daily life. The *Chanson réaliste*—or song depicting a romantic view of these struggles—was nurtured in the cabaret and popularized by singers such as Aristide Bruant (1851-1973). The Parisian public was thus primed for their enthusiastic reception of American jazz—an art form whose ethos was sympathetic to the art of cabaret artists.

The Nexus of Schulhoff and Surrealism

As Schulhoff searched for a new aesthetic after World War I, he found that the ethos of the Dadaists resonated with his pursuits. In 1917, Dadaism had its beginnings in a cabaret in Switzerland\(^46\) and had its immediate predecessor in Surrealism. Dadaism could not sustain itself beyond the early years of the 1920s,\(^47\) but the ethos of Dadaism lived on in Surrealism, which is still evolving today. Surrealism advocates the examination of subconscious desires through dreams and drug-induced mental states. These states were said to channel Freudian ideas of repressed

\(^{45}\) Another name for the Golden Age in France, a time of economic prosperity.

\(^{46}\) Clancy

\(^{47}\) Ibid.
As such, surrealists espoused techniques such as automatic writing—writing or painting on impulse. These techniques underscored an effort to bring the subconscious world to the surface. These pursuits made Surrealism resonate with the ethos of jazz, particularly the improvised jazz solo, and the sensuality of the music. Jazz music entertained the fetishes of the European audience. The association of syncopation with primal sensuality could also have underscored subconscious sexual desires brought to the surface, when African American performers Josephine Baker and Ada Smith, for example, danced to syncopated music. Furthermore, the jazz solo was esteemed as “democratic” by Surrealists. Jazz therefore resonated with the psychological, philosophical, and political perspectives of the Surrealists.

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49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
CHAPTER 4
CINQ ÉTUDES DE JAZZ:
AN ANALYSIS

Overview

When Universal Edition published Cinq Études de Jazz (1927), the United States and Europe were in the interwar years—a time of economic growth and a stronger middle class with more disposable income along with more time for leisurely activities. Nightlife thrived with the opening of nightclubs throughout urban centers, New York City, Chicago, London, and Paris among them. Innovations such as the phonograph and the radio ushered in a global age. The press used these innovations to grant the masses instantaneous exposure to the events taking place in the cultural centers throughout the United States and Europe.

The press had played an important role in the French public’s embrace of jazz, for example, in publishing images and stories from the African colonies of Dahomey and the Belgian Congo, shrouding these distant cultures with exotic allure. Paris had already witnessed the “cakewalk” phenomenon, and African sculptures and masks had inspired aesthetic movements such as cubism, which used Primitivism as its aesthetic blueprint. The socioeconomic climate of the 1920s, along with the invention of the radio and phonograph, set the stage for jazz to become a global phenomenon.

The confluence of all aforementioned factors simultaneously made jazz the first modern art music from the United States to reach Europe, and the first example of commercial music.

51 Leighten, 610
52 See page 21.
Nightclub patrons danced to the syncopated rhythms of jazz, while avant-garde artists were attracted to its possibilities as an inspiration for their creative works. Although jazz was a global phenomenon, social paradigms made the Parisian embrace of jazz a distinctive phenomenon—a phenomenon that likely inspired works such as Cinq Études de Jazz.

In the introduction, I stated that Cinq Études de Jazz serves as a commentary on the nexus of modern art and popular culture with jazz as a unifying force. These five etudes underscore the contrast between the sociopolitical paradigms of the United States and France during the 1920s. In the southern United States, Jim Crow laws oppressed and marginalized former slaves. In contrast to this oppressive environment, the bohemian and cosmopolitan culture of Montmartre offered a welcoming climate for African Americans; while black entertainers had to use separate entrances in parts of the United States, entertainers such as Ada Smith and Josephine Baker owned nightclubs. I propose that these nightclubs and similar establishments inspired the Cinq Études de Jazz.

The five etudes are named either for a popular dance or for a subgenre of jazz—“Charleston,” “Blues,” “Chanson,” “Tango,” and “Toccata Sur le Shimmy.” “Charleston” is the opening act, establishing Schulhoff’s perception of jazz through the appearance of the gestures that will unify the piece. Through the economical use of compositional material, these gestures are colored by the use of modes and octatonic scales. They also evoke imagery that alternates between the dance and music of African American performers, and the rituals, customs, and art of Africans.

“Blues” represents a cabaret in Montmartre. This etude offers commentary on a setting that has been described as “Harlem in Paris.” This etude highlights all the artistic contributions from

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53 See page 3.
the influx of African Americans in Paris, particularly those in Montmartre.

“Chanson” represents the cabarets and café-concerts of Paris. “Chanson” reflects the evolution of cabaret from a gathering place of avant-garde artists to an intimate nightclub setting, where the chanson-réaliste was a popular act. The chanson-réaliste reflects the spread of symphonic jazz—music that reflected a refined style, in contrast to the “raw” and “primitive” nature of authentic jazz music.\(^5^6\)

“Tango” explores the African influence on Argentine culture in the late nineteenth century. Cabarets such as El Garròn, where the tango was frequently performed, illuminated the thriving cultural boiling pot at the center of the Montmartre night scene. “Toccata Sur le Shimmy” is based on *Kitten on the Keys* (1921), a popular novelty piano piece by Zez Confrey. Novelty piano was an amalgamation of several styles of music, ranging from Impressionism to jazz. It is highly probable that Schulhoff channeled the spirit of novelty piano because he intended this etude to serve as a conclusion—an epilogue that synthesized all the elements that governed the composition of the first etudes.

**Compositional Techniques Governed by Imagery**

The etudes musically channel the characteristics of their namesakes through the use of modes, symmetrical scales, articulation, and rhythmic gestures. After the same manner that painters used techniques such as distortion and abstraction to convey primitive elements, Schulhoff, influenced by Debussy, Ravel, and Rimsky-Korsakov, used symmetrical scales, such as the whole-tone and the octatonic scales, and Greek modes.

When these pieces were published, jazz was a relatively nascent art form. Its immediate

\(^{56}\) Matthew Jordan, *Le Jazz: Jazz and French Cultural Identity* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2010), 75.
predecessor, ragtime, was highly rhythmic. Schulhoff thus bases the motivic development upon rhythmic gestures rather than melody and harmony. He also exploits the properties of the octatonic scale and its modes.

*Example 4.1.* The modes of the octatonic scale and their similarity to the blues scale.

![Diagram of octatonic modes](image)

The octatonic scale was useful for modernist composers seeking to assimilate the aesthetic properties of jazz into their music. Example 4.1 shows the pattern of alternating whole-steps and half-steps\(^{57}\) of two modes of the octatonic scale. The third scale in the figure is a blues scale. The circles demonstrate how the modes of the octatonic scale organically produce “blue” notes (referring to the flatted third, characteristic of the blues scale), the raised fourth scale degree, and the flatted seventh.

In chapter 2, I discussed the issue of reconciling formal structure with expression as the intent behind the aesthetic pursuits of forward-thinking fin-de-siècle composers. One could argue

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\(^{57}\) The octatonic mode I scale begins the alternating pattern with a half-step (H); mode II begins the alternating pattern with a whole-step (W). Mode I is comprised of an H-W-H-W-H-W-H pattern; mode II comprises a W-H-W-H-W-H-W pattern.
that Schulhoff used the idea of étude (a “study”) for the pieces in this set in order to reconcile their formal structure to their use of aesthetic expression outside conservative musical materials of the day—i.e. his use of jazz and other exotic dance forms. Schulhoff, however, was drawn to the rhythmic aspect of American jazz. As such, one might speculate that he chose the term étude because he conceived this set as a study of jazz as a dance idiom. Three out of five of the pieces are indeed based on a dance. In addition to the purely musical purpose of the term étude, it is important to mention that these dances provide a social commentary regarding the cultural revolution that was emblematic of the 1920s. Therefore, after the manner that we understand jazz, as a term with both musical and extra-musical meaning, these études are a summation of Schulhoff’s interpretation of the jazz era.

The performer will find these études technically difficult. Even as my analyses of the individual pieces will reveal technical challenges, such as awkward fingerings, sophisticated pedaling, and syncopation, the overall challenge is to maintain the character of each étude and to give a stylistically convincing performance at the brisk tempi Schulhoff indicates. In my personal experience of preparing and performing these études, I questioned Schulhoff’s choice of tempo, particularly his marking of 96 bpm for “Blues” and 138 bpm for “Chanson.” The information given in the historical overview of each analysis demonstrates why it is important to strictly adhere to Schulhoff’s choice of tempo for each étude.  

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58 It is also helpful to listen to transcriptions of these études played by various ensembles. The timbre of the different instruments provides insight for pianists in their preparation of these pieces.
The Charleston

Historical Overview

The Charleston was named after the popular social dance said to have originated in Charleston, South Carolina. The dance achieved its iconic status as one of the most popular social dances of the 1920s after its appearance on the Broadway show *Running Wild* in 1923. The dance was accompanied by “The Charleston,” a song by composer James P. Johnson. Example 4.2 shows the syncopated gesture upon which the Charleston dance became associated.

Example 4.2. The Charleston Rhythmic Gesture.

![Example 4.2. The Charleston Rhythmic Gesture.](image)

Even as Johnson’s song made the dance popular, the dance existed several years prior; it has a rich history as a dance evolving from the dances of African American folk music. The growing popularity of the Charleston coincided with the growing popularity of ragtime music, which became the most common music to accompany the Charleston dance.

The Charleston in Paris and Montmartre

In 1925, Josephine Baker arrived in Paris. The performance troupe accompanying her, La Revue Nègre, would eventually include Sidney Bechet, the renowned soprano saxophonist and clarinetist. The arrival and enthusiastic reception of Baker and Bechet underscored the motivations

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behind the influx of black entertainers who migrated to Paris in the 1920s, i.e. to enjoy the racially equitable social climate that Paris offered in contrast to the United States. These entertainers capitalized on the demands of an audience spellbound by black music and dance. Regarding the Parisian audience Baker wrote the following:

When the rage in New York of colored people
Monsieur Seigfried Folies said
its getting darker and darker on old broadway
Since the La Revue Nagri came to Gai Parée
I’ll say its getting darker and darker in Paris.61

The French reception of La Revue Négre preceded an interest in the sculptures and masks of African art, in the first decades of the twentieth century. When Baker arrived and danced the Charleston, the French audience likened her frenetic dancing to their fantasies of l’art négre.62 Baker satisfied these fetishes with overtly sexual performances, particularly her “banana dance,” where she danced semi-nude in a skirt fashioned with bunches of bananas. The bananas moved with her hips and suggested the arousal of phalluses surrounding her body.

Schulhoff’s Representation of the Charleston

Schulhoff embarked on concert tours of England and France in the late 1920s.63 Because he spoke of his love of dancing to the primal rhythm of the music,64 he likely visited cabarets and dance halls in Montmartre. The following quote is from a letter that Schulhoff wrote to his friend Alban Berg in 1921:

62 Goia, 12.
64 Ibid
I am boundlessly fond of nightclub dancing, so much that I have periods during which I spend whole nights dancing with one hostess or another...out of pure enjoyment of the rhythm and with my subconscious filled with sensual delight, thereby I acquire phenomenal inspiration for my work, as my conscious mind is incredibly earthly, even animal as it were.65

Schulhoff’s quote suggests that he was also of the Eurocentric view that esteemed the cultural milieu of Africans and African American immigrants as exotic. As such, he would have been swept up into the public sensation surrounding black dancers and the exotic and erotic energy they brought to the stage. By the time he arrived in Paris, Baker’s career was well underway, and the Charleston was a popular dance taught to the elite of Paris.66 Due to the popularity of the Charleston, I propose that Schulhoff felt it was suitable for his first etude, basing it on this dance as an introduction to the atmosphere of the nightlife in Paris during the 1920s.

Schulhoff’s Charleston is in cut time with a metronome marking of 108 bpm. He dedicated it to Zez Confrey, the influential figure of the novelty piano craze of the early twenties. Novelty piano was partly influenced by the lively syncopated rhythms of ragtime music. The technical demands of Schulhoff’s “Charleston” bear similarity to the technically demanding passages typical of the novelty piano style. These technical demands include fast tempo, different articulations in each hand, and wide intervals that pose challenges for pianists with smaller hands. The stride piano67 left hand accompaniment, a hallmark of novelty piano style, is supplanted by jagged melodic contours that, at times, require the pianist to make significant leaps. I interpret this as a distortion of stride piano accompaniment, which itself poses technical challenges for the pianist.

67 Stride piano is a left-hand comping pattern where beats 1 and 3 consists of a root and beats 2 and 4 consist of the corresponding chord. The left hand alternates between the chordal root and the chord and typically requires a leap of the hand between the root and the chord.
Example 4.3. Schulhoff, “Charleston” (mm. 1-6).

The fast tempo and the technical demands of the opening measures may represent the reaction of an observer who has been thrust into the lively ambience of a Montmartre nightclub. The use of the open sound of perfect fifths gives a brilliant timbre to the music. The right-hand figures in the first measure have a jagged contour, and the placement of an accent on the weak part of the beat, against the steady quarter notes, gives the music a syncopated feel. The right-hand figures suggest the steps of the Charleston dance, where dancers cross hands over the knees to give the illusion of crossing their legs. Example 4.4 shows the right hand of the first two measures where cross rhythms echo this effect.

Example 4.4. Schulhoff, “Charleston” (mm.1-2).

Earlier I stated that Schulhoff used the properties of the octatonic scale to channel the
“primitive” elements of jazz. The motivic development of this music is comprised of rhythmic gestures; Schulhoff’s intent was to exploit the percussive properties of the piano by giving the performer detailed indications of articulation. He used the pitches to represent splashes of colorful shapes and a bright timbre. The intervals generated from mixing modes I and II of the octatonic scale give a jagged contour that mirrors the Primitive aesthetic of paintings such as Picasso’s Demoiselles d’Avignon.

While the rhythmic gestures and contour of the right hand represent the dancers, the left hand represents the rhythm section. The left hand gives a strong ground beat that recalls the drumming circles in nineteenth-century New Orleans (similar to Goia’s historical account above), where big drums were used with body percussion, such as knee slaps, foot stomping, and handclapping. In Schulhoff’s Charleston, I view his use of register as suggesting the various timbres of the different percussion instruments, for example, the tambourine. In example 4.5, I have extracted the left-hand pitches of measures 1-2 to form a single line, which reveals the underlying rhythmic gesture.68

Example 4.5. Schulhoff, “Charleston”, a reduction of the underlying rhythmic gesture that unfolds between hands (mm. 1-2).

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   1  2
   ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢
   ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢ ☢
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Even though a pianist might use individual discretion in deciding which percussion instrument to evoke in their preparation of this etude, I find it helpful to imagine the quarter notes on beats 1 and 4 of the first measure as membranophones, and the eighth notes in the second measure as

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68 See also the first two measures of the excerpt in example 4.3.
idiophones. The quarter notes on beats 2 and 3 might represent body percussion. Demonstrating this point, I use drumset notation in example 6 to further condense the first two left-hand measures into rhythmic gestures.

Example 4.6. “Charleston”, Drumset notation illustrating a further reduction of the rhythmic gestures in “Charleston,” (mm. 1-2).

Measure 8 marks the first transition into the next group of rhythmic gestures. The excerpt in example 4.7 on the following page shows the first deviation from the octatonic collection in measures 8-10.

Example 4.7. Schulhoff, “Charleston”, alternating F# and G chords (mm. 8-10).

With the exception of the third beat in measure 10, the pitch material in these measures comprises alternating F# and G chords. The rhythmic gesture in measure 8 will be repeated in measures 13-14 and measures 43-44. This gesture introduces a representation of verbalizations, such as shouting,

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69 Membranophones are a family of percussion instruments that include the bass drum. The name is derived from any percussion instrument that is constructed of a membrane stretched over a hollow body. Idiophones are percussion instruments that can be plucked or shaken.
common in dance circles. This verbalization practice has origins in the field hollers heard on slave plantations; it made its way into the black church, where the congregation engaged in such practices as Africanizing American hymns. They sang and danced to music, using complex rhythms, while shouts could be heard over the music.

*Example 4.8.* “Charleston”, Reduction of measure 8 in drumset notation (m.8).

Example 4.8 illustrates the shouts that ring out above the hand-clapping and knee slaps.

Even though music similar to Schulhoff’s “Charleston” was performed in nightclubs and dance halls, many aspects of black music and dance were inspired by the black church setting. Goia also notes accounts of blues and ragtime musicians going to the church to “get ideas on music.”

Measures 15-16 (see example on following page) feature a strong build in intensity and enthusiasm until the explosion in expression occurs on the fourth beat of measure 17. It is helpful to picture a group of black musicians and dancers in a dance circle, leaning in toward one another, lowering the dynamic volume, and minimizing their movements in a moment of suspense. In addition to the musicians, some of the dancers may have contributed to the rhythmic drive by striking tambourines and using body percussion. The syncopated rhythm that unfolds between the hands, along with the staccato articulation, suggests improvised choreography. The dancers then

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70 Goia, 9.
71 Goia, 2.
72 Body percussion consists of striking parts of the body to produce a percussive effect. Examples include clapping and knee-slapping. See examples 4.6 and 4.8
crescendo until shouting together in a moment of unabashed expression, depicted by the stacked fifths on beat 4. Schulhoff was possibly depicting a dance circle where dancers were showing off their unique version of the Charleston. There were possibly male and female dancers on opposite sides of the circle switching sides. They would meet in the middle and then the male would display a courtly gesture, such as tipping his hat toward the female while performing elaborate footwork.\textsuperscript{73} The tenor line in measure 17 (Ex.4.9) depicts this scene. The melodic movement from G to E represents the dancers switching places in the dance circle. The dance circle is represented by the note F (first beat of measure 17, bottom staff, example 4.9). Schulhoff depicts the energy felt throughout the dance hall with the \textit{fortissimo} and crescendo marking of the chord on beat 4. This dynamic marking works alongside the register and the stacked fifths to depict the imagined primal energy that European onlookers may have experienced as they danced to the ragtime music.

\textit{Example 4.9}. Schulhoff, “Charleston”, mm. 15 and 16 lead to the stacked fifths in m. 17 that depict the rapturous shout of the dance hall patrons (mm. 15-17).

\begin{center}
\textbf{Erwin Schulhoff, 5 Études de Jazz\textcopyright\, für Klavier © Copyright 1927 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien/UE8954}
\end{center}

Measures 18-20 show a brief return to the first rhythmic gesture; this develops the thematic material presented in measures 1-7, presenting fragments of the original motive disbursed between the hands. These three measures also act as a transition to the next section of measures 21-28, which explores the primitivism associated with the pentatonic scale.

Example 4.10. Schulhoff, “Charleston”, (mm. 18-28).

Measures 21-27 comprise alternating the G pentatonic collection with the second mode of the octatonic scale. Measure 28 returns to octatonic modes I and II from the first motive in measures 1-7. Example 4.11 on the following page illustrates the dyads in measures 21 and 22, broken into a single line to demonstrate the interplay of the two pitch collections.

Example 4.11 Schulhoff. “Charleston”, dyads to demonstrate the interplay of G pentatonic collection and octatonic mode II (mm. 21 and 22).

Schulhoff gives the indication *martellato* for measures 21-28. This expressive marking, along with
the *ff* dynamic marking, works with the pitch content to channel the European fetish of the savage and bestial rituals of France’s African colonies. While the first 20 measures channel the sounds and ambience of the nightclub, measures 21-28 might look back to African villages, which he depicts as exotic here.

Schulhoff places a caesura at the end of measure 28. After 28 measures of frenetic dancing, hand-clapping and shouting, this brief moment of silence is used to set up a transition into measures 29-36, which act as a development section. Schulhoff chooses to notate measures 29-33 on three staves.

*Example 4.12 Schulhoff, “Charleston”, (mm. 29-36).*

In these measures, the pentatonic scale and the octatonic modes are all presented together in a frenzy that builds in intensity. Schulhoff presents this material on three staves, in measures 29-33. This section represents all the patrons of the club coming together in frenetic dancing and shouting. The pentatonic gestures on the lowest staff represent the elaborate footwork. The middle staff represents the smooth gliding across the floor, and the top staff represents the flailing of the hands.
The dotted quarter note rhythmic gestures in the middle staff (mm. 29-32) and the treble staff in measures 34 and 36 represents extra-musical expression, such as animated body language and shouts.

The last three measures of “Charleston” reiterate the notion (see example 4.1 on page 23) that the octatonic scale can organically produce blue notes depending on the assertion of a tonal center. Since the implied tonal center of “Charleston” is A, Schulhoff’s use of octatonic mode I over tonal center A produces the flatted seventh and the flatted fifth. Example 4.13 shows a motif that unfolds between the middle and top staves of measure 58. This motif—I call it the “Rhapsody in Blue lick”74—is comprised of a stepwise melodic progression from the fifth scale degree to the flatted seventh (E–F♯–G). These final measures set the precedent for how Schulhoff uses the octatonic scale, pentatonic scales, dynamic and articulation to channel exotic elements throughout the rest of the etudes.

Example 4.13. Schulhoff, “Rhapsody in Blue” lick (motif), mm. 57-59

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74 George Gershwin, the composer of “Rhapsody in Blue” (1924) uses the same stepwise motion to create the bluesy motif that he develops throughout the piece.
Blues

Historical Overview

While the social climate that boosted the popularity of the Charleston provides social commentary in race relations regarding the different perspectives involving the exploitation of black entertainment in Europe and the United States, the jazz subgenre of the blues offered commentary on the social conditions that existed in the homeland of jazz—the southern United States. The blues demonstrates a less adulterated glimpse into the past than the urban craze surrounding the Charleston of the Jazz Age. The melancholic sounds and the unfiltered expression of the blues reflected a music that had been crafted by an oppressed people. Blues, like jazz, also reflected a state of mind; for the African American musician, playing the blues echoed the ancestral propensity to use music functionally in an attempt to make the reality of the hardships of social inequality less palpable.

The blues was the subgenre that most effectively channeled the exotic musical customs of West Africa. Elements of this music, which included the vocalizations of ritualistic practices and the use of string instruments, are channeled in both the extended techniques used by blues singers and the extensive use of guitars and banjos. The AAB verse form of the blues, which typically included the repetition of the first line, imitates the call-and-response style of African music.

The Harlem Renaissance in Montmartre: Blues Poetry

Blues highlights the artistic contributions of black artists in literature as well as in music and dance. During the 1920s, Langston Hughes was among the black writers and poets to spend time in
Paris and Montmartre.\textsuperscript{75} Hughes’s writings convey the sense of struggle and despair, the results of a life of oppression in the United States. He wrote within the genre of blues poetry, a highlight of the Harlem Renaissance, the artistic movement of the 1920s that celebrated the creative works of black artists. The bohemian atmosphere of Montmartre made it home to numerous cabarets, catering to the avant-garde artists and writers who frequently met there. The aesthetic of blues music and blues-inspired poetry would have been welcomed at a Montmartre cabaret. The influx of black artists across all disciplines, with numerous stages to perform their work, resulted in Montmartre becoming the French analogue for Harlem in the 1920s.

\textit{Schulhoff’s Representation of “Blues”}

Schulhoff’s dedication of this etude to contemporary composer Paul Whiteman (1890-1967) is exemplary of European and white American roles in the propagation and subsequent commercialization of an art form with origins in African folk music. Jazz and its subgenres had two entities that acted as brokers for its propagation and subsequent emergence as a global sensation—live performances and recordings, both in demand to satisfy the tastes of modern popular culture and the modernists’ propensity for exoticism. Both are yet another reiteration of the notion that the liberating spirit of jazz reached across cultural barriers to satisfy the tastes of both low-brow and high-brow audiences. Whiteman realized that a convincing jazz performance was difficult for classically-trained performers to duplicate; they faced difficulty replicating the same movements that black performers executed naturally.\textsuperscript{76} Whiteman expressed his sentiments in the following: “The popular idea is that jazz is a snap to play. This is all wrong . . . . A jazz score can never be

\textsuperscript{76} Paul Whiteman, \textit{Jazz} (New York: J. H. Seares, 1926), 11.
played as written. The musician has to know how to give it the jazz effect.”77 Whiteman, like Schulhoff, was a musician and composer introduced to jazz from the outside in and was mesmerized by the possibilities inherent within this fresh approach to musical expression.

Example 4.14. Schulhoff, “Blues,” the sonore marking in measure 3 reveals an underlying harmonic structure also present in “Chanson” and “Tango.”

“Blues” begins with a two-measure vamp, consisting of a D-flat major chord with a sharped seventh, followed by a chromatic gesture leading to the downbeat of the second measure. If the indicated articulation is properly executed, the vamp sets the tone for the entire piece by evoking the strumming of the banjo. The theme begins in the third measure on E, which, after the vamp, the ear should readily perceive as the flatted third typically heard in the blues. Schulhoff gave the indication sonore for this tone which rings above the bass ostinato and sings across the bar line.

The sonore marking hints at an underlying structure also present in “Chanson” and “Tango.” This underlying structure consists of a fundamental treble and bass line; in “Blues” and “Tango,” the voice-leading in these lines is governed by the interplay of pitch collections comprised of modes I and II of the octatonic scale. Like “Charleston,” “Blues” exhibits properties of the octatonic collection, albeit in a different manner that involves the sustaining of pitches along with melodic motivic development. The metronome marking (quarter note = 96 bpm) suggests this etude is still rhythmic and should have a forward-moving pulse.

77 Whiteman, 11.
Example 4.15 shows a score excerpt of “Blues,” measures 1-18. Circles and boxes illustrate the voice leading in the fundamental treble and bass lines. The circles show the tones connected by the lines. (These lines are extracted and shown on a structural graph in example 4.16) The octatonic embellishments in example 4.15 are outlined by a diamond box; the pentatonic embellishments are shown in a rectangular box. The diamond box in measure 8 is an example of Schulhoff’s use of the same pitch collections to create a variety of moods in the different etudes.

Example 4.15. Schulhoff, “Blues” (mm. 1-18).
Example 4.16. Schulhoff, “Blues”, graph illustrating the underlying harmonic structure of score excerpt in example 4.14 (mm. 3-18).

The example 4.16 graph illustrates the underlying harmonic structure of measures 3-18. The fundamental bass and treble lines are depicted by whole notes. The tempo gives these lines momentum and keeps them fresh to the ear. These fundamental tones, when used with the pedal and a steady pulse, help create the ambience needed to communicate the imagery behind these etudes. As such, all other melodic material represented by the stemless noteheads is viewed as embellishment of the fundamental lines, thus should be executed within the context of the line.

The embellishments are comprised of pitches from octatonic mode I. The stemless noteheads in parentheses are not part of octatonic mode I. Schulhoff used the pentatonic scale to create the gestures in the left hand in measures 7-8, and in the right hand in measures 11-12. These
pentatonic gestures accompany and affirm the treble line. Schulhoff was possibly attempting to evoke the practice of other singers, or people in the audience making affirmatory statements, such as “take your time,” or humming along with the singer as they sing the embellishments.

In measure 19, the music returns to the opening thematic material with the addition of a descant above the melodic line. This descant, organized into two-measure phrases, is initiated by stacked fourths, followed by a fioratura comprised of pitches from the octatonic collection. Marked *ppp* and *legatissimo*, this descant gives a surreal effect to the music and contributes to the hazy and lackadaisical mood of the blues.

The flatted third—the E—sings out above the descant and the banjo, subdued by Schulhoff’s indication of the *una corda* pedal. A curious deviation from the original pitch content is the flatted seventh that appears in the strumming banjo accompaniment, in measures 19-23. The sharped seventh, generated from the stacking of perfect fifths a third apart in the vamp, is not commonly used as a harmonic interval in the blues form; the flatted seventh is normally used and ordinarily functions to progress from tonic to subdominant. But here, Schulhoff possibly utilized the feeling of an unresolved dominant seventh to allow the listener to perceive a sort of moment of eternity—a suspension of the normal sense of time—before returning to the obstinate forward-moving pulse created by the sharpened sevenths of the original pitch content. Furthermore, there is always the possibility that the chromatic alteration is another example of distortion.

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78 Although Schulhoff did not use a key signature in the etudes, the implied key center is D-flat. The E may be aurally interpreted as a flatted-third within the context of the blues genre.
Example 4.17. Schulhoff, “Blues” illustration of the octatonic scale-derived fioratura and deviation from the sharped seventh (mm. 19-22).

In measures 27-59, Schulhoff’s writing evokes an instrumental interlude. These measures bear the influence of the polyphonic jazz of New Orleans, where the timbres of different instruments contribute to the texture of the music. The length of this interlude at 32 measures resembles a jam session. Imagine a patron in a Montmartre cabaret who is spellbound by the horn player’s use of exotic extended techniques, such as growling. These musicians, armed with a sensibility crafted from formative years hearing blues singers and black folk singers, may well have developed this unconventional technique from their experiences as a black person living under the oppressive conditions of racial inequality. Example 4.18 shows measures 27-35.

Schulhoff uses the extended chords in the right hand with sophisticated pedaling technique to create a sense of a haze around this jam session scene, perhaps evoking a smoke-filled cabaret. Schulhoff contributes to the atmospheric effect of this scene by constructing the extended chords from interlocking major and minor chords, interlocking fifths, and the pentatonic collection to express the imagined primitive elements of improvised authentic jazz. He uses all these methods simultaneously within two chords. Example 4.19 features two of these chords (m. 29) and shows the chord broken down into the constituent intervallic content and pitch collections.
Example 4.19. Deconstruction of chords into their constituent pitch collections (m. 29).

The jam session is also accompanied by a depiction of a rhythm section in the left hand, a pattern that resembles barrelhouse-style comping. In barrelhouse, a common pattern is “walking” to the flatted seventh. Example 4.20 shows where Schulhoff overtly displays this comping pattern in contrast to his usual tendency to either allude to or distort it. The curved line drawn depicts a progression from the G-flat chord on beat 1, where G-flat is the root, to the F-flat on beat 3.

Example 4.20. Schulhoff, “Blues”, example of barrelhouse style comping (m. 31).

A reduction of the bass line reveals another reason why the performer should adhere to Schulhoff’s prescribed tempo marking. The bass line should be rhythmic while suggesting the type of dancing emblematic of black culture in places like New Orleans. This dancing is characterized with a kind of sway that is simultaneously upbeat and lackadaisical. This sway might reflect how the culture reacted to the oppression they faced. Langston Hughes spoke of this way of life in his *Weary Blues* (1926), when he spoke about a pianist in a bar playing the blues and the nightlife in Harlem. In this work he evokes the use of music to ease the hardships of daily life. The rhythm of the music at night made one forget that the morning and all the hardships it brings was imminent.80

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79 In a jazz ensemble, the rhythm section, typically comprised of a drummer, bassist and pianist, provide rhythmic and harmonic support for the soloists. In Schulhoff’s Blues, the left hand can be understood as a rhythm section.

80 Davis, 277.
**Chanson**

*Overview*

Amid the fusion of the rhythmic, harmonic, and improvisatory elements of jazz into modern art music as displayed in the first and fifth etudes of *Cinq Études de Jazz*, “Chanson” is a snapshot of French culture and identity. The sounds readily evoke the “Frenchness” to which Americans have grown accustomed through recordings of the modern *chanson-française*.

*Schulhoff’s Representation of French culture*

In the midst of the pervasive influence of American jazz on French culture in the 1920s, critics called for a clear concept of what constituted authentic “Frenchness.” Schulhoff’s use of pitch in “Chanson” suggests that he used the etude to focus on how French culture was reflected in traditional French music.

Schulhoff’s perception of French culture is reflected through his use of the pentatonic collection in “Chanson.” The pentatonic collection in “Chanson” gives it a contrasting character, compared to the other four etudes, which prominently feature the octatonic collection. The use of a pentatonic collection evokes the ethos of the *chanson-réaliste*, a style of French song that focused on themes of nature and love and appealed to the working class. These songs were popular in the café-concerts and cabarets of Montmartre. Singer Aristide Bruant (1851-1925), began his career in the café-concert, and was among the earliest proponents of the style, which would evolve into the French popular songs of the 1920s and 1930s championed by singers such as Edith Piaf (1915-1963). Example 4.21 shows the right-hand passages of the first 10 measures of “Chanson”. The

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82 Jordan, 18.
right-hand phrases are comprised of figures derived from the pentatonic scale.

*Example 4.21.* Schulhoff, “Chanson” (mm. 1-10).

The graph in example 4.22 on the following page shows the underlying harmonic structure of “Chanson” for measures 11-27. The modal mixture of pentatonic scales in the right hand and octatonic modes in the left hand is exemplifies the syncretism of French folk music, modern art music, and popular music that produces the characteristic “Frenchness of the chanson-francaise.

Even though “Chanson” is the most lyrical etude of “Cinq Études de Jazz”, at 138 bpm to the quarter note, “Chanson” has the fastest tempo of all the etudes. The faster tempo helps to move the fundamental treble and bass lines forward. While the pianist may consider using the dotted half-note as the pulse, I suggest honoring Schulhoff’s indication of using the quarter note. The subdivision of smaller units will aid in pacing the rubato.
“Chanson” has several rubato passages that need appropriate imagery to sound organic and convincing. Referring to measure 21 in the structural graph (example 4.22), these rubato passages tend to occur when a melodic line organically spins out of the sustained fundamental treble line. While the preceding measures can be understood as sustained tones with embellishments from the pentatonic collection, chromaticism returns in measure 21. I interpret this as melodic rather than as an embellishment; the chromaticism acts as the emergence of the octatonic collection. The rubato indication is likely intended to draw attention to the blossoming of the octatonic collection from the pentatonic collection.

Example 4.23. Schulhoff, “Chanson”, pentatonic gives way to octatonic collection (mm. 21-23).

This mix of collections reflects the influence of jazz on popular French song. Furthermore,
example 4.24 shows a similar phrase that precedes a highly chromatic passage I interpret as an instrumental interlude. I interpret this interlude as a direct nod to Paul Whiteman’s influence on symphonic jazz.


![Image of musical notation]

This interlude may allude to the polite symphonic jazz played in the cabarets of Paris in this period. This music was rehearsed thus removing the element of spontaneity found in authentic improvised jazz. The mutual syncretism between jazz and tradition, however, is evident in the increased chromaticism and use of octatonic cells in the interlude. There is a mix of sweeping pentatonic and octatonic gestures.

As a nod to the Romantic presentation of the common themes appearing in the chanson réaliste, the idea of the cabaret singer returns in measure 53 with the indication of *forte* and *dolce*.

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85 In the music of Morton, King Oliver, Henderson, and Paul Whiteman, the music was written out (or given orally) and rehearsed. In this instance, I am referring to jazz solos and the interplay of jazz musicians in early ensembles.
To reiterate the recurrent theme of the association of rubato with chromaticism, the marking is *molto rubato e con passione*. The melody is no longer simple and pentatonic. The texture is also thick, which suggests that this moment is the expressive apex of the etude.

*Example 4.25.* Schulhoff, “Chanson”, the expressive apex with thicker texture (mm. 53-56).  

I view the remaining measures of “Chanson as an afterthought. The remaining measures shown in example 4.26 reflect on the common themes of the chanson réaliste—themes of the struggles of the common man through a Romantic presentation. The closing measures of the etude are filled with sweeping gestures and ethereal sonorities with an ever-decreasing dynamic level. This might reflect the ambience of the cabaret as the music dies down amid the clanging of silverware and quiet chatter among the patrons.

*Example 4.26. “Chanson”, (mm. 71-76)*
**Tango**

*Historical Overview*

The tango is a dance form that originated in the slums of Buenos Aires, Argentina in the late nineteenth century. It originated from a confluence of Latin American and African traditions; the rhythmic patterns bear a remote influence of African musical traditions, while the melodies bear a distinctive Latin American influence. Furthermore, the influence of both musical traditions was a result of immigration from Africa and Spain to the West Indies, Central America, and South America. The resulting art form is an exotic dance imbued with vestiges of traditional cultures in Africa and Iberia.

The Argentine slums were home to a culture comprised of European immigrants and Gauchos, a name given to people who lived a rustic existence in the outskirts of the major urban areas. Gaucho musical traditions included the *milonga*, a dance said to have African origins. The rhythmic pattern of the tango is based on this dance. The following example is an illustration of the basic rhythmic structure of the tango.

*Example 4.27. The basic rhythmic structure of the tango.*

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89 Ibid.
The Tango in Paris and Montmartre

By the time Schulhoff made his tours of England and France in 1927 and 1928, the tango and the Charleston were already popular fixtures in the cabarets of Montmartre. The tango made its way to Europe around 1910.\(^91\) By the time the Charleston gained popularity, the popularity of the tango had long been established and was danced in cabarets such as El Garròn. The variety of cultural influences behind the evolution of the tango resonated with the nightlife in Montmartre. Montmartre nightlife was a boiling pot of different cultures; there were clubs frequented by people from places as far off as the Antilles, in addition to the influx of African Americans. Schulhoff’s inclusion of the tango is a nod to the capacity of jazz to readily assimilate any culture.

Schulhoff’s Representation of the Tango

At 84 bpm to the quarter note, “Tango” has the slowest tempo of all the etudes. This tempo evokes a different kind of sexuality than the “Charleston,” which is fast and aggressive and can be danced solo. The tango requires two dancers, a couple, typically in close contact with one another. The tango is therefore more intimate, sensual, and passionate. This description can provide a cue to the pianist in listening to the eighth-note pulse, which might evoke a rapid heartbeat or other physiological changes that occur during a state of sexual arousal.

While “Tango” has a similar underlying structure to “Blues” and “Chanson,” Schulhoff also embeds melodic lines into the left-hand ostinato. In addition to creating counterpoint with the right-hand Latin-inspired melody, these embedded lines explore the African influence behind the tango. These embedded lines create rhythmic gestures that reflect the rhythmic sensibilities\(^92\) of

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\(^92\) Jazz musicians had an organically different approach to rhythm that was highly expressive and filled with character. As such this approach gave rise to techniques such as swing.
jazz musicians. It is therefore important to begin with the underlying melodic structure of the left-hand ostinato.

Example 4.28. Schulhoff, “Tango”. Lines extracted from mm. 1-3 and mm. 6-7.

The upper left passage in example 4.28 shows the left-hand ostinatos in the original score, against the extraction of the embedded lines on the upper right. The notes that form the embedded line are circled in the excerpt, and lines are drawn to the corresponding pitch in the extraction. These lines form a gesture that consists of three parts. The tones in the bottom line function as the fundamental bass line of the phrase. Each tone is meant to be sustained in the pedal and carried through the two 4-measure phrases supported by A and C# in the bass. Through sophisticated pedaling techniques, such as half-pedaling and flutter-pedaling, the performer creates a haze that evokes the cigarette smoke of the cabaret or the image of fog rising from the dance floor. The middle line is the scale degree I–V oscillation, and the top line is the 2-note syncopated gesture. The syncopation of the 2-note gestures on the top line, against the I–V oscillation, reflects the primal rhythmic sensibility of the jazz musicians. Schulhoff added syncopation to the I–V oscillation in the
middle voice and a descending gesture. These variations, which occur as the music becomes more active, evoke the increasing sexual tension between the dancers.

*Example 4.29.* Reduction of the embedded lines in the left hand ostinato.

The A on the downbeat of the first measure draws the ear toward the assertion of this pitch as a tonal center. The 4-measure phrases in the right hand in measures 2-10 are supported by the A in the bass for measures 2-5, and C# in measures 6-9. In measure 10, there is a return to the tonal area of A. These measures, therefore, demonstrate conventional phrase structure in the right hand. In the left hand, however, the progression from A to C# is a deviation from conventional harmonic progressions; in a conventional harmonic progression, there would be progression from a tonic class to a pre-dominant or dominant class of pitches.

The next example shows the underlying structure for measures 2-5 and measures 6-9. “Tango” is the last of the three cabaret pieces with an underlying structure that includes the fundamental bass and treble lines. The performer should maintain awareness of the structural background of the left-hand ostinato and the fundamental bass and treble lines against the pulse. The performer should also consider keeping the eighth note pulse by counting to eight with the metronome set to 84 bpm to the quarter note. This helps maintain the momentum of the fundamental lines, while ensuring that the left-hand rhythmic gestures are crisp.
Example 4.30. Schulhoff, “Tango”, graph showing fundamental bass and treble line with embellishments that use the pitches of the octatonic collection.

The D# in the upper voice functions as a common tone with modes I and II of the octatonic scale. It is the third scale degree of both modes and thus unifies the modal mixture between phrases. My structural graph also helps to establish the imagery for this etude. I view the left hand as simultaneously representing the male dancer and the African influence behind the tango. The syncopation evokes the primal rhythmic sensibilities of jazz musicians. It also represents the sexual energy bound in the male dancer’s hips. The readiness of the hips to thrust is represented in the anticipation of the first note of the syncopated two-note gestures.93

93 See example 4.27. The rhythmic placement of the pitches immediately before the beat, along with the interval of a half-step—the resolution of which sings across the beat—is evocative of a hip thrust.
Toccata Sur Le Shimmy “Kitten On The Keys” De Zez Confrey

**Historical Overview**

While the first four etudes are sonic representations and commentary of the sociopolitical climate and artistic tastes of the Jazz Age in Europe, from the perspective of a modernist composer, the last etude—*Toccata Sur Le Shimmy “Kitten On The Keys” De Zez Confrey*—is unique, as it is derived from an existing piano work. The original *Kitten on the Keys*, published in 1921 by Zez Confrey, is an example of the novelty piano genre. Following the modernists’ trend of finding an aesthetic from sundry sources, novelty piano is itself a synthesis of several musical styles that range from Impressionism to ragtime.

It is noteworthy that Schulhoff placed this etude at the end of the set. Regardless of whether it was Schulhoff’s intention, this final etude serves as an epilogue, which summarizes all the sociopolitical commentary imbued within the first four etudes. Regarding the aforementioned reading of these etudes as a study of jazz as a highly rhythmic dance idiom, the rhythmic gestures in the Charleston can also function as a thesis statement in this study. I previously noted the idea that the Charleston’s musical line is fashioned out of a tapestry of rhythmic gestures, rather than the heretofore conventional melodic-driven phrase structures of the Classical and Romantic aesthetics. This idea is followed throughout the study before arriving to a decisive conclusion with the final etude. Many of the rhythmic ideas in the Schulhoff toccata are identical to the gestures in a Charleston dance. Example 4.30 shows another example of Schulhoff’s intent to use the toccata as a conclusion, including a side-by-side comparison of Confrey’s shimmy and Schulhoff’s toccata, which reveals identical rhythmic gestures. The rectangular boxes show similar placement of the

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accent; the diamond box shows the similar contour and articulation of the perfect fifths.


Schulhoff’s evocation of the shimmy in this etude may be read as a further testament that this etude functions as an epilogue. The shimmy was regarded as one of the most suggestive dances of the time. As such, the French may have embraced this dance as the pinnacle of black expression; all of their preconceptions regarding the primitive and erotic sense of rhythm exhibited by le nègre are summarized in the shimmy.

In addition to this etude’s function as an epilogue, as for the reception of jazz by French popular culture, and a nod to the French tendency to view the black entertainers’ style of expression as primitive or savage, Schulhoff channeled the aesthetic pursuits of French and Spanish Cubist painters—George Braque and Pablo Picasso among them—whose principle technique was the distortion of subjects into abstract representations of the original. In the shimmy, Schulhoff preserves the roots of the original chord progressions, uses extended harmony, and modifies the rhythm to create the effect of distortion.
Example 4.32. Zez Confrey, “Kitten on the Keys”, the original novelty piece (mm. 1-13).

Example 4.32 (above) shows the original novelty piano piece. With a time signature of common time and a tempo indication of Allegro moderato, this piece is a novel representation of ragtime music. The sequence in the right hand is supported by a smooth musical line in the left hand fashioned out of chromatic passing tones. In the left hand, a two-measure vamp sets into motion the barrelhouse style of comping. The rectangular boxes, beveled boxes, and ovals show the corresponding passages and how Schulhoff distorts the original.

Zez Confrey, "Kitten on the Keys", 1921. This work is in the public domain.
Example 4.33. Schulhoff, “Toccata”, Schulhoff’s representation of the original novelty piece (mm. 1-14).

In Schulhoff’s representation, the smooth line in the opening left-hand passage is supplanted by a disjointed line comprised of a falling minor and major thirds. In the vamp, the barrelhouse style of comping in the left hand is substituted by syncopated rhythmic gestures shared between the hands.
The vamp in Schulhoff’s representation also demonstrates rhythmic displacement as one of his principles methods of distortion. Example 4.34 illustrates Schulhoff’s displacement of the pitches in the top voices of the vamp.

*Example 4.34. Confrey, Schulhoff. “Kitten on the Keys” and “Toccata”, respectively. Side-by-side comparison of the two-measure vamp from the orginal novelty piece and Schulhoff’s representation (mm. 5-6).*

The excerpt on the left is the vamp from Confrey’s *Kitten on the Keys*. In the excerpt on the left, I superimpose the original over an extraction of the left hand from Schulhoff’s vamp. (Refer to the measure inside the rectangular box in example 4.33 to find the pitches I have extracted.) Schulhoff displaces these pitches to change the melodic contour.

Example 4.35 illustrates Schulhoff’s distortion of the first five measures of the B section in Confrey’s work. In this distortion, Schulhoff kept the rhythmic and the melodic contour intact; he modified the pitch content while preserving the melodic contour of Confrey’s work. The rectangular boxes correspond with the antecedent phrase; the beveled boxes correspond with the consequent phrase. Example 4.35 also demonstrates Schulhoff’s use of articulation to distort the original work. Schulhoff supplanted the graceful stride piano accompaniment in the left hand with staccato passages comprised of rising and falling gestures crafted from a sequence generated from perfect fourths.
Example 4.35. Confrey, Schulhoff, respectively, B section of “Kitten on the Keys” (mm. 23-28) and B section of Schulhoff’s “Toccata” (mm. 41-46).

Example 4.36 illustrates Schulhoff’s technique of rhythmically displacing phrases in Confrey’s work. Note the corresponding circles between passages of Confrey’s material, and Schulhoff’s reworking. All of the harmonic and melodic materials are kept intact in Schulhoff’s representation, only reordered into an abstract representation. In addition to Schulhoff’s reordering of pitch material, Schulhoff also reordered the sections of Confrey’s work. Example 4.36 demonstrates how Schulhoff cuts and pastes excerpts from the trio section of Confrey’s work in
measures 23-27 of “Toccata”. The blurred pitches inside the diamond boxes represent measures from the trio that Schulhoff cut. The square box represents the measures that were pasted in place of the cut measures. Furthermore the square box shows a distortion of a cadence—a progression from a tri-tone to the tonic. Schulhoff also supplanted the tonal center of the trio section of Confrey’s work (B-flat major) with the implied tonal center of F major in the final measure of “Toccata”.

Example 4.36. Confrey and Schulhoff, Confrey’s “Kitten on the Keys”; Schulhoff’s “Toccata”, example of rhythmic displacement as a method of distortion (mm. 66-71 and mm. 23-27).
CONCLUSION

I return to my opening question: what’s in a name? With the first glance at the name *Cinq Études de Jazz*, I believe Schulhoff intends to spark curiosity. The purpose of this study was to reveal the complex web of events and technical ingenuity behind the title of this piece. The study distilled the web into three main components: the ethos of the European avant-garde, the ethos of American jazz, and the Parisian audience. These three components were unified by the sociopolitical climate of the seventy-year period between the 1850s and the 1920s. During this period, artists were experimenting with modes of expression that could no longer be supported by current formal structures. Romantic ideals, which advocated personal expression, were being fulfilled by the emergence of modern art. For the European avant-garde, the emphasis on personal expression inspired artists to create work as a reaction against practices such as European colonialism. In the United States, African Americans were experimenting with their unique modes of self-expression—their reaction to the oppression they endured from racial inequality. The commercialization of their music resulted in exposure to the French audience, which were titillated by the music’s exotic qualities.

I propose that Schulhoff’s *Cinq Études de Jazz* represents the Parisian audience, their taste for exotic entertainment and appreciation for self-expression. These elements are evident in the establishment of numerous cabarets where black jazz musicians and avant-garde artists performed. As such, Schulhoff’s work is a synthesis of the ethos of jazz and the European avant-garde.
Schulhoff’s synthesis of these elements occurs over the course of five movements. “Charleston” highlights the vigorous and sexually-charged dances of performers, such as Josephine Baker and Ada Smith. Their performances evoked images of African sculpture. As such, “Charleston” looks back to the early instances of the French fascination with l’art négre, which began as a result of French colonialism. “Blues” represents the darker side of this exotic entertainment, highlighting the oppression black entertainers experienced under the Jim Crow laws in the southern United States. “Chanson” examines the ethos of the audience who frequented the cabarets—many of whom were working-class patrons—whose appreciation of the reactionary ethos of jazz and modern art music whet their appetites for exotic entertainment. “Tango” represents the cultural assimilation that produced a lively and diverse after-hours entertainment scene in Montmartre, one where the public also enjoyed cultural imports from the Caribbean and South American countries. “Toccata Sur le Shimmy” synthesizes all the above by evoking the properties of novelty piano—its a synthesis of jazz and modern art music.

My analysis of the five movements Cinq Études de Jazz seeks to illuminate the atmosphere of the Montmartre cabaret. The intent was to help the reader develop imagery to understand how Schulhoff may have witnessed and processed the phenomenon in Paris. The analysis also examines Schulhoff’s compositional techniques, which included the use of symmetrical scales and modes. These devices imbued Schulhoff’s work with a sense of abstraction, thereby making his work resonate with the ethos of both jazz and the creative works of the European avant-garde.

After this analysis of Cinq Études de Jazz, against the historical information provided in this document, I conclude that it is crucial to look beyond “ism” labels, which seek to categorize artists with similar aims. My research reveals that art has always reflected the cultural sentiments

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95 See page 26.
96 See pages 27-28.
of the time. Artists will continue to challenge current formal conventions for the sake of personal expression. When we consider the cultural revolution that occurred during the 1920s, we understand that the popularity of jazz reflected the sociopolitical and socioeconomic climate of a dawning global age, thereby giving this music a rightful place among the art music of the twentieth music. This is what the name *Cinq Études de Jazz* represents.
REFERENCES


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