

Eric Dolphy & Outness

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Introduction

In the late 1950s/early 1960s stylistic developments occurred in jazz that caused some reactions in the press and amongst musicians, most of it critical. It was like a second coming of bebop, critics didn't know what to call it and many of the prominent established jazz musicians "didn't get it". One of the people at the forefront of these developments was Eric Dolphy. Defining outness, the problems with labelling musicians as "out" or "outside" and the consequences this had and still has on Dolphy and his music (and all musicians for that matter) is the focus of this essay.

The initial problem with the topic at hand is that the stylistic developments of the 1960s took on a multitude of names; "the new thing", avant-garde jazz, "out music"¹ "anti-jazz",² "fire music", as well as a multitude of other names³. Miles Davis often referred to the new musics as the "way-out thing".⁴ After the release of Ornette Coleman's album *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation* (1960) the album's title became a popular catch all term for all the different styles and musical innovations of this era. However, the label of avant-garde was and is still commonly used to refer to the musics of that era. So what is avant-garde jazz? Gridley tells us that it is:

the music of innovators [and that the] classification[s of this era were] very loose, and it (a) led some outsiders to assume ... that the different musicians of this period had more in common than they actually did, but also that (b) this was the only period in which 'avant-garde' jazz was created. ... some early jazz by Louis Armstrong, bop by Charlie Parker, and cool jazz by Lennie Tristano ... could justifiably be called 'avant-garde.'⁵

¹ Gridley, Mark C., *Jazz Styles 10th edition*: 307.

² John Tynan qtd in *Down Beat* 4/12/1962: 6th paragraph.

³ Such, D. G., *Avant-garde Jazz Musicians Performing 'Out There'*: 17.

⁴ Davis, Miles, & Quincy Troupe. *The Autobiography Miles Davis with Quincy Troupe*. Edition 2005: 272.

⁵ Gridley, *Jazz*: 307.

Although “out music” is generally avant-garde, avant-garde music is not necessarily “out”. Describing both terms can be problematic as what is avant-garde today may not be so tomorrow. Likewise, what is ‘outside’ to someone may not be ‘outside’ to another. So what is “out”? Mark Levine’s *The Jazz Theory Book* has a chapter on “Playing ‘Outside’” in which he describes it as:

mean[ing] several different things, including playing notes that aren’t in the chord, stretching the length of one chord into another, or playing something recognizable but in a different key. It can also mean playing ‘free,’ or atonal, with no chord structure at all.⁶

Importantly, he adds that:

what’s considered outside is subjective and changeable. What you hear as ‘outside’ someone else will hear as ‘inside,’ and vice versa. Bird was considered ‘out’ by many musicians in the 1940s, as was Coltrane in the 1960s.⁷

Referring to the avant-garde inclinations of “out music” as Gridley does, Levine also adds that “Many of the best examples of ‘outside’ playing are really *bitonality*”.⁸ Although these are all good ways of thinking of ‘outside’ playing, the book suffers (as a majority of music theory books do) from a Eurological bias. What I mean by this is that music theory books often overlook or give secondary importance to time, rhythm and timbre in music which are arguably the most important aspects of all musics. So let us take a look at what Levine left out. He is mostly concerned with harmonic and melodic outness but playing ‘outside’ can also refer to several other things such as playing ‘outside’ (or free) of time. Odd time signatures are sometimes called “out”, most notably as is implied by Dave Brubeck’s classic album *Time Out*. One could play or compose ‘outside’ of a style or a traditional form. One’s sound or timbre could be described as “out”. Similarly one could play out of tune. It is important to remember, as Levine pointed out,

⁶ Levine, M. *The Jazz Theory Book*: 183.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.* 184.

that this is all subjective. Ornette Coleman said that: “There is no end to pitch. You can play flat in tune and sharp in tune.”⁹

Eric Dolphy

So was Eric Dolphy “out” and if so how? Did he consider his music and his playing to be “out” and did he use or approve of that label? Outness can be viewed from more than just a music theory perspective and from here on this essay will tackle Dolphy’s outness from three perspectives: marketing (labelling), musical (including music theory) and social.

Marketing (labelling) Outness

Dolphy’s *Outward Bound* (1960), *Out There* (1960) and *Out to Lunch* (1964) suggest the outness of their musics not only in their titles but also in their covers. *Outward Bound* (Appendix A) portrays Dolphy in outer space. The album title is on a sign that is pointing out to space where there are multiple planets or moons; indicating that he is ‘out of this world’. There is a door that opens to nothing and the three instruments he plays on the record are in the middle ground seemingly out of place. The sole use of darker to lighter shades of green as a type of gray between white and black also contributes to the painting’s surrealist nature perhaps it is also a reference to ‘green-tinted... glasses’ that bebop musicians like to wear.¹⁰ The record label’s name in the bottom right corner, New Jazz, is an obvious reference to ‘the new thing’.

The cover to *Out There* (Appendix B) is also located in space but this time with a cello, bass and cymbal forming a floating ship with someone on top of it, perhaps Dolphy again? The shadows on the metronome and instrument-spaceship suggest that there are at least two Suns

⁹ Horricks, R. *The Importance of Being Eric Dolphy*: 12.

¹⁰ Lott, Eric. “Double V, Double-Time: Bebop’s Politics of Style” *Callaloo*, No. 36 (1988): 598. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2931544>)

near this planet. There is sheet music coming out from a trap door on the planet, flying out into space. The shades of orange are used much like green was on *Outward Bound*. Dolphy's *Out to Lunch* (Appendix C), released by Blue Note Records, follows the theme of the other two album covers with its use of mostly blue for its cover. The cover also has a clock with seven arrows pointing out in all directions; obscuring the time of return to "business as usual". The first two albums, *Outward Bound* & *Out There* were painted by Richard Jennings, a friend of Dolphy's¹¹ indicating that it is likely that Dolphy chose them but *Out to Lunch* was released shortly after he died and there is no indication of him having chosen the cover.

Interestingly, Dolphy's first album as a leader for the Prestige record label, *Outward Bound* (1960), implies in its title that the music is "out", however at least two of the six tunes are jazz standards and only three of the six are originals; none of the tunes share the album title. Dolphy's second album as leader for Prestige, *Out There* (1960), also implies the outness of the music in its title but on this album there is a tune that shares the album title. What is interesting about this is that the album's liner notes¹² do not mention why Dolphy chose the title *Out There* for the album or the tune, if he did indeed choose them at all. This is especially interesting considering that he recorded and released the tune *Out There* again but titled *Far Cry* on his third album as leader for Prestige; *Far Cry* (1960). Eric Dolphy does tell us why it is titled *Far Cry*:

One of the title's meanings is that it's a far cry from the impact Bird had when he was alive and his position now... I wrote this to show that I haven't forgotten him or what he's meant to me. But the song also says that as great as he was, he was a far cry from what he could have been. And, finally, it says that I'm a far cry from being able to say all I want to in jazz.¹³

¹¹ Simosko & Tepperman, *Eric Dolphy: A Musical Biography & Discography*: 43.

¹² Goldberg, J., *Out There liner notes*

¹³ Dolphy qtd in Zan Stewart's *Out There: The Angelic Passion of Eric Dolphy*: 16.

Because of this, I am inclined to think that someone at the record company was deciding the album titles and sometimes track titles in order to market the music to a specific audience with this label of “out”. Likewise, the title of his magnum opus, *Out to Lunch* (1964), implies the outness of the music and has a track titled *Out to Lunch*, but contrary to the other tunes on the album, there is no explanation of this tune beyond some technical musical aspects and more importantly no explanation of its title.¹⁴ When looking at Dolphy’s recordings as leader and sideman it is interesting to note how the album titles are, more often than not, suggesting the avant-garde nature of the music.¹⁵ *Wherever I Go* (1959), *Looking Ahead* (1960), *Here and There* (1960), *Fire Waltz* (1960), *Free Jazz* (1960), *Out Front* (1960), *Other Aspects* (1960), *The Quest* (1961), *Where?* (1961) and *Point of Departure* (1963) are all examples of this. Dave Brubeck’s *Time Out* (1959) is one of the earliest examples of an album being marketed as “out”, there are earlier albums with the word “out” in it such as Sonny Rollins’ *Moving Out* (1954) and John Coltrane and Wilbur Harden’s *Jazz Way Out* but both these examples were not avant-garde for their eras.

Musical Outness: Influences

Dolphy’s influences were wide ranging, they included much music outside of the jazz tradition. He himself said: “Everything affects you. Every musician I’ve ever heard has influenced me.”¹⁶ Dolphy was influenced by many jazz greats, some of which include: Duke Ellington, Fats Navarro & Thelonious Monk, to whom he wrote a tribute; *Hat and Beard*. He was also heavily influenced by Charlie Parker as evidenced by his explanation of his tune *Far Cry* seen earlier. Dolphy’s friend, Wilbur Brown, said: “Dolphy was a very inside saxophone

¹⁴ Spellman, A. B. & Bob Bluementhal, *Out To Lunch liner notes*

¹⁵ Simosko, Dolphy: 43.

¹⁶ Ibid. 12.

player [in the late '40s], playing Charlie Parker kind of stuff".¹⁷ Some of the music outside of the jazz tradition that Dolphy was influenced by include the 2nd Viennese School, Ravel, Bartok, Mozart, Stravinsky, Bach and Beethoven amongst other classical composers. He was also influenced by Varèse, performing his solo flute piece *Density 21.5* at the Ojai Festival in 1962.¹⁸ One may be inclined to believe that Dolphy was influenced by Olivier Messiaen due to the fact that both used birdsongs in their music but there is no evidence of this outside of Dolphy's playing. His flute work on pieces such as *Glad To Be Unhappy* (Appendix D) and *You Don't Know What Love Is* (Appendix F) are excellent examples of this. Dolphy tells us that while he was practicing in his backyard in California:

I used to play, and the birds always used to whistle with me. I would stop what I was working on and play with the birds... Birds have notes in between our notes... Indian music has something of the same quality—different scales and quarter tones.¹⁹

He was also influenced by Indian music and Ravi Shankar.²⁰

Musical Outness: Timbre, Melody, Harmony, Form & Time

Dolphy's playing is unique in its sound and timbre due in large part to his use of squeaks, growls, cries, laughter, "vocalization"²¹ and other humanized sounds²² as well as animal sounds²³ which could all be considered "out". He even used these techniques in his arranging of John Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* (1961) album in which he also used "[w]hoops, chanting, [and] hollers".²⁴ All these elements could be considered "outside" and some critics went as far as to

¹⁷ Stewart, *Out*: 14.

¹⁸ Simosko, *Dolphy*: 68.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 13.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.* 13-14.

²² *Ibid.* 24.

²³ *Ibid.* 62.

²⁴ Horricks, *Importance*: 32.

call it “musical nonsense”.²⁵ Melodically and harmonically Dolphy used superimposition, a common characteristic of bebop. Contrary to bebop however, Dolphy’s superimpositions often abstracted the original chord instead of playing similar function chords; this had a bitonal effect. He also used 12-tone rows as in his composition *Red Planet* (Appendix E), his compositions and soloing are full of large intervallic leaps and he also used a lot of musical quotation, quoting *Pop Goes The Weasel* on multiple recordings (Appendix G). Dolphy’s chord progressions become more and more unconventional from 1960 to 1964, especially with the lack of ii-V and V of V progressions in his later works. Many of the forms of his pieces and his use of odd time signatures such as on his album *Out to Lunch*, are very unconventional (Appendix H). Dolphy also often played out (or free) of time in his solos and in his pieces such as in the bass clarinet double bass duo introduction of *Something Sweet, Something Tender* as recorded on *Out to Lunch* (1964).

Something Sweet, Something Tender; Something Out?

Something Sweet, Something Tender (Appendix I) is an interesting example of Dolphy’s musical outness, for its multi-meter, odd time signatures, 15 bar form, unusual instrumentation, unusual chord progressions as well as its often bitonal melody. Examples of bitonality in this piece include the 1st measure of the melody in which he superimposes D Lydian on a B7(#9) chord and measure 8 in which he superimposes Cmaj7(#5) and Amaj7 arpeggios over an E7 chord. The piece is also notable for its large Webern-like intervallic leaps such as the minor 9th leaps in measure 4 (Bb to B) and measure 13 (C# to D) as well as some dissonant notes such as the F natural on a C7(#11) chord in measure 11. Other than the two V of V progressions—C#7(b9)(b5) in measure 9 to C7(#11) in measure 10 (tritone substitution) and C7(#9) in measure

²⁵ Simosko, *Dolphy*: 62.

14 to F7(#9) in measure 15—the harmonic progressions in this tune are very unconventional; dominant chords resolving down a perfect 4th or up a perfect 5th (measure 13 to 14), up a chromatic step (measures 1 to 2 and 12 to 13) by thirds (measures 3 to 4, 4 to 5, 5 to 6, 8 to 9 and 11 to 12). The extensive use of chords with one or more tritone intervals—all but the Ebmin7(add11) in measure 7—make for a consistently obscure and shifting tonal center throughout the piece. The harmonic and melodic features and the use of the vibraphone as the only chord playing instrument (outside of occasional bass double stops) give the piece its feeling of floating. The free time introduction, the lack of a clearly defined steady pulse by any of the musicians until the bass clarinet solo, the use of multi-meter and the asymmetrical form also contribute to this floating feeling. All these individual aspects of the piece could be considered “out”, they were certainly avant-garde in 1964 and seeing any one of these individual elements in jazz today is still uncommon and all of them together an even greater rarity.

Musical Outness: Other Compositions

Dolphy’s earlier compositions were a little less adventurous and much more rooted in the bebop tradition than his later works but could still be described as “out” in some ways. For instance, his compositions *245* and *Serene* are 12 bar blues with some very unusual harmonic and melodic twists and turns somewhat similar to Bird’s abstraction of the 12 bar blues in *Blues For Alice*. Dolphy’s piece *Les* (Appendix J) is another weird kind of blues with a 14 bar form. The first 7 measures are typical of jazz blues harmony but the last 7 are Dolphy’s creation, again with chord progressions moving up by step chromatically. His piece *G.W.* (Appendix K) is also interesting in that it’s an AABA form with a 12 bar A section and a 6 bar B section. It also has a few Monkish minor seconds in the two horn melody.

Social Outness

Outness can be viewed as a form of epistemological othering. “According to Somers and Gibson (1994, 38), social groups often perform such constructions ‘to consolidate a cohesive self-identity and collective project.’”²⁶ As pointed out earlier in the Gridley quote, jazz purists made epistemological others out of avant-garde musicians of the 1960s and this resulted in all the new musics of this era being classified as one and the same. Critics and musicians started to define jazz by what it is not and the trend largely continues to this day.

Eric Dolphy & Ornette Coleman

This is one of the reasons writers often put Eric Dolphy in the same category as Ornette Coleman, claiming that Dolphy was an ‘apostle’ of Ornette’s.²⁷ This occurred not only in the 1960s but still today; more recently in Raymond Horricks 1989 book *The Importance of Being Eric Dolphy* in which he states: “Ornette, the movement’s founding father, had clearly demonstrated the way”.²⁸ The problem with this assumption is that, much like bebop, the early developments of Ornette and Dolphy are not recorded. Also Dolphy only got his first record as leader in 1959 whereas Ornette had his first record as leader in 1958. The fact that Ornette released a record as leader and achieved success playing his own music before Dolphy does not prove that Ornette influenced him. There are certainly similarities in Dolphy and Ornette’s music but when comparing the harmonic approach of the two one will find that Ornette uses what he has termed harmolodics (an idea that suggests harmony is created by the individual melodies of the musicians who are improvising on no predetermined chords at all) whereas Dolphy would

²⁶ Lewis, George E.. “Improvised Music after 1950: Afrological and Eurological Perspectives” *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1996): 103. (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/779379>)

²⁷ Balliet, as quoted in the liner notes of *Out There Revisited* by Joe Goldberg

²⁸ Horricks, *Importance*: 10.

improvise on chords and superimpose new ones on top of the original harmony as seen in some earlier examples. Dolphy also did some harmolodics on Ornette's *Free Jazz* (1961) as well as a chordless improvisation with Mingus a few months earlier in *What Love?* as documented on the live album *Mingus at Antibes* (1960). Dolphy tells us:

I get bugged when people compare us... I've known Ornette a long time, and we agree about a good many things. But I'm just playing myself, the same as he is. Of course, so many people aren't interested in the music, but in the person. They only talk about the person. Take Beethoven. He was supposed to be a terrible person, and the writers of his time only talked about that.²⁹

The media often seems to focus on the personality of musicians; this was not just the case in Beethoven and Dolphy's times, but it is still the case today. Reports of celebrity narcissism, substance abuse, rampages, sexcapades, bad attitudes and personal life problems seem to be the main focus of tabloid magazines and media networks. This was and to some extent still is the case with the lives of Charlie Parker, Miles Davis and John Coltrane amongst others.

Was Eric Dolphy's Personality "Out"?

Was Eric Dolphy's personality outside of the stereotypical image of musicians that is portrayed in the media? The simple answer would be yes. Clifford Solomon, who was a band mate of Dolphy's in the Roy Porter Band, tells us that:

The band was riddled with young junkies, and wine was consumed in large quantities but Eric never participated in any of this. Yet he was respected—not considered an oddball. Usually, if you don't partake with the cats, then you're almost an outcast.³⁰

Dolphy had "low-self esteem" suggesting he was far from being a self-absorbed narcissist.³¹ A friend of Dolphy's tells us that he "never spoke about himself" and that he "treated women with

²⁹ Eric Dolphy as quoted in the *Original liner notes of Out There* by Joe Goldberg

³⁰ Simosko, *Dolphy*: 33-34.

³¹ Stewart, *Out*: 12.

respect”.³² Everybody who knew Eric Dolphy considered him to be a beautiful person, regardless of their views on his music. Mingus who isn’t particularly known as a kind individual said that: “Eric Dolphy was a saint”.³³ His generosity was immense. Dolphy even gave free lessons to a private student despite his poverty because the student was also struggling financially.³⁴ Vi Redd, a friend of Dolphy’s, tells us: “I was playing a job in El Monte and I broke my own mouthpiece... I hurriedly called Eric and he came all the way out from town to bring me one I could use.”³⁵ A close friend of Dolphy’s, Richard Davis, tells us that: “Whatever money he had, he’d divide it up with musicians that didn’t have any. He’d give a job of his away to a musician who didn’t have one.”³⁶ On another occasion he says that:

Once I saw Eric with an armful of groceries and I asked him where he was going. He replied that he was on his way to deliver the groceries to some musicians who had just gotten into town and didn’t have anything to eat. I know he didn’t have any money (no work) but he did have a twenty dollar gig the night before.³⁷

When has the media ever reported on deeds of this sort? The bad deeds certainly get a disproportionate amount of media attention; perhaps this is one of the reasons Dolphy is “out” of the scope of many important works of jazz scholarship and literature in general.

Dolphy Out of Employment

All these aspects of outness lead to Dolphy being out of employment. “Freddie Hubbard, who hired Dolphy when he could, has said that some club owners told him, ‘Don’t ever bring that man here again.’”³⁸ Upon winning *Down Beat*’s International Jazz Critics’ Poll as New Star

³² Simosko *Dolphy*: 36-37.

³³ Ibid. 2.

³⁴ Ibid. 76.

³⁵ Ibid. 39.

³⁶ Stewart, *Out*: 12.

³⁷ Simosko, *Dolphy*: 76-77.

³⁸ Stewart, *Out*: 12.

on alto sax Dolphy asked: “Does this mean I’m going to get work?”³⁹ Before leaving for Europe Dolphy said: “I can get more work there playing my own music. Because if you try to do anything different in this country, people put you down for it.”⁴⁰

Did Eric Dolphy Consider Himself “Out”?

Based on the last quote, the simple answer to that question would be no. Dolphy identified with the jazz tradition as is evidenced by the large body of jazz standards he recorded as a leader and sideman (Appendix L). Some of the tunes he recorded later became jazz standards. He also used jazz forms, chord progressions, Bird style rhythm,⁴¹ licks and phrasing, swung eighths, walking basslines, double time feel and traded fours in his compositions and improvisations. One night at a club in Harlem:

Eric was heard blowing chorus after chorus... in the ... style of Tab Smith. ... ‘You can hear two hundred saxophone players around New York blowing just the same. On records it’s important I become Eric Dolphy again’⁴²

If one were obliged to identify Dolphy as belonging to a group simply based on his appearance, (Appendix M) it would most likely be bebop. “Bebop people, [Time Magazine] said, ‘like to wear berets, goatees and green-tinted horn-rimmed glasses, and talk about their ‘interesting new sounds,’”.⁴³ Dolphy certainly fits that description with his goatee, beret, and sunglasses (of which the tint is unclear in the Appendix photos) suggesting that he identified with bebop jazz musicians at least to some extent. Dolphy also was obsessed with ‘new sounds’ stating:

³⁹ Simosko, *Dolphy*: 59.

⁴⁰ Simosko, *Dolphy*: 86.

⁴¹ Mingus qtd by R. Horricks, *The Importance of Being Eric Dolphy*: 53.

⁴² Horricks, *Importance*: 31.

⁴³ Lott, “Double V”, 598.

“There’s so much to learn, and so much to try and get out. I keep hearing something else beyond what I’ve done. There’s always something else to strive for. The more I grow in my music, the more possibilities of new things I hear. It’s like I’ll never stop finding sounds I hadn’t thought existed.”⁴⁴

One of Eric’s teachers, Buddy Collette, said of Dolphy: “He was pretty outside ... He loved the outside chords, he loved being different. He loved all those strange notes to the point of being ‘out there’”⁴⁵ but Dolphy himself said:

“I think of my playing as tonal. I play notes that would not ordinarily be said to be in a given key, but I hear them as proper. I don’t think I ‘leave the changes’ as the expression goes, every note I play has some reference to the chords of the piece.”⁴⁶

Jazz critic John Tynan described the music of Eric Dolphy and John Coltrane as “horrifying... nihilistic... anarchistic... anti-jazz”⁴⁷ Trane replying to Tynan and other critics said: “they made it appear that we didn’t even know the first thing about music... it hurt me to see [Dolphy] get hurt in this thing.”⁴⁸ From these statements we can conclude that Dolphy didn’t consider his playing to be “outside” but that he was given the label by others.

Dolphy played in all sorts of jazz contexts, from Latin jazz to free jazz, from big band to bebop and from modal jazz to third stream. Eric Dolphy was part of the jazz community having recorded, toured, gigged and jammed with dozens of successful jazz musicians amongst the most successful of which include; John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, Chico Hamilton, Oliver Nelson, Freddie Hubbard, Ornette Coleman, Roy Haynes, John Lewis, Max Roach & Gunther Schuller (Check out Appendix N for a more extensive list).

⁴⁴ Horricks, *Importance*: 52.

⁴⁵ Stewart, *Out*: 15.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 11.

⁴⁷ Tynan, J. Nov. 23, 1961, *Down Beat*, 6th paragraph.

⁴⁸ Coltrane, J. qtd by Frank Kofsky in *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*: 242.

Eric Dolphy & Miles' 2nd Great Quintet

Dolphy also recorded, toured and performed with all the members that formed Miles Davis' 2nd Great Quintet except for Miles; playing with most of them before the group was formed.⁴⁹ Ron Carter's first album as a leader features Dolphy as a main soloist.⁵⁰ Carter says that: "I came to New York in 1959... with Chico Hamilton... Eric Dolphy... Dennis Budimir... We made a record for Warner Bros, that was so far out they never released it."⁵¹ Britt Woodman tells us that, like many jazz musicians in the '60s; 'Eric had gone with the idea of trying to get into the Miles Davis combo.'⁵² It is interesting that Dolphy was not invited to play for Miles considering how his music had such a large impact on the music of the quintet. Even Miles admits this, although he speaks unfavourably of Dolphy's playing:

[Tony] liked musicians who made mistakes, like being out of key. ... I want to clear up the story about me wanting to get Eric Dolphy in my band... Eric was a beautiful guy as far as his personality went, but I never liked his playing. He could play; I just didn't like the way he played. A lot of people loved it; I know Trane did, and Herbie, Ron, and Tony did, too. When George quit, Tony did bring up Eric's name, but I didn't even consider him seriously. ... Eric played 'like somebody was standing on his foot.'⁵³

Herbie Hancock tells us that playing with Dolphy:

was the first time that I had worked in what was considered an avant-garde group. I remember when Eric hired me, to play with his group, I had no idea what he was doing. So I was surprised to find that when we rehearsed that he had music... with chord symbols and everything... But I knew the musicians weren't playing it as written... So I asked Eric. 'What do you want me to play?' and he said, 'Oh, play anything that you want to play.' I thought about that and said to myself, 'Maybe if I break some of the rules that I have about playing, I can get a little farther out.' And that worked. I started breaking the rules with melody, harmony and rhythm. I kept my normal thing as a

⁴⁹ Simosko, *Dolphy*: 157-178.

⁵⁰ Carter, R., *Where?* (1961)

⁵¹ Ron Carter as quoted by Simosko, *Dolphy*: 42.

⁵² Britt Woodman quoted by Horricks, *Importance*: 28.

⁵³ Davis, *Autobiography*: 268-269.

foundation, in my head, so what people would hear was mostly the breaking of the rules, well, stretching them. After that, I was able to incorporate what I learned with Eric with ... other bands, including Miles.”⁵⁴

Does the “Out” Label Correspond With Dolphy’s Musical Philosophy?

Dolphy’s own thoughts on music show that he had an unquenchable thirst to learn everything that he could about it in all its forms and styles.^{55 56} He was looking outside of the established traditions for a creative way to express himself musically. He felt that “Music is a reflection of everything”⁵⁷ and that “jazz is like part of living, like walking down the street and reacting to what you see and hear. And whatever I do react to, I can say immediately in my music.”⁵⁸ He didn’t enjoy being pigeonholed by labels, when asked about one of his projects he said:

It’s just music... and it’s good music. I wish people would quit saying jazz musician, and just say musician. If you can play jazz, you can play other things. There's so much good music that isn't being heard. Schonberg and Berg and Bartok and Webern, they're just beginning to be heard. And so many other things that haven't been heard at all⁵⁹

Shortly before he died, Dolphy stated: “I enjoy playing all kind of ways... music, regardless of what ... label we put on [it], it's basically music, and basically it's creative”.⁶⁰

Conclusion

Outness is ultimately a construction and it’s not one that Dolphy used to describe himself or his music. Some may categorize Dolphy as an Afrofuturist based on the surrealist covers of *Outward Bound* and *Out There*. However I think Dolphy would not have used such a label; he

⁵⁴ Herbie Hancock qtd by Stewart, *Out*: 12.

⁵⁵ Horricks, *Importance*: 52.

⁵⁶ Dolphy qtd in *Out There liner notes* by Joe Goldberg

⁵⁷ Simosko, *Dolphy*: 67.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 24.

⁵⁹ Dolphy qtd in *Out There original liner notes* by Joe Goldberg

⁶⁰ Dolphy qtd in All Things Dolphy!!! At allaboutjazz.com

<http://forums.allaboutjazz.com/showthread.php?t=30638>

preferred to think of his music as: “just music”. The label of “out” is used in many different ways; David Such asserts that the “out” label is derived from expressions such as ‘far out’ and ‘out of this world’⁶¹. Mark Levine describes playing ‘outside’ as bitonality but aptly indicates that what is ‘outside’ is subjective. Tone, pitch, time, extended techniques, notes that are outside of a given scale or chord along with almost any musical parameter can be considered “out”.

The problem with labelling someone’s music as “out” (or any label for that matter) is that labelling is often done by people who are not involved in the creation of the music that is being labelled. This is the case when jazz “purists” identify jazz by what it is not as was done in the 1960s and is still done to this day. Ken Burns *Jazz* (2000) is: “exclusionary... Relatively little attention is given to jazz trends since the 1960s that lie outside the musical mainstream.”⁶² This outness is a form of epistemological othering that creates a polarized false paradigm having major social, cultural and economic repercussions, many of them negative for creative musicians who are seeking to discover new sounds and trail-blaze into their own idioms.

Jazz has been polarized into two different schools by purists, there’s (traditional) jazz— basically all jazz before 1960, bebop, swing/big band, ragtime, New Orleans jazz, etc—and all the “other stuff” that is “outside” of jazz according to purists—basically jazz after 1960: “world” music, fusion, free jazz, jazz rap/hip hop, funk, avant-garde jazz, third stream, etc—but it is interesting that many of the elements in the music of the purist school were once “out” and can still be thought of as “out”. For instance, bebop musicians use a lot of notes “outside” of a scale or chord (typically chromatic passing tones). Similarly, it is odd that Dizzy’s collaboration with Chano Pozo is considered “in” but “world” music is considered “out” of jazz.

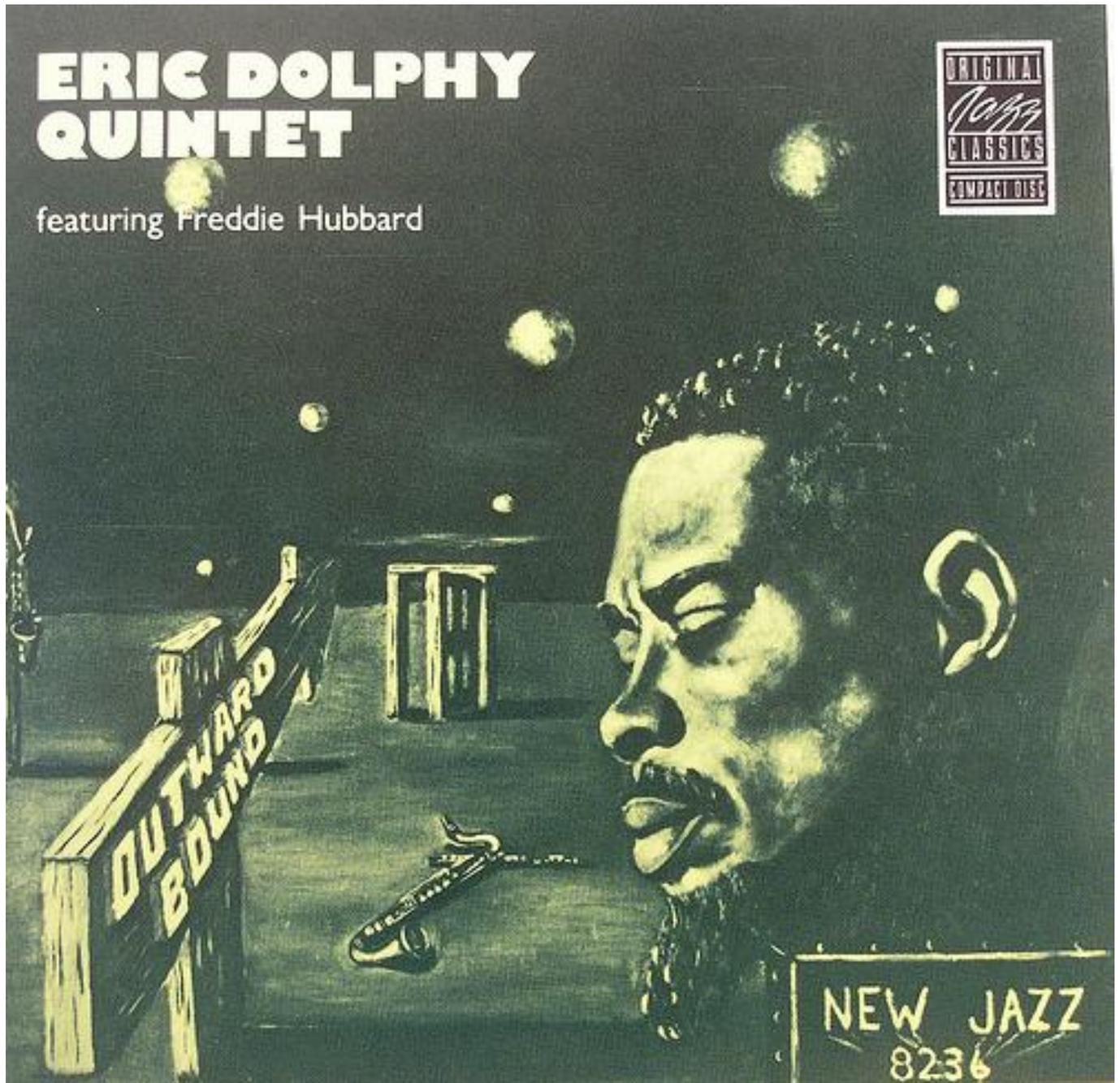
⁶¹ Such, D. G., *Avant-garde Jazz Musicians Performing ‘Out There’: 2*.

⁶² Stewart, Jesse. “Freedom Music: Jazz and Human Rights.” In *Rebel Musics*, eds Fischlin and Heble. (2003): 91.

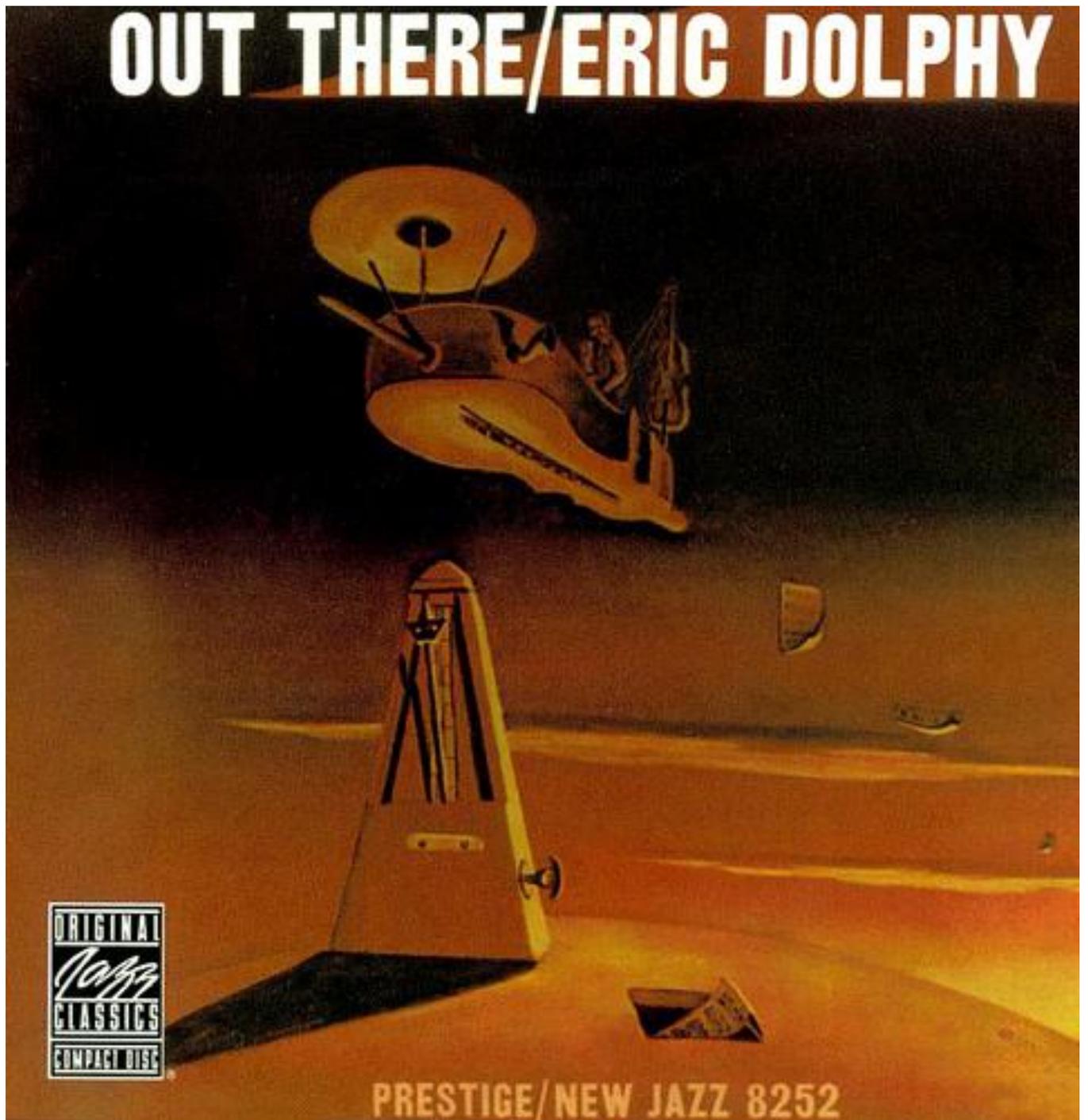
Humans have categorized and labelled things into groups based on their patterns for millennia and there are many advantages to this. However, sometimes the wrong patterns are considered criteria for labelling things as belonging to a certain category or as being “outside” of them. When categorizing, it is important to highlight differences as much as similarities of whatever is being labelled as the differences are what make it individual. Dolphy’s music is still “outside of the musical mainstream” today but outness, like avant-garde, is not necessarily the polar opposite of the mainstream. All styles of music were avant-garde at some point; it is only once they are imitated and emulated in mass that they become mainstream. Deciding when avant-garde (“out”) becomes mainstream (“in”) is problematic. Dolphy was in the mainstream jazz community of his era, he played popular jazz standards, performed with some of the most acclaimed jazz musicians of all time and was often written about in jazz magazines like *Down Beat*.⁶³ However it is his outness that caused his rejection by a large part of the jazz community. Perhaps it is his creative spirit, his driving dedication, his generosity and/or his humble kind nature that made him “out”, regardless those are the traits of his that we can learn and grow from the most.

⁶³ Knauer, Wolfram. Jazz Index: Eric Dolphy <http://www.jazzinstitut.de/us.htm>

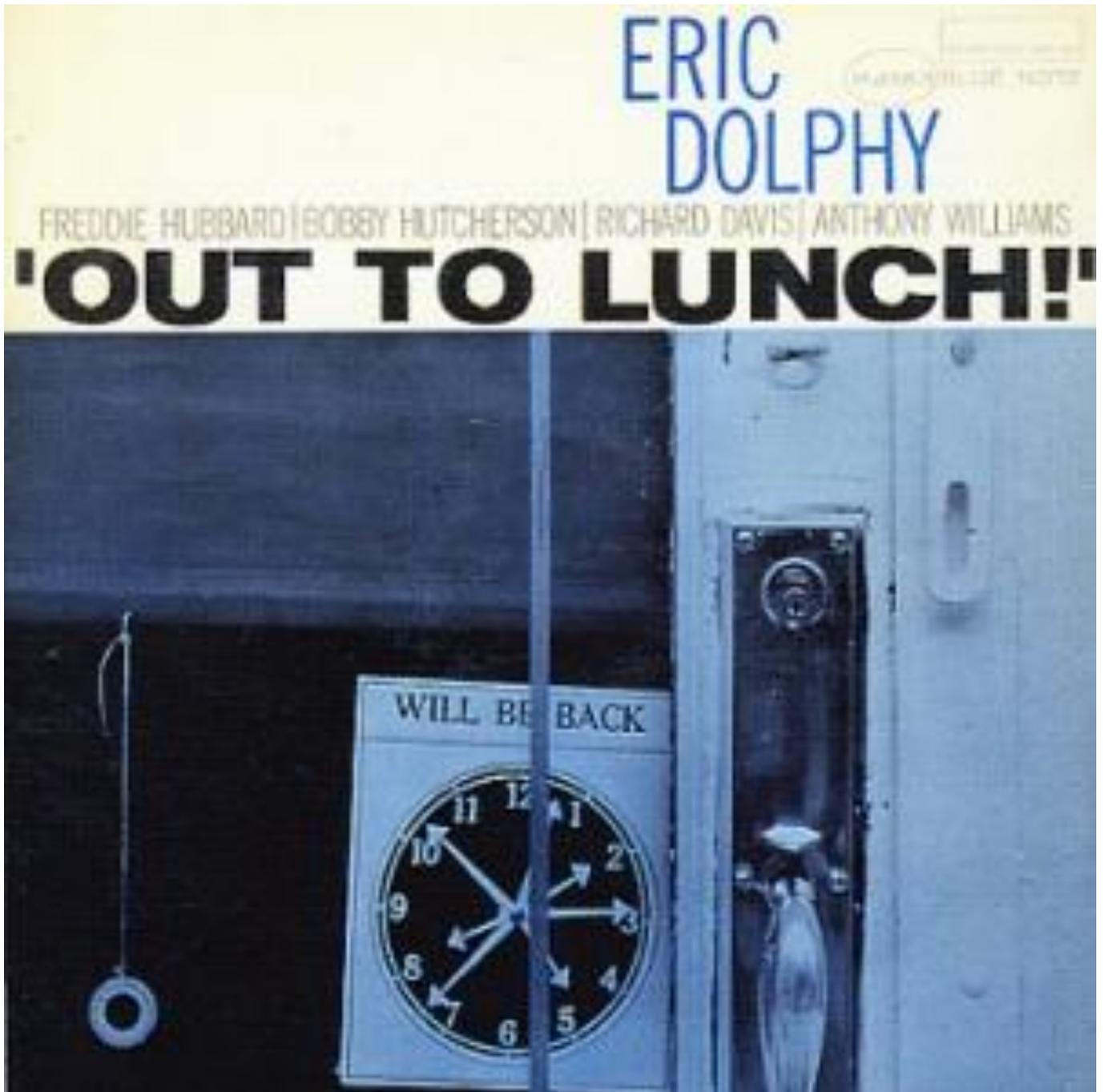
Appendix A



Appendix B



Appendix C



Appendix D

Bird sounds from middle of measure 70 to first note of measure 72 as recorded on *Glad To Be Unhappy* in *Outward Bound* (1960). Approximately 5:07 to 5:14 on the recording or middle of first measure to first note of third measure in this transcription excerpt. Transcribed by Robert Duboff and Travis Sullivan in *The Eric Dolphy Collection*: 25.

A musical transcription of bird sounds from the recording 'Glad To Be Unhappy' on the album 'Outward Bound' (1960). The transcription is presented in three staves of music. The first staff shows a sequence of notes with chords Em, Dm, Dm/C, and Bbm. The second staff continues the sequence with chords Am, Gm, F, and Em7, including a triplet of notes. The third staff shows a melodic line with various accidentals and a final chord. The transcription is set in a key with one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature.

Appendix E

Opening melody of Red Planet (Miles' Mode) is a 12-tone row followed by its retrograde (first 4 bars only). Note: this transcription is for Bb instruments.

A handwritten musical transcription of the opening melody of 'Red Planet' (Miles' Mode). The transcription is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The melody is labeled 'A C#-7 DORIAN'. The first staff shows the 12-tone row, and the second staff shows its retrograde. The transcription includes various accidentals and dynamics markings.

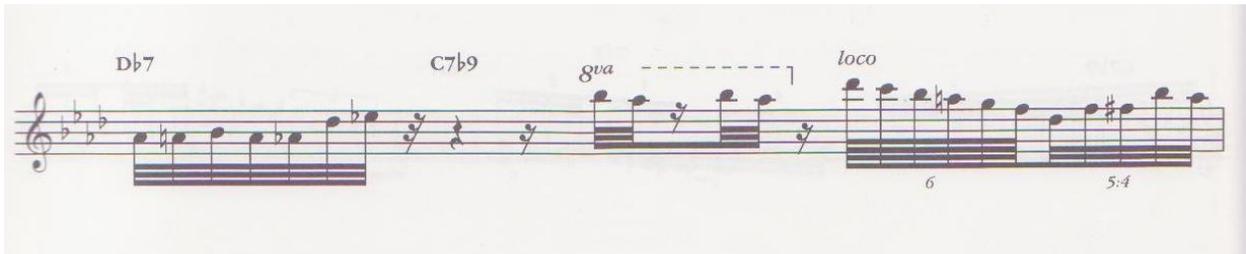
Appendix F

Some examples of bird sounds in *You Don't Know What Love Is* as recorded on *Last Date* (1964). Excerpts from transcription by Robert Duboff and Travis Sullivan in *The Eric Dolphy Collection*.

Measure 41 (p.138)



Measure 43 (p.138) (8va = bird sounds)



Measure 47-48 (p.139) (trill = bird sounds)



Appendix G

A few examples of Dolphy making musical quotes: melodically and/or rhythmically. (Note: Any time indications are approximate.)

Pop Goes The Weasel:

- In *Speak Low* on *Hot & Cool Latin* (1959) at 3:00.
- In *Laura* on *Eric Dolphy in Europe Volume 2* (1961) at 2:07, at 5:54 & at 12:20.
- In *Glad To Be Unhappy* on *Eric Dolphy in Europe Volume 2* (1961) at 5:40.
- In Ron Carter's *Rally* on *Where?* (1961) at 2:56.
- In *Hot House* on *Berlin Concerts* (1961) at 1:52.
- In *Red Planet* on *The Illinois Concert* (1963) at 3:37.
- In Andrew Hill's *Refuge* on *Point of Departure* (1964) at 3:50.

Woody Woodpecker

- In *The Way You Look Tonight* on *Eric Dolphy in Europe Volume 2* (1961) at 8:52.

William Tell Overture: Finale by Giachino Rossini

- In *Springtime* on Eric Dolphy's *Naima* (1964) at 11:15 & at 14:05.

Unknown piece

- In *Warp and Woof* on Mal Waldron's *The Quest* (1961) at 3:31.

Appendix H

Out to Lunch (1964) time signatures and form

Hat and Beard = 9/4 (A section), strophic form.

Something Sweet, Something Tender = (see Appendix I)

Gazzelloni = 8 bars of 4 (A section), 5 bars of 4 (B section), ABAB form.

Out to lunch = 4 bars of 4 (drum intro), 8 bars of 4 + 1 bar of 5 (A section),

Straight up and Down = 5 bars of 4 (A section), 3 bars of 4 (B section), AAB form.

Appendix I

Something Sweet, Something Tender

Ballad
♩ = 62

Eric Dolphy

Chords: B7(#9), Cm7(b5), Db7, E7, Db7(b9), F7, Ebm7(add 11), E7, C#7(b9), C7(#11), C7(#11), E7(b9), F9, C7(#9), F7(#9)

Appendix J

4 bars
C instruments

LES

ERIC DOL
PHY

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| F7 ALT | Bb7 ALT | F7 ALT | / |
| Bb7 | B0 | F7 | Bb-7 Gb7 |
| G-7 C7 | Ab-7 Db7#5 | A-7 D7 | G7 ALT |
| | | C Db/C | D E/C Eb/C |

Appendix K

© **G. W.** FOR GERALD WILSON ERIC DOLPHY

A

Ab7 Ab7 Ab7 Ab7

Db7 B13b5(add b9) Gb7sus4 Bb7/F

Eb7 Eb7/Db

B

B7b5 Bb7 B7b5 Bb7

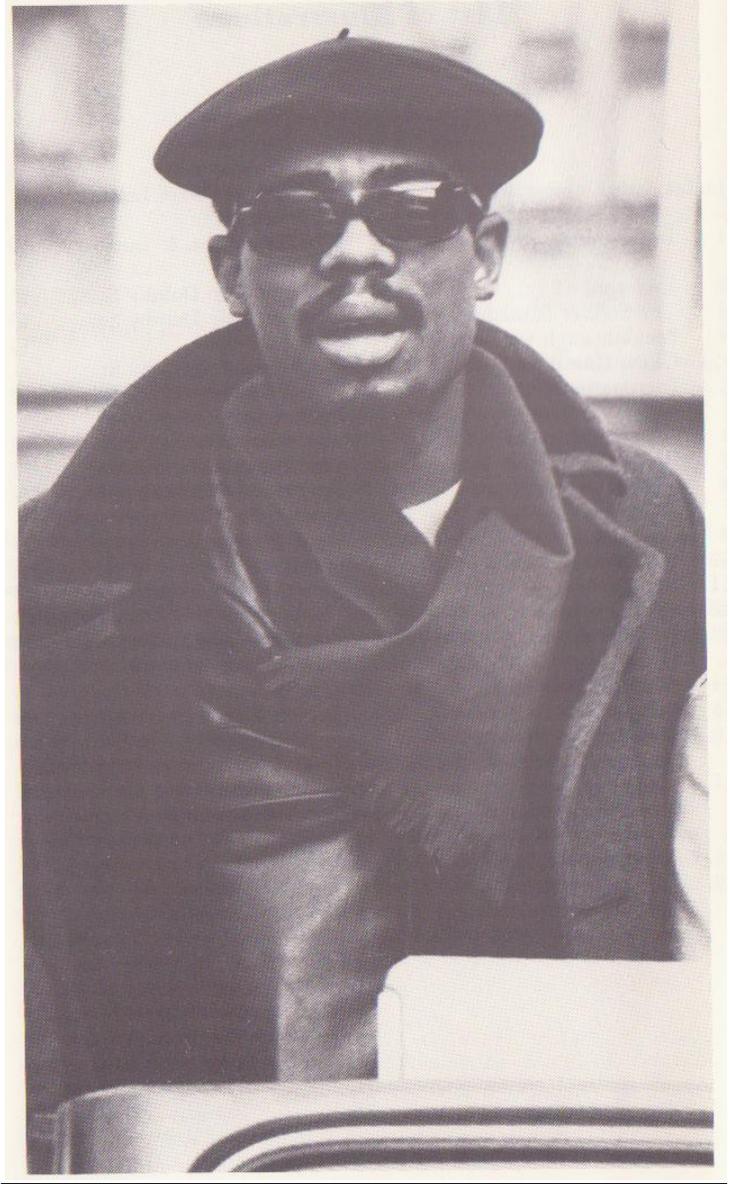
B7b5 Bb7 Ab7 FORM: AABA

Appendix L

Some Jazz Standards Recorded by Dolphy (extracted from the Tune Index in Simosko & Tepperman's *Eric Dolphy: A Musical Biography & Discography, revised edition*): 147-156.

- Afternoon in Paris
- Alone Together
- Bags' Groove
- Better Get Hit in Your Soul
- Blue Monk
- Blue Train
- Body & Soul
- Come Sunday
- Day Dream
- Don't Blame Me
- Donna Lee
- Epistrophy
- Fables of Faubus
- Glad to Be Unhappy
- God Bless the Child
- Goodbye Pork Pie Hat (Theme for Lester Young)
- Green Dolphin Street
- Groovin' High
- Hot House
- I Got it Bad and That Ain't Good
- I Got Rhythm
- I Wish I Were in Love Again
- I'll Remember April
- I'm Beginning to See the Light
- If I should Lose You
- If You Could See Me Now
- Impressions
- In a Mellotone
- In a Sentimental Mood
- India
- Jitterbug Waltz
- Lady Be Good
- Laura
- Left Alone
- Like Someone in Love
- Lover
- Miss Ann
- Mood Indigo
- Mr. P.C.
- My Favorite Things
- Naima
- Nardis
- Night In Tunisia
- Oleo
- Ornithology
- Out of Nowhere
- 'Round Midnight
- Skylark
- Softly as in a Morning Sunrise
- Sophisticated Lady
- Speak Low
- Spring is Here
- Stolen Moments
- Tain't Nobody's Bizness...
- Take the A Train
- Tenderly
- The Way You Look Tonight
- There is No Greater Love
- They All Laughed
- What Is This Thing Called Love?
- When Lights Are Low
- Woody'n You
- You Are Too Beautiful
- You Don't Know What Love Is

Appendix M



Appendix N

A Few Successful Jazz Musicians That Dolphy Recorded, Toured and/or Performed With:

(For more extensive list look at Simosko & Tepperman, *Eric Dolphy: A Musical Biography & Discography*: 157-178.)

- John Coltrane
- Charles Mingus
- Chico Hamilton
- Oliver Nelson
- Freddie Hubbard
- Ornette Coleman
- Roy Haynes
- John Lewis
- Max Roach
- Gunther Schuller
- Mal Waldron
- Booker Little
- Bud Powell
- Jaki Byard
- Bill Evans
- Wes Montgomery
- George Russell
- Paul Chambers
- Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis
- Kenny Dorham
- David Baker
- Don Cherry
- Richard Davis
- Bobby Hutcherson
- Ed Blackwell
- George Duvivier
- Booker Ervin
- Don Ellis
- Art Farmer
- Joe Farrell
- Tommy Flanagan
- Jimmy Garrison
- Curtis Fuller
- Benny Golson
- Jim Hall
- Coleman Hawkins
- Sonny Rollins
- Joe Henderson
- Andrew Hill
- Philly Jo Jones
- Thad Jones
- Woody Shaw
- Steve Swallow
- Art Taylor
- Clark Terry
- McCoy Tyner
- Elvin Jones
- Phil Woods
- Reggie Workman

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