Accidental Discovery, Intentional Inquiry: Leveraging Linked Data to Uncover the Women of Jazz

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DH2015  
Sydney, July 3, 2015
OVERVIEW

Context: Linked Jazz
Collect gender data
Prep for music data mashups
Sam Rivers
D = Darryl Duncan & Sam Rivers
D Good afternoon, here we are. This is an interview for the Afro-American music collection. My name is Darryl Duncan and I'm interviewing Mr. Sam Rivers. Today is March 26, 1988.

Mr. Sam Rivers, you have been a saxophonist of note and it's really a pleasure for me to be here talking with you. I thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be here.

D Especially from my musical perspective. First, could you tell us something about your musical training and how you got started as a saxophonist? I got started as a saxophonist rather late, but the musical training goes back to practically birth. My father and mother are both musicians. My grandfather and his two sisters were musicians. Just about all relatives play some sort of musical instrument.

D You come from a musical family. Yes, I would say. My mother is a music teacher and I got started studying the piano around four or five something like that in Chicago. I was born in Alvino, Oklahoma. My father and mother were travelling - we were on tour with the Silver Tones Quartet. My father was the first tenor and my mother was the accompanist, so I was born on the road and they were out of Chicago so Alvino, Oklahoma which it say on the birth certificate was a stop on a tour. So, we lived in Chicago. My mother took a job in Shorter College in south Little Rock when I was seven so maybe ten so I came up on the campus and went to Catholic school in Little Rock.

D I've always read on liner notes and things like that that Sam Rivers is from Boston. When did you end up in Boston and what would you say about Boston that could be called a brand of your musical identity? The Boston kind of sound? I'm from Boston after I had completed the military service. I was in the Navy for WWII and after that, I went to Boston to study at the Conservatory. At the time, I think it was a fortunate choice. I had a choice between New York or Boston and I chose Boston to further my musical growth, but I was already a musician before I went into the Navy. I wasn't in the band and there were some other grades I shook. I liked navigating and I also went to a motion picture editing school and edited films for the Navy. The musical career was already in progress. I decided to go to Boston to study more. Fortunately, at that time there were quite a few musicians that went on to greater things that were all there together. Archie Shepp, Gil Evans, Quincy Jones, Alan Dawson, Nat Pierce, Charlie Mariano and many more that I'm sure I'm missing. Frank Kidd, an alto player that was very advanced for his time. I remember his sound like Eric Dolphy in the late fifties. Everyone was laughing, of course, and stretching their chins. I remember those kinds of situations. There were always these kinds of musicians around that went past the accepted bounds. When they did, they weren't accepted as all there or a bit eccentric but never really taken seriously until the late fifties like Armente Coleman.

D So you would say that these types of influences early in your career can be accounted for as the heavy influence on your progressive style - your forward looking style? I think all the influences certainly - we're all sponges you know if we're open enough, people that are not open get it anyway, we don't remember where we got it from but we
I think what Im trying to highlight here is that youre composing, so, several compositions, but well talk about that later in the interview, your process of composition, et cetera. But the fact that you know, you have several originals on this session, so....

Yeah, right. I think its, I started writing because, when I came to Boston I used to, of course, I used to go every night to listen, and in those days like, uh, even the big bands, like Duke's band or Count Basie band, would stay for two weeks, you know, at a club. You cant think of that today, but.... I was always sitting in, I decided that when I, if somebody asked me to sit in, I was going to sit in. You know, I decided that. So, I used to sit in with, Max Roach, would let me sit in. Miles Davis would let me sit in, so on, so on. So... but Diz had a big band in those days, and Phil Woods was, I think, lead alto, and uh, Melba Liston was playing trombone. Anyway, uh, I was sitting in, playing, and I heard, Bud Powell! Bud Powell! " When I played people said, "Aw, shes Bud Powell! Shes Bud Powell! " And I started thinking, I said, "I guess thats no good, I have to, you know, to try to find my own idiosyncrasy. " One of the things I started writing, one of the things that, I think, thats the reason I started writing, to develop my own idiosyncrasy. So writing was something I was never interested in before.
Identify the relationships among jazz artists and represent them as Linked Open Data.
MINTING MISSING NAMES

Sample of 54 interview transcripts

→ 219 name instances/URIs missing from DBpedia and minted

→ 25 out of 219 (11%) minted URIs referred to women.

These individuals were mentioned in our oral histories, but missing from major encyclopedic knowledge bases (Wikipedia and MusicBrainz) or massive repositories of bibliographic name authorities (LC/NAF and VIAF).
MORPHOLOGY OF LINKED DATA AS RESEARCH CLUE

The bare data encoding, which is provided by the URI syntax

<http://linkedjazz.org/resource/Lynn_Grissett>

revealed aspects of the data worthy of further investigation and suggests **threads to new lines of inquiry through the lens of linked open data:**

Women in Jazz
MINING DBPEDIA TO COLLECT GENDER DATA

MusicBrainz ID from DBpedia

DBpedia dcterms:subject: matched for gender on “Female_jazz_musicians”

VIAF ID from DBpedia

URI used to query Akiyoshi data

<http://dbpedia.org/resource/Toshiko_Akiyoshi>
MINING DBPEDIA TO COLLECT GENDER DATA

MusicBrainz ID from DBpedia

DBpedia dcterms:subject: matched for gender on "Female_jazz_musicians"

VIAF ID from DBpedia

URI used to query Akiyoshi data
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Oral History Data

Artist, Discography, and Session Data

Performance [concert] Data
Mary Lou Williams

When Norman Granz arranged the concert with the- was it the New York Philharmonic?

Yes, the Philharmonic, I didn’t finish that. Milton Ornitz was helping me with the arrangements. There was four of the “Zodiac Suite”. So he had a gig coming up Saturday that he had forgotten about. It was an important gig, like he was the leader, and he had to go up in the country to play bass. So he said, “Pussy Cat” - that was my nickname then - “I can’t finish the arrangements.” I said, “Oh, goodness, I’ll finish them myself,” I did “Scorpio”. He was so surprised. I had never written for a symphony in my life. About 7 o’clock in the evening after I had finished, David Stone Martin - you remember him? - he came here and I said, “David Stone Martin, I can’t write for WILLIAMS a symphony. I don’t know what I’m going to do. I need another tune.” He said, “Oh, darling, you can do it. Go ahead, darling,” and he kept saying that until I got on the floor and I started writing and I finished off “Scorpio.” All of a sudden I decided I wanted them to play a blues. So I sat there and I made up a blues. I heard a record - I didn’t copy all of Charlie Parker’s solo but I said I better give them a pop thing because I’m going to give it to 36 violins. It was 100 pieces. So I wrote this blues and David Stone Martin said, “How you doing?” He sat with me all night, I sat there - it took me from 7 o’clock till 11 o’clock and my rehearsal was at 12, because I copied all the parts on the blues. So when I took all my arrangements in, Mr. Ripp was there, the manager of the Carnegie, and I was afraid to pass the blues out. So I had the girl to rehearse just the “Zodiac Suite”. When someone called Mr. Ripp to the phone I said, “Wait a minute, wait a minute, I gave you the wrong arrangement. Here, this one.” So I passed it out fast while he was away and they played it and the musicians went wild. They never played anything like that before. I’ve seen them in the last two or three years and they say, “When are you going to write something else like that for the Symphony?” “I had them doing a boogie thing and they play a blues on it. I had no difficulty in teaching them how to phrase it or do it. Yeah, 36 violins, they stood up and played this kind of a boopish chorus. WILLIAMS

When was the concert?

The concert was either that night or a couple of days later.

What year was this, do you remember?

“1946”

1946. At Carnegie Hall?

And what reaction was there to “Zodiac Suite”?

Terrific. I don’t remember the public but the musicians applauded more than anybody. They stood up and applauded.

Was there any interest in recording it then?

Yes, but somebody stole it. Someone stole that recording and somebody stole the recording of the concert that Barney did for me at Town Hall.
Using data from transcripts processed on Linked Jazz to explore data from other resources
"Mary Lou Williams" (foaf:Person)

"female" (foaf:gender)

"1910-05-08" (schema:birthDate)

"1981-05-28" (schema:deathDate)

"Durham, North Carolina" (schema:birthPlace)

"piano" (mo:PrimaryInstrument)

SESSION
( mo:Performance)

(RECORDING
( mo:Release)

SESSION
( mo:Performance)

(CARNegie HALL
(event:Event)

"MainHall"
(event:Place)

"Carnegie Pop Concert"
(event:Event)

"Mary Lou Williams" (piano)
(mo:Performer)

"Zodiac Suite"
(rdf:label)

"Ann Kullmer"
(conductor)
(mo:Performer)

"Zodiac Suite: Scorpio"
(mo:MusicalWork)

"Zodiac Suite: Sagittarius"
(mo:MusicalWork)

"Zodiac Suite: Aquarius"
(mo:MusicalWork)

"1946"
(dcterm:Date)
“Mary Lou Williams”
( foaf:Person )

“female”
( foaf:gender )

“1910-05-08”
( schema:birthDate )

“1981-05-28”
( schema:deathDate )

“Durham, North Carolina”
( schema:birthPlace )

“piano”
( mo:PrimaryInstrument )

SESSION
( mo:Performance )

( . . . )
( mo:Performance )

RECORDING
( mo:Release )

( . . . )
( mo:Release )

J-DISC

CARNEGIE HALL

“Carnegie Hall”
( event:Place )

“Zodiac Suite”
( rdf:label )

“Mary Lou Williams”
( mo:Composer )

“1946”
( dcterms:date )

“Carnegie Pop Concert”
( event:Event )

“MainHall”
( event:Place )

“Mary Lou Williams”
( piano )
( mo:Performer )

“Ann Kullmer”
( conductor )
( mo:Performer )

“Zodiac Suite: Scorpio”
( mo:MusicalWork )

“Zodiac Suite: Sagittarius”
( mo:MusicalWork )

“Zodiac Suite: Aquarius”
( mo:MusicalWork )

( dcterms:date )
( event:Place )
( mo:MusicalWork )
( mo:Performer )
( mo:Composer )
( mo:Label )
( mo:Track )
( mo:Record )
THANK YOU!

Questions?

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