

## THE COLD WAR, JAZZ, AND TURKEY

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### CULTURAL EXCHANGE<sup>1</sup>

When Diz blew, the riots were routed

People danced and they cheered and shouted

The headlines bannered the hour as his

They dropped their stones and they rocked with Diz.

That's what we call cultural exchange

Yeah! I remember when Diz was in Greece back in '56

He did a good job we started sending jazz all over the world.

The State Department has discovered jazz

It reaches folks like nothing ever has.

Like when they feel the jazzy rhythm

They know we're really with 'em. That's what we call cultural exchange.

No commodity is quite so strange as this thing called cultural exchange

Say that our prestige needs a tonic export the Philharmonic,

That's what we call cultural exchange!

We put "Oklahoma" in Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> "Cultural Exchange" is a song that displays the outline and purpose of the early jazz tours organized by the U.S. State Department during the Cold War. Lyrics are written by Iola & Dave Brubeck, and music is composed by Dave Brubeck, a song from the album *The Real Ambassadors*, recorded on 19 September 1961. Source: [www.satchmoz.at/wagnleitner\\_paper\\_english.htm](http://www.satchmoz.at/wagnleitner_paper_english.htm). Also see, Penny M. Von Eschen. *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 81.

“South Pacific” we gave to Iran.

And when all our neighbors call us vermin

We send out Woody Herman

That’s what we call cultural exchange

Gershwin gave the Muscovites a thrill (with Porgy and Bess)

Bernstein was the darling of Brazil (and isn’t he hip?)

And just to stop internal mayhem

We dispatch Martha Graham

That’s what we call cultural exchange. . . .

## PRELUDE

Jazz was created by African-Americans in New Orleans at the turn of the twentieth century, and from the start, it was associated with ideas about freedom as it was a response to oppression. Since the 1920s, its voice of freedom has been taken up also by white Americans, and later, by musicians from all around the world. Turkish drummer Durul Gence indicates that jazz is a way to express himself in pure freedom.<sup>2</sup> American critic Willis Conover defines jazz as “a cross between total discipline and total anarchy. The musicians agree on tempo, key and chord structure but beyond this everyone is free to express himself.”<sup>3</sup> Considered vulgar and lowbrow during its early years, jazz became popular among mainstream audiences during

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<sup>2</sup> A popular Turkish drummer, and an instructor of history of jazz in the Middle East Technical University, born in 1940. Interview with Durul Gence, by the author. 14 March 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Penny M. Von Eschen, “The Voice of America (VOA) radio broadcasts by Leonard Feather and Willis Conover helped to lay groundwork for the emergence of the jazz ambassadors,” *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 13, 17.

the 1930s, and by World War II, the inventiveness and musicianship of its practitioners was garnering praise from serious music critics and listeners. According to Penny M. Von Eschen,

African American soldiers who remained in Europe after World War I and World War II created the first European and international audiences for jazz. [...] Buoyed by the energy of expatriates, the jazz scene of Paris and other European cities received a boost from the steady increase in the circulation of jazz records and in the number of concert and club tours by American jazz groups.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1950s, after its rise to world-wide recognition, jazz became part of the cultural competition between the United States (U.S.) and the Soviet Union, another tool in America's Cold War arsenal. The State Department sponsored jazz tours through the Middle East, Asia, and Europe as part of "cultural exchange," constituted a significant aspect of Cold War diplomacy. "Aiming to spread jazz globally in order to win converts to 'the American way of life,'" Von Eschen writes, "proponents of the tours cited the popularity of jazz in Europe to make their case."

#### COLD WAR DIPLOMACY AND JAZZ

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union pointed to the racism in American life, including "Jim Crow" laws that divided the races and restrained African Americans from exercising their full legal rights as citizens. Jazz tours were seen as a way to show the opportunities open to African Americans, and to demonstrate American cultural egalitarianism to Third World nations. In addition, as a part of its strategy to "win the hearts and minds" of European and Middle Eastern people, the State Department also hoped to counter the cultural dominance of the European countries and the Soviet Union in the fields of

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<sup>4</sup> Von Eschen, 7-8.

orchestral music and ballet by promoting what Duke Ellington had called, “America’s classical music.”<sup>5</sup>

Apart from the State Department’s motives, jazz musicians themselves were happy to join the effort as “jam-bassadors.” One reason for the willingness of African American musicians to travel and play on behalf of their country was the spirit of patriotism that marked the Eisenhower and Kennedy years. The musicians said they saw the tours as a way to support their nation in the “global battle for freedom.” And since jazz was still considered by many as vulgar race music, the players considered this official support of a black art form as a major accomplishment both for the music itself and for the cause of civil rights. They would not only receive national recognition at home, but also be able to spread their music to other continents and share it with foreign musicians of various cultures and races.

Given their own motivations, the musicians did not see themselves as mouthpieces for the State Department. Instead, they saw the tours as an opportunity to advance their own musical and racial perspectives. The second “jam-bassador” of the U.S., Dizzy Gillespie, explained, “I sort of liked the idea of representing America, but I wasn’t going to apologize for the racist policies of America. [...] I’ve got three hundred years of briefing. I know what they’ve done to us and I’m not going to make any excuses.”<sup>6</sup>

“America’s secret weapon is a blue note in a minor key,” wrote the New York Times’s Felix Belair on the eve of the first tour in 1955. Its headliner was Louis Armstrong, “Ambassador Satch,” who Belair called the country’s “most effective ambassador.”<sup>7</sup> After the success of Armstrong’s tour, Dizzy Gillespie traveled to the Middle East the following year. The Benny Goodman Orchestra toured South East Asia in 1957, and finally, the Dave Brubeck Orchestra visited the Middle East and Poland.

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<sup>5</sup> Von Eschen, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Von Eschen, 29-30, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Von Eschen, 10.

Gillespie, the second “jam-bassador,” also received a positive reception from audiences and critics. Marshall Stearns quoted a European composer who claimed, “Jazz is one of America’s best-loved *artistic* exports.” So, according to Stearns, Gillespie was successful in making friends for the U.S., as well as overcoming the lowbrow cultural stereotypes attached to jazz.<sup>8</sup> Stearns wrote:

When Ike got Dizzy, he got a lot more than he bargained for. The State Department tours illuminated connections and collisions between domestic and foreign policies, and between race, nation and modernism. The immediate success of the tours testified to the newfound importance of jazz, but vociferous opposition to the tours indicated deep fissures within the nation.<sup>9</sup>

After his 1956 trip, Gillespie retired from his position as jazz ambassador for the next fourteen years.<sup>10</sup> In 1957, Benny Goodman, the King of Swing, took the baton. Goodman, of Jewish ancestry, traveled for seven weeks through Thailand, Singapore, Malaya, Cambodia, Burma, Hong Kong, South Korea and Japan. The issue of race had been prominent in the minds of many in his audiences, which he attributed to propaganda and tended to discount.

I was constantly asked by the press over there about the colored people here. They were quite concerned. I guess they had been fed a lot of Communist propaganda. . . . I really didn’t have anything particular to say, other than that we’ve had colored musicians in the band for twenty-five years. That was probably more than enough to offset what they’d been hearing from the other side.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Stearns was a jazz critic and the president of the Institute of Jazz Studies in the Rutgers University, who also served as a member of the State Department’s music selection committee. Von Eschen, 27, 39.

<sup>9</sup> Von Eschen, 25-26.

<sup>10</sup> Von Eschen, 43.

<sup>11</sup> Von Eschen, 44-45.

Unlike the black musicians who took the ambassadorial tour to Europe and the Middle East, not only to help spread American culture, but for their own purpose of pushing for racial equality, Goodman was a cultural ambassador who was declaring to the world that America had achieved a victory over racism.<sup>12</sup>

In 1958, the last ambassadors of the 1950s, Dave Brubeck and his Quartet, all of white European ancestry, toured East Germany and other Iron Curtain countries, as well as Poland, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Ceylon. (For the first time, the State Department provided no escort officer.) Brubeck later observed that “whenever there was a dictatorship in Europe, jazz was outlawed. And whenever freedom returned to those countries, the playing of jazz accompanied it.”<sup>13</sup> At the time, jazz was banned in East Germany,<sup>14</sup> as it had been in the Soviet Union before and during the Cold War years. In 1959, just before the U.S. and the Soviet Union came to the brink of nuclear war, the Soviet Union overturned its ban on jazz and agreed to allow an American tour of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) in 1961.<sup>15</sup>

In 1963, under President John F. Kennedy, the Duke Ellington Orchestra was sent on a three-month jazz tour, which included performances in Syria, Jordan, Afghanistan, India, Ceylon, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey. Ellington’s tour seemed part of the momentum of the civil rights movement that gained new energy from the March on Washington. Leonard Feather called Ellington’s tour “the greatest coup in history of musical

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<sup>12</sup> Von Eschen, 44-45.

<sup>13</sup> Von Eschen, 47, 51.

<sup>14</sup> “In 1932 the autocratic central government headed by Chancellor Franz Von Papen, responded to racist critics of jazz by prohibiting the hiring of musicians of color. In the last years of the Weimar Republic, with the demise of the governments that supported a liberal democracy, jazz thus came under government attack, a practice that would continue in the Third Reich.” Uta Poiger. *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 22.

<sup>15</sup> Von Eschen, 98.

diplomacy,” and it displayed American potential to transcend racism and become part of the “modern world.”<sup>16</sup>

In fact, each of the jazz tours of the 1950s and early 1960s were filled with the optimism of the civil rights movement. This changed with the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963 occurred while the Ellington Orchestra was playing in the Middle East. The rest of the tour was canceled. Four years later, writes Von Eschen, after the 120-odd urban rebellions that followed the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., many people were in despair over the endemic violence of American society. In view of the widespread youth rebellion, an aggressive government campaign to neutralize black activism, and revelations of U.S. atrocities in Vietnam, to export American culture meant exporting a culture that was (as historian George Herring put it) in the midst of a “national nervous breakdown.” That Nixon could trade on America’s breakdown and on black militancy to appeal to Eastern Europe and Soviet audiences restless for change in their own countries attests to the boldness of his diplomatic initiatives. But as domestic protest and international censure of the American war in Vietnam escalated, and as U.S. covert and overt militarism were exposed across the globe, the liberal internationalist idealism and optimism in which the tours had thrived were beginning to fade.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, American cultural programs continued to tour in different forms. One major example was the 1970 Eastern European tour of the rock’n’roll band “Blood, Sweat and Tears”. Similarly, in 1973, with a slight change in policy, the State Department organized

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<sup>16</sup> Von Eschen, 121, 124, 185, and 214.

<sup>17</sup> Von Eschen, 186.

a tour for the pop group “Fifth Dimension” through Turkey, Romania, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The State Department again relied on African-American artists to represent the country and present a more inclusive image of America than the state of the nation would actually warrant.<sup>18</sup> To the end of the Cold War, the U.S. was successful in presenting a positive image through its jazz tours and spreading its influence musically and culturally.

#### THE COLD WAR, TURKEY, AND JAZZ

In Turkey in the early 1940s, the word jazz was used not for the music, but for the band—any band—that played at dances, weddings, and parties. The phrase “caz geldi” meaning “jazz came” was said by audiences when the musicians were taking the stage. Turkish musicians Durul Gence and Tuna Ötenel claim that, when they learned about the music in the 1960s, jazz meant any dance band.<sup>19</sup>

Drummer Durul Gence traces the history of jazz in Turkey back to the 1920s, when the American record industry began to sell jazz overseas. The spread of jazz all over the world, according to Gence, took place primarily through these records. And when the sons of wealthy Turkish families returned home after attending university in the U.S., they often brought back jazz records. Jazz records became part of the social life of Istanbul. Selçuk Sun, one of Turkey’s most accomplished bass players, said he first heard jazz as a teenager in the late 1940s, listening to a 78 mm jazz record brought to Ankara from America.<sup>20</sup>

Gence notes:

I liked Joe Morello very much because he was very technical with a crisp sound. Philly Joe Jones was very remarkable for his dramatic drum solos. However, my earliest hero was Gene Kruppa, who was the

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<sup>18</sup> Von Eschen, 185, 227-228.

<sup>19</sup> Interviews with Durul Gence and Tuna Ötenel by the author on 14 March 2005, and 23 February 2005, Ankara.

<sup>20</sup> Selçuk Sun. Interview by the author, 18 March 2005, Ankara.



first to play drum solos. He made drummers very popular in Turkey and all over the world. I very much liked Gene Kruppa because I could see him in the films. In some other countries you could go and watch the performances of the musicians and could be inspired by their way of playing, but in Turkey this was not the case since you could only listen to the records and imagine how the musicians made the sounds they played. Since I could watch Gene Kruppa in movies I had something visual about him.<sup>21</sup>

The story was not much different in the 1950s. Acclaimed singer Ayten Alpman listened to Ella Fitzgerald singing “America I Love You” and “A Tisket, A Tasket.” Jazz was quite popular in Ankara and Istanbul in those years, according to Alpman, and American jazz orchestras often performed in *Kervansaray* and other Istanbul nightclubs.<sup>22</sup> Tuna Ötenel recalled listening as a fifth grader to Duke Ellington on a Turkish national radio broadcast. The influence of jazz records continued through the following decades. Pop singer and jazz trombonist Fatih Erkoç first heard the music in the late 1960s on a Miles Davis record while browsing Erol Pekcan’s personal archive.<sup>23</sup>

Many of the earlier Turkish jazz musicians came to know jazz during their military service. Tuna Ötenel recalls that, when he accompanied his father in the Officers’ Club orchestra, jazz was performed during dinners as salon music.<sup>24</sup> Durul Gence began to play jazz in military school.<sup>25</sup> Selçuk Sun remembers the dance songs of those times in Turkey are now considered to be jazz songs.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Durul Gence. Interview by author, 14 March 2005, Ankara.

<sup>22</sup> Ayten Alpman. Interview by author, 18 March 2005, Ankara.

<sup>23</sup> Fatih Erkoç. Interview by author, 27 February 2005, Ankara.

<sup>24</sup> Tuna Ötenel. Interview by author, 23 February 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Durul Gence. Interview by author, 14 March 2005, Ankara.

<sup>26</sup> Selçuk Sun. Interview by the author, 18 March 2005, Ankara.

So, Turkey was well aware of jazz music years before the Cold War tours. Although there were not many foreign musicians in Istanbul or Ankara, Turkish and Armenian musicians formed their own jazz groups. Durul Gence recalls

musicians like Hirant Lusikyan with whom I also played. Lusikyan played the clarinet, which was one of the most important instruments of early jazz, that is, Dixieland or New Orleans jazz. Lusikyan used to tell us that they had some other Armenian or minority musicians, as well as Turkish ones, who used to gather in clubs or dancing halls, and play this music. However, they did not play it as jazz at first. They played it with some dance music like Charleston, Cat Walk or similar Fox Trot dances etc., so it was more for the dancing audience. Also, the early tunes in Turkey were for dancing, and people used jazz as a tool to show off without understanding the nature of this music.<sup>27</sup>

Jazz in Turkey became more sophisticated with the formation of jazz bands, a movement that accelerated greatly after the State Department tours. The first “bop” band, a sextet, in Turkey was formed in 1947 by Cüneyt Sermet who became the band’s bass player.<sup>28</sup> Other members of the orchestra were İsmet Sıral on saxophone, Müfit Kiper on trumpet, Şadan Çaylıgil on drums, Turhan Taner on guitar and İlham Gencer on piano. Before they formed this band, Sermet, Taner, and Gencer played as a jazz trio. In 1951, Sermet, along with arranger Arif Mardin and trumpeter Arto Haçaduryan formed a jazz orchestra.<sup>29</sup> These musicians became the most influential jazz players in Turkey, and several became international personalities.

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<sup>27</sup> Durul Gence. Interview by author, 14 March 2005, Ankara.

<sup>28</sup> Cüneyt Sermet is also a jazz critic.

<sup>29</sup> Cüneyt Sermet. *Cazın İçinden*, (İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 1999), 342.

In 1956, following the increasing interest in jazz and formation of jazz bands in Turkey, Dizzy Gillespie's tour visited Turkey after starting in Iran and moving on to Yugoslavia, Greece, Syria, Pakistan, and Lebanon. Von Eschen writes that Gillespie's tour like Dave Brubeck's trip two years later, moved through the Eisenhower administration's conception of a "perimeter defense" against the Soviet Union "along the Northern Tier," extending from Turkey to Pakistan. In 1955, this U.S. proposal was concretized in the Baghdad Pact, an anti-Soviet mutual defense treaty signed first by Turkey and Iraq and later by Pakistan and Iran.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, Gillespie's goal was to bring jazz to new audiences, not to become part of a defense strategy. In some ways, Gillespie's vision was more democratic than the State Department's. The price of tickets for Gillespie's concert was prohibitive for many ordinary people, so in Pakistan and Turkey, he simply opened the gates and declared, "I came here to play for *all* the people."<sup>31</sup>

There was a decidedly democratic aspect to the jam sessions the American bands played with the local musicians following the concerts. It allowed local musicians to sit in with the artists they had only listened to on record and gave them a chance to observe their playing styles. Gence remembers his first live experience with American jazz:

It was the time that Dizzy Gillespie's Big Band went on a world tour and came to Turkey as the ambassador of the American Government. Then, Dave Brubeck and his Quartet visited Turkey in the late 1950s. So, these were the first times that I heard live jazz performances and was impressed. After I met Dave Brubeck and Dizzy Gillespie, I knew what jazz was. Dave Brubeck's drummer Joe Morello, who was very well

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<sup>30</sup> Von Eschen, 31-32.

<sup>31</sup> Von Eschen, 34-35.

known for his solo in the popular jazz performance *Take Five*, was very impressive, and he influenced my drumming very much.<sup>32</sup>

While the official concerts had a positive influence on jazz in Turkey, the jam sessions that were conducted with Turkish musicians right after the concerts seemed even more influential. This one-on-one experience provided Turkish musicians with the necessary training and professionalism. These musicians passed along that knowledge to the generation of the 1970s and 1980s.

When Gillespie and his band were in Ankara, Billy Mitchell, who played tenor sax, and trombonist Rod Laevitt sat in and played in a jam session with Turkish trumpeter, Muvaffak Falay at the Intime Casino. During the next day's concert, Gillespie gave Falay an engraved cigarette case as a present "in token of the brotherhood of jazz." In the meantime, Quincy Jones met Arif Mardin, whom he described as an "elegant young gentleman in a white silk scarf and black tuxedo." Since Arif Mardin was a composer and an arranger, he shared one of his scores with Jones. Later when he got back to the U.S.A., Jones used this score with an "all-star band" on a broadcast of Voice of America. This was a turning point in Arif Mardin's life. Through the success of his arrangements, Jones obtained a scholarship for Mardin at Berklee College of Music in Boston, the most prestigious jazz school in America. Mardin went on to work as a producer with Jerry Wexler and arranged for many prominent pop, rock, and soul artists, including Aretha Franklin, the Bee Gees, and Bette Midler, and he became a vice president with Atlantic Records.<sup>33</sup>

When Benny Carter and his band came to Turkey, they jammed at the Hotel Ankara, where the band of Tuna Ötenel, Erol Pekcan, and Selçuk Sun performed. During the jam sessions that were put together after the official Benny Carter concerts, Carter played piano

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<sup>32</sup> Durul Gence. Interview by author, 14 March 2005, Ankara.

<sup>33</sup> Von Eschen, 37.

and Harry “Sweet” Eddison played trumpet, with Tuna Ötenel on sax, Erol Pekcan on drums, and Selçuk Sun on bass.<sup>34</sup>

When the Dave Brubeck Quartet arrived in Istanbul in 1958, they were greeted by a Turkish band performing Brubeck’s, “Tea for Two.” During their concert in Ankara, Brubeck invited onstage several Turkish musicians, who played bass, French horn, and drums, along with an Italian guitarist, where they jammed on “All the Things You Are.” The result of the interaction with local musicians was Brubeck’s next album, *Jazz Impressions of Eurasia*. Most of the album’s scores had their roots on the expression of thanks in the languages of the countries they had visited. The first tribute was “Dziękuje,” thank you very much in Polish. The Turkish expression for thank you very much, “çok teşekkür ederim,” became the basis of the score of “Gold Horn,” which, explains Von Eschen, uses “a modal-like theme characteristic of the music of Turkey, along with Western harmony.”<sup>35</sup>

Following the successful tours by Gillespie, Carter, and Brubeck in the late 1950s, ambassadorial jazz continued into the early 1960s. In 1963, the Duke Ellington Orchestra was scheduled to play Turkey until Kennedy was assassinated on November 22. The concerts were cancelled by the State Department, but Ellington expressed his wish to go on with the tour as a tribute to the President, and he took his orchestra to Ankara. Immediately upon their arrival, though, the State Department prohibited the shows. Ellington and his orchestra jammed nevertheless side by side with their Turkish friends, sharing their grief with them. Selçuk Sun said that “we played in my house all night, till the morning. They were devastated by the loss, and were mourning. They not only expressed this with words but also with the tunes they played.” Sun still remembered the night vividly after forty-two years.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Tuna Ötenel. Interview by author, 23 February 2005. Ötenel also recalls having jam sessions in Ankara with the Clark Terry Orchestra.

<sup>35</sup> Von Eschen, 51.

<sup>36</sup> Selçuk Sun. Interview by the author, 18 March 2005, Ankara.

The concerts were not necessarily perceived as an exportation of American culture to Turkey. Although Turkish newspapers referred to the jazz musicians as “ambassadors of the U.S.A.,” the musicians themselves did not talk about America or propagandize, nor did the Turkish audiences perceived their concerts as designed to influence them.<sup>37</sup> Selçuk Sun said that “we knew that the concerts were organized for propaganda purposes, but the musicians did not have anything to do with the Cold War, they were here only to share their music with the masses, and we just enjoyed ourselves.”<sup>38</sup>

## CONCLUSION

From the very beginning of the jazz tours, the U.S. State Department had certain Cold War objectives. The route for Dizzy Gillespie’s tour through the “Northern Tier,” could be interpreted as seeking support for America’s strategy of containing the Soviet Union, which had its roots in the 1947 Truman Doctrine and provided funds for anti-Communist governments in Greece and Turkey.<sup>39</sup> However, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, and Duke Ellington evaluated their own jazz tours during the Cold War era as an opportunity to elevate the level of jazz and to achieve recognition for African Americans as well as recognition of themselves as artists.<sup>40</sup> And many in the countries they visited did begin to associate America with African American jazz and the push for civil rights. These ambassadors represented the sense of freedom at the center of jazz. In this respect, writes Von Eschen, “they identified so deeply with global struggles for freedom [and] they were cultural translators who inspired the

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<sup>37</sup> Durul Gence. Interview by author, 14 March 2005, Ankara.

<sup>38</sup> Selçuk Sun. Interview by the author, 18 March 2005, Ankara.

<sup>39</sup> Von Eschen, 31-32.

<sup>40</sup> “For these musicians, jazz was an international and hybrid music combining not just African and European forms, but forms that had developed out of an earlier mode of cultural exchange, through the circuitous routes of the Atlantic slave trade and the “overlapping diasporas” created by migrations throughout the Americas. And if the State Department had facilitated the music’s transnational routes of innovation and improvisation, for many musicians there was a certain poetic justice in that.” (Von Eschen, 250)

vision and shaped its contours, constituting themselves as international ambassadors by taking on the contradictions of the Cold War internationalism.<sup>41</sup>

When Gillespie was asked by President Nixon whether he was enthusiastic about playing for the people in Europe and Middle East, according to Von Eschen, Gillespie replied ‘I ain’t too interested in playing for those people; I’m more interested in playing *with* them.’ According to Gillespie, Nixon had expressed skepticism and asked, ‘Do they have that caliber of musician over there?’ Gillespie had replied: ‘You don’t realize the worldwide extent and breadth of our music. I’m liable to walk into a nightclub in Afghanistan and hear a guy playing a solo he took off one of my records note for note. Sometimes you can find a better musician for a certain job in a place like Osaka than you can get in Philadelphia.’ Jazz may have been created in America, but Gillespie could find the essential elements of jazz in Afghanistan, Nairobi, or Belgrade.<sup>42</sup>

Although Turkish musicians had not encountered the same social struggles as their black colleagues in America, they shared a love of the music. So, the cultural-presentation tours were not perceived negatively, although people were quite aware of the fact that these concerts were organized for propaganda purposes.

Cultural exchange was one of the primary tools of American diplomacy during the Cold War, and the jazz tours of the 1950s and 1960s proved to be successful in boosting the image of America in countries around the world, including Turkey. America’s jazz musicians were “the Real Ambassadors” envisioned in the musical by Dave and Iola Brubeck, produced in collaboration with Louis Armstrong, as a parody that satirized “State Department

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<sup>41</sup> Von Eschen, 252.

<sup>42</sup> Von Eschen, 237-238.

objectives, personnel, and protocol, and voiced a powerful and unequivocal indictment of Jim Crow America.”<sup>43</sup>

#### WHO’S THE REAL AMBASSADOR<sup>44</sup>

I’m the real Ambassador!

It is evident I wasn’t sent by government to take your place.

All I do is play the blues and meet the people face to face.

I’ll explain and make it plain I represent the human race and don’t pretend no more.

Who’s the real Ambassador?

Certain facts we can’t ignore.

In my humble way – I’m the U.S.A.

Though I represent the government,

The government don’t represent some policies I’m for.

Oh, we’ve learned to be concerned about the Constitutionality.

In our nation segregation isn’t a legality.

Soon our only differences will be in personality.

That’s what I stand for.

Who’s the real Ambassador? Yeah, The real Ambassador.

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<sup>43</sup> Von Eschen, 79.

<sup>44</sup> Von Eschen, 88.