

**David G. Such. *Avant-Garde Jazz Musicians: Performing "Out There"*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993) 206pp., \$14.95 paper.**

The burgeoning scholarship on the avant-garde in jazz of the 1950s and 1960s still accounts for only a small number of scholarly jazz-related publications. Though the ascendance of interdisciplinary, cultural studies paradigms leave open many pathways to discussions of avant-garde jazz, David G. Such's *Avant-Garde Jazz Musicians* incorporates little of the cultural criticism Ronald Radano offers in his equally new *New Musical Figurations: Anthony Braxton's Cultural Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Such instead focuses multiply on what avant-garde musicians say about their music's position a handful of topical devices which head chapters in the text. From considering "Labels," an indispensable issue in music criticism—since so much knowledge is vested in its nominal category—Such discusses predecessors to the "out jazz" period from the mid-late 1950s onward, citing bebop's revolutionary reputation and its figureheads as worthy precursors to such musicians as Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, and many of the more recent player/composers whom Such interviews.

While an important historical achievement, Such's analysis of the lineage remains formalist in its unfolding of musical processes that literally echo earlier eras. He then discusses economic issues intertwined in playing music that is both resolutely non-commercial and indeed thrives on the proverbial, "live" moment to develop. Economics, he reports, dictates a near-mandate to "out musicians" that they either "alter their style of musical performances to fit more acceptable commercial models" or forego the developmental crescendos which accompany performance in public. Such reports that "most out performers living in New York City" have only "two or three" opportunities to perform publically each year. This discussion brings Such's true scholarly "moment" to light: while he wants to contextualize "out music" of the 1980s by discussing the 1960s and earlier, those eras, too, have received scant satisfactory scholarly work to date.

Such continues on to discuss how metaphor functions in his coining of the term "out music" and documents the frequent directionals "upward" and "outward" which characterize this music. Closing with chapters on "world views" and "culture" as they relate to "out music," Such caps a project that hints strongly at directions for further research and future projects. In trying to cover the whole expanse of musical entities, from the intricacies of producing a performance to the performance itself and how that performance is disseminated, Such sets himself a task worthy of a far larger and more in-depth text than his.

The upside here is that Such's text is brief and compact and thus perfect for use in an introductory course, say, on the aesthetics of the Civil Rights movement or (obviously) jazz itself. I am predisposed towards

### *Explorations in Sights and Sounds*

recommending it alongside perhaps LeRoi Jones' (Amiri Baraka) *Blues People* (New York: William Morrow, 1963), since the latter text situates itself also on the historical axis of what Jones called the "changing same" of African American musical aesthetics and its more fully and challengingly developed historical context. Such, in this regard, picks up roughly where Jones leaves off and offers nice transcriptions and splendid insights as both a musician and an ethnomusicologist.

Andrew Bartlett

**Ronald T. Takaki. *Violence in the Black Imagination: Essays and Documents*. Expanded Edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 348 pp., \$14.95.**

Originally published in 1972 and re-issued in 1993, *Violence in the Black Imagination* was an early attempt to overcome the pitfalls of what some academicians have termed disjunctive scholarship. Ronald Takaki reminds us that too often fiction is analyzed narrowly as an art rather than as social documents that might be useful not only to those studying literature but also to those examining history. Reviewing three fictional works, Takaki makes a case for their use as historical sources. He asserts that "black fiction not only adds to our already limited number of ante-bellum black written documents, but also represents a particularly important genre of evidence" (12). Nineteenth century fiction, according to Takaki, lends insight into the *feelings and emotions* African Americans harbored towards slavery—insight often lost in traditional historical sources.

Takaki re-issued and expanded this book in response to the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion. Taking issue with the soundbites and superficial reporting used to characterize the rebellion, Takaki calls for the historical contextualizing of this seemingly sudden explosion of violence: "More than ever before, we must examine our past in order to understand the roots of racism and its legacy of racial conflict and violence" (6). To provide this contextualization, he turns to three fictional essays: "The Heroic Slave" by Frederick Douglass, "Blake: or, the Huts of America" by Black nationalist Martin Delany, and "Clotell: a Tale of the Southern States" by William Wells Brown, a pioneering Black novelist.

*Violence in the Black Imagination* contains these nineteenth century texts, corresponding review essays offering historical background about the authors and the factual events providing backdrops for these stories, and analysis of the conception of violence that is a common theme among all three. "The theme of violence," notes Takaki, "provides a provocative angle from which to probe the complexity of [Black people's] daily lives and the intricacies of their thoughts on...the destiny of