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FUNKJAZZ KAFÉ: THE MUSIC, MARKETING, AND MOVEMENT

by

NATHALIE FOX

Under the Direction of Committee Chair Maurice J. Hobson, PhD

ABSTRACT

This study will utilize interviews and archival research using a historical lens to understand the music, movement, and marketing strategies of FunkJazz Kafé. FunkJazz Kafe was a music and arts festival, which followed the tradition of new political movements being coupled with artistic movements that served as the expressive extension of the movement. As the festival grew, Orr was able to implement African-centered ideologies by having African American vendors and Visual artists join the growing list of performers at the festival that took place quarterly at its prime. With backing from corporate sponsors such as Billboard, Orr was able to take Funkjazz from a one-night event held at the humble, yet historic, Royal Peacock to a multi-day festival at the Tabernacle. While Orr loved music, he loved his people more, which led him to create a festival where Black people could learn and preserve their artistic culture.

INDEX WORDS: FunkJazz, Atlanta, Black Atlanta, Black Arts, Black Arts Movement in Atlanta, Black Arts in the 1990s, Jason Orr

FUNKJAZZ KAFÉ: THE MUSIC, MARKETING, AND MOVEMENT

by

NATHALIE FOX

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2020

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2020

FUNKJAZZ KAFÉ: THE MUSIC, MARKETING, AND MOVEMENT

by

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May 2020

DEDICATION

To my ancestors, whose shoulders hold me up so that I can achieve my dreams. To my late great grand-parents, Clara B. Fox, Naomi H. Ledbetter, and Tillie Fox, whose toil and tears allowed for my triumphs. To my father, the late Dr. Nathaniel Darnell Fox, who left a powerful legacy behind to guide me as I carve my path in academia and in life. I know that you all are rejoicing in your heavenly home.

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First, I would like to thank God and his son Jesus Christ who died for my sins; it is through him that I have found salvation and eternal life. I was only able to complete this journey because I know that God answers prayers. To my Mema, Momma, and Nadiiyah, thank you for the words of encouragement as I went through this journey. Thank you for answering every phone call no matter how many times I called and no matter the hour. When I was stressed and overwhelmed, your conversations offered serenity and motivation. This was the first milestone I worked through since Daddy passed, and I must thank you for the extra patience and support you all poured into me over the past two years. Mema and Momma, thank you for always being shining examples of strong women and teaching me that I can be anything I want to be. To Nadiiyah, my sissy, being your older sister, was my first job in life, and it has been one of the most joyous experiences. When I started this program, I followed my heart, I want you to do the same and show the world how amazing and truly talented you are.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my thesis committee of Dr. Akinyele Umoja, and Dr. Lakeyta Bonnette-Bailey for their time, patience, and guidance. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my thesis chair, Dr. Maurice Hobson. It has been a pleasure to study under such brilliant minds with kindest spirits. You all have been great examples of scholar-activism.

I would like to thank the Department of African American Studies. The level of love in that department is unmatched. The lessons I learned in the department will forever be with me in my life both inside and outside of the classroom.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In an interview with Billboard Magazine Motown President and CEO William "Kedar" Massenburg was asked how he felt about the category Neo-Soul placed upon a revival in soul music that started in the mid-1990s. His response of "they did not want this music to be looked at as a genre. Because when you classify music, it becomes a fad, which tends to go away" was speaking of a crowd that was wearing the "label happy" music industry.¹ A part of the weary label crowd was a young Atlanta native Jason Orr. Having a profound love for music and managing several musicians and groups in his career, Orr believes black artists were falling prey to putting themselves in a box through identifying with one genre. Creating rigid labels and genres was just one of the many ways a Eurocentric music industry stifled the black artists.

By 2002 when Massenburg interview with Billboard, Jason Orr's Black Arts festival FunkJazz Kafé was a haven for the Black Arts scene in Atlanta. Orr connected with musicians and music lovers in the Atlanta area who were longing for Funk, Soul, and Jazz music, Orr Started by putting on small house parties where the music came from live musicians instead of a DJ, that progressed to renting out small venues such as the Royal Peacock, and finally evolved to the multi-day arts festival that took place quarterly at the Tabernacle. Orr's vision allowed him to create a festival where black musicians, sculptors, painters, poets, clothing designers, alternative medicine practitioners, and chefs could display their talent as well as educate others without the constraints they faced in Eurocentric settings. FunkJazz Kafé lasted for an entire decade and event had a short tour circuit in other cities with large African American populations. Orr's

¹ Gail Mitchell, "*Soul Resurrection: What New About Neo-Soul*", Billboard, 2002. 30

vision also extended globally as the many Caribbean, and British artists traveled to put their work on display and perform at this grand event.

While it started with Orr's love for music, it is essential to understand how this festival has used the arts to educate people about the black experience and connect people of the Diaspora. This thesis will be a qualitative study that will be guided by the research question "how does FunkJazz Kafé continue the tradition of the use of the Black Arts as the expressive forms or social and political movements." To answer the research question, I will look at the music, the marketing, and the movement that was FunkJazz Kafé.

2 Historiography

To understand how FunkJazz Kafé served as an expressive arm of new political movements in Atlanta, the examination of other periods in history where black communities used the arts as an expressive form of resistance when coupled with new political and social movements. The historiography will start with literature surrounding the creating of African American culture and its use as a method of survival, but also a tool of rebellion. Enslaved people from Africa used festival culture to critique their conditions and standing in society with their celebrations of European holidays mixed with African retentions. After emancipation, black communities throughout the Diaspora continued to use the culture created during enslavement as an expressive form of new political and social movements. The literature surrounding the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement in the United States shows the continuation of the Black Arts as an expressive arm. The use of black art as an expressive form was not exclusive to the United States; the idea was present across the Diaspora. The literature surrounding Dancehall culture in Jamaica and the work of Fela Kuti's in Africa detail the use of the Black Arts as an expressive arm across the Diaspora. The historiography continues with the literature surrounding the political movements of the 1970s that were accompanied by the Black Arts Movement in the city of Atlanta. The Black Arts scene developed in the 1970s helped pave the way for Atlanta to become a cultural epicenter twenty years later. As Atlanta grew into its new role as a cultural epicenter in the 1990's Atlantans kept the tradition of Black Art as the expressive form of new political and social movements.

2.1 Historiography of African American culture

In 1971, Sidney Mintz and Richard Price wrote a collection of essays titled *The Birth of African American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*, which focuses on the formation of

African American culture throughout the Americas, focusing on Suriname as a case study.²

Sidney Mintz and Richard Price focus on how enslaved Africans needed to create new institutions, defined as any regular or orderly social interactions that acquire a normative character, to serve their everyday needs in their new home. Mintz and Price state that to form these new institutions, enslaved people, had to set aside their ethnic identities to create new identities and a new culture.

Sterling Stuckey's *Slave Culture; Nationalist Theory and The Foundations of a Black America*, argues that during the Middle Passage, the ethnic identities of groups such as the Igbo, Yoruba, Akan, and several others were shed to create a common culture. The common culture was created as members of several groups shared the traumatic experience of being ripped away from their homes in Africa and sold into chattel slavery.³ While Stuckey, Price, and Mintz share opinions on the experience on the Middle Passage as the start of relationships between different ethnic groups, Stucky's work specifically focuses on the culture developed by Africans in the United States. Stuckey's work describes how Africans in the United States looked back to their ancestral lands to help them create norms and mores to help relationships created on the Middle Passage last in North America. Stuckey writes that music, dance, oral traditions are one way the Africans in the Americas connected themselves back to Africa.⁴ Stuckey's work focuses on African Americans in the United States post-emancipation in case of studies through figures like W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson. Stuckey maps their connections to Africa through the retentions, passed down through their African culture, such as Negro spirituals. While the

² Sidney Wilfred Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth Of African-American Culture* (Boston, Mass: Beacon Pr, 2011) 23,38,42.

³ Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory And The Foundations Of Black America* (New York, NY: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013). 1,24-26,45,56.

⁴ *Ibid.*1,50,107,200.

locations of case studies of Stuckey's work and the work of Prince and Mintz differ, both works trace the importance of enslaved people using elements of African culture to create a new culture in the Americas.

Later works in the historiography surrounding the creation of African American culture suggest that the culture started on the continent of African and not the Middle Passage as previous work suggested. In *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial Antebellum South*, Michael A. Gomez suggests that the barracoons, where the newly captured Africans were held, are home to the unifying idea of blackness that would allow for an African American culture to be established. After they trekked hundreds of kilometers, newly enslaved Africans were thrown into makeshift pens along the coast, known as barracoons. The time spent in barracoons depended on the availability of ships, which left many different ethnic groups contemplating their future in the barracoons together for months at a time.⁵ Gomez notes that during the waiting period, those captured in the barracoons would help nurture each other back to health, which was necessary after the long journey to the coast. These caring acts established bonds across different ethnicities while still in Africa, proving the connections started before the Middle Passage. The bonds between people of different ethnicities that in the barracoons grew even stronger on the Middle Passage, as the "shipmate" relationships between members of the same sex, was formed. Gomez's work reflects the same level of importance for the shipmate relationship as the work done in the 1970s by Mintz and Price. Gomez writes that on the voyage across the Middle Passage captured Africans quickly noticed everyone in chains looked like them, and white people were the cause of their new horrid conditions; this shared experience of Middle Passage caused Africans to see themselves in a new

⁵ Michael A Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). 154-157

light based on their shared blackness, versus their ethnicity.⁶ Once on land, the shipmate relationship continued and led to new institutions that would become the foundation for African American culture. In their work, Mintz and Price consider the formation of African American culture as a way for African to cope with their new condition as they mention certain rituals around marriage, birth, or death needed to be performed. Africans in the New World depended on other Africans to help them perform important aspects of their culture, bringing them closer together to help establish a new culture. However, Gomez's work adds another level to the formation of African American culture as he claims the formation of the culture was an act of rebellion as well. The public and private continuation of African ceremonies, religious practices, names, and art forms were more than enslaved people living the way they had for centuries; in the Americas, it symbolized their rejection of the conditions and culture forced upon them during enslavement.⁷

2.2 Historiography of the festivals of the African Diaspora

Carnival is one of the largest festivals in the Western Hemisphere. It is celebrated in the Caribbean, South America, and wears a "mask" and disguises itself as Mardi Gras in the United States. Milla Riggio, who studies the religious history of Trinidad, tracks Carnival as an imported tradition for the French Creole planters and then celebrated by the ostentatious English governors. Riggio's work looks deep into religious tensions caused between the governing Anglicans and the French Catholic Planters, but she also examines how religious differences led to class tensions and other economic struggles. However, her work does not include the enslaved people on the island. It is necessary to include the enslaved population's involvement, and this

⁶ Ibid.155-167

⁷ Ibid. 155,156,158

inclusion can be observed in Cannes Brulee; during Carnival season, which arguably had the most significant impact on the way Carnival celebrations developed in the Western Hemisphere.

The Spanish controlled Trinidad from 1498 until 1797, and it ceded to the British in 1802. The British Crown had to think strategically about how to govern its new colony that was inhabited by a large amount of French Catholics, who moved to Trinidad in 1783 after the Cedula of Population; where Roman Catholic settlers were allowed to settle in Trinidad after an oath of allegiance to the Spanish crown.⁸ The British crown's fear of a Catholic uprising, led to Trinidad having a Crown Colony system of government, meaning it was ruled directly from Britain instead. At the beginning of their rule of the colony, the British passed legislation that reinforced Catholic dominance, even allowing the British governor to serve as an officer of the Roman Catholic Church in Trinidad. This openness ended in 1844 when the Anglican church became the official religion of Trinidad under an Ecclesiastical Ordinance.⁹ As expected, Riggio notes this change heightened the conflict between the Anglican bureaucracy and the Catholic planters, who were the majority of the population.¹⁰ With Catholics having the majority of the population on the island during this time, they were able to resist the crown from stopping all religious festivities. However, British Protestant governors found ways to integrate themselves into these celebrations. Both English Protestant and Catholics from French and Spain both held grand balls, where they masqueraded as they traveled from home to home partaking in treats, dancing, and alcohol. Riggio's work focuses on the economics and politics of the island to understand it affects on Carnival but does not factor race into the different ways the festival was celebrated in Trinidad.

⁸ Milla Cozart Riggio, "*The Carnival Story*" in *Carnival* (New York: Routledge, 2004).40-42.

⁹ *Ibid.*41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

To understand the role of black people during early Carnival celebrations, one must examine their participation during enslavement and post-emancipation. In an article titled *Origins of Rituals and Customs In the Trinidad Carnival: African or European*, Hollis “Chalkdust” Liverpool records the lasting legacy of black people on the European holiday of Carnival. Liverpool studies the large free black population of Trinidad, which was always greater in numbers than the white population.¹¹ The two groups kept separate lives; whites were less hostile toward free blacks during the holiday season from Christmas to Lent when major festivals took place, as their festivities were their main concern. While free blacks were not kept from participating in festivals during holidays, the government put certain obstacles in the way black looking to celebrate during the Christmas to Carnival season. According to Liverpool, the free blacks of Trinidad were expected to go through extra measures during Carnival, such as paying for permits to hold the extravagant balls.¹² The free blacks spared no expense for their celebrations as they had something to prove to whites and enslaved black people. Liverpool suggests the free blacks’ participation in these European style balls showed their aspirations to be considered as equals in the eyes of their government. Liverpool calls the actions of free blacks during Carnival, a form of passive resistance as they performed activities normally reserved for whites.¹³ Their message to the enslaved blacks was not one of up-lift but steeped in class consciousness. The free blacks refused to mingle in the street celebrations put on by enslaved Africans. Their balls were a haven and allowed them minimal interaction with enslaved blacks during this period of celebration.

¹¹ Hollis Liverpool, *Origins Of Rituals And Customs In The Trinidad Carnival: African Or European?*, *The Drama Review* 42, no. 3 (1998),24.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.1146677&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

¹² *Ibid.*24,26

¹³ *Ibid.*30

Liverpool theorized the enslaved blacks of Trinidad did not harbor ill feelings or jealousy towards the free blacks during Carnival but looked at them as an example of how to become "culturally active" during the festivities leading to Cannes Brulee.¹⁴ Liverpool argues that the street festival nature of modern Carnival is direct retention from the enslaved Blacks who took over the streets of Port of Spain while the whites and free coloreds were busy with their ornate balls.¹⁵ Before the street festivals of Carnival, the enslaved African would participate in Cannes Brulee, which was a ceremony reenacting the burning of a sugar cane plant. The burning of the sugar cane plant marked the beginning of the festival for enslaved people who celebrated the holiday in their quarters.¹⁶ Before emancipation in 1838, the burning of the cane was literal and remained engrained in Carnival culture after emancipation as a symbolic act that represented the freedom of the people.¹⁷ As Cannes Brulee became more about symbolism and imagery, anthropologist J.D. Elder, states that Africans of Trinidad coupled pageantry of black art with the celebrations of Carnival by 1881.¹⁸ Elder lists five ways the African pageantry was a tool of rebellion during Carnival.

The first way listed is "enacting the African pageant inside the white-dominated Carnival."¹⁹ Elder speaks about the rage that mostly Catholic Europeans felt when the "pagan" Africans took part in this festival. This disdain for black entry into the festival grew when they learned that the enslaved blacks were going to celebrate it using their own traditions.²⁰ The second is "processing through the streets during the dead of the night."²¹ In the work of Riggio

¹⁴ Ibid.30,31.

¹⁵ Ibid.25,26

¹⁶ Ibid, 25,26,27.

¹⁷ Ibid.30

¹⁸ J.D. Elder, "*Cannes Brulees*", in *Carnival*, 1st ed. (New York: Rutledge, 2004).49

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Liverpool, "Origins Of Rituals And Customs In The Trinidad Carnival: African Or European?", 1998; Milla Cozart Riggio, "*The Carnival Story*", 2004.

²¹ J.D. Elder, "*Cannes Brulees*", 2004.49

and Liverpool, both agree the planters class and the upper-class governors traveled around but with a set destination of a friend's house or a rented space. Their festivities were private, and the obnoxiousness and frivolousness of their activities were hidden, whereas the Africans made their celebrations public. The third element Elder mentions were “satirizing the ruling class through song,” but research shows there are several ways the Africans used humor to ridicule the white-planter class.²² Liverpool points out the whip yielding Jab Jab masquerade in modern Carnival is an evolution of Africans mimicking the whip-cracking planter class in early Cannes Brulee celebrations.²³ The fourth element of beating the “African drum” and fifth “ participating in African like dances” were looked upon as savage and profane acts by the Europeans in Trinidad.²⁴ The drum playing African rhythms, the masquerade characters, such as Jab Jab, and melodies of Carnival were cultural retentions from Africa. They proved that Africans created their cultural practices and used them as a critique as societal norms, as they displayed their culture proudly during a holiday they were white citizens excluded them even after emancipation.

2.3 Historiography of The Harlem Renaissance and the New Negro Movement

After the American Civil War during the Reconstruction era, African Americans participated in a massive relocation from southern states to the large northern cities. According to Mark Schneider and Nathan Huggins, the Great War expedited this mass migration.²⁵ After fighting in Europe, soldiers internalized President Wilson’s policy to protect freedom through democracy. These proclamations influenced black families and communities to demand better treatment from their country, which led to a prompt departure of the South. Through the Great

²² Ibid.

²³ Liverpool, "*Origins Of Rituals And Customs In The Trinidad Carnival: African Or European?*", 2004

²⁴ J.D. Elder, "*Cannes Brulees*", 2004.49

²⁵ Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). 83

Migration, southern African Americans hoped to avoid the horrid grip of Jim Crow and to find economic opportunities other than sharecropping and domestic work, which kept them dependent on white southerners. When deciding what cities to move to, many families followed train routes to the North to the nearest large city.²⁶ For example, people from Alabama would travel to Chicago, and people in the Carolinas would relocate to Washington, D.C. However, even though New York was further north, the city had the most significant drawing power, as black people from all of the southern states flocked to New York in droves. Huggins suggests this affinity for New York was due to Harlem's pulling power as the epicenter of black culture for the time.²⁷

During this period, Alain Locke explains the transition from the Old Guard to the New Negro, which he titles his essay. The New Negro that Locke describes is full of "self-respect and self-dependence" attitudes that were amplified in the black community during Reconstruction and echoed into the early twentieth century.²⁸ Locke argues that the move to industrious centers in the city helped shed the regional tensions held by African Americans, and the unity helped them to see what Locke called the "common condition."²⁹ According to Locke, the old guard fought for equality but lacked self-expression in comparison to the New Negro. Locke argued that the New Negro valued the self-expression found in the arts in Harlem. While the Old Guard full of the Du Bois' and Garveys' of the world were using academic writings and newspapers to fight against inequality, the New Negro was more concerned with how their self-expression

²⁶James Edward Smethurst, *The African American Roots Of Modernism: From Reconstruction To The Harlem Renaissance* (The John Hope Franklin Series In African American History And Culture) (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).47

²⁷ Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*, 2007.26

²⁸ Alain Locke and Charles Molesworth, *The Works Of Alain Locke* (The Collected Black Writings Series) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).444

²⁹ Ibid.444-450

could relay the same messages.³⁰ While Locke praises the New Negro, it is not to undo the work of those before them, the two movements needed each other.

As the intellectual idea of the New Negro grew, it was strengthened by the work of the Harlem Renaissance, which served as its expressive arm. Writers such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Zora Neale Hurston used their work to highlight the experiences of African Americans by putting them at the center of their stories and poetry instead of the periphery characters in works written by other races. Literary works like the famous poem “I too” by Hughes creatively voiced the African Americans' desire for equality. Just as race weighed on the writers of the Jazz Age, Huggins, author of *Harlem Renaissance*, suggests it was just as important to the musicians of the time. Huggins says the Jazz musicians of the time had to transform “work songs, Gospels, and holler” into Blues, Ragtime, and Jazz.³¹ Huggins wrote that during this time, the black community was trying to “sell” itself, but that had to start with the “Negro knowing his worth,”; which led to the sense of artistic self-consciousness.³² Huggins hypothesizes that the Harlem Renaissance took off when the Negro chose to believe that they had a “culturally enriched past in America and Africa.”³³

In the *Harlem Renaissance*, Huggins poses the question, “what if black Harlem had been left alone, not discovered by whites?”³⁴ He suggests the prose and music of the time might have been more honest without white interjection. As African Americans were using African-centered ways to express themselves against the oppressive Eurocentric hegemony, the white people during this time saw Harlem as an escape from the “struggles” of everyday life. Huggins writes

³⁰ Ibid.447-452

³¹Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*,2007.26 64

³²Ibid.

³³ Ibid.65

³⁴ Ibid.85

Jazz was "forbidden music performed in the dark night-clubs with jungle or old southern plantation settings, where white men could watch "coffee, chocolate, and caramel-brown girls move to savage-primitive beats."³⁵ The white spectator misunderstood or perhaps did not even care about the meanings of the Harlem Renaissance for African Americans as they pressured the movement into turn into something more palatable for a white audience. The Renaissance shows the danger the white gaze can cause to the Black Arts as it moves from its unintended audience. Huggins emphasizes the importance of keeping Black Arts for the black community.

2.4 Historiography of The Black Arts Movement

While many praised the work of the Harlem Renaissance, voices in later Black Arts movements were critical of the movement. *In Visions of a Liberated Future*, Larry Neal emphasizes the importance of artistic movements working in tandem with social and political movements. Neal marries the Black Power Movement and the Black Arts movement, which advocates the desire for self-determination to the Black Arts Movement, which set the goal of creating art that speaks directly to the black expression as it leaves western aesthetics behind.³⁶ According to Neal, the Black Power Movement depended on black people realizing their status as a third world nation within a nation. However, to see themselves as a collective, a group needs a shared culture that is grounded in an aesthetic that centers their experience, which happens through a series of ethical decisions. Neal argues that after previous attempts in New York and Washington D.C, the Black Arts Movement could grow after the community made the ethical switch that allowed for people to grow more concerned with the art of politics and less concerned with the relationship between art and politics.³⁷ Neal blames the intellectuals of the past for not

³⁵ Ibid.89

³⁶ Larry Neal, Amiri Baraka and Michael Schwartz, *Visions Of A Liberated Future* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1989).62,65,67.

³⁷ Ibid.62,64.

posing ethical questions such as “whose vision of the world is more meaningful our or our oppressors?”³⁸ While Neal was extremely critical of the artistic movements before the Black Arts Movement, calling movements like the Harlem Renaissance a failure, he was optimistic about the future for black art as the Black Arts Movement grew an expressive outlet that told the story of changes in the black community.³⁹

2.5 Black Arts as Expressive Arms Across the Diaspora

In *Wake the Town and Tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica*, Norman Stolzoff maps Jamaican dancehall culture from slavery to World War II, and then from World War II to modern times ending with the way the poor black youth of Jamaica have used Dancehall as an expressive way for them to take control over their bodies as they deal with issues associated with poverty, racism, and violence.⁴⁰ Through oral history learned for Mr. Jones, the pioneer of Disc-jockeying, Stolzoff seeks to understand the origins of dancehall back to mento country dance, which dates back to slavery. Stolzoff finds that during their enslavement, Africans in Jamaica watched their English masters perform quadrille dances, which were performed by couples in large groups. Enslaved people were taught to play European instruments, such as the violin, to perform during the dances for their masters. During times of leisure or holidays, enslaved musicians would play for their fellow enslaved people, which Stolzoff shows led to the popular Saturday dance and dances held during times of celebration. During these celebrations, black musicians would take what they learned from playing music in a European setting and marry them with African elements. According to Stolzoff, musicians were not the only ones responsible for the evolution of the quadrille dances to the mento dance. The African dancers were not

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.68,72,77

⁴⁰ Norman C Stolzoff, *Wake The Town & Tell The People* ([United States]: Duke University Press, 2013).1-

satisfied with the erect style of the quadrille, so they added African elements such as a more bent torso, more African footwork, and making the lower half of the body more active through hip thrusting and pelvic circling.⁴¹ This change from the restricting European quadrille to the more upbeat and free movements of the mento dance. Stolzoff noted the mento dance and music is one of the earliest forms of the marrying of the European and African culture or “creolization” of culture in Jamaica.⁴² Stolzoff emphasizes the importance of these dances to the enslaved people as they gave them a sense of autonomy during the days when festivals took place. Stolzoff theorizes that slaveowners supported and attended these dances as they thought it kept enslaved people docile, but they did not pay attention to the lyrics of the mento songs that mocked the white master figure and the oppressive conditions of the plantation. The ideas of blackness created through the performance at the mento dance lasted through emancipation as the newly freed black people in Jamaica still used the dance to mediate social relations in Jamaican society.⁴³

Stolzoff traces the history of music in Jamaica through post-war times, where Jamaican art forms like the Mento music mixed with Jazz, which was seen as another form of music with identifiable African retentions, to become the expressive arms of the post-independence. The practice of merging Jamaican culture with other art forms of the Diaspora led to the creation of Ska and Reggae, which were deeply rooted in the Pan-African beliefs associated with Rastafarianism.⁴⁴ In the late 1960s and early 1970s when Ska and Reggae were growing in popularity as they were played on the sound systems in dancehalls, this changed the atmosphere as the lyrics of the Reggae and Ska genres promoted “an alternative social reality, black

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid. 24-26,127.

⁴³ Ibid.34-36,120,215-225.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 6,40, 128, 217-226.

consciousness, and political protest” which leads to dancehall culture being seen as an expressive arm of the anti-colonial politics in Jamaica.

To describe modern Dancehall, Stolzoff uses the image of clashing as the dancehall becomes a place where dichotomies placed upon black people are teased out. For instance arguments of colorism leading to a middle-class light-skinned people versus more impoverished dark-skinned people; the geographic clashes include an urban and rural divide along with the clash of the moral uptown versus the vulgar slums of the downtown; gender norms clash with the provocative dress and movements associated with the dancehall; the relationship between the people and the state is also put into conversation as dancehall attendees are often over-policed. While some points of Stolzoff’s works point out the hostility of dancehall as he covers feuds between artist which can lead to fights and promote gang violence, there is an overall sense that dancehall is more often a place of relief as people come to use the dancehall as a place where they challenge the oppressions they face during everyday life.

Using the Black Arts as an expressive form of new political and social thought was not limited to the black people in the Western Hemisphere, the tradition flowed throughout the world as black people drew inspiration from the movements of other black people. Michael Veal tells the story of music as a form of resistance in Africa through the life of Olufela Olusegun Oludotun Ransome-Kuti, more commonly known as Fela Kuti, the King of Afrobeat. Veal starts his story by telling the history of Fela Kuti’s family, his mother, who was a fighter of women’s rights, and his father, a union activist and well-respected forerunner of education reform in Nigeria. Kuti’s socio-economic level allowed him to attend university in England, where he was able to meet other people of the Diaspora as he engaged in the nightlife of London’s growing

African and Afro-Caribbean populations.⁴⁵ Veal writes Kuti was attracted to nightlife, where he was introduced to American Jazz, which interested him more than the Eurocentric art forms taught in his classes at Trinity Music College.⁴⁶ For Kuti, the nightlife offered a new musical experience that Veal notes differed from a colonial musical experience in Nigeria. The people in the colonies were subject to what the colonizers wanted them to hear, causing the music scene in the British colonies to be very limited. In the nightlife in Britain, Kuti found familiarity in the Afro-Caribbean beats coming from countries like Cuba. Veal also noted his reintroduction to the Jazz after WWII as it was more abstract than the Jazz he heard from highlife bands in Nigeria, which were influenced by the Big Bands in America.

While London was a significant influence on Kuti, Veal tells Kuti's travels with his band in the United States were even more influential on his understanding of the effects of the Diaspora, prompting an even greater reverence for his home continent. Veal writes that while in America Kuti and his bandmates saw the Black Power Movement in its early stages as African Americans were wearing dashikis, trading relaxed hairstyles for afros, and in some cases changing their names to those of the Yoruba and Asante origin.⁴⁷ Veal writes of a conversation where Kuti "says that Africans were ashamed of wearing the native dress but found pride in African Americans wearing African garb."⁴⁸ Veal also writes that Kuti was inspired by the popular culture of the time, which was heavily influenced by black artists such as Sly and the Family Stone, Parliament-Funkadelic, the Temptations, and the Jackson 5.⁴⁹

⁴⁵Michael E Veal, *Fela: The Life And Times Of An African Musical Icon* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000). 39.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 39,40,117.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.71.

⁴⁹ Ibid.47,

After Kuti left America, he returned to Nigeria as it was putting itself together after the Biafra war. Veal writes that after being inspired by what he saw in America, Kuti's lyrics saw a dramatic shift in his musical goals as he went from making lively, dance music to using his music to promote a political platform that was African-centered. The people's frustration with the new government in Nigeria allowed for Kuti's new music labeled "Afrobeat" to take off as it offered a musical critique of the colonial world around them. Veal writes that want for a "home-grown" sound, wealth disparities brought on by the "oil-boom" in Nigeria which lead to a growing underclass, and a need for a style that could capture the complex identities on those from the middle class who had been educated abroad lead to an audience ready for Kuti's new style inspired by "Blackism," a term Veal accredits to Kuti to describe his new philosophy.⁵⁰ The latter half of Veal's work shows a more mature Kuti whose lyrics note the growing class disparities and mistreatment of the people, making him a target for several Nigerian regimes and the army. According to Veal, the collisions with the government turned Kuti into even more radical and encouraged his adoption of Pan-African ideology as he started to write about the problems within other African countries as well, giving him a larger audience to witness his legacy. While other literature focuses on the way African retentions shaped black form of art across the Diaspora, Veal's work on Kuti explains how the movements of the Diaspora shaped the African continent and push citizens to create an expressive arm that reflected the anti-colonial and Pan-African politics of the time.

2.6 Black Art as the extension of the Black Political movements in Atlanta

In her doctorate dissertation titled *Our Art*, Candy Tate looks at the importance of the Neighborhood Arts Center in the discussion of the Black Art Movement in Atlanta. Tate's work

⁵⁰ Ibid.80,85,115,128,

focuses on the impact of the Black Arts Movement beyond the reach of the Atlanta University Center and the Black church, which were credited at the center of the movement for Atlanta.⁵¹ According to Tate even though segregation tampered with the availability of Black art in Atlanta African Americans still found passes their creative talents such as “the Institute of the Black World founded in 1969, and the Atlanta Center for Black Arts starting in the spring of 1971, were also the results of this transitional era.”⁵² Tate writes Black artists in Atlanta started to employ an attitude of “art for the people” as they moved the Black Arts scene from the middle class and institutions of higher learning to place more accessible to the community with the help of federal and state dollars.⁵³

Tate writes about the importance of Maynard Jackson’s first term as mayor, where he set the tone for the Black art in the city as he vowed: “to the enhancement of the city’s cultural life through active governmental support of the art.”⁵⁴ According to Tate, Jacksons knowledge of the arts from his aunt, Mittiwilda Dobbs, and matriculation through the Atlanta University Center (AUC), which was the epicenter of Black culture before his mayoral term, allowed him to see how the arts catalyzed change.⁵⁵ In 1974 the city of Atlanta received \$30 million from the Federal Government’s Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the Jackson administration appropriated a portion of the funds to create a multi-disciplinary space for the arts, and Tate traces its evolution into the NAC.⁵⁶ While the NAC was vital to helping the people have access to art through classes in various topics, Tate’s work also shows that Jackson’s use of art outside of the NAC was just as crucial to proving a message of a “biracial city” on the local,

⁵¹ 54,318

⁵² Rachanice Candy Patrice Tate, "*Our Art Itself Was Our Activism*" Atlanta ' S Neighborhood Arts Center, 1975-1990" (Ph.D, Clark Atlanta University, 2019).

⁵³Ibid. 81.

⁵⁴ Ibid.108.

⁵⁵ Ibid.64,103.

⁵⁶ Ibid.17,89

national, and international level. Tate describes a host of actions employed by the Jackson administration to make Atlantans feel comfortable in their city and the political and social landscape were changed to be more inclusive, such as concerts in the green space near Hurt Plaza, to bring Atlantans into the downtown area for leisure; Tate notes that this was special because previously, the downtown area was thought of as a place of work and business.⁵⁷ With the activities held in racially neutral places, Tate notes that Jackson's vision of the two races enjoying black art together allowed for black and white patrons to enjoy the work produced by government-paid artists could prompt exposure which Tate argues was a critical factor in Atlanta integrating and maintaining "biracial balance."⁵⁸

Tate's work mentions Jackson's goal of taking Atlanta to an internationally as a city healed from its past several times; however, the interviews Tate conducted along with the research shows that Jackson and his administration knew that Atlanta had to see itself as leaving its past behind. For Jackson, it was not enough for the city to accept a handful of black political officials or only acknowledge the black elite as it had done for long, the city needed a platform for various groups from the black community to continue their activism in a changing city. Tate's work focuses on the NAC, but hints towards a broader picture of Jackson's programs as platforms which allowed the black community artistic space to create to critique what was happening politically and socially on a local, national, and international level.

Tate's work on the NAC is just a small example of how the Atlanta Black Arts Movement served as the expressive arm for the new black politics in the city of Atlanta. *In the Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*, historian Maurice Hobson details the black political movements in which the Black Arts scene in Atlanta

⁵⁷ Ibid.110

⁵⁸ Ibid.54

served as the expressive arm. While Tate's work focuses on the NAC created by the Bureau of Affairs, Hobson dives deeper into the work of the Jackson administration and the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, which promoted the growth of the Black Arts scene. One of the programs created by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, mentioned by Hobson, was the Atlanta Jazz series. The Atlanta Jazz Series was a series of Jazz performances in various city parks in April. Then on Memorial Day weekend, they culminate into a big Jazz festival in Grant and Piedmont Parks.⁵⁹

The events held through the Bureau of Cultural Affairs helped Atlanta realize its potential for music and arts festivals, causing the Black Arts scene to grow rapidly due to the support from black politicians. Hobson argues the "cultivation of black art served as the expressive arm of the perceived black political and economic power resulting from Jackson's policies." This is similar to the way the Harlem Renaissance served as the expressive arm of the New Negro movement. While Tate's work focuses on the Black Arts Movements through the lens of the Neighborhood Arts Center in the 1970s and 1980s, Hobson's work traces the legacy of Atlanta's Black Arts Movement as it continued into the 1990s. By the 1990s the entire country watched as Atlanta transformed into an epicenter of black culture, with the Black Arts scene mediating how the world would understand Atlanta. Since the Atlanta Black Arts scene started as the expressive arm of a political movement, this shaped the trajectory for its future, as the new Atlanta artists continued to use their work to critique politics, economy, and social structure of their city, just as they had seen former members of the Black Arts scene do in the 1970s and 1980s. Hobson uses the lyrics of the young duo OutKast to show how Atlanta artists used music as an economic, political, and social critique of the world around them. Hobson uses the song "Get up Get out"

⁵⁹ Maurice J Hobson, *The Legend Of Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*, 1st ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

and other tracks to shows the problems local Atlantans faced as Atlanta prepared for Olympification on the local level as well as the problems put in place by the Clinton administration, such as the “three-strike rule,” which disproportionately affected the African American community.⁶⁰ Hobson’s work details the political and economic highs and lows of Atlanta as a city and shows how the Black Arts scene was there to capture it all.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

3 Methodology

3.1 Theory

A qualitative study seemed the most appropriate to understand the music, marketing, and social movement that created FunkJazz Kafé. Out of the four approaches of Qualitative studies mentioned by Creswell in his book *Qualitative Inquiry and Research*, the narrative approach appears to fit this work, documenting the story of FunkJazz Kafé. For this study, the Black performance Theory, developed by Thomas DeFrantz and Anita Gonzalez, as the theoretical framework. DeFrantz and Gonzalez wrote the goal of Black performance theory is to establish “black expressive culture as an area of serious academic inquiry.” Before Black performance theory looked at primarily dance, but DeFrantz and Gonzalez have included popular music, fiction, and theatre as mediums that preserve social, political, religious culture.

3.2 Archival Research

The archives at Georgia State University will help in finding the local newspapers in the Atlanta area. For my research, the *Atlanta Daily World*, one of Atlanta’s black newspapers, will be a greater understanding of the African American community in Atlanta during the 1990s. The *Atlanta Daily World* was a place for African Americans to display social functions that took place within the African American in the city from skate nights at famous roller rinks, church programs, and Grammy after-parties hosted by black artists. Examining the black periodicals of Atlanta will help me to develop a sense of Atlanta nightlife. They contained several advertisements for venues such as Club Kaya, a dance club, Apache spoken-word, and live artistry, as well as a Hip-hop and R&B nights at other clubs. These flyers posted in newspapers also included the names of famous DJ’s such as Frank Ski and lived acts during the 90s, this will be helpful because they provide ideas for potential interviews to expand knowledge on the music

industry of the time. Also, this research plans to use *Jet*, *Ebony*, and *Billboard* magazines from the Georgia State University Archives to understand the contention between African American popular culture and the European hegemony.

This research will use the archives at the Atlanta University Center, which houses a vast wealth of African American archives for the Atlanta area. This study will rely on papers of Atlanta's first black mayor, Maynard Jackson. A further examination of Jackson's documents will help us further understand how his economic policies and unwavering faith in Atlanta's ability to become the light of the American South helped create a landscape for Atlanta to be the leader of black popular culture for the 1990s when FunkJazz Kafé took place.

The Auburn Avenue Research Library archives house the archives for the WERD radio, which was the nation's first African American owned and operated a radio station. Similar to the way the Atlanta Daily World was a place for black people in Atlanta to advertise community events, the shows on WERD would help to understand how black events, including FunkJazz Kafé, announced their activities to the Atlanta area. The Auburn Avenue Library also prides itself on its Oral History collection, which will help me understand the history of Atlanta from the perspectives of African Americans that lived during the period when Atlanta becomes the capitol music produced during the time FunkJazz Kafé was a festival.

The Stuart A. Rose Collection at the Robert Woodruff Library located at Emory University will be beneficial due to its abundant resources on the city of Atlanta. As an archive at a large southern private university, the Stuart A. Rose collection has acquired several vital materials detailing life in the American South. Due to the mammoth size of the archives, it has been helpful in my preliminary research when finding primary sources for music festivals left out

of literature such as “Jack the Rapper.” Here, this research will use the Stuart A. Rose Collection to supplemental findings at the smaller and more intimate black-owned archives.

Oral histories will be used for this project. Oral history and interviews have been a standard and necessary methodology within the discipline of African American studies for several reasons. In this study, in-depth interviews with Jason Orr, the creator of the FunkJazz Kafé music festival, will be conducted, processed, and gleaned. Interviews conducted with Orr will help us understand his early life as an Atlanta native and how his love for music and the arts developed, leading him to create the festival. Orr was not only in charge of finding the acts for the festival but in charge of marketing as well. We will use the snowball method as Orr’s interviews lead us to FunkJazz Kafé alumni that will participate in interviews to detail the experience at the festival further.

4 Music: Culture Preservation

4.1 Take It From The Top

In 1970, Jason Orr was born in Atlanta to a single mother, Carrie Orr. Since his father was not present in his younger life, he would often spend time with his grandmother Ada in Savannah, which alleviated his mother from some of the stress associated with single parenthood. As Orr grew older and stayed with his mom in Atlanta more frequently, he and his mother, enjoyed the free festivals, concerts, and performances throughout the city. His mother's need to find economical or free activities introduced him to several elements of the Black Arts.⁶¹ Orr recalled his mother taking him to events such as the Atlanta Jazz series, where he was exposed to artists who developed the Atlanta Sound.⁶² Orr was also influenced by the house parties that were popular at the time. He vividly remembered the living room furniture being pushed to the walls to create a dance floor as a designated disc jockey played records all night, furthering Orr's interest in the Funk, Jazz, and Soul genres.⁶³

As Orr grew into a teenager, he shadowed an older cousin who worked in lighting and audio for Jazz and Funk bands from Atlanta. Orr first shadowed his cousin to get a chance to watch the bands but found himself enthralled by the buttons and knobs that controlled the sound and lights on stage. At one concert, Orr's cousin, busy with a friend, left Orr in the lighting and sound booth unattended, while the two enjoyed the show. Watching his cousin several times and memorizing the light sequences, Orr took over the show while his cousin was "macking" with his companion. The transition from an experienced lighting and audio technician to the young

⁶¹ Jason Orr, Music Interview, interview by author Nathalie Fox, in person (Wolf Creek Amphitheatre, February, 10, 2020).

⁶² Hobson, *The Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Orr, Music Interview, February 10, 2020.

inexperienced Orr went unnoticed.⁶⁴ Orr and his cousin saw this as a success, and he started to control more of the knobs, switches, and buttons that control the lighting and audio during the shows. He quickly realized he had a knack for the working behind the scenes and sought to learn as much as he could about what it took to produce a successful show, even getting the opportunity to travel with his cousin and the bands he worked for over the summer.

When Orr entered high school, his mother asked if he had any interest in going to Northside High School, which housed the only magnet programs for the performing arts in Atlanta Public Schools. Because he did not have training in the performing arts, he applied to the Technical Theatre program. Orr used the skills he learned from the time spent with his cousin to audition for the program. During his audition, he used white and red lighting to create a scene that depicted the dichotomy between heaven and hell. To show his knowledge on audio equipment, Orr added “Cry Little Sister,” the theme for the popular vampire movie *Lost Boys*. The song’s use of an angelic children’s choir to sing dark lyrics added another layer to the visual dichotomy between heaven and hell. Orr’s creativity earned him a spot in the program and provided him with skills that he would use later in life during FunkJazz Kafé, such as set design, stage lighting, and audio.⁶⁵

After Orr graduated high school, he attended Clark College. After a year of studying, Orr had a realization that he was unhappy and found it ridiculous to pay to stay in an environment where he felt he could not thrive, so he left the college. Like many young adults, he used his early twenties for self-exploration, which led him to reach out to his father. Orr moved to the Virgin Islands to facilitate their relationship. While living in the Virgin Islands, he found himself easily connected to the culture and enjoyed the different cultures of the Diaspora represented on

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

the islands. Orr's love for the arts drew him to the music, dance, and festival culture on the island. His transformative trip increased his understanding of the arts across the Diaspora, which prepared him for the task of curating FunkJazz Kafé.⁶⁶

After spending a year in the Virgin Islands, Orr came back to his home in Atlanta. While he is a self-proclaimed "free-spirit" never pressured by societal norms, he did try conforming to societal expectations as he worked as a tax collector for the city of Atlanta. Like many office workers, Orr found the nine to five life incredibly mundane and used music to balance his life. After long hours of collecting taxes, he would go to his second job as the manager for Vinnie Bernard and the Original Man. As a fully committed manager, Orr was always on the hunt to find venues for Vinnie, but Orr said, "when he would take Vinnie's demo tape [around the city], nobody picked it up."⁶⁷ With a sound that was slow and soulful, coupled with a live band, the Atlanta club scene was not optimal for Vinnie Bernard and the Original Man. Orr sought to create a scene for Vinnie and his band to perform but, more importantly, space where Atlantans could enjoy a live band that played Funk, Jazz, and Soul music. Thus, FunkJazz Kafé was born.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Jason Orr, *Funkjazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade*, video (Atlanta, Georgia: FJK Life Arts Films, 2012).

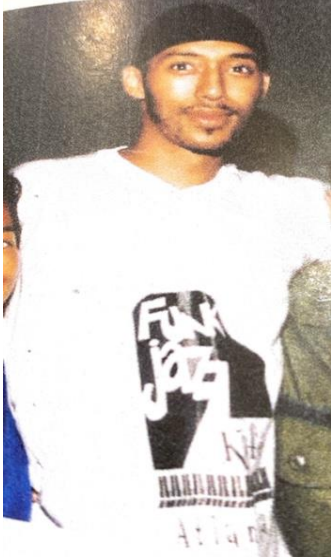


Figure 4.1.1 Jason Orr courtesy of Jason Orr

When thinking about FunkJazz Kafé and what FunkJazz Kafé would grow to be, Orr had to assess the needs of the city. Non-commercial radio stations such as WRFG FM, WRAS, and WCLK fed the city R&B, Jazz, and Soul music from previous decades and mixed in new artists from the 1990s. Current WCLK DJ and Atlanta native, Jamal Ahmad recalled the work of his predecessors, Ken Rye and Ken Batie, whom he called “mavericks” for exploring different genres on traditional Jazz radio.⁶⁸ The young people who listened to non-commercial radio on their commutes craved a place where they could hear live music. In the early 1990s, Atlanta could get their need for live bands met if they attended House of Love, which was a party hosted in a loft owned by Randall Truesdale. Word of mouth spread that “House of Love” was the place to be. Unfortunately, the event came to a halt after nervous code violations for operating such a large event in a residential space. This created a need in the market for live Jazz, Funk, and Soul, and Orr was ready to fill it.

⁶⁸ Jamal Ahmed, Atlanta in the 1990s Interview, interview conducted by Nathalie Fox, via phone (April 10,2020).

4.2 Funk It Up

In 1994, Orr held the first FunkJazz Kafé at the famous Royal Peacock.⁶⁹ While the event was new, it felt familiar, like a family reunion, because the live music scene in Atlanta was small, and oftentimes, crowds knew each other or moved in the same circles. The house band known as the Chronicle put together by percussionist John “Lil John” Roberts, who knew Orr through his occasional work with the Original Man, was paired with a familiar face like Bone Crusher of Lyrical Giants, Joi Gilliam, and Speech of Arrested Development.⁷⁰ The audience was amused with the ability of the musicianship from the Chronicle. Their knowledge of music allowed them to play various genres with ease; they were not just a Jazz band, a Soul band, or a Funk band, they perfected several genres, and they continually pushed musical limits. The audience also heard the house disc jockey, DJ Kemit, who created a set filled with Soul grooves, Afrobeat, and Hip-hop classics. While the Chronicle and Dj Kemit were permanent fixtures of FunkJazz Kafé as the house band and house disc jockey, the acts changed every festival to ensure that crowds were introduced to new artists. Notable FunkJazz Kafé alumni include Akon, Caron Wheeler, Too \$hort, Erykah Badu, Bilal, Van Hunt, Raphael Saadiq, Loose Ends, Marsha Ambrosius, Nappy Roots, and Meshell Ndegeocello.⁷¹ When interviewing musicians and FunkJazz Kafé attendees, both agreed that they never went to a FunkJazz Kafé and left unsatisfied by the musical acts, proving that lightning does strike twice or in the case of FunkJazz Kafé, forty-one times.

In September of 1995, FunkJazz Kafé attendees packed the King Plow Arts Center. Singer Dionne Farris was present but only as an attendee. According to Farris, she dodged Orr

⁶⁹ The Royal Peacock is a night club located on Auburn Avenue. As a part of Chitlin Circuit the night club saw several famous African American acts during the 1950 and 1960s where it was a staple in Atlanta nightlife

⁷⁰ Ibid. FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors Book. Courtesy of Jason Orr, 2019

⁷¹ FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019; Orr, Music Interview, February 10,2020

the entire night to avoid performing.⁷² However, Farris’s plans of only being a casual attendee were short-lived as Orr called her to the stage, saying, “the people want you to sing.” She stood by her decision not to perform. This did not work for Orr or the other attendees of FunkJazz Kafé. Orr stepped away from the mic, waded through the crowd to Farris, put her on his shoulders, and personally delivered her to the stage. Then Roberts counted off, and the music started, Farris stated she was still in shock and voiced into the mic “I do not have anything to sing.” In the *Diary of a Decade* interview, Farris stated that as soon as she spoke into the mic, something magical happened; she described it as “the spirit took over.”⁷³ Farris sang the first thing that came to mind: “I do not know what to say, yeah/I do not have anything to say/Every time I open my mouth, I am not sure what is going to come out.”⁷⁴ When talking about Farris’ performance, percussionist Little John Roberts said that “it was spontaneous and just the right thing at the right time. It was always like we were in tune with the universe. It was God moving through that event.”⁷⁵

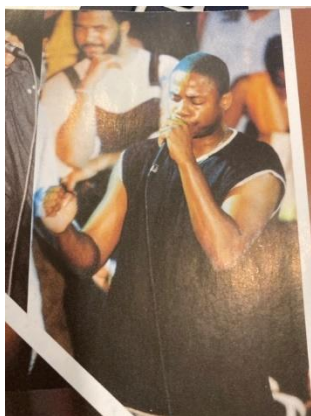


Figure 4.2.1 Doug E Fresh performing at FunkJazz Kafé located in the 25th Anniversary Booklet courtesy of Jason Orr

⁷² Jason Orr, *Funkjazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade*, video (Atlanta, Georgia: FJK Life Arts Films, 2012).

⁷³ Jason Orr, *FunkJazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade*, 2012.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Farris' improvisation was spectacular; however, improvisation was not uncommon at FunkJazz Kafé. Artists who saw FunkJazz Kafé as a safe place used the stage to try different materials and just have fun with the audience. On October 3, 1998, FunkJazz Kafé attendees participated as Hip-Hop pioneer Doug E. Fresh led the crowd in a memorable call and response session. Fresh, known as the Human Beat Box, used his mouth to make the beat of Sweet Green Fields by rock duo Seals and Crofts; the Chronicle picked the beat up almost instantly. Fresh informed the crowd they were going to play a game that required the crowd to "fill in a blank word when they hear it."⁷⁶ The crowd roared, cheering Fresh on as they waited for what was next. Fresh asked the crowd, "one plus one equals," they echoed "two." Next, Fresh asked, "the people you hang around are your"? FunkJazz Kafé attendees replied, "crew."⁷⁷ Fresh's game lasted several rounds before he ended the game by tricking the audience into saying they eat soup with a fork, which was an easy mistake, as the couplets that proceeded the joke ended with answers ending in "ork" such as New York, pork, and cork. Percussionist John "Lil John" Roberts called the performance with Doug E. Fresh "great," and he noted, "it was spontaneous, no practices or rehearsals."⁷⁸ The interactions between Doug E. Fresh, the house band, and FunkJazz Kafé attendees relied on the call-and-response pattern which was a practice among various ethnic groups in Africa, then woven into the Ring Shout practiced by enslaved people in the West Indies and the United States which solidified its use in African American music tradition.⁷⁹ The use of the familiar call-and-response allowed for the musician, the band, and the audience to take a journey together

⁷⁶ Jason Orr, *FunkJazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade*, 2012.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory And The Foundations Of Black America* (New York, NY: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013). 1,24-26,45,56.

even if they did not know where the improvisation would take them, which was the beauty of FunkJazz Kafé for performers and attendees alike.

4.3 Hip Hop the CNN For The Black Community

During interviews, Orr stated that the purpose of FunkJazz Kafé was always “cultural preservation, cultural innovation, and cultural education.”⁸⁰ While he sought to preserve the genres of Funk, Jazz, and Soul, he was opened to performers who were from other genres, such as Hip-hop and Rap, to ensure his goal of cultural preservation, cultural innovation, and cultural education. FunkJazz Kafé used the performance of groups such as Public Enemy along with Outkast and Goodie Mob from Atlanta’s own Dungeon Family to educate festival attendees on current events and conditions within the black community.

Public Enemy was formed by Carlton Ridenour, known as Chuck D, and his college friend William Drayton, known to the world as Flavor Flav.⁸¹ Later, disc jockey Norman Rogers, known as Terminator X, along with Richard Griffin, known as Professor Griff, was added to the group. While the members came from different backgrounds, they all remembered their formative years of childhood during the turbulent 1960s marked with assassinations, Federal opposition to the Black Panther Party, and extreme protest of the Vietnam conflict. While members recognized their privilege of growing up in Staten Island as compared to the conditions that their other family members and friends faced in the Bronx or Harlem, it was clear that there was no shortage of racism in Staten Island’s Roosevelt neighborhood.

⁸⁰ Orr, Music Interview, February 10,2020.

⁸¹ Jason Orr, FunkJazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade, 2012.

The experiences they faced growing up profoundly shaped their personas as they formed the group Public Enemy. Ridenour, with his heavy voice and witty, sharp lyrics, took on a role like that of the griot on the African continent. Griots told poems and oral histories, often accompanied by music, similar to the way Ridenour used vivid imagery to lay scenes for listeners throughout his lyrics.⁸² Griffin was known as Professor Griff and took on the role of Minister of Information. Throughout the world, those who hold the government title Minister of Information hold the responsibility of keeping citizens aware of domestic and foreign governmental policies; they usually do so through a series of publicity and propaganda campaigns. Griffin took the title seriously and used Hip-Hop to spread information to the masses.”⁸³ Griffin explained that he saw his craft as a “luxury.” Griffin recalled the hardships of the Ministers of Information from other generations, specifically members of the Black Panther Party, whom he stated: “viewed as the enemy by the mainstream media and spent time in crossfires, literally dodging bullets.”⁸⁴ Griffin considered himself fortunate that he was able to use his music and lyrics to reach the people through Hip-hop, which he called “higher infinite power healing our people.”⁸⁵ Griffin felt that the key to helping the Black community rise against the ongoing systemic oppression and frightening new problems such as the crack epidemic and the increasing numbers of HIV/AIDS might be in the past protest that the hip-hop generation saw when they were children in the 1960s and the 1970s. Much as the Black Arts movement did in a previous generation, Public Enemy used their art form as the expressive arm of Black Power.

⁸² Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory And The Foundations Of Black America* (New York, NY: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013). 23.

⁸³ Richard Griffin, Involvement in FunkJazz Kafé, interview by Nathalie Fox, via phone(April,10,2020).

⁸⁴ Griffin, Involvement in FunkJazz Kafé, April 10,2020.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

When asked how he felt about performing at FunkJazz Kafé, Griffin stated, “it was a rare situation because, at that particular time, it [performing in Atlanta] was like performing in front of a Black capitol.” When trying to describe the unique feeling he had from performing at FunkJazz Kafé, Griffin described the experience as the thrill one might feel when they have just ridden a roller coaster. Griffin also shared how performing at FunkJazz Kafé was rejuvenating as an artist, he explained: “this might sound weird, but at the time, we were mainly performing in front of a white audience.” Before the early 2000s, when Public Enemy graced the stage of FunkJazz Kafé, they found themselves extremely popular among white youth and other groups, despite their highly Black Nationalist lyrics. What these audiences most identified with Public Enemy was music that expressed the rage and anti-establishment sentiment they were feeling. When Public Enemy was not performing, the members were still involved with spreading their message to the attendees at FunkJazz Kafé. Griffin was a vendor in the marketplace where he sold copies of his books. When asked about his FunkJazz Kafé experience as a vendor, Griffin said, “I was excited by the level of conversation from people that looked like me but might have locs [locked hair] or a bald head. It was very intuitive, intellectual thoughts, and there were sometimes some challenges. Everyone there did not agree.”⁸⁶ For Griffin and FunkJazz Kafé attendees, the festival offered a chance for ideas to be exchanged between black people of different careers, religions, socio-economic backgrounds, and promoted unity across the African Diaspora. While Griffin was excited to have conversations with people in the various FunkJazz Kafé suites, he also enjoyed seeing the new “Ministers of Information,” such as Organized Noize’s Dungeon Family, Outkast, and Goodie Mob share their views on the FunkJazz stage.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Organized Noize is an Atlanta based production team that consists of Rico Wade, Patrick “Sleepy” Brown, and Raymond “Ray” Murray. In an interview hosted by the City of Atlanta’s Office of Cultural Affairs, Wade stated that the members of the Organized Noize were always involved with music. For instance, Sleepy Brown's father was a member of the 1970s funk band Brick and Murray was a “Hip-hop scholar, who studied hip-hop before it was popular in Atlanta.”⁸⁷ While Organized Noize is based on “the love for hip-hop and thirst for live music,” Wade also said, “we had something to prove.”⁸⁸ Artists like 2 Live Crew and the Geto Boys have represented the southern voice in the hip-hop arena, which was dominated by the east coast and west coast rivalry. Wade felt like there was more work to be done as the rest of the music world did not take the south seriously. The trio got together in hopes they would make a valuable contribution to the art form by rebranding the south as serious musicians.

During the 1980s and early 1990s the Hip-hop genre was dominated by the east and west coast, Atlantans, like Brown, Wade, Murry, knew their city was full of performers that oozed talent, which means Atlanta had the potential to become a serious contender in the new genre. In the I Love Atlanta interview organized by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, members of Organized Noize shared with interviewer Maurice Hobson stories of how in the 1980s and 1990s, older children and teens flocked to skating rinks such as Cascade, Golden Glide, and Jellybeans.⁸⁹ The skating rink allowed teens to skate, and when they finished, teens could chat with their friends, as well as listen to the newest tunes which were played by live disc jockeys. The skating rink was a place for “peacocking” or showing off, so friends often practiced routines to impress the crowd. As teens got older and put away their skates, they turned to teen clubs and talent shows

⁸⁷ Patrick Brown, Raymond Murray, Rico Wade, ELEVATE: Forever I Love Atlanta The Art of Organized Noize, interview by Maurice Hobson , in person (October, 15,2015).

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

held at venues like skating rinks, high schools, and malls.⁹⁰ Atlanta teens took the same tenacity in which they practiced skate routines and focused it on acquiring new music, writing lyrics, creating personas, and developing a stage presence.

For Atlantans like Usher and the women of TLC, the hard work paid off when they were signed to LaFace Records, which was a recording label started by L.A. Reid and Kenneth “Babyface” Edmonds. The two went to Georgia to take advantage of the tax incentives for the media industry, but also to be close to their artist Bobby Brown.⁹¹ To scout local talent LaFace Records held bi-monthly talent showcases. During one of the showcases, Brown and Wade decided to test their singing abilities but were kindly told to focus their talent elsewhere by Perri “Peebles” Reid, who was L.A. Reid's wife, who was instrumental in the label. They respected Reid’s advice as they switched to a more significant role in music production. They walked away, agreeing not to “get caught up in their ego as they were not really singers anyway,” Wade said it was “just a look.”⁹²

This led the duo to seek the help of Murray, who was a fellow producer. Together the trio helped cultivate the talents that radiated in OutKast and Goodie Mob and achieved their goal of showing the world Southern talent. OutKast consisted of Andre “3000” Benjamin and Antwon “Big Boi” Patton.⁹³ The two were from the East Point neighborhood and attended Tri-cities High School, where they would engage in battles during lunch. Eventually, the two stopped the battles, and they joined forces. Soon after deciding to work together, they met Rico Wade. The trio of Organized Noize polished the duo but had a hard time convincing LaFace record of their

⁹⁰ Interview conducted by Maurice Hobson Brown, Murray, Wade, ELEVATE: Forever I Love Atlanta The Art of Organized Noize Hobson, *The Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Interview Conducted by Maurice Brown, Murray, Wade, ELEVATE: Forever I Love Atlanta The Art of Organized Noize, October 2015

potential. Their moment came when they were successful on the soundtrack for the movie *Boomerang*.⁹⁴ Once they solidified their deal with LaFace Records, they realized the responsibility of their new role in the fabric of Hip-hop. Their innovative style kept true to the Atlanta sound by using the real band sound and using Atlanta slang and diction throughout their lyrics. Outkast was the perfect group to work new rap into the festival. FunkJazz Kafé was made by an Atlantan and was his way of helping the city by discovering the talent in their neighborhoods, and attendees support the group whom they saw as one of them. The south dominated several genres of music thanks to musicians like Ray Charles, Little Richard, Gladys Knight, James Brown and bands such as Cameo, S.O.S. Band, and Brick, OutKast showed FunkJazz Kafé attendees that the South also had enough talent to dominate the new genre of Hip-hop as well⁹⁵

While OutKast walked on the stage and told the world “the South got something to say” at the 1995 source awards, Goodie Mob were the Ministers of Information for the Dungeon Family and showed the world who the people in the South were. In the interview held by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, Wade explained that Goodie Mob was the “Atlanta version of Public Enemy.” Since the group was not trying to play into the larger rap conversation, this was a group that used music to tell their story and share a message with the people.⁹⁶ Just as Public Enemy rapped about the conditions they saw in New York in the 1980s, Goodie Mob became the voice of discontent for southerners in the 1990s and early 2000s. The FunkJazz Kafé crowd was highly receptive to Goodie Mob because the audience prided themselves on being intellectuals who

⁹⁴ Ibid.; Hobson, *The Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Interview Conducted by Maurice Brown, Murray, Wade, ELEVATE: Forever I Love Atlanta The Art of Organized Noize, October 2015

⁹⁶ Interview Conducted by Maurice Brown, Murray, Wade, ELEVATE: Forever I Love Atlanta The Art of Organized Noize, October 2015

were looking for the arts to evoke deeper thoughts on current conditions. Similar to the way Public Enemy educated listeners on national topics, Goodie Mob spoke directly to the issues the black community faced in Atlanta and other conditions faced by those that lived in the deep South.

4.4 Diasporic Connections

Orr's vision for FunkJazz Kafé was for the festival to serve as a haven for black artists and attendees. His vision of black was not limited to the North American experience; he wanted his festival to acknowledge artwork of the Diaspora in its totality. While artists from all over the world like Japan's Toshi Kubota answered Orr's call for talented musicians, there was a notable amount of artists from the United Kingdom who answered the call and started their own "British Invasion" of FunkJazz Kafé festivals.⁹⁷ Loose Ends, Caron Wheeler of Soul II Soul, and Omar are all FunkJazz Kafé alumni.

Soul II Soul was a collective from London, who grew popular in the Brixton night club scene for their ability to mix African, Caribbean, British, and African American music. The Black world was attracted to their reintroduction of tribal beats, Professor Griff stated, "those beats literally did what the song said...they brought us 'back to life.'"⁹⁸ While the beats were undeniably attractive, the world was stunned by the vocals of powerhouse Caron Wheeler. In the documentary *FunkJazz Kafé: Diary of a Decade* Wheeler said, that while she encouraged others to keep on moving through her music, she was struggling personally, saying "during that time I was trying to inspire myself. I just felt like my life was falling apart. I was trying to get up and

⁹⁷Toshi Kubota is a Japanese recording artist known for his work in the Soul and R&B genre in Japan. His work showed the reach of music of the Diaspora into different markets.

⁹⁸ Jason Orr, *FunkJazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade*, 2012.

pull myself together!”⁹⁹ While Wheeler was trying to motivate herself, she was inspiring others such as Dionne Farris, who called Wheeler’s voice a “direct inspiration sonically.”¹⁰⁰ Cee-Lo Green of Goodie Mob said, “Soul II Soul was a black sound, and it represented something bigger.” Cee-Lo was right; Soul II Soul demonstrated black people in the Western world using music as a way to get back to their African roots. Even though Wheeler performed at FunkJazz Kafé by herself, the impact of Soul II Soul’s African-Centered vibes was replicated at the festival, which reminded the attendees that people across the Diaspora wanted to preserve genres of the past as well.

While Soul II Soul brought the black community back to life with their music, British artist Omar ensured that his music kept love alive with his romantically themed lyrics. Omar Lye-Fook, known as Omar, came from a long line of Jamaican musicians, which started with his maternal grandfather, who was a church saxophonist. Lye-Fook’s father was musically inclined, he grew up playing drums and started a record label named Kongo Records in the 1970s. After watching his brothers become successful in the label, Lye-Fook decided at sixteen it was his turn to join the family business as he released his first single. He left his father’s label and tried with many smaller labels until he found his musical home at RCA, which was owned by Sony. When Omar switched from his father's label to a white-owned British label, he experienced constraints as a black artist, and realize the same constraints were placed on his white colleagues at the label. He recalled an instance where his label asked him to “change the live strings for a synthesizer because they did not want to pay for a band.”¹⁰¹ Lye-Fook agreed but had mixed feelings when

⁹⁹ FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019.; Jason Orr, FunkJazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade, 2012.

¹⁰⁰ Jason Orr, FunkJazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade, 2012.

¹⁰¹ Omar Lye-Fook, Involvement in FunkJazz Kafé Interview, April 15,2020.

he saw Jason Donovan, another artist on the label, in a music video with the same live band the label told him they could not afford.

Lye-Fook later learned that in the United States, Black artists had trouble getting their labels to understand them as well. Artists like Erykah Badu, Raphael Saadiq, Dionne Farris, and Meshell Ndegeocello were navigating through their label's thoughts about what category their music would be marketed to and sold. Many were seen and heard as Neo-Soul artist, a term coined by Kedar Massenburg; the category served as the way for record labels to account for this resurgence in Soul music.¹⁰² Speech, of Arrested Development, said he "had problems with labels because he felt like they divided the movement. All the tags messed them up."¹⁰³

In the United Kingdom, American labels were just as eager to categorize their British artists, coming up with the term Acid Jazz, which used elements of Jazz, Soul, and Funk, like its distant sister Neo-Soul. The difference between the reception of Neo-Soul and Acid Jazz is that artists like Omar did not mind the terms. In an interview, Omar stated, "American artists can survive on solely being on the R&B charts, in the UK you have to be radio-friendly," alluding to the fact that in order to sell in a mainstream market, labels were sometimes necessary to move units.¹⁰⁴

Artists from the United Kingdom and the United States both felt free when they performed at FunkJazz Kafé, which allowed them to leave the pressures from their label behind. Omar stated that FunkJazz Kafé was a different experience, where he could enjoy himself because it was not like a tour where he was on a bus and only in cities to perform. He was in Atlanta just for the event, so he recalls FunkJazz Kafé festivals as a period where he could enjoy

¹⁰² Jason Orr, FunkJazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade, 2012.; Orr, Music Interview, February 10,2020.

¹⁰³ Jason Orr, FunkJazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Omar Lye-Fook, Involvement in FunkJazz Kafé Interview, April 15,2020.

himself by taking in what the city had to offer. While he had a Black niche following as a soul pioneer in the United Kingdom, he admits he was always in awe at the size of the crowd that Atlanta produced during FunkJazz Kafé. Omar shared that it was exhilarating to be around a crowd that looked like him and smelled like him, as he referenced the smell of Egyptian musk, in such a large setting in the United States. While Omar was no stranger to performing in the United States, he recalls that he was still surprised to see FunkJazz Kafé crowds know all the words to his songs, when many of them did not know about the sub-genre of Acid Jazz. Lye-Fook's relationship with FunkJazz Kafé attendees proved that the right music could transcend labels forced by record companies.

5 Fashioning FunkJazz Kafé

During a period when Hip-Hop and Rap controlled mainstream music, Orr's task was to put his vision of the alternative, FunkJazz Kafé, into the minds of festival attendees. Orr, who believed profoundly in cultural innovation, tried new advertisement practices like keeping crowds in the dark on who would be performing and incorporating new technology such as the internet. Many artists' first experiences were as attendees, who loved the atmosphere, so they were elated when Orr asked them to share their talents. Through Orr's hard work and the attendee's faithfulness, FunkJazz Kafé's growing popularity interested corporations who were seeking to mend their relationships with the black community.

5.1 Marketing to Attendees

On August 2, 1994, an excited young Orr was preparing himself for the first official FunkJazz Kafé at the Royal Peacock in downtown Atlanta. He made flyers, advertising the event with Bobby Byrd as the guest of the night. Bobby Byrd was known for lending his voice to the call and response portions on several James Browns track such as "Get Up (I Feel Like Being a Sex-Machine)." Unfortunately, Bobby Byrd canceled at the last minute for the event, and it put Orr in a quandary. In an interview, Orr revealed his feelings of embarrassment when he was not able to provide an audience with what was promised through flyers and other promotions. This incident changed the way that Orr marketed future FunkJazz Kafé to attendees. After Byrd canceled, Orr vowed never to advertise specific acts or appearances for his FunkJazz Kafé before the event. He admits that for many promoters, this style would not have worked, but his years in

the entertainment industry allowed him to develop a reputation for knowing good music, so the crowds came even if they did not know who was to perform.

In the early years of FunkJazz Kafé, Orr used flyers to promote the festivals. Since he did not announce the talent for upcoming events, he relied heavily on eye-catching graphics to gain the attention of potential attendees. The need for the perfect flyer led him to flex his artistic muscles and create a FunkJazz Kafé logo. Orr asserted that the FunkJazz Kafé logo came to him in the middle of the night, and he was moved by a commanding spirit to grab a pencil and paper to sketch the vision in his head.¹⁰⁵ The FunkJazz Kafé logo consists of the outline of a grand piano, and in the center of the piano, in a swanky italicized font, the words "The Funk Jazz Kafé" were in large letters.¹⁰⁶



Figure 5.1.1 FunkJazz Kafé Logo

At the beginning of FunkJazz Kafé, Orr would personally drop off flyers and window posters to businesses around metro-Atlanta. To spread the word of FunkJazz Kafé, he specifically targeted black clothing stores, barbershops and hair salons, and restaurants. While

¹⁰⁵ Jason Orr, Marketing Interview, interview by author, in person (Wolf Creek Ampitheatre, Febuary, 10, 2020).

¹⁰⁶ FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors Book. Courtesy of Jason Orr, 2019.

several locations were supportive, Orr remembered the extra enthusiasm from the owners of black record shops such as Earwax Records in Midtown and Moods Music in the Little Five Points neighborhood; the connection seemed natural because they were all in the business of cultural preservation. With FunkJazz Kafé, Orr hoped to preserve the Soul, Funk, and Jazz genres of previous decades, and the owners of record shops were trying to protect the use of wax records as the means of listening to the genres Orr was concerned with preserving.

In 1994, Orr hosted the first FunkJazz Kafé in July and the second one in November.¹⁰⁷ During these events, Orr had the foresight to collect data such as the names and mailing addresses of the festival attendees.¹⁰⁸ The data was helpful when he promoted the next FunkJazz Kafé, held on March 17, 1995. The data collected in the first year of FunkJazz Kafé allowed him to mail flyers to the addresses of previous festival attendees, creating repeat attendees. Mailing flyers directly to the homes of FunkJazz Kafé attendees meant they knew about upcoming events; in case they never saw flyers at their barbershops or favorite record store.¹⁰⁹

The local college and university newspapers and other media outlets at Georgia State University and the Atlanta University Center were also crucial for advertising and promoting FunkJazz Kafé. While Orr did interviews and bought advertisement space in the newspapers, college students who wrote articles detailing their experiences at FunkJazz Kafés were very influential in getting their classmates to attend FunkJazz Kafé festivals. During my research, I was given access to the FunkJazz Kafé marketing pamphlet, which suggests that 62% of FunkJazz Kafé attendees were "attending college" in 1998.¹¹⁰ The same pamphlet shows that the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Orr, Marketing Interview, February 10, 2020.

¹⁰⁹ For the early FunkJazz Kafé's sending letter via postage was adequate but was phased out as the price of stamps increased, and the popularity of other forms of technology became available

¹¹⁰ Jason Orr, FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet. Courtesy of Jason Orr, 1998.

largest cohort of FunkJazz attendees was 24-28 years old, hinting that patrons introduced to the festival in college remained customers well into their early thirties if they continued to attend the festivals.¹¹¹

In October of 2002, Corrine Edelin reported FunkJazz Kafé as an "underground phenomenon" in the *Spelman Spotlight*.¹¹² Edelin opens the article by saying, "At a time when people need to depend on each other most, there are very few places we, meaning young and black, can go to be with one another."¹¹³ Edelin echoed the need of young people to shed the feelings of fear due to 9/11, the terrorist attacks that brought down the World Trade Center in New York City. She called for black people to gather and enjoy each other in a post-9/11 America. Edelin notes that while some found comfort in "grinding in the club," others were looking for more than sweaty dancing and the exchange of numbers on a napkin on a night out. Edelin assured other students that FunkJazz Kafé was a great way to get exposure to new talent since FunkJazz Kafé was a "melting pot of for all forms of self-expression; art, song, spoken word, food, fashion, and music."¹¹⁴

In *The Signal*, Georgia State University's newspaper, journalist Vonetta DeVonish described FunkJazz Kafé as "unlike the typical Saturday night at the club."¹¹⁵ DeVonish wrote that FunkJazz Kafé offered a variety of activities, such as "smooth [J]azz, art, and poetry."¹¹⁶ Her article was focused on the first FunkJazz Kafé of the new millennium taking place on January 15, 2000. She convinced readers that FunkJazz Kafé was an excellent place to turn over a new leaf for the new year and try new experiences. DeVonish encouraged her coeds to act fast and

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Corrine Edelin, "The Under Ground Phenomenon : Funk Jazz, What Is It?", *Spelman Spotlight*, 2002.

¹¹³ Edelin, "The Unger Ground Phenomenon: Funk Jazzm What Is It?,". 2002.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Vonetta DeVonish, "Funkjazz Kafé Returns", *Georgia State Signal*, 2000.

¹¹⁶ DeVonish, "FunkJazz Returns", *Georgia State University Signal*, 2000.

pre-buy tickets at EarWax Records because the event was known to sell out at the door.¹¹⁷ She ended the article with a call to action, asking students to remember to bring canned goods to get \$5 off the original ticket price of \$20. For those not sold by the promise of a good time, Devonish hoped the chance to help the community would appeal to the emotional side of her coeds, leading them to take a study break and attend the festival.

During the turn of the century, Georgia State University started an online streaming platform called "The Spot" to reach listeners over the internet. According to DeVonish, the purpose of The Spot was to provide coverage on diverse topics such as women's life and development along with black life and culture, which were previously overlooked by campus media.¹¹⁸ Mark Henderson, the promotions chairperson, stated, "the purpose is to inform students about current activities around campus and in the city."¹¹⁹ By 2000, when "The Spot" started streaming, FunkJazz Kafé was at its prime and Orr hosted festivals quarterly in April, July, and October of the first year of the new millennium.¹²⁰ The high frequency of FunkJazz Kafé Festivals made it the perfect place for members of "The Spot" to advertise to those on campus looking to find a community that prioritized the Black Arts.

Just as universities were experimenting with new technology, Orr also used the invention of the internet to market to FunkJazz Kafé to attendees. With the help of Deangela Duff and James Harris, Orr was able to launch FunkJazz Kafé.com in the fall of 1995.¹²¹ When talking about the website, he laughed at the basic design but recalled the importance of the guestbook feature in promoting FunkJazz Kafé. The guestbook allowed for FunkJazz Kafé attendees to

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Vonetta DeVonish, "The Spotlight Programs Board Brings Internet Radio To GSU With "The Spot", Georgia State University Signal, 2000.

¹¹⁹ Devonish, "*The Spotlight Programs Board Brings Internet Radio To GSU With 'The Spot'*".

¹²⁰ FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors Book. Courtesy of Jason Orr, 2019.

¹²¹ Orr, Marketing Interview, February 10, 2020.

share their thoughts and memories about FunkJazz Kafés they previously attended. The testimonials on the FunkJazzKafé.com guestbook were also a successful advertisement tool as potential customers could view the webpage from any location, taking FunkJazz Kafé's sphere of influence beyond the greater Atlanta area. While cultural preservation was a motivation for Orr to host FunkJazz Kafé, the use of the FunkJazz Kafé website as archival data that helps document culture of the 1990s adds to the legacy of FunkJazz Kafé, as early data from the website shows how the Black Arts community intertwined new innovations such as the internet with older artforms.

5.2 Marketing to Performers

In the early years of the FunkJazz Kafé, Orr had to sell his ideas not only to FunkJazz Kafé attendees but also to performers that participated in the festival. Orr was always on the lookout for new talent to help expand the horizons of FunkJazz Kafé attendees. In an interview, Orr articulated that most artists were receptive of performing at FunkJazz Kafé because it avoided a potential "burn out" in the Atlanta market. As a manager in the music industry, he furthered explained the two ways FunkJazz Kafé helped artists avoid the metaphorical burnout, which was not announcing talent and performances built around a sampling experience.¹²²

Orr mentioned that the first way to avoid the burnout was his decision to not disclose the talent at FunkJazz Kafé, which changed the relationship between artists and their following. In other areas of the entertainment industry, the artist tried to prevent overworking their market, usually adding ample space between visits in cities. FunkJazz Kafé's marketing allowed for musicians to do their tour appearances in Atlanta, while still providing the element of surprise

¹²² Ibid.

and excitement for their fans, who saw them on stage at FunkJazz Kafé. Many artists used this to their advantage and asked Orr if they could perform, if there were a FunkJazz Kafé, while they were in town for other events. The shock and excitement of fans outweighed the financial cost of seeing the same artist twice in a short period.

The second way that FunkJazz Kafé alleviated the burnout faced by musicians was through what Orr called the "scratch and sniff" experience.¹²³ As a festival, Orr designed FunkJazz Kafé so that attendees could enjoy a variety of new activities in small intervals. The sampling nature of FunkJazz Kafé alleviated musicians from performing an entire set, visual artist from painting enough artwork for an entire exhibit, or vendors from bringing everything in their stock. Instead, Orr directed musicians to perform only one or two songs, the visual artists displayed a subset of their finished artwork, and fashion designers only brought samples of their collections. The scratch and sniff aspect was attractive as it allowed for artistic freedom as musicians tried improvisations or a new song, the visual artists tried new methods, and vendors passed around samples of new products.

¹²³ Ibid.



Figure 5.2.1 Jamie Foxx Feeling the Funk located in the 25th Anniversary Booklet courtesy of Jason Orr.

As FunkJazz Kafé grew, Orr found himself being asked by the artists to perform because of their love for the festival. In the documentary *FunkJazz Kafé: Diary of a Decade*, musician Van Hunt said that "he loved performing at FunkJazz Kafé so much that he would have paid Jason to perform at the festivals."¹²⁴ Artists who participated in FunkJazz shared the same amusement with the festival as the attendees. International artists such as Omar claimed to have never experienced anything like the festival after years of travel.¹²⁵ In the FunkJazz Kafé documentary and the FunkJazz Kafé 25th-anniversary collector's book, artists were photographed enjoying themselves in various locations throughout the festival. One might see a young Jamie Foxx dancing, Professor Griff from Public Enemy engaged in conversation with other attendees in the FunkJazz marketplace, or Erykah Badu, Joi, super-producer Leslie Brathwaite, and Chili

¹²⁴ Jason Orr, *Funkjazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade*, video (Atlanta, Georgia: FJK Life Arts Films, 2012).

¹²⁵ Omar Lye-Fook, Omar's experience at FunkJazz Kafé, interview by author, phone, 2020.

of TLC hanging out.¹²⁶ For many artists, FunkJazz Kafé was more than just a gig as it offered a chance to be with like-minded people.



Figure 5.2.2 Erykah Badu, Joi, super-producer Leslie Brathwaite, and Chili of TLC hanging out located in the 25th Anniversary Booklet curtesy of Jason Orr.

5.3 Venues

The first FunkJazz Kafé was held at the Royal Peacock, a club of cultural significance in Atlanta. This location was fitting, given the Royal Peacock's significance in the black entertainment industry.¹²⁷ The Royal Peacock originally operated as the Top Hat from 1937 until 1949, when it was reopened as the Royal Peacock by businesswoman Carrie Cunningham.¹²⁸ Reports state that Cunningham acquired the club so that her band director

¹²⁶ Jason Orr, FunkJazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade, 2012.; FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019.

¹²⁷ Orr, Marketing Interview, 2020.

¹²⁸ Skip Mason, "Businesswoman Carrie Cunningham Ran Royal Hotel And Royal Peacock Club", *Atlanta Daily World*, 1999,

son, Red McCallister, would have a safe place to play.¹²⁹ Cunningham decided to venture into the night club business after her son faced several confrontations with police in the early hours of the morning after they would leave performances. Cunningham's Royal Peacock also created a haven for other black musicians to safely perform in the city of Atlanta, making her club one of the most well-known establishments on the Chitlin Circuit in the country. Musical acts such as Etta James, James Brown, and Ray Charles performed at the Royal Peacock during the 1950s and 1960s.¹³⁰ It only fitted that FunkJazz Kafé, the modern, safe haven for musicians and artists, be held at the Royal Peacock. As the festival grew, Orr had to leave the historic venue behind to find a venue that could hold the growing elements of the FunkJazz Kafé festival.

Instead of choosing one specific venue, FunkJazz Kafé utilized various venues within Atlanta. However, the Tabernacle, which was a church turned into a concert venue, was utilized more than any other venue during FunkJazz Kafé's ten-year run from 1994-2004. The Tabernacle held a total of nineteen of the forty-one festivals held during the decade.¹³¹ The Tabernacle was also the home of FunkJazz Kafé during the tenth and twenty-fifth anniversaries of the festival. The Tabernacle was a functioning place of worship known as The Tabernacle Baptist Church from 1911 to 1994. However, in the 1950s, attendance started to decline and never recovered, making it hard for the Church to cover the overhead cost of the large venue. In 1994, the church was sold for \$2.2 million to an investment group headed by James Cummings, who hoped to use

¹²⁹ Manson, "Businesswoman Carrie Cunningham Ran Royal Hotel and Royak Peacock Club", 1999.

¹³⁰ Atlanta Daily World, "Royal Peacock Presents Etta James", September 21, 1963, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpatlantadailyworld/docview/491296037/7FFE50489E924EA3PQ/45?accountid=11226>; Atlanta Daily World, "The James Brown New Show", February 1963, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpatlantadailyworld/docview/491279413/279593E9398A416CPQ/6?accountid=11226>; Atlanta Daily World, "Night Life Review", September 11, 1952, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpatlantadailyworld/docview/490980002/C1D62F038534E4APQ/18?accountid=11226>

¹³¹ Orr, FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019.

its location to draw people to it during the 1996 Olympics.¹³² Even though it seemed like a promising business venture, no development took place for two years. The future of the old church was unclear until days before the Centennial Olympics when Isaac Taggart and partner Lance Sterling bought the venue. They planned to convert the space into a House of Blues as they did in other cities such as New Orleans, Chicago, and Los Angeles.¹³³

The House of Blues was opened just in time for the Olympics, where greats such as James Brown, Al Green, James Cotton were able to perform.¹³⁴ Unfortunately, the interest in the new venue did not last past the Olympics, leaving city officials and investors unsure about the future of the building. In 1998 Sterling rebranded the venue as the Tabernacle, but in 1999 he parted ways with his investment as he sold the venue to SFX, which is now Live Nation. Along with a great location downtown and its proximity to public transportation, the size of the Tabernacle was great for Orr's vision for FunkJazz Kafé because it was large enough to hold several different elements of the festival culture due to the many rooms within the venue.

The main hall contained the FunkJazz Kafé main stage, with a capacity of 2,500 people, is where more massive performances were held during FunkJazz Kafé.¹³⁵ This space was the largest within the venue and is the area where larger, more prominent artists performed. The design of the main stage was one of Orr's own creation, and he took pride in designing it for each event. The main stage at FunkJazz Kafé did not resemble a typical stage with a microphone stand and set places for instruments, but mirrored a cozy living room. A personal sketch by Orr depicted couch, a typical house plant, a coffee table with a lava lamp, and bean bag chairs to

¹³² Sallye Salter, "*Historic Downtown Church Sold To Olympic Investors*", Atlanta Constitution, October 15, 1994.

¹³³ Sonia Murray, "*Big Acts Rise From Church Converted Into House Of Blues*", Atlanta Constitution, June 27, 1996.

¹³⁴ Murray, "*Big Acts Rise From Church Converted Into House Of Blues*".

¹³⁵ "The Tabernacle | Live Nation Special Events", [Specialevents.Livenation.Com](https://specialevents.livenation.com/venues/the-tabernacle), 2020, <https://specialevents.livenation.com/venues/the-tabernacle>.

enhance the 1990s vibe. The living room furniture evoked memories of house parties that were reminiscent of scenes from the beginnings of Orr's career. The stage setting presented a nostalgic sentiment of house "rent" parties that were popular in the 1970s and the 1980s. During these parties, children often assisted their parents, and other adults set the stage for these parties by pushing furniture aside to turn the living room into a stage and dance floor. Vendors lined the side of the main hall selling a variety of items. Some of the vendors sold African-centered clothing, artwork including paintings of famous figures such as Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong playing the trumpet, and potters selling their clay works. The center of the room was filled with people dancing and singing along to whatever musician or group took the stage.

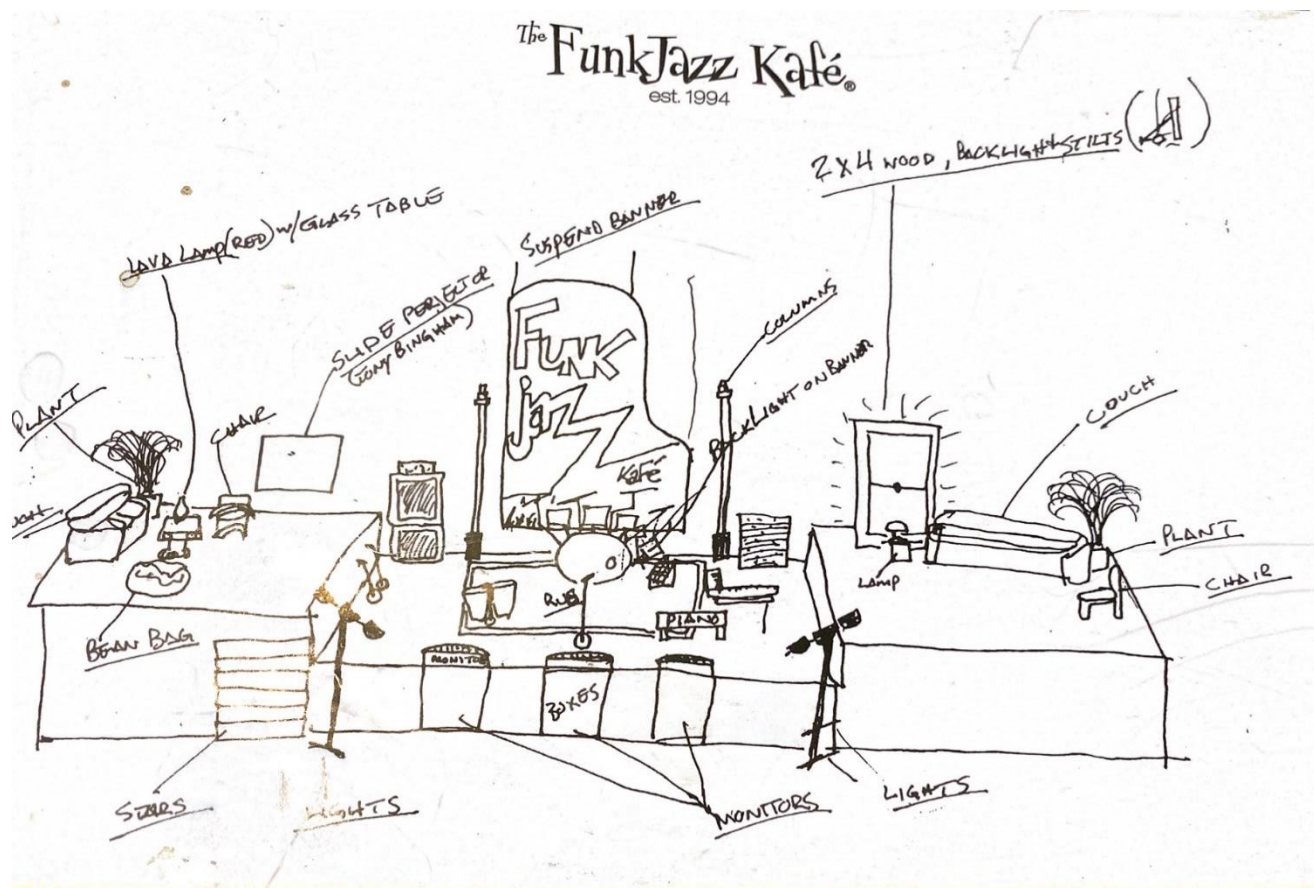


Figure 5.3.1 Figure 5.3 Orr's sketch of the FunkJazz Kafé stage in the 25th Anniversary Collectors Book. Courtesy of Jason Orr

FunkJazz Kafé was a comprehensive concept of all components of the life of a black artist. It provided music, spoken word, independent films, a conversation room, a marketplace, healthcare products, and clean eating alternatives. The Cotton Club on the lower level of the Tabernacle transformed into a bazaar during FunkJazz Kafé.¹³⁶ The FunkJazz Kafé marketplace was full of creativity as vendors showed off their fashion designs, jewelers sold their original pieces, and artists sold various forms of artwork. Attendees could also recharge by grabbing a quick bite from local chefs. The FunkJazz Kafé marketplace was also a place where attendees could watch demonstrations such as fashion shows, Kalinda, mimes, as well as dances from across the African Diaspora.¹³⁷ Since the performance in other areas was not conducive for conversations, the FunkJazz Kafé marketplace became a place for attendees to meet each other and talk about their experiences. The connections developed in the FunkJazz Kafé marketplace helped attendees create friendships that lasted beyond the festival.

The second-largest space at the Tabernacle during the FunkJazz Kafé was "The Room" and the Artist Lounge. The rooms were designed similarly; they shared a lounge design that consisted of leather furniture arranged in a way to promote conversation.¹³⁸ Orr rotated staple FunkJazz Kafé suites such as the Poetry Suite and the Independent Film Suite between The Room and the Artist Lounge. The Poetry Suite was an open mic setting, which gave amateur FunkJazz Kafé attendees a chance to participate alongside professional poets. Defacto, a three-piece band, accompanied the poetry, to enhance the relaxed spoken-word cafe vibe.¹³⁹ When FunkJazz Kafé attendees had their fill of music or browsing the marketplace, they could escape

¹³⁶ FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019.

¹³⁷ Orr, FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019.; Orr, Funkjazz Kafé: Diary Of A Decade, 2012; Orr, FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet, 1998.

¹³⁸ "The Tabernacle | Live Nation Special Events", Specialevents.Livenation.Com, 2020,

¹³⁹ Orr, FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019.; Orr, FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet, 1998.

to the FunkJazz Kafé independent film suite. The film suite introduced festival attendees to the work of black artists. The independent film Suite showed documentaries, comedies, and romances but all from an African-centered perspective. Independent film suite was another testament to Orr's commitment to giving black talent a place to shine without Eurocentric constraints.

To give attendees an enjoyable experience, Orr was determined to use every room, including the compact Eden and VIP Rooms. During other events at the Tabernacle, the rooms were bars where patrons ordered drinks then headed back to their seats, the size of the room did not allow their utilization for much else. However, during FunkJazz Kafé, the rooms were transformed into essential suites. The VIP Room was turned into the Healing Suite, where attendees could get facials, manicures, along with back and foot massages.¹⁴⁰ The masseuses only let a small number of people in the room, which provided an intimate experience for couples or small groups of friends that wanted to enjoy the complimentary services.

The Eden Room was used as the FunkJazz Kafé House Party Suite. This suite was designed to flood attendees with memories of house parties from their high school and college years. This suite offered musical variety as different DJs worked the booth in fifteen-minute segments. The attendees recalled that this suite remained packed at all times of the night, which sometimes made it impossible to squeeze into an already small room. To keep the suite from violating safety codes, Orr added a red velvet rope to the entrance of the suite, which was controlled by security. Orr hoped that the rope and security would promote the flow of traffic as attendees moved throughout the venue to visit other suites. However, at some festivals, it had the opposite effect as FunkJazz Kafé attendees waited in line to enter the suite.

¹⁴⁰ Orr, FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019.; Orr, FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet, 1998.

5.4 Corporate Sponsorship

Like many festival curators, Orr could not financially support an entire festival by himself, which led him to look for sponsorship to help foster the festival's growth. When speaking on the relationship between FunkJazz Kafé and the corporate sponsors, Orr stated, "without corporate sponsorship, the festival would not have happened."¹⁴¹ Just as he wanted to provide festival attendees with a unique experience, he was also concerned with giving sponsors an exceptional experience when they partnered with FunkJazz Kafé.

Since the beginning of FunkJazz Kafé, Orr collected data from FunkJazz Kafé attendees to help the success of the festival. What started as FunkJazz Kafé volunteers collecting the mailing addresses of attendees for the mailing list turned into volunteers asking attendees to complete a questionnaire that collected information about attendee's lifestyles outside of the festival. The questionnaire focused primarily on the crowd's spending habits, asking questions such as their income level, their interest in buying a car, their favorite alcoholic beverages.¹⁴² Orr compiled this data into a small booklet to help him market FunkJazz Kafé to potential corporate sponsors.¹⁴³

Over the 25 years of FunkJazz Kafé, the festival received sponsorship from General Motors, Jack Daniels, Volvo, Tanqueray, Comcast, MillerCoors, Ford, Heineken, and many more.¹⁴⁴ In initial meetings with corporate sponsors, Orr shared the data he collected from the questionnaires completed by FunkJazz Kafé attendees. Corporations saw the full range of data

¹⁴¹ Orr, Marketing Interview, 2020.

¹⁴² "FunkJazz Kafé Fam-base Questionnaire" provided by Jason Orr.

¹⁴³ FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet, 1998.

¹⁴⁴ Orr, FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019.; Orr, FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet, 1998.

collected over the years and decided FunkJazz Kafé would be a great event to do their data collection to help them understand the black market. Several corporations set up booths in the FunkJazz Kafé marketplace, which allowed their brand representatives to interact with attendees. While the marketplace worked for some corporations like Volvo and Ford, Orr found out the FunkJazz Kafé suites were more helpful for other corporations to interact with festival attendees. Audio companies such as Bang & Olufsen and Bose products were placed throughout the festival, which allowed attendees to hear the quality of the sound system verses hear the praises from sales representatives.

While Orr was happy to have corporate sponsors, he shared that sometimes it was a struggle getting corporations to adhere to his vision. The FunkJazz Kafé house party suite was one of the more trafficked areas during the festival, which made it great for advertising to festival attendees. Miller Brewing Company jumped at the opportunity to host the house party suite for the use of the bar with hopes of promoting their products. While Orr was happy to work with a national brewery, he was disappointed in the choice of Miller Brewing Company to serve Miller Lite Ice, known for its high alcohol content but cheap cost. While Miller Lite Ice House was not malt liquor, it was commonly sold in the "40 oz" targeted towards black communities. Orr felt that Miller Brewing Company misunderstood the audience that attended FunkJazz Kafé. His experience with Miller Brewing Company was not unique and was seen as a larger scheme of corporations in the alcohol industry trying to correct the past. In 1989, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* journalist, Cynthia Duracanic, articulated the complicated relationship between the targeted advertisement from large American breweries and the Black population in America.¹⁴⁵ In cities with large black populations such as Los Angeles and Detroit, citizens tried to bring

¹⁴⁵ Cynthia Duracanic, "Sign Of The Times: 'Sin Ads Targets Blacks'", Atlanta Constitution, 1989.14A

attention to the disproportionate amount of billboards placed in the inner cities of America. To combat the bad press and legal actions forming against them, large alcohol companies sponsored "black Jazz Festivals, black fashion shows, scholarships for black students, and other forms of black visual art."¹⁴⁶

Since Orr had full control of the festival, it was easy to control the interactions between corporations and FunkJazz Kafé attendees. He created an invent that promoted interactions between corporations and festival attendees but would not allow those interactions to be controlled by the stereotypes that primarily white corporations felt about their black consumers. When Orr felt corporations promoted their agendas over the cultural education and preservation of FunkJazz Kafé, he gracefully looked elsewhere for sponsorship. Orr's ability to keep control of corporate sponsorship kept festival attendees from branding Orr as a corporate sellout. FunkJazz was marketed as a cultural festival for black people, and no amount of money could change that.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

6 The Function of FunkJazz: FunkJazz Kafé and Atlanta's Black Art Scene in the 1990s

The art created during the Harlem Renaissance, a social and artistic movement, served as the expressive arm for the ideas of the New Negro Movement. The relationship between new political movements, coupled with expressive artistic movements, has been paired several times in the black community since the Harlem Renaissance. Atlanta's black art embodies that of a broader history of black political movements expressive arms, as the Black Arts scene in Atlanta served as an expressive arm for the political change brought on by black politics during the 1970s. The election of Maynard Jackson led to the creation of the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, which aimed to make art more accessible to the citizens of Atlanta.¹⁴⁷ The Bureau of Cultural Affairs was responsible for the creation of The Neighborhood Arts Center, which allowed for Atlantans to form connections to the artwork of black artists through the chance to take a variety of classes that led to community members' interest in visual and performing arts.¹⁴⁸ The Bureau of Cultural Affairs also started programs such as the Atlanta Jazz Series, which provided Atlanta with free concerts every weekend leading up to the Atlanta Jazz Festival on Memorial Day weekend. Carrie Orr, a single mother, took advantage of these free events and used the budding arts and festival culture of Atlanta to her entertain her son Jason. Growing up in Atlanta in the 1970s, and seeing the work of the Bureau of Cultural Affairs during the Jackson administration, Orr was introduced to how festivals centered around the Black Arts could be used for cultural preservation, cultural innovation, and cultural education.

To better understand the role FunkJazz Kafé played in the Atlanta Black Arts scene in the 1990s, this study examined the eccentric name of the festival. Orr described funk as "the grittiest

¹⁴⁷ Maurice J Hobson, *The Legend Of Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*, 1st ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017). 225.

¹⁴⁸ Rachanice Candy Patrice Tate, "Our Art Itself Was Our Activism" *Atlanta's Neighborhood Arts Center, 1975-1990* (Ph.D, Clark Atlanta University, 2019).110-112.

expression one came come up with."¹⁴⁹ In the black community, funk is more than a genre of music; it is the way black people add an inherently black spin on regular activities in their lives in a Eurocentric hegemony. Funk is the way one seasons their food without a recipe, tilts their hat to an angle to where it defies gravity by staying on their head, the idea that even walking down the street displays a certain amount of confidence and swagger. Musically, the genre of Jazz was known for its improvisation that promoted a flow between instruments that mirrored dialogue between people. During FunkJazz Kafé festivals, attendees were in an environment that encouraged conversation about the representation of black people through the arts, both musical and visual, along with conversations surrounding local, state, national, and international politics. For centuries in Europe, cafés have been a place of social interactions where sobering drinks like coffee promoted conversation in comparison to the other public places such as pubs, which profit off the drunkenness of patrons. While Orr added his funk to the word and stylized café as "Kafé," FunkJazz Kafé was designed to join in the tradition of cafes as a place for the Black Arts community to come together to exchange social, political, and economic ideas.

6.1 Visual Arts

During the Harlem Renaissance, visual artists such as Henry Tanner, Aaron Douglas, and Richmond Barthe were responsible for changing the representation of African Americans as they fought against the racist caricatures of their time. They worked what Huggins calls "Africanisms" into their paintings and sculptures in hopes of connecting African life to black life in America.¹⁵⁰ While the work in the Harlem Renaissance centered the African body as the subject, artists did not solely make their art for black consumption. Black artists in the Harlem

¹⁴⁹ Orr, Jason. Movement Interview. Interview by Author . In person. Wolf Creek Amphitheatre, February 10, 2020.

¹⁵⁰Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). 166

Renaissance considered attitudes of white people, as they hoped the humanity added to black subjects by the African-centered gaze would change attitudes towards black people. While black artists in Atlanta during the 1990s used the same mediums of art like sculptures and paintings, their attitudes towards the audience for their art differed. The black artists that participated in FunkJazz Kafé made their artwork specifically for black consumption, which made FunkJazz Kafé a coveted venue to sell artwork.

Maurice Evans, John Mapp, and Adrian Frank were some of the artists that shared their work during FunkJazz Kafé festivals.¹⁵¹ FunkJazz Kafé contained several exhibits where the contemporary black artists could display their artwork of beautiful black bodies, famous black figures, and other elements of black culture. Other visual artists such as Cabi, Michi, and Tony Bingham participated in live exhibits.¹⁵² During the live exhibits, attendees watched artists throw pottery, paint, and create sculptures. FunkJazz Kafé created an environment that facilitated discussions between the artist and the public. The conversations allowed for artists to fully explain the work to potential buyers, an opportunity they would not get if the art were in a standard gallery.

¹⁵¹ FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors Book. Courtesy of Jason Orr, 2019.

¹⁵² Orr, FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors book, 2019.



Figure 6.1.1 Artist Michi is throwing pottery located in the 25th Anniversary Collectors Book courtesy of Jason Orr.

One of the visual artists that participated in FunkJazz Kafé was Fahamu Pecou, who is known for his use of Hip-hop and fine art as commentary on popular culture. Pecou was a young student at the Atlanta College of the Arts during the 1990s. It was during this time that he first heard a colleague, who was two years ahead of him, rave about a "dynamic music and arts event," which was FunkJazz Kafé. When Pecou attended the FunkJazz Kafé festival, he felt that it lived up to the description circulating the visual art world.¹⁵³ The African-centered nature and the emphasis on black culture drew the young Pecou into the festival as it was a staunch difference to the Eurocentric curriculum he experienced at the Atlanta College of the Arts. In an interview, Pecou said, "the motion of attendees walking around to the individual rooms that

¹⁵³ Fahamu Pecou, Pecou's experience at FunkJazz Kafé, interview by author via phone (April 2, 2020).

offered different experiences and then joining friends back to hear live acts on the main stage was one of the most beautiful things he had experienced at an event centered around the arts.



Figure 6.1.2 singer Donnie and Fahamu Pecou at FunkJazz Kafé courtesy of Jason Orr

The next year, Pecou worked at FunkJazz Kafé after being brought on as a production assistant by his friend Kimbo Tom. Kimbo Tom was an event promoter and manager at Ying Yang Café, but during the FunkJazz Kafé festival, he served as a production manager. As an assistant, Pecou moved boxes, furniture, and musical equipment throughout the festival, but he did not mind because of the experience he gained from being in such a creative space. He remembers being star-struck when he witnessed Maurice Daniels painting live on stage at one of his first FunkJazz Kafé festivals. The proximity that FunkJazz provided to the Black Arts scene not only allowed Pecou to understand the technique better; it also helped him get advice from a mature artist whose work he admired for a long time and considered a hero.¹⁵⁴ While Pecou was

a visual artist, he appreciated the information given to him by other creatives such as musicians, who were paving their path in a Eurocentric industry. He also absorbed what he called an "entrepreneurial spirit" from various vendors at FunkJazz Kafé, Kimbo Tom, and Jason Orr. Pecou stated this entrepreneurial spirit led him to move to New York City, where he opened his own graphic design company and grew as an artist. While in New York, he watched Atlanta grow into an epicenter of black culture at the turn of the millennium and decided to move back.

Upon Pecou's return to Atlanta, he participated as a featured visual artist at several FunkJazz Kafé festivals. He did not take the opportunity lightly as he was on the same stage as his idols. The invitation to paint at FunkJazz Kafé made becoming an artist more tangible for Pecou. He felt Eurocentric ideals stifled his reception to the art world in previous attempts. When Pecou was a senior at the College of the Arts in Atlanta, his senior exhibit told the story of his life, which contained raw elements like the story of his mother's murder committed by his father.¹⁵⁵ Pecou remembers the painful experience of his art not being accepted for its content, which unapologetically emphasized his experience as a black man. For Pecou, FunkJazz Kafé was therapeutic as it negated previous experiences where his artwork was misunderstood for its focus on black culture.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.



Figure 6.1.3 Models participating in a live exhibit located in the 25 Anniversary Booklet courtesy of Jason Orr

During FunkJazz Kafé, the visual arts within the festival also included fashion designers. At the festival, just like musicians and other visual artists, fashion designers were not constricted to Eurocentric ideas, which allowed them to experiment with fashion. Some designers focused more on African-centered prints and fabrics, while others created a business by selling size-inclusive lines offering clothes made for the curves of black bodies. In order to create an interactive experience between fashion designers and FunkJazz Kafé attendees, fashion exhibits were placed throughout the festival. Exhibits designed around fashion from Cat Fashions, Couture by Colin Turner, Ubon, and Pieces of Adrene were staples to the FunkJazz Kafé experience. The fashion exhibits placed live models in preconstructed sets that consisted of props such as paintings and ceramic works from other visual artists. The models that participated in the live fashion exhibits melted flawlessly into the prefabricated scenes, standing in place for long periods throughout the events. While there were traditional fashion shows, Orr prioritized the

fashion exhibits for the ability to spark conversation as crowds debated the blurred line between art and fashion.

6.2 Health and Wellness

At the age of twenty-three, when Orr worked as a tax collector while managing Vinnie Bernard and the Original Man, he found himself often exhausted from his long schedule. Once he finished with his day working as a tax collector for the city of Atlanta, he would drive to the city of Stone Mountain to pick up members of the Original Man band, and then drive to Cascade Road in Southwest Atlanta, enduring horrible traffic on Atlanta's interstate 285.¹⁵⁶ The band's dedication pushed them to practice to the wee hours of the mornings, often time leaving Orr with no sleep as he headed back downtown to start another day of collecting taxes. While most people look to the weekend to provide time for relaxation and to prepare themselves for the next week, Orr's weekends were just as busy as his weekdays. He remembered waking up early to cut grass and perform other chores in exchange for a place to practice during the week at the home of Bunnie Jackson-Ransom, who was the mother of the first drummer for the Original Man, Maynard "Buzzy" Jackson III.¹⁵⁷ After cutting grass, he would spend the afternoons preparing equipment and making phone calls to ensure last-minute details for gigs the band had in the evening. Drained and exhausted, Orr knew that he could not continue the same patterns if he wanted to be successful.¹⁵⁸ Orr read the book *African Holistic Health* by Dr. Llaila O. Afrika after a recommendation from friends who were already living a holistic lifestyle. The lifestyle this book promoted changed his life and gave him the balance he needed to continue his dream.

¹⁵⁶ Orr, Movement Interview, 2020.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Llaila O Afrika, *African Holistic Health* (Brooklyn, NY: A & B Publishers Group, 2004).116

African Holistic Health centered around the thought that "European medicine was meant for people of European descent, and African medicine was meant for people of African descent."¹⁵⁹ In this book, Afrika challenges the triage methods of Eurocentric medicine, which he claims aims to treat a body only in time of sickness, offering little or no preventative medicine. In the text, Afrika moves beyond the dominant idea of Eurocentric medicine to encourage people of African descent to follow a holistic lifestyle that treats the "spiritual, mental, and physical causes of disease."¹⁶⁰ As a young man, Orr was fascinated by the African-centered ideas presented in Afrika's book, leading him to make changes in his own life. Orr did so with hopes of gaining energy and a general boost in wellbeing by following the diet Afrika recommended for people of African descent, which consisted of the abundant fruits and vegetables such as okra, yams, millet, papayas, along with other fruits and vegetables found in regions near the equator.¹⁶¹

Being around the Jazz and Funk music industry for a significant amount of time, Orr was familiar with the principle of "no junk in, no soul out" from which many talented people lived their lives. Orr did not believe the myth surrounding drug and alcohol use in the music industry, and Afrika's teachings helped his choice to live an alternative lifestyle. After years in the music industry, Orr saw the effects of drugs and bad eating habits on the creative mind and decided¹⁶² his ideas were too great to be impaired by a poor diet.¹⁶³

While Afrika emphasized herbal remedies and a changed diet, his philosophy preaches that a proper diet is useless without a good flush of one's system through the occasional cleanse.

¹⁵⁹ Afrika, *African Holistic Health*. 4

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.12

¹⁶¹ Ibid.257

¹⁶³ Orr, Movement Interview, 2020.

When talking about the ways Afrika's teachings changed his life, Orr described cleanses as of the utmost importance to someone living a holistic lifestyle. He believed that "without a flush, you are putting the good stuff on top of junk, and if the good stuff mixes with junk, it all becomes junk, and nobody wants junk in their bodies."¹⁶⁴ Afrika teaches the period when one performs a cleanse is not just about removing physical impurities, but also a time to center oneself spiritually through activities such as meditation.¹⁶⁵ During the twenty-fifth anniversary of the FunkJazz Kafé Celebration, Orr was asked, "how does he mentally and physically prepare for FunkJazz Kafé?" he emphasized the importance of cleanses and flushes, such as salt baths every day for a week leading up to the event as a part of his pre-festival ritual.

Afrika states that "African Empires, civilizations, music, art, philosophy, science, medicine and culture is built upon wholistic foods and medicine."¹⁶⁶ The vendors that Orr invited to participate in FunkJazz Kafé were highly influenced by his choice to live a holistic lifestyle that promoted black music, art, and culture. In this, Orr chose to use FunkJazz Kafé as a place to introduce aspects of a holistic lifestyle to those who were not as familiar with the way of life. For several years there was a "healing suite" dedicated to introducing festival attendees to elements of the holistic lifestyle at FunkJazz Kafé. The FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet described the Healing Suite as a "getaway suite with relaxing music, aromas, candles, and fruit accompanied by complimentary facials, manicures, and back and foot massages."¹⁶⁷ The vendors showed attendees simple ways to incorporate elements of a holistic lifestyle into their everyday routines through the demonstrations of massage techniques, natural body care products, and the power of a relaxed state through the help of essential oils and aromatherapies.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Afrika, *African Holistic Health*. 170-175

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. XXXIII

¹⁶⁷ Jason Orr, FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet. Courtesy of Jason Orr, 1998. 7



Figure 6.1.46.3 A look into the Healing Suite located in the 25th Anniversary Book

Orr's choice in food vendors was also influenced by his vision to expose festival attendees to elements of a holistic lifestyle. With systemic racism leading to poverty, black Americans increasingly live in food deserts and have poor access to adequate health care, which leaves a large portion of the community at a higher risk for diabetes and heart disease. Orr felt that educating other people on healthier diets through FunkJazz Kafé was a large part of cultural sustainability because it would help people live longer. Soul Food cuisine, developed during times of enslavement as a means of survival, is high in sodium and fat content, working against any medically recommended diet. Orr convinced vendors to give free samples of holistic recipes to entice people into a holistic lifestyle. Vendors such as Danie Pernell, the owner of First Batch Artisan Food, provided healthier alternatives to food such as black-eyed peas and collard

greens.¹⁶⁸ The samples sent attendees away with hopes they will try recipes outside of the FunkJazz Kafé settings, which supported Orr's goal to promote a holistic lifestyle.

While there is no data to show that FunkJazz Kafé attendees were practicing healthier lifestyle options after FunkJazz Kafé, it seemed that they were undoubtedly influenced by the holistic lifestyle approach while in the FunkJazz Kafé setting. In comparison with modern festival cultures where dehydration from drunkenness and drug use is a common fear, the fact that fruit juice and water sales at forty-seven percent were just as competitive with beer and mixed drink sales at fifty percent.¹⁶⁹ The data collected suggest that if festival cultures curbed the alternative of alcohol and promoted healthier drink choices, crowds would buy into the holistic atmosphere provided by the festival. These statistics show that attendees respected the health and wellness component, and did not view this as a place to overindulge in alcohol, but instead kept things in moderation.

6.3 Community service

Throughout the FunkJazz Kafé tenure, Orr and attendees worked in tandem with local, state, and federal organizations to tackle an array of problems that citizens faced in the 1990s and early 2000s. As an Atlanta native, Orr watched his city change dramatically in the first two decades of his life. He watched lives altered by the harsh repeat offender policies on the state and federal level, natural disasters, and an increase in HIV, all of these events would leave the city in need of help beyond government resources.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸Danie Pernell, conversation with author at the 25th Anniversary FunkJazz Kafé, August 19, 2019.

¹⁶⁹ Jason Orr, FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet. Courtesy of Jason Orr, 1998.

¹⁷⁰ New York Times, "*Beware The Three-Strike Laws*", February 2, 1994.; Atlanta Daily World, "Governor Proposes Modification Of "Two Strikes" Law", 1997; Center for Disease Control and Prevention, HIV and AIDS --- United States, 1981—2000, In *The Morbidity And Mortality Weekly Report* (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2001).

An example of this can be seen on July 4, 1994, when tropical storm Alberto, the first of the season, made headlines instead of the typical festivities that surrounded the independence holiday. Though Alberto's location was concentrated in the Gulf of Mexico; however, its effects reached Southwest, Central, and North Georgia. The storm destroyed Albany and Americus and left parts of Macon and Atlanta flooded.¹⁷¹ The CDC reported that forty-three of Georgia's counties were declared federal disaster areas, and fifty-five of the one hundred fifty-nine counties were considered a disaster area on the state level.¹⁷² The flooding of the Flint and Ocmulgee rivers reached record-breaking heights of thirty-five to forty-five feet, leaving over one hundred dams and watersheds in shambles.¹⁷³ The Macon Telegraph reported that I-75 was flooded with over four feet of water, causing its closure for almost three days.¹⁷⁴ A total of one thousand seven hundred smaller roads and six hundred bridges were out of commission, making it difficult for supplies to reach the residents in the troubled zones. As expected, after any natural disaster, many were left without water and power. With the contaminated water sources and minimal options for food, southern Georgia relied on northern areas to help them through this time of need, making it necessary for stores, charities, and events like FunkJazz Kafé to take donations.¹⁷⁵

The cities destroyed by Alberto in southern Georgia had high black populations. The Atlanta Daily World, a black newspaper connected the black community of the disaster areas to

¹⁷¹ Atlanta Daily World, "'94 Flood Leaves Some Areas Of Our State Devastated", July 12, 1994.

¹⁷² Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Flood-Related Mortality -- Georgia, July 4-14, 1994 In The Morbidity And Mortality Weekly Report (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 1994).

¹⁷³ Macon Telegraph, "*The Flood Of '94 : By The Numbers*", 2004, <https://www.macon.com/news/local/article30133773.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Macon Telegraph, "The Flood of '94".

other black citizens in Georgia, who were eager to help the victims of Alberto. On July 17, the *Atlanta Daily World* published an article titled "Flood Victims Need Our Help." In the article, the *Atlanta Daily World* emphasized the importance of black communities in unaffected parts of the state coming together to help the black communities affected by the storm. The article acknowledged the work of the federal and state government to help the victims, but also mentioned the lengthy wait for the different types of government aid to disperse. The call to action was for the black community to help supplement the assistance of the government in hopes that the victims would get a variety of their needs met. FunkJazz Kafé joined with other corporations and organizations to help send supplies to relief efforts.¹⁷⁶

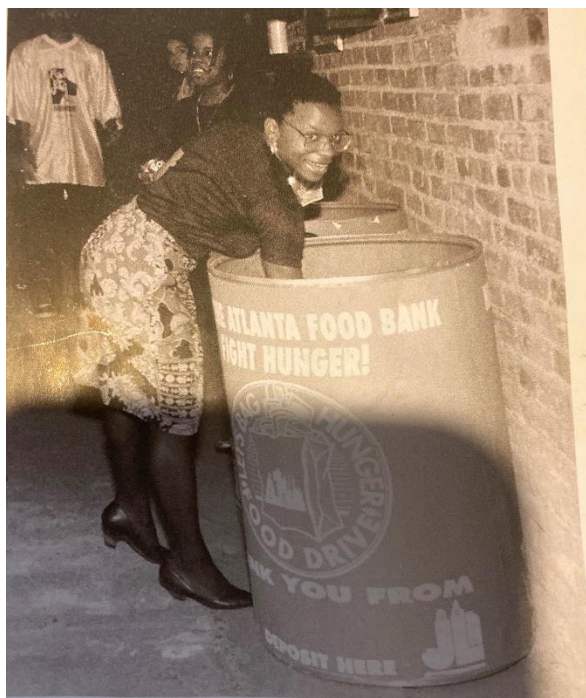


Figure 6.1.5A FunkJazz Kafé attendee donating food to the Atlanta Food Bank

¹⁷⁶ Atlanta Daily Word, "Kroger Extends 'Roundup' Help For Flood Victims", July 24, 1994, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpatlantadailyworld/docview/491757954/87639DF077CF41EEPQ/18?accountid=11226>.

The first FunkJazz Kafé took place exactly one month after tropical storm Alberto on August 4, 1994.¹⁷⁷ Through the pressure of putting on his first FunkJazz Kafé, Orr understood the importance of helping those who were in need in Southwest and Central Georgia. He asked festival attendees to bring water to send to South Georgians. The large number of donations caused for Orr to enlist the help of artist Speech, from Arrested Development of Atlanta, to help him find a way to get the supplies to Southwest and Central Georgia.

In later festivals, Orr chose to focus the community service element of the festival with organizations that focused on populations within the metro Atlanta area. FunkJazz Kafé fought against hunger with a canned and boxed food drive in seventeen of his forty-six festivals, partnering with the Atlanta Community Food Bank. The canned-food drive was most successful because it offered a way to quantify attendees' participation in the community service project. It was successful because it worked in a way to give back to the community and attendees as well as the discounted amount of the ticket in exchange for a set number of canned food items. For example, Orr offered five dollars off the regular ticket sale price of twenty dollars if a person brought canned food to the festival.¹⁷⁸

FunkJazz Kafé also provided aid in other capacities, such as contributions to the National Aids Education and Services for Minorities (NAESM). FunkJazz Kafé partnered with NAESM for the service project for eighteen of forty-six of his FunkJazz Kafés. NAESM was created in

¹⁷⁷ FunkJazz Kafé 25th Anniversary Collectors Book.

¹⁷⁸ Sonia Murraray, "PREVIEW Funkjazz Kafé Featuring The Chronicle & DJ Kemit And The Naked Jazz Orchestra. 9 Tonight. \$10 With Clothing Donation, \$15 Without; Benefiting Sheltering Arms. World Club, 339 Marietta St. N.W. Advance Tickets Sold At Earwax, 1052 Peachtree St. N.E. For Information, 404-842-3865 (404-842-FUNK). Pop Music Funkjazz Kafé Continues The Cultural Awakening", *The Atlanta Constitution*, 1995, [http://PREVIEW FunkJazz Kafé Featuring the Chronicle & DJ Kemit and the Naked Jazz Orchestra. 9 tonight. \\$10 with clothing donation, \\$15 without; benefiting Sheltering Arms. World Club, 339 Marietta St. N.W. Advance tickets sold at Earwax, 1052 Peachtree St. N.E. For information, 404-842-3865 \(404-842-FUNK\). Pop Music FunkJazz Kafé continues the cultural awakening.](http://PREVIEW FunkJazz Kafé Featuring the Chronicle & DJ Kemit and the Naked Jazz Orchestra. 9 tonight. $10 with clothing donation, $15 without; benefiting Sheltering Arms. World Club, 339 Marietta St. N.W. Advance tickets sold at Earwax, 1052 Peachtree St. N.E. For information, 404-842-3865 (404-842-FUNK). Pop Music FunkJazz Kafé continues the cultural awakening.) *Atlanta Constituion*, September 26, 1996.

1990 by Rudolph H. Carn, Madam Edna Brown, and Mae Gratis Reed.¹⁷⁹ NAESM was an active voice in fighting against the disproportionate HIV/AIDS rate the black community was experiencing in the Atlanta community in the early 1990s. The community relied on NAESM to help educate HIV/AIDS patients along with their friends and family on this new disease. Their relationship in the HIV/AIDS community was strengthened in 1995 when they were able to provide more services after being selected with fifteen other programs to be funded through a grant administered by the Georgia Department of Human Resources Epidemiology and Prevention Branch. NAESM's government funding came at a critical time for black communities as it surpassed the white community, becoming the largest group of HIV/AIDS patients from 1995-2000, reaching a high forty-four percent of all cases according to data published by the CDC.¹⁸⁰

In the mid-1990s, Orr recalled walking down a street in the West End neighborhood of Atlanta and seeing long lines of people. He was intrigued by the people and overwhelmed with emotion from the individual stories of those he heard as he made his way through the line. By the time he made it to the front, Orr knew that NAESM was an organization he wanted to help through his festival FunkJazz Kafé. NAESM partnered with FunkJazz Kafé in 1997, implementing his community service model to collect canned food items for Atlanta Community Foodbank to help those serviced by NAESM. After working with NAESM for two years, Orr expanded, adding a clothing drive to help those affected by HIV/AIDS. For several years he invited NAESM to host a booth at the festival where they would distribute condoms and literature surrounding safe sex practice and HIV/AIDS prevention. With eighty percent of the

¹⁷⁹ "Our History", National AIDS Education & Service For Minorities Organizational Website, 2020, <https://naesm.org/about-us222/our-history/>.

¹⁸⁰ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, HIV and AIDS --- United States, 1981—2000, In The Morbidity And Mortality Weekly Report (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2001).

festival's intended audiences being in the ages of twenty-one to thirty-five and the median age of twenty-six, HIV/AIDS awareness was critical as FunkJazz Kafé attendees were a target group for NAESM.¹⁸¹

6.4 Connection to the Diaspora

In the early 1990s, Orr had the opportunity of living with his father in St. Thomas. Orr's time in St. Thomas helped Orr form a deeper connection to different perspectives of the Diaspora. For Orr promoting blackness at FunkJazz Kafé did not revolve around the African American experience but emphasized the connection of the black world. FunkJazz Kafé sought to educate and connect people of the Diaspora by providing a variety of classes, demonstrations, and vendors. Afro-salsa, African drumming circles, dance demonstrations, and limbo demonstrations were just a few of the ways attendees could learn about different cultures from the Diaspora. Attendees highly appreciated the demonstrations performed in the FunkJazz Kafé marketplace as the artforms from across the Diaspora provided them with an educational experience through entertainment.

FunkJazz Kafé took festival elements from Carnival, perhaps the most widely celebrated festival throughout the Diaspora, and shared it with those who never been abroad to experience the festival. For example, Orr included several different groups to partake in demonstrations of the art form of Kalinda at FunkJazz Kafé. At FunkJazz Kafé, different fighters from the same group sparred in a slow and exaggerated movement so that crowds could better understand the moves and strokes of the fighting style. Historians and Anthropologists have traced Kalinda back to stick play in Africa.¹⁸² The art form was enhanced by Africans in Trinidad who would play fight each other with the sticks, called bois or pouis, which they carried to protect themselves

¹⁸¹ Orr, FunkJazz Kafé Marketing Pamphlet, 1998.

¹⁸² Elder, J.D. "Cannes Brulees". In *Carnival*, 1st ed. New York: Rutledge, 2004. 50

from pests such as snakes and mice, in the sugar cane fields. Back at their quarters, enslaved Africans would draw a gayelle or ring, in which they would practice their fighting. The fighting was accompanied by songs called lavways, from musicians known as chantwells, which were performed in creole exciting the crowd and fighters.¹⁸³ The Kalinda artist at FunkJazz Kafé tried to stay as close to the original artform as possible, even drawing a gayelle made from white chalk on the concrete floor of the Tabernacle for their demonstrations. Even though the motions of the fights were slowed down dramatically, it was clear the amount of power and force that could be added when the fighters wanted to do so.

Orr also invited Moko Jumbie, more commonly known as stilt-walkers, to participate in the FunkJazz Kafé experience. The Moko Jumbie often set the tone for the events as they walked down the street in a colorful dress while dancing and waving at festival attendees in line as they waited to enter the venue. In several regions in West Africa, the Moko Jumbie represent the god Moko in costume form. His height allowed him to see into the future, offering a sense of protection to a village. As Africans were forced across the Middle Passage, the story of the Moko survived with a few changes to fit the current situation of the enslaved people in the Caribbean. In Caribbean folklore, his long legs also allowed him to leave Western Africa and walk across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean. In Caribbean folklore, the Moko Jumbie endured a hard past full of mistreatment. Nevertheless, he was able to remain "tall" despite several efforts to knock him down, providing hope and inspiration to enslaved Africans in their new condition of bondage. The Moko Jumbie was a staple Carnival Mas or character from the early 1900s to after World War II.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Milla Cozart Riggio, *"The Festival Heard Around The World"* in *Carnival* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 242, 289

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 290

After World War II, the Moko Jumbie mas was re-introduced to Carnival in the late 1980s by Glen "Dragon" deSousa.¹⁸⁵ DeSousa hoped that teaching the local children elements of the performing arts such as limbo dancing and stilt walking would keep them off the streets, which would prevent them from a life of crime and gang activity.¹⁸⁶ While Orr was visiting his father, he experienced a revival of the Moko Jumbie in St. Thomas and the rest of the Caribbean that was a response to deSousa's work.¹⁸⁷ The inclusion of the Moko Jumbie was a way to pay homage to the festival culture Orr experienced in the Caribbean as well as educate black people in Atlanta on elements of Diasporic festivals.

¹⁸⁵ Stefan Falke and Laura Anderson, *Moko Jumbies: The Dancing Spirits of Trinidad* (New York: Pointed Leaf Press, 2004). 2-12

¹⁸⁶ Falke and Anderson, *Moko Jumbies*. 23, 38, 44, .

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 33, 60-65.

7 Conclusion

The work of the Jackson administration during the 1970s changed Atlanta forever. The Bureau of Cultural Affairs' goal to support the work of the Black Art community and make it more accessible to citizens affected the city's Black Art scene beyond Jackson's tenure as mayor. The citizens who participated in events held by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs witnessed the newly Black Arts Scene created in conjunction with a new political period that promised economic prosperity and social justice. This study shows the lasting effects of the Black Arts Scene that grew in the 1970s and helped Atlanta become an epicenter of culture in the 1990s.

Orr and many others in the arts, who grew up in Atlanta and were introduced to the arts through the Black Art Scene, are incredibly vocal about how the work produced was an inspiration for them to perfect their craft. As the children of the 1970s and 1980s who attended events and programs held by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs, as young adults in the 1990s, they craved spaces where artists could be unapologetically black and share their artforms with other black people; creating a market for FunkJazz Kafé. Orr's knowledge and personal experiences with the Black Arts in Atlanta allowed him to create a festival that uplifted the community through cultural preservation, cultural innovation, and cultural education.

While festival culture focuses a lot on the experience of the attendee, it is imperative to note the therapeutic atmosphere FunkJazz Kafé provided to the artists in the Black Arts scene during the 1990s. FunkJazz Kafé helped musicians fight the labels and constraints that were applied continuously to their work via a Eurocentric music industry. The need to preserve the genres of Jazz, Funk, and Soul and their elements such as the live band, perplexed the mainstream music industry as they scrambled to categorize the resurgence in the 1990s properly. At FunkJazz Kafé, musicians were around like-minded people who understood their musical

choices and valued their decision not to let black musical traditions die, seeing them as significant ties that connect communities of the Diaspora. The visual artists of FunkJazz Kafé also needed a place to display their work that rejected Eurocentric art practices; in other settings, their work that depicted elements of black life was undervalued, leaving them to seek a space where they did not have to justify their African-centered aesthetic.

While FunkJazz Kafé was a place of refuge for black artists, for attendees, it followed the Atlanta tradition of keeping art for the people. Similar to the events held at the Neighborhood Arts Center, which offered classes in the arts, FunkJazz Kafé encouraged the interaction between attendees and experienced artists. During FunkJazz Kafé, musicians performed call and response songs, tutorials of dances from the diaspora, as well as demonstrations of self-defense, which were all ways to get the crowds to participate in an African-centered art experience.

While FunkJazz Kafe reached its peak in the 1990s, the research in *FunkJazz Kafé: Framing FunkJazz Kafé, Fashioning FunkJazz Kafé, and the Function of FunkJazz Kafé* show the connection to the Black Arts scene of Atlanta started in the 1970s. After twenty years of morphing, the Black Arts scene manifest in the festival culture in Atlanta during the 1990s. While there was new music, different artists, innovations like the internet, the principle of black art made easily accessible to black people was still at the center of the movement two decades later.

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