Jazz and electroacoustic music, early encounters: the Mwandishi band

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Billy Hart: "It was almost a miracle musical experience. You could say it was spiritual, but it was so sensually pleasurable that I dare not put it in the same words."

As the international community of electroacoustic composers and performers grows throughout all corners of the globe, a new historical perspective is emerging, grounding the aesthetics and materials within a greater diversity of cultures. (Fischman 1999; Gluck 2006a, 2006b, 2008) However, beyond the writings of George Lewis (Lewis 1996, 2002, 2007, 2008), little attention has been given, within the electroacoustic scholarly community, to African-American musicians. The work of black musicians who have engaged with electronics outside of popular music, for example Charles Stepney, Eddie Harris, Muhal Richard Abrams and Miles Davis, "proved controversial and widely misunderstood in a world in which acoustic instruments became conflated with musical, and eventually, cultural and even racial authenticity." (Lewis 2007) A fascinating and little discussed example may be found in the music of the Herbie Hancock Sextet, a group active in the early 1970s. Popularly known as the Mwandishi band, this group evolved from an excellent, but relatively conventional jazz ensemble into one that engaged electroacoustic music aesthetics and practice. It is the contention of this writer that it belongings simultaneously and fully within the worlds of jazz and electroacoustic music.

In the January 3, 1972 issue, *Time* magazine listed 'Mwandishi', the first recording by the Herbie Hancock Sextet, among its "best LPs" of the year. The announcement was accompanied by an unusual assessment: "Miles Davis protégé Herbie Hancock shows what jazz might have sounded like if it had come up the river from Darmstadt, that European mecca of the avant garde, instead of New Orleans." *Time* was probably not suggesting direct descent from Boulez and Stockhausen, although Hancock had been long familiar with Stockhausen's music. Maybe the idea was simply to suggest that this recording offered something new and maybe musically radical, despite its relatively accessible surface. Possibly, this was a reference to the Sextet's flexible approach to time, unfolding collective improvisation in place of standard theme-solo-theme forms, and expanded tonalities. More overtly, by the use of a Swahili title, like the others taken on by members of the band, Hancock sought an Afrological cultural reference point for his music. He was surely not alone during this period of heightened interest in black cultural identity. On the West Coast, African names and customs were championed by Maulana Ron Karenga, best known as creator of the celebration of Kwanza. Percussionist James Mtume, a nephew of the Sextet's band's first drummer, Tootie Heath, was involved with Karenga's organization. Trombonist Julian Priester recalls that the adoption of Swahili names also helped the band "became a unit. It was like we became a family." This aspect of the band's identity continued to be affirmed even when, in 1972, an eighth musician joined the band, a white Irish Catholic synthesizer player, Patrick Gleeson.

The musical side of this cultural construction is quite apparent to the listener in part due to its embrace of rhythmic complexity and unusual time signatures. There is an emphasis on improvisation, timbre and instrumental tone quality, and there are moments where the density of musical events can be overwhelming. This accords with musicologist and composer Ollie Wilson's (1983) characterization of black music as including "rhythmic clash or disagreement of accents … cross-rhythm and metrical ambiguity ... singing or the playing of any instrument in a percussive manner," "antiphonal or call-and-response musical structures … a tendency to incorporate physical body motion as an integral part of the music making process" and a "high density of musical events within a relatively short musical time frame - a tendency to fill up all of the musical space." Elsewhere, Wilson (1992) cites what he terms "The Heterogeneous Sound Ideal," a "kaleidoscopic range of dramatically contrasting qualities of sound (timbre) in both vocal and instrumental music." George Lewis (2008) has argued, correctly I believe, that the very idea of black experimentalism has been viewed as a contradiction in terms, despite facts created on the ground by members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Music in Chicago. Nonetheless, while many attributes of the Mwandishi band clearly fit Wilson's definitions of black music, *Time* magazine was in fact on to something. Hancock's interest in the music of the European avant garde dates back to his college years. Later, several Mwandishi band members recall listening with Hancock to Stockhausen, as well as to Ravel and Coltrane, in their hotel rooms while on tour. Musical values central to the music of this band are shared between these traditions, not the least an interest in timbre, texture, noise elements, atonality and polytonality, musical abstraction, open forms, and collective improvisation. The Mwandishi band located itself within points of confluence between black music and the European avant garde, including electroacoustic music.

However radical *Time* may have viewed the recording 'Mwandishi', the music heard on the LP represented just an early stage in a three-year evolution that continued through two additional recordings, supplemented by several others released under the names of other band members, among them trumpeter Eddie Henderson, trombonist Julian Priester, and saxophonist Bennie Maupin. The Mwandishi band was often on the road, performing two or three lengthy sets nightly. Performances of their relatively stable repertoire, reflecting the most recently released recording, were subject to constant variation and innovation. While no recordings of live performances have been commercially released, the handful

circulating on the bootleg market point to constant evolution and discovery. This evolution, which moved towards an increasing integration of electronics, was neither linear nor free of ambivalence and conflicts. The success of the band is due to its ability to absorb the input of new information and respond to challenges, which seemed to only stoke a yearning for further expression.

Origins and musical evolution

The Mwandishi band was preceded by an initial Herbie Hancock Sextet formed in 1969 from which only Herbie Hancock and bass player Buster Williams remained. Their music is reflected in the April 1969 relatively straight ahead post-bop recording, 'The Prisoner', a year after Hancock ended a five-year tenure with the Miles Davis Quintet. The music exploited the sonic richness and chromatic potential of three horn players, saxophonist Joe Henderson, trombonist Garnett Brown and trumpeter Johnny Coles, supported by drummer Tootie Heath. This studio recording was followed by a more commercial rhythm and blues inflected one-off recording 'Fat Albert Rotunda', recorded between October 1969 and February 1970, which alternated material composed for a soundtrack to Bill Cosby's 'Fat Albert' television series with compositions in the same vein as 'The Prisoner'. The Herbie Hancock Sextet performed actively throughout North America and Europe during 1969 and 1970. Its repertoire consisted of material from both recordings, compositions from Hancock's earlier solo recordings, and a tune by Williams, "Firewater." John S. Wilson'*s New York Times* (March 7, 1970) review of a performance at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City observed: "...the group had a tremendously spirited attack in which solo lines and ensembles slid into place, coalesced and erupted in a constant and colorful flow of development," yet bemoans only "few sparse bits of ensemble color" in the horn ensemble playing.

The heightened timbral focus, which was to come later, is hinted at in Hancock's increasing use of the electric piano, an instrument he had first encountered during a 1968 Miles Davis session, and his tendency to incorporate a growing spectrum of electronics to expand its sounds. His approach had roots in his experience with Miles' band, which pioneered a highly intuitive approach to improvisation; a subtle detail added to or subtracted by any participant could shift the balance and direction of a performance. Even before that, in 1962-1963, Hancock had explored tone clusters in place of conventional chords while playing with Eric Dolphy, and, in 1961-1962 with trumpeter Donald Byrd, particularly 'Free Form' (1961). Hancock began to assimilate these influences in the tune 'The Egg' on his own 1964 recording, 'Empyrian Isles'. Billy Hart traces some of Hancock's advanced harmonies to Sam Rivers, who taught them to Eric Dolphy , and then to fellow Davis quintet alumnus, drummer Tony Williams.

There are no recordings available to offer a picture of the transformative period of the Sextet, as it became Mwandishi. However, the musical backgrounds of new personnel, unexpectedly replacing most of the existing band members during August and September 1970, are telling. Trombonist Julian Priester had played in the polyrhythmic band of drummer Max Roach during 1960-1961, and in 1954-1957, with influential big band experimentalist Sun Ra's ensemble, albeit during its more musically conventional period in Chicago. Drummer Billy Hart, who had listened to John Cage, David Tudor and Karlheinz Stockhausen with his friend Anthony Braxton in the mid-1960s, had recently played with Pharaoh Sanders and was greatly influenced by John Coltrane. Saxophonist Bennie Maupin, who had learned much during one-on-one encounters with saxophonists John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy, recently performed on Marion Brown's highly impressionistic and freely improvisational 'Afternoon of a Georgia Faun' in August 1970. During this period, Hancock had also participated in a number of notable recording sessions that featured electric instruments and electronic processing. These include the pivotal Miles Davis sessions documented on 'In a Silent Way' in September 1968 - February 1969, and, joined by Bennie Maupin, during sessions of the 'Bitches Brew' period, Fall 1969 - Spring 1970. Herbie Hancock and Billy Hart both participated in Josef Zawinul's 'Zawinul', in August-November 1970, which featured an extensive use of the Echoplex to sonically expand the electric piano, creating dense washes of overlapping sounds.

To these musicians was added trumpeter Eddie Henderson, a physician and psychiatrist, who had gleaned much from his close association with Miles Davis and Freddie Hubbard, and the band was off and running. After an engagement in Vancouver, the Sextet traveled to Chicago for an unusually extended month-long November engagement booked at a steakhouse called London House. Harriet Choice's review in the Chicago Tribune (November 13, 1970) offered a positive report, but only hints that something unusual took place: "They are a tight and happy group, and even if diners are a little bewildered by the free form music ... a combo that swings - and that's the essence of jazz." Eddie Henderson, however, remembers a more challenging scene: "When that band hit [started to play] I think it was at the brunch hour. People were gagging ... the regular clientele that whole month didn't come anymore. We brought all these jazz enthusiasts and a lot of the black avant garde musicians from Chicago. They were there every night. At that point, that is when the music changed from the old Fat Albert Rotunda kind of concept, to the Mwandishi music...." The new audience included members of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Music (AACM), the important African-American Chicago-based collective of exploratory musicians. (Lewis 2008) The closest record of a performance from this period is the studio recording of Julian Priester's 'Wandering Spirit Song', recorded during the December 31, 1970 'Mwandishi' recording session.

The evolution of the Sextet's performance approach appears to have been organic and spontaneous. A key shift came in bassist Buster Williams's role in the rhythm section. Eddie Henderson recalls: "Buster was kind of the spark ... [he] would change bass lines and just open up a new door. You know, and it wasn't written down! It was just spontaneous ... and the band and Herbie would follow along...." Buster Williams adds: "I would come up with one of these lines and everyone would jump on it. And to this day I get impatient doing anything too long. These rhythms, these lines, these motifs would morph into something else. Sometimes it would happen because I mistakenly played it wrong. You know, I always remembered what Monk and Art Blakely told me: if you make a mistake, play it again and it ain't a mistake...." The sense of freedom assumed by Williams gave other band members permission to spontaneously take the lead and this opened up new avenues for the whole band as a collective. In addition, Herbie Hancock continued to reassess his approach to musical form, extending the open-ended approach of Miles Davis' quintet. The Sextet was known to improvise for extended periods of time, sometimes much later displaying elements or the literal head of a tune. Herbie Hancock commented in a *Down Beat* interview (May 24, 1973): "... I think of structure in a different sense now – structure as being only an element to stimulate rather than one to form ... A lot of times, in sections of tunes, we may want to take one basic sound, one basic cluster or chord or scale, and use that as a fulcrum." Julian Priester recalls: "There were no restrictions ... everyone was listening to each other, leaving our egos out of the process, just responding to what the overall group invents." The driving force of the Mwandishi band became the freedom and ability that it's members discovered to collectively intuit what fellow band members were thinking and together find their way through unexplored musical territory. The results were striking in their innovation and unpredictability.

Moving further into electronics

Herbie Hancock had been fascinated with electronics and machines from an early age, one expression being his choice of a dual major in college of electrical engineering and music. Hancock recalls *(Down Beat*, November 9, 1972) that he began to listen to Edgard Varese "when I was in college, I think - '56 or '57..." In a 1964 interview with John Mehegan (*Jazz,* September 1964*)*, he commented: "I first heard electronic music about a year ago and now I am beginning to 'hear' or relate to it in some sense. [Miles Davis quintet drummer] Tony Williams and I are going to buy an oscilloscope and tape apparatus and start fooling around with it ... you don't even need human beings in order to create music. Have you ever heard the beauty of sound passing through trees? That's the beauty of nature…" He added: "I've been listening to The Song of Children [Karlheinz Stockhausen's 'Gesang der Jungling']. I don't know if the sound is that of human voices or whether it is electronically produced, but it is fascinating. I haven't as yet been able to absorb it into my emotional makeup. I've been affected by it..." Herbie Hancock's imagination was no doubt sparked by the creative use of electric instruments by black popular musicians Stevie Wonder and Charles Stepney (a student of Henry Cowell's writings). The introduction of electric instruments in jazz certainly provided another underpinning; witness Hancock's exposure to the electric piano through Miles Davis. It is clear, though, that his musical influences crossed musical, stylistic and cultural boundaries, bridging Wonder and Stockhausen.

When Herbie Hancock began to play the electric piano, first the Wurlitzer in 1968 and later the Fender Rhodes, he built upon the pioneering work of pianist and big band leader, Sun Ra, who first did so in 1954, five years before Ray Charles. Sun Ra's contribution to electronic instruments in jazz included use of the monophonic keyboard instrument the Clavioline in 1965 and the Mini-Moog, when it came out in 1970. In 1965, Eddie Harris adopted the newly introduced Selmer Varitone, a saxophone coupled with an octave-splitter, extending electronics to reed players. A cluster of electronic expansions to the Rhodes, introduced by the companies Fender and/or Vox, tremolo and then the Echoplex, were of great interest to Hancock, who next adopted two other devices popular among rock and funk guitarists, the wah-wah and fuzz box, and then the ring modulator, first used in jazz in Miles' band by Chick Corea in 1970. These moves were controversial to some, such as critical Ron Wellburn (1971) who wrote: "...[rock musicians emerged from] a technological lineage extending through John Cage, Stockhausen, Edgard Varese, all the way back to Marconi and the wireless. White rock is a technology, not a real music ... black musicians should re-evaluate the technological intrusions now threatening our music; times may come when that technology will be useless. Our music is our key to survival."

Herbie Hancock's first recording on his new contract with Warner Brothers Records was for the rhythm and blues inflected 'Fat Albert,' largely music from the soundtrack to the pilot to Bill Cosby's animated television show. They assigned rock producer David Rubinson to the project, beginning many years of collaboration with Hancock. They surely had no idea that the two would share an interest in electronic music. Rubinson had found early success as a theatrical producer in New York City. Hired by Columbia Records, he began to produce bands for the label. While at Columbia Records, he became acquainted with experimental traditions in electronic music, especially the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, while producing the band United States of America, whose 1967 song "Hard Coming Love" is an early example of the use of the Moog synthesizer in a textural and largely non-melodic manner. Rubinson integrated echo and tape feedback within the context of rock tune on the Chambers Brothers "Time Has Come Today", also in 1967. Frustrated with the conservatism of Columbia Records, Rubinson left New York and moved to San Francisco to become an independent producer, giving him new freedom: "In the modern way of recording, post-production was as important ... The technology

was there for us to use as we see fit ... all of this could be incorporated into my music...” Rubinson recalls that he gave Herbie Hancock free reign in the studio and as result, his “creativity was exposed to the entire creative process of making records and making music. He was insightful and he just opened up like a flower ... and expressed himself in the whole process ... It increased his palette of colors and effects.” The idea that a jazz musician could make a studio his or her own was an innovation. Rubinson recalls that he was only able to persuade Warner Brothers to support the band’s direction and release ‘Mwandishi’ by pointing out the recent commercial success of Miles Davis’ ‘Bitches Brew’. In fact, post-production on that first recording is quite modest when compared with what would follow.

The most substantial change in post-production was quite unintended. Rubinson sent Hancock to the studio of Patrick Gleeson, a sound designer, producer, and synthesizer player, because of Hancock’s expressed interest in learning how to play that instrument. Little could they have known how this encounter would change the nature of the Mwandishi band. Patrick Gleeson had been a literature professor at San Francisco State University who found greater satisfaction and excitement in the musical technologies that were then emerging. He left academia and became part of the creative scene in that city, especially around the circle of the Sam Francisco Tape Music Center. He was influenced by Morton Subotnick’s ‘Silver Apples [of the Moon’ and ‘The Wild Bull’, music of Steve Reich, and Terry Riley, whom Gleeson had befriended. He was also a big jazz fan. Using musique concrete techniques and then the Buchla, Gleeson composed scores for members of Ann Halperin's Dancer's Workshop. “I appeared in concert with John Cage ... [and in 1967 at] The Planetarium, various clubs in North Beach, San Francisco State, etc. With that, I cashed out my middle class life, went in halves on an early Moog III, and began presenting myself as a studio musician...” worked first on session with rock musicians, including members of the Jefferson Airplane.

Gleeson recalls: “Herbie brought over ‘Quasar’ [a tune by Bennie Maupin]. He and I sat down in the studio together and he explained to me: ‘I really don’t know much about this instrument; maybe you can give me some idea. I was thinking about something about right here,’ and he went to what was probably the first entrance in ‘Quasar’. I guess I had the engineer loop manually; there was a loop function on the recorders at that time, or maybe I had the remote myself. And I went over it a few times and as I was going over it, I was patching [the Moog III]. I got the thing ready for him to play by actually assuming what the performance might well be if someone were to play it. I was actually doing it. I looked at Herbie and said ‘how about that.’ He said ‘Yeah, have you recorded it?’ I said ‘don’t you want to play it?’ He said: ‘No, why don’t you just do again what you did before.’ So I did that and then he listened back and made some adjustments – ‘maybe that could last a little longer.’ And then I recorded it. “He said ‘I like what you’ve done and where this is going. Why don’t you just keep going and I’ll come back in a while and listen to what you are doing.’ I just stayed up for probably thirty hours and finished ‘Quasar’. He came back, which was two days later, and he was very complementary. It just blew his mind. He had never heard anything like it; it was the beginning of a new era for him.” Gleeson made similarly seamless interpolations on Maupin’s ‘Water Torture’. Only with very close listening can one clearly distinguish the instrumental sounds from the electronics. One seems to emerge from the other. The results present a fully integrated electroacoustic work, one that would appear to have been completely recorded live.

Herbie Hancock was so pleased with the results of this collaboration and the new direction it represented that he invited Gleeson to become a member of the Sextet and join them on the road. Gleeson purchased an Arp 2600 synthesizer, far more portable than the Moog III, to take on tour. His presence met with immediate resistance from the members of the band. David Rubinson believes that this was “because they didn’t really think this was a musical instrument.” Gleeson recalls bassist Buster Williams, the only attendee at his first rehearsal, reacted by saying: “Hmm, sounds like a big vacuum cleaner.” Eddie Henderson felt that: “Everybody was so possessive of the music we were playing. Somebody comes in, doing all these other sounds; it just felt funny.” In fact, the sounds of the synthesizer were indeed radically different from any acoustical instrument, especially in the hands of Gleeson, who often crafted non-pitched sound gestures that he refers to as “washes.” Over time, the band members grew to appreciate Gleeson’s participation. Buster Williams: “I liked [Patrick’s electronics]. I thought that it added a new dimension.” Julian Priester: “By that time I had completely accepted the change, the progress, the progression of technology, that I viewed it [Patrick’s synthesizer] as an extension of what we were doing acoustically, so it fit.” Billy Hart recalls: “It was amazing, when Patrick joined the band. It’s like ‘The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe’ [a fantasy novel by C. S. Lewis]: you walk in the closet, the next minute you’re outside, and then you’re in an airplane. When you’re that young, the shock was fascinating. I remember Buster saying, sometimes, he would lean over to me and say: ‘instruments weren’t supposed to be played like this!’” Eddie Henderson may have struggled more than some others, as he recalls: “I think that by that point [when Patrick joined the touring band], we’d grown accustomed of the sounds ... and it wasn’t as abrasive as it was in the beginning.” Gleeson himself felt welcomed after a period of adjustment: “When I joined this deeply Afrocentric band … I felt like I’d gone home. I felt like I’d found my place. This is where I belong.”

Ironically, it was Gleeson’s work that added new layers of rhythmic complexity to the band, as he adapted the Arp’s sequencers to craft multiple layers of synthesizer ostinati, such as on ‘Rain Dance’, included on ‘Sextant’, recorded in Fall 1972. Some of Gleeson’s relationships, professional and personal, with fellow band members have continued ever since.

On top of this, the band's driver, Fundi, assumed the responsibilities of sound engineer. The soundboard included quadraphonic pans and an Echoplex, which allowed him to radically change the nature of the sound mix. Billy Hart recalls: "a guy could take a solo and all the sudden his whole environment would change… All of the sudden, it depends upon your imagination, you were in a whole new environment."

Mwandishi meets the marketplace and the critics

The more full the integration electronics within the texture of the Mwandishi band, the more negative grew the critical response. Of three reviews in Down Beat between 1972 and 1973, two were highly negative. Harvey Siders (November 23, 1972) call a September 1972 live performance at the Monterey Jazz Festival "... too much of a confusing thing. I don't know if I was more disappointed with the overall sound of the Herbie Hancock Septet, or with my inability to understand what they're trying to do ... [the] pieces don't make a satisfying mosaic; an unrelated collage, perhaps, but not a consistent mosaic." Pete Welding complained that the record 'Crossings' "[displays a] lack of any feeling of flow or inevitability; nor is there much in the way of true rapport among the players…" In general, these critics expressed confusion with the open structures and the unfolding, unpredictable nature of the collective improvisation, criticisms the band had heard as early as 1970. But Welding added something new: "... with freaky, eerie sequences of 'spacey' effects laid into a matrix of lush Les Baxter-like exotica ... plenty of empty, overdramatic bluster – the most obnoxious kind of speciously trippy music ... The less said about the synthesizer effects, the better." It is difficult to align these comments with the depth of nuance and musicality to be found within the actual recording, as a third Down Beat reviewer, Bill McLarney (May 10, 1972) observed: "What matters is that this music, these artists, have the ability to get you next to yourself and maybe some night, even to work a transformation – if you are ready."

Ironically, just as the Sextet's music was growing more experimental, Warner Brothers was seeking to mainstream its market appeal. A *New York Times* advertisement by the Sam Goody record chain places the African themed cover of 'Crossings' side by side with "Frank Sinatra's Greatest Hits, Vol. II" and folk singer Arlo Guthrie's 'Hobo's Lullaby," Randy Newman's 'Sail Away', Van Dyke Parks' 'Discover America' and Bob Weir's (of the Grateful Dead) 'Ace'. Below that is depicted a new two-LP set by The Beach Boys. On top of the page is trumpeted the rubric "Great Sounds by Great Artists," but the message conveyed is that 'Crossings' was a pop album, in the company of rock and pop musicians. David Rubinson, with encouragement from Herbie Hancock, booked the band in rock venues. The mixing of jazz and rock was the model championed by Rubinson's business partner, rock impresario Bill Graham, owner of the Fillmore East and Fillmore West, who had paired Cecil Taylor with The Yardbirds, Sun Ra with Ten Years After, Miles Davis with Leon Russell, and Herbie Hancock with Iron Butterfly and with John Mayall. Hancock himself was eager to play to larger and younger audiences. David Rubinson notes: "the whole sensibility of what he was doing changed ... he was getting some negative audience reaction when they'd play a jazz club, some of the new stuff. But when he played some of the rock clubs, that's what they loved. There was that kind of positive feedback." For other members of the Mwandishi band, though, these pairings were a source of frustration and a wound to personal pride. Buster Williams concluded: "The attempt to play rock clubs didn't work … David Rubinson was going to make him a star and of course ended up upsetting everybody."

All good things come to an end. But ironically, the Mwandishi band didn't come to a conclusion due to internal tensions. Rather, the cause was one part financial and one part Hancock's growing interest in less complex, more popular music that was less abstract and closer to funk. On the first point, Hancock observed in a *Down Beat* interview with Ray Townley (October 24, 1974): "I ran out of money. I could get gigs, but they wouldn't pay enough for the expenses. I always lost money. Not with every single gig but maybe I'd make a profit, and then on the next one, I'd lose more than the two put together." On the second, Hancock recalled (in the 1996 liner notes to his 1973 recording 'Headhunters'): "I began to feel that I had been spending so much time exploring the upper atmosphere of music and the more ethereal kind of far-out, spacey stuff. Now there was this need to take some more of the earth and to feel a little more tethered, a connection to the earth... I started thinking about Sly Stone and how much I loved his music and how funky "Thank You For Letting Me Be Myself" is...." The Mwandishi band's final performances actually seemed to grow in intensity and depth. Eddie Henderson observes: "In the last tour, even though there was tension going on, the music was really crystallizing itself. It was self-evident that we had come to a pinnacle in our development. I didn't know it was going to end at the peak, at the apex … And through God's grace it came to that pinnacle and it vanished. It just vanished."

Conclusions

For the Mwandishi band, sensibilities of electroacoustic music and African-American culture converged. Among these are a focus on timbre, open forms, exploratory improvisational approach, and an expanded definition of musical sounds. The shift away from being a more straight-ahead jazz ensemble was gradual and often unconscious. For most band members, though, jazz sensibilities continued to predominate, where the primary goal was playing in the moment without concern for recording, post-production or technology. Herbie Hancock was different. His interest in electronic technologies was rooted

in multiple sources, among them the growth of electric instruments in African-American popular music, a fascination for how electronics could enhance musical exploration, and his grounding in electroacoustic music. Band members found that the use of electronics expanded their own improvisatory palettes with new sounds. While at least some band members connected the increasing use of post-production with commercial rock interests, Herbie Hancock saw the recording studio as a musical tool to expand what was possible in performance. Jazz critics became increasingly negative about the Mwandishi band's more electroacoustic, exploratory directions, as poorly as they had received Miles Davis's electric music. Despite the challenge of integrating Patrick Gleeson into the band, for reasons as much cultural as musical, Gleeson's presence heightened Hancock's experimental and electronic sensibilities. Assisted by David Rubinson's open and electroacoustic approach to post-production, the Herbie Hancock Sextet became a band that merited a full seat in two worlds, of jazz and electroacoustic music.

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