Journal of Jazz Studies vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 243–271 (2025)

"Whisper, Say We're Free": Visualizing the *Freedom Now Suite* and Abbey Lincoln's Voice of Protest

Marcus Grant

In the February 1961 issue of *Jazz Notes*, editor Bill Fend wrote a review of the recently released *We Insist!: Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite*—a collaboration between drummer Max Roach and singer-songwriter Oscar Brown Jr.—praising the album for its integration of politics. He wrote: "One of the jazzmen who had long been strongly involved emotionally in the movement for integration in America and national autonomy in Africa was Max Roach," ending the review with the statement, "this is an example of protest."[1] As the *Freedom Now Suite* gained notoriety throughout the early 1960s, it became known as one of the most undeniable musical projects of the period.[2] The songs—"Driva' man," "Freedom Day," "Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace," "All Africa," and "Tears for Johannesburg"—confront the history of oppression facing Black people both in the United States and throughout the African diaspora.

Roach and Brown initially planned to debut a theatrical version—including singers, dancers, musicians, narration, and film initially titled *Freedom Day*—in 1963 to mark the centennial of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. However, the tragedy of the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa, along with the ongoing Civil Rights Movement in the United States, inspired Roach to change the name to *We Insist!: Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite* and release the album in December 1960 on Candid Records.[3] The original studio recording features Roach on drums, Booker Little on trumpet, Walter Benton and Coleman Hawkins on tenor saxophone, Julian Priester on trombone, James Schenk on bass, and Michael Olantunji, Raymond Mantilla, and Tomas du Vall on percussion. Arguably the most notable feature of the album's lasting legacy is the striking performance by singer Abbey Lincoln, whose screams and moans during "Triptych: Prayer, Protest, Peace" are meant to evoke the exhaustion and rage of Black people around the world. Prior to 1960, the vocalizations and

[1] Bill Fend, Review of *We Insist!: Freedom Now Suite*, *Jazz Notes* 6, no. 2 (February-March 1961), 29.
[2] Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (Harvard University Press, 2005).
[3] Max Roach, *We Insist! Max Roach's Free Now Suite,* Candid Records 9002, December 1960.

techniques Lincoln performs during this piece had not yet been recorded by any jazz vocalist. Accordingly, her performance of the scream in "Triptych: Prayer, Protest, Peace," has become the subject of ongoing discourse in which scholars describe her performance as "sounds of polysemic and polyphonic resonance."[4] During the 1960s, Roach, Lincoln, and the rest of the band took this project on the road, appearing first in front of an audience at the New York branch of the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE), and later embarking on a national and international tour.

This article focuses on a 1964 live performance of the *Freedom Now Suite* recorded on *Jazzprisma*, a concert series produced by the Belgian Television network BRT (Belgische Radio en Televisie) in Schaerbeek, Belgium. The ensemble, consisting of Clifford Jordan on tenor saxophone, Coleridge Perkinson on piano, and Eddie Khan on bass, along with Roach and Lincoln, performs a version of the suite in just under thirty minutes. A version published on YouTube on October 3, 2022 includes the complete broadcast from start to finish.[5] In my analysis, I look closely at the depths of meaning achieved by the suite. I also grapple with the nuanced performances of race and gender Lincoln navigates with her singing and visual aesthetics. I argue that these visual aspects, in addition to her striking vocal performance, must be viewed together in order to best appreciate the depth of Lincoln's career metamorphosis and Africa-centered protest aesthetics. Additionally, this recording, in its departures from the recorded album, presents an opportunity to observe Lincoln's multi-layered performance—gendered, racial, vocal, and political—in ways that the recorded album does not. Taking these audiovisual dimensions into consideration, this article contributes to existing discourse about Lincoln and the *Freedom Now Suite* by exploring how Lincoln's performance here is particularly indicative of avant-

[4] Aida Mbowa, "Abbey Lincoln's Screaming Singing and the Sonic Liberatory Potential Thereafter." In *Taking It to the Bridge: Music as Performance*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill (University of Michigan Press, 2013), 136; Ana Deumert, "When Things Fall Apart: On The Dialectics of Hope and Anger," *Language in Society* 53, no. 5 (November 2024): 881–900; Walter S. Gershon, "Hear Me Roar: Sound Feminisms and Qualitative Methodologies," in *Transdisciplinary Feminist Research*, eds. Carol Taylor, Jasmine Ulmer, and Christina Hughes (Routledge, 2020), 138-52; Danielle Goldman, "Sound Gestures: Posing Questions for Music and Dance," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 17, no. 2 (July 1, 2007): 123–38.

[5] *Max Roach Quartet & Abbey Lincoln, BRT TV Studio, Schaerbeek, Belgium, January 10, 1964 (Colorized)*, 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5GSYwveJRw. While the YouTube video has this performance listed as occurring on January 10, 1964, the Belgische Radio en Televisie 1964 yearly review has it scheduled for March 23. It is unclear from the video exactly which date the performance was recorded.

garde expressions of Black nationalism that she intentionally displays on this international stage.

I focus on this video performance in particular to uncover how Lincoln directly and indirectly conveys a history of Black trauma through her non-lyrical vocal techniques in "Tears for Johannesburg" and "Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace." I view Lincoln's moans and screams as an index for historical violence against people of African descent. Ultimately, I argue that while Lincoln's embodied performance of the scream serves this purpose, the video's intense and deliberate camera angles produce a reductive and hyper-sexualized view of her radical protest and in some ways detract from Lincoln's long history of representing herself as a Black nationalist. In the following sections, I take on three tasks: (1) I analyze how Lincoln reappropriates the gendered dress and respectability politics at the foundation of jazz to establish her own performance of protest and Black pride; (2) I underscore how this performance directly and indirectly confronts the global affairs and social issues throughout the African diaspora during the 1960s; and (3) I confront the ways in which the camera creates a reductive and sexualized view of Lincoln's performance that counters her aforementioned efforts.

STYLING AND PERFORMING BLACK NATIONALISM

The 1964 *Jazzprisma* performance is a clear display of how the ensemble's performance of the suite evolved significantly from the original album recording. While keeping the meaning and impact of the original recording in mind, I formulate my analysis of the live performance by combining the audiovisual properties which potentiate additional layers of understanding. In this section, I examine how this video illuminates Lincoln's reappropriation of gender roles constitutive to jazz. I look closely at how she styles her dress, hair, and jewelry, to amplify the messages of the *Freedom Now Suite* and signify her identity as a Black nationalist woman.

The program begins with a short introduction in Dutch by producer Jan Geysen, shown sitting on a stool just in front of Roach's drum set. Following a close-up shot of Perkinson at the piano, the camera pans out to show all five musicians positioned in a wide arch; from left to right: piano, bass, tenor saxophone, vocals in front, and drums to the far right. Lincoln, Perkinson, and Khan are on the stage level, while Jordon and Roach are on risers. Jordan, positioned a few feet behind the ensemble, is on a square riser, and Max Roach is on a larger rectangular riser (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Stage-left, downward facing camera angle of full group

Roach, Perkinson, Khan, and Jordan wear black suits with white dress shirts, black bow ties, and black dress shoes. As the featured vocalist, Lincoln is dressed more expressively, wearing a multi-colored and patterned floor-length dress. The suits worn are typical for male jazz musicians; long dresses are equally typical for female jazz singers. Musician and music scholar Miroslava Jichova has written on the gendered descriptions of female jazz vocal artists by critics. For example, Jichova compares the different language critics used to describe both male and female musicians in *Jazz Times* and *Live New Orleans* and argues that women in jazz are typically constructed as carriers of qualities that structure their identity and appearance, such as their bodies and perceived sexuality. For this, she highlights certain passages from a review of New Orleans singer Ingrid Lucia, in which she is described as wearing a "stunning strapless red dress" and "sport[ing] a sexy smile and approach" pointing out how women's contributions on the bandstand are observed more in terms of their appearance.[6] In contrast,

[6] Miroslava Jichova, "Gendered Representations of Jazz Vocal Artists: A Critical Discourse Analysis of CD and Performance Reviews, and Interviews," M.A. thesis, University of New Orleans, August 8, 2007.

Jichova reveals how men in jazz are represented by critics as representing qualities of identity in terms of mastery of achievement. Instead of commenting on singer John Boutte's appearance, critics stated how he is "easily one of the best male vocalists in the city" and how "he and his band were tight." The different language here plays a significant role in the ways in which male and female musicians are represented and therefore perceived in terms of skill, authority, and artistic contribution. This is true historically; as jazz historian Sherrie Tucker argues, women in jazz bands are often buried under the notion that men are centered in jazz discourse. Tucker reveals that the normal configuration of gender in jazz and swing is for men to skillfully operate their instruments while women perform popular versions of femininity with their voices and bodies.[7] How the artists are dressed in this video affirms historical representations and performances of gender in jazz. Lincoln, through her hair, dress, and jewelry, reappropriates these historically gendered boundaries in order to achieve her own performance of political protest as a Black female nationalist.

Throughout her career, Lincoln navigated a series of personal and artistic metamorphoses. Her early popularity as a sultry club singer made her a well-known sex symbol often compared to Marilyn Monroe.[8] Viewing the album covers of her first two recordings, *That's Him!* (1957) and *Abbey Lincoln's Affair… A Story of a Girl in Love* (1957), alongside her 1958 album *It's Magic* and 1961 album *Straight Ahead* shows a significant change in her personal and professional image. On the cover of *That's Him!*, Lincoln is shown leaning on a cushion wearing a white fitted dress with cleavage showing and the strap of her dress falling off her right shoulder. She wears red-tinted lipstick, light blush, and eye-liner. Her hair seems to be relaxed while tightly pinned to her head. Likewise, on the cover of *Abbey Lincoln's Affair*, she is shown wearing a white corset dress with cleavage exposed. She is posed lying almost upside-down on a red background, making the view of her exposed shoulders and cleavage even more prominent. Her makeup is similar to that of the previous record: red lipstick with light blush and black eyeliner. Following these two releases, there is a drastic shift in the way Lincoln is pictured on her next album cover. The 1958 record *It's Magic* shows a much more conservatively dressed Lincoln; she wears a white long-sleeved shirt while crossing her arms across her chest and leaning on a knit pillow. Her hair and makeup remain similar to the previous two album covers,

[7] Sherrie Tucker, *Swing Shift: "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940s* (Duke University Press, 2000), 3-6.
[8] Farah Jamine Griffin, *If You Can't Be Free, Be A Mystery: In Search of Billie Holiday* (Random House Publishing, 2002), 163. Griffin points out how in 1957 Lincoln was featured on the cover of *Ebony* with the caption, "Abbey Lincoln–the Girl in the Marilyn Monroe Dress." The comparison is carried on in an article which juxtaposes photos of Lincoln and Monroe.

but Lincoln wears significantly more jewelry, including numerous silver bracelets on her left wrist, a light blue ring on her left ring finger, and a pair of long silver earrings.

Scholars have underscored Lincoln's new ways of representing herself aesthetically as a Black woman during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Historian Eric Porter chronicles the progression of respectability displayed on Lincoln's album covers during this time period. By comparing her *Riverside* recordings from 1957 to 1959, he marks a gradual metamorphosis from the supper club singer toward jazz artist.[9] Likewise, historian Ruth Feldstein underscores how, as Lincoln became increasingly aware of the plight of Black folks both in America and throughout the world, she began to align herself in many ways with the ongoing justice movements transnationally, carrying these themes into her artistry.[10] The 1964 *Freedom Now Suite* video is a clear example of both Porter's and Feldstein's observations. Lincoln's dress is a relatively modest scoop neck cut that covers her cleavage. The loose, long sleeves cover her arms and shoulders and button conservatively at the wrist. Her legs are concealed by the high-waisted, pleated skirt. The sequenced, clover-shaped pattern evokes a distinctive style indicative of the 1960s' Afrocentrist fashion.[11] Put simply, this dress differs from the gowns she wore earlier in her career in that it both covers more of her body and displays her creative expression. Lincoln wears this dress as a fashion statement against normative notions of dress in jazz performance and to promote her essentially Black aesthetic.

In addition to her dress, she wears a long necklace with beaded cylinder shapes, and a pair of long, flat gold sword-shaped earrings. Cultural historian Tanisha Ford highlights the significance of jewelry and dress for Black women connected to the Black Freedom Movement and Black Nationalism. She states that Black women wore colorful prints, beaded jewelry, Afros, and other aesthetic displays of African pride in order to liberate themselves from the cultural and social bondage of their slave or colonial pasts.[12] Lincoln's hair is styled up with two layers; the first layer is pinned flat against the front region

---

[9] Eric Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz?: African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists* (University of California Press, 2022), 161.

[10] Ruth Feldstein, *How It Feels to Be Free: Black Women Entertainers and the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 141.

[11] Cydni Meredith Robertson, Caroline Kopot, and Jaime L. Mestres, "Beyond Afros and Activism: Analysis of Black and African American Women and Fashion, Style, Dress and Identity in Fashion Studies Literature," *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* 11, Marginalized Identities and ADH Abstracts (2024): 13–26, https://doi.org/10.1386/fspc_00195_1.

[12] Tanisha C. Ford, *Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 4.

with a center part while the remaining hair on the crown of her head is worn natural in an Afro style. Her Afro represents a connection with the history of "Black is Beautiful" advocates in the 1960s whose rejection of white beauty standards were actualized in their embracement of the Afro as a political statement.[13] Historians including Robin D.G. Kelley and Susannah Walker observe the Afro as a prominent style that, amplified by Black women, became an icon for global Black liberation movements. Walker mentions how, for Black women, the Afro developed into a prominent symbol of racial pride during the mid-1960s that both celebrated African beauty and recognized African anticolonial movements.[14] Furthermore, Kelley notes that it was Black women like Abbey Lincoln, Nina Simone, and Miriam Makeba whose work with the Black freedom movement and African liberation wore Afros—or "au natural" — as a political statement.[15] The Afro was more than an innocuous fashion decision, but rather one informed by the individual's politics, particularly those held by Black women radicals during this time. As such, Lincoln's Afro can be understood as a significant indicator and visual representation of her political views. Feldstein, too, suggests that it was indeed Lincoln's dresses, hair, and earrings that actualized her Black pride aesthetic.[16]

Taken together, this 1964 video performance shows Lincoln stepping away from a colonized and sexualized perception of her previous persona as a club singer and instead presenting herself as a Black nationalist and Black female singer. These aesthetics of race and gender must be viewed in connection with the totality of this musical performance as a display of Lincoln's protest aesthetic because Lincoln is, in fact, performing all of these things simultaneously. In other words, considering the audiovisual adds an essential layer of understanding to the *Freedom Now Suite* that is missing if one only hears the album recording.

MUSICAL COMMENTARY ON AFRO-DIASPORIC OPPRESSION

The music on the *Freedom Now Suite* album is profound in its subject matter and its critical commentary on racism and white supremacy. While the setlist for the *Jazzprisma* performance is for the most part consistent with the original studio recording, there are some significant structural departures that merit attention. In this section, I consider these departures and how they are related to broader

[13] Susannah Walker, *Style and Status: Selling Beauty to African American Women, 1920-1975* (University of Kentucky Press, 2007), 171.
[14] Walker, *Style and Status*, 178.
[15] Robin D. G. Kelley, "Nap Time: Historicizing the Afro," *Fashion Theory* 1, no. 4 (1997): 343. doi:10.2752/136270497779613666.
[16] Feldstein, *How It Feels to Be Free*, 137.

issues of freedom in the ongoing civil rights movement(s) within the United States and throughout the African diaspora. These include the ongoing Civil Rights Movement, Apartheid in South Africa, and the political crisis and history of colonialism in the Republic of the Congo.[17] Here I consider how the music spotlights these global issues of oppression.

In the *Jazzprisma* performance of *Freedom Now Suite*, I find two primary changes from the original album recording, both of which are deeply connected to the global context of the 1960s. First, the song sequence differs from that of the album. Where "Freedom Day" precedes "Triptych" on the original recording, here, "Freedom Day" is the finale. Likewise, "Tears for Johannesburg," the final track on the recorded album, comes before "Triptych" (see table 1).

Freedom Now Suite, 1960	*Freedom Now Suite,* 1964
1. Driva' Man 2. Freedom Day 3.Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace 4. All Africa 5. Tears for Johannesburg	1. Driva' Man 2. Tear for Johannesburg 3. Triptych: Prayer/Protest 4. All Africa 5. Freedom Day

Table 1. Differences in track list between 1960 album and 1964 live performance

This reordering of songs is notable due to the state of international affairs at the time of the 1964 performance. Namely, the Republic of the Congo (today the Democratic Republic of the Congo) was in the midst of the Congo Crisis, a social and political uprising against Belgian colonial rule. The Belgian Congo in central Africa was colonized by Belgium from 1908 until 1960. After the Congo gained its independence, it became the Republic of the Congo with Patrice Lumumba serving as its first prime minister. This led to the Belgian Crisis, which resulted in major political protests and the assassination of Prime Minister Lumumba on January 17, 1961. Following the assassination, Abbey Lincoln led the Cultural Association of Women of African Heritage (CAWAH) in a demonstration at the United Nations to protest the apparent murky circumstances surrounding the assassination. Additionally, South Africa was still

[17] I use "Republic of the Congo" here in observance of the name changed after they gained independence from Belgium on June 30, 1960; whereas, prior to 1960, it was named "The Belgian Congo."

shaken after the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960 and the ongoing institution of apartheid. *Freedom Now Suite*'s liner notes, written by Nat Hentoff, direct "Tears of Johannesburg" toward the "violence perpetrated against the international African community," adding that "there will be no stopping the grasp for freedom everywhere."[18] If we are to understand the songs of this suite as communicating a particular mood of liberation throughout the diaspora, a resequencing or reordering for sake of live performance/recording carries significant meaning.

This new sequence, with "Freedom Day" as the finale, emphasizes the continued fight for freedom. It also underscores the desire for liberation from colonial rule and the attempt to make transnational connections as it is referencing the mood around the time of the Emancipation Proclamation. As Lincoln sings the final verse, ending on an a cappella "freedom day!," the audience is left in anticipation of freedom yet to come. Considering the international stage on which this suite was performed—specifically a Belgian television studio, along with Lincoln's fervent involvement with international political struggles, I view this resequencing of songs as a protest response to these ongoing conflicts.

While I consider the resequencing of songs as having political undertones, the omission of "Peace" from "Triptych" altogether as a second departure is especially significant if we are to consider how Roach originally arranged the suite. Roach envisioned this piece to connote "the feeling of exhaustion after you've done everything you can to assert yourself."[19] "Peace" was not yet a reality in the time of apartheid in South Africa, political unrest in the Republic of the Congo, and the ongoing Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Therefore, I interpret the omission of this movement as a signifier for the lack of peace during that time. Black studies scholar Aida Mbowa suggests that the order of songs in the original recording of this suite is "of great importance."[20] Accordingly, Mbowa highlights the "dissonance and irresolution" of "Protest" while suggesting that "the hums and coos of Lincoln's voice" in "Peace" allude to the anticipated peace to come after a protest. For Mbowa, the relationship between "Protest" and "Peace" is a political one; in this case, peace can only be heard, imagined, and lived as a result of, or following, times of protest. To omit "Peace" from this performance should be read as political. "Triptych" is left

[18] Nat Hentoff, "Tears for Johannesburg," on *We Insist!: Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite*, 1960, Candid, Liner Notes.
[19] Hentoff, "Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace," Liner Notes.
[20] Mbowa, "Abbey Lincoln's Screaming Singing and the Sonic Liberatory Potential Thereafter," 142.

incomplete in its "irresolution" not only sonically, but more significantly the message of an imagined peace is incomplete. Thus, this departure indicates that peace is not yet opportune. Understood together, I argue that these two departures from the original recording are a performance of political protest and connect the artists to a transnational effort for Black freedom throughout the entire diaspora.[21]

MUSIC ANALYSIS

In addition to the structural departures, how the music is performed in the 1964 performance provides highlights how the suite is a commentary on race and gender. Inspired by ethnomusicologist Lara Pellegrinelli's observation that the work of female jazz vocalists often receives less attention than male instrumentalists, I center my musical analysis on Lincoln's vocal performance, especially her pitch, timbre, and rhythm.[22] As there are few musical analyses of Lincoln's performance of the *Freedom Now Suite*, my analysis encourages a deeper understanding of Lincoln as an autonomous jazz musician making musical and aesthetic decisions that prioritize her pride in being a Black woman.

Perkinson opens the performance of the suite with a slow and loose blues progression with hints of melodic material at the piano, while Khan accompanies sparsely on bass with the harmonic root notes. Roach enters with a triplet-based rhythmic motif, followed by Khan playing a brief bowed solo.[23] Clifford Jordan enters shortly after with a lush and chromatic rendition of the bridge from Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady." The text of "Sophisticated Lady" (1932) centers a woman who has lost love and, despite her depression and longing for that lost feeling, continues searching for love through simple pleasures of the

---

[21] While on this European tour, Roach and Lincoln performed the suite, or versions of it, throughout. Although this video is the only available footage of the tour, there are two live album recordings which show some continuity with the Belgian recording. The first album, titled *Max Roach Soup with Abbey Lincoln "Freedom Now Suite" Live in Europe 1964*, was recorded on January 14, 1964 in Copenhagen, and features the entire suite on the A side and three songs including "Driva Man" and "Tears for Johannesburg" on the B side recorded in Stockholm. The second album, *Max Roach Quintet with Abbey Lincoln Live in Paris*, was recorded January 18, 1964. This recording does not feature the *Freedom Now Suite*, but does have the two selections played at the beginning of the Belgian program: "Sophisticated Lady" and "Love for Sale."

[22] Lara Pellegrinelli, "Separated at 'Birth': Singing and the History of Jazz," in *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies*, ed. Nichole T. Rustin and Sherrie Tucker (Duke University Press, 2008), 32.

[23] Max Roach Papers 1880-2012, Music Division, Library of Congress, box #17, folder #6. This solo motif "For Big Sid" was eventually recorded as a full piece on his solo drum set record *Drums Unlimited* in 1966.

flesh and meaningless relationships. Lincoln begins singing a rubato rendition of Cole Porter's "Love For Sale" with Perkinson accompanying. "Love For Sale" (1930) is sung from the perspective of a prostitute soliciting men. Similar to "Sophisticated Lady," this song centers a female subject in the midst of a love affair. While the lyrics of these opening songs focus on female sexuality and respectability, their purpose as an introduction to the suite do not specifically sexualize Lincoln any more than any other jazz singer. Both songs are known as standard repertoire in jazz and it was not unusual to perform these and other recognizable songs during a set. Additionally, the band incorporated both pieces in other shows during this tour. What does stand out as unusual, however, is the way the cameras capture Lincoln during the remainder of the suite. Put differently, the repertoire does not sexualize Lincoln; it is the progression of camera angles throughout this opening that lays the foundation for how she is framed later during "Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace."

The *Freedom Now Suite* formally begins with "Driva' Man" four minutes and thirty-seven seconds into the video. After two chords resolving on a C-minor dominant seventh chord, Lincoln sings the first two verses a cappella, accompanying herself with a tambourine. Lincoln's delivery is calm and melancholy with moments of bluesy melodic riffs at the end of her phrases. Her rhythms are consistent, however, and establish an eighth-note subdivision. The band comes in strong with a unison hit on beat one of verse three marking the top of the six-bar blues form. The rhythm section plays time in a 5/4 meter as Lincoln continues singing and striking the tambourine on beat one. Meanwhile, Jordan fills in the space with melodic improvisations. In these third and fourth verses (5:47-6:34), Lincoln abandons the straight rhythmic delivery heard in her a cappella verses and stretches her rhythmic phrasing slightly, falling on and off the beat. This rhythmic deviation creates tension and anticipation for the listener while serving as a metaphor for freedom from the rigidity of the driver man. Following Lincoln, Jordan takes a solo for five choruses.

In this opening sequence, Lincoln plays with gender, race, and a history of enslavement as she sonically evokes the female slave by singing "but that mammy ain't his wife," while simultaneously performing the male overseer with the tambourine strikes signifying a whip. While she embodies and performs this violent relationship, her rhythmic deviations introduce dissonance and work towards freedom—a freedom more distinctively realized later in the suite during "Freedom Day."

After Jordan's solo, the other musicians fade out, leaving only Roach as he continues playing the 5/4 drum beat, accenting every down beat on his left side ride cymbal. Khan then enters with a short interlude of the bass ostinato from "Tears for Johannesburg" (10:01), however the band does not perform all of

"Tears For Johannesburg," which is nearly ten minutes long on the album. Instead, Lincoln vocalizes freely over the form, bending pitch and sliding between her head and chest voice. Lincoln then bows her head and slowly steps off stage while the rest of the band continues improvising. Although seemingly mundane, Lincoln's exit is an important moment in the performance. Considering that "Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace" is next in the set, it is possible she steps off stage to mentally, if not physically, prepare for this performance. With Lincoln off stage, Khan builds the opening of "Tears for Johannesburg" as Roach improvises over the ostinato. After a reprise of the theme and an open solo by Jordan, the broadcast breaks for a moment allowing the transition to "Triptych" which only features Roach and Lincoln.

"Triptych" begins showing only Roach and Lincoln on stage as they begin "Prayer." Roach introduces "Prayer" with a triplet phrase starting on the rack-tom, moving to the snare drum, to the floor-tom and finally the bass drum. This phrase is answered with a unison rhythm played on the snare drum and floor-tom finished with a single bass drum kick. Roach returns to this opening phrase throughout the piece, employing it as a motivic rhythmic cadence. The exaggerated dynamic space between Roach's three phrases (triplet figure, eighth-note cadence, and rack-tom roll) together creates feelings of tension and release that flow throughout the remainder of the movement. Lincoln enters at 15:49 with a lulling and unwavering "eeeh" vowel sound scooping slightly into a F# (F#4). Roach plays the rhythmic cadence again while Lincoln responds by descending from F# (F#4) to E (E4) at 15:53. As Roach makes his departure from the original theme with a quintuplet from bass drum to snare drum and a repeated bass drum—resembling a heartbeat—Lincoln, too, extends the phrase at 15:57 with a "yuhhh" sound from B (B3) to A (A3). Her second phrase begins at 16:06 on A (A4) where she then dips to G# (G#4) before sliding from E (E4) to F# (F#4). After a repeated vocalization between C# (C#4), E (E4), and F# (F#4) at 16:25, Lincoln displays her widest vocal interval by scooping into a C (C5) and sliding down to a B (B4) at 16:36-16:38, then jumping down, landing between D (D4) and E♭ (E♭4). Lincoln repeats the high C (C5) slide to B (B4); she then slides down to G# (G#4) and resolves on A (A4) on an "ooo" vowel sound. Roach then performs a tight, single-stroke roll on the snare drum, pausing, then a single stroke roll on the floor-tom into a sextuplet Swiss-army-triplet pattern.

This melismatic sequence in the first phrase of this section is accompanied by Roach's crashing cymbals and rolls on the snare drum before returning again to the opening triplet motif. At 16:45, Lincoln makes a change from the "yuhhh" and "eeeh" vowels at 16:54 as she resolves the phrase on a long "oooo" with slight

vibrato. The final section of "Prayer" (17:09–17:37) has the loudest vocal projection thus far. These vocal changes, together with the building of rhythmic and melismatic complexity, marks a change in the performance that parallels the intensity and anguish referenced in the liner notes. There are similarities to the original recording, particularly in the drum patterns, phrasing, and repetitions; however, as I discuss below, Lincoln's vowels in this live version more clearly indicate the "cry of the oppressed peoples." The duo continues to build for nearly two minutes, increasing in volume and intensity as the "Prayer" becomes more and more restless. Roach then recapitulates the opening cadence with embellishments and accents on the bass drum indicating the end of the prayer.

I highlight the pitches in this opening sequence to draw attention to the stark differences between this performance and the studio recording. On the recorded album, Lincoln's vocalizations during the opening of "Prayer" come from A natural minor with few non-diatonic deviations. She begins on E (E4), making melismatic leaps to G (G4) and A (A4). She follows a relatively diatonic pattern resolving phrases on A. The majority of her notes fall between C4 and C5. There are just two places where she includes non-diatonic pitches; B♭ (B♭4) at 1:47 and E♭ (E♭5) at 2:18. While the live recording too seems to be situated in A natural minor, Lincoln displays both a wider tessitura and more non-diatonic pitches. As shown above, the opening of this performance of "Prayer" includes G#, F#, C#, and E♭. To use more non-diatonic notes is to incorporate more dissonance which may indicate a greater familiarity with the piece and/or an audible expression of an increase of social and political dissonance expressed through these pitches. Additionally, in the live performance Lincoln displays a greater range of vowel sounds, whereas in the studio recording, she sings only the "ooo" vowel sound for first minute and thirteen seconds. Similar to the use of non-diatonic pitches, I understand the wider variety of vowel sounds and timbre used in the live recording as an indication of Lincoln evoking a greater depth of feeling and emotion fueled by the social and political climate that she carries into the remainder of the piece.

"Protest" begins at 17:51 with Roach crashing relentlessly on the drums and cymbals. While Roach continues rolling fast single strokes across the drums and cymbals—notated in the original score as "cacophony"—Lincoln enters at 17:55 with one short and quiet yelp before letting out a series of piercing and increasingly long screams pulsating on a "hah" sound.[24] This full departure from recognizable language is actualized in the range of Lincoln's scream as she freely

[24] The Max Roach Papers 1880-2012, Division of Music, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC, box #47, box 1-8.

moves between high to low pitched screams and yelps. Her screaming timbre shifts between a strained head voice at 18:07, to low-pitched, more throat centered and "grainy" at 18:10, to a sharp, high-pitched and piercingly pure tone at 18:26 that sounds to be at the upper limit of Lincoln's vocal capacity.[25] The use of "grit" and "pure" timbres together with chest, head, or throat voice throughout this section creates a juxtaposition of vocal quality that reflects the angst and anguish of the piece.

At 19:09, the camera shifts from Lincoln and shows Roach playing the seven-note Asâdua bell pattern on the rim of the snare drum marking the beginning of "All Africa." Lincoln omits the Langston Hughes poem at the beginning of this performance, instead starting by singing the names of eighteen ethnic groups—Bantu, Zulu, Watusi, Ashanti, Herero, Grebo, Igbo, Basuto, Myasa, Ndongo, Mbumda, M'boom, Kongo, Bobo, Kikuyu, Bahutu, Lozi, Kisi—while Jordan accompanies her with melodic improvisation. Rather than finishing the phrase by naming the remaining six ethnic groups, as heard on the album—Mbangi, Dahomey, Bongo, Bandjoun, and Bassa—Lincoln chant-sings "Africa" in their place, sounding a call for unity among the African peoples. Roach then initiates a crescendo with a single-stroke role into a 3/4 waltz groove for solos. Jordan takes the first solo followed by Perkinson, Khan, and finally Roach, who takes an open solo until the camera fades black.

"Freedom Day" is the last piece on this broadcast. It begins at 25:28 with Jordan playing the main melodic line on concert pitches C4, D4, and E♭4 before improvising over a held C-minor chord. After solos by Roach and Khan, the song form begins and Jordan takes a solo that leads to the top of the form. Lincoln enters with the lyrical melody, taking liberties with the notes and rhythmic phrasing. Lincoln counters the up-tempo swing in 4/4—nearly 400 beats per minute—with long whole-note phrases. Throughout "Freedom Day," Lincoln embellishes on and breaks away from the original rhythm and melody. Her embellishments layered over the fast tempo and intensity of the rhythm section read as expressions of freedom through improvisation which further amplify the suite's themes of liberation. She incorporates space and anticipation by back phrasing the melody—placing notes and phrases before, on, and/or after the beat—effectively creating a sense of fluidity over the driving harmonic changes. Lincoln sings the entire verse through, finishing with a declaration of

[25] Here, I am referencing my definition of timbre inspired by a range of scholars including Fales (2002), Siendenburg & McAdams (2017), and Weidman (2015). While timbre is a rather ambiguous term and can, at times, raise more questions than answers, I, through these authors, consider timbre as the audible quality of the voice and use it here to distinguish between the pitch and volume of Lincoln's screams.

"freedom day" on a decending half-step resolution from B♭4 to A4 at 29:44. She sustains on A while the band resolves on a D-minor chord.

From the re-sequencing and omission of songs to Lincoln's vocal and timbral improvisations, these musical departures provide a new take on the original *Freedom Now Suite*. During this performance, Lincoln especially evokes the oppression of Black folks throughout the diaspora. From her dress, hair, and jewelry, to her singing, moans, and screams, Lincoln confronts the social and political conflicts associated with being Black in the 1960s and simultaneously, through the totality of her performance, promoting and upholding a sense of pride and unity. While I have observed and analyzed the audible elements of this performance, what is equally striking are the ways Lincoln is captured and framed by the camera during intimate and intense moments.

THE HYPER-VISUALIZATION OF ABBEY LINCOLN'S SCREAM

In "Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace," Lincoln's scream is a gendered cathartic protest of racism and the global oppression of Black people. However, as I argue, the extreme close-up (ECU) camera techniques effectively remove the totality of Lincoln's protest performance from the frame. What remains is an ECU of Lincoln's mouth and therefore a hyper-visualization of Lincoln's scream that reproduces ways she was sexualized in the media earlier in her career.

The most visually impactful moments of Lincoln's performance on "Protest" are shown in three different frames: the medium close-up, close-up, and the extreme-close up. The first is the initial frame of Lincoln as she begins singing "Prayer" (see figure 2).

This medium close-up, single-frame shot shows Lincoln from a side angle as she gazes forward with her head slightly upward facing. As Lincoln and Roach begin improvising, the camera gradually zooms in on Lincoln. During this sequence, the camera switches frames to Roach just three times in the beginning of "Prayer," before switching back to keep viewers' attention on Lincoln for the remainder of the piece. During the next roughly two minutes (15:50–17:52), the camera gradually zooms into a close-up in which just her face is visible, and then at 17:33, further into an ECU frame in which just Lincoln's mouth is visible (see figures 3 and 4).

Figure 2. Medium-close up frame of Lincoln singing "Prayer," 15:50.

As Lincoln continues singing, moaning, and vocalizing, the camera remains focused on her mouth. At 17:38, the camera zooms out slightly to reframe Lincoln in a close-up shot marking the final seconds of "Prayer." While the camera pans out, Lincoln closes her eyes and bows her head as Roach continues playing the cadence off screen (see figure 5).

The camera remains on Lincoln during her short rest period. This moment of rest draws comparison to the moment at the end of "Tears for Johannesburg" when Lincoln exited the stage—a restful moment that, unlike this one, was private, and for Lincoln alone. This is another moment taken by Lincoln as she prepares to deliver the scream in the next movement.

While Roach, still out of frame, begins crashing loudly, marking the beginning of "Protest," Lincoln lifts her head (17:52), and begins a series of screams and yelps over the percussive cacophony. The camera quickly zooms back into an ECU frame to capture Lincoln's mouth (see figure 6).

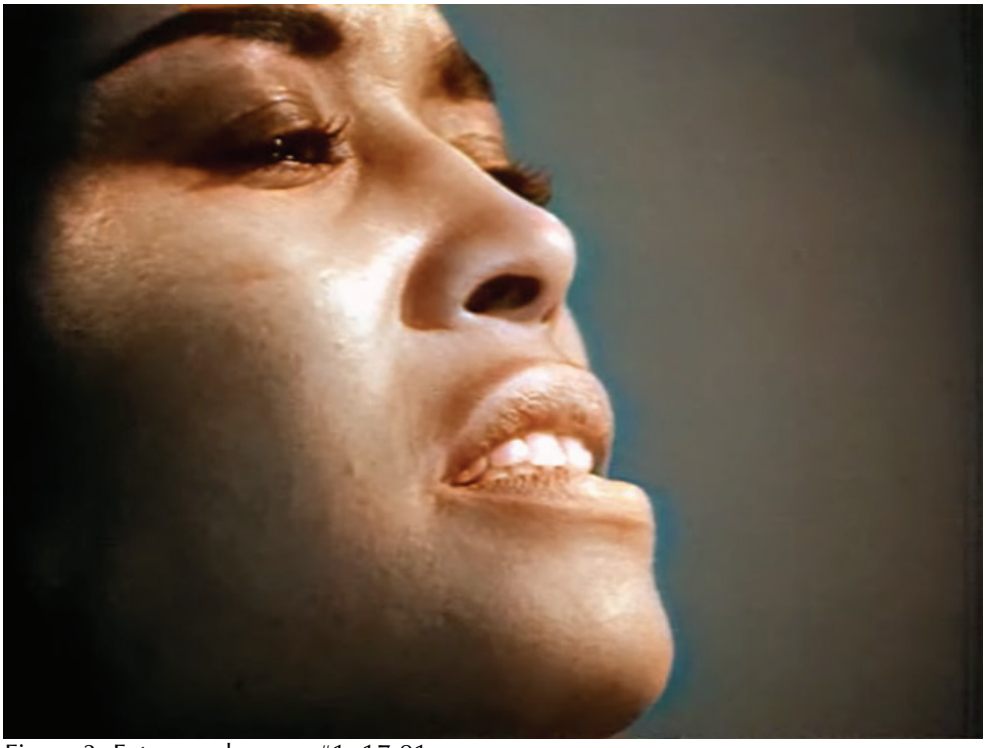

Figure 3. Extreme close-up #1, 17:01.

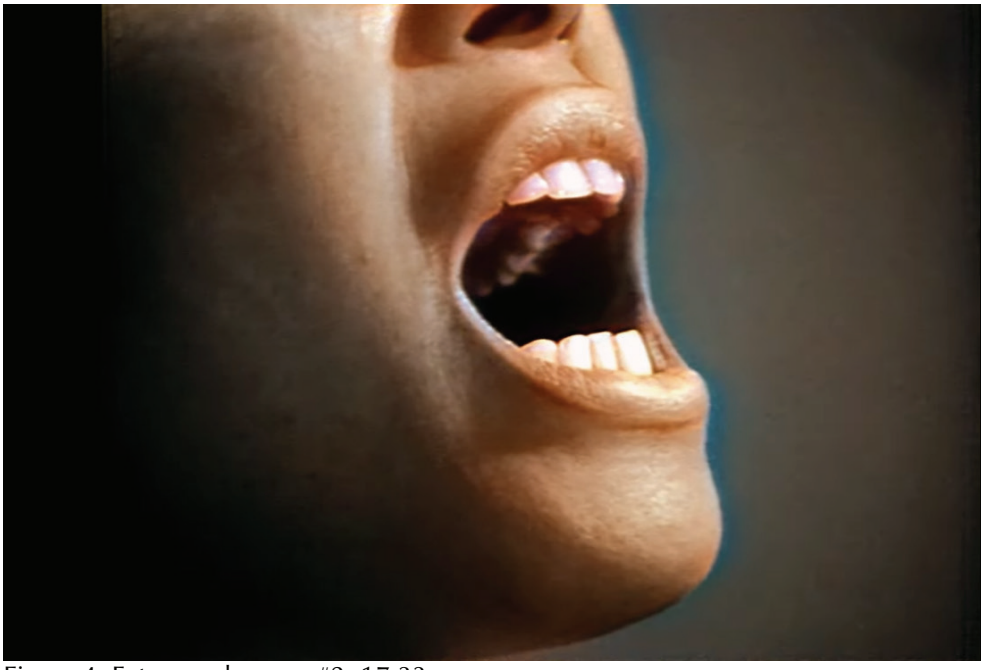

Figure 4. Extreme close-up #2, 17:33.

Figure 5. Camera remains on Abbey Lincoln bowing her head during drum transition between "Prayer" and "Protest," 17:44.

For the entirety of "Protest," the camera focuses solely on Lincoln. This framing is important to note as it situates the listener and viewer on Lincoln for an extended period of time, allowing the audience to truly see and contemplate her scream as a spectacle. Lincoln and Roach's performance of "Protest" lasts approximately one minute and ten seconds and ends abruptly (19:03).

This series of carefully curated close-up shots encourages a specific view of Lincoln's performance and the scream itself. The opening credits list the members of the production team, including chief cameraman Claude Michiels and camera operators Michel Brouwers, Louis Artus, and D. Yokanovic, who were in charge of documenting the visual narrative of this audiovisual performance.[26] As this television program was as much art as it was entertainment, the ways the musicians are captured are curated to tell a story, even if we cannot now know more about why such decisions were made. Historian Benjamin Cawthra interrogates the ways that photographing

[26] These names are among those listed on the production team of other Belgian television programs including other recordings of *Jazz Prisma* and *Kapitein Zeppos* a popular Dutch children's series in the 1960s.

musicians not only shows stories, but also shapes them in a way that documents and mythologizes.[27] He quotes critic Susan Sontag in his assertion that "photos objectify."[28] By viewing Lincoln's performance through this lens, a series of meanings arise with regard to objectification and mythologization. I extend this also to include fetishization. Although this performance is a duo between Roach and Lincoln, the camera focuses almost completely on Lincoln's head and mouth. By closing in on her mouth, the camera essentially removes the rest of Lincoln and reframes the scream as a separate entity. For these brief moments, viewers can only focus on Lincoln's mouth agape and her intense scream.

Figure 6. Extreme close-up frame on Lincoln's screaming mouth, 18:02.

Let us refer back to the beginning of the performance and consider two components: (1) the underlying themes of gender and sexuality displayed in the opening moments of the performance with "Sophisticated Lady" and "Love for Sale," and (2) Abbey Lincoln's metamorphosis away from a sexualized club

[27] Benjamin Cawthra, *Blue Notes in Black and White: Photography and Jazz* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 7.
[28] Cawthra, *Blue Notes in Black and White*, 8; Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (Picador, 2003), 81.

singer. I view the opening selections as a brief recall of the persona Lincoln left behind in 1958. Accordingly, as the cameras focus only on Lincoln's face and open mouth, the view shifts away from her protest aesthetics, and the camera effectively reinstates and amplifies the prior themes of sexualization and attaches them to Lincoln through their lens. While Lincoln intentionally established herself as a "dignified Negro woman," her appearance and musical explorations were perceivable representations of her metamorphosis. Furthermore, her identity as a Black nationalist and engagement with domestic and international politics provide important context that informs the totality of her performance. Her protest is not only realized in her music, but through her hair, jewelry, and dress. The camera framing seemingly erases these forms of identity which she so carefully curated over the years, and, as I argue, specifically curated for this performance on this international stage for this time.

I believe it is important to recognize that while these cameramen may not have intentionally used zoom to guide the viewer away from Lincoln's presentational protest aesthetics—it very well may have been an artistic or production-based decision—what we have as a result of those decisions, is nevertheless a reduced and essentialized view. And consequently, to lose sight of Lincoln's intentional representation is to lose sight of Lincoln's metamorphosis into a self-proclaimed Black nationalist and a protesting jazz artist. The Black pride iconography is on clear display in her appearance; however, by focusing on her mouth, we lose the significance of Lincoln's dress, hair, jewelry and the remaining expressions of Black pride which Lincoln intentionally including in her total protest aesthetic. By focusing solely on Lincoln's mouth and Lincoln's scream, the visual aesthetics Lincoln spent time establishing in order to achieve a particular type of protest are effectively removed from the frame. The viewer can only focus on the scream which, because of the extreme camera work, is front and center as an object removed from the body which produced it. By removing these gestures of gender and performance from view, Lincoln is visibly and audibly reduced to a scream.

THE SCREAMING VOICE

The 1964 video recording of the *Freedom Now Suite* is dynamic in that it holds within its frames a myriad of layered implications raising questions of language, voice, Blackness, colonialism, and protest more broadly to create a unique site for critical audiovisual analysis. What does it mean to have a voice? Is possession of a voice a sufficient level of personhood and language? Musicologist Nina Eidsheim offers a useful reading of vocalist Billie Holiday and her image as a Black woman singer. She claims that the figure and image of the Black woman

vocalist is a quintessential American voice, one that bears historical implications of an oppressed female body.[29] I consider Eidsheim's reading of Holiday as a figure of a "hypervisible and hyperaudible" subject to situate Lincoln within a historical frame of Black women entertainers. This scream is not only an indication of rage as referenced in the album liner notes, but also an indication of a Black female lived experience in the United States. Lincoln, through her performance of Black pride and African unity, embodies her voice and the scream as an audible element of her political beliefs and affiliations.

Cultural theorist and scholar Fred Moten pays particular attention to Lincoln's performance of "Triptych," comparing her screams and moans to Frederick Douglass's recollection of Aunt Hester's scream.[30] Moten submits that Lincoln's scream is a narrative, an improvisation, and a troubling performance of Blackness. He also raises questions of femininity and a rethinking of Blackness, through protest, that are constitutive to a revolutionary performance of Black womanhood. Black studies scholar Jayna Brown offers a more recent analysis of Lincoln's performance on *We Insist!* and focuses on the Black woman's voice as providing an ontological gathering point within contemporary Black philosophy.[31] Brown is in conversation with Moten in his analysis of Lincoln's scream, but goes further, questioning how the non-linguistic practices of screams and moans heard in Lincoln's performance confront, engage, and disengage from language. Brown argues that Lincoln's vocalizations show how certain forms of articulation, particularly the scream, are only possible outside of language.[32] For Brown, sounding pain in performance is different from sounding pain as it is inflicted.[33] Through Moten and Brown, I read Lincoln's scream as an avant-garde performance of Blackness that utilizes noise and extramusical vocal techniques to express the trauma of racism.

In analyzing the album recording, Brown argues that, "A black woman's voice provides an ontological gathering point within contemporary black philosophy."[34] She writes that Lincoln's voice on "Protest" operates as a complex polyphony that carries grief, fear, defiance, and fury. Brown is also interested in the intersection of voice and the practices of confronting, engaging, and

---

[29] Nina Sun Eidsheim, *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music* (Duke University Press, 2019), 158.

[30] Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 23.

[31] Jayna Brown, "Black Sonic Refusal," in *The Female Voice in the Twentieth Century,* ed. Serena Facci and Michela Gerda (Routledge, 2021), 103.

[32] Brown, "Black Sonic Refusal," 107.

[33] Brown, "Black Sonic Refusal," 109.

[34] Brown, "Black Sonic Refusal," 103.

disengaging from language, and in the case of Abbey Lincoln's scream in "Triptych," Brown argues that Lincoln's articulations and screams are only possible outside of language.[35] This is significant for Lincoln's performance, for over the course of this suite she uses very little conventional musical "language" or lyrics; she instead uses moans, screams, and other vocalizations subversive to the traditionally configured role of the jazz singer, and especially different from the type of singing Lincoln did prior to her "metamorphosis."[36] Lincoln's screams and hollers, along with her previous departures from conventional musical language, are an improvised performance of vocalizing within the avant-garde or free jazz movement.[37] This style of music expression began as an opportunity for musicians to subvert the traditional in an effort to strain the definition of jazz to its limit by incorporating sounds and techniques previously understood as extra-musical.[38] For singers such as Lincoln, the voice is both an instrument and a part of their quotidian practice. Throughout this piece, Lincoln's vocalizations embody feelings of reverent prayer, uncontrollable rage, and relaxed exhaustion. Critics like Nat Hentoff recognized that Lincoln transformed her voice—with the use of the scream—into a political weapon. However, just as Lincoln's screams and moans disrupt the boundaries of language throughout this performance, the camera disrupts the performance and effectively objectifies Lincoln, rendering her only an instrument, a scream.

Lincoln's performance is eerie and haunting as she uses screams and moans to convey the ideas laid out in the album liner notes. What is arguably most striking, however, is that the scream itself did not come naturally, or even willingly, to Lincoln. It was Roach who "encouraged" Lincoln to explore this extramusical vocalization, and more so the trauma he himself inflicted to elicit Lincoln's scream. [39]

In 1995, Roach spoke with jazz critic and writer Amiri Baraka about his work with Lincoln. Roach mentioned that he began "dealing with the voice," and that he "had a voice living with [him]," specifically when it came to composing and performing music that related to the conditions of the Civil Rights Movement.[40] Roach was most concerned with the idea and performance of a "scream," one

---

[35] Brown, "Black Sonic Refusal," 107.
[36] Gardner, "The Metamorphosis of Abbey Lincoln," 20.
[37] Mervyn Cooke, *Jazz* (Thames and Hudson, 1999), 157.
[38] Cooke, *Jazz*, 155.
[39] Eric Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz?: African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists* (University of California Press, 2002); Farah Jasmine Griffin, *If You Can't Be Free. Be A Mystery,* 172.
[40] Max Roach Papers 1880-2012, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, box# 51, folder 1-7, ML31.R62.

that would accompany his percussive interventions on "Triptych: Prayer, Protest, Peace." In the interview with Baraka, Roach recalled the makings of the scream:

> So, I could say, "scream," let me hear what that sounds like. What about creating a piece with just screams. Instead of me writing "scream," I would say, "supposing you were walking down the country road and you saw a body hanging up on a tree… all of a sudden you come to a clearing and there is a man hanging on a tree, like one of those things we used to see. He was burned, tarred and feathered and his jones cut off." You just react to that and that's a scream. I would have to explain, in words, what I was after.

Roach went on to say, "People thought I must have been beating her because it was up here, in the apartment, I would be banging on the kitchen table and she would be working at [the scream]."[41]

Lincoln's personal writings offer a different perspective on this process, and demonstrates how difficult it was for her to perform the scream: "The first part was conceived as 'Prayer,' and I didn't find that hard to interpret. It was the second part I was having trouble with. [Roach] called it 'Protest' and he wanted me to scream. It had never occurred to me that screaming could be a part of music."[42] She finally declares that she "didn't want to do it. And no matter what he said or how he raved or ranted, I held my peace." Lincoln also speaks on the reactions of those closest to her during this screaming "practice." She writes, "My mother and… my friend and sometimes mentor, Jaunita, was visiting from the East Side. [Roach] pounded on the table and called me out by my name. My mother, who was in the kitchen with Jaunita, was horrified."[43]

What stands out here are the different ways in which Lincoln and Roach describe the same situation. While both Lincoln and Roach's personal accounts reveal a profound underlying presence of violence in the production and performance of the scream, there is a different tone and position from which they speak. From Roach's perspective, he is working with a "voice" and prompting Lincoln to scream by recalling imagery of historical trauma against Black folks. Lincoln, on the other hand, is actively maintaining her autonomy by initially refusing to scream, despite Roach's "pounding" on the table.

It was through both repeated attempts by Roach to elicit a scream and an anecdotal inspiration from her nephew that Lincoln finally decided to tap into

---

[41] The Max Roach Papers 1880-2012, Division of Music, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, box #57, folder 1-4, ML31.R62.

[42] The Abbey Lincoln Collection (IJS-0101), Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University Libraries, Newark, NJ, box #22, folder 7.

[43] The Abbey Lincoln Collection (IJS-0101).

her own self and scream. Lincoln spoke about this process in her personal writings:

> It was hard for me to believe [Roach] really wanted me to scream…. Why should I scream? Anyway, I didn't know how to do it. One day soon after, we were on our way out of the city for a performance. Darryl, a great love of my life and the eldest son of my sister, Shirley, was also staying with us for a moment and was also on the trip…. Max confided to Darryl that I didn't know how to scream and asked him to scream for me…. When Roach started to speak, Darryl interrupted him and said to us, "you see, Uncle Max, the reason I can scream so loud is because I'm a little boy and babies can scream louder than me and Aunt Abbey can scream louder than you." I have discovered over the years that children are natural oracles. Darryl was only eight years of age and he knew a simple truth, one he helped me discover. A scream is an alarm, a capability for our protection…. Still I was and still am, thankful for the ability to scream. It helped to free me up as a singer. I became more daring and less inhibited.[44]

Here, Lincoln talks about the process of realizing the potential of the scream from her own perspective. While initially refusing to scream as Roach would have her, Lincoln changed her position on screaming and decided it was a tool for liberation. Mbowa writes that Lincoln spoke on behalf of her ancestors and that, through the scream, her body was a vessel in service of her ancestors.[45] This context aligns with Lincoln's process of realizing the potential of the scream itself, and her broader autonomy and self-identity as a Black woman.

It is this question of Lincoln's autotomy and agency that rests at the center of this project, for it is Lincoln's position and experiences as a Black woman, paired with her stance on Black freedom during the Civil Rights Movement, that grounds her scream as a cathartic protest. In sum, I am forwarding the idea that Lincoln is more than her scream. And while the scream may have been incorporated into her repertoire through collaborations with Max Roach, she herself is an autonomous and protesting artist whose creative aesthetics superseded the audible, and carried over in the remainder of her career. Following a 1995 interview with Abbey Lincoln, jazz scholar Ingrid Monson mentioned that, "[Lincoln] emphasized that she had a successful career before and after her marriage, in part, to counter the tendency of some to portray her

[44] Abbey Lincoln Collection (IJS-0101).
[45] Mbowa, "Abbey Lincoln's Screaming Singing and the Sonic Liberatory Potential Thereafter," 144.

as the *creation* of Max Roach."[46] This acknowledgement of Lincoln's artistic autonomy underscores both the profoundness of the scream and how Lincoln was performing protest in other aspects of her life. The 1964 broadcast in Belgium provides audiovisual context of Lincoln's total protest including her dress, hair, jewelry, and overall image. A hyper-fixation on the scream as displayed in the video recording, I argue, leaves only a limited and essentializing view drawing attention away from the totality of Lincoln's audiovisual protest performance. Thus, to be mindful of the totality of her creative representations is to see her as more than "a voice" (as stated by Max Roach) and more than a scream (as portrayed through ECU frames in this video). Rather, this understanding affirms the full metamorphosis of Abbey Lincoln–a Black woman, artist, and activist.

CONCLUSION

The United States experienced many social and cultural catalysts throughout the 1960s, and particularly in the months leading up to the *Jazzprisma* performance. On June 12, 1963, civil rights activist Medgar Evers was assassinated in front of his home in Mississippi. On August 28, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech to over a quarter million people at the March on Washington. Then on September 15, members of the Ku Klux Klan bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama killing four young girls and injuring nearly two dozen others. Two months later, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated while riding in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas on November 22. These events, and others, served as a social, political, and racially charged background for the ongoing struggle for civil rights experienced and expressed by Black musicians during this time.

Lincoln demonstrates how some jazz musicians experienced the social and political discord in the United States and grew more conscious of international conflicts throughout the African continent. As Lincoln was motivated by this growing consciousness, she inevitably combined her art with her social and political activism. Her dress, hair, style, and overall appearance were visual indicators of this, while her voice and song choices amplified her views to the masses. Lincoln's brief disruption of traditional vocal techniques is a moment of new critical discourse and theoretical language politics which, as Jayna Brown argues, recognizes the fundamental violence of the US racial regime.[47] The video

[46] Ingrid Monson, "Abbey Lincoln in the Civil RightsYears," Talk delivered at the Symposium in honor of Abbey Lincoln, Columbia University, December 7, 2001.
[47] Brown, "Black Sonic Refusal," 107.

recording of the 1964 performance is an opportunity to observe, audio-visually, Lincoln's complete protest aesthetics. By understanding the complex dynamics of Lincoln's performance—her navigation of gender, language, the avant-garde, the historical context—it is clear that her scream represents a history of violence and oppression. At the same time, it is also clear that the use of ECU camera angles have a silencing effect, confining Lincoln's expression to a disembodied scream alone. Unlike the hyper-focused ECU camera angles on the 1964 broadcast, I have sought to broaden the focus and reframe Lincoln to include her complete protest aesthetics so to avoid further losing sight of her identity and metamorphosis into a "dignified Negro woman." As a further result of this broadened view, Lincoln's voice, artistry, and politics receive serious attention in the appreciation of her lasting legacy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbey Lincoln Recording Session Interview 1995, 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YknrksR8DuY.

The Abbey Lincoln Collection, The Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ.

Brown, Jayna. "Black Sonic Refusal." In *The Female Voice in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Serena Facci and Michela Gerda. Routledge, 2021.

Cawthra, Benjamin. *Blue Notes in Black and White: Photography and Jazz*. University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Cooke, Mervyn. *Jazz*. Thames and Hudson, 1999.

Cooks, Bridget R., and Graham Eng-Wilmot. "Sound of the Break: Jazz and the Failures of Emancipation." *American Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2016): 315–40.

Deumert, Ana. "When Things Fall Apart: On The Dialectics of Hope and Anger." *Language in Society* 53, no. 5 (November 2024): 881–900. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404524000721.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Dover Thrift Editions, 1903.

Eidsheim, Nina. *The Race of Sound: Listening, Timbre, and Vocality in African American Music*. Duke University Press, 2019.

Feldstein, Ruth. *How It Feels to Be Free: Black Women Entertainers and the Civil Rights Movement*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Feldstein, Ruth. "'The World Was on Fire': Black Women Entertainers and Transnational Activism in the 1950s." *OAH Magazine of History* 26, no. 4 (October 1, 2012): 25–29. https://doi.org/10.1093/oahmag/oas033.

Fend, Bill. "Max Roach – 'We Insist: Freedom Now Suite.'" *Jazz Notes* 6, no. 2, February-March 1961, 29.

Ford, Tanisha C. *Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul*. University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Gershon, Walter S. "Hear Me Roar: Sound Feminisms and Qualitative Methodologies." In *Transdisciplinary Feminist Research*, edited by Carol Taylor, Jasmine Ulmer, and Christina Hughes. Routledge, 2020.

Goldman, Danielle. "Sound Gestures: Posing Questions for Music and Dance." *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 17, no. 2 (July 1, 2007): 123–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/07407700701387291.

Griffin, Farah Jasmine. *If You Can't Be Free, Be a Mystery: In Search of Billie Holiday*. Random House Publishing Group, 2002.

Jichova, Miroslava. "Gendered Representations of Jazz Vocal Artists: A Critical Discourse Analysis of CD and Performance Reviews, and Interviews." *University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations*, August 8, 2007. https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td/569.

Kelley, Robin D. G. "Nap Time: Historicizing the Afro." *Fashion Theory* 1, no. 4 (1997): 334-51, https://doi.org/10.2752/136270497779613666.

Max Roach Papers 1880-2012, Music Division, Library of Congress, ML31.R62, Washington, DC.

Max Roach Quartet & Abbey Lincoln, BRT TV Studio, Schaerbeek, Belgium, January 10, 1964 (Colorized), 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5GSYwveJRw.

Max Roach with Abbey Lincoln. *Freedom Now Suite*. Magnetic Records, MRCD 110, 1964.

Max Roach Quintet with Abbey Lincoln. *Live in Paris*. WHP1470, Recorded January 18, 1964, released in Europe 2023.

Mbowa, Aida. "Abbey Lincoln's Screaming Singing and the Sonic Liberatory Potential Thereafter." In *Taking It to the Bridge: Music as Performance*, edited by Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill, 135–54. University of Michigan Press, 2013.

Monson, Ingrid. "Abbey Lincoln in the Civil RightsYears," Talk delivered at the Symposium in honor of Abbey Lincoln. Columbia University. December 7, 2001.

Monson, Ingrid. *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Moten, Fred. *In The Break: The Aesthetics of The Black Radical Tradition*. University Of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Muhanji, Cherry, and Jack Straton. "Activism Through Music." *Inventio: Creative Thinking about Learning and Research*. April 1, 2005. https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/phy_fac/219.

Porter, Eric. *What Is This Thing Called Jazz?: African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists*. University of California Press, 2002.

Roach, Max. *We Insist!: Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite*, Candid Records 9002. December 1960.

Robertson, Cydni & Kopot, Caroline & Mestres, Jamie. "Beyond Afros and Activism: Analysis of Black and African American Women and Fashion, Style, Dress and Identity in Fashion Studies Literature. *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture* 11 (2023): 13-26. https://doi.org/10.1386/fspc_00195_1

Pellegrinelli, Lara. "Separated At Birth: Singing and the History of Jazz." In *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies*, edited by Rustin, Nichole T. Rustin and Sherrie Tucker. Duke University Press, 2008.

Saul, Scott. *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties*. Harvard University Press, 2005.

Vogel, Shane. "Lena Horne's Impersona." *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 23, no. 1 (67) (May 1, 2008): 11–45. https://doi.org/10.1215/02705346-2007-022.

Walker, Susannah. *Style and Status: Selling Beauty to African American Women, 1920-1975*. University of Kentucky Press, 2007.

White, Alisa. "'We Insist! Freedom Now': Max Roach's Transatlantic Civil Rights Imperative." *Jazz Education Journal* 40, no. 2–3 (October 2007): 47–48.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marcus R. Grant is a professional drummer, percussionist, musicologist, and educator from West Chester, Pennsylvania. He is currently a Brown University PhD candidate in Musicology & Ethnomusicology with a secondary certificate study in the Department of Africana Studies. Grant holds a BM in jazz performance from Temple University, an MM jazz performance, an MM in musicology from the University of Miami (FL), and an MA in musicology and ethnomusicology from Brown University. As a scholar, he focuses his research on 2020 Black Lives Matter protest music and hip-hop, and the intersections of musical protest and digital culture. Other research interests include jazz studies and music of the Black church. As a performer, Grant has shared the stage with Victor Goines, Nicole Henry, Angélique Kidjo, Robert Glasper, Lalah Hathaway, Bilal, De La Soul, and is a performing member of the Robert Glasper *Black Radio Orchestra* and Derrick Hodge *Color of Noize Orchestra*.