

Women College Musicians Take on the World: Gender in Cold War Jazz Diplomacy and Collegiate Jazz Programs

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In 2023, the U.S. State Department shared historic video footage on its YouTube channel from the 1967 North Texas State University One O’Clock Lab Band’s diplomatic tour in Mexico.¹ The video featured a woman soloist playing “La Bamba” on piano, however the description lists the performance as “by the North Texas University Jazz Band” and the soloist is not credited by name. Surprised to see a woman playing in a historically male-dominated ensemble, I sought out more information about the pianist in the video and discovered that she was Linda de Leon, one of two women to participate in the North Texas State tour in 1967.² To be more exact, on the 1967 tour, these women did not play *in* the band, but played *with* the band as “featured” soloists—a designation historically used when referring to those who did not properly “belong” to a group for one reason or another.³ Uncovering de Leon’s name, much less her story, required archival work, a challenge indicative of the ways that women’s roles in both musical diplomacy and jazz have been obscured, both then and now.

When women are not expressly mentioned in the historical narrative, the assumption is often that they were not there.⁴ However, the archive can tell

¹ U.S. Department of State, “North Texas University Jazz Band, ‘La Bamba’, Mexico, 1967 | Music Diplomacy Archives,” September 27, 2023.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqMyDp2zccM>

² The other was vocalist Carol Lurie. Pat Bryan, “Lab Band Bids ‘Adios’: To Leave Jan. 26 for Mexico,” *The Campus Chat*, January 6, 1967, 1.

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth307324/m1/1/>

³ As discussed later in this article, it would be another nine years before the North Texas State jazz band would officially count a woman among their ranks. Tracy McMullen has written about the history of this particular University of North Texas jazz program and how it is built on racist and sexist grounds. Tracy McMullen, “The College Jazz Program as Tradition Making: Establishing a New Lineage in Jazz,” *Women and Music* 27 (2023), 32–50.

⁴ Sherrie Tucker, *Swing Shift: All-Girl Bands of the 1940s* (Duke University Press, 2000) and Ken Prouty, “We Don’t Know What We Don’t Know: Historiography and the ‘Lost Voice’ in Jazz,”

another story. In the case of jazz diplomacy, it appears that the State Department was proud to have young women representing the U.S. Even if care was not taken to identify these women by name, their images were and are still promoted as representative of their cultural exchange programming. Similar to the video of Linda de Leon posted on YouTube in 2023, vocalist Carol Lurie was featured in the Advisory Committee to the Arts' report in the singular photo representing the 1967 North Texas State tour through Mexico (Fig. 1). Even though Lurie appears in the foreground of the image, she is out of focus and visually pushed to the margin, while the men in the ensemble are central.



Figure 1. Carol Lurie sings with North Texas State One O'Clock Lab Band as featured in "A Report to the Congress and the Public by the Advisory Committee on the Arts" covering Cultural Presentations USA 1966–1967.⁵

This article reveals how women were influential in jazz diplomacy at a time when they were systematically marginalized in academic and professional settings.⁶ By examining a set of U.S. State Department-sponsored collegiate jazz

in *Learning Jazz: Jazz Education, History, and Public Pedagogy* (University Press of Mississippi, 2023), 50–80.

⁵ Leon Breeden Collection, Scrapbook 1967 A/B
<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc673868/m1/24/>

⁶ A number of policies were introduced toward women's equality during this time period including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1965), Voting Rights Act (1965),

tours during the Cold War, I highlight the variety of women's participation and influence in three collegiate programs and their tours. Specifically, I address: 1) the University of Michigan's Symphony Band's 1961 tour of the Soviet Union, Middle East, and Eastern Europe, which featured a jazz band; 2) the University of Illinois Jazz Band's 1969 tour of the Soviet Union; and 3) the North Texas State University One O'Clock Lab Band's 1967 tour of Mexico and 1976 tour of the Soviet Union. Through these case studies, I argue that collegiate women jazz musicians made a distinct and unacknowledged contribution to U.S. cultural diplomacy during the Cold War. Through their musical abilities and interpersonal interactions, these women expanded the diplomatic reach and success of their tours.

During this period of the Cold War, the State Department was invested in sending musical groups around the world to promote U.S. culture, and jazz in particular was lauded as an American innovation.⁷ Although few women were invited to participate in jazz diplomacy on the professional level, a handful of young women took part as college student musicians. My contribution spotlights the individual women who were a part of collegiate jazz programs through their involvement with State Department diplomacy initiatives. The case studies in this article span 1961–1976, a time of significant change related to women's place in U.S. society and developments in jazz education. Although the 1960s saw rapid expansion of collegiate jazz education programs and women enrolling in college at an increased rate, the number of women in collegiate jazz programs was limited, even tokenistic, and sometimes limited only to a vocalist position.⁸ With this cultural moment in mind, this article shows how college women were active participants in jazz diplomacy despite their small numbers and the dominant narratives overshadowing them.

Drawing on scholarship on women in jazz, women in music, and feminist historiography more broadly, I read archival materials “against the grain” to look

no-fault divorce (1969), full legalization of birth control (1970), *Roe v. Wade* (1973), and notably for academia, the passage of Title IX (1972), which prohibited sex-based discrimination in collegiate institutions. Carol Hymowitz and Michaela Weissman, “Don't Steal a Job from a Man,” in *A History of Women in America* (Bantam Books, 1978) as cited in Jill M. Sullivan ed. *Women's Bands in America: Performing Music and Gender* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016).

⁷ Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Harvard University Press, 2006), 10.

⁸ Kenneth E. Prouty, “The History of Jazz Education: A Critical Reassessment,” *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 26, no. 2 (2005): 97; Stacy Jones, “Dynamic Social Norms and the Unexpected Transformation of Women's Higher Education, 1965–1975,” *Social Science History* 33, no. 3 (2009): 247–91.

beyond what the sources say to what they leave out.⁹ Of fourteen collegiate jazz tours conducted during this time period of State Department Cold War-era diplomacy, I was able to confirm that seven women participated: the three vocalists and four instrumentalists in the four tours outlined in this article. Identifying their participation often took digging in multiple archives, including the National Archives, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection, and separate University archival collections. Although their accounts are notably absent from the traditional narratives and scholarly literature on Cold War jazz diplomacy, the women college musicians I identified were active in sharing stories about their experiences through newspaper columns and interviews, which I found through digital sources and conducted myself. Despite their small numbers, women did in fact participate in collegiate jazz diplomacy tours in measurably impactful ways.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN 1961 TOUR

The University of Michigan Symphony Band's State Department tour spanned a record-breaking length of fifteen weeks lasting from February 19 to June 2, 1961 through the Soviet Union, Middle East, and Eastern Europe.¹⁰ The University of Michigan Symphony Band tour was not originally intended to have a jazz band, but months before the tour, the State Department specifically asked for a "dance band" to serve as entertainment for the Jordan-American Goodwill Dinner as part of a tour stop on April 23, 1961.¹¹ The smaller, ad hoc jazz band, composed of Symphony Band members, was "the best kept secret of the '61 Michigan Russian tour band," according to Charlie Martyn, the appointed graduate student leader of the group.¹² The "secretive" nature of the jazz band

⁹ Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 127. In music studies specifically, see Ellie M. Hisama, *Gendering Musical Modernism: The Music of Ruth Crawford, Marion Bauer, and Miriam Gideon* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); Ruth A. Solie, "Women's History and Music History: The Feminist Historiography of Sophie Drinker," *Journal of Women's History* 5, no. 2, (1993): 8–31; and Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹⁰ "Russia Tour Revisited" document, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, 244. <https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/110898>.

¹¹ Charlie Martyn conversation with the author, February 2023.

¹² Charles Martyn, UM Symphony Band 1961 Russian Tour archived website, <https://web.archive.org/web/20171204083648/http://smt.d.umich.edu/1961symphonybandtour/Bios/CharlesMartyn.html> Michigan's student jazz band might not have happened at all without a woman. Charlie Martyn originally declined the leadership role because his wife Ruth was pregnant. However, she insisted that he should take this once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of the tour. She gave birth to their first child while he was away on the tour.

extended into the historical record as the Symphony Band's director, William D. Revelli, notoriously disliked jazz and downplayed this component of the tour in retrospective articles he wrote for the *Music Educators Journal*.¹³ As a result, the University of Michigan 1961 tour is not reflected in historical narratives as a "jazz tour" and was seen as mainly the symphony band tour.¹⁴

Also not evident on the surface, is the fact that two women participated in the tour's jazz band. Like many of the other students who volunteered to play in the jazz band, these women came from a primarily classical music background. As a piano performance major, Patricia Parker, who played oboe in the symphony band, also played piano for the jazz band.¹⁵ Noelle Papsdorf Rogers, who played French horn in the jazz band (covering saxophone parts), was primarily a classical singer. She would go on to have a successful career as a concert and opera singer after her time studying at the University of Michigan.¹⁶ Rather than be center stage as a "canary"—a woman singing with an ensemble composed mostly of men—she took on the role of an instrumentalist playing French horn alongside her peers.¹⁷ Both were skilled at sight-reading, which was a particularly important skill given that the jazz band had mere months to rehearse before the beginning of the tour.¹⁸

¹³ There is no mention of the jazz band in his articles about the tour. William D. Revelli, "Reflections on a Musical Adventure," *Music Educators Journal* 48, no. 1 (September–October 1961): 37–41, and "Reflections on a Musical Adventure," *Music Educators Journal* 48, no. 4 (February–March 1962): 55–58, 95–96.

His perspective on jazz was more complicated than just hate. He described this in a letter to Leon Breeden: "If you would review my career and work before and at Michigan, you will find I was not anti-jazz. However, I was and still am anti any program that neglects the music fundamentals of true, sincere, thorough musicianship – and, SO ARE YOU, for I know your fine taste, training, and concepts demand this of your great jazz band program at NTU." Letter from William D. Revelli to Leon Breeden, October 20, 1976, Box 36 Scrapbook 1976 B/C, Leon Breeden Collection, University of North Texas.

¹⁴ Lisa E. Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 93. Davenport mentions the University of Michigan Symphony Band tour in one sentence as setting a precedent for touring groups in the Soviet Union and that the "Symphonic Band" played "some jazz tunes." This does not capture the full extent that there was a band within the band designed for this express purpose of playing jazz.

¹⁵ Patricia Parker, conversation with the author, August 2024.

¹⁶ Noelle Papsdorf Rogers Obituary, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/186161728/noelle-rogers>

¹⁷ Both Sherrie Tucker and Lara Pellegrinelli have written about the role of women as singers in otherwise all-male ensembles. Tucker, *Swing Shift*, and Pellegrinelli, "Separated at 'Birth': Singing and the History of Jazz," in *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies* edited by Nichole T. Rustin and Sherrie Tucker (Duke University Press, 2008), 31–44.

¹⁸ Charlie Martyn conversation with the author, February 2023. Referring to their sight-reading ability, he claimed they could "read the spots off" of anything.

As the first collegiate instrumental tour of the Cold War era, the University of Michigan Symphony Band was chosen by the State Department because of the general appeal of sending young people on tour, as well as the band's specific make up, which included women and students from different states in the U.S.¹⁹ A note recorded by Band Secretary Frederick E. Moncrieff after meeting with State Department officials highlights this by stating, "94 STUDENTS—27 GIRLS—ABOUT 18 STATES IN U.S. IMPORTANT IN CHOICE."²⁰ The attention to representing a variety of states came from ongoing demands from Senators wanting representation of the country outside of New York City for cultural tours.²¹ Collegiate groups became a good solution to this problem for the Senate not only because of their high artistic quality, but also because they were located across the U.S.

During this time period, State Department cultural diplomacy tours were managed by the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA). In a letter remarking on the University of Michigan Symphony Band tour, ANTA publicist Isadora Bennett reveals the appeal of sending students on tour for the State Department. She expresses that the group was chosen because they wanted young people specifically to interact spontaneously with their international constituents. She wrote:

It has been discovered that "the best ambassadors are the young ones." Kids are going on exchange programs for study, kids just traveling have been the best representatives we can have. The reason is, of course, that their contemporaries will talk to them, will ask questions. And the kids will answer right off the top of their heads. Their knowledge of politics and history may be slightly less than scholarly—but they talk and, in themselves, they are "exhibits" for an open society.²²

ANTA and the State Department found the University of Michigan Band attractive in part because of their youth, which differentiated them from well-established professional musicians. At the same time, as most came from a

¹⁹ American National Theatre and Academy publicist Isadora Bennett mentions the issue of state representation "There were several just as good – but the members of this one represented 24 states. That was the basis of the final choice." Frederick E. Moncrieff Papers, Box 1, Folder 7 – Notes & Misc., Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁰ Frederick E. Moncrieff Papers, Box 1, Folder 7 – Notes & Misc., Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²¹ Transcript of Procedures – Advisory Committee, July 8, 1963, Box 4, RG 59 Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs/Office of Cultural Presentations, P 307: General Records, 1957-1968, National Archives, College Park, MD.

²² Frederick E. Moncrieff Papers, Box 1, Folder 7 – Notes & Misc., Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

privileged and primarily white background, these students were less likely to use the global platform provided by the tour as an opportunity to take a stand on Civil Rights—as opposed to professional artists like Dizzy Gillespie who refused to attend his State Department briefing or Louis Armstrong who turned down a tour 1957 in response to the Little Rock Crisis.²³ As Bennett notes, all of this was “perhaps best kept off the record.”²⁴

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SYMPHONY BAND (TOUR)
HARRIS HALL
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

December 9, 1960

TOUR TO SOVIET UNION-MEDITERRANEAN AREA*****FEBRUARY 20 TO JUNE 2, 1961

SUGGESTED WARDROBE AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

The following items are suggested in view of the areas to be visited and in consideration of the seasons, temperatures etc. to be encountered. Since we will be doing much of our travel by air, and as our itinerary will call for considerable and rapid movement of the unit, members are urged to confine their baggage to a minimum number of pieces—but with due consideration of vital necessities. Following are indispensable items which should be given priority.

<p>One suit—preferably dark color. Two pair of slacks, dark gray, brown, or black. One winter OVERCOAT, preferably with a "zip in" lining for both winter and spring. One sport coat, preferably dark color. Raincoat (to be provided by Band). One pair of black shoes for Concert dress. One pair of black shoes for street wear. ? One pair of shoe rubbers, type which covers entire shoe, <u>NOT</u> "low-cut!" One Woolen Sweater. One pair of Woolen Gloves. One Woolen Muffler. <i>Have</i> One pair of Ear Muffs. One Uniform, provided by Band. One beret, dark. One belt, for men. One pair of suspenders. ? <i>What for</i> <i>Have</i> One Alarm Clock. One portable music stand <u>WITH CASE.</u></p>	<p>Neckties 2 of lighter color 2 of darker color 2 plain black "Continental" Bow Ties model to be announced. Pajamas One pr. of woolen pajamas <i>Have</i> One pr. of wash and wear light pajamas. Five white "wash and wear" shirts. ? <i>Boys?</i> Two pair of black woolen socks. " " Two pair of "wash and wear" black socks. " " Four pair of "wash and wear" underwear. One pair of woolen or "thermal" underwear. Six "fast dry" handkerchiefs. Toilet Articles: 2 tubes of toothpaste. Toothbrush. Shaving cream for men. Plenty of blades for men. Safety Razor for men (Electric razors will not be practical in this area) Deodorant. Comb--pocket style. Clothes Brush. Several bars of soap. Several packages of pocket-size Kleenex.</p>
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Figure 2. Jane Otteson King Packing List with Notes.

²³ Hugo Berkeley, "When America's Hottest Jazz Stars Were Sent to Cool Cold-War Tensions," *The Guardian*, May 13, 2018.

²⁴ Frederick E. Moncrieff Papers, Box 1, Folder 7 – Notes & Misc., Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

The State Department's interest in women instrumentalists stands in contrast to administrative documents, such as the tour packing list, which centered men's items and considerations while packing. Jane Otteson King included some comments related to gender on the suggested packing list distributed to band members that highlight how the default suggestions were oriented toward men. Next to "five white 'wash and wear' shirts," she wrote "? Boys?" Next to suspenders, she wrote "? What for" (Fig. 2). She also liberally crossed out a section on neck ties and another on sports coats and slacks (top of right and left columns Fig. 2). Presumably, this list was compiled by administrative leadership with little knowledge or concern about what items the women should bring for dress and personal care.²⁵

While details about the women who participated in the 1961 tour are conspicuously absent from the historical record, these women shared their experiences and details about the people they met in newspaper columns, features, and interviews after their tours. These sources were sometimes difficult to identify. For example, the finding aid for a set of interviews conducted about a year after the tour originally only listed the men's names who spoke first.²⁶ As flute player Susan Schumacher Heath spoke last, her name did not appear. Despite her omission, in her interview, she contributed stories about the people she met on tour, including an older woman in the audience. Whereas the men primarily talked about the musical accomplishments of the tour, she stressed the interpersonal connections developed.

In another example, Symphony Band trombonist Roxanne Bates wrote in a column for her local newspaper the *Battle Creek Enquirer* about how the audiences reacted to the age of the students and women in the band:

The fact that we are "so young" is the first impression we make on the crowd as we come on stage. They are also amazed at the number of women in the band (27). The fact that some of us play instruments not usually played by females adds to their amazement. There are four of us that play brass instruments and when we troupe past the footlights and take our

²⁵ When the University of Iowa Band toured in 1965, they had the same packing list, but added an addendum: "The following clothes list is specifically for men and the women will have to make their own substitutions." As cited in Larry Jens Peterson Jr. "Bands at the University of Iowa from 1880 to 2008: The Development, Directors, Repertoire, and the 1966 Historic Tour of Europe and the Soviet Union," (DMA diss. University of Iowa, 2012), 129.

²⁶ "Sound Recording - Audio tapes of post-tour interviews with Gregory Munson, Tour Librarian, and with Dr. Revelli and Mr. Cavender - [Undated]" Part 2, Frederick E. Moncrieff Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.
<https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/122274>

places in our respective section the increased buzz from the audience is obviously for our benefit.²⁷

As Bates notes, there was an audible reaction from members of the audience in particular toward the women brass players. Joan Forster Fitzgerald, who played in a trumpet feature as part of the tour, confirmed this curiosity from the Russian audiences in an interview with me: “When they saw a girl in one of the trios it got their attention, especially in Russia. After the concert they wanted to hear me play just to see/hear if I could.”²⁸ Women did not typically play brass instruments in the Soviet Union at the time, so women’s appearance as brass players in both the Symphony Band and the jazz band would have been novel to audiences.

In her newspaper column, Bates also commented on how jazz styles were different in the Soviet Union, stating that “Jazz, while not downright outlawed in the Soviet [Union], is frowned upon and therefore it is very limited. The dance band groups play in the style of Glenn Miller and other styles long since abandoned in the States. As a result, any type of jazz or show tunes are a hit with Soviet audiences.”²⁹ Although the jazz band was not originally scheduled to perform in the Soviet Union, people heard about them after they played at the American Ambassador in Moscow’s reception.³⁰ A representative for a Moscow jazz club even leapt up on stage to inquire about the jazz band at a symphony band concert, emphasizing the demand.³¹ Jazz was originally programmed on the tour as a means of entertainment or background music, but audience interest had the students playing more often and in more formal artistic settings than originally anticipated.

While there are no set lists or other formal written documentation, recordings made during the tours give a sense of what the Michigan jazz band played. On an undated tour recording of the Michigan jazz band, the ensemble plays a typical early jazz diplomacy program that does not adhere to a distinct style, but rather traces historically significant pieces in jazz in an approximately 30-minute set.³² The set started with “Battle Hymn of the Republic” and “When the Saints

²⁷ Roxanne Bates, “Report from Russia: Michigan ‘Wind Orchestra’ Great Favorite,” *Battle Creek Enquirer and News*, Thursday, April 27, 1961, 24.

²⁸ Joan Forster Fitzgerald, email correspondence with the author, October 8, 2023.

²⁹ Roxanne Bates, “Report from Russia: Michigan ‘Wind Orchestra’ Great Favorite,” 24.

³⁰ Leslie S. Brady, “Michigan Band (Moscow February 28 – March 9),” Foreign Service Dispatch, March 10, 1961, U.S. Information Agency, Country Files for Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Container 26, E-W Exchanges - Performing Arts, National Archives.

³¹ Leslie S. Brady, “Michigan Band (Moscow February 28 – March 9).”

³² In *Music in America’s Cold War Diplomacy*, Danielle Fosler-Lussier discusses “History of Jazz” programs to show how they were a trend in State Department programming at this time period

Come Marching In” played in a trio of trumpet, trombone, and clarinet.³³ Their later selections on this performance include “Make Mine Minor,” a mid-tempo swing piece by Lennie Niehaus, and “Things Ain’t What They Used to Be,” popularized by Duke Ellington. Based on another sound recording from a Jordan television performance, the band played some overlapping repertoire, but in less of a strict chronological order. As part of this performance, the full big band played in a mambo style in which the players sang the chorus, a refrain that sounded like they were singing the words “Hot Gun Mambo.”

As is clear from photographic evidence (Fig. 3) and the descriptions of the jazz band, they played with non-standard big band instrumentation, making due with what they had, including bass clarinet and French horn to fill in saxophone parts. The tuba player would play the bassline on string bass only when one was available to borrow in the location they visited. Parker would likewise have to use the piano available at the venues. For example, at the studio in Jordan, the top of her head can be seen in the bottom left corner as she is seated at the grand piano (Fig. 3). In its ad-hoc volunteer status, women were welcomed into the jazz band and treated as musical equals with their peers.

This tour exemplifies how women played active roles in the musical reception of the U.S. abroad. However, women’s participation in this jazz band was doubly obscured, first by how their role as women was minimized and then by how the jazz band itself was hidden as a part of the more visible Symphony Band. Nonetheless, the Michigan band tour set a precedent for collegiate jazz tours, including other notable tours like the University of Illinois and North Texas State tours that are discussed in the following sections of this article.³⁴

early in Cold War jazz diplomacy. In 1956, *Down Beat* criticized Dizzy’s program as atypical because jazz musicians usually had a signature style. A Finnish critic of the University of Illinois Jazz Band’s 1968 tour wrote “when they here first blew avantgardism [sic] and put on funny hats and played Dixieland, aired rock ’n’ roll rhythms for a change, made a little fun at the expense of the old Ellington sound, and then again came back to straight Basie or a more decorative Lunceford beat, the whole made a very motley impression and the band did not seem to have any profile of its own.” Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America’s Cold War Diplomacy* (University of California Press, 2015), 116–22.

³³ “University of Michigan - Jazz Band Program undated,” Charles Martyn Papers, Symphony Band 1961 Tour Collection, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. https://bentley.mivideo.it.umich.edu/media/1_x6d7tevq

³⁴ Billy Perrigo, “How the U.S. Used Jazz as a Cold War Secret Weapon,” *Time Magazine*, December 22, 2017, <https://time.com/5056351/cold-war-jazz-ambassadors/>



Figure 3. The University of Michigan 1961 tour jazz band recording for a Jordan television show.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS 1969 TOUR

Despite the University of Michigan's informal jazz band's earlier performances, the University of Illinois Jazz Band is typically considered the first collegiate big band of its kind to tour the Soviet Union. However, they faced extra Soviet scrutiny in the tour's approval process as a stand-alone jazz band. As a result, the band was referred to as the "Illinois Stage Orchestra" throughout their tour rather than "Jazz Band," as they were back home, to allay Soviet concern over the word "jazz."³⁵ Nevertheless, Soviet jazz fans filled the concerts once people got word of what they were actually playing.³⁶ Apart from the band's musical accomplishments, this tour is notable because it included a woman vocalist: Dee

³⁵ "U. of I. Jazz Band Astounds Russians," December 8, 1969, *Chicago Tribune*, news clipping found in Box 82, Folder 2, Bureau of Educational Cultural Affairs Historical Collection, University of Arkansas.

³⁶ "U. of I. Jazz Band Astounds Russians," December 8, 1969, *Chicago Tribune*. See also Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy*, 191.

Dee Bridgewater.³⁷ Specifically recruited for the State Department tour by the University of Illinois (from Michigan State University), Bridgewater's participation was not only rare as a Black woman on a collegiate tour, but her story also disrupts the prevailing narratives of Cold War cultural exchange that often obscure women's contributions.³⁸

While Dee Dee Bridgewater herself has often and openly discussed her participation in State Department programming in interviews, historical narratives about Cold War musical diplomacy simply leave her out.³⁹ Dee Dee Bridgewater has one of the most successful jazz careers of all the collegiate women musicians who participated in these diplomacy tours, if not of all students, regardless of gender. She is an NEA Jazz Master and Grammy and Tony Award winner, to name just a few of her achievements and recognitions.⁴⁰ But of the case studies presented in this article, she was the last woman I found that participated in a collegiate jazz diplomacy tour, and the only Black woman. Though all of these women are notably absent from traditional narratives about jazz diplomacy, her omission is especially striking considering she went on two tours, one as a student and one as a professional, in addition to her prestigious career afterward.

While there has been scholarship on collegiate musical diplomacy and jazz diplomacy generally, the position of college women jazz musicians in diplomacy

³⁷ Then Denise (Dee Dee) Garrett, she met her first husband Cecil Bridgewater as part of the University of Illinois jazz program (he also went on the 1969 tour.) Student Personnel Roster, Box 82, Folder 2, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection, University of Arkansas.

³⁸ She was recruited at a collegiate jazz festival by the director at the University of Illinois John Garvey with the upcoming State Department tour in mind. She recalled meeting him, "Professor John Garvey came and asked me if I'd be interested in, in doing a cultural exchange trip to Russia and so I said, 'Absolutely, I'd love it.' And he says, 'Well, you'll have to transfer here.' And I was like, 'That's fine.'"³⁸ The tour gave the University of Illinois bargaining power to recruit college musicians. As a direct result of the State Department tour, she decided to attend the University of Illinois that fall of 1969 for the tour that began at the end of the semester. Dee Dee Bridgewater (The HistoryMakers A2014.254), interviewed by Larry Crowe, November 10, 2014, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 3, story 12, "Dee Dee Bridgewater recalls transferring to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign."

³⁹ I found no mention of her in Von Eschen's *Satchmo Blows Up the World* or Lisa E. Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy*. While Fosler-Lussier discusses the 1969 Illinois tour specifically, she does not mention Dee Dee Bridgewater specifically. See *Music in America's Cold War Musical Diplomacy*, 191-93. Interviews include, Jo Thomas, "A Singer is Returning to a Stage Where It All Began," *New York Times*, September 22, 1998, <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/22/arts/arts-in-america-a-singer-is-returning-to-a-stage-where-it-all-began.html>

⁴⁰ Dee Dee Bridgewater, <https://www.deedeebridgewater.com/home>. Melba Liston and Sarah Vaughan are also NEA Jazz Masters who participated in State Department programming.

has fallen between the cracks. In *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, Penny Von Eschen briefly touches on the paradigm of gender in her coverage of professional jazz diplomacy tours in order to point out women's explicit exclusion. The government officials making tour decisions deemed Black women, in their words, too "provocative" to send abroad.⁴¹ She mentions a couple of exceptions including Sarah Vaughan as a vocalist—even though that was to be part of festival programming, not her own headlining tour—and trombonist Melba Liston, who toured with Dizzy Gillespie.⁴² The vast majority of jazz artists sent were male groups integrated by race, which were seen as favorable to the State Department to divert attention away from the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. by promoting an image of racial harmony.⁴³ For example, the State Department was particularly pleased with the success of Dave Brubeck's integrated band, though the personnel choice was entirely up to Brubeck and it is uncertain that race played a role in that personnel decision.⁴⁴ Although the State Department understood that favorable international reception was linked to more diverse ensembles in their programming, there is limited evidence that representatives encouraged diversity measures outright. Overall, the dynamics of collegiate tours were different than professional tours as they included fewer Black musicians in general.

As a formal step before the University of Illinois tour a representative of the Soviet concert organizing group, Goskontsert, had to evaluate and approve the ensemble. In her book on Cold War musical diplomacy, Danielle Fosler-Lussier explains that the evaluator had voiced "concern about some members' Afro hairstyles and the possibility that the vocalists would 'wriggle in a provocative or otherwise unacceptable way.'"⁴⁵ This comment reveals the prejudice the evaluator of the group had toward the two Black vocalists, Don Wright and Dee Dee Bridgewater. A memo in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection reporting on the audition discussed the vocalists' movement, and especially Dee Dee Bridgewater, stating: "Following the comments from U.S. Embassy Moscow, the female singer did not move about when singing but

⁴¹ Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 228–246. These festivals took place in Belgrade, 1973 and Warsaw, 1975. On Melba Liston, see 20–21.

⁴² Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 33. For more on Melba Liston and her archives, see Monica Hairston O'Connell and Sherrie Tucker, "Not One to Toot Her Own Horn(?): Melba Liston's Oral Histories and Classroom Presentations," *Black Music Research Journal* 34, no. 1 (2014): 121–58.

⁴³ Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World*, 5.

⁴⁴ Stephen A. Crist, "Jazz as Democracy? Dave Brubeck and Cold War Politics," *The Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 2 (2009): 148.

⁴⁵ Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Musical Diplomacy*, 193.

obviously had difficulty remaining stationary.”⁴⁶ There was more scrutiny on her not just as a Black person, but as a Black woman. To get approval for the tour, the State Department pressured the band to meet Soviet dictates on what was appropriate, which were based on raced and gendered assumptions.

Though the Soviet representatives had hesitations about Afro hairstyles in particular, the musicians’ appearance led to positive interactions between the University of Illinois’ Black musicians and African students studying in the Soviet Union. The State Department noted that three of the four Black students wore Afros and went on to elaborate, “these four persons exerted a magnetic attraction upon African students studying in the USSR.... On numerous occasions they engaged in all-night conversation about the conditions faced by African students studying in the USSR, race relations in the United States and other subjects of mutual interest.”⁴⁷ The candid conversations and openness displayed by the Illinois students emphasizes the comments made by the ANTA publicist about the Michigan band that youth would be “‘exhibits’ for an open society.”⁴⁸ African students in the Soviet Union felt they could discuss topics openly with the African-American students and they had meaningful interactions.

In an oral history interview with The HistoryMakers, an education non-profit dedicated to preserving African American history, Bridgewater described in more detail how she formed relationships with Soviet musicians and audiences, as well as what it felt like more generally to be on the Illinois tour.⁴⁹ When asked about what she thought the Soviet Union feared about the students, the interviewer said “That you’d be spies?” She responded “Yeah, or subversive for their youth.” Then she elaborated,

We had to be bused everywhere by the American embassy. The American embassy organized clandestine meetings for us with Russian jazz musicians. And I remember taking a lot of blue jeans and I took a lot of bangles because in the late ‘60s we wore, all those bangles were in, and bracelets made with spoons and forks and knives. Yep, so I took a lot of those

⁴⁶ “Illinois Jazz Band Audition,” October 8, 1969, University of Arkansas, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Box 82, Folder 2.

⁴⁷ American Embassy in Moscow to Department of State, Box 81, Folder 25, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, University of Arkansas. Also, cited in Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America’s Cold War Diplomacy*, 96.

⁴⁸ Frederick E. Moncrieff Papers, Folder 7 – Notes & Misc., Box 1, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

⁴⁹ Dee Dee Bridgewater, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 4, story 2, “Dee Dee Bridgewater remembers touring the Soviet Union with the Jazz Big Band,” <https://da.thehistorymakers.org/story/659990>

bracelets. I remember I just did my arm up with just bracelets and when I would run into people, I would give them—they'd give me something that they had.⁵⁰

As she said this, she gestured up both of her arms from the wrist to the elbow and then mimicked an exchange. Through this description, she shows how she participated in what Fosler-Lussier refers to as the “gift economy.”⁵¹ Gifts were one way that relationships formed through musical diplomacy became rich with meaning about the identity of the giver and symbolized the link between cultures. It matters that she was a woman trading jewelry rather than the men, who traded musical equipment like reeds and drumsticks. She was connecting culturally with other women in ways that would not be the same if the personnel were only men.

Following the 1969 tour, Bridgewater was invited by Illinois bandmate Jim McNeely to join another State Department tour of the Soviet Union in 1972, this time with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra—after he graduated from Illinois, McNeely became the band leader for the Jones-Lewis band.⁵² In a HistoryMakers interview, Bridgewater discussed the ongoing impact she had on Russian audiences:

I've had a lot of, of Russians come up to me over the years who saw me in one of the cities that we performed in and wanted to tell me how liberating that whole experience had been for them and hearing me sing and the second time when I went back, I was pregnant. I think I was like five and a half months pregnant and I was very pregnant, you could see it and that created quite... a scandal to have a pregnant woman singing on stage.⁵³

From the way she framed the experience, not only was her singing influential to audiences, but her representation as a woman, and then as a pregnant woman, made a difference in their lives. Dee Dee Bridgewater's involvement in these diplomatic tours illustrates the complex intersections of race and gender in Cold War musical diplomacy and how this led to interactions with different students and audience members that may not have otherwise been reached.

⁵⁰ Dee Dee Bridgewater, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive, Session 1, tape 4, story 2.

⁵¹ Fosler-Lussier, *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy*, 26–27.

⁵² Theodore Shabad, “Jones-Lewis Band Has Hit in Moscow,” April 25, 1972, *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/04/25/archives/joneslewis-band-is-a-hit-in-moscow-multiracial-jazz-troupe-plays.html?smid=url-share>

⁵³ Dee Dee Bridgewater, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 4, story 3, “Dee Dee Bridgewater talks about jazz music in the Soviet Union.”

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY 1967 AND 1976 TOURS

Whereas many of the other collegiate State Department jazz tours preceded an official or degree granting program at their institutions, as one of the oldest jazz programs in the country, the North Texas jazz program was twenty years old by the time they were invited to participate in a State Department tour of Mexico in 1967. As mentioned in the introduction, two women performed with the One O’Clock Lab Band for the 1967 tour: Linda de Leon, piano soloist and Carol Lurie, vocalist.

The top band at North Texas is rarely called the “jazz band,” but called the “One O’Clock Band” for its rehearsal time.⁵⁴ In its original formation in 1947, the director avoided using the term “jazz” because of its racialized connotations. By removing this label from the ensemble, and distancing the music from its Black originators, North Texas made the group more palatable to the white men in power at the university.⁵⁵ It was therefore called the “Laboratory Dance Band” or simply the “Lab Band.”⁵⁶ Further, the terminology of “lab” aligned the arts with the sciences in a way that prioritized the masculine trope of objectivity.⁵⁷

Prior to the decision for the North Texas Lab band to participate in its first State Department tour the director, Leon Breeden, communicated with the director of the Cultural Affairs program, Charles Ellison about the band and its proclivities. In a letter dated March 27, 1966, Breeden stated that “[the North Texas Lab band] could have made a tour of Army bases as far back as three years [ago] but the information [distributed by the State Department] said that a group with a ‘catchy’ name (or some such indication) and with some pretty girls, etc. would be the ones selected. Our men just do not go for the presentation of anything short of our usual straight-forward, dark suit and tie, and with nothing that reeks of phoniness method of presenting our bands [sic].”⁵⁸ Breeden saw having “pretty girls” as antithetical to seriousness and akin to other gimmicks

⁵⁴ The top band rehearses at 1:00pm and the lower levels rehearse in descending order later into the evening.

⁵⁵ Tracy McMullen, “The College Jazz Program as Tradition Making: Establishing a New Lineage in Jazz,” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 27 (2023): 32–50.

⁵⁶ John Murphy, “History of Jazz at North Texas,” <https://jazz.unt.edu/history>

⁵⁷ Dan DiPiero has written about how this patriarchal scientific approach can play out in jazz theory classrooms. “In particular, chord-scale and adjacent approaches to jazz theory fit into patriarchy’s consistent investment in ‘scientific’ structural systems, while at the same time making it possible to ‘geek out’ about performances understood to be virtuosic.” In “Race, Gender, and Jazz School: Chord-Scale Theory as White Masculine Technology,” *Jazz & Culture* 6, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2023): 53–54.

⁵⁸ Letter from Leon Breeden to Charles Ellison, March 27, 1966, Box 76, Folder 13, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Series 2, Performing Arts, Subseries 1, Performers.

such as outfits or “catchy” names. Nonetheless, de Leon and Lurie were brought on board for the 1967 tour.

Beyond their musical abilities, the two women acted as interpreters, contributing formally to the tour by speaking to the audience from stage, as well as in more informal social settings. Linda de Leon was Latina and had spent a summer of her collegiate career studying at the University of Mexico, which made her an important representational figure.⁵⁹ The director’s wife, Bonna Breeden, also did some interpretation and diplomatic relations work.⁶⁰ In a letter to the State Department, Fulton Freeman, the American Ambassador to Mexico, outlined the role these women played on the tour in more detail, stating “In official and unofficial representational duties, Miss de Leon, Miss Carol Lurie, Garcia, Shepard and the Breedens bore a major burden. Other band members tended to stand aside, usually because of the language barrier.”⁶¹ The women soloists were highly visible while representing the band on-stage but were also put in a position to ease social and diplomatic interactions off-stage as well. Thus, their participation was influential to the diplomatic success of the tour.

In this letter, Ambassador Freeman goes on to confront the unstable place of the women on the tour directly: “Some band members tended to resent the participation of the two girl soloists, Miss de Leon (piano) and Miss Lurie (vocalist), because they felt the two girls did not ‘fit in.’”⁶² The next line of the letter suggests that the women were effective in reaching men in the audiences, however: “The girls, however, were enormously popular with male members of the audience, had an effective stage presence and provided a needed change of pace at each concert, and were most effective in representational work.”⁶³ Not only were the women on the tour separated from their peers in terms of their musical contributions and extramusical duties, but their value was justified in terms of their appeal to men in the audience (just as had been suggested to Breeden). While the women’s musical features added variety to the big band format and they were uniquely positioned to offer translation services, these skills ultimately alienated them from the other members of the band.

⁵⁹ “The North Texas State University Lab Band,” Box 76, Folder 13.

⁶⁰ She submitted an extensive report of the tour at its conclusion. Found in Box 76, Folder 12, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and Leon Breeden Scrapbook 1967 A/B, 104–9. <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc673868/m1/104/>

⁶¹ Letter from American Embassy in Mexico to the Department of State, March 12, 1967, Leon Breeden Scrapbook 1967: A/B, 158 <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc673868/m1/158/>

⁶² Letter from American Embassy in Mexico to the Department of State, March 12, 1967, 158.

⁶³ Letter from American Embassy in Mexico to the Department of State, March 12, 1967, 158.



Figure 4. North Texas State One O'Clock Lab Band visits the White House 1967.

Following the 1967 tour, the band did not bring the women jazz musicians with them when they went to the White House to celebrate their success. The photo of the group only features two women: Ladybird Johnson in a bright red dress and Bonna Breeden next to her husband (Fig. 4).⁶⁴ This would not be the last time that de Leon and Lurie were excluded from post-tour events. A couple of months after the Mexico tour, the One O'Clock band competed in the Mobile Jazz Festival that April. The personnel list was adapted from the tour, but included neither the women from the tour nor saxophonist Danny Garcia, who was also an active translator for the group on tour. On the list, their names are scrupulously crossed off (Fig. 5).⁶⁵ At the top of the page, a note about the per diem further drives home that no women were considered part of the band: “\$12.00 each *man* for meals.”⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Maristella Feustle, “This program is here to stay’: Jazz Studies at North Texas,” May 14, 2015. <https://blogs.library.unt.edu/unt125/2015/05/14/jazz-at-north-texas/>

⁶⁵ Leon Breeden Collection, 1967 Scrapbook A/B, 216. <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc673868/m1/216/>

⁶⁶ Emphasis added. Leon Breeden Collection, 1967 Scrapbook A/B, 216. <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc673868/m1/216/>

**MOBILE, ALABAMA
JAZZ FEST.**

North Texas State University
Lab Band - Denton, Texas 76203
~~1967 Tour of Mexico - Department of State~~
Office of Cultural Presentations
Washington, D.C.

Date: 4/6/67
THIS PAYMENT

Transaction: (Signature indicates completion)

Personnel

Leon Breeden	Ed Soph <u>Ed Soph</u>
Mrs. Leon Breeden	Frank Kimlicko <u>Frank Kimlicko</u>
Linda de Leon	Vic Glazer <u>Vic Glazer</u>
Carol Lurie	_____
Tim Bell <u>Tim Bell</u>	<u>Robert Lewis</u>
Danny Garcia	<u>_____</u>
Lou Marini <u>Lou Marini</u>	<u>_____</u>
Ray Bocchie	<u>_____</u>

Figure 5. Personnel list edited from 1967 Mexico tour to Mobile, AL Jazz Festival

As one of the oldest jazz degree programs in the country, the North Texas State program was built on a structure that privileged the position of white men.⁶⁷ While women musicians were included in and influential for the tour abroad, for the band’s subsequent performances, they were left behind. The women’s status as “featured” musicians structurally limited their inclusion in the band.

Just prior to the North Texas State Lab Band’s second State Department tour in 1976, the *Denton Record Chronicle* proclaimed that Beverly “Bev” Dahlke was “the first and only woman to play in the North Texas State University 1 o’clock Lab Band.”⁶⁸ In an interview with Kurt Dietrich published in his book on Wisconsin jazz musicians, Dahlke shared her experience of finding out she made the One O’Clock Lab Band. At first, she was not chosen for the top band, but Leon Breeden and his team changed their mind and he came to tell her the news in person. She said, “It’s like the maestro has shown up at my door. And he goes, ‘Well, after consideration we have decided that you should be in the One

⁶⁷ McMullen, “The College Jazz Program as Tradition Making,” 33.

⁶⁸ “Lab Band’s First Lady,” *Denton Record-Chronicle* (Denton, Tex.), Vol. 73, No. 261, Ed. 1 Tuesday, June 1, 1976. p. 1

O'Clock."⁶⁹ She then elaborates, "I had to run over to some frat house or someplace where there was a phone, to call my parents."⁷⁰ As opposed to the 1967 tour with the women who did not "fit in," officially playing in the band certainly must have made a difference for Dahlke's sense of belonging in the famed jazz program. However, this passage suggests the hesitation that could have come from program administrators about the logistics of having a woman on the tour.⁷¹

There was a second woman, Rachel Lebon, included on this tour, though her participation initially appeared entirely undocumented, aside from a video featuring her with the One O'Clock Band for local television station KERA in early 1976. I found no explicit evidence that Rachel Lebon was a part of the 1976 tour until I went to the physical archives.⁷² Not only was Lebon on the tour, she acted as a face for the band.⁷³ She was highly visible, singing in front of the

⁶⁹ Kurt Dietrich, *Wisconsin Riffs: Jazz Profiles from the Heartland*, (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2018), 163. Also published online "Beverly Dahlke," July 18, 2020, <https://kurtdietrich.net/2020/07/18/beverly-dahlke/>

⁷⁰ Dietrich, *Wisconsin Riffs*, 163. Also published online "Beverly Dahlke," July 18, 2020, <https://kurtdietrich.net/2020/07/18/beverly-dahlke/> Dahlke closes out her interview with Dietrich reiterating the limitations placed upon her in the field as a woman during her education and into her work as a professional musician. "When all these people said that [I couldn't do certain things because I was a girl, and later a woman], guess what I'm saying in my head? [Expletive] you; I'm going to show you."

⁷¹ Dietrich goes on to speculate, "The band traveled a lot, and some administrator may have anticipated that having a woman in the band would create logistical problems on the road. But with Breeden as her champion, Dahlke fit right in, and problems did not arise." <https://kurtdietrich.net/2020/07/18/beverly-dahlke/> In fact, the archives reflect that there was administrative burden with university systems set up for single gender trips. There was a class absence form that specified "men and women must be listed on separate sheets." One has Bev Dahlke written and then crossed out on the one for men and then her own name alone on a subsequent form. Box 31 - Scrapbook 1976 A, Leon Breeden Collection.

⁷² There was no mention of her alongside coverage of the tour on the UNT website or as part of the digitized *Denton Record Chronicle*. The 1967 tour coverage in the press mentioned the two women in the newspapers, but this was scarcely mentioned in 1976 except for the one article about Bev Dahlke as the only woman.

⁷³ This is in contrast to how Lebon's position was underplayed in regard to the tour from the North Texas side. Leon Breeden announced the tour to the public during intermission on a 1976 KERA television taping in which Lebon sang in the second half (Dahlke also performed). Bill C, "The Way We Were' 1976 with Rachel Lebon," January 23, 2023, https://youtu.be/27_4nXLMzhg?si=X0_7xVsDSQ35Z1Iv. Interviewed at intermission at this performance about the intent of the tour, Leon Breeden said, "we will be going strictly 100% as musicians, as artists... We hope we will be of such character and of such family togetherness and of such unity that the people over there will see in us what democracy really means."⁷³ He had the opportunity to mention their vocalist when he was asked about how many people were coming on the tour, but did not. Sherman Jazz Museum, "Interview at Intermission of the

ensemble, and formed connections with audiences and international musician counterparts. Lebon was one of the selected musicians memorialized in a scrapbook as participating in direct music-making in a “jam session” with their Soviet peers.⁷⁴ Additionally, the band’s performance in Volgograd was covered in the local newspaper, and a picture of Lebon singing is the featured image in the write-up.⁷⁵

A year after the tour, Lebon established a scholarship in the name of one of the vocalists she met at a jazz club in Leningrad named Valentina. Since the date on this press release was August 30, 1977, it is not in the scrapbook in the Leon Breeden collection with the rest of the 1976 tour materials, which were organized chronologically with precision. Instead, the press release was kept by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural affairs to document the impact of the tour.⁷⁶ Different archival collections use different organizational systems, but in this case, prioritizing date over thematic material made Lebon’s dedication related to the tour more difficult to find. The Valentina Jazz Vocal Scholarship was given by Lebon with the intention of having a vocalist position consistently in the One O’Clock Lab band and specified “an annual Valentina Jazz Vocal Scholarship to a male or female vocalist interested in singing with the 1 O’Clock Lab Band and learning the jazz/pop style of singing.” She acknowledged the system in place for such a vocalist: “Ms. Lebon also required the vocalist to meet the approval of both Breeden and the lab band members.”⁷⁷ Instrumentalists were chosen solely by Breeden as the director, so this added level of scrutiny to meet approval of the band members was perhaps to combat the sentiment that women vocalists like Carol Lurie on the 1967 tour did not “fit in” with the rest of the band. While Lebon certainly could have made the scholarship in her name (the top of the press release is even internally titled “lebon scholarship”) she chose to dedicate it instead to another woman vocalist she never would have met without the tour. This scholarship highlights how Lebon’s interpersonal connection with this other vocalist would not have been the same if the band did

KERA special featuring the 1976 UNT One O’Clock Lab Band. Recorded 5/15/1976.” <https://shermanjazzmuseum.com/interview-at-intermission-of-the-kera-special-featuring-the-1976-unt-one-oclock-lab-band-recorded-5-15-1976/>

⁷⁴ Photo labelled “Rachel Lebon singing a number at the Moscow ‘Jam Session’ (‘Misty’),” Scrapbook Portugal/USSR 1; Portugal/USSR 2, Box 34, Leon Breeden Collection, University of North Texas.

⁷⁵ Volgograd Newspaper, June 18, 1976, Scrapbook 1976 B/C, Box 32, Leon Breeden Collection.

⁷⁶ “Lebon Scholarship,” Box 76, Folder 14, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection, University of Arkansas.

⁷⁷ “Lebon Scholarship,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection.

not bring her as a vocalist, and further, Lebon's own belief in the importance of a more permanent role for singers in the band.

What I find distressing about declaring Beverly Dahlke the "first" woman in the band is that it makes a judgment about what *really* counts. It took nearly thirty years of the jazz program at North Texas for the first woman to be counted in the top ensemble, which alone is a startling fact. It also leaves out the fact that nine years prior, women were a part of the band on its previous State Department tour. One can conclude that singing *with* the band, as Carol Lurie and Rachel Lebon did, does not count as playing in the band. Nor does being a featured soloist *with* the band, which is how Linda de Leon became the lasting face of the band as spotlighted by the State Department YouTube page (as discussed in the introduction). Even though these women represented their university and country by touring around the world, there were still limitations to how their stories were kept and interpreted, limitations that obscured their impact in the historical record.

CONCLUSION

While the experiences of these women are not universal, they reveal some of the types of structural challenges that women faced as college jazz musicians in the twentieth century, and how even though they performed on a global stage, their stories went missing. Despite the way they have been obscured in the historical narrative, women college musicians formed important international connections as part of Cold War musical diplomacy. These collegiate women reached broader audiences and developed interpersonal connections along the course of their State Department tours. By combining these various archival materials and attending to the accounts of the participants themselves, the revised narrative I have presented here shows that not only were women present on these tours, but that they contributed meaningfully to the success of the tours.

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