

Abstracts

Jazz Studies

Kornél Zipernovszky and Ádám Havas: Editors' Preface

While the editors of the first Hungarian jazz studies volume acknowledge previous attempts in this direction, they hope that a focused interdisciplinary approach could yield more results than those of earlier publications. The teachings of various post-modern theoretical schools contribute to realise the relative significance of jazz canons, the one-sidedness of the narrative of successive styles and to establish the new perspective of seeing jazz as a construct or as a discourse as the result of negotiations between different diasporas. The essays explore historical topics, interviews challenge well-known concepts, and a sociological survey yields new results.

Scott DeVeaux: Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography

The paper surveys a number of different and contradictory ways of telling the story of jazz. Jazz history is organised around values, such as the celebration of an ethnicity or the rejection of capitalism. Writers often depend on what Hayden White called modes of narration, such as the “Tragic” mode of self-destructive musicians like Buddy Bolden or Bix or the „Romance” of Louis Armstrong or Benny Goodman, who prevailed against many disadvantages to become virtuosos and stars. The paper criticizes the widespread use of metaphors of growth and evolution in jazz history, which minimize the contestation and uncertainty that have accompanied musical changes. Yet one has to be sensitive to the practical problems of teaching jazz history without undermining the use of narrative explanations. The paper emphasizes the constructedness and interestedness of traditions, and how they can distract us from history – from the meanings jazz has had at particular times and places.

Éva Federmayer: Millennial Budapest and Ragtime. Patterns of Race, Gender, and Class (Status) in the Early Hungarian Jazz Period

In my discussion I address some of the internal contradictions in the ragtime culture of Millennial Budapest, relying on specific aspects of gender studies, body studies, jazz studies, and cultural studies. First I look at Budapest as the heart of the national body, then I explore the construction of two types of masculine bodies, typical of the era. I also explore the orpheum as a distinctive modern space inflected by ragtime and ragtime-related culture, and focus on the eroticized and racialized bodies of women performers. After elaborating on the racialized aspect of the Hungarian cakewalk craze popularized by orpheums and musical theaters, I deal with the power dynamics of Millennial Budapest's carnivalesque multitudes that posited the racialized and gendered *other* only to reinscribe the *same* within the boundaries of a fledgling nation with imperial aspirations.

Kornél Zipernovszky: "Who Will Win – The Jazz or Gypsy, it is Hard to Tell." Gypsy Musicians Defend Hungarian National Culture

In this essay I focus on what is called the jazz age and try to examine how in Hungary the music played by Gypsy orchestras and by jazz bands became utterances in a discourse at the intersection of power relations inflected by ethnic, race, and nationalist concerns. The tunes of nationalism and revisionism in post-Trianon Hungary were mostly played by Gypsy orchestras when their members were also losing ground and their daily bread, due to the new fad, American jazz. While Gypsy musicians sought to keep their jobs by voicing xenophobic-nationalist agendas, jazz became to be identified as Race music on the other side of the Atlantic as part of the African American struggle for racial integration. I explore the process how jazz became the dominant urban fashion in Hungary, what the reactions of the Gypsy musicians and the politicians as well as that of the music establishment were to jazz, and how the narrative of the racialized clash between Hungarian Gypsy music and American jazz emerged.

Dániel Molnár: „Artistic Concept by Miss Arizona and Sándor Rozsnyai”. The Shows of the Arizona Revue Dancing and Their Effects and Elements (1932–1944)

The study provides the first scientific analysis and interpretation of the shows of a Budapest nightclub, based on newly uncovered sources. The Arizona Revue Dancing used to be the club of the Hungarian elite in the 1930s, and its shows reached international fame by the end of the decade. Instead of the elements of the local entertainment tradition, the owners, Sándor Rozsnyai and his wife based their shows on their own earlier experience as touring artists around Europe. In their relatively small club they created a unique „playground for adults” using several mechanic equipments, and produced spectacles based on their original ideas, and frequently erotic dance acts. During their 12 years of operation four traceable phases can be identified, each with its own different dramaturgy and working practice, and they seem to correspond to the political changes of the era.

The launch of the formal jazz education in the decade after the first world war in Europe was the sign of starting to recognise jazz as a full-fledged performing art despite fierce battles fought with the representatives of the classical music tradition. The fact, that jazz was easily fitted into the objective, hard and dry sound of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, contributed largely to the integration of jazz. Its proclaimers mostly viewed its ability to improve the sense of rhythm beneficial in music education. The head of the first jazz department was a Hungarian musician, Mátyás Seiber. Prior to his emigration from Frankfurt in 1933 he published a textbook of percussion instruments apart of his own compositions, and a number of essays on jazz thereby contributing to the approximation of the jazz tradition and the classical one. In his writings he enlightened the close relation of the pre-modern performance practice (renaissance diminution praxis; baroque basso continuo) and jazz, thus underlining the shared vernacular roots of the classical and the jazz tradition, worthy of a student of Kodály. His planned co-operation with Adorno never really took off. After the second world war, jazz has left behind its bonds to dance music and took a position nearer to contemporary classical music. Thereby the former trend could be reversed: now jazz had the option of orienting itself towards contemporary music. Despite the emergence of a number of outstanding works, a synthesis based on a new communal language of jazz and classical music has not come into being. Improvisation has only partially been incorporated into classical music education, whereas its creative potential could never be realised as just one of the canonized subjects taught.

Gergő Havadi: The Ethics of Hungarian Jazz Subculture in the 1970s and 80s – A Life-Style of Cultural Subversion

This research poses the question to what extent the institutionalization of Hungarian jazz and its compromise with the Hungarian state power in the 60's implied further colonization of jazz by state-interests and the control of the official cultural politics. Is it possible to talk about jazz subculture after all? The investigation of the jazz club network shall give the answer to these questions, for that reason, the current article scrutinizes this particular non-governmental, civilian initiative from a social and micro historical viewpoint. In the '70's '80s jazz music connected both with avant-garde artistic trends and other genres such as rock, blues and fusion music has managed to recapture its roots, create its own audience (i.e. the jazz subculture) and last but not least, to reestablish its identity as well. The existence and functioning of the jazz clubs and the club network proved to be insecure, in fact it depended on the endurance and possibilities of philanthropic actors. These narratives and stories crystallize the very essence of the cultural and musical politics of the Kádár era: the isolation and drowning of all autonomous arts, musicians and related subcultures deviating from the official trend which according to cities and regions took different forms and strength.

Our research, based on qualitative interviews and survey technique, is the first cultural sociological inquiry that investigates contemporary Hungarian jazz scene focusing on elements of symbolic and economic stratification within the scene. The research investigates the logic of position-takings and struggles for legitimacy of jazz musicians considered as creative workers based mainly on Pierre Bourdieu’s relational theory of artistic fields. The detailed presentation of some sociological and historical-sociological investigations serves the purpose of situating the research questions and findings in the contemporary scientific discourses on jazz, therefore the study allows the reader to gain insight into our methodological and theoretical “research alchemy”. The main stake of our work is to provide an empirically established model of the creation of and struggles for reputation based on the constructions of reality of the musicians themselves.

Ádám Havas: The Dogmatism of Freedom and the Freedom of Dogmatism. System of Distinctions in the Mainstream-Free Jazz Dichotomy

The research aims to bring the field of contemporary Hungarian jazz musicians into the centre of sociological investigation leaning mainly on the critical reinterpretation of Bourdieu’s relational theory of artistic fields. The first systematic sociological research investigating the contemporary Hungarian jazz scene aims to grasp the logic of symbolic and economic distinctions of the scene by analysing the dichotomy of free and mainstream jazz. The dichotomy is understood as a system of structuring oppositions that plays a more important role with regards to the position-takings and the construction of prestige of jazz musicians, than the mutually exclusive principles of autonomy and heteronomy as outlined in Bourdieu’s field theory. The analysis of qualitative data (25 interviews from 2014 Fall until 2016 Spring) shows evidence for the validity of our conceptual innovation: the implementation of a *simultaneous aesthetic hierarchy* that describes the peculiar logic of hierarchization in the Hungarian jazz scene.

Bulcsu Bognár: „Let us State, Instead of Denying the Negation.” A Discussion About György Szabados’ Life Work. Part III.

The discussion interprets György Szabados’ life work. The train of thoughts attempts to reconstruct the social philosophical concept of the ground-breaking jazz and contemporary music composer. A better understanding of Szabados’ relationship to classic and contemporary music and his specific musical world – that is based on traditional folk music, Bartók and jazz – is needed. The final part of the discussion positions Szabados’ Work in the field of contemporary music. It argues that his approach was similar to a group of composers in Central and Eastern Europe like Penderecki and Lutosławski. It also analyses the reception of Szabados’ music among Hungarian contemporary classical and jazz musicians. Finally, it discusses the last period of Szabados’ creative years, along with his relation to public policy and his music pedagogic oeuvre.

Szerzőink

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