

Collision in *new music*. Cross-border perspectives in the study, research and manifestation of jazz

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Abstract: I start with the inclusion of jazz in the category of new music in the transition phenomenon from Romanticism to the polystylism of the 20th century and until contemporary times. The work *Collision in new music. Cross-border perspectives in the study, research and manifestation of jazz* aims to identify some of the general approaches regarding the scientific investigation of jazz in universities around the world, study methods, means of promoting jazz musicians, etc. The work will also bring several personal opinions from some Romanian musicians on the study and research of jazz abroad: pianist Ion Baciú Jr. (Sweden), trombonist Robert Cozma (Germany), trumpeter Emil Bîzga (U.S.A.) and others.

Keywords: jazz, new music, scientific investigation.

1. Introduction

Choosing a suitable research direction in the context of the International Conference of Doctoral Schools organised by the “George Enescu” National University of Arts, Iași, and carried out in the thematic sphere *Intersections in the artistic research: the model of the Other and the culture of mobility* represented a real challenge for many of those who received the invitation to participate in this scientific event, a fact revealed by some of the participants during the defence of the themes, but also later, in the discussions about the diversity, necessity and impact of the numerous debated topics.

Initially, I also found it difficult to make the connection between the two expressions taken together, *the model of the Other* and *the culture of mobility*, but also separately, through the terms *model* and *mobility*, at least referring to music, but especially to jazz, the musical genre to which I have devoted a good part of my artistic and research preoccupations. I perceived the context of the conference as a very necessary *comparison* between us and the world we live in. It is not a piece of musicological research, not a strictly synthetic commentary, not a syntactic, morphological analysis, etc., but it is a reference to the Other (a double argument of the challenge I was talking about above). So, the Other as... a **MODEL**: “... a model is considered to be a representation of an object, behaviour or a system that one wishes to understand” (***, 1995) or, and in my opinion, closer to our search, “a

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thing used as an example to be followed or imitated” (***, *Oxford languages*) due to its value and qualities, its implementation capacity, operation and efficiency.

Therefore jazz – model – mobility – culture – research – the Other, terms that, at least from the perspective of jazz history and a scientific approach, can really represent a challenge!

2. The *new new music* – a “Cinderella” of the beginning of the 20th musical century?

In the absence of inspiration, a few days before the debut of the prestigious conference of doctoral schools I was on the verge of maintaining the status of a good listener because I was not able to identify the connection between the expectations of such a manifestation and what I could offer. But then, for a certain reason and in a certain context, I read the well-known book written by musicologist Elena Maria Șorban, *Muzica Nouă* [New Music] (2014), a work that, in the meanwhile, has become the muse of these lines.

In the contents of the book one can notice the not negligible (and, I would add, well-deserved) place of jazz in what the authoress of the volume manages to solve in a professional manner, namely, a systematisation of the recent history of world music.

After I contextualised jazz from the perspective of the musical phenomenon that was going to mark the history of world music as early as the beginning of the 20th century, I thought it appropriate that the title of my theme be *Collision in new music*. *Cross-border perspectives in the study, research and manifestation of jazz*. It is a work that I built according to two coordinates, not equally consistent in their approaches. On the one hand, a general classification of jazz in the category of new musics in the transition phenomenon from Romanticism to the polystylism of the 20th century and until contemporary times. On the other hand, with the purpose of approaching the challenge provided by **the model of the Other**, the second coordinate is related to the way in which jazz is perceived, studied, researched and promoted in the world today.

Neoclassicism, Postromanticism, Verism, Impressionism, Expressionism, Avant-gardism, Electroacoustic music, National Schools are currents that we learn about from all the books on the history of music, written especially after the 1970s. The musical languages that preceded them throughout history, the syntaxes that characterised them, the composers that shaped their identity, the works that remained as testimony, all of these come to confer a well-defined status onto academic music, without a doubt. These currents generated each other in one form or another, but jazz did not; from this perspective, we could truthfully and suggestively call it *the new new music*... All the other languages are organically chained, more or less solidly, *new types of music* in truth, but they are the results of something, unlike jazz which simply... “lands” in the language of the 20th century, firstly extremely timidly through the ancient blues, a kind of

Cinderella not looking for her shoe, but for her identity or, perhaps, rather, for her beauty, originality, importance and the role she could play in the sonic universe of the early 20th century...

Not to mention the advantage of the great currents over jazz: of having been long ago institutionalised, studied, promoted, researched, benefits for great masters of the times. However, jazz marks an important first page in history only after the first decades of the 20th century. But, in my opinion, *the model* is built over time, thoroughly cultivated and continuously transformed on its way through the world, throughout human history.

3. Academic music education - milestones in time

A brief summary of a general chronology of academic music education in the world, just a few milestones, will somehow point out this road generating schools, performers, composers, teachers, musicologists, namely a generator of *models* to which any professional in the music field refers. Schools lead to models.

- In 314 — the first “guild” of singers, *Schola Cantorum*, Pope Sylvester I, Rome (Henderson, 1921, p. 20)
- In 590 — the reorganisation of *Schola Cantorum*, Pope Gregory I, Rome (Cattin, 1984, p. 51)
- In 909 — *Wells Cathedral School*, Wells, Somerset, England (Quilter, 1985, p. 88)
- In the 9th - 12th centuries — *Saint Martial School*, a composition school, Limoges, France (Fuller, 1979)
- In 1160 - 1250 — *Notre-Dame School* (***, *Britannica*), Paris, France
- In 1585 — *Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia* (***, *Internet Archive*), Italy
- *Conservatories* appear all over the world (Naples – numerous Conservatories, *models* for: Palermo, Paris, Bologna, Milan, Warsaw, Florence, Prague, Vienna, London, The Hague, Liège, Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Rio de Janeiro, Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, Havana, Buenos Aires).

4. The institutionalisation and manifestation of jazz - chronological milestones

The **new** new music, jazz (regarding education) appears firstly... paradoxically perhaps, in Germany. Sources mention the German composer, pianist, professor and conductor Bernhard Sekles¹ as the initiator of the first jazz

¹ Bernhard Sekles (1872-1934) – he composed music for the stage (*opera, ballet*), music for the orchestra (*symphonic poem, symphonies*), chamber music, *lieder*, choral works. He was also a theoretician.

class in *Dr. Hoch's Konservatorium –Musikakademie* in Frankfurt am Main in 1928 (Bowers, 2002, p. 122).

In a short sequence, we mention here some of the events that marked the beginnings of the study of jazz such as courses, workshops, specialisations, departments, as we learn from the *Timeline of jazz education*:

- In 1964 the Austrian musicologist Erich Marckhl lays the foundations of the jazz department at *The Academy for Music and the Performing Arts* in Graz, Austria, which he had founded in 1963
- In 1974, *Banff Center for Arts and Creativity* (1933), in Alberta, Canada – jazz workshops initiated by the pianist and composer Oscar Peterson and the clarinetist, composer and teacher Phil Nimmons
- In 1974, *Gnessin State Musical College*, Moscow, the Soviet Union – jazz departments
- In 1982, *American School of Modern Music* – jazz courses
- In 1993, *Leeds College of Music* (1965), in Quarry Hill, England – the first jazz degree in Europe

Things have certainly evolved and numerous similar initiatives followed. At this point, jazz is an integrated study field, present in most countries with a tradition of musical education. Here are just a few examples of the top rated jazz departments in Europe (***, *15 Best Jazz Universities*): *Rytmsk Musikkonservatorium, Copenhagen, Jazz Department, Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, Jazz Department, Conservatorium van Amsterdam, Jazz-Institut Berlin, Hochschule für Musik Hans Eisler, Universität der Künste*. And certainly America, the homeland of jazz, could only excel in this chapter, fortunately. There are specialised websites (***, *Jazz in America*) that compete to draw up lists of such institutions, some more generous than others regarding the educational offer in the field of jazz, and it would be impossible to draw such a list.

There is good information, if one desires to discover the first decades of jazz education in the world. It can be found in *The Jazz Dictionary* signed by the musicologist, trumpeter and saxophonist Mihai Berindei: “At the current stage of its development, contemporary jazz (note: in 1975) has become a discipline of great complexity, it is no longer possible to approach it without a thorough specialty study” (Berindei, 1976, p. 141). Thus, the author mentions all the countries where music universities have been having jazz programmes: various countries and cities in the U.S.A. (Boston, New York, Miami, New Jersey and others), Europe (in countries such as Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Yugoslavia, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Hungary), but also in the Soviet Union (I kept the names of the countries as they were called during those years).

Also, we learn from this dictionary that, in those days, in the U.S.A., “between 110 and 175 jazz festivals were annually being organised, a total of 18,000 jazz bands with about 100,000 participants” (Berindei, 1976, p. 94). Also, throughout Europe, in many countries without a jazz education, EJF² was staging numerous festivals. Romania also appeared there with the Jazz Festivals in Ploiesti and Sibiu.

5. Jazz in the Romanian school

As for the jazz school in our country, it seems that Romania had this renewal at the same time as the pioneering imposed by pianist, composer, arranger and musicologist Edmond Deda, who studied at *Alberto della Pergola* Conservatory in Bucharest; he then went to London to *The Billy Mayerl School for Modern Syncopation* where he studied jazz piano. This is an example of **mobility** that led to the existence of a jazz course within the *Lyra* Philharmonic Society in Brăila (1942-1944), as well as to the establishment of the Jazz Conservatory in Romania (1941) (Vasiliu, 2020, p. 282). Timid steps towards the study of jazz in the socialist period were made in the People's Arts Schools, and an example/a **model** can be found with pianist and composer Marius Popp, who in 1985 began to teach jazz in Bucharest. Once the abusive regime was *sidelined*, the borders were opened, mobility was cultivated and in this way the premises for building generous projects were created, which were based on *the model of the Other*.

The pianist, composer and professor Mircea Tiberian laid the foundations of studying jazz in Bucharest in 1990. The same happened in Iași five years later, in 1995, through the efforts of pianist, composer and teacher Romeo Cozma, then in 1997 in Cluj. Also, there were jazz clubs in the large cultural centers. For example, in Iași there is the *Richard Oschanitzky* Jazz Club of the Students' Community Centre, a kind of garden where jazz “buds” continuously grow.

6. Mobilities in “clearing” the new new music

Some of the Romanian jazz musicians who have studied abroad present us some ideas and hypostases about the higher education system of jazz in schools in the U.S.A., Germany, Colombia, Sweden, etc., some similarities, but especially differences between us and the world. The purpose of such “a meeting” would be the one which marked the outset of the present work, namely the identification of possible models.

Pianist Ion Baci Jr., Tzuntzu, as we know him, who has lived in Sweden for decades, says: “In Sweden, nobody knows anything about Romanian jazz because there are no world-renowned instrumentalists. In Romania there are still some people who know about Swedish jazz, due to the fact that there were

² European Jazz Federation.

collaborations with Americans: Monica Zetterlund with Bill Evans, Bengt Hallberg with Stan Getz, Palle Danielsson with Keith Jarrett, Ulf Wakenius with Oscar Peterson, Jancsy Körösi with Zoot Sims, Aura Urziceanu with Duke Ellington, with Thad Jones/Mel Lewis. As for jazz education I don't have too many opinions. Colleges usually teach students how to be teachers, not jazz musicians. Some people who became famous graduated (or not) from some famous jazz schools, but they were already trained before they enrolled there. These colleges constitute a meeting place, a place to make connections; and in no way a place to learn how to become a new Miles Davis. Certainly, you hear something new, you learn about an idea, a certain way of thinking about a certain accompaniment, but no one was accepted as mediocre character and came out a great jazzman because he attended, say, Berklee (where many thousands of mediocre students graduated, by the way). The jazz audience is extremely small, and I'm referring to Romania. Many people think that they are jazz fans. Everyone has heard of this guy, but they haven't read anything about him. I don't know how much this jazz audience knows. At the Jazz Festival in Bucharest, the bands *ZMEI3* and *Trigon* had the greatest success. They are not bad bands, but it's like classical music: if Andre Rieu is our favourite violinist, then it's quite clear to us..."

Trumpeter Emil Bîzgă, a graduate of Master studies in Jazz in Germany and Master studies in Trumpet Performance (classical) in the U.S.A., told us: "I went to study my Master's at the Hanover University (*note: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität*) and there there was a very good jazz department since the years after the World War II. As the Germans were not America's favourites and did not have jazz in their blood, the decision-makers initially brought professors from America. It was **a model** taken over by other large European centres where jazz was studied... I studied everything there: harmony in jazz, trumpet in jazz, big-band conducting, jazz-specific theory (we are talking about a Master's degree). I had no discipline that did not have to do with jazz. In order to get to swing, the German professors teach funk first of all. I was... amazed and even, I admit, sometimes I burst out laughing when I saw what slaloms were made in the study methods for the Germans who didn't have swing in their blood (approx. 99%...). From a practical point of view, I would mention at least a particularly important aspect in the approach to jazz: it was confirmed to me there that the B period (the chorus) in jazz must be played at a slightly increased tempo in comparison to the previous period, otherwise... there is a risk of involuntarily thinning, pulling back the tempo! Binary thinking in swing is catastrophic. It must be thought out in a ternary way! On the other hand, Americans believes that, if you don't have swing..., you can't be connected with jazz. In the U.S.A., upon the admission exam, you are redirected to another specialisation, even profession, if you don't have swing. The universities are very well set up, both types of music – classical and jazz – are treated equally. At this moment, in Romania, on the

graduation diploma of the jazz specialisation it says that you are a composer. It seems like an error to me, if you want to talk about **models**. There is no such thing! You can't be a jazz composer if you don't have minimum knowledge of the classical language, you don't really know the art of composition, harmony, counterpoint, etc. You don't become a jazz composer without knowing everything from Bach's times until today ... but you could become a very good jazz performer on any instrument, including vocals. For the time being, the steps in the right direction are extremely small. **The model** throughout Europe is identical to the one in America. The Jazz Department generally has autonomy. So, also with a budget especially dedicated to this department. Hence, the possibility of paying specialised professors, important names in world jazz, so, at least one professor for each instrument in a jazz band. I am wondering: is alignment to European standards really desired? It seems that the decision-makers are musicians who graduated classical music! I agree that classical music should be mandatory as a first step in the development of any musician, regardless of the direction they specialise in! But try to help jazz to become what it deserves in Romania, too!"

The trombonist and pianist Robert Cozma has five years of experience in a Jazz Department at the *Hochschule für Musik in Nuremberg* (one year of Erasmus scholarship and two master degrees: Jazz - trombone and Jazz Composition). He tells us that there are two great differences between the two cultures, the German and the Romanian. On the one hand, you can do Jazz Performance there like Musical Performance here, and, on the other hand, you can attend the Jazz Pedagogy specialisation in order to become a teacher. The time allocated to each MA student for the chosen specialisation, Performance, is one and a half hours, but... if you study an instrument such as the saxophone, the number of hours can increase according to the chosen stylistic direction (classical jazz, big-band, modern jazz, etc.). Each professor comes with their own knowledge, but essentially, their method is based on personal practical experience. All professors in the jazz department are important practitioners of the jazz language, but they know the language of classical music extremely well. Then, in addition to the instrument and the compulsory disciplines, students can choose by themselves (on a website) the ensemble in which they will study. And, depending on the credits, during the four years of the BA, they have the possibility to "migrate" to other types of ensembles, which confers them a greater degree of knowledge (they can choose from approximately 15 ensembles). Germany has become a very important jazz stage in the world, especially if we talk about big bands. The significant difference between the two **models** of jazz school, German vs. Romanian, would be that in Germany the emphasis is on the practical side, over 70% (during the BA), and the MA includes no theoretical discipline, so the Dissertation means a live concert, not just a composition on the computer and

that's it. So, whether you have a Master's degree in Performance or Composition, the final exam is the LIVE Concert!

Lucas Contreras, a Colombian guitarist and composer in the band 7th *SENSE*, said that, when he sat the admission exam at the university, he saw no less than 14 guitarists, the best ones in their country, in front of whom he played, and at the end he had to choose one professor! A generous offer, to say the least...

7. Hochschule für Musik, Nürnberg – a model self-named *The youngest college in Germany*

Germany is the first country that widely opened the doors of jazz in the musical education institutions, so it is appropriate to use as a model of good practice one of the universities that assert themselves through strategies for the implementation of different study programs, with a high performance level, also being an important destination regarding mobilities from all over the world: *Hochschule für Musik* in Nuremberg, Germany. Although it claims to be the youngest college, in fact, the history of this institution dates back to 1821 when the renowned school founder Johannes Scharrer founded the *Städtische Singschule* in Nuremberg, a canto school. Having passed through numerous stages of development, it is finally defined as *Meistersinger-Konservatorium*. The 1998 merger of the *Leopold-Mozart-Konservatorium* in Augsburg with the *Meistersinger-Konservatorium* in Nurnberg resulted in the *Hochschule für Musik*, a university that stands out for its diversity of opportunities and educational offer both at the undergraduate level and especially at the master's level.

Jazz, the new new music (as I have called it since the beginning of this paper) has an overwhelming weight in the educational plans of this university, both in terms of theoretical training, but especially in terms of practice. If we look at the most recent study plan (***, *Hochschule für Musik Nürnberg*), we notice that the first discipline is *Künstlerische Praxis* (Artistic Practice) as the main subject, “Hauptfach”. There follows *Methodik zur künstlerische Praxis* (Methodology of Artistic Practice), in other words, students study how to teach Artistic Practice when they are teachers. Next, we note that from the junior year, students are anchored in an integrated approach in the form of a *Künstlerisches Projekt* (Artistic Project), closely related to *Elementare Musizierpraxis* (Elementary Musical Practice), followed by two other disciplines focused on the training of the future teacher. This first grouping of disciplines, united under the name *Hauptfach* (Major) – for us it would translate as *compulsory* – shows the degree of orientation towards the practical side of the studies, but especially to the creation of opportunities for graduates on the labor market, right from the first semester.

In the document in the suggested link one can notice the fact that jazz occupies the greatest part of disciplines, classes and credits. Even the Music

Theory classes are included in the curricular area called Jazz, progressively, over the study years (harmony, hearing, dictation, rhythm, arrangements). Also, it is interesting to see the presence of Jazz Musicology courses, in which, in addition to Jazz History, students learn to research jazz! Not to mention the Jazz Instrument discipline, which has the largest number of classes/credits during the studies. At the *Hochschule für Musik, Jazz Instrument* (voice) students have at least 4 credits in a given semester (otherwise they have 6, 7, 8 or 11 credits each) and 18 credits (out of a total of 30) in the last semester of studies.

8. Conclusions

Undoubtedly, the study of jazz in Romania and the wish to be like the model coming from the traditional places of the jazz school are found in some high schools (not substantially) or in some private schools. The manifestation of this form of artistic expression has gained impressive proportions through all kinds of festivals, concerts, recitals, publication of specialised books, etc. Although more than 30 years have passed since the insertion of jazz in the Romanian education, it seems that we are still somewhat behind. We still have a lot to recover, but the hope of identifying, implementing and confirming **models** to follow lies precisely in the fact that jazz exists in Romania, too.

The conclusion is a simple and extremely suggestive one: we still need already proven, functional, beneficial and durable **models**. We must only open our eyes and be able to accept them.

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