

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GENRE BOUNDARY AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF COMPROMISES AS JAZZ MUSICIANS' STRATEGY OF ACTION

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The fieldwork conducted in Belgrade during the summer and autumn of 2017 was oriented towards jazz musicians, and their strategies of action, in gist, implied playing other popular music genres through compromise – function work. Such business tactics are a consequence of jazz musicians' ever-insecure position, but strategic goals have changed over time with the nature of that insecurity. Going beyond the genre boundary first became a means of securing the profession itself after WWII due to (foreign-)political and ideological influences, whereas from the 1960s to date, it has been the economic guaranty of the survival of many jazz musicians. Playing folk music is one of the observed strategies analysed through a broader sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and professional context.

Keywords: jazz musicians, strategy of action, compromise, music genres, function work, Serbia

Terensko delo v Beogradu poleti in jeseni 2017 je bilo osredinjeno na jazz glasbenike, na njihove strategije delovanja, predvsem na kompromis, tj. igranje drugih, nejazzovskih priljubljenih glasbenih zvrsti. Takšna poslovna taktika (function work) je posledica stalno negotovega položaja jazz glasbenikov, pri čemer so se strateški cilji sčasoma spreminjali glede na naravo te negotovosti. Po 2. svetovni vojni je zaradi zaradi (tujih) političnih in ideoloških vplivov preseganje žanrske meje omogočilo ohranitev poklica: od 60. let pa je zagotavljalo za preživetje številnih jazz glasbenikov. Poustvarjanje narodnozabavne glasbe je ena od strategij, ki jih avtorici analizirata v širšem družbenopolitičnem, družbenoekonomskem in strokovnem kontekstu.

Ključne besede: jazz glasbeniki, strategija delovanja, kompromis, glasbeni žanri, funkcionalno delo, Srbija

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this research paper is on the Belgrade jazz musicians and their *strategies of action*,¹ which, almost, as a rule, involve concessions. Compromising, with the aim of continuing to perform, this profession, which is so inundated with uncertainty, has almost become inextricable from their operational tactics. This uncertainty, ever-present throughout long decades, is consistent with overall socio-economic and political trends. Consequently, this paper focuses, among other things, on analysing how the societal context affected the development of the jazz scene in Belgrade² and this profession, which is in never-ending *negotiations* with other music choices. The very approach to this music phenomenon – with music not being the focal point – imposed a perspective that sees jazz

¹ The concept will be elaborated in the continuation of the paper.

² Where the scene is also the most developed and where jazz is institutionally positioned best, as will be shown, whereas the jazz scene in the provincial part of the country is mainly organized around ten or so jazz festivals. Festival and concert jazz events in Belgrade, however, stayed outside the focus of this analysis; it is possible that a different picture of the local jazz scene would be created if the visits of foreign musicians and good marketing that accompany these visits are taken into consideration.

as a “uniquely interactive creative practice, dependent on shared practices and meanings [...] inseparable from societal and cultural context” (MacDonald and Wilson 2005: 395), but at the same time emphasises a fundamental distinction between different members of this profession,³ which may further reflect on the above practice, even on the tactics for overcoming the adverse professional situations. This is why it was necessary to analyse the professional context that goes beyond local boundaries.

This problem, designated in international frameworks, has also recently been introduced into the scientific orientations centred on education⁴ (Bartlett and Tolmie 2017) or the work and employment (Umney and Kretsos 2014: 571–588; Umney and Kretsos 2015: 313–334) of jazz musicians themselves.⁵ Namely, this practice adopted by jazz musicians is there defined as *function work*, or playing other genres⁶ so as to provide sustenance, of which Becker also writes in his study *Outsiders – Studies on the Sociology of Deviance*, based on his own experiences and contacts with the jazz musicians of Chicago from the end of the 1940s; one part of the study is dedicated to jazz musicians and their resistance, as well as their accepting business arrangements like these (Becker 1963, 79–114). In brief, this type of job continuously ensures a higher salary or a secure inflow of money for jazz musicians, whereas it is also simultaneously experienced as less creatively rewarding work (Umney and Kretsos 2015: 330), for which reason they are in an almost incessant process of balancing between security and the wish to express themselves in a creative manner. Deviation from playing a jazz repertoire, which is mainly reasoned by the fact that an extremely small number of musicians can earn a living by exclusively playing jazz, is the grounds not only for the tension emerging as a consequence of the imposed conflict between ‘creative autonomy’ and ‘business imperatives’ (for an example of younger jazz musicians who accept function work in London, see: Umney and Kretsos 2014: 571–588), but also for the strategic choices

³ These differences, which will be discussed in more detail later, range from the level of formal education; from whether jazz musicians belong to the younger or older generation of performers; whether they have full-time employment as jazz musicians or they are freelancers; whether they are men or women; all the way to those differences between performers that, on their part, arise from whether vocalists or instrumentalists are concerned, while speaking of the latter we also think of the differences with respect to playing particular instruments, which may further lead to different strategies of action .

⁴ Dealing, *inter alia*, with the questions connected with creativity and postsecondary jazz education, Eitan Wilf also highlights the fact that “[s]cholars and practitioners of organizational research have, in fact, recently turned to jazz music in an attempt to find organizational models that would be better suited to the fluctuating and changing conditions of the postindustrial marketplace, which require an improvisatory approach to decision making”, and adds, “whereas the jazz program is an example of the bureaucratic cultivation of creativity, the turn to jazz in the search for organizational models is an example of the creative cultivation of bureaucracy... The first is about what I would metaphorically call ‘modern creativity,’ and the second is about ‘creative modernity.’” (Wilf 2010: 578)

⁵ Naturally, the focus of these studies is on younger musicians. A rare study that takes into account the experience of both younger and older musicians is Edward Harvey’s study *Social Change and the Jazz Musician* (Harvey 1967: 34–42).

⁶ Mostly at weddings or other family celebrations or corporate events.

towards which this analysis will be directed. The fact that professional decisions and actions taken by jazz musicians always end up between two poles could, without mentioning the different contexts that define the jazz profession (not only here and not only now), create a virtually bipolar picture of the members of this profession zigzagging: between what they want to do and what they accept to do; between the creative and artistic work founded on that which is elitist⁷ and virtuosic on one hand, and the entertaining, so-called functional work, on the other; between formal and informal labour;⁸ but also between the ideological tensions that, in local context, divide the genres of popular music into modernising and retrograde (Đurković 2013: 235). Therefore, in addition to attempting to shed light on the factors that keep these musicians on these watersheds, an attempt was made to identify the ways of *reconciling* the above-described tensions.

This will not be possible if we do not know when this strategy of action, namely playing other music genres, entails a compromise; that is when it is no longer deemed to constitute musical versatility and the freedom of artistic expression. To respond to the need described above, the issue of music genre definition is here examined from the anthropological perspective, which sees music as a socio-cultural category that is “extricating its meaning from the cultural context in which it is created and practiced” (Ristivojević 2014a: 5). As a result, anthropologists, in a few words, do not discuss music *per se* (Žikić 2009: 254); on the contrary, the anthropological focus is on the culturally recognisable meanings. Simon Frith defines the ‘meaning’ of music, *inter alia*, as the term that describes the regulated forms of social behaviour (Frith 1996: 249), and adds:

To grasp the meaning of a piece of music is to hear something not simply present to the ear. It is to understand a musical culture, to have ‘a scheme of interpretation.’ For sounds to be music we need to know how to hear them; we need ‘knowledge not just of musical forms but also of rules of behaviour in musical settings.’⁹ The ‘meaning’ of music describes, in short, not just an interpretive but a social process... (Frith 1996: 246–250)

It is necessary to emphasize at this point that jazz is deemed to be a genre that belongs to the corpus of popular music, a corpus shared, among others, with genres such as rock and roll, and folk music. Should we understand a genre as “a set of musical events (real or possible) whose course is governed by a definite set of socially accepted rules” (Fabbrri 1980) and if we bear in mind that the boundaries between the genres are actually the boundaries of social elites rather than that of musical expression as such (Žikić 2009:

⁷ It is believed that elitist attitudes and behaviours grew stronger under the influences from Europe (Samardžić 2016: 79).

⁸ See more details about the following in: Rubić 2017.

⁹ The argument here is taken from Derrick F. Wright, Musical Meaning and Its Social Determinants. *Sociology* 9 (3), 1975: 424, 428 (Frith 1996: 250).

348), then the knowledge of the nature of that division must be known if we want to gain better understanding of the position of a jazz musician as a person dealing with the boundaries that are defined – a person crossing those boundaries and taking active part in these, seemingly separate, worlds. Singling out rock and roll (and pop-rock) and neo-folk as two “dominant mega-genres of popular music in this region, in the past half of century” is essential for this discussion, considering that they have developed “distinctive relationships” and “distinctive perceptions between them” (Đurković 2013: 234), as well as distinctive valuation of a part of research and public spheres. This can be, in a few words, expressed in a binary opposition¹⁰ that is dedicating one side to “progressive urban rock and roll”, and the other to “primitive folkers”,¹¹ thus essentially reflecting the ideological discourses that neglect their mutual intertwining, borrowing, and crisscrossing (ibid.: 233–234). Accordingly, one of the tasks undertaken here is to attempt to answer the question of how much this division influences the professional decisions of jazz musicians, i.e., how and why they are taking on genres from both sides of *the boundary* (when, while playing jazz, they also play both rock-and-roll and folk music¹²)? The focus, however, will be on the strategies of action and associated compromises which, as revealed by a number of informants, related to cooperation with those put on the ‘demonic’¹³ side of the division, namely with their counterparts on the folk scene. Furthermore, the folk scene encompasses all those music styles that were developed in different political and socio-cultural frameworks that are differently named¹⁴ but are all classified as subgenres of popular folk music.¹⁵ The reasons for this focus are to examine the ideological effects on the identified practice, as well as their relation with the economic imperatives that the international literature, analysing the jazz musicians’ function work, describes as being dominant.

Finishing these introductory remarks, we should mention a number of important factors relating to the strategies of action as such. If we accept the premise that culture affects the action by shaping a repertoire or ‘tool kit’ of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct ‘strategies of action’ (Swidler 1986: 273), then we come to view

¹⁰ See more details about redefining the binary positions, such as traditional/modern, or local/global, on the example of the world music phenomenon in: Ristivojević 2014b.

¹¹ This conflicting relationship between *folkers* and *rockers cultures* may be more specifically described as “contrasting” relationship considering that it “stems from the contrast between the presence and absence of a specific characteristic” (Kovačević 2017: 970) or culturally attached meanings.

¹² Both as the performers and as the creators, as it will be shown here below.

¹³ According to the words of a woman interviewee, this can also be seen in the light of critical views on turbo-folk, for instance, deeply-rooted in a part of academia and culture-savvy audience (see: Simić 2007: 107–109).

¹⁴ New folk music, newly-composed music, turbo-folk, neo-folk, are all frequently used as synonyms.

¹⁵ For a more general sketch of the development of popular folk music in Serbia, see: Simić 2007: 102–113, for instance, and for the overview of other republics of former Yugoslavia, with a special focus on Slovenia, see: Đorđević 2010: 139–143 and Radović 2010: 124–126.

the individual as active, sometime skilled users of culture whom we actually observe (Swidler 1986: 277). To put it concisely: when people solve problems, they construct strategies of action – persistent (but not fixed or immutable) ways of ordering action through time (Laz 1998: 102).

Culture provides resources¹⁶ for constructing organized strategies of action. Particular cultural resources can be integrated, however, into quite different strategies of action. A crucial task for research is to understand how cultural capacities created in one historical context are reappropriated and altered in new circumstances. (Swidler 1986: 283)

Furthermore, we should bear in mind the distinction identified by Ann Swidler – that strategies of action may vary within the settled and unsettled cultural periods, where “[i]n unsettled lives, values are unlikely to be good predictors of action, or indeed of future values” (Swidler 1986: 282). Within an established way of life, as Swidler mentions, values may play a significant role “if we acknowledge that values do not shape action by defining its ends, but rather fine-tune the regulation of action within established ways of life” (ibid.).¹⁷

This paper, therefore, intends to call attention to the strategy of action that, due to different societal circumstances in which it takes place, features different goals and different means of implementation. The chronology of events requires that we first describe the situation appearing immediately after the end of WWII when the cross-genre repertoire tactics, in the institutional frameworks, were meant to safeguard the survival of jazz in Yugoslav society. The one that followed, which, as stated above, will be discussed in more detail, is the strategy for individuals’ breaking the boundary to folk music, with the goal of ensuring that a certain number of musicians survive in jazz music. Thus, both these outcomes continuously support the domestic jazz scene, particularly so in the segment in which it is formed around professional activities.¹⁸

¹⁶ “Resources are not simply ‘out there’ waiting to be used in identical ways by all. Rather, in interaction we draw on and give meaning to available resources, then use that meaning as a guide to action” (Laz 1998: 103).

¹⁷ “Bourdieu (1977) also emphasizes the idea of strategies, and the term is central to a whole tradition in anthropology, which, nonetheless, sees strategies as oriented to the attainment of ‘values’ (see Barth, 1981) [...] For me, strategies are the larger ways of trying to organize a life (trying, for example, to secure position by allying with prestigious families through marriage) within which particular choices make sense, and for which particular, culturally shaped skills and habits (what Bourdieu calls ‘habitus’) are useful.” (Swidler 1986: 276)

¹⁸ For a broader definition of the scene concept, when “the concept of scene refers to spatially contextualised communication on the basis of things that matter, which provides an anchorage for identification to the participants of such communication.” See: Kozorog and Stanojević 2013: 369.

METHOD AND INFORMANTS' PROFILES

A field survey was carried out in summer and autumn of 2017, in Belgrade. On that occasion, fifteen people were interviewed. The informants were selected either based on the recommendation of other jazz musicians or based on their being publicly recognisable jazz musicians. Since it was, for several reasons, impossible to obtain data about their precise number in Belgrade,¹⁹ the interviewees' estimate of 50-100 currently active jazz musicians was accepted.

This professional group displays internal versatility with regard to age, level of formal education, choosing instrumental and/or vocal means of musical expression, affiliation, etc. A significant distinction noted was that the three interviewed women were all vocalists²⁰ and the twelve men were instrumentalists. The most significant difference relevant for this research, however, proved to be the one relating to the affiliation, which classifies most informants in the ranks of formally employed persons and only two people among freelancers. The employed persons included members of the Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) Big Band, teachers in jazz music departments of the secondary school of music and the Faculty of Music in Belgrade (FMU), as well as three persons who are retired jazz musicians but remain active.²¹ Another noteworthy fact is that almost all informants, in addition to having formal employment, do some additional work and that freelancers take additional jobs, such as writing commissioned music, being members of different panels, etc. However, this is not only a possibility for them; instead, due to low earnings and small fees, they are forced²² to concomitantly take several formal and informal jobs, including the abovementioned function work.²³

A TRADITION OF COMPROMISE: THE SURVIVAL OF JAZZ IN YUGOSLAV SOCIETY

A hundred-year long tradition of playing jazz, with all the changes that jazz music underwent with regard to its content, coincides with the tradition of compromise-making as the strategy of action for jazz musicians in the region. A strategy of action that will be first

¹⁹ Associations gathering jazz musicians, besides the Association of Jazz, Pop, and Rock Music which is the oldest among them, also gather together the performers in other genres of music. In addition, musicians are also known to sporadically engage themselves outside the music profession or find professional engagement outside the country.

²⁰ Among them, one freelancer is attempting to establish a career both as an author and instrumentist.

²¹ One interviewee was undergoing a process to obtain a pension after being terminated employment through a redundancy programme.

²² The salary of the members of the RTS Big Band, which are all university graduates, amounts to approx. 350 euros; the salary of teachers in secondary school and lecturers at University is somewhat higher; on average, 25 euro is charged for a gig.

²³ Not necessarily in folk music.

discussed is the one whose goal was to ensure that this music, which was present thanks to “the enthusiasm of the educated townspeople for jazz in the 1920s and 1930s” (Muršič 2017: 59) in urban centres such as Belgrade, Ljubljana, and Zagreb, was maintained in Yugoslav society after WWII. The need for such strategy arose as a consequence of political about-turns because of which formerly present characteristics, such as “deeply rooted” or “essentially approximating (speaking of music in the region of Yugoslavia) the Western²⁴ – in this case the American – music” (Vučetić 2009: 86) were made unacceptable. The pressure, already visible in the second half of 1945, to stop playing this kind of music (Vučetić 2012: 60) had a number of different implications. It influenced the way in which the processes of jazz institutionalisation and professionalisation proceeded, but also the development of a strategy of action with a goal to safeguard jazz in such a socially and politically unfavourable environment. This strategy was developed by the musician who made repertoire compromises so as to satisfy the ruling party’s views of culture as well as the supposed taste of the people who had just won the war.

To confirm the above statement, here are two examples from post-war Belgrade. The first is about Dinamo, the first big band in Serbia, which Vojislav Bubiša Simić founded in 1946 and whose post-war repertoire was adjusted to “the taste of the audience” in such a way that, besides a dozen of American Schlagers and several Russian songs, it included “Kozaračko kolo dancing” every half an hour (Lučić Todosić 2002: 68). The second example dates to 1947 when the Radio Ljubljana Dance Orchestra was required to change the repertoire after they had a concert in Kolarac People’s University. The testimony of Bojan Adamič is that, after the concert, he was summoned into the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia where “Radovan Zogović told him that jazz is ‘pig music’, threatened him with violence, and instructed that a different repertoire be prepared for the next evening”, and, for that reason, his orchestra played Russian songs, waltzes and polkas the following evening (Raković 2011: 125).

However, Tito’s split with the Stalinist USSR in 1948 moved the disputed music into the ‘eligible’ category and, in January of that same year, in the changed socio-political circumstances, Mladen Bobi Guteša founded a professional Radio Belgrade Entertaining Orchestra, which would later start the Radio Television of Belgrade Jazz Orchestra²⁵ (Jakovljević 2003: 68). This change did not bring freedom with regard to the repertoire; namely, a three-member Radio Belgrade commission was set up to ward off any playing in the “American style”, meaning with heavy syncope and a strong rhythm (Stefanović Grof 1998: 8).

Most importantly, however, jazz playing did not suffer discontinuity; instead, necessary preconditions were created for its professionalisation through institutionalisation – through the formation of orchestras all over the country. Before founding the Belgrade orchestra,

²⁴ For more details about the acceptance of the western music influences in the period prior to WWII, see: Muršič 2017: 59–60.

²⁵ Which is the RTS Big Band today.

Bojan Adamič had founded Radio Ljubljana Dance Orchestra, more well known as the Big Band, in 1945, and Radio Zagreb Dance Orchestra, led by Zlatko Černulj, was founded in the 1946/1947 season (Vučetić 2009: 88). Another important institutional coincidence, of interest for jazz, with the developments at the international political scene, happened in 1953. Namely, in the same year in which Stalin died, the Association of Jazz Musicians was founded in Belgrade. Even though jazz was not more readily accepted at the time, in the early 1950s “the state-party leadership personified in a single man, Josip Broz” expressed, in front of a delegation of composers “dissatisfaction with the fact that jazz, as music alien to Yugoslav people, enjoys a growing presence in our country” (Jakovljević 2003: 78), it still meant that “the government decided to recognise this kind of music, but also to have it institutionally ‘channelled’ through the Association” (Vučetić 2009: 90).

Jazz became better established in the 1950s through concerts, publications, broadcasts, vinyl recordings, and regular articles on radio and in print media. A general climate conducive for the approximation to the West, i.e., the U.S.A., was favourable for institutionalising the first Yugoslav jazz festival in Bled in 1960, which grew into the international festival soon afterwards and was relocated to Ljubljana in 1967 (Krstić 2010: 197). Since this festival exclusively featured jazz music (Vučetić 2012: 13), this may be deemed to denote that this music genre had finally become *independent* in the territory of Yugoslavia.

In that same period, jazz music could be heard at official celebrations, such as the marking of the anniversary of Užička republika (the Republic of Užice) in 1963, in what was then called Tito’s Užice,²⁶ and the institutionalisation process continued through the introduction of jazz into the schools of music in Valjevo and Subotica (Vučetić 2012: 71). To put it briefly, it can be said that, in general, the compromises that were made were necessary, but that they contributed to keeping jazz music in the post-war Yugoslav society, i.e., that they have played a critical compensational role.

Furthermore, although jazz ceased to raise suspicion for being so-called American music, the times that followed brought new challenges and, accordingly, a new goal and modifications of the strategy of action. Specifically, the Radio Television Belgrade Jazz Orchestra started to play more of the so-called pop music, with elements of rock. This time the change was made due to economic reasons that arose in front of jazz musicians when the audience generally turned towards the more prevailing music industries. After the 1970s, jazz music was played “at a sporadic jazz festival, and this once a year or not at all [...] and this was the time when the Orchestra’s²⁷ production was best ever, expressed in minutes, but it played pop and rock music, and this mostly as an orchestra accompanying a vocalist” (Stefanović Grof 1998: 67). Thus, the opening towards the West, which saved both jazz scene and jazz musicians in the post-war period, became an exacerbating factor,

²⁶ It is also possible, in this context, to think of jazz music as a supra-national phenomenon in the Yugoslavian frameworks. This could have had special weight locally, when decision on the selection of music for official programmes were made.

²⁷ The Radio Belgrade Entertaining Orchestra at that moment.

in economic terms, at the turn of the 1960s into the 1970s when “the leading Communist elite” attempted to, at one and the same time, impose and promote the “Western pop music” and affirm the *popular* music as a part of that which is urban, positive, elitist, and valuable (Đurković 2004: 276). This period is also a period in which market competition started, which meant that musicians shared the fate of the music they played and that compromises were not impinging solely on those who played in institutions.

FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO STUDYING THE COMPROMISES, OR ABOUT RETAINING THE MUSICIANS IN JAZZ MUSIC

Here follows a description of the findings of a field survey based on which the conclusions can be drawn, which either directly or indirectly indicate the strategies of action and appertaining compromises the interviewed jazz musicians made in the course of their careers. These compromises implied accepting jobs outside playing jazz, while simultaneously particular attention will be dedicated to playing folk music as function work. Especially important will be to describe the contextual elements without which the programmed analysis would not have been possible. Therefore, the focus will not be on jazz musicians only, but also on their more immediate and broader surroundings. More immediate surroundings would surely include the environment to which a musician belongs in a specific playing formula or the one to which he gravitates guild-wise. It is of pronounced importance given the fact that it is made of musicians themselves and that they form value attitudes, in it and in relation to it, towards the music that is suitable for public performance from the point of view of the genre, and which is not. That is why genre conventions and strategies of action in accordance with will not only be examined in the informants who have a personal experience of playing folk music, but also in the informants who have no concrete experience, but who do have a definite opinion on it (on the traditional perception of jazz musicians against those who are not musicians, but are united into one by the term ‘square’, and those playing the so-called commercial music, see more in: Becker 1963: 79–114). In contrast, as a broader environment, the total socioeconomic, as well as political and ideological, trends that directly mould all the aspects of their professional lives will be taken into consideration.

FROM THE IDEAL COURSE OF ACTION TO AN ACTUALLY PRACTISED ONE

The analysed narratives clearly suggest that the ideal course of action for the interviewed musicians would be to provide for their sustenance by playing jazz music and to venture into other music categories only by free choice. This statement in actual fact shows how unstable their socioeconomic status was for several decades, which forced them to develop several strategies of action out of which only the one relating to the concomitant playing of folk music will be discussed below. The mentioned unstable status is further aggravated

by the fact that the interviews were conducted at a time when Belgrade did not have any jazz clubs in the strict meaning of this word, namely clubs which feature jazz programme five to seven days a week and present both local and international performers. In contrast, it should be noted that this moment of instability came after a period of optimism that ensued after the Department for Jazz and Popular Music was established at the Faculty of Music in 2012. This optimism was also associated with a number of musicians returning from abroad after they had already established their careers. Several jazz clubs that, in the Yugoslav era, were devoted exclusively to jazz music, and which were not subsidised by the City Authorities – which the narratives too often see as a solution of the problem that is described here – contributed to creating a picture of a lively scene in which musicians and their music were able to acquire the status to which they aspired and which, in some cases, were described as vulnerable because of the onslaught of other music genres.

Judging by what the interviewed people said, however, it seems that quite the contrary happened. That it is not only that they see themselves as being vulnerable, but that one can hardly live on playing jazz nowadays in Serbia is clear from the fact that most of our informants have formal employment. Playing jazz music, at places where this is still possible, thus becomes their additional activity to earn extra income.

It is evident from the above that what was desirable for a long time, as is the case with formal education, for example, has transformed into something that makes musicians vulnerable. In the first place, this is about the production of qualified staff at graduate and master studies,²⁸ and about the return and/or visits of a number of jazz musicians from abroad. The above circumstances, however, would not have made musicians vulnerable were it not for the confirmation of a process in which jazz was almost pushed out from urban night clubs, which are its origins (Lopes 2004: 232). This reduction of the number of places in which one can listen to live performance of this music to a bare minimum is explained by our informants in several ways, all of which are linked to either the lack of profit or the lack of interest. The former concerns the owners of places in which jazz is played. They are profit-orientated, and so musicians and their repertoire are valued based on *how many beers were dispensed from the shank*; this shifts attention from those who suffer a lack of profit to those who have lost interest.²⁹ Thus the latter do not manage to show up in numbers that would make them an audience sufficiently convincing to uphold the idea of the profit of owners who would then be able to share that profit with those who make their living playing jazz music. Turning to other genres as rational behaviour of jazz musicians, however, was encouraged by their higher motivation to function within specific music environments, which seems even more critical than content-related elements.³⁰

²⁸ Which all interviewees have welcomed as appreciated competition.

²⁹ We mean losing an audience for several reasons.

³⁰ See more details here below.

‘WORLDS’ AND COMPROMISES

The perception is that jazz musicians have a continuously uncertain status³¹ – the uncertainty here reflecting the situation with their engagement taking into account that a “jazz musician is economically controlled by others” (Merriam and Mack 1960: 215), along with the idea of severe self-renunciation and (even) their superiority as performers, in synergy with the already established impression of jazz as elitist music, were, in a number of cases, compressed into the terms and sentences that suggest that they were forced to *prostitute themselves*, or to *play the role of a musician* (and the word *musician* here means *entertainer* and not *artist*, which is how they define themselves), or to *provide music services for consideration*.

A large number of informants, however, spoke euphemistically about what they call “playing other *musics*”,³² referring to compromises, while the number of those who stated that they had never crossed the boundaries of their own professional/artistic desires is extremely low (only two).

Considering that the informants included the retired persons (but still active on the jazz scene, however negligible this scene might be), formally employed persons, a few free-lancers, as well as those who have just graduated from university or will do so soon, it was possible to examine the chronology of compromises most commonly chosen, in accordance with contemporary societal developments, which reflected on the, to some extent, divided music *worlds*, which jazz musicians only too often united because of different, although mutual, interests, with a goal of making desired compensation. Perhaps, apart from the foregoing, we could also approach the division of these worlds through Becker’s definitions of the world and an art world:

Define a world as consisting of all those people and organizations whose activity is necessary to produce the kind of events and objects which that world characteristically produces. Then an art world consists of the people and organizations who produce those events and objects that the world defines as art. (Becker 1976: 703)

This tautology is then resolved by the assertion that the world of art mirrors society at large (Becker 1976: 717) and in the concrete case the same may refer to the fact that the folk music world is not recognised in society as an art world, whereas that belongingness has for long been recognised to the jazz world. The fact, however, that both *worlds* belong to a broader corpus, i.e., to the popular music world to which it is socially approved that

³¹ Thus, one of the informants, suggesting that frugality accompanies jazz musicians at all times, described the status of jazz musicians by comparing them and himself with a bird of prey: *There is not much meat on a hawk*.

³² Not necessarily folk music.

it may support manifold unifications,³³ has as its outcome exactly the same as what is also registered in narratives. Playing in rock bands, as a kind of a second job, is hardly uncommon among jazz musicians. Pop, together with rock, is defined as the *other branch* of the same music. Ethno and world music have continuously had their place in jazz music; therefore, the related excursions were also detected in the answers; and the same continuity is present with regard to overlapping with the world of folk music. However, what could be defined as commonly shared by all who made compromises is that it is this very transgressing of what is ideal type that has kept them in jazz, and that, without this kind of financial succour (even when a person is formally employed), they would not be able to uphold their first music choice as artistically recognised.

As for the genesis of overlapping with the world of folkers – which is how the informants call the members of this extremely heterogeneous professional group, which also featured a significant variance of characteristics in previous decades, it should be highlighted that the view on the folk musicians' world and the experience of those who entered it, although almost never described as having great artistic value, it carried no negative connotations; the same is true for the world of rock and pop music, which not everybody deemed acceptable: because of this, one of the teachers³⁴ in the Stanković secondary school of music, said:

Those young, beautiful, and rebellious people address their young, beautiful and rebellious issues, while the rest of us do what we are required to do... Why have I never engaged in rock music? If so much space is given to lighting, smoke, fog, to that stupidities, long hair, massive jewellery... – what is left to music? Everything is given more priority than music.

SING JAZZ AND MIX GENRES

It has already been stated that the only jazz vocalists in the research study were women of different generations, with or without formal jazz education, with or without formal employment. Although characterised by manifold differences, they do have one thing in

³³ This process may also be brought into connection with the tendencies developed in Yugoslav socialism and the trends of the 1960s, which makes a worker from a musician: “with the strengthening of popular music production, the process of so-called estradisation started, with an attempt to establish one common platform and agenda to professionalise and institutionalise activities in the field of popular music. The primary focus was on otherwise unrecognised and neglected music activities that the official cultural policy largely overlooked. Using the framework of socialist modernisation, emancipation and enlightenment, the categories of ‘estrada worker’ (*estradni radnik*) and ‘estrada artist’ (*estradni umetnik*) were established in an attempt to build an umbrella concept for all musical activities, regardless of music genres and labour conditions. Such a notion of estrada art was presented in the public discourses as ‘the most democratic way of consuming art (Estrada 1965–70: year II, no. 6, 1966).” (Hofman 2015: 37–38)

³⁴ He graduated in jazz from a university in Austria.

common. To step into the world of folk music, as it were, was intolerable for them. Our oldest woman interviewee, now in her seventies, refused an invitation to sing so-called newly-composed folk music back in 1980s and thus practically isolated herself for long years. This refusal coincided with something else which she now sees as a matter of mentality – the audience turning their back on her after her great and successful career³⁵ saying: *It is finished with this one. She is too old.* The compromise she was offered to make could have prolonged her career, but, as she said, the fact that she did not *compromise herself* allows her to still sing jazz in her sixties and seventies, even if she is no longer physically attractive (for more details about this and old jazz musicians' emotional attitude towards the profession and creativity, see: Milosavljević 2018: 7-21). This position taken by a female singer – that she needs to be of agreeable appearance – made our informant who teaches at the FMU³⁶ define the position of women singers³⁷ as *the most stupid place*:

In the first place, you are expected to giggle, to be a fool, to act as a clown and not to know anything... It is only important that you know how to make pleasant chit chat and have charisma so that people love you and come to your concerts. That is what makes me angry – to be a showgirl [Srb. pevaljka]!

The pejorative name for a female singer (*pevaljka*), actually fits in with the inherited image of a broader music corpus of Kafana Musicians (*muzikanti*), who “were perceived as a peculiar branch, the lowest rated in the scale of professional musicianship [...]” (Hofman 2015: 35) in the Yugoslav era. “The critical accounts, judging and marginalisation of kafana musicians in official and public discourses resulted from the negative assessment of music labour in the service sector, whose working regimes were stigmatised as immoral and low value” (ibid.). Accordingly, Ana Hofman further refers us to the characteristics connected with female singers, and says: “Being labourers in a profession marked by a history of moral devaluation, by discourses of bad-quality and dishonest service work determined female singers' social position” (ibid.: 46), also adding to that:

To obtain a job or keep working, for female singers it was extremely important to develop strong social skills and communicate not only with patrons, but also with managers, and *kafana* and restaurant owners, all-male. (Hofman 2015: 41)

³⁵ Just like many of her women and men colleagues, she was best recognised and most adored when she was singing hit songs; her engagement at the club scene, both in the country and abroad, however, implied jazz repertoire and that is why she defines herself as a, primarily, jazz singer. She even sang in front of Ella Fitzgerald some songs from the repertoire of this great jazz celebrity.

³⁶ She graduated jazz at a university in Austria where she still lives.

³⁷ Not necessarily in folk music.

Although it describes the role of a female singer that is inherited from the folk music world – with sexuality-related elements being, supposedly, given more priority than talent or vocal ability – this is not true only for this world. Some American and British studies with regard to the role, participation, and perception of female jazz singers reveal the similar thing, underlining that, before the mid-1980s, with few exceptions, women “were always second-class citizens in jazz, the most macho of all the arts” (Gourse 1995: 7). One of the definitions of jazz is that it is a “patriarchal society”,³⁸ which produced four types of the role played by a woman jazz singer: mother, seductress, pet, and iron maiden (Wehr 2015: 6). There is another similarity between the local jazz scene and the scenes after which it is modelled: they share a phenomenon faced by “jazz educators all over the world”, namely “a lack of females in jazz” (ibid.: 3), as well as women’s predominant inclination towards becoming jazz singers or jazz pianists (Gourse 1995: 7).

I PLAYED THE WORST KIND OF FOLK MUSIC...

In the situation with women singers not crossing the boundary and not venturing into singing folk music – such as our female informants – their male colleagues are left room to make choices which are seemingly easier for them to make. Specifically, they are less recognisable and less visible, particularly when it comes to recording folk music albums in a studio. In brief, the history of meandering, i.e., going into folk music, begins with older generations and still subsists today. When different generations are considered, it can be said that older jazz musicians generally do not have formal jazz education. The middle generation acquired their graduate diplomas abroad, or are on the way of acquiring them here in Belgrade, and, for the youngest generation, university education is a standard. The members of the middle and younger generations talked about their older colleagues as jazz musicians who were principally entertainers, and they identify this as the critical and overwhelming issue from their point of view. The participation of older musicians at the music scene was associated with the fact that jazz was closely connected with the Schlager scene, that they have played at many festivals accompanying the singers of so-called popular music, that they remember their USSR tours as delightful and profitable, and that, generally speaking, they were employed with Radio Belgrade where, in accordance with the internal organisational chart, they could be reassigned from Jazz Orchestra to the Folk Orchestra, for instance. This overlapping, as shown above, along with the invitations from folk musicians, such as: *C’mon, let’s hear a bit of that jazz of yours...* recommended them at first as studio musicians or members of bands playing at village fetes or concerts, when their financial position so required. According to our informants, this picture mostly refers to

³⁸ One of the coincidences that should be mentioned relates to the fact that some women interviewees talked as if they were men and, thus, were “routinely positioned as ‘guys’ when giving examples” (MacDonald and Wilson 2006: 69).

the 1980s when so-called newly-composed folk music was in expansion.³⁹ Besides working as performers, jazz musicians also worked as authors, and that work is very lucrative, too.

Furthermore, because of general instability and crisis in the 1990s a number of young (at that time) musicians headed abroad⁴⁰ to study,⁴¹ and those who stayed turned to folk gigs as a source of income which would enable them to survive the disintegration of the Yugoslav jazz scene (Krstić 2010: 217–219) and the dissolution of Yugoslavia itself, and the general economic and societal devastation that pushed rock and roll (until then under the patronage of the government) and jazz back into the underground (Đurković 2004: 279).

The experience⁴² of those times has been translated into a paradigmatic narrative of a pianist who first acquired classical music education and then university education as a jazz musician in the Netherlands, and who is now teaching at the jazz department of the Stanković School of Music. At the time, he had left behind classical music and had not fully adopted jazz music yet; he started playing folk music in Bosnia in the 1990s: *I played the worst kind of folk music... At weddings, farewell parties... It was surely not because I wanted to... I had to earn some money so that I could stay in jazz.*

It is noteworthy, however, that this advantage that folk musicians enjoyed in that period is not seen exclusively as the failure of so-called cultural policy. Namely, the answers do not manifestly contain pronouncedly significant ideological encumbrances with regard to those who played folk music and neither to those few who did not cross that boundary but nevertheless showed understanding for that course of action. On the opposite side, the economic status of folk musicians, which was such that they were able to confer some of their resources to jazz musicians – and the latter would be in an even more adverse position were it not for this *act of kindness and goodwill* – was seen as the prevailing factor in the choice-making process where not even aesthetic considerations could take prevalence. Furthermore, it was added yet another significant characteristic that was described in the category of high professional commitment and dedication, which may be summed up as follows:

They are perfect professionals... You do not see that in jazz. And there are no schools for them... It is a cruel world, and I have nothing but respect for them. Everything

³⁹ The song “Dobro jutro džezeri” (Good morning, jazzers) of a Belgrade rock band Bajaga i instruktori (Bajaga and Instructors), made in 1985, precisely portrays this period and the then Belgrade jazz musicians’ practice of playing folk music. This song, just as its subsequent remake and later playing, will be analysed in a separate study.

⁴⁰ Where function work is also accepted within the framework of the genres which are financially more lucrative there.

⁴¹ To study the extent to which the education of jazz musicians abroad contributed to the spreading of elitist views of the profession and the extent to which their attitudes differed from the elitism developed by their older colleagues without formal jazz education would also be significant for future research studies.

⁴² As a strategy for the perception of everyday life in the region, music was also visible on the example of New Wave during the 1980s. See more in: Ajduk 2018, 2019.

is as it should be... Nothing is missing there... The job must be done. On the other hand, in Iguana.⁴³ What, contrabass is not here? Ok, let's take a 45-minute break.

A statement of a well-known jazz bass guitar and contrabass player, who had a career in rock music as well, picturesquely explains how was it possible that these two music worlds, seemingly distant from each other, function so well together, i.e., how was it that jazz musicians, who are the *most elitist* in the popular perception – their own and that of their colleagues from other music genres – could work so well with folk musicians who are *the most suspicious*:

Specific styles imply specific systems of human relationships. As in Plato – like music, like the state. Well, on a smaller scale, when modes of music change, the relationships in the relevant groups of musicians and their listeners change with them. Each to their own. Folk and jazz are similar in some ways. The antagonism between folk and jazz musicians is lesser than that between jazz and rock musicians, or classical and folk musicians, or any other,⁴⁴ The ways musicians organise themselves are similar. However, that is not the case with musicians and their audience. There we have a problem since it is on the performers to accommodate the audience. They are like the toilet paper of the society, but that is why they are paid so well...

I can tell you about the period some twenty years ago when I used to play. The groups are open. They change frequently. It's different with rockers. Most often a group is formed of four persons, and that's it. These ones are changeable. You know what songs are played, what the repertoire is like. The standards are played.

All the above-said suggests that cooperation with folk musicians was a continuous strategy intended to help musicians stay in jazz. Something similar applies even today, but now some younger jazz musicians play folk songs in such a way that they create their own bands to play at weddings and other parties where their repertoire is a combination of folk and pop songs, as standards. They stress that this strategy brings them money without which they would have to give up waiting to – sometime, somewhere – play jazz.⁴⁵ At this point, one could mention one of the most dominant stereotypes which portray jazz musicians

⁴³ One of the elitist Belgrade jazz clubs that is now closed.

⁴⁴ Incompatibility does not arise from the nature of music but rather from those who play jazz and classical music. In addition to a large number of differences that divide ones from the others, there is also the idea of “music which costs” and “music which pays” (Dallin 1958: 32); and there are many reasons to write about the effect they have on each other, in terms of music, and in long-term (Salamone 2005: 742–743). Additionally, some American jazz musicians construct this genre as American classical music.

⁴⁵ They add that the advantage is that they are getting, absolutely necessary, experience, which is even more inaccessible for them as young musicians in the described circumstances.

as the ones “receiving little financial reward for their endeavours in comparison to other musicians” (MacDonald and Wilson 2005: 404). The informants confirmed just that – they are extremely poorly paid when they play jazz. They say that they can earn 25 euros for an average evening of playing jazz but fail, however, to supplement that fact with the information about how much they earn when they play other music genres. In contrast, they do stress that the advantage is that these jobs are greater in number and that they are better paid. Although this type of professional expression through “function” gigs, which implies playing at parties or corporate events, is commonly thought to be better paid,⁴⁶ it is also defined as the one frustrating the younger musicians (Umney and Kretsos 2014: 582), as confirmed by our informants; however, the frustration is caused by the fact that they are being converted into *entertainers*, devoid of any artistic and creative expression, while, as regards their values, genres are reduced exclusively to “good music” and “bad music”, without a pronounced ideological encumbrance.

CONCLUSION

To practice jazz in Belgrade today means to be a pedagogue in the secondary school of music or the faculty of music, which does not include playing of music; to be engaged in the RTS Big Band which is the only performing entity; or to attempt to survive in a highly insecure status of, extremely rare, freelancer; or to, supplementing a salary or pension, try to stay in this profession. Low income, lack of opportunity to play jazz, minimum gig fees, more competition – these are only some of the economic factors *adding on* the former tradition of making compromises, which also used to be dictated by society’s ideological requirements. It can be deduced from everything stated here that boundaries among genres are actually a *soft* construction that jazz musicians have been historically traversing for a long time, experiencing unevenly intense opposition, or without opposition, all in line with the economic imperative dominating the statements of our informants. It seems that the myths present in the so-called jazz culture, such as the myth of the artist who is changing the world (Salamone 2009: 144) or that of the insane genius (Dobson 2010: 241) do not fit into the outlooks on life which jazz musicians have developed over time and which had to reconcile action and sustenance; just like ideological considerations of those who are *observing* the compromises described here do not bear any greater importance for those who make such compromises. Hence, the conclusion is that ideological question marks over folk music, dominating some segments of scientific and public discourse, do not seem to

⁴⁶ The thesis that, due to jazz belonging to the entertainment industry, the artist is not the one reaping the benefits, remains, and it can be understood better if we know how much foreign jazz musicians are paid. Accordingly, in London, for example, a younger musician playing jazz earns 30–60 pounds (Umney and Kretsos 2014: 578), and for function work they usually get 150–250 pounds (*ibid.*: 582).

be of greater significance for jazz musicians themselves, or at least have smaller significance than the economic benefit which has the offsetting power described here.

Another reason for musicians resorting to the above strategy of action is that their colleagues show understanding for their choice even if they are not following suit. The truth remains that they define their supplementary jobs as a compromise – function work – but it should be stressed that the undesirable aspect of going against one’s own wish is that, by doing it, they shift themselves from a desirable position of an artist to the required role of an entertainer. The expectation that playing contradictory roles of a “creative artist” and a “commercial entertainer” leads to the “confusion in respect to status” (Merriam and Mack 1960: 213) subsides under the offsetting power which is economic in nature but is not only that. It is even more important to stress in the conclusion that this strategy of action, actually, helps musicians stay in jazz as a professional area in which they manage to satisfy their need for creation.

It is shown here that the same strategy of action – playing other music genres – can have different goals and means of implementation, depending on the circumstances that are seen as a dominant threat. In brief, the same strategy of action was seen in the institutions who made repertoire compromises to ensure the survival of jazz in Yugoslav society after WWII, but also in individuals who turned to more profitable genres with folk music dominating in the previous four or five decades. However, the author of this paper wants to underline that the professional context, in which strategic decisions of local jazz musicians must be studied, suggests that local jazz musicians share the fate of their counterparts in much stronger economies – which is particularly true for beginners in this profession – and that they could learn from their older colleagues, among other things, that playing other genres can provide security for the profession itself and for them as members of that profession.

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NA DRUGI STRANI MEJE ŽANRA. ANTROPOLOŠKA ANALIZA KOMPROMISA KOT STRATEGIJE JAZZ GLASBENIKOV

Avtorici sta na podlagi terenskih raziskav beograjskih jazz glasbenikov in njihovih strategij delovanja preučili njihov izvajalski repertoar, ki je zaradi eksistencialnih razlogov vključeval tudi igranje drugih glasbenih zvrsti. Ta kompromis (function work) kaže na nenehno negotov položaj glasbenikov. Ob tem je bilo treba preučiti tudi profesionalni kontekst, družbenopolitične vplive, navsezadnje tudi socialno-ekonomske vidike, ki so in še oblikujejo in tvorijo lokalno jazz sceno in določajo položaj glasbenikov.

Prehajanje meje žanra je ena od strategij delovanja, ki je omogočala, da so v različnih obdobjih dosegali različne cilje. Po 2. svetovni vojni je kompromis omogočal ohranjanje jazza v družbi, ki ga že iz ideoloških razlogov ni sprejemala brez odpora. Od 60. let prejšnjega stoletja pa je bil jazz zaradi prevlade drugih žanrov, predvsem narodnozabavne glasbe in rocka, izrinjen iz javnosti. Zaradi ekonomske negotovosti se je veliko število jazz glasbenikov odločilo za kompromis, za funkcionalno delo, s katerim so si lahko izboljšali eksistencialni položaj. Terenska raziskava je pokazala, da je ta strategija delovanja omogočila tudi njihov položaj na prizorišču jazzu.

O tem pričajo tudi pripovedi petnajstih intervjuvancev, ki jih je avtorica spraševala poleti in jeseni 2017. Glavna tema pogovora so bili kompromisi v prehajanju žanrov. Sami glasbeniki so kompromis opredelili kot prakso tistih žanrskih prekrivanj, ki jih imajo za estetsko pogosto nezadovoljljiva, premalo zahtevna, a so na drugi strani bolj plačana in ponujajo več možnosti za igranje. Med sogovorniki sta le dva izjavila, da nista nikoli prestopila meja sprejemljive glasbe. Raziskovalna pozornost je bila usmerjena tudi na tisti del njihovih izkušenj, ki so povezane z ljudsko glasbo, tj. z glasbo, ki nima umetniškega dosega in ki jo del znanstvene in širše javnosti presoja ideološko. Da bi ugotovili, koliko ideološki naboj vpliva na odločitve izvajalcev, so v analizo vključene pripovedi o osebnih izkušnjah prakticiranja ljudske glasbe, pa tudi pripovedi njihovih kolegov brez izrazitih izkušenj, vendar z jasnim stališčem do strategije, ki je postajala vse pogostejša od začetka 80. let.

Jazz glasbeniki so pogosto v položaju, ko morajo uskladiti svoje umetniške ambicije in želje v jazzu ne povsem naklonjenem okolju; pri tem se ne menijo kaj dosti za tiste, ki se spotikajo ob njihovem igranju ljudske, narodnozabavne glasbe. Za izvajalce so ideološke opredelitve ljudske glasbe, ki prevladujejo v znanstvenem in javnem diskurzu, manj pomembne od ekonomske upravičenosti oziroma kompenzacije. To je za avtorici razlog več, da so jazz glasbeniki v svojem glasbenem krogu deležni razumevanja kolegov, ki teh odločitev ne sprejemajo. Ambivalentni položaj vsekakor ostaja: jazz glasbenik je med položajem umetnika in igranjem vloge zabavljača.

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