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"Our subcultural shit-music": Dutch jazz, representation, and cultural politics

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4. “Piep-piep-knor and wooden shoe timing”: On Dutch jazz criticism

In the summer of 1966, the eighth and last edition of the international jazz festival in the Belgian city of Comblain-La-Tour took place, a large open-air festival known as the “European Newport Festival” headlining American stars such as Stan Getz, Benny Goodman and Anita O’Day and featuring a total of forty-one groups from twelve countries, including five from the Netherlands: the Leddy Wessel trio; the Franz Kamp Hammond Trio, Robert van Leeuwen Quintet, Magnolia Jazz Group; Mudfield Skiffle Group.³²⁶ The German group led by vibraphone player Gunther Hampel also included a Dutch musician; the young reed player Breuker, who one month earlier had provoked a scandal in the Netherlands with the performance of his “Litany for the 14th of July, 1966” at the competition of the Loosdrecht Jazz Festival (see Chapter One) and who had just returned from playing at the Carthago Jazz festival in Tunisia. The mixed line-up of jazz and beat groups targeted at young audiences, attracted approximately twenty-five thousand visitors—mostly youth “beatniks” who spent the day drinking beer and eating fries and sausages.³²⁷ Among the listeners was a group of young Dutch friends, students of the University of Amsterdam that celebrated the end of the academic year with a trip to the festival.³²⁸ Unlike the beatniks, these students—Pé Hawinkels (1942), Peter Smids (1942), Bert Vuijsje (1942)—would all become part of what Vuijsje calls “*het clubje*” (“the gang”), a group of students strongly committed to the case of jazz.³²⁹ Together with the slightly older critics Arend Jan Heerma van Voss and Ruud Kuyper the group reported on the festival in daily newspapers, weekly magazines and specialized jazz magazines.³³⁰

³²⁶ Pé Hawinkels, “Comblain 66,” *De Nieuwe Linie*, August 13, 1966, 17.

³²⁷ See, for example, Ben Dull, “Jazz en beat in poel van modder,” *Het Parool*, August 8, 1966, 5. Pé Hawinkels estimated the number of visitors around 25.000, Pé Hawinkels, “Comblain 66,” *De Nieuwe Linie*, August 13, 1966, 17. Kuyper gives and elaborate description of the audience in Ruud Kuyper, “Regen en waterige jazz op een internationaal festival,” *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, August 9, 1966, 5.

³²⁸ Bert Vuijsje, conversation, 26 August 2014.

³²⁹ Journalists associated with the group include the following journalists, including the newspapers they reported to: (Martin Schouten, *Algemeen Handelsblad*; Pé Hawinkels, *De Nieuwe Linie*; Bert Vuijsje, *Vrij Nederland*; Peter Smids, *De Groene Amsterdammer*; Simon Korteweg, *Het Parool*; Rudy Koopmans, *De Volkskrant*).

³³⁰ Diverse media reported on the event, including the Amsterdam-based daily *Het Parool*, the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, progressive weekly magazines *De Groene Amsterdammer* and *De Nieuwe Linie*, and the specialized jazz magazine *Jazzwereld*.

Although jazz critics occasionally addressed the lack of female musicians within Dutch jazz, jazz criticism remained largely a boy's club.³³¹ In his study of *Jazzwereld*, Van de Leur observes how the *Jazzwereld* was "largely written and, judged by the letters sent to the editor, read by men," illustrating the marginalization of women within Dutch jazz life. This is demonstrated by Hawinkels, who, in his review of the English singer Julie Driscoll, notes that the discussion among the jazz critics present "got stuck on the question whether or not she was wearing bra (she wasn't)," adding that, "another noteworthy personality was Miss Belgium, because "[h]er behind was not as fat [as the one of the also present Wallonian television star Jean Claude Trouot], but attracted the attention anyway, as it was covered with a trousers embroidered with goldthread."³³² Criticizing the extensive program for its many insignificant highlights, Hawinkels further observes how the festival resulted in an "amorphous mass" of "Dixieland and mainstream," "capitalist songs" and "semi-experimental try-outs,"³³³ while Kuyper notes that Breuker was "the only Dutch performer of the latest jazz that we find credible at the moment."³³⁴ Although evidently touched by the exuberance of male youth, the reviews give a sense of the sociologist-political approach to writing and the drive to promote the latest jazz in favor of what they considered "commercialized" modern jazz and "lousy" beat.³³⁵

This chapter explores the role of Dutch jazz criticism in the development of postwar jazz in the Netherlands, and more specifically, to its role in Dutch jazz's shift away from American models of playing jazz. Who were these mediators and promoters of jazz and what arguments did they use to validate and legitimize their observations? How did

³³¹ Similarly, Van de Leur observes how *Jazzwereld* journalists either ignored women, or downplayed their role by focusing on their appearances rather than their musical achievements, Van de Leur, "Improvisatoren versus cliché-machines," 33-34.

³³² Hawinkels, "Comblain 66," 17. "In Comblain baande in elk geval Eddy Boyd, naïef glimlachend zoals dat betaamd, de weg voor de R&B-klanken: de Engelse Steam Packets, met zang van Julie Driscoll, e[e]n jongedame, bij de discussie over wier merites de verzamelde Nederlandse jazz- en bluesscribenten bleven steken in de vraag of ze nu een B.H. droeg of niet (ze droeg er geen), werden zelfs al hier en daar krachtig toegejuicht." "Een andere vermeldenswaardige persoonlijkheid behoorde misschien aan Miss België. Haar achterwerk was niet zo dik [als dat van de aanwezige Waalse televisiester Jean Claude Trouot], maar trok toch de aandacht, gestoken als het was in een geheel gouddraden pantalon."

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ruud Kuyper, "Regen en waterige jazz op een internationaal festival," *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, August 9, 1966, 5. "Breuker—die vorige week heeft gespeeld op het Carthago Jazzfestival in Tunesië—is voorlopig de enige Nederlandse vertolker van de allernieuwste jazzideeën in wie wij wel willen geloven."

³³⁵ Hawinkels, "Comblain 66," 17.

critics position jazz against the backdrop of the fragmentation into different jazz scenes, the professionalization and institutionalization of jazz practices, the emancipation from American jazz practices, and the declining audiences as a consequence of changes within teenage culture? To answer these questions, this chapter critically engages with the writings of some of the leading Dutch jazz critics of the 1960s and 1970s (Rudy Koopmans, Bert Vuijsje, Michiel de Ruyter, Ruud Kuyper, among others) and examines their work in connection with their esthetical and political beliefs.

As John Gennari has pointed out so beautifully in his *Blowin' Hot and Cool* (2006), jazz critics play a formative role in cultural life by mediating the relationship between the musicians and the audiences—not merely as writers, but in many cases as producers, broadcasters, concert organizers, and public intellectuals as well.³³⁶ By processes of selection and evaluation—in both aesthetic and ethical terms—critics were crucial in shaping jazz narratives, consisting of musical terminology, musicians, styles, labels, associations, and imagery that altogether serve as a fluid, vital, albeit often problematic, frame of reference. Announcements, reports, and reviews in newspapers and popular music magazines are particularly important in studying the developments of jazz in the Netherlands, as they give insight into the social-cultural context, the status, and the reception of jazz as perceived by the general public. While these sources place jazz in a broader socio-cultural perspective, jazz books and specialized magazines—most notably *Jazzwereld* (1965-1973), *Roaring* (1969-2000), *Rhythm and Blues* (1959-1991) and *Jazz/Press*—contribute to the understanding of the increasingly specialized jazz discourse among jazz devotees. A further investigation of *piep-piep-knor* and other language-specific terminology not only reveals the increasing desire to understand jazz within local settings, but also the implicit—and explicit—ideologies that informed these writings.

Primitive exoticism

The intimate bond between jazz and Dutch criticism goes back to 1919, when “jazz,” also spelled “yasz” or “jasz,” began to appear in advertisements and announcements and

³³⁶ John Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool: Jazz and its Critics* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

newspapers in the Netherlands. Competition in Dutch leisure life was fierce during the prosperous years after WWI, forcing casinos, variety theatres, and dancing schools to look for novelties and new attractions. In search for the latest dance trends, entertainment entrepreneurs such as Max van Gelder (1873-1943) and Jean Louis Puisse (1880-1927) advertised *ragtimes*, *pickers*, *rockers*, *peaces*, and other dance fads.³³⁷ Together with members of the Imperial Society of Dance Teachers, jazz became the new British-American crowd-puller in Dutch leisure life. Enthusiasts and opponents discussed the artistic and ethical qualities of jazz in columns, articles and letters to the editor. The *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* in 1919, for example, observed how “The Jazz Band consists of one or more negroes; a banjo player, a few people making as much noise as possible on copper pans, some playing the *rinkelbom* (a type of tambourine), while others are playing the castanets, a *pijper*, a few *bellemannen* (auto-mobile hooters) and some sirens.”³³⁸ While enthusiasts praised the rhythmic quality and use of dissonant chords, opponents feared the loud noisiness of the music and the physicality of the dance. These opponents typically dismissed the jazz craze as immoral and as something for the uncivilized: “That Indians and Negroes dance, I can understand. Aren’t we trying to civilize these people from here? Now, that says it all.”³³⁹

Moreover, these written media contributed significantly to the notion of jazz as an exotic form of entertainment, by placing jazz within a setting of visual, non-textual imagery. For example, in 1926—two years after it first published a picture of a French jazz band—the illustrated weekly society magazine *Het Leven* introduced their readership to a new world of jazz by means of black and white photographs. One of the pictures published in *Het Leven* shows the Original Ramblers, a Dutch “jazzy dance orchestra” initiated by bandleader Theo Uden Masman, which would become one of the longest-lasting jazz orchestras in the Netherlands.³⁴⁰ The formal setting and positioning of the orchestra’s members—male musicians in uniform suits, with striped ties, neat hair-cuts, polished shoes and a polite smile—is only one of the many images that

³³⁷ “Danslessen in Besloten Kring,” *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, November 19, 1919, 4.

³³⁸ “De Jazz Band,” *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, July 14, 1919: 13.

³³⁹ Unknown author, “De dans-waanzin,” *Limburgs Dagblad*, September 18, 1920, 10. “Indianen en negers dansen, kan ik mij begrijpen. Stelt men van hieruit niet pogingen in het werk om die menschen te beschaven? Dat zegt immers genoeg.”

³⁴⁰ *Het Leven* was published between 1906 and 1941. “Dance cabaret,” *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, October 28, 1926, 16.

became part of the standard visual repertoire of jazz. As the main platforms for promoting and discussing jazz, written media thus played a reflective and generative role in the development of jazz culture, presenting jazz as an exotic and primitive black-American entertainment form that was valued mostly for its rhythmic qualities.³⁴¹

The discussions about the value of jazz continued during the 1930s, in special sections on jazz in the newspapers, jazz magazine *De Jazzwereld*, and other publications. Early jazz critics, mostly young, middle-class men who had taken up writing as a hobby, not only actively promoted the music in their writing, but also played a decisive role in the further organization of jazz life. In 1931, the sixteen-year old saxophonist and bandleader Ben Bakema, alias Red Debroy (1916-1969), founded *De Jazzwereld* (1931-1940), the first Dutch magazine published between 1931-1940 that was solely dedicated to jazz. Set out to inform its readers about jazz concerts, the latest gramophones, and lectures, the magazine also promoted the further dissemination of jazz by organizing annual jazz competitions. Moreover, from 1933 the magazine functioned as the official platform of the Nederlandse Hot Club (Dutch Hot Club, NHC) that was initiated that same year by Eddy Crommelin (1914-1982), an amateur drummer who worked as a Dutch sales representative and producer for the British Decca Records. In order to stimulate the dissemination of jazz in the Netherlands, the NHC organized lectures, concerts, and discussions on jazz and actively sought cooperation with broadcasting companies and with the international record industry. In addition, in 1936, *De Jazzwereld* was responsible for publishing the world's first known photo book on jazz.³⁴²

De Jazzwereld journalists outspokenly promoted their view of jazz as an essentially African-American musical practice, differentiating the “real” and “pure” “hot jazz” of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and other black American musicians from the “commercialized” and “tasteless” dance music of their white, often European counterparts.³⁴³ Similarly, separating the “hot dance music” of swing bands such as the

³⁴¹ From 1925, the daily *Het Vaderland* published a special section on jazz called *De Elfde Muze* (“The Eleventh Muse”), added in 1934 with the section *Uit de Wereld van de Jazz* (“From the World of Jazz”).

³⁴² Unknown editor, *Foto-album van de Jazzwereld* (Den Haag: Moorman's Periodieke Pers, 1936 [1939]).

³⁴³ J.B. van Praag, Ronald D. Roberts, “Red” Debbie, “Avant-garde,” *De Jazzwereld* 4 (April, 1932): 2.

Casa Loma Orchestra from the serious jazz of Ellington's band, a columnist of the daily paper *Het Vaderland* wrote in 1934 that,

[n]ot all jazz is art; a large part is entertainment music, although of an exceptionally high level because it requires a sense of 'feeling' to truly understand the music. In the 'Art' category only some classics of Ellington, Carter and a few instrumental improvisations, remain. (Benny C. Newrhythm, *Het Vaderland*, 1934, 10)³⁴⁴

Among the most prominent prewar books on Dutch jazz was the 1939 *Jazzmuziek: Inleiding tot de volksmuziek der noord-amerikaanse negers* (Jazz: Introduction of the North-American Negro Folk Music) by Will G. Gilbert and C. Poustochkine, a publication containing written out blues-schemes, chapters on swing and improvisation.³⁴⁵ Praised for its "technical details," "excellent bibliography" and for its well documented writing, the book was reprinted in 1947 and 1957 and translated in Swedish (*Jazzmusik*), illustrating the international appeal the book held to readers.³⁴⁶ Altogether, these and other writings were based on firm ideological and esthetical beliefs, reinforcing the notions of jazz as an essentially African-American and—from a Dutch perspective—therefore exotic practice. Moreover, these writings demonstrated the dualist nature of jazz, which from its earliest days in the Netherlands meandered between the status of a high and a low art.

Postwar jazz writing

Postwar the Netherlands saw an increasingly professionalized and specialized body of jazz writing, which informed its readership through newspapers, monthly journals, books, and specialized jazz magazines. Popular music magazines such as *Tuney Tunes*

³⁴⁴ Benny C. Newrhythm, "Uit de wereld van Jazz: Het karakter der jazzmuziek," *Het Vaderland*, October 9, 1934, 10. "Alleen kunnen we niet zeggen dat alle jazz kunst is; een groot gedeelte is louter amusementsmuziek, hoewel van een zeer goed gehalte; ze eischt soms heel wat 'feeling' om haar te kunnen begrijpen. Onder de rubriek "Kunst" vallen slechts enkele classics van Ellington, iets van Carter en ten slotte eenige goed geslaagde instrumentale improvisaties."

³⁴⁵ Will G. Gilbert [Willem Henri Adriaan Steensel van der Aa] and Constantin Poustochkine, *Jazzmuziek. Inleiding tot de volksmuziek der Noord-Amerikaansche negers* (Den Haag: Kruseman, 1939).

³⁴⁶ Han Schulte, "Honderd jaar Nederlandstalige jazzliteratuur," in Van Eyle, ed., *Jazz & Geïmproviseerde Muziek*, 163.

and *Muziek Express* focused on the popular musicians of the day in interviews, record reviews, main stories, and lyrics. Also, *Muziek Express* introduced what would become the primary decoration of teenage rooms: the pop star poster. Edited by radio-deejay, journalist and ardent supporter of “light swing music” Skip Voogd, the monthly *Tuney Tunes* averaged a circulation of twenty thousand copies.³⁴⁷ In January 1955, *Muziek Express* was initiated by Paul Acket, a *Tuney Tunes* contributor and publisher who during the 1960s developed into one of the leading jazz impresarios. With a wide readership, peaking in 1974 at 375 thousand per issue, the magazine remained the largest youth magazine until halfway the 1970s and was published until December 1989.³⁴⁸ During the 1960s *Tuney* and *Muziek Express* increasingly covered pop and rock artists. While those magazines initially focused on both American and Dutch entertainment music, including popular Dutch jazz groups such as the Skymasters, the Ramblers, the Dutch Swing College Band, beat and pop groups increasingly became the headlines of the magazines. As pointed out in Chapter One, the decreasing coverage of jazz in popular music magazines signaled the jazz’ shift from a popular music genre for the youth, to a subculture. However, after Paul Acket sold *Muziek Express* together with the *Popfoto* magazine to publisher VNU, he used his profit to start the North Sea Jazz Festival in 1976. Thus, while *Muziek Express* had lost its interest in jazz, the music magazine’s success in terms of sale numbers fascinatingly fed into the promotion of jazz in the Netherlands.³⁴⁹ Nevertheless, pop music increasingly replaced jazz in popular music magazines, which responded to the increasing demand for pop music by a growing group of teenagers.

Although during the 1960s jazz could still be considered part of popular music culture (see Chapter One), rock and roll and beat music began to replace jazz as the primary music for the youth. “Jazz back in those days [in the fifties] had a different function than now,” jazz journalist Ruud Kuyper observed in 1967, “this music symbolizes the resistance of the youth against older generations; people back then said exactly the

³⁴⁷ *Tuney Tunes* was published from 1944 until 1966, when Paul Acket renamed it *Popfoto* to underline its new focus on the latest pop music.

³⁴⁸ Righart, *De eindeloze jaren zestig*, 162.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

same things about jazz as they say now about beat music.”³⁵⁰ While the readership of *Tuney Tunes* and *Muziek Express* had included teenagers, it was not until the late 1950s that media began to aim directly and exclusively at this newly emerging group. The first magazine initiated by teenagers themselves was *Twen*, published between November 1960 until May 1961, when it was renamed *Taboe*. The twenty-seven year old André van der Louw and Almar Tjepkema initiated the magazine, modeled after a German magazine of the same name. Like its German counterpart, the magazine aimed at teenagers from approximately sixteen years and up, using the slang of younger educated readers and discussed music, fashion, drugs, and social-political themes concerning the housing shortage and the monarchy.³⁵¹ The magazine *Twen*, in contrast focused on jazz rather than rock and roll, with regular columns by the young writer Remco Campert and artistic portraits by photographer Ed van der Elsken.³⁵² Van der Elsken’s course-grained black and white photographs of American artists such Ella Fitzgerald, Chet Baker, Dizzy Gillespie, and the audiences during the legendary *nachtconcerten* (night concerts) at the capital’s Concertgebouw, captured the spirit of the young teenagers in suits and ties.³⁵³

Publications on jazz that appeared between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s focused mostly on the history of jazz. With telling titles such as *Jazz: Van oerwoudrhythme tot Hollywoodsymphonie* (*Jazz: From Jungle Rhythm to Hollywood Symphony*, 1949), these histories typically begin the story of jazz in the seventeenth century with the settling of African slaves in the United States, establishing work songs, spirituals and the blues as the main pillars of jazz and relying on key musicians and groups to illustrate the music’s evolution from blues, ragtime and spirituals to the “pure jazz” of New Orleans and Chicago.³⁵⁴ Hans de Vaal, author of the 1949 *Jazz*, was a journalist interested in American culture who interviewed several contemporary writers (Elliott Stein, Carson

³⁵⁰ Kuyper, *Over Jazz*, 24. “De jazz had toen [in de jaren vijftig] immers een andere functie dan nu. Deze muziek was een van de symbolen van het verzet van de jeugd tegen de oudere generatie; er werd toen precies zo over gesproken en geschreven als de laatste jaren over de beatmuziek.

³⁵¹ Righart, *De eindeloze jaren zestig*, 162.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ed van der Elsken, *Jazz* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1959).

³⁵⁴ See, for example, Hans de Vaal, *Jazz: Van oerwoudrhythme tot Hollywoodsymphonie* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Kampen, 1949); Adriaan Heerkens, *Jazz: Het wezen en de geschiedenis* (Baarn: Bosch en Keuning, 1955); Rolf ten Kate, ed., *Zes over jazz: Kaleidoscoop van een deels miskende, deels overschatte muze* (Zaandijk: Heynis, 1958); Ton de Joode, *Jazz onder het mes* (Amsterdam: Ten Brink, 1962).

MacCullers, Alfred Chester, Charles Wright, among others) for the Amsterdam-based literary magazine *Litterair Paspoort*. Locating what he refers to as “pure jazz” at the heart of New Orleans and Chicago, De Vaal aligns himself with the American vernacular prose of Ramsey Jr. and Ch. Smiths’ *Jazzmen* (1939), works that tell the American story as, in the words of Gennari, “an epic full of larger-than-life heroes and unforgettable places that cohered into a new national mythology,” while locating “the holy grail of jazz authenticity in New Orleans street parades, south-sides Chicago saloons, and Harlem rent parties.”³⁵⁵ While De Vaal aimed at an “objective study of the nature and essence of the music,” meant for “all those who are interested in the problem of jazz,” his book is basically a passionate plea for the “zuivere jazzmuziek” (pure jazz).³⁵⁶ Moreover, distinguishing the “pure jazz” of “North American Negroes” from what he considers jazz’s inferior derivatives of “commercial swing,” dance music and “degenerated Re-Bop,” De Vaal’s history is exemplary in its tendency to explain jazz in terms of racial and geographical binaries, reinforcing essentialist ideas of “the real jazz” as African-American and resulting in an evolutionist, essentialist and music stylistic explanation of jazz.

De Vaal is also the author of the earliest known book section on jazz in the Netherlands, a short three-page chapter on jazz and swing in the Netherlands that could equally be understood as a plea for the “pure jazz” from the United States. Lamenting the scarce access to jazz and swing via American, English, and Dutch radio broadcasts and expensive gramophones, De Vaal argues for more American jazz on radio and in magazines. In doing so, he fiercely criticizes the music of the four leading Dutch jazz orchestras of the time, the Dutch Swing College Band, the Skymasters, the Ramblers, and the Metropole Orkest, mostly for not playing “the real thing,” or for having sold its soul to the commercialized swing. “The Dutch Swing College Band’s escape of swing,” De Vaal states, “doesn’t mean that what they play can be called jazz.” The “Charlie Barnett” type of music played by the “unsurpassed radio orchestra” the Skymasters remains swing

³⁵⁵ Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool*, 123.

³⁵⁶ Hans De Vaal is a relatively unknown writer. Some of his work is published in Frans de Bruyn and Jaap Romeyn, ed., “Vandaag 5: Nieuw Werk van Nederlandse en Vlaamse Schrijvers,” in *Litterair Akkoord: Een Keuze uit de Bijdragen Verschenen in de Zuid-en Noordnederlandse Letterkundige Tijdschriften van het Jaar 1956*, ed. by Pierre H. Dubois, Hubert van Herreweghen, Karel Jonckheere and Garnt Stuiveling (Utrecht: Bruna, 1958).

“nonetheless,” while the “silly songs and teenybopper love tunes” by the “once popular Ramblers” “can’t even be considered dance music.” De Vaal, however, held hope for the Metropole Orkest, led by David Gijsbert “Dolf” van der Linden. According to the writer the orchestra showed “great potential,” if it would only concentrate on the works of American and English composers such as Aaron Copland, Ferde Grofé, Robert Russell Bennett, Percy Grainger, William Grant Still, and Eric Coates.³⁵⁷

Jazz journalist Ton de Joode in 1962 *Jazz onder het Mes* (Jazz under the knife) similarly portrays jazz in the Netherlands and its neighboring countries as inferior to American jazz. In his attempt to position Dutch jazz against both American and other European jazz, he observes: “[O]f course, not everything from across the Atlantic [is] of a superior quality, but even those who play rather mediocre, technically tower above the leading figures from European countries.”³⁵⁸ Notwithstanding this criticism, De Joode is enthusiastic about Dutch players such as Wessel Ilcken, Rita Reys, Pim and Ruud Jacobs, “Bill” Overgaauw, and the young and upcoming pianists Rob Madna and Louis van Dijk, whom he praises for playing with a “hearthwarming quality” and for having earned a reputation that “extends well beyond the borders of the Netherlands.”³⁵⁹ Besides these modern jazz musicians, De Joode compliments traditionalist groups such as the Dutch Swing College Band, the Rivertown Dixieland Band and the New Orleans Seven for attempting—“in their own way”—to “keep the jazz fire burning.”³⁶⁰

De Joode’s work is interesting, because he is one of the few Dutch jazz critics in the early 1960s that engages with a comparative, albeit very generalizing study of different European jazz practices. Referring to Chris Barber and other revivalist traditional jazz from the UK, he observes how the English situation is much more “limited” than the Dutch, noting that “in general one could say that the Englishman refuses to engage with post-1940s jazz styles.”³⁶¹ France, according to the Joode, is “the only country that

³⁵⁷ Hans de Vaal, *Jazz: Van oerwoudrhythme tot Hollywoodsymphonie* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Kampen, 1949).

³⁵⁸ De Joode, *Jazz onder het mes*, 129. “Natuurlijk was lang niet alles, wat van over de Oceaan kwam, van superieure kwaliteit, maar opvallend was toch dat Amerikanen, die slechts middelmatig spel lieten horen, technisch nog een aanzienlijk aantal centimeters uitstaken boven de topfiguren van de Europese landen.”

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 129-130.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 131-132.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 132-134.

during the interwar-years has affected the development of jazz in America and abroad,” referring to Hugues Panassié, Sidney Bechet, and the Hotclub the France, while “modern jazz thrives” in Scandinavian countries and in post-war Germany, where Hans Koller, Albert Mangelsdorff, and Kurt Edelhagen contributed to what he calls a “vivid jazz-cult.”³⁶² In an intriguing ten-page chapter “Jazzmode, snobisme en doop” (“Jazz fashion, snobbism, and dope”), De Joode further criticizes the young jazz listeners from Europe, arguing for a more critical engagement with jazz. Recalling Miles Davis’ remark that “In Europe they dig everything you do, even the wrong notes,” De Joode portrays the European listeners as uncritical, rebellious snobs. “[It is this rebellious aspect of jazz] that makes the youth want to copy jazz musicians, in the way they dress, but also—luckily not too often—in the use of narcotics.”³⁶³

While these and other writings on jazz until 1960s appeared only occasionally and were predominantly written by enthusiasts on a non-profit basis, jazz professionals during this period were mainly active on radio. One of its most influential exponents was Michiel de Ruyter (1926-1994), who was active as an editor of programs such as AVRO’s Jazz Societeit (1952-1958), Radio Jazz Magazine (1961-1972). Likewise, record producer and allegedly the first deejay on Dutch radio, “Pete” Felleman (1921-2000) from 1947 presented *Swing & Sweet, From Hollywood & 52nd Street* (later *LP Parade*) for VARA radio and *USA Cabaret* on Hilversum I.³⁶⁴ However, mid-1960s a new group of jazz journalists emerged that used written media as the main platform for discussing jazz.³⁶⁵ They manifested themselves by initiating specialized jazz magazines such as *Jazzwereld*, *Jazz/Press*, by writing columns in daily newspapers and popular music magazines such as *Oor*, and by publishing books.³⁶⁶

³⁶² Ibid., 129-140.

³⁶³ Ibid., 121. “Het is voor een groot deel eenzelfde opstandigheid, die zoveel jongere mensen in verschillende dingen jazzmusici doet na-apen, in kleding enzovoorts, maar ook—hoewel gelukkig minder veelvuldig—in het gebruik van verdovende middelen.”

³⁶⁴ Pete is an alias of Jaap Albert Louis Sidney.

³⁶⁵ Michiel de Ruyter produced *Radio Jazz Magazine* together with Aad Bos and Kees Schoonenberg.

³⁶⁶ Journalists associated with *Jazzwereld* Rudy Koopmans, Pé Hawinkels, Hans Dulfer, Ted Szantó, Michiel de Ruyter, Peter Smids, Martin Schouten, Simon Korteweg, Gezinus Wolters, Frank Visser, Arend Jan Heerma van Voss, and Bert Vuijsje. Specialized jazz magazines that have appeared in the Netherlands include *De Jazzwereld* (Scheveningen, Augustus 1931- November 1940); *Rhythme* (Eindhoven, October 1949 - September 1961); *Jazzwereld* (Hilversum, July 1965 - June 1973); *Muziekkrant Oor* (Amsterdam, 1971 onwards); *True Note* (September 1973 - October 1974) *Key Notes: Musical Life in the Netherlands*

Ideologies and opinions

In 1967 journalist Ruud Kuyper compiled the book *Over Jazz* (On Jazz), which discussed jazz from a variety of angles: Dutch jazz; the role of jazz criticism; jazz as a form of low/high art; the difference between jazz and *beat*; new directions in jazz; the blues; and jazz audiences.³⁶⁷ With the exception of Kuyper (1937-1999) and editor for the *Haagse Post* Trino Flothuis, all contributors (Pé Hawinkels, Bert Vuijsje, Trino Flothuis, Peter Smids, Arend Jan Heerma van Voss and Martin Schouten) were college students born between 1932 and 1942. In his introduction to the book Kuyper explicitly puts his work in the tradition of American sociologist and jazz critic Marshall W. Stearns. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, these were all young and eager students that set out to challenge jazz discourse in the Netherlands. These journalists not only discussed jazz in most of Dutch newspapers, they also wrote for and initiated specialized magazines such as *Jazz/Press* and *Jazzwereld*. Moreover, as jury members of significant jazz competitions such as the Wessel Ilcken Award, they contributed significantly to the promotion and dissemination of jazz in the Netherlands. The book *Over Jazz* not only showed the writers' ambitions, but was at the same time reflective of, in the words of Gennari, the "academic overtones" that postwar jazz discourse began to take on.³⁶⁸

In contrast to evolutionist and essentialist jazz narratives of earlier jazz histories in the Netherlands, this generation of journalists advocated an independent and critical reflection of jazz.³⁶⁹ "[J]azz writing should be based on a thorough knowledge of facts and backgrounds," former *Jazzwereld* editor Vuijsje noted in 1983, adding, "the purpose of a meeting between a journalist and a musician is not to hang-out, drink booze and smoke cannabis, but to record significant and reliable statements by the interviewee."³⁷⁰

(Amsterdam, 1975-1977), *Jazz /Press* (Almelo, September 1975 - September 1978); *Jazz Nu* (Tilburg, 1978-2000); *Philharmonic* (Pete Felleman).

³⁶⁷ Between 1972 and 1980 Bert Vuijsje published "Jazz Nieuws," a bimonthly column on jazz in *Oor*. Vuijsje continued to publish in the popular music magazine until 1982.

³⁶⁸ Van Eyle, ed., *Jazz & Geïmproviseerde Muziek*, 112.

³⁶⁹ Van de Leur, "Improvisatoren versus cliché-machines," 30-37.

³⁷⁰ Bert Vuijsje, *Jazzportretten: Van Ben Webster tot Wynton Marsalis* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1983), 7. "Gedegen kennis van feiten en achtergronden ... dat was onze opvatting van jazz journalistiek: niet de (al dan niet alcoholische of cannabische) verbroedering tussen muzikant en schrijver dient het doel van de ontmoeting te zijn, maar het vastleggen van belangwekkende en betrouwbare uitspraken van de geïnterviewde."

The initiation of *Jazzwereld* in July 1965 was a direct response to *Rhythme*, the monthly magazine for “modern music” published between 1949 and 1961. The magazine promoted jazz as a “happy music” and was therefore dismissed by Vuijsje as the “youth trauma of a whole generation of jazz fans.”³⁷¹ In 1973, in the last edition of *Jazzwereld*, chief editor Bert Vuijsje recalled that they had started the magazine in July 1965 with three goals:

First of all, we shared the conviction that it should be possible to write differently about jazz than *Rhythme* ... Second, we felt the urge to inform the jazz audience about the “new thing” as it was called a year after the “October Revolution in Jazz” and a month after the recording of [Coltrane’s] *Ascension*. And third—although initially a one-man crusade of Arend Jan Heerma van Voss—we were driven by the fact that there was a fascinating, in the Netherlands hardly known music, the “blues.” (Bert Vuijsje, “Afscheid: De laatste *Jazzwereld*,” *Jazzwereld*, 43 May/June 1973, 3)³⁷²

In contrast to the prewar *De Jazzwereld* and *Rhythme*, critics of *Jazzwereld* positioned jazz as a high art worthy of serious attention, critical analysis and philosophical debate. Consequently, *Jazzwereld* journalists tended to ignore musicians and groups (Dutch Swing College, Pim Jacobs, Rita Reys) who sought to entertain their audiences, dismissing them for having “fallen into the trap of commercialism.”³⁷³ As such it took on a much more radical stance than, for example, the American *Down Beat*, which served the music industry as well as consumers of jazz.³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ Bert Vuijsje, “Afscheid: De laatste *Jazzwereld*,” *Jazzwereld*, 43 May/June 1973, 3.

³⁷² The *Jazzwereld* discontinued in 1973, when editor Bert Vuijsje considered it no longer useful to continue the magazine because of “too high production costs” and a general “musical malaise” in jazz. “Zoals ik er op terugkijk, ging *Jazzwereld* in juli 1965 van start met een drievoudige boodschap. Ten eerste de overtuiging dat het mogelijk moest zijn op een andere manier over jazz te schrijven dan in *Rhythme* (1949-’61, jeugdtrauma van een hele generatie jazzfans) gebruikelijk was. Ten tweede de drang om het jazzpubliek te vertellen dat er iets nieuws te horen was: the new thing” zoals dat toen, het jaar na “The October Revolution in Jazz” en een maand na de opname van [Coltranes] *Ascension* heette. En ten derde, maar dat was aanvankelijk een volstreekte eenmans-onderneming van Arend Jan Heerma van Voss, de wetenschap dat er een fascinerende, in Nederland hoegenaamd niet bekende muziek bestond, de ‘blues’.”

³⁷³ Van de Leur, “Improvisatoren versus cliché-machines,” 33.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

Similarly, the *Jazz/Press*, a bimonthly “noncommercial” jazz paper, promoted the music as serious form of art, albeit in a less outspoken way than *Jazzwereld*. From September 1975, a “collective of editors, designers and a photographer” worked on *Jazz/Press*, a bimonthly “noncommercial” jazz paper with the aim of “providing a complete overview of the current jazz activities in the Netherlands.”³⁷⁵ The magazine circulated with fifty-three hundred copies, of which five thousand went to forty-five jazz clubs throughout the country, and even needed to create a waiting list because of the increasing demand.³⁷⁶ Besides informing its readership on the latest jazz, *Jazz/Press* also dedicated itself to the fight against the “discrimination” in the public funding system,

The governmental funding of the *Nederlandse Opera* [Dutch Opera] amounts to millions. *Operagezelschap Forum*, covering the eastern and northern part of the Netherlands, on itself receives 4 million guilders annual funding, in addition to 4 million guilders of provincial and local funding. The annual funding of Dutch jazz organizations is significantly smaller, less than half a million! The percentage of opera listeners in the Netherlands is practically the same as the percentage of jazz listeners: app. 1,5 %. *Jazz/Press* obviously wants to end this discrimination (Editorial, “Ruimer Subsidiebeleid,” *Jazz/Press* 2 [1975], 1-2)³⁷⁷

Furthermore, *Jazz/Press* set out to critically follow the position of jazz within the radio broadcasting network (“Hilversum 4”) and its place in the planned national archive for recordings.³⁷⁸

The journalists’ drive towards a more politically engaged form of writing resulted in analysis and reflections often in the charged language of the 1960s and 1970s.

³⁷⁵ Editorial, “Ruimer Subsidiebeleid,” *Jazz/Press* 2 (1975): 1-2. The magazine was published between 1975-1978, from 1976 it received governmental support in terms of structural subsidy.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁷⁷ “De subsidie aan de Ned. Opera bedraagt vele miljoenen. Alleen al Operagezelschap Forum, dat Oost-en Noord Nederland bestrijkt krijgt per jaar 4 miljoen regeringssubsidie plus 4 miljoen provinciale en gemeentelijke subsidie, De subsidie aan de Nederlandse jazzorganisaties is jaarlijks beduidend minder dan een half miljoen! Het percentage operaliefhebbers is in Nederland nagenoeg gelijk aan het percentage jazzliefhebbers: beiden ca. 1,5%. *Jazz/Press* wil duidelijk een einde maken aan deze discriminerende situatie.”

³⁷⁸ Editorial, “Ruimer Subsidiebeleid,” *Jazz/Press* 2 (1975): 1-2.

Reflective of the socially aware, Marxist writings of American jazz critics such as Frank Kofsky—described by the aforementioned Gennari as “the ardent champion of black cultural nationalism,”³⁷⁹ A.B. Spellman and others, these critics attempted, for the first time, to write a socio-cultural jazz narrative, stressing economic and political change as crucial factors to what they considered the “jazz revolution of the 1960s.” Arguably the most politically outspoken jazz critic was Rudy Koopmans (1932-1983), a professional sociologist who published regularly on jazz in daily papers (*De Volkskrant, Haagse Post, De Groene Amsterdammer*) and music magazines (*Jazzwereld, Oor, Jazz/Press, Key Notes*). Graduated in sociology, and in the 1970s working as a lecturer at the university of Amsterdam, Koopmans published several books on avant-garde art forms and their socio-political context. Moreover, both as chairman of SJN and co-founder of the ICP-label, he was actively involved in the further professionalization of jazz in the Netherlands. Following Kofsky’s premise that free jazz is a class struggle, his 1977 *Jazz: Improvisatie en organisatie van een groeiende minderheid* contains Dutch translations of articles by A.B. Spellmann and Frank Kofsky. Because “musicians should have the last word,” the last third of the book is dedicated to a series of reprinted interviews with sixteen musicians, all Dutch with the exception of Peter Brötzmann, David Murray, Olu Dara, Phillip Wilson and Derek Bailey.³⁸⁰

In his 1977 book, Koopmans explains his sociological view on understanding jazz, stating that,

it is impossible to gain insight into jazz when one limits himself to the product: the music. To gain insight in the *music* of jazz, is to gain insight in the *world* of jazz, which is far from an isolated area. ... Jazz musicians are not part of the establishment, nor are their views. In contrary, jazz musicians are a minority in every respect...This is also the case in the Netherlands. It becomes apparent in the rewards, the working conditions, jazz’s position within cultural policy and media networks, the way it is

³⁷⁹ Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool*, 252.

³⁸⁰ Koopmans’ *Jazz* (1977) contains interviews with Hans Dulfer, Misha Mengelberg (2), Arjen Gorter, Han Bennink (2), Maarten van Regteren Altena, Kees Hazevoet, Theo Loevendie, Willem Breuker (2), Tristan Honsinger, Mr. Slim, Leo Cuypers, Peter Brötzmann, David Murray, Olu Dara, Phillip Wilson, and Derek Bailey.

treated by record companies and the way jazz is (not) integrated into educational systems. ... The corruption [of jazz] takes place through corrupted public taste and imposed by commercial mass media like radio and television, record companies, the business industry, commercialized art institutions, etcetera. Successful musicians are immediately taken hostage by these institutions, which has a negative effect on their artistic achievements. (Rudy Koopmans, *Jazz: Improvisatie en organisatie van een groeiende minderheid* [Amsterdam: SUA, 1977], 8-9)³⁸¹

Altogether, while aiming for a critical, in-depth examination of jazz, reflecting the idea that jazz was a serious art form, the 1960s generation of jazz critics also explicitly propagated the more experimental forms of arts, condemning and therefore largely ignoring what they considered corrupted types of music.³⁸² Thus, these journalists not only advocated a more engaged and critical reflection of jazz, but, by doing so, contributed to the repositioning of jazz as a serious art form, away from entertainment and commercialism.

Musicians generally felt ambivalent about the role of jazz critics. On the one hand musicians depended on the media as a promotional tool. While improvising musicians of the similar age, most notably Willem Breuker, knew very well how to use the media in order to receive attention for his music, not every musician felt comfortable with the unconditional support by some journalists. Drummer Pierre Courbois, for example, remained hesitant about the lavish praise he received from songwriter, poet, translator and *Jazzwereld* contributor Pé Hawinkels. "Pé went overboard occasionally. He was one

³⁸¹ "Die heersende ideeën, die heersende muziek echter dringen wel voortdurend in de jazzmuziek binnen. Dit is wat men verloedering van de jazz kan noemen. Die verloedering komt binnen via verschillende maatschappelijke kanalen: via een verloederde publieke smaak, via de commerciële opzet van massamedia zoals radio en televisie, via de macht van de platen producerende maatschappijen, via de invloed van het bedrijfsleven en gecommmercialiseerde kunstinstututen op het onderwijs, enzovoort. Jazzmusici die een beetje publiek succes hebben worden al snel in de wurggreep van de bemiddelende instituten genomen waarna het bergafwaarts gaat met hun prestaties."

³⁸² Bert Vuijsje, "Afscheid: De laatste *Jazzwereld*," *Jazzwereld*, 43 May/June 1973, 3.

of my biggest fans. Even if I had played the drums upside down with a circular saw, he still would have liked it. And that's no good, either."³⁸³

Canonizing Dutch jazz

During the 1970s, journalists and musicians increasingly came to recognize improvised music as a distinctively Dutch jazz practice. Along the lines of the canonization processes described so eloquently by Scott DeVeaux in his widely acclaimed "Constructing the jazz tradition," Dutch jazz journalists increasingly attempted to capture the story of Dutch jazz into a singular narrative, stressing its particularities rather than similarities with the dominant American jazz narrative. Their writing reflected the growing awareness of Dutch jazz musicians, who during this period began to understand their music in relation to their local roots in a more outspoken way—although, one has to add, most musicians did not think of their music in terms of national identity.³⁸⁴ Han Bennink and Willem Breuker were among the most outspoken about using their own roots in order to create a cultural identity. In a 1973 interview Bennink recalled how Breuker and he shared a background in American music and developed it into what he called the "*Zeeburgerdijk-muziek*," a music with its "own specific timing," named after the street where Breuker was born and raised. Likewise, reed player Breuker in a 1973 interview recalled meeting another Dutch musician in Libya:

This guy was all busy imitating Oscar Peterson. In Libya! So I say: "Man, you're out of your mind! What on earth are you trying to achieve by playing Oscar Peterson in Libya? That makes absolutely no sense at all! You have to check out your own shit, from here. See what you can do with that."³⁸⁵

³⁸³ See Kusters and Schulz, *Pierre Courbois*, 19. "Pé sloeg wat mij betreft soms een beetje door naar de andere kant. Hij was een van mijn grootste fans. Al had ik achterstevoren op m'n kop met een cirkelzaag achter de drums gezeten, dan had hij het nog mooi gevonden. En dat is eigenlijk ook niet goed."

³⁸⁴ Walter van de Leur observes a similar tendency in *Jazzwereld*. Van de Leur, "Improvisatoren versus cliché-machines," 36-37.

³⁸⁵ In March 1967 the Dutch airlines KLM invited the Mengelberg Quartet to perform at a party of staff members of the KLM and the Dutch embassy in Tripoli, Libya. By the end of 1966 the original quartet of Mengelberg added a fifth member, Willem Breuker. Vuijsje, *De nieuwe jazz*, 157. Although the original quartet included Piet Noordijk on alto saxophone, apparently Breuker took over this time. Buzelin, *Willem Breuker*, 19. "We waren eens in Libië en daar ontmoetten we ook een jazz-muzikant. Nou, die was

Reflecting this growing awareness and the desire to create a musical identity of their own, musicians more outspokenly and more confidently separated their music from the American and European. Bennink, much to his later regret, noted in a 1970 interview that “[t]here is no such thing as an American avant-garde. Also, there is no European scene, there is only a Dutch scene. Believe me, it’s true, the best music of the moment can be heard in the Netherlands.”³⁸⁶ “I read somewhere that people organize jazz-trips from the Netherlands to the United States ...Well, that is absolute ludicrous. The trips go the wrong direction. They should organize for the Americans to come over here!”³⁸⁷ Similarly, Koopmans in the last issue of *Jazzwereld* observes how “we should cherish improvised music” because it is “perhaps the first music in the Netherlands with a distinct character.” However, while these and similar comments signaled a growing sense of self-awareness, musicians nor writers in the first half of the 1970s explicitly positioned the musical avant-garde as distinctively Dutch, or as related to a specific Dutch cultural identity.³⁸⁸

The 1977 publication of Vuijsje’s article “Hoe groot is de Hollandse school?” (How big is the Dutch school?) and Koopmans’ historical overview of Dutch jazz in *Jazz: Improvisatie en Organisatie van een Groeiende Minderheid* (“Jazz: Improvisation and Organization of a Growing Minority,” 1977) are the earliest examples of critics’ attempts to connect the work of improvising musicians to its local context. However, while Vuijsje in his exploration of the Dutch school confidently credits the independent jazz label ICP for creating an influx of small, independent labels, he remains reluctant to

ontzettend druk bezig met Oscar Peterson na te spelen. In Libië! Ik zeg, man, je bent niet goed bij je hóófd. Wat wil je in godsnaam in Libië met Oscar Peterson? Dat slaat helemaal nergens op! Je moet een beetje naar je eigen troep kijken hier. Om daar wat uit te halen.” Meijer, “Ik maak muziek voor iedereen, maar waarom vindt iedereen het zo afgrijselijk?,” 77.

³⁸⁶ Rudy Koopmans and Bert Vuijsje, “Han Bennink: ‘Shepp, Sanders, Ayler, Murray, het is om te huilen’,” *Jazzwereld* 30 (July 1970): 19. “Ik heb gelezen dat er nu jazz-reizen georganiseerd worden van Nederland naar Amerika. Nou, dat is volslagen overbodig, voor mij tenminste. De reizen gaan de verkeerde kant op. Er zouden reizen georganiseerd moeten worden voor de Amerikanen hier naar toe!”

³⁸⁷ Rudy Koopmans and Bert Vuijsje, “Han Bennink: ‘Shepp, Sanders, Ayler, Murray, het is om te huilen’,” *Jazzwereld* 30 (July 1970): 19. Original text: “Ik heb gelezen dat er nu jazz-reizen georganiseerd worden van Nederland naar Amerika. Nou, dat is volslagen overbodig, voor mij tenminste. De reizen gaan de verkeerde kant op. Er zouden reizen georganiseerd moeten worden voor de Amerikanen hier naar toe!”

³⁸⁸ Rudy Koopmans, *Jazzwereld* 43 (May/June, 1977): 15-16. “Wellicht de eerste muziek in Nederland die een specifiek karakter vertoont. [...] Daarom moet het prille plantje van onze geïmproviseerde muziek liefderijk gekoesterd worden.”

answer the question whether the musical impact of improvised music has extended beyond the works of individuals such as Willem Breuker, Leo Cuypers, Misha Mengelberg and Han Bennink, praising both couples for their unique duo-playing.³⁸⁹ A more elaborate and definitive account comes from the same year from Rudy Koopmans, whose historical overview of Dutch jazz can be seen as the first attempt to canonize jazz in the Netherlands into a singular Dutch jazz narrative. Stressing economic and political change—both national and international—as crucial factors to what he considered the jazz revolution of the 1960s, he states, “the music that has taken shape from 1968 specifically in our country, has become known as ‘aktuele geïmproviseerde muziek’ [contemporary improvised music]. This means that one not only improvises according to the rules of jazz, but that any material can be used to improvise on. Obviously, the element of improvisation derives from jazz, which remains the main background of these musicians.”³⁹⁰

Koopmans is the first to engage with the musicians’ local roots and knowledge of other musical traditions, considering it crucial factors that have shaped this new music:

Reed player Willem Breuker asserts that the music of his early childhood years in *Amsterdam-Oost* were just as important [as jazz]: barrel organs, carillons, mandolin ensembles and brass bands. Reed player Loevendie has become increasingly aware of his *Kinkerbuurt*-past: brass bands and church bells. At the same time he has become part of the Turkish music tradition, feeling closer with Turkish folk singers than with blues singers. Pianist Misha Mengelberg ones noted that his meeting with John Cage and Thelonious Monk was crucial, but later acknowledged how he comes from a much broader tradition that includes Schubert, Herbie Nichols as well as Fluxus. Han Bennink explores a wide range of folk music, first of all from Africa, but also from other areas. In addition, he doesn’t hesitate to pick up the popular tradition of the musical saw. Bass player Maarten Regteren van Altena occupies himself with the minimal music of Terry

³⁸⁹ Bert Vuijsje, “Hoe groot is de Hollandse school?” *Muziekrant Oor* 6/7 (April 1977): 30-31.

³⁹⁰ Koopmans, *Jazz*, 159.

Riley, Spanish revolutionary music, to name a few. Piano player Kees Hazevoet engages with the music of the Pygmies.” (Koopmans, *Jazz*, 159)³⁹¹

Besides the growing political consciousness of Dutch musicians, journalists saw the American developments in jazz as an important reason for the departure of American models of playing jazz. Koopmans marks the end of the 1960s as the absolute breaking point, as he observes how “A threefold rupture took place during these years: a departure from American jazz (as a result of a lack of significant jazz in the U.S. and the death of John Coltrane), a departure from the world of dance and entertainment, and a departure from the broadcasting system.”³⁹² Vuijsje, a year later, similarly observes changing economic and politic conditions as crucial factors in the establishment of Dutch jazz. He mentions the declining avant-garde scene in New York and the emerging socio-political awareness of Dutch improvising musicians as vital for the establishment of Dutch improvised music. “For the first time in jazz history,” Vuijsje observes, “the great exemplary musicians from New York seemed to get so off-track, that it was easy for the European musicians to free themselves from the American hegemony.”³⁹³ The establishment of Dutch jazz as suggested by Koopmans and Vuijsje should be understood as part of an iterative process; it is not only born out of social, cultural and

³⁹¹ “De muziek, zoals die sinds 1968 in ons land specifiek gestalte krijgt, wordt veelal aangeduid als “aktuele geïmproviseerde muziek.” Daarmee wordt aangegeven dat niet langer alleen op jazzmatige wijze wordt geïmproviseerd op jazzmateriaal, maar dat geïmproviseerd wordt op allerlei materiaal. Het element improvisatie is natuurlijk afkomstig uit de jazz, die de belangrijkste achtergrond van de musici blijft vormen. Rietblazer Willem Breuker stelt vast dat voor hem de muziek die in zijn jonge jaren in Amsterdam-Oost hoorde evenzeer meespeelt: draaiorgels, carillons, mandoline-ensembles en harmonieorkesten. Rietblazer Loevendie verklaart dat hij zich steeds meer bewust is geworden van zijn Kinkerbuurt-verleden: fanfare-klokken en kerkklokken. Tegelijkertijd weet hij zich ook deel van de Turkse muziekwereld. Met een Turkse volkszanger heeft hij een nauwere relatie dan met een blueszanger. Pianist Misha Mengelberg stelde eens dat voor hem de kennismaking met John Cage en Thelonious Monk doorslaggevend was, maar later geeft hij er zich rekenschap van dat hij voortbouwt op een veel breder historisch materiaal, dat zowel Schubert, Herbie Nichols, als de ervaringen met Fluxus omvat. Slagwerker Han Bennink put uit een breed arsenaal van volksmuziek, in de eerste plaats uit Afrika en daarnaast uit andere gebieden. Daarbij schroomt hij niet, de populaire traditie van de zingende zaag weer op te nemen. Bassist Maarten van Regteren Altena houdt zich bezig met minimal music van Terry Riley en met Spaane revolutie muziek, om maar eens een greep te doen. Pianist Kees Hazevoet is onder meer bezig met de muziek van de Pygmeeën.”

³⁹² Koopmans, *Jazz*, 10. In her 1978 doctoral thesis on Dutch workshops, musicologist Eva Bouman wrote a three-page section on post-war developments of jazz in the Netherlands, focusing primary on educational practices in jazz. She is one of the few authors who in her work addresses the role of women in Dutch jazz.

³⁹³ Vuijsje, *De nieuwe jazz*, 146-147.

political change but also informs social, cultural and political change. The category “Dutch jazz” is therefore crucial to claim a sense of distinct identity in order to secure the funds and infrastructural changes that I have identified earlier in Chapter Three.

Dutch jazz narrative

Most critics maintain the “classic” style of historiographical writing. Koopmans in his historiographical writing maintains a classical, evolutionary view on history in which he periodically divides the history of Dutch jazz in successive stylistic genres.³⁹⁴ This becomes evident by the use of sentences such as:

Black power entered the Concertgebouw with a Max Roach’s group in 1964 (“esthetics as protest”). A little later alto player Eric Dolphy played here with Mengelberg’s group, almost crossing the boundaries of bop. Albert Ayler’s quartet in the new season permanently changed [jazz’s] course. (Koopmans, *Jazz*, 157)

Or,

Also in the Netherlands we saw how musicians who started playing bop, changed West Coast during the 1950s, switching over to hard-bop around 1965. (Koopmans, *Jazz*, 156-7)³⁹⁵

Implicitly, Koopmans dismisses the value of modern jazz musicians after Wessel Ilcken’s death, at least suggesting a causal connection between the emergence and death of Dutch jazz. In Koopmans’ view, the increasing incorporation of jazz musicians into radio-orchestras signaled the death of Dutch jazz as the broadcasting system has failed to actively stimulate contemporary music in the Netherlands: “After Ilcken’s death the identity of Dutch jazz faded away. [...] Musicians, including Rita Rays and the Jacobs brothers, increasingly assimilated into the system of radio-orchestras of Hilversum,

³⁹⁴ Similar observations have been made in Van de Leur’s study of *Jazzwereld*. Van de Leur, “Improvisatoren versus cliché-machines, 30-37.

³⁹⁵ “Black power wandelde het Concertgebouw binnen met de groep van Max Roach in 1964 (“schoonheid als protest”) Even later kwam altist Eric Dolphy hier spelen met de groep van Mengelberg: de grens van de bop werd bijna overschreden. In het seizoen kwam het kwartet van Albert Ayler naar Nederland, waarmee de bakens definitief verzet werden.³⁹⁵ Ook in Nederland hebben we bij verscheidene musici kunnen zien hoe ze als boppers begonnen, in het begin van de jaren vijftig West-coast gingen spelen, om rondom 1956 over te schakelen op hard-bop.”

although they initially continued to be successful in jazz, for example, by winning the first prize at the Antibes Jazz festival.”³⁹⁶

To Koopmans, the earliest attempts in creating a musical identity was the emergence of “modern jazz” as represented by its “undisputed leader” Wessel Ilcken, the “centre of modern jazz” the *Sheherazade* and the *Jazz Behind the Dikes* series that “contributed to a distinct identity and an international reputation:”³⁹⁷

The situation of jazz in the Netherlands changed drastically when Ilcken entered the scene. He formed the center, a prestigious leader, the American example became less significant, and a distinct group of jazz musicians emerged that were full-time active playing jazz and which could no longer be associated with the world of dance and entertainment orchestras [...] the party ended on the 13th of July 1957 when Wessel Ilcken passed away. Without exaggerating one can say that with him and his group Dutch jazz began to stand on its own feet.³⁹⁸

Dutch jazz histories published after 1977 share a consensus on what this typical Dutch practice contained; these include improvisation, composition, eclecticism, absurdist, humor, irony, theatrical forms, non-conformism, and anti-hierarchical musical organizations. Also, there is a sense of agreement on the key figures and key moments in Dutch jazz. While Koopmans saw the early death of Dutch drummer Wessel Ilcken as the ending of a crucial first phase in the emancipation of Dutch jazz from the American models of playing, the general consensus among post-1977 histories of Dutch jazz typically take 1966 is a pivotal year in the emancipation of Dutch jazz. That year Willem

³⁹⁶ Koopmans, *Jazz*, 153-4, 177. “Na de dood van Ilcken vervaagde de identiteit van de Nederlandse jazz weer. Zoals reeds werd gezegd, steeds meer musici werden opgenomen in het radio-orkestenbestel van Hilversum, waaronder ook Rita Reys en de gebroeders Jacobs. Wel behaalden ze aanvankelijk nog successen op jazzgebied, zoals een eerste prijs in het jazzfestival in Antibes.”

³⁹⁷ Koopmans, *Jazz*, 153. “... terwijl de Philips-jazzserie ‘Jazz Behind the Dikes’ zorgde voor een beginnende eigen identiteit en bekendheid tot over de grenzen.”

³⁹⁸ Ibid. “Met het optreden van Ilcken veranderde de jazzsituatie in Nederland radikaal. Er was nu een duidelijk middelpunt, een aanvoerder met een groot prestige, er werd wat minder dan voorheen naar Amerikaanse voorbeelden gekeken, en er was nu een duidelijke groep jazzmusici full-time bezig in het jazzveld - Wessel Ilcken en zijn medestanders konden niet geassocieerd worden met de wereld van dans- en radio-orkesten. Het feest duurde tot 13 juli 1957, toen Ilcken vroegtijdig overleed. Zonder overdrijving kan gezegd worden dat met hem en zijn groep de Nederlandse jazz op eigen benen kwam te staan.”

Breuker performed his “Litany for the 16th of June” (see Chapter One), which in retrospect contains most of the musical characteristics associated with Dutch improvised music while also displaying a socio-political awareness. Groups and musicians that are usually named in Dutch jazz histories include Misha Mengelberg, Han Bennink, Willem Breuker, Leo Cuypers, Instant Composers Pool, Willem Breuker Kollektief. Furthermore, while the institutionalization of jazz education is largely ignored in Dutch jazz historiography, aspects of self-organization (BIM, SJN, independent labels) are usually very much elaborated on, suggesting a politicization of jazz historiography that reflected the writers’ own political agendas.

While Dutch jazz writing from the mid-1970s tended to explain musical change from a sociological perspective, as a reflection of shifting authorities and power relations, the American jazz narrative remains a dominant frame of reference against which individual musicians are positioned and valued. This is illustrated by common descriptions of Dutch musicians, such as trumpeter Nedley Elstak who is complimented as “Dizzy Gillespie’s little brother” or alto saxophonist Piet Noordijk, who is described as “Charlie Parker’s Dutch nephew.”³⁹⁹ Similarly, Koopmans observed how René Thomas had played so well at the 1964 Loosdrecht Jazz Competition that he “almost reached an American level.”⁴⁰⁰ Notwithstanding these backhanded compliments, journalists around 1977, so roughly ten years after what they generally take as the starting point in the establishment of Dutch improvised music, occasionally attempted to understand musical change within local settings. However, not all critics were keen on the notion of “improvised music” as a school. Fearing a straightjacket of all sorts of musical restrictions, and considering young Dutch musicians (such as Boy Raaijmakers, Maarten van Norden and Bob Driessen) as imitators of American jazz musicians (such as Ornette Coleman, Eric Dolphy and John Coltrane), Jan Rensen in 1977 concluded that “there is no such thing as a ‘Dutch school’ except for Breuker and Mengelberg,” adding “we should avoid getting too chauvinistic” and “stop cultivating this so-called “Dutch

³⁹⁹ Kuyper, *Over Jazz*, 22.

⁴⁰⁰ Rudy Koopmans, “Albert Ayler: New Grass,” *Jazzwereld* 24, (June/July 1969): 12-18.

school.”⁴⁰¹ Rather, he argued for the understanding of Dutch jazz as part of a European movement.

Despite the awareness of the dangers of a simplification as raised by Rensen in 1977, the idea of a typical Dutch jazz found following in the further organization of jazz life in the Netherlands by the end of the 1970s. As organizers and concert promoters began to use the national reference as a marketing tool to organize concert series, resulting in names such as “Holland Impro” (1977), a series of concerts organized in the northern city of Groningen—with actually an international line-up—or the 1980 educational program “Improvising Musician” at the Conservatory of Amsterdam.⁴⁰²

Piep-piep-knor

The term “*piep-piep-knor*” is revealing in this case, as the onomatopoeic word reflecting the extended sounds used by improvising musicians.⁴⁰³ Similar phrases have been used in different countries to refer to this type of music, including the English “squeaky gate” music, or the Russian “*sobaka*” [the dog’s music] and “*sobachatina*”.⁴⁰⁴ The Dutch term originated in popular music discourse of the mid-1960s, and began to appear in *Hitweek* and other popular music magazines to refer to the progressive, electric sounds of bands such as Pink Floyd, Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band, and Soft Machine. During the 1970s the term settled into jazz discourse, initially as a positive “nickname” for Dutch improvised music.⁴⁰⁵ Martin Schouten in 1971 used *piep-en-knor* in his 1971 review of *Pleasure*, a quartet album by Dutch pianist Kees Hazevoet, in which he notes that the quartet “in a classical line-up” plays “a sort of modernist jazz that sounds almost

⁴⁰¹ Jan Rensen, “De erfenis van John Coltrane (slot): Piep-piep knor uit Europa,” *Muziekkrant Oor* 16 (August, 10, 1977): 31.

⁴⁰² Concert Hall The Oosterpoort in the northern city of Groningen organized the first concert in a new series called “Holland Impro,” featuring the following musicians: Peter Bennink (as, ss, bagpipes); Peter Brötzmann, ts, as; Dud Pukwana, as, percussion; Willem Breuker, ts, ss, cl; Han Bennink, drs and the Guinnesse group Africa Djolé. Eddie Determeyer, “Nogal chaotisch swingfeest van Holland Impro,” *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 21 October 21 1977, 5. The first concert attracted approximately 300 visitors. The following year the number of visitors dropped to 60. Eddy Determeyer, “Holland Impro, waarheen?,” *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, March 2, 1978, 17.

⁴⁰³ Although journalists have attempted to translate the term into English—Dutch jazz journalist Erik van den Berg lists “bing-bong-plink music” and “bonkey squaky music”—it has never seriously caught ground, Erik van den Berg, column, *Jazz Bulletin* 81, (December 2011): 13.

⁴⁰⁴ The term *sobachatina* is a loaded term, meaning as much as “dogism.” It derives from *gonyat’ sobaku* [literally: to chase a dog around the place], which is the Russian musicians’ slang for “playing out there,” or “playing free.” Cyril Moshkow, email correspondence, 25 August 2015.

⁴⁰⁵ Erik van den Berg, column, *Jazz Bulletin* 81 (December 2011): 13.

outdated, as something from the sixties; the *knor* and *piep* syndicate, as a befriended pop fan likes to call it.”⁴⁰⁶ A year later, in 1972 saxophonist and journalist Hans Dulfer in *Jazzwereld* uses “*piep en knor muziek*” to describe some of the modern music, albeit yet without a clear Dutch connotation.⁴⁰⁷ Likewise, the popular music magazine *Oor* [“Ear”] in 1974 described the pop musicians Thijs van Leer and Jan Akkerman and their band *Focus*—which scored an international hit with “Hocus Pocus”—and their album *The Masters of Rock* (Imperial, 1974) as pioneers of the “Hollandse School” [Dutch School].⁴⁰⁸ In 1977 *Muziekrant Oor* headlined a historical overview by Jan Rensen entitled “Piep-piep-knor uit Europa.”⁴⁰⁹

A further study of the label also reveals how, during the 1980s, “*piep-piep-knor*” or Dutch improvised music, as feared by Jan Rensen in 1977, had indeed turned into a “school” or at least into a recognizable style, to be used by other players as material for improvisation. The following concert review is exemplary for the idea of Dutch improvised music as a genre:

The influence of the Breuker-school became evident in a suite-like piece that combined repetitive music and West-Indian Calypso with the “*piep-knor*” [“squeak oink”] style. Other than that, the musicians took a great leap backward, sticking mostly to late bop and early free jazz.⁴¹⁰

In his 1982 review of the *De Band*, a group consisting of members of the Willem Breuker Kollektief (WBK) and the Gemeentereinigingsorkest Vaalbleek (“Public Sanitation Department Orchestra Pale Pallid”) from the southern town of Tilburg, Dutch jazz

⁴⁰⁶ Martin Schouten, review, *Jazzwereld* 33 (March 1971): 26. Schouten reviews Kees Hazevoet’s album “Peasure One,” (Peace Records 1003, 1970), with Kees Hazevoet, p, tp, cl; Kris Wanders, as; Arjen Gorter, b; Louis Moholo, d. “Ook voor de muziek van Pleasure, een kwartet in een zeer klassieke bezetting dat een soort modernistisch jazz speelt dat al bijna ouderwets aandoet, als iets van vroeger, van de jaren zestig. Het knor-en-piep-syndicaat zegt een bevriend popliefhebber.”

⁴⁰⁷ Hans [H.F.] Dulfer, “Dulfers Kolom,” *Jazzwereld* 38 (April/May 1972): 13.

⁴⁰⁸ Bert Vuijsje, “Hoe groot is de Hollandse school?” *Oor* 6/7 (April 17, 1977): 31.

⁴⁰⁹ Jan Rensen, “De erfenis van John Coltrane (slot): Piep-piep knor uit Europa,” *Muziekrant Oor* 16 (August, 10, 1977): 31.

⁴¹⁰ Eddy Determeyer. “De Band en het onderzoek naar de “wortels,” *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, April 13, 1982. De invloeden van de Breuker-school waren evident in een suite-achtige stuk, met elementen uit de repetitieve muziek, het West-Indische calypso-vocabulaire en de “*piep-knor*” richting bijeen waren gebracht. Maar voor het overige bleven de muzikanten dichterbij de late bop en de vroege free jazz, waarmee ze een fikse sprong terug maakten in de tijd.”

journalist Eddy Determeyer observes how improvised music in the Netherlands has arrived at a crossroads, splitting in three directions.⁴¹¹ While Willem Breuker, Leo Cuypers, members of the Instant Composers Pool and other first generation improvising musicians “continue in the 1970s idiom,” a new generation of—unspecified—improvising musicians has broadened their scope, listening to “Punk, New Wave Rock and Funk.” *De Band*, according to Determeyer, belongs to a third category of musicians that has begun to investigate their musical roots, resulting in a mixture of styles.

Determeyer’s observations are interesting, because they are an early example of the now common but much debated notion of Dutch improvised music as a distinctive (Dutch) musical practice.⁴¹² While the *Jazz Behind the Dikes* series (Phonogram, 1955-57), the “first modern jazz recordings in the Netherlands,” has come to represent a generation of jazz musicians whose playing, although praised for its technical excellence, remained highly dependent on the American idiom, the 1982 review signals the increasing attempts to understand local jazz within its own local context, away from the dominant American narrative. Moreover, the review illustrates how Dutch improvised music (or “Breuker-school”) has extended from a mere social category, representing a social group of Amsterdam-based musicians born in the mid-forties, to a stylistic genre, representing an eclectic, interdisciplinary, experimental, often humorist approach to musical performance. This way, opposing modern and traditional jazz groups, Dutch improvised music, and the “piep-knor” style, has become part of a repertoire of styles (“bop,” “free jazz”) that these musicians have mastered and play with.

While terms such as “improvised music” and the 1998 “New Dutch Swing” usually serve to represent the music either neutral or positive ways, *piep-piep-knor* has increasingly become known among the broad public as improvised music’s negative counterpart, reflecting the listener’s perception of improvised music as a random, incoherent and incomprehensible succession of sounds, no longer recognizable as music, and, perhaps

⁴¹¹ *De Band* consisted of Boy Raaymakers, tp; Paul van Kemenade, as; Ron van Rossum, pi, co; Niko Langenhuijsen, b; and Rob Verdurmen, dr.

⁴¹² Exemplary for the understanding of Dutch improvised music as a distinctively Dutch scene are, for example, *Tettertett* (1996) a series of interviews with twenty-two Dutch improvising musicians conducted by Dutch journalist Bas Andriessen and *New Dutch Swing*, a 1998 study of the Amsterdam improvised music scene by American jazz journalist Kevin Whitehead, in which he argues for the idea of Amsterdam as a “distinctive scene with a distinctive sound.”

worst of all, paid for with “our public money.” This negative connotation is illustrated by a 1981 description of a jazz club in the city of Rotterdam called Thelonious, which is described as “for some the Walhalla of free music for some, to others a shady place of *piep-piep-knor*.”⁴¹³ Moreover, as part of a growing vocabulary surrounding these local jazz practices, the term is expressive of the increasing desire to understand jazz within settings other than the American narrative. This is underlined by Vuijsje, who in his 1978 introduction to a series of interviews with Dutch musicians Willem Breuker, Misha Mengelberg, Han Bennink and Leo Cuypers, journalist Bert Vuijsje coins the term “*piep-piep-knor op klompen*” (“*piep-piep-knor on wooden shoes*”), underlining, again the national.⁴¹⁴

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how critics during the 1970s attempted, for the first time, to canonize jazz in the Netherlands into a singular narrative, stressing economic and political change as crucial factors to what they considered the jazz revolution of the 1960s. From its earliest liaisons with jazz, written media played both a reflective and generative role in the development of jazz culture. Studying developments in Dutch jazz through its criticism reveals the increasing desire, by both musicians and writers, to understand local developments in jazz as part of an American as well as a Dutch jazz narrative, resulting during second half of the 1970s in the first attempts to canonize the story of Dutch jazz. With their explicit support of the more experimental, avant-garde jazz forms, jazz critics, most notably those associated with *Jazzwereld*, contributed to the repositioning of jazz as a serious art form, away from entertainment. Moreover, by inventing new critical tropes and creating new terminology these critics underlined the music’s particularities rather than similarities in relation to the dominant American narratives, reinforcing the idea of improvised music as a distinctively Dutch jazz practice. As such, journalists played a formative role, not only in defining the history of Dutch jazz but also in shaping its significance in Dutch cultural life.

⁴¹³ Willem van Empel, “Nieuwe muziek, roots en beboppers in Thelonious,” *Het Vrije Volk*, March 28, 1989, 2.

⁴¹⁴ Vuijsje, *De nieuwe jazz*, 146.

Ultimately, the study of the interconnectedness between the social and musical practices of jazz and written media demonstrates how the mediatization of jazz both conditions and generates shared value systems and consequently contributes to the identification of musical communities.⁴¹⁵ By processes of selection and evaluation—in both aesthetic and ethical terms—critics played a crucial role in shaping the Dutch jazz narrative; a narrative of musical terminology, musicians, styles, labels, associations, and stereotyped imagery that continues to serve as a vital—albeit often problematic—frame of reference up to the present day. As such, this fluid, interpretative framework continues to enable actors within the field of jazz (musicians, programmers, policymakers, audiences, and the like) to position and give meaning to the music they are making, selling, portraying, and hearing. Altogether, this chapter has showed how written media are a valuable source of studying the implicit value systems that inform musical practices, functioning as an important platform to discuss, disseminate and reflect on cultural change. Especially in the pre-digital age, the influence of these written sources on the common perception of jazz was significant. In the next chapter I further investigate how narratives are constructed and informed by locally rooted socio-political discourse. I do this by examining the ways in which the American *Down Beat*, as a platform of mainstream jazz discourse, has engaged with non-American practices.

⁴¹⁵ The shift in coverage to specialized magazines such as *Jazzwereld* and the marginalizing position in popular music magazines such as *Muziekrant Oor* signaled the shifting position of jazz in the Netherlands. Similarly, Vuijsje in 1978 detected the Mengelberg/Bennink duo as a defining moment in the process of emancipation from American models of jazz, while Breuker increasingly focused on music-theater. Vuijsje, *De nieuwe jazz*, 157.