

GENDER PERSPECTIVES OF INSTRUMENTAL JAZZ PERFORMERS IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

*Jasna Jovičević*¹

PhD Candidate, Faculty for Media and Communications, Singidunum
University, Belgrade, Serbia

РОДНЕ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЕ ЦЕЗ ИНСТРУМЕНТАЛИСТКИЊА У ЈУГОИСТОЧНОЈ ЕВРОПИ

Јасна Јовићевић

Докторандкиња, Факултет за медије и комуникације, Универзитет
Сингидунум, Београд, Србија

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ABSTRACT

I investigate constructed social platforms for female jazz instrumentalist, with a particular emphasis on the Balkan cultural space of Southeastern Europe (former Yugoslav countries). In this region, female jazz instrumentalists are confronted with multiple systems of rejection, facing double standards of the Balkan social-ideological patterns, typical for the patriarchal tradition, reproduced and incorporated within a micro context of the already gendered music genre. I analyze the image of female jazz instrumentalist in the public cultural space where jazz is created and consumed. This study presents autoethnographic testimonies as a subjective point of view.

KEYWORDS: female musician, jazz instrumentalist, gender in jazz, Balkan women in music.

АПСТРАКТ

У раду истражујем друштвене платформе у којима се џез инструменталистичке налазе, са посебним нагласком на балкански културни простор Југоисточне Европе (земље бивше Југославије). Овде се џез свирачице сусрећу са вишеструким системима искључивања, суочавајући се са двоструким стандардима балканских друштвених идеолошких образаца типичних за патријархалну традицију, репродукованих и инкорпорираних у микро контекст већ родно одређеног музичког жанра. Анализирам репрезентацију џез инструменталистичке у јавном културном простору у којем је џез стваран и конзумиран. Ова студија је подржана аутоетнографским сведочењима из субјективног становишта.

Кључне речи: музичарка, џез инструменталистичка, род у џезу, жене Балкана у музици.

INTRODUCTION

Although in disciplines such as cultural theory, social studies, philosophy, and art forms, *gender* has been one of the topics open for academic discussion since the mid-20th century, gender perspectives in music have been subject to analyses and interpretations only since the late 1980s (Šuvaković 2000: 161), with reinterpretations of jazz history coming last. Both the aesthetics and social environment have been dominated by male ideals of representation in jazz since its formation (Knaauer 2016: 7), when most of the participants were men. Jazz is predominantly male music, so it is essential to investigate the term *gender* as a social construct, emphasizing that gender identity is not innate², but acquired by learning and socializing, and that gender roles are culturally determined – which means that what makes a person a woman or a man (femininity and masculinity) is considered a construct of a particular time and space of a society and culture (Bašaragin 2019: 2).

In the Balkan cultural space of Southeastern Europe (former Yugoslav countries), the presence of jazz female instrumentalists is still considered uncommon or unusual, because men have always regarded this kind of music as a *male genre* (Adkins Chitti 2007: 2). As in other popular music discourses, in jazz men are the *default* category and the gender of performers is only referred to if they are female. Not only in the Balkans, a woman in jazz is often a delegitimizing category in social and symbolic hierarchies (Faupel, Schmutz 2011: 3). Female jazz instrumentalists in the Balkans participate in a complex system of rejection, facing double standards and hitting a glass ceiling consisting of patriarchal hegemony, gendered music genre and the semi-peripheral position of women within the wider socio-political center-pe-

2 It is not sex as a biological category, which refers to physical differences between men and women.

riphery (West/East) context. I propose that three different systems of preference are at work here: (1) men over women in a Balkan patriarchal paradigm, because of the gendered cultural rules of participation in the private-public sphere, (2) men over women in the jazz genre, because of the notion of everlasting female as novelty representation in male music, and (3) semi-peripheral status of southeastern European women over Western European and North American women instrumentalists, because of the issues of authenticity in jazz.

This text is structured in several sections that approach the main problem of a gender imbalanced regional jazz scene from several angles. First, I analyze the image of female jazz instrumentalists in the public cultural space where jazz is created and consumed, detecting the representation of feminine and masculine roles within the jazz tradition in general. Second, with reference to the overview of Southeastern European jazz history narratives, and their current position in regional literature, I identify the oppressed status of female musicians' identities and an urgent need for research in gendered aspects in jazz. Finally, I share an autoethnographic testimony from the perspective of a female jazz musician working on the regional scene that highlights the representational cultural system in patriarchal Balkan societies.

AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER ROLES IN JAZZ

Throughout the history of jazz, women have always been less represented, less successful, less followed and less noticed than their male counterparts. In the jazz discourse as a space for the production of meanings, woman is labeled as "different", compared to the "real" one; a man, contributing to female disadvantage in the music field (Faupel, Schmutz 2011: 1). Hall suggests that each culture gives meanings to different positions in the system classification (Hall 1997: 259). Belonging or not belonging to any given society is determined by the relative power of the group in that society that designates itself as a central place (Dajer 2012: 242). Playing jazz means playing together, and that implies a hierarchy and distribution of rank and power within the interactive system (Annfelt 2013: 4). Annfelt emphasizes the importance of power distribution within collaboration, knowing that jazz improvisation is based on individuality and originality. It can be concluded that the individual strategies are used in group identity formation, hence they are socially collaborative and political in its root; the attitude of the individual within the social is implied and expected in this genre of music.

A gendered division of roles in music is typical in most cultures. The gender dimension is a heterosexual normative order of bodies (Iveković 2006: 43), but also a symbolic order in economic, political and social contexts that is hierarchically constructed. In the jazz discourse, the gender division features men who play instruments while women sing and/or dance (Annfelt 2013: 2). Sherrie Tucker offers comprehensive and in-depth research about the status of women in jazz and gender analyses of jazz as a genre. She believes that "music is one of the places where people learn gender, where ideas about masculinity and femininity (intersected with other categories, such as race, etc.) are taught, debated, consolidated, and challenged,

as a part of social organisation” (Tucker 2002: 383). Both on the individual and group levels, the tension between genders is always a sexual, social, political, symbolic, imaginary narrative that is constantly translated, read, and interpreted in new ways over and over again (Iveković 2006: 51). It is thus possible to read gender representation in jazz music. Even in the academic jazz studies, the notions of *hot*, aggressiveness, virtuosity, authenticity, competitiveness and risk taking have been associated with masculinity, while *sweet and sorrowful*, *sexy*, *broken hearted*, tender, lyrical, emotional, sentimental and *slow* with femininity (Tucker 2010: 380, Faupel, Schmutz 2011: 2, 16). The music interpreted by female musicians is often discussed according to its gender-specific significance, which further reinforces male dominance in the field (Faupel, Schmutz 2011: 2). Women in jazz are more likely than their male colleagues to be legitimated through reference to emotional authenticity, whereas jazzmen are more often described as serious, intelligent, stoic, creative or virtuoso (Tucker 2002: 383). These gender stereotypes play a significant role in the multiple mechanisms that contribute to female disadvantage in jazz, but other popular music genres as well.

Judith Butler suggests that performativity is “the act that one does, the act that one performs, in a sense, an act that’s been going on before one arrived on the scene” (Butler 2010). Performativity is a stylized repetition of acts, i. e. imitating or miming dominant conventions of the performed act. It means that someone’s behavior creates his or her identity. So, if a musician works in a music genre that already has a certain level of prior performativity, and learns, practices, and reproduces that level of performativity, it means that he or she performs this given performativity while interpreting music within that genre. Butler also states that “performativity cannot be understood outside of the process of iterability – a regularized and constrained repetition of norms” (Butler 1993: 95). Different types of performativity can be found through detailed examinations of jazz performances, with performativity showcasing the conventions of a certain genre. There are syntactic expectations in jazz standards, prescribed roles for different instruments and historically determined perspectives within practice. Performers agree on the meanings of a certain behaviour, communication, signs or gestures in culture within the constraints of a particular musical genre and not limited to the jazz standard genre. These performing behaviors have been repeated to such an extent that they have become ritualized (Jovičević 2021: 257). A song written in the 1940s, for example, carries the hallmarks of the swing era, or be-bop era, which, in the stylistic sense, implies certain ways of musical interaction between performers and the gesture as a communicative tool. Thus, the notion of style is not only embodied in the music itself but also transmits conventions of a certain historical situations or groups of musicians belonging to a genre (*ibid.*). Knowing that jazz was created by men, it embodies masculine collective expression of the practice, regardless of time and contemporaneity.

Tucker explains that jazz critics, journalists, and jazz historians have constructed the history of jazz as a logical sequence in which one style blends into the next on by an eccentric genius passing the “torch” to the next one, which is then dubbed the “jazz tradition” that dominates popular and critical writings about jazz (Tucker 2002:

375). “The dominant jazz discourse” is a continuum that governs, directs and shapes jazz narratives. Needless to say, the main bearers of jazz styles were men, as well as their followers, although women were present on stage from the beginning (Tucker 2002: 376). When jazz was born, in the beginning of the 1900s in the USA, there existed the association of women entertainers (musicians, actresses, dancers) with prostitutes, represented as a similar social group. As a young girl I read J. L. Collier’s *History of Jazz* (Kolier 1989) and learned about the famous idyllic image of New Orleans’ red light district Storyville, where the story recalls a smoky ambient full of brilliant and careless male musicians surrounded with exotic prostitutes. Tucker underlines this image that constructed the presentation of “the fallen” woman, different from “the respectable” one (Tucker 2004: 59). Women were not expected to be involved with the *men’s game*, reserved only for intelligent, talented and creative men. After jazz was recognized as a *male genre*, male musicians potentiated the masculine behavior, style and often chauvinist attitudes to women. Women in jazz were presented as eye-catchers and exponents, entertainers, emotional and hysteric singers or dancers, very rarely piano players (this presentation contracted the image of the respectable bourgeois, well brought-up woman, tied to a private sphere and domestic environment). Music that women play is associated with feelings, emotions and grief, while men’s music is associated with spiritual and sacred experiences and tied to culture, social activism and an active public sphere. Jazz is often portrayed as an exclusive world of male musicians roughing it on the road and tours, “jazz cats” bringing down the house with legendary jam sessions, sometimes sharing the spotlight with a lone female vocalist (Tucker 1999: 71). Roles in the band are divided as *soloist* or *accompanist* or a singer. The important role of a bandleader or a soloist was reserved for a man. These norms are of course not a complete story, but a proof of an intense struggle over social distribution of power between the genders (Tucker 2004: 9). According to that kind of power distribution, the task of a female vocalist is to interpret lyrics, of a female piano player to accompany, and not to improvise; the improvisation is the activity reserved for men. Instrumental improvisation is associated with thinking, virtuosity, and creativeness, singing with expression of emotions. The gender dimension is a heterosexual normative order of bodies (Iveković 2006: 43), but also a symbolic order in economic, political and social contexts that is hierarchically constructed.

Repeating a performative act within the practice of jazz, constitutes a social identity of a performer. Women could either be “good girls” or “play like men” (Downbeat magazine in ‘40s quote) (Healey 2016), “Don’t be so girly”, “Not strong enough for the instrument”, “plays as aggressively as a man”, “feminine voice like a nightingale”, or “sounds great, just like a jazzman” are just some of the performativities forming female identity within a jazz music practice that I have experienced as a female player. Jazz is a field where, for example, if female musicians receive media attention, they often have their physical appearance, sexuality, or personal relationships to family members or lovers discussed (Faupel, Schmutz 2011: 2). Female vocalist will be discussed as beautiful, tender, and sexual appearance or superb emotional expression will be emphasized, while the excellence of the voice color, unique technique or phrasing, and soulfulness is assigned to a male vocalist.

It implies that a guitarist is a male instrumentalist, otherwise, it is always stressed that a “female guitar player” or a “female saxophone player” (Faupel, Schmutz 2011: 10) that is “strong enough” to hold or blow into the instrument, or understands the distinguished language of jazz.

In the beginning of the 1990s, when I started to play jazz saxophone in Serbia and later in Hungary, the most common observations from my surroundings were about me being a girl playing saxophone, especially jazz saxophone: “How come a girl can play saxophone?”, “I never saw a girl playing saxophone before!”, “Isn’t saxophone a male instrument?”, “Are your lungs strong enough to blow?”, “Men play jazz, so are you the only one?”, “Why would a girl play jazz?”. When I was already an active participant in the jazz scene, playing gigs with different bands, I would often receive comments such as: “Oh, you must be a singer!” or “Are you with the musicians?”, “Are you the trumpeter’s girlfriend?”, “You play so good, I could not even hear it is not all men in the band!” And when I finally got into a professional big band, I was on the receiving end of these comments: “Wow, you have balls” (a quality that describes a masculine courage and power in making music), “You play so good (play so fast), just like a man!” or “Your solo was so lyrical, so girly”. Although these comments emphasized the uniqueness of my gender identity, the truth is that I did feel lonely, different and rejected. Fortunately, the status of female jazz instrumentalist has changed since then, and the social power is now shared more equally.

SOUTHEASTERN EUROPEAN JAZZ NARRATIVE

After World War I, swing was received into the salons of Eastern and Southeastern Europe as a symbol of urban and cosmopolitan sound coming from the United States. While fascism was gaining strength in Germany in the 1920s, jazz became a framework for a rebellious expression of Jewish musicians of the East side of Europe (Blam 2011: 21). Jazz provided an illusion of freedom as a counterpoint to communism after World War II (Dimitrijević 2009). Over the next few decades, jazz was viewed as a corrupt genre sent by the imperialists, and it was dangerous and challenging to create and perform, keeping jazz in the realm of illegality (ibid.). Behind the iron curtain, after Stalin’s death, jazz became popular and loudly advertised by the Voice of America radio shows (*Jazz Hour* radio show) (Krstić 2010: 184). Starting from the late 1950s, American musicians toured Eastern and Southeastern Europe, and jazz festivals flourished all over the region. The seed of jazz was sown differently in that part of Europe, not only conditioned by current politics, but also by tradition, cultural heritage, mentality and social environment. By the 1970s jazz had earned the status of high culture and participant art form in Europe.

Serbian jazz historian and musician Miloš Krstić argues that jazz did not plant its roots in the Balkans (Krstić 2010). The most likely reason why jazz did not become popular in its original version was the strong influence of Balkan traditional music. In the 1940s Yugoslavia, Miloš Krstić and Miša Blam recall, jazz was played in several clubs, at taverns, in dancing halls, and school parties. Although it was called jazz, the repertoire that was played there was actually a compilation of popular hits,

dancing, and traditional songs, but included a drum set (Blam 2011: 125). Blam writes that jazz at that time was not considered as an art or an improvisatory music genre, but the “hot” entertaining dance music for “the rich guests” (Blam 2011: 71). Since the 1950s, as Yugoslavia was not so politically oppressive as the rest of Eastern Europe, musicians were free to travel outside of the country and to welcome global jazz stars. From the mid-1950s, American musicians began to tour Yugoslavia, and the first jazz regional collaborations occurred in Bled (Slovenia) in the beginning of the 1960s (Krstić 2010: 184-187). Shortly after that, first jazz festivals, tours and concerts promoted jazz as “elite” music.³ At the same time, this privileged freedom of Balkan musicians, a legal permission to copy and sound like *West*, made jazz less original, daring, and innovative. Mainstream styles such as swing, be-bop and hard-bop, were considered as the original jazz in Yugoslavia and cherished by the *gatekeepers* of the genre.⁴ The big bands of Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia were the only institutional jazz ensembles in the southeastern European region from the 1960s until today, preserving the same values of traditional jazz. At the same time, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary went underground with jazz during the reign of their communist regimes.⁵ Jazz as a politically prohibited art form, illegally born in hidden garages and basements, tended to mirror the rebellious, provocative, authentic and avant-garde attitude within the artist community. The East European jazz scene was much more creative, original and free of strict parameters defining the style or genre than Southeastern Europe. I find that the old tendency of nurturing the classical mainstream jazz in Southeastern Europe, and provoking new forms in jazz and improvising music in Eastern Europe from fifty years ago, are applicable and evident today. In this context, demarcation of Eastern from Southeastern Europe refers to the geographical and cultural line between former Yugoslavian countries as Southeast, and North and East from there as Eastern (Hungary, Czech, Slovakia, Poland, USSR). Even more so, the avant-garde method as an experimental and unorthodox aesthetic in jazz music was never accepted in Yugoslavia, so it has remained almost completely absent from today’s scene and practice.

This rigid formulation and understanding of jazz in Southeastern Europe reinforces the patriarchal, hegemonic values of the jazz tradition. The *jazz standard* is the authentic initial point in classical jazz repertoire. A jazz standard is a song recorded many times in different versions by many interpreters (McBride 2018), and by its structure, it is a consistent music form, with its constructed framework, temporally and harmonically stretchable and transformative. There are syntactic expectations, prescribed roles within the ensemble and historically determined perspectives within that practice. As with verbal communication, there are meanings in the derivation that are placed in the structure or in the marking system of a music genre.

3 “Elite” is a concept that divides the audience between, on the one hand, those who enjoy jazz music, because they learned how to listen to it and understand it, whilst belonging to the “upper middle class”, and on the other hand, the traditional lower-class, non-bourgeois populace from the cities.

4 For example, Svetolik Jakovljević was one of the most influential jazz critics in Yugoslavia who favored the traditional jazz esthetics as the only one. <https://sites.google.com/site/svetolikjakovljevic/>

5 Vojislav Pantić, in conversation with the author of this article, 13 March 2020.

In other words, as in culture, and in a particular in a music genre, performers agree on certain meanings in behavior, communication, signs, music content or gesturing. So, as I previously mentioned, this music genre itself is gender performative; a game played by following the rules conceived and performed by men, excluding women. Balkan musicians implicitly took over the patriarchal ideology put into effect within traditional jazz, as a familiar social system recognized from their own tradition and social environment. They reproduce the social ideological pattern of tradition and the canonized models of representation within the micro context of the musicians' community (Nenić 2019: 9). Inflexible and limited systems with precise boundaries and frameworks in the society itself keep the environment safe from, and closed to progress, change, diversity or innovations. So, I believe that the values of the patriarchal ideology are safe and tucked within Balkan mainstream jazz.

There are numerous jazz history books, chapters, research papers and feuilletons concerning Eastern and Southeastern Europe, but as one can imagine, none of them include female instrumentalists. Although the iron curtain and the border between capitalist and post socialist countries vanished long ago, as a researcher and a jazz scene participant, I can bear witness to the fact that the iron curtain is still very much alive in the context of the female presence in jazz. There were almost none, and there are currently only a few female active jazz instrumentalists on the scene in Southeastern Europe (Maja Avlanović, Milena Jančurić, Nevena Pejčić, Lana Janjanin, Bruna Matić, Marina Milošević, Milica Božović Jasna Jovičević, Katarina Kochetova, Irina Pavlović...). The number of active female jazz instrumentalists in Southeastern and Eastern Europe is considerably lower than in Western Europe and the United States.

IMAGE OF A FEMALE JAZZ INSTRUMENTALIST IN THE BALKANS

While there is a well-documented history of female *gusle* and "female" folk instruments (*tepsija* spinning, *daire*) players (Neimarević, Nešić 2011: 31–92; Nenić 2019: 51–114), there is no rich history of jazz female instrumentalists in the Balkans. The primary cultural role of a woman is rooted in the private sphere, connected to the capacity of reproduction-motherhood, and domestic work. Nikolić states that in Balkan in the Middle Ages, music was played exclusively by men (Nikolić 2016). Troubadour music was the exclusive right of men; its essence consisted in celebrating a woman as an idol, not as a collaborator in performance. Women did not even have access to church music (*ibid.*). As economically weaker than men, professional women in music were "earning their daily bread" as singers, since vocal music did not require expensive instruments (Đurić Klajn 2000: 171). Women's creativity is associated rather with preservations of folk traditions (Blagojević 2015: 137; Dević 1990: 23); traditional customs, tales, dances, family values etc. This traditional culture bounds her to the home, family and private sphere, making her responsible for handcraft, cuisine, folk artifacts, and folksongs conservation. Blagojević accounts that female *gusle* (a single corded traditional musical instrument) players and poets are not known and recognized by men, although the entire traditional poetic genres

(e.g. lyrical poems) can be tied almost exclusively to women's folk art. However, the importance to the women's creativity which took place inside their homes was acknowledged only from the beginning of this century, with different meanings from those related to tradition and enforcing national self-awareness (Blagojević 2015: 137). In the traditional instrumental music of Serbia, Nenić underlines, female playing is present only on the edges of representative discourses and is declared an "excess", an exception that can confirm the existing rule that a musician is always a man by nature and the strength of his sex (Nenić 2019: 9). I agree with Nenić and share her concern that, just like the folk music of the Balkan region, where female instrumentalists as individuals are marked on the basis of their gender and specifically placed at the intersection of the public and private sphere, this applies to female jazz musicians as well.

While jazz histories of the West are being newly interpreted and rewritten in order to stabilize the gender imbalance produced by patriarchal ideology, as explained above, Balkan world persistently concludes and implies that jazz is for only men. In the books written by legendary Yugoslav musicians, pianist Miša Krstić (2010) and bassist Miša Blam (2011), women were only mentioned to have been hired for "oriental and traditional dance and jazz ballet" aiming to "relax the visitors" (Blam 2011: 71). Several women were listed as the stars of the evening; dancers who animated the audience with jazz music. In *Vek džeza (The Century of Jazz)* (Krstić 2010), in the section about the development of the regional scene from its inception until today, Krstić provides a comprehensive list of young jazz players and bands currently active on the regional jazz scene at the end. With the exception of a few female singers in these books, there is no mention of any female player ever participating in the jazz scene, not even female instrumentalists who performed and recorded with the bands mentioned in the same book as crucially important for the regional jazz.

Compelling in this research is the fact that there are few mentions of regional women players in the texts and books written by other female ethnomusicologists, musicologists, and researchers active in the promotion of feminist ideology or interested in the history of female musicianship (or in herstories).⁶ As far as jazz music is concerned, there are only a couple of female players and bands promoted, as far as in Southeastern Europe as well as in the rest of World. Written in the last decade, these texts affirm female creativity, action and advocacy, by fostering the subject of gender imbalanced regional music scene. These distinguished authors are crucial for problematizing the gender issue in the current scene, provoking changes in the representation of female players.

I conclude that Southeastern European female players have been rejected on the jazz scene for two reasons; the masculinity in the genre has been taken as the norm while, at the same time, surrounded by Balkan traditional ideology; struggling in

6 Female researchers focusing on female music performers in Southeastern Europe are: Tatjana Nikolić, Iva Nenić, Jelena Novak, Adriana Sabo, Ivana Neimarević, Olivera Vojna Nešić, Verica Grmuša, Bojana Radovanović, Ana Hofman, Marija Dumnić Vilotijević, Ksenija Stevanović and many others.

the double hierarchical systems of society based on patriarchy. But there is a third standard; players are facing the role of *non-authentic* interpreters of jazz music that is encoded and emboldened in the Afro-American and western world's cultural heritage and socio-political movement.

SEMI-PERIPHERAL STATUS OF THE BALKAN FEMALE JAZZ PLAYERS

Jazz is one of the latest music genres to develop strategies for establishing new representation of women players' identities in jazz.

Marina Blagojević Hugson introduces the "theory of semi-peripherality" that relies primarily on a sociological approach and the broad spectrum of multi-disciplinarity on which gender studies are based. This theory rests on the empirical research on gender regimes and experiences related to implementations of public policies in countries on the semi-periphery of Europe. These studies offer conclusions with respect to phenomena within the gender regimes in the "transitional" period in time of the Cold War revival in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Blagojević Hugson 2015: 25). Blagojević Hugson classifies Eastern European, Central European and South-Eastern European countries as "semi-peripheral" in relation to the "core"-center, which are Western countries, and the rest of the world, which is periphery.. She positions semi-periphery between the center and the periphery as it contains the characteristics of both. Semi-periphery always puts the "effort to catch up with the core, on one hand, and to resist the integration into the core, so not to lose its cultural characteristics, on the other hand" (Blagojević 2009: 33–34). One aspect of an authentic identity of the semi-peripheral nations with the "desire for the West" is well mirrored in preserving the "original" traditional jazz style among players in Yugoslavia ("American jazz wannabe"). On the other hand, I identify an inability for new inventions in jazz expression, except fusion with one's own folklore that reflects the trajectory between modernisation, Westernisation and the opposite: "pragmatic interpretation of tradition in isolation" (Blagojević 2009: 34).

Unfortunately for regional female jazz players, there is more to the notion of semi-peripheral status. There is a complexity of how general public both in semi-periphery and the center reads the *authentic* representation of American and Western jazz women in Southeast Europe. As to numbers, I analyzed the programs of major jazz festivals programs in the region.⁷ The estimation shows that only 4% of the performers are female instrumentalists. But more precisely, only a few per mille over 1% are regional female musicians. Most of the guests are female musicians from US, Canada or Western Europe. The authenticity in jazz has a strong connection

7 Male and female performers' percentage was estimated from the programs of the last 15 and 20 editions of Novi Sad Jazz Festival (<https://novisadjazzfestival.rs/en/>) and Belgrade Jazz Festival (<http://www.bjf.rs/en/>). I had the access to the relevant information with the help of Vojislav Pantić, the long-standing program director Belgrade Jazz Festival.

to blackness, Afro American culture, Anglo-Saxon culture, and the West. Festivals still associate the *authentic* jazz repertoire with American voices as the original and “exotic” content. The general audience expects that Afro-American singer or Western horn player knows “the real language of jazz” (Suzuki 2013: 207) (meaning the vocabulary, feeling, the struggle, and socio-political statement of jazz) as opposed to local or regional musicians bringing the “local”, non-original jazz (“You will never sound like an Afro-American, it is not in your blood!” I would often hear as a comment to my interpretation). It demonstrates that gender issues in jazz can be shaped by race, socio-political position, and division of such power (Suzuki 2013: 208). What is authentic identity in contemporary jazz? Though originating in the US, isn’t jazz today a word for freedom, new expression, the search for one’s “own voice”, and identity shaping through collaboration?

NEW SCENE IN DEVELOPMENT

I am a woman in jazz living in Serbia; however, I have studied and worked as a professional musician in Hungary, Austria, Brazil, the US and Canada. The development of my musical career as a jazz saxophone player and composer has gone through various stages, mainly through the struggle with stereotypes as the acceptable norm required for success, and mostly in a marginalized status within the context of discourses on jazz. This life role as a female jazz instrumentalist often puts me in a position of marginality in relation to the mainstream, but it actually allows me to see the reality from below, from the position of powerlessness and exclusion. My position enables an autoethnographic insight into both regional and global jazz scenes from a different angle, with personal and feminist aspects.

In the beginning of the 2000s I was, among other bands and groups, a saxophone player in an all-female jazz saxophone quartet⁸ and a guest in an all-female big band in Budapest.⁹ These were all-female musicians’ gatherings, aimed at joining forces to display solidarity and making a strong statement that women are present on the men-dominated regional music scene. Such newly formed ensembles were appreciated and provided a successful model for female musicians’ affirmation in the US and Western Europe at that time. In Hungary, these music formations were perceived as “curious”, “extraordinary”, sometimes “sexy”, “girly”, or sometimes “bold and courageous”, but they were never considered “normal” or accepted as an integral part of a gender-balanced jazz music scene. While race, class, or political statements are read in male bands, all-female bands are regarded as entertaining sisterhoods. For a long time after 2000, I collaborated with great colleagues in many regions of Europe, the US and Canada, men and women. Only when I returned to Serbia after twenty years, and accepted to collaborate as a sideman (there is no

8 Classy Four Saxophone Quartet <https://novisadjazzfestival.rs/Jazz-Festival-Novi-Sad/classyfourengh.htm>

9 Swing Ladies Hungary <https://youtu.be/6hGNuGw7tk>

term in jazz for a “sidewoman”) in prestigious bands, I decided to form an all-female regional ensemble. New Spark Jazz Orchestra – The Balkan Woman in Jazz¹⁰ was a pilot project designed for Serbian, Montenegrin and Macedonian markets. It was an innovative music program aimed to increase the number of female instrumentalists and composers in the regional jazz music scene, and also to improve professional capabilities of female musicians by strengthening their capacity and education. From the Balkan and Southeastern European perspectives, and in the context of the dominant patriarchal paradigm, the creation and placement of female jazz orchestras or individual female instrumentalists in the music industry is challenging both for the participants and for the listeners. Female jazz musicians do not match the prevailing stereotype of women in their social context, so they often experience social isolation and non-recognisability. My motivation was to directly influence cultural development of the region, by promoting the visibility of female artists and music professionals.

Due to the atmosphere prevalent in the jazz community, many women were giving up on their professional careers as early as in high school. Some of the reasons include the lack of the role models that could inspire them during the schooling and apprenticeship stages of their lives. There are not many female role models, active participants, historical figures, bands, band leaders, composers or touring jazz female instrumentalists that could improve the statistics. For example, there is not even one female player in all the regional big bands¹¹ (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia), and those orchestras basically define the institutional jazz scene. Recently, they formed a collaboration regional project called Jumbo Big Band, which united 3 big bands, formed of 51 men on stage, playing jazz music together. There are now a few jazz departments at the university level¹² which attract new generations of performers. Nonetheless, it is still a very low percentage of female students studying instrumental jazz. The fact that there are three Jazz Departments in the region and no female instrumental teachers raises questions about the importance of professional support and the general school system. Before these departments were established (in Belgrade, Serbia and Štip, North Macedonia), a career in jazz was regarded as an

10 Through an open call, 15 upcoming women musicians and composers from the Balkans participated in a 15 months-long program as members of the New Spark Jazz Orchestra. The program includes two one-week long music residencies with ensemble and big band workshops, an on-line educational web portal, and the promotion of new jazz learning methods via symposiums led by the Educational Team. With the new professional skills acquired, and the rehearsals with original music materials, the Orchestra will have four regional concerts in three countries, and publish a promotional CD/DVD of music composed by the participants. This project is supported by the European Cultural Foundation and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia. Visit www.nsj.org

11 <http://mp.rts.rs/en/ensembles/rts-big-band/>, <http://bigband.rtvlo.si/orkester/>, <https://glazba.hrt.hr/273113/o-orkestru-2>.

12 Jazz Departments at Faculty of Music at the University of Belgrade (Serbia), Faculty of Music at the Goce Delčev University of Štip (North Macedonia), and “Franc List” Music Academy of Budapest (Hungary).

unprofitable profession with an insecure income in this region. Those who chose a jazz profession without a degree had fewer job opportunities. Hopefully, this situation is changing, and there will be new job openings in the academia as well.

Female jazz instrumentalists are still represented and promoted as a *novelty* on the scene. Although I have a long playing career as a sideman, when I am a band leader, for the most part, I am promoted as a “woman in jazz”, singled out as different, playing at themed festivals and programs related exclusively to women. This way of particularizing female figures as *different*, excellent, but marked and isolated, is also an extremely efficient patriarchal way of ensuring that women should be seen primarily as exceptions to the rule (Nenić 2019: 9); moreover, it is not limited to jazz, but resonates in different music genres too (traditional, pop, punk, rock). New jazz styles such as free improvised music, experimental jazz, crossover, and multidisciplinary projects (ecology, bio, experimental, free improvised, conceptual etc.) have included women from the outset. There is a growing scene of female music performance in Europe and worldwide,¹³ as well as supportive networks promoting their work.¹⁴ The mission of these initiatives is to change, intervene and free both form and structure from previous improvisational rules within the practice of traditional jazz discourse. The aforementioned contemporary and marginalized music genres seem like a *safe place* for female creation, keeping the doors wide open for diversity, new artistic expression and different cultural environments. Although not popular, mainstream or well paid, new music locations can accommodate the need for open social collaboration, welcoming transformative and diverse identities.

Although jazz is a contemporary genre, it was constructed by men in accordance with their needs and instincts, not involving women as equal participants on the music scene. I am convinced that it is important to critically challenge traditional representations and modes of understanding regional jazz through research, in order to attract new audiences, with respect to contemporaneity as one of the genre's main characteristic.

13 <https://womencreativemusic.tumblr.com/>

14 <http://femalepressure.net/>

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ЈАСНА ЈОВИЋЕВИЋ

РОДНЕ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЕ ЦЕЗ ИНСТРУМЕНТАЛИСТКИЊА
У ЈУГОИСТОЧНОЈ ЕВРОПИ

(РЕЗИМЕ)

У овом есеју истражујем изграђене друштвене платформе за цез свирачице, са посебним нагласком на балкански културни простор Југоисточне Европе (земље бивше Југославије). Цез инструменталисткиње се на овом поднебљу сусрећу са вишеструким системима искључивања, суочавајући се са двоструким стандардима балканских друштвених идеолошких образаца типичних за патријархалну традицију, репродукованих и инкорпорираних у микро контекст већ родно одређеног музичког жанра.

Цез је претежно мушка музика, не само зато што су већина свирача мушкарци, већ и зато што у његовој естетици и друштвеном окружењу доминирају мушки идеали представљања. Генерално, поље доминантне цез традиције је мушко поље моћи у којем су још од његовог формирања жене остале позициониране као „друге“. „Аутентичност“ цез инструменталисткиња оспорава се у три система преференција: у већ родно одређеној перформативности хегемонијског стила унутар традиционалног цез извођења, у начину представљања мушкарца наспрам жена у балканској патријархалној парадигми, као и полупериферни статус свирачица Југоисточне Европе у односу на свирачице Западне Европе и Северне Америке.

Један од главних проблем са којим се бавим у раду је родно неуравнотежена регионална цез сцена и маргинализован статус цез свирачица. Студија је подељена у различите одељке, где анализирам слику цез инструменталисткиње у јавном културном простору, примећујући заступљеност родних улога у цез традицији. Кратак преглед историје цеза Југоисточне Европе и анализа регионалне стручне литературе постављају цез инструменталисткиње у репресиван статус откривајући хитност за истраживањем родног аспекта цеза. Као цез саксофонисткиња и композиторка, мој субјективни поглед и аутоетнографско бележење искуства служе као сведочанство о заступљености неједнако распоређене моћи у нашем културном систему.

Кључне речи: музичарка, цез инструменталисткиња, род у цезу, жене Балкана у музици