

12 'New York Comes to Groningen'

Jazz star circuits in the Netherlands

Kristin McGee

New York is not the definition of America, I heard Americans saying. New York is an international city; it's a whole mixture of cultures. That is what jazz is even though it started in the United States. And modern jazz is made out of different genres, of different styles of music so you cannot really trace the background so much, but you know the roots.

(Groningen guitarist George Dumitriu)

Introduction

On a Tuesday night in May 2007, students from Italy, Romania and Slovakia occupied unofficially reserved tables adjacent to the tiny stage at Groningen's local jazz club, the Spieghel. Other attendees stood by the bar, chatting with horns out, wetting reeds, and waiting for requested tunes. Murals inspired by Primitivist art animated musty walls and depicted life-size brass instruments and African-American jazz musicians in mid-session, exuding ecstasy or pain and conveying the mythos of the 'jazz act'. The real-life musicians appeared less emotive as they skilfully yet predictably rendered standard tunes, mostly bebop: 'Confirmation', 'A Night in Tunisia', 'Blue Monk'. Head, solo, solo, solo, trading eights, fours, and twos, then head again – they moved through a jazz routine enacted a thousand times in small clubs like this one all over the world.¹ Some soloists stood out, for instance a young saxophonist with the edgy sound and impeccable funk timing of Maceo Parker. I took my chances with a simple blues, 'One for Daddy-O', hoping to weave parts of Cannonball Adderley's effortless solo² into mine without losing my place. I was nervous, taken aback by players half my age, including Kaja Draksler, the award-winning Slovenian piano prodigy whose solo rendered the audience speechless. Later that evening, New York-based drummer Owen Hart, Jr. took charge of the rhythm section, radically upping the bar with his Blakey-inspired playing. Impressed by the calibre of musicians frequenting this university town's weekly jam sessions, I began to follow other sessions as well as 'legit' concerts led by conservatoire students and faculty at the Oosterpoort cultural centre.

Most of the evening's young jazzers were enrolled in a programme entitled 'New York Comes to Groningen' at the local music academy, the Prins Claus Conservatoire. A recent promotional video³ conveys the programme's pedagogical

aesthetic: it unfolds in a recording studio, where New York stars warm up, then 'woodshed' their parts, while informalizing the 'professional' affair with well-circulated anecdotes and self-deprecating jokes, casual camaraderie meeting artistic exceptionalism. The programme not only supports world-class artists based in New York, but facilitates touring and recording projects including programme leader and bassist Joris Teepe's big band, featuring many of the school's artists in residence. Such is the multi-faceted life of twenty-first-century world jazz musicians as they adopt various roles including teacher, recording musician and travelling star.

The emergence and perpetuation of the global jazz star network

This chapter reflects upon the migrations of jazz stars and students, giving particular attention to one node in this international network: the 'New York Comes to Groningen' programme at the Prins Claus Conservatoire in Groningen. Interviews with participants in the programme document the ideologies cosmopolitan jazz musicians articulate, the virtuosic practices they participate in, the experiences they pursue, and the journeys they undertake. Before a discussion of these interviews, however, it will be useful to introduce four aspects of American jazz history and its mythos that have an ongoing impact upon these musicians: namely the legitimization of jazz, the construction of a jazz canon, the emergence of bebop as a collective, virtuosic jazz practice, and the rise of New York as the centre of a network of jazz stars. As will become evident, the American jazz myth has a great deal of influence upon the reception and careers of contemporary jazz musicians working and travelling in Europe.

Early international jazz circuits came into existence as musicians crossed to Europe on luxurious ocean liners (a stunning transformation of the very different voyages that had brought their ancestors across the Black Atlantic in the first place). The spread of music halls further facilitated the emergence of physical and performative networks for travelling jazz musicians from Europe and abroad. But it was internationally networked media, and especially radio, that transformed local jazz artists into international stars and promoted them as American royalty in cosmopolitan European cities. The professional lives and international reception of today's jazz artists remain deeply informed by this legacy.

It was in Europe during the interwar period that jazz first acquired a 'legitimate' artistic status, as French promoters Delaunay, Panessié and Hodier prompted American critics to recognize jazz's merit. It soon followed in the USA. Here legitimization incorporated ideological tenets of a new progressivism (McGee, in press).⁴ Organizers such as John Hammond and Norman Grantz historicized jazz by presenting jazz and swing bands in 'evolutionary' continua or as 'jazz retrospectives'. During the late 1940s Grantz's highly publicized 'Jazz at the Philharmonic' series canonized selective Dixieland, modern jazz, and bebop players more effectively than any other organized jazz venture. Moreover, the process of legitimization emphasized individualism: highly visible concert series promoted 'cutting' contests of selected jazz musicians 'pitted against each other'

in commercial contexts (in contrast to older jam sessions, which were less formal and less soloist-centred).⁵

Tied up with the process of legitimization was an ideology that perceived a teleological or progressive trajectory in jazz, and a process of canonization. In popular and scholarly discourse, virtuosic, highly individuated bebop came to be seen as the inevitable artistic culmination of jazz, and bebop tunes and style came to occupy a central place in jazz practice. Recent work by social historians of jazz (DeVeaux 1997; Gebhardt 2001; Gennari 1991; Stowe 1994) suggests that this telic historicization, culminating in the enshrinement of bebop, was predicated on a number of ideological bases. These included American exceptionalism (put simply, the idea of the USA's special place in the world), an ideal of authentic artistic autonomy, and an expansionism that had been transferred from the American frontier to capitalism and the urban metropolis. Indeed, jazz scholar Nicholas Gebhardt suggests that the historicization and reception of Charlie Parker as a modern, creative, yet tragic metropolitan jazz musician was immensely impacted by ideologies of the frontier, American progressivism and the liberal capitalist dynamics of the metropolis.

Gebhardt also describes the happenstance camaraderie and musical experimentation that facilitated the exploration of new musical harmonies, rhythms and vocabularies of improvisation central to bebop. He counters the teleological and individualistic characterizations of the style, describing it centrally as a collectively virtuosic social act (Gebhardt 2001: 81). That the bebop jam session was and is a social practice should not be forgotten, even as we acknowledge the symbolic codification of such acts as the centre of America's most authentic art, and the cementing of the position of bebop in dominant narratives of jazz (with New York-based virtuosos Parker and Gillespie its truest representatives).

Since the 1980s, a decade that saw the concurrent rise of the black middle class and neo-conservatism (Heffley 2005: 2), Wynton Marsalis has emerged as the most articulate and charismatic spokesperson of the new jazz traditionalists, largely through his dual role as international trumpet star and leader of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.⁶ In New York, he matured into America's jazz ambassador, promoting 'jazz as America's classical music' and inspiring countless young musicians with his virtuosic technique and entertaining workshops. His vision of jazz as America's authentic music further inculcated the 'great man' legacy set forth by linear narratives tracing the Armstrong–Gillespie continuum (Brown 2004: 241).

The 'global jazz star network' has developed into a highly mediated circuit, which draws much from the mythos of jazz. A crucial part of this mythos concerns how early travelling African-American virtuosos demanded artistic, social and racial equality in the radically transformative decades of the twentieth century. It is no wonder, then, that New York, the centre of intercultural cohabitation and progressive artistic engagement (but also dominant historical narratives informed by American exceptionalism) has become the symbolic and geopolitical centre of this global network. In the twenty-first century, New York profoundly guides the musical paths of aspiring jazz artists who chose to continue the legacy of improvised instrumental jazz founded upon the progressive and virile bebop

culture of the 1940s. The city is the historically predetermined epicentre of the routes comprising contemporary international jazz star circuits. Its persistent pre-eminence is evident in touring routes, educational pilgrimages, and the canonically informed reception of contemporary jazz artists.

In the pages that follow, I look at the relationships between global jazz star circuits and European jazz programmes implemented during the 1980s as jazz subjects began to surface in college curricula and feature more frequently in high-art performance spaces. Subsequently I examine contemporary European jazz networks in the Netherlands and their continued ideological links to the early American jazz artists who first established transatlantic mobile identities. Contemporary scenes have moved far beyond early examples of Europeans imitating American artists. In the twenty-first century, European jazz has evolved highly complex networks dependent upon mass and mixed media. Yet even as it accommodates new mobile performance sites, it reifies prestigious jazz star circuits. As international jazz routes expand to encompass New Europe's jazz worlds, these networks are increasingly determined by historically embedded institutions such as the jazz festival and the music conservatoire. Dutch educational systems have a particularly important role in the lives of mobile European jazz stars, and reveal jazz culture's increasingly 'translocal' character (Peterson and Bennett 2004).

Jazz circuits in the Netherlands – 'New York Comes to Groningen'

Jazz as an academic field of study is relatively new in the Netherlands. Most Dutch programmes were introduced in the 1990s. Originally music curricula simply included a variety of *lichte muziek* (light or entertainment music) courses intended to augment classical training. As jazz artists established profitable performing careers in the 1980s, however, many music schools began to consider jazz performance a viable degree. In the twenty-first century, music conservatories offer courses not only in jazz performance but also in related musical genres; the Amsterdam Conservatoire jazz programme, for instance, provides training in styles it distinguishes as jazz, Afro-Cuban, Latin, fusion, crossover, big band, R & B, pop, and funk. The programme also features artists-in-residence; past teachers include Joe Lovano, Wynton Marsalis and Bob Mintzer. Such big-name soloists are increasingly likely to belong to a group of musicians and educators, mostly from New York, who travel the conservatoire circuit to offer workshops, perform with big bands, and play with local jazz ensembles.

The Netherlands music conservatories are the starting point for many young jazz instrumentalists from within the country and further afield. Jazz students are increasingly mobile, and many leave home countries to study jazz in reputable foreign programmes that combine formal educational training with more casual training at local jazz sessions. (Their mobility was foreshadowed by jazz stars who moved from North America to contribute to music programmes all over the world, beginning in the 1980s as universities began to adopt jazz education.) European students studying in the Netherlands, for example, often travel to New York to study and network with other international musicians.

Perhaps the most innovative Dutch jazz education programme was developed by Dutch bassist Joris Teepe, who lives in New York but teaches in Groningen. In 2001, after living, playing and teaching in New York for more than ten years, Teepe transformed the *lichte muziek* offerings of the Prins Claus Conservatoire in Groningen into a full-time jazz programme. At the time of writing, the instructors in this programme include professional jazz musicians from New York, a collaboration proudly proclaimed by the name 'New York Comes to Groningen'. Each year, eight internationally established jazz stars travel to Groningen four times to offer coaching and musical advice to conservatoire students. During week-long sessions, students attend workshops, lessons and jam sessions and follow history, theory and composition modules; there are also lunchtime and evening concerts. The touring and recording jazz stars mentor students and impart skills that prepare them for a professional life of playing and touring. During the 2009/10 academic year the programme featured bassist Joris Teepe, guitarist Freddie Bryant, pianist David Berkman, saxophonist Don Braden, saxophonist Mark Gross, drummer Ralph Peterson, trumpeter Alex Sipiagin and vocalist Dena DeRose, all from New York.⁷

Alex Sipiagin

During April 2010, trumpeter Alex Sipiagin was the programme's guest performer and teacher. In addition to his own solo projects, Sipiagin has toured and recorded with revered jazz stars from the United States, Germany, France and the Netherlands. He moved to New York from Moscow after winning fourth prize in the Thelonious Monk competition in Washington DC in 1989. Previously, during the early 1980s, he had studied at the Moscow Conservatoire in the classical music department, but devoting much of his free time to jazz and popular music. In pre-perestroika Russia, young musicians typically acquired jazz media, including cassette tapes of radio programmes and coveted copies of Western vinyl recordings, through informal and sometimes illegal channels. Sipiagin recalled spending hours listening to cassettes of his favourite jazz artists Lee Morgan, John Coltrane and Miles Davis (interview at Groningen, 20 April 2010):

There was a very limited amount of jazz music there (in Russia). All we had were cassette tapes. You know, you make copy after copy after copy, and finally the quality was very bad. And I remember that it took me three months to transcribe a solo of Lee Morgan from one of those tapes because you couldn't really hear it that well. We used to catch the *Voice of America* – a jazz programme every Friday but Russian officials tried to make extra noise ... and so you try to catch this – oh I got it [Sipiagin mimics the programme's static noise and then breaks into laughter]

Sipiagin and his jazz companions favoured East Coast jazz soloists active during the post-war decades; bebop (and post-bop) records were critical in instilling in them bebop's enduring values of individual and collective virtuosity. In addition to transcribing solos, Sipiagin recalled intense daily musical interactions with other aspiring jazz musicians from the Conservatoire:

(It was) mostly a jazz musicians' community. I used to live in a student house and we jammed on a daily basis in somebody's room and of course in the conservatoire we made some little jams. And at that point in Russia, there were quite a few professional Russian jazz bands. And a couple times a year there was a legal jam session so we had a chance to come and check it out.

For Sipiagin, the combined activities of listening, socializing and jamming constituted a jazz lifestyle, imparting sub-cultural values counter to the official status of classical music (and classical music pedagogy) in Russia.

During the 1980s, American jazz stars reified bebop virtuosity and hastened its institutional elevation and canonization through educational programmes and concerts. This decade also witnessed the rapid expansion and consolidation of Western media conglomerates (the 'big six') throughout the world. Conversely, the engagement of Russian players with a uniquely Eastern European (cultivated) jazz mythos was less institutionally sanctioned. It relied upon the circulation of scarce Western media and informal and sometimes illegal jam sessions, the mainstay of social, collective jazz practices. (The latter were tacitly tolerated by Russian authorities despite this music's connection to an increasingly commodified and imperializing Western culture.) During the 1980s, Sipiagin and others adopted the intense discipline of idolized post-war bop players, and in re-enacting these musical rituals, they initiated their own process of legitimization, quite distinct from American processes of institutionalization and canonization.

After moving to New York, Sipiagin quickly familiarized himself with the scene by sitting in on jam sessions and playing weekly gigs with prestigious big bands including the Gil Evans Orchestra, the Charles Mingus Big Band and the Zebra Coast Orchestra. His reputation as a master trumpet soloist secured, he was invited to tour and record with Dave Holland and Randy Brecker, among other prestigious New York artists.

It was also in New York that Sipiagin mastered his soloistic jazz timbre and dynamic rhythmic approach. He identified New York as the only place in the world where artists successfully execute the 'essential' swing feel:

New York is the only place that you swing in a certain way. It's very hard to explain but when I heard this certain style, just a little behind the beat but in a perfect position – I never heard it anywhere else, only in New York. And I really had to spend a lot of time learning how to do this. But playing with all these guys and all these cats in the Mingus band ... you really learn this very fast. Your sense of time develops with the guy sitting next to you.

Many attribute a particular style of rhythmic swing to New York: an approach to the quaver (eighth note) that seems, paradoxically, both laid back and aggressive. Some claim that this style was introduced by Art Blakey. Musicians continue to strive towards this slightly-behind-the-beat groove. When the entire group plays precisely behind the beat laid down by the drummer, there is a dramatic sense of collective virtuosity. In this way and others, New York musicians carry

on the collective, virtuosic activity invented and defined by mid-twentieth-century bebop musicians in informal jam sessions.

I asked Sipiagin about his lifestyle as a travelling soloist with both New York and European ensembles. He claimed that touring with prominent big bands throughout Europe's festival circuit gradually expanded his jazz world beyond the USA. Sometimes bands tour up to four weeks, settling in larger cities for week-long appearances. These kinds of tours provide steady salaries for artists who generally do not teach. Moreover, they provide excellent exposure: the experience of travelling and touring with other musicians is considered critical for establishing status as a 'world jazz artist'.

Like other New York-based artists, Sipiagin claims a double identity: half New Yorker, half Russian. By this identification he ties himself to canonized jazz soloists, especially those from New York. Since the 1950s, as the repertoire of the great post-war artists (mainly Parker, Monk and Gillespie) has increasingly come to dominate international jam sessions, contemporary jazz artists have looked to bebop as the standard against which to measure new talent. Sipiagin described his particular musical sound as follows:

It is definitely modern jazz but based upon some deep traditional roots. Bebop absolutely – that is what I studied until now and that is what I am going to continue to study. I'm constantly learning the language of Clifford Brown, Lee Morgan, Gillespie, all of them. It's the alphabet of a certain language. It's not just that you learn once. You have to continue speaking this language and practising every day. But the music that I try to create is different. ... It is not bebop traditional: it is based on it but I am trying to write my own music, which is also Brazilian and sometimes classical and sometimes modern.

Bebop as a musical style continues to guide the musical training and influence the compositions of many modern artists, however eclectic. Expressing individual creativity within the musical language of bebop continues to motivate contemporary artists in the context of the music collective. Moreover, the harmonic and rhythmic language of bebop provides a foundation for European big bands and travelling New York jazz stars, whose collaborations extend the dominant image of the jazz virtuoso, perhaps most prominently in concerts that feature travelling jazz soloists supported by big bands playing standard instrumental arrangements.

Because of his extensive travelling, Sipiagin has come to recognize differences between European and American audiences. He claimed

... there are some great listeners everywhere – but it is a completely different attention here [in Europe]. I don't know why. For example, if you go to a jazz festival in Vienne, France, people they reserve tickets a year in advance and they try not to miss one note of the show and they really listen. Try to go to the Playboy Jazz Festival in Los Angeles – they are having a party, eating chicken and drinking beer and speaking loudly during Wayne Shorter Quartet. It says something.

Conversely the New York audiences exhibit something unique, especially within the smaller clubs that provided the base of early jazz and bebop performances during the last century. He agreed:

I love the New York audience, you know, in a small club. It's in New York that I play in jazz clubs, like this Mingus band, every Monday we play the jazz standards. Usually people who come to hear the jazz standards, they already know in advance what they are going to hear. And so they are really quiet and you can feel this energy. And the New York audience is so open; you can see the emotions on their faces.

According to Sipiagin, New York audiences expect to hear a repertoire of jazz standards and that particular swing so characteristic of the city. His remarks betray his own biases, which envision New York as the most authentic site for jazz's artistic recognition. Indeed, the unofficial vernacular storytelling of jazz stars and students parallels the official discourse of jazz histories: both portray New York's musical hegemony over an increasingly connected jazz world.

Performing, touring, recording and teaching provide the mainstay of musicians on the jazz star circuit. The lifestyle is intense, even exhausting, but also exhilarating, as players perform with the best ensembles in the world, inspiring young artists in cosmopolitan jazz cities. Despite rigorous touring schedules, jazz stars are rewarded for sharing their experiences and musical expertise. Sipiagin confirmed this:

Sometimes I am exhausted but this kind of teaching is different from regular teaching gigs. ... You don't have to be a professional teacher but you have to be a musician and you have to bring experiences from your travelling jazz life into the student's life. All eight of us, we all travel non-stop. We come here four times a year to share our experiences, and our lessons are more like a masterclass: hang out, answer questions. ... So this kind of teaching really makes me look at myself in the mirror and say – what do I know? This week is arranging week and I am not just opening a book, telling them the rules from the book. I tell them what I experience.

For world jazz stars who also teach, the role of educator is dependent upon status as well-travelled professional players who then impart real-world experiences to students. In this scenario, students are treated more as fellow musicians engaging in musical dialogue than as studious subordinates.

As global jazz circuits expand, artists assert their individual voices in the context of highly qualified groups that complement their musical ideas. Sipiagin's guest performances stimulate intercultural collaborations while extending the tradition of bebop and straight-ahead jazz. These collaborations result in contemporary mediations upon modern improvised music in a uniquely European context. The road provides the essential conduit for intercultural creativity:

Actually, travel really inspires me to play music and write music. ... Not just

travel anywhere to visit anybody. I really choose what I want to do. Lately, for example, I am doing a lot of projects with several good European jazz bands – one from Germany, another one from France. With all those bands, we do a CD release and we do several tours together and it is really important when somebody hires you to be yourself. So I don't have to change myself to adjust to these guys because they really want to know my style and just play. Just do what you do so you feel yourself, you feel very comfortable in developing your own style and writing compositions once a week.

Even in the European context, Sipiagin accentuates his unique expressive qualities as an individual in relation to the collective. In jazz biographies and social histories, the identification of an individual jazz 'voice' (in relation to a lineage of players) persists as a value and is central to the recognition of soloists. Traces of this value are manifest in informal utterances during intercultural jazz collaborations, but also within institutionalized curricula imposed upon jazz students. Berliner's research affirms the importance to musicians of both recognizing and establishing a unique personal sound. He states (Berliner 1994: 124–5):

An idol's personal sound is commonly the precise object of imitation for learners. It is a clearly discernible, all-encompassing marker of an individual artist's identity. Tommy Turrentine considers it to be the 'one way you can tell an instrumentalist right away when he solos.' Chuck Israels and his high school friends tested each other's sensitivity to these matters through musical games. Although Steve Kuhn had a more 'highly developed ear for recognizing different jazz tunes from records, I had a good ear for timbre and inflection and the personal marks of the players,' Israels observes, 'and I could always recognize the soloists.'

As Berliner's account suggests, jazz students learn to mimic the particular nuanced musical characteristics (timbre, rhythmic variation, phrasing and time-feel) of a player. Yet they are nevertheless expected to develop their own unique sound through a process of imitation, musical socialization, and individualization. Thus informal discourse and pedagogical practices might be seen to affirm or complement the ideology of individualism that Gebhardt criticizes in dominant and scholarly narratives of jazz.

Joris Teepe

According to Joris Teepe, the programme he founded in Groningen is the only course in the world to bring jazz musicians from New York to a new site to teach its jazz curriculum. It was Teepe's experience touring with jazz greats Rashied Ali, Chris Potter, Renee Rosnes and Randy Brecker that led him to value the role of older, established musicians in his musical education and eventually motivated him to revise the Conservatoire's curriculum. He stated:

Basically I designed the idea, but I was teaching at one school in New York

where the teachers teach ensembles and their own instruments, but they teach everything – history, theory, everything. So I thought if I can bring one guy from New York who stays here the whole week who teaches everything – we don't need other teachers. ... I have been playing with all of the best drummers in the world and so for drum students here I can tell them a lot about how to play drums. I've been standing next to them for the last thirty years.

In this way, Teepe privileges the jazz mentor relationship often prioritized in historical accounts of how jazz musicians learn from each other during the collective and social activities of the jam session (Berliner 1994). Sipiagin's reference to New York apprenticeships with established jazz stars similarly stresses the value of jazz mentorship (see previous section).

Jazz musicians' professional lives inevitably encompass a number of tasks, including arranging compositions, giving lectures, producing recordings and mentoring younger players. Their breadth of knowledge is a resource that offers young jazz students much more than they would receive in traditional instrumental music lessons.

When asked about the role that New York plays in the history of jazz, Teepe claimed, 'Somehow everybody got together in New York. You can't go around that. Even sometimes people in the scene they say – you are either in New York or you are in the rest of the world. So if you are not in New York anymore, it doesn't matter if you are in Chicago or Amsterdam.' I asked if there had been similar attempts to incorporate well-known Europe-based jazz soloists into the programme. He responded, 'Like I said – either you live in New York or you don't. I can't get around that fact. To me it's a fact but to a lot of people it is not.' Teepe's comments reveal the complexity of Europe's relationship to canonized jazz paradigms. Through his relationship with New York-based jazz stars and, indirectly, his role leading a Dutch jazz institution, he reinscribes the American jazz mythos, with New York as its symbolic discursive centre. Paradoxically, however, Groningen's New York-centred jazz programme provides a meeting place for jazz students from throughout the world, who network with non-American jazz artists and eagerly establish intercultural groups. In this sense, the programme confounds the bebop-centred mythos while articulating its prominence. Talented students take in the New York jazz scene before pursuing careers in New Europe's increasingly connected jazz world.

Because of the emphasis upon performing musicians from New York, the programme has recently attracted many international students. More than half come from outside the Netherlands, encouraged by previous students who praise the programme's unique position in Europe. According to Teepe, international students come from Korea, China, Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, America, South America, Italy and Spain. As for Dutch students outside of the province of Groningen, he claimed, 'Not many Dutch know about it. They actually think Groningen is too far.' In other words, jazz students in Amsterdam and Utrecht are often not aware of the programme, perhaps because of a prevailing attitude that the Randstad (the area including and surrounding Amsterdam) is more cosmopolitan.

George Dumitriu

The jazz programme in Groningen describes its connection to New York in this way: “‘New York Comes to Groningen’ ... gives students the opportunity to learn the values of tradition and exploration that are associated with musicians on the New York jazz scene.’ For Teepe and students in the programme, jazz teachers are not only professional performers but also active participants in the New York scene. To impress this fact upon students, each year Groningen sends its best young musicians to New York for one week to discover it first-hand. During their third year, students can also take part in exchanges with other international programmes.

I interviewed a current fourth-year student from Romania, George Dumitriu, who plays guitar with various jazz and jazz-fusion groups in Groningen. He claimed that his decision to come to the city was based upon recommendations from past Bucharest Conservatoire musicians. European jazz students might prefer to study in New York, but tuition costs are prohibitive; the Dutch programme offers access to New York teachers and full-time subsidized academic funding. Dumitriu, however, eventually went to New York for his exchange semester and found the experience intense and exhilarating. He said:

If you go [to New York] for one week you can maybe taste the beauty of it but if you stay for a bit longer, you really get to know what is actually happening there because there is so much energy and so much exchanging. Everything is blooming very fast. Even if you live there not doing much, you get a lot of it because there is so much happening. And these teachers that come to Groningen, they always brought us this flavour of New York and it was a great contact for us to have this vibe, to have a completely other world from here.

I asked George if, as a European musician, he felt discouraged by the essential role that New York plays for the advancement of professional jazz careers. Is it possible for European musicians to share the legacy pioneered by American jazz ‘greats’, many of whom first began in the small jazz clubs of New York City? He responded:

Yes, of course it is. Jazz started in the States and that is the music that we are studying. It’s American music and I don’t know if I would have come here if it was only European teachers. ... I mean there are great musicians that are Europeans like Joe Zawinul [jazz pianist and fusion keyboard player]; he was Austrian and he was one of the top musicians and famous players. He played with and made Weather Report, you know; it is all his responsibility and there are a lot of examples.

Of course, there are a number of successful contemporary European jazz musicians including Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen (Danish double bass player), George Mraz (bassist from the Czech Republic), Jan Garbarek (Norwegian experimental saxophonist) and Esbjörn Svensson (Swedish pianist and composer).

Significantly, many of them live in New York (except the late Svensson), having built careers playing, touring and recording with other New York-based musicians. Notably, European jazz students are quick to cite prominent European jazz stars, effortlessly inventorying their various European- and New York-based projects. Through their precise knowledge, they betray a particular European (double) consciousness: they resist essentialized notions of America’s authentic musical culture even as they envision Europeans as part of New York’s international jazz network.

Inevitably, Conservatoire students branch out into other cities to test their musical ideas and launch musical careers. For example, Dumitriu plays with a variety of projects featuring fellow Conservatoire students, including the Rebop Unit and the DumiTrio. He also plays with the European Academy Big Band led by German arranger/conductor Peter Herbolzheimer. Recently he contributed to the album *Turku*, containing a number of compositions based upon Turkish songs and featuring vocalist Sanem Kalfa. Slovenian pianist Kaja Draksler and her award-winning group Acropolis led the project.⁸

Kaja Draksler

In 2009, Groningen Conservatoire pianist Kaja Draksler won the prestigious Deloitte Award, a Dutch honour given to musicians on the cusp of breaking into the international jazz arena, carrying a cash prize of €20 000. Draksler has won several European jazz awards, and by the age of twenty-three she had already been commissioned to write and perform works with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and the Radio Big Band of Slovenia. She has also recorded seven CDs and performed in several international touring projects, including Acropolis, Katarchestra, Orpheus and Eurydice, Turku, and the European Movement Jazz Orchestra.

I talked with Draksler about her influences as a jazz musician and her experiences in Groningen and New York as a student. She identified Thelonious Monk as an important influence but was reluctant to highlight any particular place, style or player:

For now it is still too equal, all these influences. One of the biggest influences is Monk from the older players, but you know every player has influences from other players. So if your influence is Keith Jarrett, he was influenced by somebody. If your influence is Herbie Hancock, he was influenced by Oscar Peterson. If you take more modern guys, they always already have influences from other people. I guess I have influences from jazz but mostly I listen to other music. ... I listen to classical or more avant-garde music and it could be called jazz, but I don’t know, maybe just ‘improvised’. It is really hard because of these big names: if you say I just listen to this guy, then you are listening to all of the other guys who are in front of him.

Draksler’s comments convey an eclecticism valued by many younger jazz improvisers whose musical backgrounds encompass a multitude of musical

styles accessible in the digital age. She incorporates a wide array of genres into her musical projects, ranging from big-band swing to Turkish folk song and contemporary classical music. Draksler's reluctance to claim the most virile of canonized male players in her cast of influences may suggest bebop's exceedingly masculinized representation in musical practice and in social histories that persistently promote a lineage of male jazz virtuosos from Armstrong to Gillespie. Nevertheless, the teleology of influence (from player to player), as articulated in Berliner's many interviews of jazz musicians as well as in the words of Sipiagin and Teepe, reinscribes bebop's core value of musical mentorship followed by the crafting of one's individual sound. For younger musicians, however, and probably more so for women, a variety of musical genres including classical music invariably provide additional inspiration for modern improvised music.

Cross-cultural jazz collaborations are becoming more commonplace within Europe. These are sometimes informally arranged through spontaneous musical creations amongst fellow international students. In other cases, European jazz groups are explicitly sponsored by the most prominent intercultural agencies. In 2007, Draksler was invited to perform with the European Movement Jazz Orchestra by the cultural ambassadors of the European Union Council. Members were solicited from the council's presidential countries: Slovenia, Portugal and Germany. The group received funding from the EU to tour several countries. Draksler and the group's other musicians enjoyed the tour so much, they decided to continue working together. In order to promote the group, the band recently recorded their first CD. She described the origins of the group as follows:

We are an independent big band, but we started out as a European Union project and so we had three tours – different countries: Germany, Slovenia, Portugal, Croatia, Italy, Belgium. ... We played concert halls like the Berlin Concert Hall. It was big: every concert was in a festival or in a concert hall. It was very professionally organized because they had a lot of money and a lot of people with influence. They put us together. It was just by coincidence that we stayed together as our own group. ... Last year we played on the fiftieth jazz festival in Ljubljana. And then this year we are doing this record in Portugal.

The group's website (www.kajadraksler.com) emphasizes the rising prominence of the European jazz scene as well as the influence of diverse European musical styles upon the group's sound:

In this orchestra, elements which seem incompatible at first sight, such as Portuguese fado, Slovenian poetry and German 'Blasmusik' (marching music), are united in a thrilling European mixture which draws from both traditional and more contemporary sources, yet never loses its musical cohesion. Originally planned to be a one-off project, the European Movement Jazz Orchestra has, within only one year, developed into a highly unique body with an unmistakable voice whose international language and spirit has made it a true gem of the European jazz scene.

In the twenty-first century, intercultural European jazz groups successfully navigate the most prominent European sites within the global jazz star network. Jazz artists meet at music conservatoires or in jam sessions and establish groups which then tour the rapidly growing jazz festival circuit. The European Movement Jazz Orchestra's rapid success highlights the growing desire by European audiences to support innovative young groups based in Europe that incorporate 'traditional' and local musical influences in modern compositions.

The musical 'eclecticisms' exhibited by younger European jazz groups suggest a new relationship to the American jazz mythos. While New York continues to attract international musicians, younger jazz musicians exploit distinctly European jazz institutions and more informal jazz networks to establish translocal musical identities. Draksler and Dumitriu both perform in groups that extend beyond the bebop jazz paradigm, incorporating folk, classical and pop influences. In 2010, European jazz festivals feature increasingly eclectic programming, a clear indication of a transition away from the bop-centred practices of an older generation to the newer undertakings of younger jazz groups, electronic jazz ensembles, and DJs who unproblematically mix established genres and sounds with contemporary beats. Nevertheless, the mythos of New York as pre-eminent jazz city profoundly guides the educational pilgrimages of young European musicians, however eclectic and cosmopolitan their musical repertoire.⁹

Conclusion

In the post-industrial era, New York has acquired the status of world jazz city, a fact profoundly shaping the professional, educational and creative lives of travelling jazz musicians. In the Netherlands, the legacy of the jazz canon and the continued mobility of stars on the global jazz circuit determine the paths of young musicians as well as the variety of music genres featured in prestigious festivals and national concert halls. Well-funded collaborations between local stars, nationally subsidized orchestras, and the highly visible New York giants betray the continued hegemony of the American jazz canon. But these relationships also complicate the cultural imperialism thesis and its one-dimensional cultural trajectories from the 'West to the Rest', especially as new media, eagerly adopted by a younger generation of migrating jazz students participating in Europe's hybrid economies (Lessig 2008), increasingly enable the emergence of new jazz publics. The range of mixed-jazz styles adopted by younger intra-European jazz groups and featured in social networks and in public performance outlets suggests a growing eclecticism, which in European contexts attests to the 'emanzipatory' calls (Heffley 2005) of earlier collectives rallying against the commodified and homogenizing practices of the American music industry. But, again, as European jazz has become 'legit', sanctioned by state funding bodies and conservatoire artist-in-residence programmes, it is clear that jazz's prior mythos (most prominently revived during the 1980s within neo-traditional streams) continues to impact contemporary European jazz scenes. This is perhaps most evident in the ongoing promotion of New York-based jazz stars and the academic institutionalization of bebop.

In Groningen, the translocal character of jazz scenes is epitomized by the transnational relationships between mobile New York-based teachers and their students, who refine their skills in New York but often return to Europe to live and work. These musicians traverse and reaffirm long-standing jazz routes. They also sustain instrumentally based 'straight-ahead' jazz, upholding bebop's legacy of collective virtuosity, which continues to thrive in contexts that include prestigious European jazz festivals and well-funded cultural centres. A wide variety of European scenes manifest on one hand an increasing mobility and on the other hand a deference to American jazz history. This is particularly evident in Groningen, the Netherlands' northernmost metropolis, where jazz stars, students, and local musicians migrate to participate in the global jazz star circuit.

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Notes

- 1 I thank Byron Dueck and Celia Cain for their close and thoughtful readings of this chapter. I am especially grateful for Dueck's clear and thorough revisions. I also thank Joris Teepe, George Dumitriu, Alex Sipiagin, and Kaja Draksler for their insights about jazz in Groningen.
- 2 From Adderley's *Somethin' Else* (1958, Blue Note BST 81595).
- 3 'New York Comes to Groningen' video on the Prins Claus Conservatoire website, online <<http://www.hanze.nl/home/International/Schools/Prins+Claus+Conservatorium/Programmes/Bachelor+Programmes/Jazz/>> (accessed 2 July 2010).
- 4 'Concerts Keep Cats in Cakes! Musicians Turn to Halls to Tide Them Over Dance Biz Lull', *Down Beat*, 9 (April 1947): 1.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 In New Orleans, the Marsalises acquired the status of jazz nobility, especially after young Wynton graduated from New York's Juilliard with honours in jazz and classical studies.
- 7 Beyond the year-long cycle of selected New York artists and teachers, individual soloists also travel to Groningen. They may visit for two days, offering workshops and masterclasses during the day and performing as featured soloist with student jazz ensembles or professional jazz combos in the city's many jazz venues. The latter include the Oosterpoort cultural centre and smaller jazz clubs such as the Spieghele and the Eetcafé Smederij.
- 8 See music examples on Kaja Draksler's home site <<http://www.kajadraksler.com>> (accessed 17 July 2010).
- 9 In a forthcoming chapter (McGee, in press), I examine the role of the more eclectic Dutch electronic jazz music collectives that tour jazz circuits, festivals and dance clubs. This article suggests a second stream in European jazz creativity, one which is highly mediated, mobile and deeply influenced by dance and popular music.

- 7 Art galleries, music venues such as Cargo, and trendy bars and restaurants are concentrated in the London neighbourhoods of Hoxton and Shoreditch, Deep is linking the Asian Underground with areas of London, and with venues within these areas, that appeal to a white, affluent, culturally elite audience.
- 8 This is despite the fact that bhangra, while originating from the Punjab region, is also very much a *diasporic* formation developed in the UK. Thus it is a syncretic practice that is as much a 'fusion' of different elements as any other genre of popular music (see Dudrah 2002, 2007; Gopinath 1995; and Back 1996 for insights into bhangra as a diasporic South Asian cultural formation).