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The Reception and Development of Jazz in the Netherlands (1945–1970s)

Walter van de Leur¹

In the decades after the Second World War, the Netherlands underwent significant economical, political and cultural changes, which invited the Dutch to rethink their national identity. Jazz, which triggered cultural debates since it first arrived in Europe, provides an ideal lens to look at these changes. This essay seeks to position jazz in the ever-changing cultural and social landscapes of the Netherlands in the postwar years, beginning with the liberation in May 1945 and ending in the 1970s.

As Mehring (2015) argues in *Soundtrack van de bevrijding* (“The soundtrack of the liberation”) it is hard to know the actual music performed during the euphoria that came with the end of the German occupation in the Netherlands. Film footage shot during those days is silent. Documentary makers have typically added the music that was both antithetical to the Nazi-regime and that symbolized the youth culture of the Allied forces: American big band swing. In the months after the liberation, some 300 songs were written by Dutch songwriters to commemorate the end of the war. These were published as sheet music but few of them were recorded at the time. Mehring distinguishes different categories: marches, patriotic hymns, romantic love songs, boogie-woogie and swing, and foxtrots, which was “one of the most popular genres among the liberation songs.” Technically, the foxtrot is not so much a genre as a dance, typically danced to big band music. In the 1930s and 1940s, many quite divergent works were identified as “foxtrots” on their record labels—a marketing ploy rather than a genre classification. Dancing had been instrumental to the success of swing music in the 1930s and early-1940s, and it continued to be the main attraction after the Second World War.

1 This essay draws on papers delivered in Nijmegen (*The Politics and Culture of Liberation Conference*, Department of English and American Studies, Radboud University, June 8, 2013), Paris (*Colloque International: Les Circulations Globales du Jazz*, Musée du Quai Branly, June 27, 2013) and Darmstadt (*Darmstädter Jazz Forum/Tagung des Instituts für Jazzforschung Graz*, Sept. 28, 2013).

Swing music warrants a somewhat technical digression. Characteristic of swing music was the ongoing pulse in the rhythm section, which played a steady, yet light, four-to-the-bar beat, with an uneven rhythmical subdivision, often expressed by the drummer on his cymbal: *ching chick-a ching chick-a*. That subdivision—called swing eighths or uneven eighths—is to be found in the melodies and accompanying lines in the music, together with so-called syncopations, or shifting accents. Swing is an interpretative practice, and its subtleties are hard to notate. Creating swing is a procedure that can be, and has been, applied to all kinds of music. Published sheet music does not capture that interpretative practice well, and publishers typically do not bother to notate swing because the performers knew how to interpret the written rhythms in swing style. A case in point is the published sheet music of Glenn Miller's *In the Mood*, the archetypical soundtrack to World War II documentaries. From the original published music one cannot know that this is to be played with a swing interpretation, apart from the somewhat vague indication "medium bounce tempo." Another iconic song from that period, *Lili Marlene*, was sung by Marlene Dietrich with a laid-back swing feel over a lightly strumming guitar, but the notation (with dotted eighth-sixteenth figures) suggests a much squarer rhythm. Similarly, the published liberation sheet music from the Netherlands gives many important historic perspectives on repertoire, lyrics, and iconography (covers), but leaves much unanswered as to the actual interpretation(s) of the material at the time. Accomplished performers could easily turn any piece into a swinging, danceable rendition.

One of the most intriguing and informative documents in Mehring's book is the repertoire list of amateur pianist Jan Hendriks, who played for the Allies with a professional band consisting of Amsterdammers "who followed the troops." The typed list, titled "Foxtrots," and marked 1944 in pen, shows that Dutch musicians had knowledge of relatively recent swing numbers such as *Take the "A" Train*, recorded in February 1941 by Ellington and his Orchestra, and *As Time Goes By*, written in 1931 but popularized through the movie *Casablanca*, which premiered November 1942 in the United States. Also on the repertoire were rhythm and blues numbers such as Louis Jordan's *Is You Is, or Is You Ain't My Baby*, which peaked on the U.S. charts in the summer of 1944. The inclusion of "Hé Baberebob" (in all likelihood Lionel Hampton's jump blues hit *Hey Ba-ba-re-bop*, recorded and popularized after March 1945) suggests a slightly later date for this list. But even if played sometime in mid-1945, much of this repertoire was quite up to date, given the difficulty to obtain records. It shows that jazz as a sonic culture traveled fast. Musicians in the Netherlands may have had no access to the actual recording or the sheet music of Hampton's *Hey Ba-ba-re-bop*, but they picked up tunes from the airwaves: the BBC was a major source, as was the American Forces Network (AFN) (Kleinhou 2007: 60, 65).

Even during the war, Dutch jazz musicians had stayed in touch with the latest music, by listening to these then illegal broadcasts.

Swing had been quite popular before and during the war. Much of the popular repertoire from the Ramblers—the most popular Dutch dance orchestra, led by Theo Uden Masman—was in swing style, and Dutch radio orchestras, such as the AVRO Dansorkest, and the orchestras of Ernst van't Hoff and Dick Willebrandts, were modeled after American and British swing orchestras. Just before the war, the most successful teenage idols had been Johnny and Jones, and their record *Mijnheer Dinges Weet Niet Wat Swing Is*, had been a hit (Openneer 2001). The song deals with a Mr. Dinges (Whatshisname), an old-fashioned composer and piano teacher with a mock German accent, who has no clue about swing, radio, saxophones, hot solos and the like. The record's success implies that Dutch teenagers full well knew about these things. To Mr. Dinges, jazz is scandalous and banal, which was pretty much the position of Dutch authorities—a stance ridiculed by Johnny and Jones. In another piece, titled *Swing Your Song, Violetta*, they took a stab at opera. Johnny and Jones, whose real names were Nol van Wesel and Max Kannewasser would die from exhaustion in the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen, just before the end of the war.

The popularity of swing music only rose with the arrival of the Allied forces, who craved music just as much as the partying Netherlanders. The newly founded Orchestra of the Dutch Swing College was an instant hit with the Canadian troops stationed in Apeldoorn, and it performed on a daily basis for months. Other swing bands such as the Red, White and Blue Stars, the Kees van Dorsser Orchestra and the Plus Fours similarly found ample employment in the months after the liberation. The Ramblers, too, returned, even though their leader was reprimanded for presumed collaboration with the Nazis and was not allowed to work for six months. There were smaller swing-oriented ensembles (typically referred to as combos) such as the Millers, led by guitarist Ab de Molenaar, the Atlantic Quintet and the sextet of singer Rita Reys and drummer Wessel Ilcken. Next to these more swing-oriented outfits, so-called Dixieland bands were active, such as the Dixieland Pipers, later followed by the Down Town Jazz Band and the New Orleans Seven.

If live music was not available, the radio provided entertainment. For swing and jazz the AFN was the first choice, with broadcasts that had started in 1943. The other station that provided jazz programming was the BBC. After the liberation there was quite some jazz programming on the national network Herrijzend Nederland ("Resurging Netherlands," 1944–46), albeit irregularly and mainly drawing from pre-war recordings (Kleinhout 2007, 195). In June 1947, Jaap "Pete" Felleman (1921–2000) started his legendary show *Swing & Sweet, from*

Hollywood & 52nd Street for VARA radio, which effectively made him the first disc jockey in the country. Felleman could boast an impressive private (pre-war) record collection, which provided the basis for the program. Foreign import of luxury goods was restricted by the government until 1950, which made it impossible to obtain the latest records from abroad. In response, Felleman set up his private import by asking KLM-pilots who flew on American cities to buy specific records for him (Gras 1994, 23). Hence, *Swing and Sweet* introduced many listeners to music that no one else had access to. When Felleman, who also worked for record companies (Gras 1994, 24), left VARA-radio because of a conflict of interests Michiel de Ruyter succeeded him and became one of the best-known and most recognizable jazz disc jockeys in the Netherlands.

Yet neither the German occupation nor the liberation changed the various pre-war positions on jazz and swing much: authorities generally opposed the music, while many teenagers tended to be fans. The titles of two studies about the reception of jazz in the Netherlands before and after the Second World War are telling; *Ongewenschte Muziek* (“unwanted” or “unwelcome music,” Wouters 1999) and *Jazz als Probleem* (“jazz as a problem,” Kleinhout 2007). After World War II, the debate over the merits of jazz followed familiar tropes that had accompanied jazz from its earliest arrival in the Netherlands. Dutch authorities, from mayors to church leaders, and from police chiefs to heads of schools, continued to be worried about the impact of this “addictive and sensual” music, “alien to white culture.” The concerns about public morale were aimed at a number of issues. To start with, jazz came from a black and “primitive people” and only distracted listeners from their own European culture, which was of a higher order. Furthermore, with jazz came dancing which was rejected in similar moralistic and racist terms. In fact, the dances that belonged to the sphere of jazz were seen as more dangerous to public values than the music that accompanied those dances. Jazz’s rhythms, it was believed, numbed the senses of easy-to-influence teenagers who would lose control over their sexual urges. In the early-1930s, Dutch politics, too, were deeply concerned about the widely-felt “dance problem” or “dance danger,” which subverted teenagers:

The modern dances—such as the Step, the Fox Trot, the Shimmy, the Charleston—often have a highly sexual character. ... Consequently, every adolescent girl who chooses to visit a dance hall runs the risk to be led in an inappropriate manner. How many of them are unable to maintain the necessary moral resistance, and end with a *rendez-vous*[?] (Bie, Van der Heyden, *et al* 1931)²

2 All quotations from Dutch sources were translated by the author.

Against this backdrop of public rejection, defenders of jazz before and after the war followed a curious route. They agreed with their opponents that much of the American entertainment music was of little value, but argued that “real” or “pure jazz” was incorrectly seen as mere entertainment or dance music, too. Authorities, they argued, failed to distinguish between real jazz and its lookalike, which was commercial dance music. One had to understand what pure jazz was: authentic hot music, often identified as Negro folk music, of the likes of Armstrong and Ellington. Jazz’s defenders hastened to add that one shouldn’t confuse jazz’s cultural value with that of European high art, which was far ahead of the simple, naïve expressions of jazz, which they nevertheless liked. In their opinion, jazz posed no threat to the much more advanced European culture. The radio guide that accompanied the “V.A.R.A. Jazz Propaganda Week” (March 17–23, 1935) explained that “defending a type of music which has come to us from the primitive black race” would in no way undermine our “sensitivity for the many and rich treasures of our European music” (Poustochkine 1935, 9). After the war, Poustochkine would follow this line of reasoning in his articles in the jazz press.

But even to jazz *aficionados* it was difficult to separate the fake jazz from the real jazz. Before the war, this issue had already led to heated debates in the Dutch jazz magazine *De Jazzwereld* (1931–1940) where in lengthy intellectual articles authors tried to define jazz, only to find that Duke Ellington’s next record did not meet the criteria. Jazz proved to be a moving target that turned out to be indefinable (Van de Leur 2012, *passim*). The music developed so quickly that Dutch jazzophiles (as *De Jazzwereld* referred to its readership) could disagree deeply about what belonged to the realm of jazz and what did not.

Debates as to what jazz essentially was were revived after the war. *Tuney Tunes*, a magazine that had started underground in 1942 with the publication of “the lyrics of the latest dance songs” in English (which could be hard to decipher for the average Dutch listener), took on the task of educating its readership. Again, swing music was seen by jazz connoisseurs as suspect, a watered-down white version of pure jazz that lacked the authentic black feeling. The magazine had no problem denouncing African-American musicians such as altoist Johnny Hodges and tenorist Coleman Hawkins, for straying too far from their roots, which were typically understood to be those of simple and honest folk music of the “American Negro.”

But bigger issues lay ahead. During the late-1940s, Dutch jazz musicians and fans became gradually aware of a new and much more radical development that had taken place in American jazz: bebop. As in the United States, this novel, high-energy, and to some rather abstract genre would split the ranks

of jazz-lovers in modernists and traditionalists (known in the U.S. as “moldy figs”), whose arguments (again) built on questions of authenticity. Because of the limited access to bebop recordings (and the total absence of live bebop performances), it would take a while before listeners understood what the new genre entailed. As Kleinhout’s discussion of the polemical exchange between the various authors shows, there was much confusion over what bebop was. Still, that did not stop listeners from deciding whether they were for or against the latest turn jazz had taken. It split the *Dutch Swing College Club*, whose more conservative members defected and founded their own organization. The magazine *Rhythme*, the newly founded “monthly for modern music,” opened the discussion with an article by the famous French jazz critic Charles Delauney (1950a), who defended bebop against its detractors. The reply came from Poustochkine (1950), who in no uncertain Eurocentric terms saw New Orleans jazz (and its recent revival) as the only valuable contribution to the musical landscape. Delauney was not convinced (1950b). The exchange, often in loaded language, expressed that the different positions were hard to reconcile. As a result, jazz fans in the Netherlands pretty much belonged either to the camp of the traditionalists or that of the modernists, and occupied their own spaces.

Among those who embraced modern jazz and bebop were the so-called Vijftigers, a young generation of poets—such as Lucebert (Lubertus Swaanswijk), Hugo Claus, Remco Campert, Jan Hanlo and Gerrit Kouwenaar—and the painters Karel Appel, Corneille (Guillaume van Beverloo) and Constant (Nieuwenhuijs), who were the co-founders of the Cobra movement. These artists saw jazz as a source of inspiration and in part followed its improvisational methodology, which materialized in their “jazzgedichten” (jazz poems). The connection was not hard to miss. In 1950, for instance, Campert published a collection of poems under the title *Ten lessons with Timothy*, which was the title of a 1946 record by one of bebop’s founding fathers, the trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie. Appel painted portraits of Gillespie, Miles Davis and John Coltrane. The bond between the painter and these musicians (many of whom he knew personally) was so close that in 2008 the Cobra Museum curated an exposition titled “Karel Appel: Jazz 1958–1962.”

From the late 1940s on, more and more so-called jazz and rhythm clubs were founded, after the example of the *Dutch Swing College Club*. These clubs were organizations of fans who typically came together on a regular basis to play records, discuss music, view films and visit concerts. They often published newsletters, and sometimes organized jam sessions and concerts. Many clubs were organized along genre-lines, as some of the names indicate: The New Orleans Rhythme Club clearly catered to other fans than the Modern

Jazz Club Persepolis. Many fans found a home in these hobby organizations. In 1950, the C.P. Jazz Club Apeldoorn noted that its membership had quickly grown to almost 100 (“Rondom de Nederlandse Jazz- en Rhythmeclubs,” 9), an impressive number that indicates that listening to jazz was an increasingly popular pastime. *Rhythme* had a separate section that brought news from the clubs. The magazine itself found its way to thousands of subscribers; the reader’s poll from 1954 was answered by over 3100 respondents, and that of 1957 by 5578. The editor noted that “more than half of our readers participated” (“Nederlandse *Rhythme* poll all stars”) which, if true, implies that *Rhythme* must have had about 10,000 subscribers.

Live performances by Americans were scarce between 1945 and the early-1950s. As a result, they were greeted with eager anticipation in the jazz press and were critically reviewed afterwards. In November 1949, saxophonist Sidney Bechet visited the Netherlands “under auspices of *Rhythme*.” “It will be the first time since 10 years, that a soloist of stature from the American jazz world will visit our country,” the magazine stated (“Sidney Bechet komt naar Nederland”), although trumpeter Louis Armstrong played in Rotterdam a month earlier, certainly a soloist of stature too. They were followed, among others, by Duke Ellington in 1950, Dizzy Gillespie, and the all-star line-up of Norman Granz’s Jazz at the Philharmonic in 1952, and Stan Kenton in 1953.

In the general press, these concerts usually received little attention, much to the chagrin of the jazz press. But an incident such as Lionel Hampton’s October 8, 1954 concert in the Apollo Hal in Amsterdam, where riotous fans tore down the interior and the floor partly collapsed under their weight, got national coverage and only fueled the prejudices of the general public. *Rhythme* sadly noted in its editorial that the audience’s behavior had damaged the reputation of jazz in the Netherlands: “Impresario Lou van Rees has cancelled the concerts of George Shearing, Gerry Mulligan and Louis Armstrong. The gentlemen of the press found something right up their alley and the already shaky reputation of jazz has been struck by a significant earthquake” (“Wansmaak”). The damage, however, was temporary, and the two foremost concert producers in the Netherlands, the aforementioned Lou van Rees, and Paul Acket, founder of the North Sea Jazz Festival in 1976, would separately stage a steady stream of concerts in the ensuing years. Among these were the famous double-concerts in the Kurhaus in Scheveningen (Den Haag) and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.³ Concerts from these “American greats” received rather mixed

3 A number of these are issued by the Nederlands Jazz Archief, including concerts by Thelonious Monk, Art Blakey, Miles Davis, Lee Konitz, Zoot Sims, Sarah Vaughan, J.J. Johnson, Gerry Mulligan, Count Basie and Chet Baker.

responses—especially jazz connoisseurs could be quite critical. According to one journalist, the concert was “skilful but useless, and destined to be forgotten quickly.” “So long, Duke Ellington,” he concluded, “until the time when the ‘bebop’-nightmare is finally over” (quoted in “Duke Ellington in de Nederlandse pers”).

Despite their differences, jazz fans and musicians in the Netherlands all agreed that jazz was an inherently American music. Whether they played in traditionalist New Orleans-style outfits, in swing-bands, or in more modern bebop and cool jazz formations, Dutch musicians tried to emulate the examples from overseas. Their bands had English names (Skymasters, Sunny Boys, Atlantic Quintet, Diamond Five) and they often anglicized their own names to make them sound more international. Hence, Gerard and Arie van Rooijen changed their names to Jerry and Ack van Rooyen, Henny Frohwein became Hank Frowan, and Jos van Heuverszwin was known as Joe Hervey.

Musically, the highest achievement was to sound “international” or “on-Nederlands” (“un-Dutch”). For most Dutch critics the best players in the Netherlands, who reached that aim, could be found on four LPs recorded between 1955 and 1957: the album *Jazz from Holland*, which appeared on Bovema Records, and three volumes of *Jazz Behind the Dikes* which were recorded by Phonogram (Philips). In a review for *Rhythme*, Tony Vos, who played on *Jazz Behind the Dikes*, praised *Jazz from Holland* as follows: “It has been known a long time that our boys can compete with their American fellow-artists. Now they’ve had a chance to prove it, and they have used the opportunity... From now on, men like Chet Baker and Shorty Rogers will have to politely take off their hats for Ack [van Rooyen]” (Vos 1955, 10). There was similar praise for the first *Jazz Behind the Dikes* recordings, and *Rhythme* boasted that thanks to their “top performances,” the featured combos received international acclaim from “jazz connoisseurs on four continents” (Peter 1955, 14).

Rita Reys, prominently featured on the first two volumes of *Jazz Behind the Dikes*, achieved the highest acclaim possible: she recorded in New York with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. Her New York “successes for radio, TV-appearances with the world’s greatest jazz musicians—‘one-niters’ in famous jazz clubs, recordings!” clearly filled the editors of *Rhythme* with great pride (“Rumoer rond Rita”). The tracks with the Jazz Messengers, issued on one side two of *The Cool Voice of Rita Reys*, were hailed by the magazine as “highpoints in the international record repertoire” (Kop and Voogd 1956, 31). Apart from making records that held promises of international recognition, Dutch jazz musicians at times were hired to play with touring American soloists, who often worked with local rhythm sections, since that was cheaper than flying

in American accompanists. Trios, such as those of drummer Wessel Ilcken or pianist Rob Madna, backed up visiting musicians.

But despite the enthusiastic reception of Dutch jazz records on the home front, the international impact was quite modest. Rather luke-warm reviews by the well-known American jazz critic Nat Hentoff of Reys' recording with the Jazz Messengers and later of *Jazz Behind the Dikes* in the leading American jazz magazine *Down Beat* (Hentoff 1956 and 1957), made *Rhythme* wonder in an editorial: "are our prominent musicians really so prominent?" (Kop 1957).

Notwithstanding the dedication of musicians, publicists and fans, jazz remained a marginal phenomenon. Only a small number of musicians could make a living in jazz. Some found employment with the radio orchestras in Hilversum, such as the Skymasters or the Metropole Orchestra, while others ventured out abroad, such as the brothers Van Rooyen and Rob Pronk. They would have successful careers in Germany.

Still, Dutch record companies were hardly interested in jazz, and the jazz press, with *Rhythme* as largest publication, remained small, while the regular press largely ignored jazz. Furthermore, new musical genres were competing with jazz for popularity. In January 1958 *Rhythme* celebrated its 100th issue, with Rita Reys on the cover. But the sign that the times were changing was in the final pages. We get "daily phone calls" and "uncountable stacks of letters ... from *Rhythme*-gals [asking] for an exclusive pic of Pat in their favorite magazine" read the byline under a publicity shot of pop star Pat Boone, not a jazz singer by any standards ("Pat Boone!"). Ten months later, Perry Como graced the cover, followed by Frank Sinatra (March 1960), Caterina Valente (May 1960), Harry Belafonte (June 1960), and Doris Day (August 1960). In September 1961 the magazine folded. In an article titled "Farewell blues" the editors explained that *Rhythme* was doing well for a jazz magazine, but that its figures nevertheless paled in comparison to those of other publications. "In the past months circulation has dropped to such a degree that it is commercially no longer viable to see *Rhythme* to its 13th year" (Kop and Voogd 1961, 3). Dozens of the once so popular jazz and rhythm clubs followed suit, and folded in the early 1960s.

Against all odds, a new jazz magazine called *Jazzwereld* was launched in 1965. In an editorial Anton Kop warned that Europeans should not overestimate their role in the making of jazz, and understand that "jazz is an American music, which *completely* evolved in America. ALL new genres developed in America, and Americans are the leading figures. Such was the case in 1920, and in this respect nothing has changed in 1965" (*Jazzwereld* 1–2: 3; emphasis in original). His position was representative for the generation of jazz fans and musicians who had been in their early to mid-teens by the end of the

Second World War, and who had wholeheartedly embraced American jazz. By contrast, the baby-boomers, who had been born between 1945 and 1955, and hit adolescence in the early 1960s, had a different perspective. They felt that American jazz had become stagnant, as had its largely imitative Dutch variety. In addition, they grew increasingly troubled by American politics and ideologies, both at home (civil rights) and abroad (Vietnam). Young jazz musicians, including pianist-composer Misha Mengelberg, drummer Han Bennink, and reed player-composer Willem Breuker, started to move away from the American models. To mark their independence, they dropped the word jazz, to replace it with the term *improvisatiemuziek* (improvisation music).

The jazz establishment was confronted head-on with this new high-energy music at the competition at the Loosdrecht Jazz Festival, a pretty mainstream affair in the boathouse of yacht harbor Van Dijk (Oud-Loosdrecht). Willem Breuker premiered a radical piece titled *Litanie voor de 14e juni* (*Litany for the 14th of June*). The work was a response to the death of construction worker Jan Weggelaar, who had died during riots in Amsterdam, known as the *Bouwwakkersrellen* (1966). It consisted of a recitation from newspaper articles over noisy, free improvised music. The work deeply divided jury and audience. Breuker received the second prize, but more importantly, *Litanie* made it clear that the times of politely swinging jazz music were over.

In the Netherlands, like elsewhere, there were confrontations between the authorities and different groups in society who sought to alter established structures. The liner notes to Breuker's record *Contemporary Jazz from Holland* explicitly stated the relation between these movements and the new jazz: "Jazz had to throw off the shackles of conventional swing. This liberation is closely connected to parallel developments in other forms of art and social life" (Bunders 1966). In keeping with the social movements of the 1960s, these Dutch jazz musicians questioned capitalist and centralized models of cultural production, as exemplified by record companies, booking agencies and concert halls, and tried to come up with alternative strategies. They established independent, non-commercial, self-supportive forms of production such as the ICP record label (1966), or Willem Breuker's BVHaast (1974). Through these companies, they recorded, designed, produced and distributed their own records. In addition, musicians formed new professional organizations, such as the "Beroepsvereniging van Improviserende Musici" (BIM), the "Union of Improvising Musicians." To have a home for their music, the BIM members launched their own podium for improvised music, the Bimhuis, which continues to be one of the leading jazz venues in Europe, with year-round jazz programming.

The avant-garde subscribed to new mythologies that gradually and partly replaced old ones. Like the broader Sixties movement, they questioned authoritarian power structures in society, which were rooted in the church (both Protestant and Roman-Catholic), challenged middle-class ideologies, and sought to replace conventional thought with ideas rooted in the counter-culture. But below the surface, the new jazzers quietly subscribed to older values: they were well-organized and invested in long-standing relationships with local and national politics. While they positioned themselves as free and independent artists, Dutch impro-musicians became heavily dependent on government funding. Paradoxically, they viewed themselves as non-commercial, that is, not answering to market demands, but now, the very government that supported them functioned as their new market. At any rate, they were quite successful: the Willem Breuker Kollektief, for instance, was supported by public funds for thirty-five years.

In their music, improvising musicians increasingly emphasized their Dutchness. One obvious way to do this was to use Dutch titles for their works, as exemplified by recordings on ICP, the label founded by Misha Mengelberg and Han Bennink. This constituted a break with the earlier practice to be “international.” LP titles such as *Een Mirakelse Tocht* (A Miraculous Trip, ICP 013), or the onomatopoeic *Tetterettet* (ICP 020), and compositions such as *Met Welbeleefde Groet van de Kameel* (With Sincerest Regards from the Camel) and *Enkele Regels in de Dierentuin* (Some Rules in the Zoo), displayed a playfulness that was one of the hallmarks of the new genre. The record covers of ICP 005 and 007/008 show typical Dutch post-war middle-class row houses and a community garden. Often, compositions conjured up places in the Netherlands, such as Breuker's *Jordaan Waltz*, or referred to local political events, such as his *Litanie* or his *Maagdenhuis 1969*, which commemorated the student protests (BVHaast CD0301). Breuker also used sonic markers of Dutchness by writing for street organs and church carillons. His experimental *Lunchconcert voor Drie Draaiorgels* premiered on three barrel organs on the Dam square in 1967, to an audience of bewildered bystanders.

Over the course of the late 1960s, jazz and improvised music in the Netherlands found new confidence. A comparison of *Jazzwereld's* earlier modest stance (“jazz is an American music”) with drummer Han Bennink's remarks in the same magazine, five years later, bears that out. Under the heading “[Archie] Shepp, [Pharoah] Sanders, [Albert] Ayler, [Sunny] Murray, it's enough to make one cry,” he stated that,

[the American avant-garde] has stopped progressing since 1964. No, even worse: it has gone downhill. You know what is crazy? I've read that there

are jazz-excursions from the Netherlands to America. There's no need for that, as far as I'm concerned. Those trips go the wrong way. They should have trips for Americans, to come our way!... There is no American avant-garde. There is no European scene either. Believe me, currently the best music can be heard in the Netherlands. (*Jazzwereld* 30: 18-19)

Gradually, an understanding grew that there was—or rather had to be—something specifically Dutch in improvised music from the Netherlands. In 1978, Journalist Bert Vuijsje somewhat infelicitously applied the term *Hollandse School* (Dutch School) to the new Dutch jazz scene that had developed in the 1960s; a label hitherto reserved for the Dutch painting masters from the 16th and 17th centuries, such as Jan Steen, Johannes Vermeer, Frans Hals and Rembrandt van Rijn. One of the key elements of the jazz-version of the *Hollandse School* was an anti-establishment attitude. It translated into absurdity and irony, the rejection of any sentimentality, and an ever-present tongue-in-cheek attitude, which often played with audience expectations. Among the musical techniques employed were a deliberate merging of composition and guided or free improvisation, hard-cut edits and collage, and an eclectic mixing of musical genres, as exemplified in most of Mengelberg's compositions. Furthermore, many Dutch impro musicians tended to use theatrical elements in their performances, as typified by Mengelberg's *Met Welbeleefde Groet van de Kameel*, which calls for some on-stage woodworking. The piece involves noisily sawing up a wooden chair and re-assembling it in the shape of a camel while the music continues—such Fluxus-type performances are among Mengelberg's trademarks (see Adlington 2013, *passim*; and Schuiling 2014, *passim*).

Those in favor of the new improvisation music, and others who hung on to the American examples of swing, bebop, cool, and hard bop, disagreed bitterly about the nature of the music. Rita Reys recalled how her husband, the piano player Pim Jacobs, and his brother, the bassist Ruud Jacobs hated the local avant-garde: "The rise of Willem Breuker was something that Pim couldn't handle. He thought it was horrible ... you like [that music] or you don't—we didn't. We didn't understand it at all" (Reys and Vuijsje 2004, 187). Part of the frustration centered around money: "The difference between us and people like Willem Breuker en Misha Mengelberg is that we never received a single penny of government support. We have done it all by ourselves, and I'm quite proud of that. With all the subsidies they [Breuker *et al*] received, they didn't get that far" (*ibid.*) The deep divide that separated jazz practitioners and aficionados in the Netherlands (commonly referred to as *richtingenstrijd*, or polarization), would gradually close, as younger generations were less invested in it.

The anti-bourgeois, non-conformist, and egalitarian ideas subscribed to by the avant-garde were central to new myths of Dutchness, as expressed in the 1980s by the so-called *Hollanditis*, when hundreds of thousands marched peacefully against nuclear arms and for peace in Amsterdam and The Hague. Another example may be found in the 1995 Postbank TV-commercial which introduced the hit song *15 Miljoen Mensen* (fifteen million people, the country's population in the 1990s). It shows Netherlanders as a carefree, fun-loving and at times unruly people, who picnic next to a "don't walk on the grass" sign. Later in the clip, two young girls grab the cap of a police officer and laugh at him, while the song informs the viewers that one can't impose rules on the Dutch. Remarkably, the commercial was for the largest bank of the Netherlands, which until 1986 had been government-owned: apparently even such respectable institutions now identified with this new Dutch identity.

In the decades that followed the Second World War in the Netherlands, the perspectives on jazz changed dramatically, from the music of the American liberators to a music that only could retain its validity if it were separated from its American models. In the process it lost much of its fan-base. Although the music mattered tremendously to the Dutch jazz community at large—fans, musicians, journalists, critics, agents and the like—jazz remained a marginal sub-culture, either despised or largely ignored by the cultural establishment. Before long, genres such as beat music and rock and roll were much more popular and commercially viable. Nevertheless, because of the often heated debates that surrounded the music, jazz provides valuable insights in how the Netherlands changed, how its people dealt with those changes, and how the Dutch viewed themselves.

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