

Was jazz invented in Paris in October 1932 ?

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What happened in Paris in October 1932 ?

- Founding of **Hot Club de France** in October 1932 by Hughues Panassié & co (official registration March 26–27 1934)
- In July 1933, "Bulletin Mensuel de Hot Club Francais" appears as an attachment to the magazine "Jazz–Tango–Dancing"
- "Jazz–Tango–Dancing" becomes "Jazz Hot"
- Hughues Panassié publishes "Le Jazz Hot" in 1934
- (Robert Goffin's "Aux frontieres du jazz" had already been published in Paris and Bruxelles in May 1932)
- The movement spread rapidly. Between 1933 and 1935, 98 **Rhythm Clubs** sprung up in Britain
- United Hot Clubs of America founded in mid–1930s

Many things had of course already happened before
1932 ...

- The music we now call jazz had certainly existed before:
- Original Dixieland **Jazz** (Jass) Band, 1917
- King Oliver's Creole **Jazz** Band, 1923, etc
- but the borders of this music were not clearly defined, **jazz** was just another name to a type of modern popular music

"Jazz" was not always jazz

- The writer F. Scott Fitzgerald called the 1920s "**the jazz age**". But much of the music then called "jazz" is would not be recognized as jazz today
- Especially in Europe, "jazz" became a generic term for modern dance music. A "jazz band" was an orchestra with a drum set and a saxophone. The first European books and articles on jazz typically do not even mention improvisation

Paul Whiteman, the "King of Jazz", in 1921



Suomi Jazz Orkesteri, the most successful Finnish "jazz" band of the 1920s

(sound example: "Puuseppä", HMV AL 943, rec. Helsinki 4.6.1928)



On the other hand, much of what we now call "jazz" was not so called by contemporaries

- Enthusiasts spoke of "**hot dance music**", "modern dance music", or just "music"
- "We called it music" (Eddie Condon, 1948)
- "Jazz is a name the white people have given to the music" (Sidney Bechet)
- "In the 1920s in Harlem, everybody was just trying to do their thing without a great deal of thought about what was black or Afro-American or jazz" (Benny Carter)

Why is this important ?

- I suggest that the way "jazz" was defined by enthusiasts in 1932 influenced the way in which jazz developed as a distinct form of music
- In Benedict Anderson's terms, jazz was an "imagined community". The development of jazz has parallels with the development of nationalism and national languages
- Let us take an example. If you read a history of Finland, there is also a chapter on prehistory. But when did Finland really begin?

A very brief history of Finland

- Finland was "founded" on December 6, 1917
- Finland as a separate entity appeared in 1809, when Sweden lost the region to Russia. The official languages of the Grand Duchy were Swedish and Russian
- Before 1809, the present area of Finland was divided between Sweden and Russia, with many border changes
- The idea of Finland as a **national entity** was developed between 1830 and 1900 by nationalists, who created the literary language and wrote "a national history"
- Did a Finland really exist before 1809 (or 1917)?

The achievements of the Hot Club movement

- The movement developed spontaneously in France, UK, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, USA, Australia etc, 1932–39
- It was a loosely organized, international movement, with ideologists (critics), organisers (entrepreneur-enthusiasts), professionals (musicians), card-carrying activists and passive supporters (fans)
- It defined jazz as a distinctive form of music with its own history
- It created a market for "real" jazz (recordings, reissues, tours, festivals) and spurned "commercial" popular music
- It became the breeding ground for European jazz

The Hot Club ideology

- The ideology was expressed in the 1930s in books and periodicals by critics: Panassié, Delaunay, Goffin, Schulz-Köhn, Hammond, Stearns, Feather, Blesh, Jackson, Hellström etc
- "Jazz is a **new art form** with African-American roots"
- "The history of jazz began in New Orleans"
- "The canon of jazz is documented in recordings"
- "Jazz is distinct from popular music"
- A "leftist" fraction wanted to define jazz as a "folk art" or "people's art" (blues, etc)

The discographical canon

- The canon of jazz was expressed in discographies, which defined the borders of jazz and showed which records were "of no jazz interest", beginning with Delauney's "Hot Discography" (Paris 1936)
- A massive reissue program after 1936
- – large numbers of American dance records had been issued in Europe in the 1920s, but most "classic" jazz records were not – or they sold very poorly
- – the systematic release of new American jazz records in Europe started with the Parlophone "Rhythm Style" series in 1929
- – after 1936, classic Oliver and Armstrong records issued in Europe for the first time

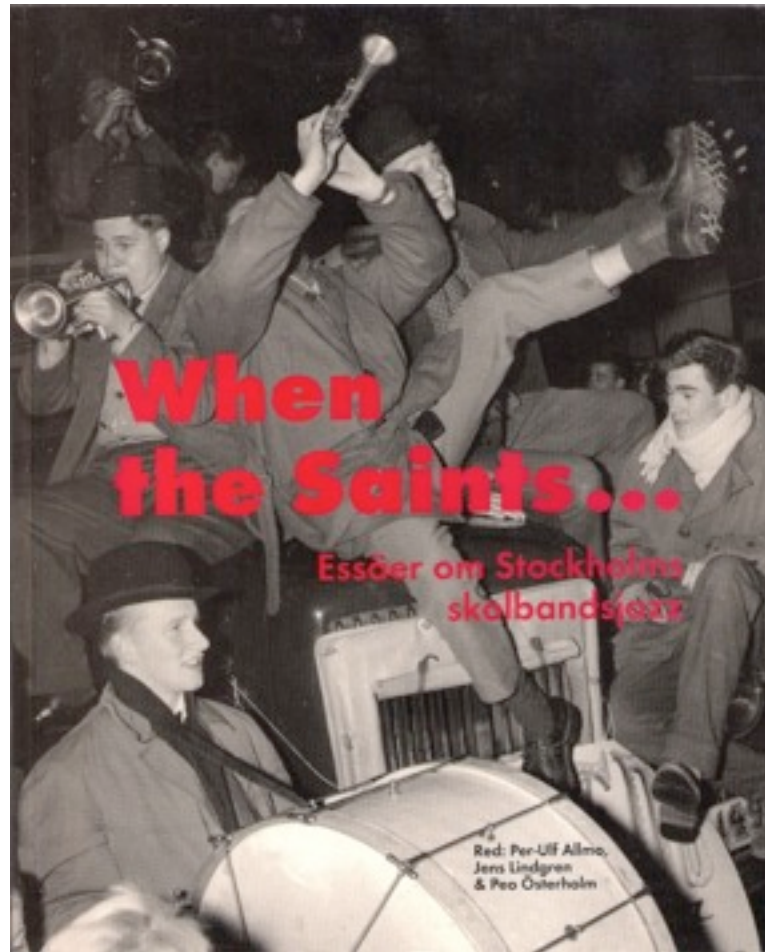
”An alternative musicology”

- The Hot Club movement created a massive amount of writing on jazz history and criticism, also some music analysis
- Jazz was the first form of music to challenge the supremacy of Western art music, but there was no dialogue between jazz critics and musicologists
- Many jazz writers were academics, but not musicologists
- Robert Goffin was a lawyer and surrealist poet
- Marshall Stearns, founder of the Institute of Jazz Studies, was professor of medieval English
- Dietrich Schulz-Köhn was doctor of economics
- Unfortunately, Adorno and Schulz-Köhn never met....

Follow the prophets

- The revival movement of the 1940s and 1950s was a striking example of the success of the Hot Club ideology. The traditionalist fraction (Panassié, Blesh) had taught that only the jazz of the 1920s was "pure"
- Reissue programs since 1936 made these recordings widely available
- In the 1940s, revivalists bands (mostly amateur) sprung up spontaneously in the USA, UK, Australia, France, Sweden, to recreate live these historical recordings
- The Hot Clubs provided them with an audience
- The tours of N. O. veterans (George Lewis etc) came

A New Orleans parade in Bromma, Sweden, 1955
Sound: "Bugalusa strut". Bunta's Storyville Jazz Band, Gazell 1001,
Stockholm 1949 (original recording: Sam Morgan, 1928)



The achievements of the movement

- The broad social acceptance of jazz since the 1960s is a result of the ideological work of the Hot Club movement
- Institute of Jazz Studies (1952)
- Institute for Jazz Research, Graz (1969)
- Jazz programs at Sibelius academy and other music schools
- Public jazz archives in many countries
- Etc

Is there something wrong with this?

- To jazz critics, "non-jazz" was of no interest
- Just as for traditional musicologists, the history of "music" had been the history of Western art music
- Actually we know actually very little about most of the music of the 20th century, because no one found it interesting
- Jazz historians have looked for a linear progression (although the New Orleans myth has long been abandoned), and paid little attention to alternative influences

An example: the Arabic roots of ragtime?

- The conventional view of jazz history sees ragtime as an early example of the merger of European and African-American traditions
- Recently, Karl Gert zur Heide has suggested that ragtime was in fact influenced by the asymmetric rhythms of Arab musicians touring the USA in the
- "raqs" > rags
- "Little Egypt", belly dancer Ashea Wabe in New York, 1896



The facts...

- We know that Near Eastern **dancers** were popular in the USA in the 1890s and 1900s
- They were often accompanied by Turkish or Egyptian musicians
- They appeared on the same shows as early black performers
- "Belly dancing" and "cooch" dancing had a demonstrable influence on American show dancing
- However, the influence of Arab **music** on ragtime remains to be proven

Alternative scenarios

- Could some other form of (popular) music have gained the status of jazz, if it had had similar ideological support ?
- After all, North American hot dance music was only one of the many new musics which reached Europe in the 20th century: tango, rumba, biguine, Hawaiian music
- Also European vernacular traditions: flamenco, fado, rebetika, yodeling...
- Asian and African music?
- Could any of these have started a similar movement?

Original Argentinian tango records were advertised in Germany as early as 1913, and tango bands appeared in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s

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Lyrophonwerke G. m. b. H., Berlin SW 61

Honolulu instead of New Orleans?

- The development of Hawaiian music has interesting parallels with jazz
- It is a hybrid form with a history at least as old as jazz. Many Hawaiian players were virtuosos on their own instruments, just like jazz soloists
- Hawaiian music was widely popular in Europe in the 1930s, and there were numerous European "Hawaiian" bands.
- If Hawaiian music had had its own Goffin, Panassié and Delaunay, could it have gained the same global status as jazz ?

Hawaiian music in Hawaii, Sweden and the Netherlands... wide popularity, but no status

Sol Ho'opii, Yngve Stoor, Kilima Hawaiians



History repeats itself

In fact, the model of the Hot Club movement has been repeated many times. Since the 1970s, we have seen other forms of music declare themselves "art", create their own histories and even recreate and reinvent forgotten traditions.

Was there something unique in jazz which distinguished it from other musical idioms of the 1920s and 1930s? Why was jazz the first to attract so many serious followers?

Like a religious conversion ?

- Many European jazz musicians and enthusiasts have recalled how jazz came to them like a religious conversion. It changed their lives...
- The Finnish pianist Toivo Kärki told how the decisive experience in his life was hearing a Louis Armstrong record at a cafe in Tampere as a schoolboy in the early 1930s. Kärki remained true to the jazz faith for 15 years, then became a hugely successful record producer and tango composer...
- Similar events are repeated in many other memoirs

Let us now listen to the record which made Humphrey Lyttelton decide to become a musician. Why?



- Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra: "Basin Street Blues", 1933
- Issued in the UK on HMV B 4979
- (Humph could also be referring to the earlier Okeh version of 1928 which was issued in the Parlophone Rhythm Style Series ,R 531, 1930)

What was the secret of "hot jazz" ?

- Here is a challenge to today's jazz researchers. Can we take the tools provided by modern musicology for performance analysis and show what are the objective features which made this performance so distinctive?
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