

Thesis Of DLA Dissertation

Kristóf Bacsó

## The Characteristics of Bebop Style

Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music

28<sup>th</sup> Doctoral School of Arts and Cultural History

Budapest

2018

## **I. The Antecedents of this Research**

Musicologists date the age of modern jazz back to the birth of bebop style. Undoubtedly, bebop has made a noticeable impact on each and every latter trend in jazz, therefore through recognising and understanding the rhythmic concept, harmonic relationships and melodic phrasing born with the bebop musicians are enabled to follow and acquire any recent jazz style.

During the last fifty years the professional literature of jazz has been enriched by several excellent masterpieces, however, I have not read any among those that would approach and analyse the elements of bebop music in a systematic way.

Although, I could refer to David Baker's *How To Play Bebop* three-volume work of high-quality, and Corey Christiansen's *In the Style of Charlie Parker* notebook, these masterpieces highlight both melodic patterns and harmonic relationships, but do not reveal or attempt to explore the links between harmonic cords and melodic phrasing.

Considering the perspectives of Jazz History Thomas Owens's *Bebop and Its Players* és Scott DeVaux's *The Birth of Bebop* deal with the theme in appropriate details, but unfortunately, their conclusions are still not concise enough in general.

As far as the American theories on jazz are concerned I can list the following milestones: *The Berklee Book of Jazz Harmony* by Joe Mullholland and Tom Hojnacki, Darius Terefenko's *Jazz Theory* and Mark Levin's *Jazz Theory Book*. Also, among the Hungarian authors the most significant ones are: *Jazz* by János Gonda and *Jazzelmélet* by Pozsár Máté. Nevertheless, I must admit that even all these publications ignore the detailed theoretical inherence of stylistic characteristics of bebop.

## **II. Resources**

Primarily, I used either the recordings made in the contemporary period, or their transcriptions. While screening these transcriptions I completed it with literature containing the analysis of many solo details and theory such as *Charlie Parker* by Carl Woideck and

*Bebop and its players* by Thomas Owens. These works approach the examined music phenomena with a jazz history perspective. Additionally, the publications listed in the I. *Antecedence* supported my research with their vast amount of information.

### **III. Methodology**

In the first part of my research I present factual music phenomena illustrated with thematic details mostly.

My assumption is that the bebop musicians had edited their compositions with far more awareness than their improvisations. These comparisons lead me to the conclusions on the stylistic characteristics of bebop rhythmic concept, harmonic relationships and melodic phrasing.

In the second part of my research I focus on pieces composed by the most significant musicians of the period while underlining, referring back to the stylistic characteristics in practice defined in the first part.

#### **IV. Results / Findings**

As a result of my twelve-year tutoring experience it has crystallised in my mind that knowing the native language of bebop is crucial for a modern jazz musician because a better understanding its rhythmic concept, harmonic relationships and melodic phrasing enhances to acquire the latter styles of jazz music a great deal.

In my dissertation I tried to sum up all the stylistic characteristics of bebop. I do believe that the theoretical inherece classified in my thesis, then implemented in practice will definitely support to acquire bebop style.

As an additional product I compiled a glossary of a current professional language with definitions and Hungarian equivalentents where necessary.

## **V. List of Activities Related to the Theme of the Dissertation**

The musical phenomena described in my thesis can be found in my compositions below:

Kristof Bacsó Triad and Lionel Loueke: *Pannon Blue*. [CD] Budapest: BMC Records, 2017. (BMCCD232)

Modern Art Orchestra: *Circular. Modern Art Orchestra Plays The Music of Kristóf Bacsó*. [CD] Budapest: BMC Records, 2014. (BMCCD204)

Kristóf Bacsó Quartet: *Nocturne*. [CD] Budapest: BMC Records, 2012. (BMCCD195)

Kristóf Bacsó Quartet: *Alteregos*. [CD] Budapest: BMC Records, 2008. (BMCCD148)

In my tutoring experience I covered the following topics:

2012-2018 Franz Liszt Academy of Music, Jazz Department, Budapest  
Combo Practice, Improvisation Technics

2008 – 2012 Kodolányi János College, Arts Department, Székesfehérvár  
Jazz-Saxophone, Arranging, Combo Practice

2004 – 2012 Béni Egressy Music Secondary, School,

Budapest  
Jazz-Saxophone, Combo Practice

2009 International Jazz Workshop, Prague  
Jazz-Saxophone

2008 International Jazz Workshop, Prague  
Jazz-Saxophone