

**DLA doctoral thesis**

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**Classical music elements in the music of influential pianists in  
jazz history**

**Ferenc Liszt University of Music**

**Classification No. 28  
History of Art and Education**

**Budapest**

**2019**

## **I. History of the research**

Title of my thesis: Classical music influences in the art of outstanding pianists of jazz history. Extremely exciting, challenging material that adds interesting and valuable aspects to both jazz and classical musicians. The theme has always been the theme since the birth of the music style of jazz, as the two musical styles (jazz and classical music) were in constant interaction with each other, and that is the case today. This interaction resulted in a number of Gershwin masterpieces, but Ravel (Sonata No.2 for violin and piano, G major piano concert), Shostakovich (Suite No.1 and No.2 jazz ensemble), Milhaud (Trois rag caprices), Stravinsky (Ragtime 11 Musical instruments, Piano rag music), Hindemith (Suite für klavier), Prokofiev (3rd Piano Competition, Lot 2, Symphony No. 5), also show the effect of jazz.

From the jazz side, the classic musical effect can be said to be the beginning. The harmonies of jazz compositions appearing in the first musical form follow classic musical chord structures and threads. The birth of ragtime is a top example of this process. In later periods of jazz history, the jazz-forming effect of classical music has been active and active.

Duke Ellington's compositions consistently incorporate Debussy's harmonious solutions, while Art Tatum's piano play applied the technical and melodic elements of Czerny, Chopin, and Liszt in his virtuoso performance. As jazz expression tools evolved, they became more and more differentiated, so when Lennie Tristano, Bill Evans, and other bebop pianists listen, they are not just technical, harmonic, but also stylistic and stylistic. Such elements include imitation, complementary interaction of right and left hand, counterpoint, or complex chord structure, such as, for example, the alpha chord.

This fusion between the two musical styles has always been exciting and has been a full-fledged phenomenon for me. From the very beginning of my piano studies, I experimented with the improvisative substitution of the melody of Bach pieces, or with the chanting of jazz chords for the harmony of a classical piece of music. In the same way, a standard baroque performance of a jazz was also employed. This interest has been reinforced and confirmed by Keith Jarrett's play, in which the above-mentioned processes and ideas take place.

During my piano performance, I often experience the impact of the fusion of jazz and classical music on the interest of the audience. Both jazz students and those interested in classical music are watching these concerts with great attention, and the "rethinking" of classical pieces has become a successful musical enterprise. The most important aspect is creativity and taste, with which we "fuse" a classic composition. In addition, a thorough knowledge of both musical styles is required for this fusion.

During my teachings and master classes, I found that there is a significant gap between the students who work separately on the two styles. Jazz musicians generally lack compositional and constructive thinking. The snapshot of improvisation is the essence of jazz, but the form of a solo is no less essential, not to mention the melodic possibilities of different classical music.

Classical musicians, however, lack this momentum because their activities are largely reconstructive. A composition in a proper style, and an emotionally charged performance is one of the highest levels of music, but it cannot be complete without the knowledge of improvisation.

We can get a much more global picture of a classical piece of music if we try to understand harmonic and melodic events and, if necessary, create our own melody over the chords, Alternatively, replace the original with another chord. Of course, there is no need to "cultivate" this fusion activity at a high level, but my experience shows that this way of thinking can only be of benefit to all musicians. I have written several studies on the subject, and I had the opportunity to learn from the most prominent artists in the USA, and many master courses have provided a broad and comprehensive experience.

## **II. Source works**

Gonda János: Jazz. Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1965

Yurochko, Bob: A short history of jazz. Chicago: Burnham Inc/Publishers, 1993

Robinson-Martin, Trineice: Performance Styles and Musical Characteristics of Black Gospel Music. Journal of Singing. National Association of Teachers of Singing. May/June 2009

Goia, Ted: The history of jazz Oxford University Press, New York, 2011

Hatch, James V. and Hill, Errol G.: A History of African American Theatre. Cambridge University Press, 2003

Columbia University Jazz Glossary

Pressing, Jeff: Black Atlantic Rhythm: Its Computational and Transcultural Foundations. University of California Press, 2002

Schuller, Gunther: Early Jazz. Its roots and musical development. Oxford University Press 1968

Hinson, Maurice: Scott Joplin at the piano Alfred Publishing Company 2007

James Lester: Too marvelous for words Oxford University Press 1994

Gutman, Bill: The musical life of Duke Ellington 1977 Random House Books, London

Riley Jack: The harmony of Bill Evans 1992 Hal Leonard Corporation

Ernst, Berendt-Joachim: The jazz book, 1964 Paladin Books

Shim, Eunmi: Lennie Tristano: His life in music 2007 The University of Michigan Press , Ann Arbor

Nisenson, Eric: The making of kind of blue: Miles Davis and his masterpiece 2000 Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Ave, New York, NY

Lees, Gene: Bill Evans, essay, 1965

Carr, Ian: Keith Jarrett: The man and his music 1992 Da Capo Press

Articles, and online materials of interviews

Jazzpiano magazine, 2012. 04.

New York Times, 1999 februári, és júliusi száma (Brad Mehldau)

Huffington Post, 2012. 02. 15. (Keith Jarrett)

Washington Post, 1995. 01. 27. (Keith Jarrett)

The Guardian, 2018. 11. 4. (Keith Jarrett)

Down beat magazin, 1976. 10. 21. (Chick Corea)

### **III. Method**

In my dissertation I analyze the classical music effects that appear from the birth of jazz. Starting with the history, it is extremely important to know the structural, historical, and stylistic aspects of jazz in order to distinguish cliché music from the concepts of individual development. Furthermore, the history of jazz is also important because it is an excellent proof of the presence of classical musical elements from the very beginning.

Since I wrote my dissertation on classical music effects in jazz, I did not need a more thorough overview of classical music history.

During my music studies I had the opportunity to learn and in many cases learn the best-known works of classical music periods from Palestrina to Ligeti's pieces. At the same time, you are interested in jazz standards and improvisation, as well as in-depth knowledge of jazz musicians. This is how the artwork that served as the basis for the examples of classical music elements in jazz was developed. I could not imagine, without thorough knowledge, the identification of a classical musical phenomenon in a particular jazz composition. In my dissertation, I placed great emphasis on a detailed description of the studies and musical interest of the artist being analyzed.

It is no coincidence that the artists I have praised the two musical styles in their own way, because they have laid the groundwork for their studies and interest.

### **IV. Merits**

Káel Norbert: Caroussel (2012)

Keith Jarrett: The Köln Concert (1975) transzkripció (1996)

Káel Norbert: Voyage (2011)

Káel Norbert: Zongoraverseny (2009)

Jazzical trio: Duality (2016)

### **V. Documentation of activities related to the subject of the dissertation**

During my pedagogical activity, the following master courses were included in the topic of my dissertation:

2010 New York, USA, Juilliard School: Lecture on the use of classical music elements in jazz

2011 Boston, USA, Berklee College of Music: Presentation of the use of classical musical elements in jazz

2014 Cancun, Mexico, Vivaldi School of Music: Master course in improvisation techniques

2017 Detmold, Germany, Hochschule für musik: Mestrkursus improvisation approach to classic pieces

2017 Madrid, Spain, Real Conservatorio Superior: Master course on the use of improvisation techniques

2018 Calcutta, India, Calcutta School of music: Master course on jazz and classic improvisation elements

2018 Bilbao, Spain, Getxo conservatorio de la musica: Masterclass, improvisation techniques for classical pieces

2019 Mexico City, Mexico, Academy of Music: Jazz Improvisation Masterclass

Concerts on the topic of my dissertation:

Lincoln Center, New York, USA: Bartók will review your solo piano

Müpa, Budapest, Hungary: Jazz crossover, Jazzical trio concert

Balassi Institute, Moscow, Russia: Bartók, Kodály's recast solo piano

Musikhochschule, Detmold, Germany: Bach, Scriabin, and Bartók Recast Piano

Indira Gandhi Concert Center, Delhi, India: Bartók Revisions solo piano

Calcutta School of Music, Calcuta, India: Bach, Bartók, and Kodály Pieces Recast for a Piano

Cairo Music Festival, Cairo, Egypt: Classic and jazz crossover, Jazzical trio concert

Ateneo, Santander, Spain: Recast of Liszt, Scriabin, Bartók, and Kodály works for solo piano

Conservatorio Real Superior, Madrid, Spain: Jazz Standards in Classical Music Approach

solo piano concert

Academy of Music, Bucharest, Romania: Bartók's recasting piano concert

National Philharmonic, Chişinău, Moldavia: Recasting of Kodály pieces, solo piano

Academy of Music, Budapest, Hungary: Bartók, Kodály, and Hungarian folk music in jazz recast, Jazzical trio concert

