



FONDAZIONE ADKINS CHITI: DONNE IN MUSICA

N:B **WOMEN IN JAZZ**

These notes are based on the Foundation's research materials for books and articles about jazzwomen worldwide.

For simplicity we have divided these into six sections.

The text is in WORD in order to facilitate transition into documents for www.

In a separate file there are

1. General Introduction – Researching Women in Jazz
2. Brief History of Jazz – “blues women” – arrival in Europe
3. The Mediterranean: Women and Jazz in Italy and Turkey
4. Jazzwomen in Serbia, Germany and Great Britain
5. Final Reflections and suggestion for further reading
6. Bibliographies

Also enclosed is a link to an American Website for Women in Jazz. Although not omni-comprehensive of the subject, this could be included in own website as further study material.

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¹ Musician and musicologist, former Italian State Commissioner for Equal Opportunities, musicology and performing arts, consultant to universities and institutions. During UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Development Policies (Stockholm, 1998), she proposed clauses regarding women and children. In 1978, she created “*Donne in Musica*” and in 1996 the “*Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica*”, with a network of nearly 27 thousand women composers, musicians and musicologists in 113 countries and which commissions new works, promotes research and musical projects and maintains huge archives of women's music. She has written books and over 500 articles on women in music. In 2004 the President of the Italian Republic honoured her with the title of “Cavaliere Ufficiale”.

General Introduction – Researching Women in Jazz

“Only God can create a tree and only men can play jazz well”

(George T. Simon, author of “The Big Bands”, 1927”)

“Perhaps men believe that we haven’t got their talent or stamina. I’m sure our presence ruins that special atmosphere of “men only” ...at the end of the day, if you listen to a recording can you really decide whether the player is a man or a woman?”²

Female pioneers are usually forgotten and rarely recognized as being an integral part of the development of jazz even though historical evidence confirms that they have always been present. Women, as vocalists, pianists and composers of their own works, have seldom been studied in the histories of jazz, in encyclopaedias or even in jazz magazines. It’s sufficient to consider the systematic way in which jazz critics and historians (all of them men – with notable exceptions i.e. the Germans Ursel Schlicht and Dorothee Kaufmann and the British Jen Wilson and Catherine Parsonage), succeed in writing about jazz without ever mentioning women. Only in the last ten years have articles about Women in Jazz appeared on internet.

Certainly male authors remember the names of some female singers but even when they write about the “Blues”³, they ignore the fact that without female voices, this genre would never have existed. How many people really know that the first great recording hit in the United States was “Down Hearted Blues” by **Bessie Smith**, released in 1923 and with a sale of more than two million copies during the course of the next year? The “Empress of Blues”, was born in 1894 at Chattanooga, Tennessee, into a very poor family and she started as a singer on street corners and eventually became the symbol of emancipation for many Afro-American women. Before 1933 she had already recorded more than 160 songs and died in an accident in 1935. She is the only female singer to obtain “Hall of Fame” recognition for Blues and Rock and Roll.

The reasons why a female presence has been considered *uncommon or unusual* are above all because men have always considered this kind of music “theirs” and “a male genre” and even today jazzwomen worldwide underline that the Jazz world is probably the most

² The personal opinion of a woman musician who preferred not to be “named.”

³ **Blues** comes from the expression “blue devils” describing a melancholy mood and exasperation.

chauvinist of all. Furthermore we still know too little about the majority of performers (both men and women) active in North America in the period in which jazz arrived on this side of the Atlantic. The first European jazzmen and women copied the melodies, sounds and rhythms from any recordings that they could find. Nowadays, the possibilities and opportunities of studying jazz and of finding every recording that has ever existed have multiplied by the hundreds and can easily be found through research on the internet.

Few people depend as much for their self-image upon the opinion of others as do artists and intellectuals. Jean Paul Sartre underlined that *“there are qualities we acquire only through the judgement made by other people. This is particularly true for the quality ofan artist...which is so difficult to define because it exists only in and through co-optation understood within the “circular” mutual relationship among equals.”* When jazzwomen see that they are excluded from programming in important festivals, continually face difficulties in the production and promotion of their own recordings and when they read titles like *“Jazz in Pink”* or *“Rosy coloured notes”* they certainly do not feel understood, accepted, supported or helped.

Due to continuing lack of statistical documents it is difficult to know whether or not the contemporary women playing winds, reeds and drums have difficulty finding a job in the jazz circuits. Do we know how many jazzwomen are really well known as creative composers? How many have *“to set up”* their own group to guarantee some kind of continuity for their work and to eke out a living? From Donne in Musica’s view point there is still much research to be undertaken and a great deal of hard advocacy to be undertaken on behalf of jazzwomen worldwide.

One reason used as an *“excuse”* for not giving space and recognition to women musicians is the debate on *“creative qualities”*. In the last few years essays, newspaper articles and books have discussed gender differences between men and women when dealing with the same work, art form or emotional situation. This is a debate that is far from being resolved because every single artist and/or creator is unique and different from every other.

What is quite clear (and UNESCO has underlined this for years now) is that Equity for Women in the field of Jazz still has a long way to go!

All forms of creativity depend on multiple factors: age, race, religion, nationality or geographical area where the artist is born, where he/she trained, and aesthetical canons which have been transmitted throughout history, education and specialised training received, as well as many other external influences such as popular culture, economic conditions, climate and even biological age. Music is a global phenomenon and every musical system is at the same time a model and a model within the cultural system of which

it is a part. But the world in which women live as musicians and creative artists is anything but natural because the cultural and music sectors as a whole were not only created from an entirely masculine perspective, and built in such a way that the hegemony of male culture and social control continues.

Even if numbers confirm that there has always been a large number of women who have chosen to express themselves through jazz (and across Europe and in North America, Australia, South Africa and in Asia, there are female teachers and directors in schools and conservatory departments specialised in this field), those who write and promote a knowledge of the contribution which jazzwomen have made know that in jazz the concept of *equal opportunities* is still far from being understood or even achieved. We suggest that readers consult the large Bibliography (listed at the end) which should serve as useful material for further research projects.

Researching Women and Jazz

Research undertaken starting in 2008 for the Foundation's "*Women in Jazz*" volume was complicated because there are so few books or articles in influential and or trade magazines, anywhere in the world, which have given any serious consideration to *female creativity in jazz*. Many journalists and writers have used a paternalistic tone (when discussing the qualities and qualifications of women musicians and directors working in the field) and some have even questioned the need for *equal opportunities*.

During the preparation of the Foundation's book we found names, professional and personal information (in Italy alone) for over three hundred women who, since the last years of the nineteenth century, had been involved in the performance of *swing*,⁴ *blues* and *jazz*. Most were conspicuous by their absence from books and studies. To find names and further information about their personal lives and careers we consulted libraries, state and private archives, magazine collections, spoke with "*aficionados*", collectors and record companies and then invited contemporary and older "*jazz-women*" to speak up and out for themselves.

Using the Foundation's women in music network we uncovered a world parallel to that represented by, and for, men. We contacted musicologists, jazz musicians and composers in every country in Europe but found useful materials in only a few: Italy, Holland, Germany, Spain, Great Britain and Sweden and, naturally, had less difficulty in finding materials for jazzwomen in the United States or in Canada. Interestingly enough letters with requests for

⁴ Name given to the syncopated music of the 1930s and 1940s.

information sent to European Jazz Schools did not receive replies at all and successive research showed that many had no female teachers.

Brief history of Jazz and its arrival in Europe

Jazz history dates back to over four hundred years ago when the Dutch, Spanish, French, Portuguese and British were involved in the slave trade – the capture and transportation to the Americas and the Caribbean of approximately ten million Africans with origins, cultures and languages very different from one to another. It has been estimated that in 1750 African slaves already represented twenty per cent of the entire population in North America...

Naturally, every African took his or her own traditions to the New World, and these included music making, dancing (with rhythms far removed from those known in Europe) and religious rituals. In the coming centuries the majority of the North American slaves were converted to Christianity and continued to sing hymns inspired by their own popular music traditions. Today's "gospel" and "soul songs" have changed very little from those heard nearly two hundred years ago in the first African churches. These musical traditions led to many other forms of music which quickly spread well beyond the Afro-American population. "Blues", for example, were a natural evolution of the music of the slaves working in America's cotton fields.

In the online article "*Women of the Blues*" we read that the women "learned from show business peers, piano rolls, local musicians, Sunday School and church and in some cases such as Sippie Wallace and Victoria Spivey, from members of their families. They were more flexible and eclectic in their choice of texts and music than their rural counterparts because they had more sources to draw upon. Further, they were not mere mimics who imitated white-music hall singers, but were active participants in the evolution of the blues as it moved from countryside to the cities and back. They transformed their personal feelings into artistic expression, which bonded them to other black women, by mixing the ingredients of heartbreak and joy to create the songs that caused thousands of black people to flock to their shows and to buy their recordings. Through the blues, these women became the principal spokespersons for black women in the North and the South. Women's blues worked its way through the interpreter's personal experience; therefore, there was a divergence in style and depth of feeling from one singer to the next. The country style of Ma Rainey, for instance, was imbed with the horror and despair of floods, blight, or crop failure, as well as mistreatment by lovers. Her focus on topics familiar to southern rural folk was enhanced by her boisterous wit, which she displayed in live performances. Wallace and Spivey employed a modified country style but their subject matter had a definite urban

perspective. Nevertheless, both of them retained the style of singing and playing that they had developed back home in Texas. Ida Cox, Bessie Smith, and Clara Smith moved away from the country style and developed sophisticated, flexible blues styles that could handle the tough or slick sounds that city listeners were accustomed to. Yet, they employed the husky, throaty pathos, moans and groans which appealed to urban and rural blues listeners alike. This style -the city blues - grasped the issues of urban violence and neglect and rendered them in shouting, wailing, aggressive tempos and shadings.”

During the last years of the eighteenth century travelling bands, known as “*minstrel shows*”, played a crucial role in the development of what would become known as *jazz* because they gave Afro-Americans the opportunity of introducing white audiences to their music. These travelling groups included female pianists and instrumentalists who also worked in circuses and theatres during the carnival season. The life of a travelling woman Afro-American musician was hard, insecure and with a daily dose of harassment and discrimination because the colour of her skin added to the widespread attitude maintained by club managers (and their clientele) who considered woman on the circuit little better than a prostitute and *easy prey*.

It must be underlined that Afro-American women have been active since the mid 1800’s as singers, church organists and pianists, performers of spirituals, gospels, blues, and as teachers of every kind of instrument, from the accordion to the banjo, winds and reeds. They were conductors of school and parish bands and choirs, and active as authors and composers of piano music and hymns. Their musical activities were the result of the arrival in middleclass homes, churches and schools of the upright piano which meant that it was considered normal for American girls to play the piano, whatever her colour or background. The piano and the harmonium were status symbols and a thriving export system from Europe encouraged families to buy an instrument. At the same time printed music was readily available and the latest “*popular works*” were distributed quickly throughout North America and this explains why so many women fell under the spell of *ragtime*⁵ at the beginning of the twentieth century becoming amongst the most published authors of this kind of music. [For further information please visit the comprehensive bibliography from the “Women Composers in Ragtime” website]

From 1860 onwards schools and universities for freed slaves and their children were founded in many parts of America. In 1874 a group of singers and instrumentalists, “*The Fisk Jubilee Singers*” undertook their first concert tour in Europe, beginning in Wales, to

⁵ *Ragtime* is the piano style that became widespread from around 1870, starting in Saint Louis, combining drawing room music and European dance music with a banjo technique.

raise funds for the Fisk University of Nashville, Tennessee, established in 1866 to educate ex-slaves. The founders were men and women, musicians and teachers. From these beginnings generations of women musicians would be born.

Florence Beatrice Smith Price, born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1888, studied with composer George Chadwick at the New England Conservatory, and became one of the most influential composers of her time. After obtaining a degree, to avoid racial discrimination in the South, she moved to Chicago where she lived until her death in 1953. She was awarded national and international prizes and is remembered because she was the first Afro-American composer to take inspiration from her own people – *swing, ragtime, jazz* – together with the spirituals and dances of her ancestors. She composed symphonic, chamber and vocal music and devoted her life to teaching, thereby opening doors for others.

While Afro-American women taught in schools and played the piano and organ in drawing rooms and churches, the men in the communities formed *marching bands* to play for funerals, marriages and parties. Towards 1890, the number of *marching bands* decreased and *jazz bands* appeared in the taverns, clubs and meeting places (including street corners) of New Orleans with a line-up that included the cornet or trumpet, clarinet, trombone, bass tuba, banjo or guitar. Musicians in New Orleans (Louisiana) created *jazz* combining elements of their own music – work songs, spirituals, traditional tunes – together with *white* music, in practice brass instruments and harmonies together with dance and band tunes. *Dixieland*, born between 1900 and 1920, is an imitation of New Orleans jazz as seen and understood by white musicians.

In the twenties, women singers started to record “*blues*” with all-male bands, and other women, graduates from music schools and universities, where they had studied a variety of instruments and composition, played in hotel salons, cinemas and clubs.

In her essay for the “*Women in Jazz in Europe*” volume, “*American Women in Jazz*”, Sarah Ernst-Edwards⁶ comments that: “In her book, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, Angela Davis gives an idea of how three women, **Gertrude ‘Ma’ Rainey**, **Bessie Smith** and **Billie Holiday**⁷, were sources of inspiration to the sisters of years to come. They were symbols of black female independence. They spoke freely of ideas that were not discussed in the post-Emancipation era: desire, sexuality, assault, and freedom. Davis claims that this is an early example of the idea that the “*personal is political*.....In this post-Emancipation era, African-Americans were able to leave the plantations and attempt to immerse

⁶ Ms. Ernst-Edwards received her BA in Music at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, USA, where she performed in various jazz bands and co-founded the Smith College Jazz Ensemble. She studied jazz piano under Michele Feldheim and Andy Jaffe. In 1999 she co-produced a radio piece on women in jazz for the NPR internship.

⁷ (1915-1959) Vocal (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billie_Holiday/)

themselves into society. An important place to study this immersion is the port city of New Orleans, Louisiana. This multi-cultural area fostered new ideas and allowed the evolution of jazz, improvised music, rags and popular tunes. The famous Storyville, a section of town, provided a breeding ground for this new music. Saloons, brothels, dancehalls and legalized prostitution could be found there. Music was required in these venues and they often employed small groups in the jazz genre.⁸ Because of its association with this subculture, jazz was termed “*devil’s music*”.⁹ This was certainly not a place for a woman.

“*Because jazz...was seen as ‘dirty music/dance’, women who hung around in jazz clubs, sang, danced and drank alcohol, were also seen as ‘dirty’.*”¹⁰ “As a result, the music was largely male dominated and a masculine language was created to describe the music and the musicians. Examples of this language are the terms ‘*jazzmen*’ and ‘*young lions*’. It became a “*fraternity that both offer[ed] a refuge from the hostile or square-seeming outside world and which also provid[ed] camaraderie-cum-healthy competitiveness*”.¹¹

“Women vocalists were the first to take part in the jazz scene, they sang in choirs and soloists for the religious services and liturgies of the Afro-American churches..... Besides vocalists, the most common role for women on stage was at the piano. **Linda Dahl**, author of *Stormy Weather*, comments that the “*piano is one of the few instruments that seems more or less free of sex stereotypes*”.¹² It did not require any alteration of facial expression; the woman could sit demurely at the piano and play. The availability of the piano in many middle-class American homes at the turn of the century opened up opportunities to a host of potential female pianists.

“All female bands served as vehicles for women musicians to gain experience playing in a Big Band context. These groups, which began to take fire in the forties, gave players a solid experience and a living wage. However, though filled with talented women musicians, these bands were often viewed as “*novelty acts*”. To avoid appearing *unlady-like*, the horn players coloured their lips with semi-permanent red lipstick so that it wouldn’t smudge while playing. The most famous of these groups was the International *Sweethearts of Rhythm*, a multi-cultural group of women who gained success in the forties when there was a shortage of male musicians due to World War II. The *Sweethearts* had many top gigs by the mid-forties. They could be seen at the Savoy Ballroom in New York and at the Apollo. They disbanded after the war, as many big bands did in that era, due to changes in the economy

⁸ **Linda Dahl**, *Stormy Weather: The Music and Lives of a Century of Jazz Women* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984)

⁹ Dahl 7.

¹⁰ **Alexandra Blackbird**, *Blue O’Clock: Looking At Gender and Ethnicity through the Evolution of Jazz* (Thesis: Smith College, 1996) 33.

¹¹ Dahl x.

¹² Dahl 59.

and taste in music. This first well-known all-female band represents how successful women jazz musicians can be.”

Together with the invention of the phonograph, radio and cinema, Jazz transformed show business. New York, with its many theatres and clubs, was the centre of the American musical world and in the very heart of the city there was an area called “*Tin Pan Alley*”, where musicians could get their music heard by recording company managers and producers. The kind of song that was going to become famous with the tunes by Gershwin or Irving Berlin developed from a “*jazz, ragtime and popular music mix*”. Alongside the male composers there were women with nicknames such as “*the female Gershwin*” i.e. **Dana Suesse**¹³ and others like **Dorothy Fields**¹⁴, **Kay Swift**¹⁵, the first woman to write a “*show*” for Broadway, as well as **Ann Ronell**¹⁶, perhaps the most famous soundtrack composer in Hollywood (including those for the Walt Disney studios). These four women were an integral part of the “*music scene*” and their visibility and recognition within the business was important, and catalytic, for other women, while their music obtained an immense popularity, unheard of before, leading to them being considered “*classics*” or “*evergreens*”

The Great Depression of the nineteen thirties was a disaster for both men and women musicians; in order to make any kind of a living musicians created different kind of bands, some with wind instruments only. *Swing* arrived and could be heard in shows and concerts in all the Broadway theatres and then, thanks to radio networks, throughout North America. The small band sometimes redeveloped into the *big band* with attractions as soloists, singers and even dancers led by famous *bandleaders*. Sadly forgotten, but very popular in those years, were the female *combos* such as the “*Harlem Playgirls* (an Afro-American band) and that of **Blanche Calloway**, sister to Cab Calloway and the first woman to become leader of a male *big band* “*Blanche Calloway and Her Joy Boys*”, She was only one

¹³ **Dana Suesse**, (1909 - 1987, New York] Musician, composer and author of lyrics. “*My Silent Love*” and “*You Oughta Be in Pictures*” are her most popular songs. In 1936, with authors Irving Kahal and Billy Rose, she wrote “*The Night is Young and you’re so beautiful*”. She studied piano with Liszt’s last student, Alexander Siloti and composition with Rubin Goldmark and **Nadia Boulanger**.

¹⁴ **Dorothy Fields** (1905 - 1974) librettist and author of lyrics, she wrote more than 400 songs for Broadway. She was famous for over fifty years working with all the great film business professionals. Among her songs “*I Can’t Give You Anything But Love*”, “*On the Sunny Side of the Street*,”; she worked with Jerome Kern for “*Swing Time*”, “*A Fine Romance*”, “*The Way You Look Tonight*” and with Cy Coleman: “*Big Spender*” and “*If My Friends Could See Me Now*”

¹⁵ **Kay Swift** (1897– 1993) Her highly prolific career lasted for seventy years and included music for shows, ballets, orchestrations for instrumental ensembles, arrangements for other popular composers’ pieces up to TV shows. After George Gershwin’s death she completed many of his scores and much of his music otherwise would have been lost.

¹⁶ **Ann Ronnell** (1906 - 1993), studied at *Radcliffe College* and at *Cambridge* in the United States; a singer and composer who became well known for having written operas and cult movie themes in the 1930s and 1940s such as *Champagne Waltz*, *Algiers* and *Commandos strike at dawn*. Together with Dorothy Fields she was one of the first women in Hollywood. She is the author of the first Disney hit, *Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?* (1933)

among a large number of women (Afro-American and White) who worked with *big bands* at that time

Blanche Calloway (February 9, 1904 - December 16, 1978) was a singer and a composer from Baltimore, Maryland. Active as bandleader, she had a first contract with the Andy Kirk Band before starting her own. She recorded with many different bands until her conversion to Christian Science in 1939. From the 1950's to the 1970s she worked as a DJ and was first director of music programmes for the WMBM radio network in Florida.

During the Second World War, with many men (including musicians) drafted into the army, navy and air force, North American music was left in female hands and the war period saw the creation and development of all *women bands* working full-time for the radio, in hotel salons and clubs, and even in department stores. They recorded, took part in films and even went to Europe to play for the U.S. troops. But when at war end men returned home, women had to leave the spotlight and find temporary work or stay at home.

Bebop arrived between the forties and fifties. Women musicians and singers who had worked in jazz bands joined forces to create "*combos*". Participation, by men and women, in these groups and in *sessions* would lead to the *cool jazz* of the fifties and sixties. In the seventies the first Festivals for women in jazz were held beginning in Kansas City, in 1978. This was followed by the annual Women and Jazz festivals in New York, followed in Europe with festivals for improvisation and more recently by the "*Donne in Jazz*" series run by "Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica".

Jazz officially crossed the Atlantic during the First World War and by 1919 was referred to, throughout Europe, as "*modern music*". Many countries had their first contact with this new art form during the last years of the nineteenth century (for example the concert tours by the *Fisk Jubilee Singers* beginning in 1874). In 1904 Italy hosted a company of Creole singers and dancers "*I creatori del Cakewalk*"¹⁷. In Spain, thanks to frequent contacts with Central America and the Caribbean, *ragtime* and *cakewalk* were already popular in the 1890's and in 1907, a variety show "*Atracciones Internacionales*", with all the latest American tunes and rhythms and singer Raquel Meller (famous for having refused a contract with Charlie Chaplin) arrived in Madrid.

France, after an initial impact with the *cakewalk* at the "*Nuovo Cirque*" in 1903, was introduced to the "*musique nouvelle*" thanks to public concerts given by the American military band led by James Reese Europe, an Afro-American musician, arranger, composer and director, who later toured and presented concerts throughout Western Europe.

¹⁷ A dance from the cotton fields, launched in a public show in 1877, became the most popular dance of those times.

James Reese Europe, (1881 – 1919) army officer and bandleader of the 369th Regiment had first sought out excellent Afro-American musicians for his band for which he then arranged a large number of jazz works. The 369th was the first Afro-American regiment to land in France after the United States' entry into the First World War and upon arrival faced two hundred days of fighting in trenches. The soldiers earned themselves the epithet "*Harlem Hell fighters*" and the regiment received the French Cross of Honour for its bravery. When not fighting, the band gave jazz concerts, and later, with the arrival of peace, toured through Europe gaining well-earned popularity before returning in triumph to the United States.

The Mediterranean: Women and Jazz in Italy and Turkey

Jazz arrived in Italy thanks to the musicians who had worked abroad during the early years of the century and the first Italian bands were those set up by a drummer who had worked in English hotels and clubs, «*Mirador*», in 1918 with his “*Syncopated Orchestra*”. In 1920, in Milan, saxophonist Carlo Benzi founded the “*Ambassador’s Jazz Band*” followed by those of guitarist Michele Ortuso, educated in the United States, and of composer Pippo Barzizza. However, the greatest momentum for this “*modern music*”, in Italy, as in other parts of Europe, coincided with the *Swing Era*, in the mid 1930s, and the catalytic agent was a creative accordion player and composer, Gorni Kramer, whose enthusiasm was responsible for the ensuing arrival, and success, of *jazz* in Italy.

In the course of a radio programme in early 1926, the famous opera composer Pietro Mascagni¹⁸ defined jazz as a “*barbaric, opiate and cocaine addicted*” phenomenon. Composer Alfredo Casella¹⁹ countered with: “*nowadays jazz is the only music undoubtedly with a twentieth century style. Among many trends in which every composer has his say and nobody is capable of giving give post war humanity a musical style that reflects the new way of thinking, jazz is giving serious musicians a genuine and great lesson*”.

Notwithstanding these difficulties from 1939 to the early forties jazz was played regularly in the “*Sala Campari*” in Milan with Enzo Ceragioli²⁰’s band.

An official Italian State Decree published on the 14th June, 1929, sets out an extraordinary list of musical works that were not considered in line with “*national order and are dangerous for morality and dignity*”. Absent from the list are those which belong to the field of jazz and this is because, yes, the works were known and played, but no, the titles were not in English. They were *Italianised* because the Ministry of Fascist Culture (“*Minculpop*”), forbade the use of English words. Music publishers translated the names of performers into Italian and Louis Armstrong²¹ was transformed into *Luigi Bracciaforte*, Benny Goodman²² was *Beniamino Buonuomo*, the “*Quintette du Hot Club de France*” was “*I*

¹⁸ (Livorno December 7, 1863 – Rome August 2, 1945) opera composer and conductor. He became popular in 1890 with the masterpiece “*La Cavalleria Rusticana*”

¹⁹ (Turin July 25, 1883 – Rome March 5, 1947) composer of symphonic music and pianist.

²⁰ (Seravezza October 1, 1908 – Milan June 10, 1999) conductor, composer, pianist, organist and arranger. From 1933 he conducted at Forte dei Marmi in a dance and jazz band.

²¹ He was known as Satchmo (New Orleans August 4, 1901 – New York July, 1971) and is the most popular jazzman of the twentieth century, famous worldwide as a trumpet player and later as a singer.

²² Benjamin’s stage-name (Chicago May 30, 1909 – New York June 18, 1986) clarinet player and bandleader. From the 1930s with the success of his Big Band he was considered one of the leaders of swing.

Cinque Diavoli del Ritmo”, while the “Three Niggers of Broadway” became “*Tre italiani in America*”. Even worse was the Italianisation of the titles of works which changed the “Saint Louis Blues” into “*Le tristezze di San Luigi*”, “Stompin’at the Savoy” into “*Savoiardì*”, “Sonny Boy” into “*Dormi bimbo mio adorato*”, while “Honeysuckle Rose” was “*Pepe sulle rose*” [which literally translated means pepper on roses] and a classic like “Blue moon” became “*Luna malinconica*”.

Jazz was considered “*subversive*” throughout the Fascist period and it was not until the end of the Second World War that Italians could freely listen to live “*swing*” music played by popular American groups and Army bands. The circulation of commercial recordings started again and these popularised the voices and talents of American jazz stars. At the end of the 1940s a first series of national commercial recordings arrived on the Italian market produced by Roberto Nicolosi, a radio personality who had introduced listeners to a successful series of programmes entitled «*La galleria del jazz*» (“*The Jazz Gallery*”) as early as summer 1945. Audience ratings contrast the belief that jazz only became popular at the end of the 1960s. Musicians throughout the peninsula made their own jazz recordings passing them off as originals although in actual fact most were transcriptions, translations and “*re-presentations*” of American music.

In Naples three jazz fans, Sergio Cotugno, Tito and Antonio Livio created the Circolo Napoletano del Jazz (“*Neapolitan Jazz Circle*”) and on the 30th April 1954, at the Circolo della Stampa (“*Press Club*”) opening concerts were given with singer **Lillian Terry** although journalists seemed far more interested in her appearance than in her performance. Jazz was suddenly everywhere; in private homes, music and night clubs, variety theatres, and, of course, on the radio. Some women jazz singers were very successful, in particular vocalist **Lucia Mannucci** a member of the famous “*Quartetto Cetra*”, **Miranda Martino** in Livio Cerri’s “*Jazz in microsolto*”, **Lidia Martorano** who worked with Lelio Luttazzi, and **Caterina Valente**, star of the 1955 Paris “*Salon du Jazz*” .

The greatest talent to emerge in this period was Catania born **Dora Musumeci**, (1934 - 2004). The daughter of Totò Musumeci, a violinist in the orchestra of the “*Massimo Bellini*” Theatre, with passion for jazz and swing, she was introduced to music by her father who encouraged her to perform in public with a small accordion, while still a child. Musumeci graduated from the “Conservatorio di S. Pietro a Maiella” in Naples but felt constrained by the inflexible rules for classical music, and realized this was not her world when she finally discovered jazz. “*Musica Jazz*” reviewed a concert held on the 10th December 1952 at the *Turin Jazz Club* ... “The revelation was a seventeen year old pianist from Catania, Dora Musumeci, with an outstanding technique and a very rare elegance. Her performances

threw the audience into raptures. She knows her stuff and what very good stuff it is too!". In 1955, they again reviewed her, this time talking about her recordings ... "Dora Musumeci has assimilated the spirit and ideas of modern jazz players..... What is important is the ability of this young woman and the free and easy manner with which she plays and expresses herself These are her first important performances.... There is a promise of an even better tomorrow when some styles and ideas taken from others will be substituted with her own." She performed extensively for musical festivals, on the radio and throughout Europe and Australia receiving an *Honour for Merit* from the Italian President.

In recent times, many other women singers and instrumentalists have obtained success in Italian and International jazz circuits usually after initial training in Italian conservatories followed by a period of study in the United States: these have included **Rita Marcotulli, Maria Pia de Vito, Cinzia Gizzi, Cinzia Tedeschi, Tiziana Ghiglione and Donatella Luttazzi.**

Thanks to this generation of women musicians Italy now has jazz courses in many conservatories and universities. Almost all are authors of their own music, which mirrors what is happening in every other field of music, the "*blending and merging of genres*".

Historically, jazz always combined and incorporated different kinds and sources of music and, in particular, beginning in the fifties, even included Latino music, rock, soul, funk, fusion and "*world*". In the last twenty years, many musical genres such as folk, Indian, pop, classical, ethnic, and even techno, have blended, with more or less success, into the language of jazz. Although purists do not approve, this "*state of the art*" mirrors the current fragmentation and globalisation of contemporary music and also reflects a creative world in which women musicians are fully involved.

Women's Bands in Italy have always been sporadic even during the seventies and eighties, when Italian feminism was very active. There are two fundamental reasons for this beginning with the lack of women musicians playing the instruments necessary for all-girl bands. While Italy has always produced female singers, pianists, string, wind and reed players (due to the centuries long tradition of chamber orchestras and wind bands throughout the peninsula as well as employment for women with Military Bands), Italy has few female drummers, bass players and even fewer who want to organise a band. On the other hand there are no full-time male (or mixed) jazz bands, due to the precarious nature and lack of publicly organised circuits for Italian music ensembles of any kind. Occupation in jazz means occasional performances for private clubs, concert series, festivals and occasional "*gigs for promotional events, trade fairs, and political conventions*".

Women and Music in Turkey

Jazz composer and performer Selen Gülün²³ discusses the history of Jazz in Turkey in “*The Turkish Republic and Women Music Creators*” for a forthcoming book entitled “*Women and Music in Turkey*”.

“Jazz entered Turkey at a relatively early stage in 1920 and later, in the 1960’s, provided musical and stylistic support to the *tango*, *kanto*, and *operetta* genres of Turkish pop music. In those days, the word *caz* was used to describe foreign dance music and *cazbant* (literally, jazz band) to describe orchestras playing popular foreign music.¹² Jazz started out being performed by musicians and bands visiting from abroad for concerts as well as by Armenian and Jewish citizens. From the 1940’s onwards various Turkish jazz bands were set up and started performing at night clubs. The Tevs sisters were among the female pioneers who earned recognition by singing with these bands. Sevim Tevs and her sister, **Sevinç Tevs** performed at the Şoray Cinema in 194.¹³ With Turkey’s entry into NATO in the 1950s and the arrival of American soldiers, jazz music became popular. This led to the creation and growth of more jazz bands and the arrival of even more female singers like **Ayten Alpman**, **Rüçhan Çamay**, and **Tülay German**¹⁴ who sang with the bands and packed concert halls. “While jazz performance was important in the 1960s, and was influenced by American Jazz in the seventies, the first attempts to produce fusion music with Turkish influences began; audiences paid attention and this music became popular. After the eighties, although some women musicians specialized in performing and playing different musical instruments, the great majority of women musicians in Turkey became singers, as in the rest of the world.One of the few books about jazz in Turkey is Özge Baykan’s *The Women of Jazz (Caz Kadınları)* ¹⁵ and this talks about the lives and music of 32 women musicians, all of whom are jazz singers.

“Today I am one of the few musicians who has been composing and performing jazz in

²³ **Selen Gülün** (Mersin, 1972), composer, pianist, vocalist, arranger, teacher and researcher. In 1996, she received a talent scholarship to study at the Berklee College of Music in the United States and graduated in Jazz in the Composition department in 1998. She completed her master in music at the MIAM-Istanbul Technical University Centre of Advanced Studies in Music. She has been teaching Piano performance, Music Theory and Composition courses at the Istanbul Bilgi University’s Music department since 1998. In 2011 she was “*scholar in residence*” in Italy with Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica where she began research regarding Turkish women composers and creators of music. .

¹² Yaprak Melike Uyar, “*Women in Jazz Music in Turkey: Gender-Based Approaches to Music Performance*”, *Porte Akademik Journal of Music and Dance Research*, V: 6 (2013), pp.86–97.

¹³ **Sevinç Tevs** (1930, Ankara – 1976), *Singer*. First Turkish woman Jazz singer to be internationally recognized. She graduated from the Ankara State Conservatory Voice and Theatre departments. Together with her sister *Sevim Tevs*, she became famous by singing popular songs of the day on Ankara Radio. Despite being a famous singer abroad and having a broad coverage on TRT and BBC archives, she did not have an album released.

¹⁴ **Ayten Alpman** (İstanbul, 1929 – İstanbul, 2012); **Rüçhan Çamay** (İstanbul, 1931); **Tülay German** (İstanbul, 1935)

¹⁵ Özge Baykan, *Women of Jazz*, Altıkitap, İstanbul, 2011; Özge Calafato, *Turkish Voices in Jazz: A Rare Collection* (2012), <<http://altzine.net/index.php/alt-ses/baslang-c-ndan-buguenueene-tuerkiye-den-caz-vokal-ozel-koleksiyon-ozge-calafato-calma-listesi>>, (12.10.2015).

Turkey since the 1980s. I would like to use a more personal tone when talking about this period and will start out by mentioning two jazz pianists who were true examples for me. In the 1980s, when I was still a student and the Turkish TV had only one channel, I used to see live broadcasts of jazz concerts by **Nükhet Ruacan**, **Neşet Ruacan**, and **Nilüfer Verdi**. Playing the piano was Nilüfer Verdi, whose surname was Ruacan at the time as she was married to Neşet Ruacan. What I saw was a jazz quartet with woman vocalists and pianists. Music improvisation excited me from an early age. I do not remember finding a woman pianist strange, and, on the contrary, as this was the only example of a pianist that I saw, it was normal for me. Similarly, I remember how excited I was about going to concerts of “*Mozaik*”, founded by my aunt’s close friend, **Ayşe Tütüncü**, who played both the synthesizer and the piano and sang with the band. So as I started playing this music I wanted to share it with other people. For me, **Ayşe Tütüncü** and **Nilüfer Verdi** are key figures in my career. Due to the lack of a specific music school for jazz in Turkey, specific to the genre that would later become our careers, all three of us started our education in schools focused on Western Classical Music or with private tutors.

“The scarcity of schools providing jazz music education - and the lack, thereof, for a long period of time - led to musicians being educated in the old system: the apprenticeship model. Therefore, it was impossible for girls to be supported by their families in a musical genre that was also culturally difficult to accept and to work with suitable instructors before the opening of jazz schools. With the Republican era in Turkey, female students were encouraged to play all sorts of musical instruments, particularly for Western Classical Music, to receive a conservatory education and to undertake musical careers. But it was a different story when it came to jazz. I think that many families were concerned about their daughters going into jazz, probably due to the dominance of improvisation in this genre.

“The first institution to offer university level jazz music education was the Jazz Department that opened in the Bilkent University’s Music and Performance Arts Faculty in the early 1990s. Although this first attempt did not last very long, the opening of the Istanbul Bilgi University’s Music Department with the aim of creating popular music led to a significant increase in the number of educated professional jazz musicians. The opening of Bilgi Music, at a private university with ample resources, created a suitable environment in which woman jazz musicians could receive the education they had dreamed of and also help them to create their own music. Jazz education became more established with the opening of other schools and departments such as the Yildiz Technical University’s Music and Performing Arts Department, the Hacettepe University Ankara State Conservatory’s Jazz Department, the Yasar University’s Music Department, the Bahcesehir University’s Jazz

School and the Modern Music Academy. The fact that most of the woman musicians creating and performing their own music since the 2000s either graduated from these schools or are continuing their studies there shows the importance of this issue.

Jazzwomen in Serbia, Germany and Great Britain

Interestingly jazz singers (followed by pianists and other instrumentalists) appeared in public far later in central and southern Europe than those in the north and “*female jazz participation*” was even later in Eastern Europe. However, even today in 2016, the Danish magazine “*Jazzspecial*” has no female critics and the same is true of every other Jazz magazine in Europe.....Copenhagen Jazz Festival 2013 had a few female singers and almost no female instrumentalists in their huge programme.....

“The first live performance of foreign jazz in Serbia took place in 1956. Although that was quite late compared to Western Europe, Belgrade was for a long time among the rare places in Eastern Europe where jazz music was publicly heard due to the fact that Yugoslavia (with Serbia as one of its constitutional territories) was not among the countries under the Iron Curtain. The history of jazz and blues composers in Serbia is an almost completely male history. Only amongst the youngest authors can we find figures of women who have significant careers - **Ana Popovic** (composer and guitarist) on the blues scene, and **Jasna Jovicevic** (composer, saxophonist and flautist) on the jazz scene. The department for jazz in the Stankovic secondary music school in Belgrade has been for a long time, the structure offering the highest level of jazz education in Serbia.”

(Mapping the Cultural History of Women Composers in Serbia - the Scream beyond Asymptote, Jelena Novak,²⁴ in “Women and Music in Serbia” Del Gallo Editore srl, Spoleto (PG) 2011)

„1924 – The golden year of Jazz. (...) Germany’s professional musicians make up „Kombinations-Kapellen“, who play Jazz-, Classical or Swing and change costumes between „Black, Dress and Velvet“ (...) And then the „Lady-Jazz-Mood-Orchestra“(„Damen-Jazzband-Stimmungs-Orchester“): [front singer] Else, best experienced Jazz musician of today, smart appearance, beautiful voice.“²⁵

German researcher Anna-Selina Sander²⁶ has underlined that “*Damenkapellen - Women’s orchestras*” were first heard in Germany around 1870: “They played dance and classical

²⁴ **Jelena Novak** is a musicologist, cultural analyst and theorist of art and media lecturing and writing on contemporary performing arts, especially recent opera. Novak is member of CHINCH, Initiative for Research and production of Contemporary Music. She worked as music editor at Radio Belgrade 3, and as music critic to Belgrade daily newspaper Danas and weekly Vreme.

²⁵ Hans-Jürgen Schaal: Fuchstänze und Negerpfeifen -Vor 80 Jahren war Deutschland Jazzland, 2004

²⁶ **Anna-Selina Sander** was born in 1982 and studied the history of art, musicology and education in Hamburg.

entertainment music, with instrumentation close to a chamber orchestra. The members were mainly female, which made them very popular with their audiences but they offended many people. The women's reputation was bad; they were often considered immoral and of easy virtue. The Damenkapellen hardly survived the First World War and vanished during the 1930s. Nevertheless, this kind of orchestra is still present today. Research in an Internet search engine reveals websites of several all-women jazz orchestras. Inspired by both the women orchestras of the end of the 19th century in Germany and the cultural spirit of the age of Swing in the years from 1920 to 1940, several women jazz musicians decided to set up orchestras themselves. To catch this Swing spirit, they concentrate on jazz and big band music as well as their own music style and try to “sell” a particular image with special stage costumes and accessories.”

Catherine Parsonage and Kathy Dyson²⁷ have described the origins of female jazz bands in Great Britain in an essay for “*Women in Jazz in Europe*”:

“The history of jazz in Britain has been scrutinised in notable publications including Parsonage (2005) *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain, 1880-1935*, McKay (2005) *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain*, Simons (2006) *Black British Swing* and Moore *Inside British Jazz*. This body of literature provides a useful basis for specific consideration of the role of women in British jazz..... Any consideration of this topic must necessarily foreground **Ivy Benson**²⁸, who played a fundamental role in encouraging and inspiring female jazz musicians in Britain through her various ‘all-girl’ bands. Benson was born in Yorkshire in 1913 and learned the piano from the age of five. She was something of a child prodigy, performing on Children’s Hour for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) at the age of nine. She also appeared under the name of ‘*Baby Benson*’ at Working Men’s Clubs (private social clubs founded in the nineteenth century in industrial areas of Great Britain, particularly in the North, with the aim of providing recreation and education for working class men and their families). Benson was taught a range of instruments by her father who played in the Leeds Symphony Orchestra and in pit bands and musical comedy ensembles. She specialised on clarinet and alto saxophone, and preferred popular music to the chagrin of her father who wanted her to be a classical pianist, still considered a more

²⁷**Catherine Parsonage** is Head of the Centre for Jazz Studies UK and Senior Lecturer at Leeds College of Music. She teaches critical musicology, popular music and jazz on undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Her book *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain 1880-1935* was published by Ashgate in 2005. She is co-editor of the Jazz Research Journal and member of editorial board of Studies in Musical Theatre.

Kathy Dyson is a jazz guitarist, composer and teacher working in the North West of England and currently Senior Lecturer in Jazz at Leeds College of Music. She has researched processes surrounding the learning of jazz improvisation and how to facilitate it effectively and creatively and is also active in the British Musician’s Union as Vice Chair of its Executive Committee.

²⁸ **Ivy Benson**: Born Leeds, Yorkshire, 11 November 1913 Died Clacton, Essex, 6 May 1993.

appropriate musical outlet for young girls at that time. She worked in a shop for a while, playing in her spare time, and spent several years in *Edna Croudson's Rhythm Girls*, a Yorkshire-based sextet, before moving to London where she became featured soloist with the band *Teddy Joyce and his Girlfriends*.

“Encouraged by Jack Hylton, Benson formed the original ‘*Ivy Benson Rhythm Girls*’ which appeared in an all girl revue called *Meet the Girls* starring comedienne Hylda Baker in 1940. Following this, Benson organised bands of different sizes known variously as ‘*Rhythm Girls*’, ‘*Ladies Orchestra*’ and latterly ‘*Showband*’, and sometimes including a string section, for the rest of her career. The circumstances of World War Two, with many male musicians going off to fight, meant that Benson’s groups had many opportunities to perform around the country at ballrooms and theatres, and also at military bases under the auspices of the Entertainments National Servicemen’s Association (ENSA). At the same time the number of girls who married visiting American GI’s and left the band was a significant problem for Benson. She recruited many of her players (including Gracie Cole, see below) from brass bands, ensembles particularly popular in the North of the country where they were formed within the communities surrounding collieries and other industrial sites.....1943 was a significant year for the band, with a 22 week residency at the London Palladium, a top venue for variety performances in the capital, on the same bill as comedian Max Miller and popular piano duo Rawicz and Landauer. In the same year the Rhythm Girls were contracted as a BBC House Band, based in Bristol in South West England. Whilst some male bandleaders including Jack Hylton and Joe Loss were always supportive of Benson, this booking caused outrage amongst many male musicians. Shelia Tracy recalled ‘*The male bandleaders didn’t want to know her, they loathed her guts. And the reviews for the first broadcast were vitriolic.*’ (quoted in O’Brien, 2002:37). Nevertheless, the Rhythm Girls returned to the Palladium on the top of the bill for six months in 1944 and performed as part of the “*Jazz Jamboree*” at the Stoll Theatre in London. In 1946 the band was booked for the first post war broadcasts on the BBC. Again sexism reared its ugly head when the Stoll Theatre group who provided Ivy with much work, threatened to cancel her contracts if she went ahead with the broadcasts, apparently ‘*fearful of the repercussions of this All Girl phenomenon*’ (Ravenhill, 2007). In retaliation, Benson took the band on their first European tour to Berlin with ENSA. This began a regular series of visits to American bases in Germany and extensive tours all over Europe and to the Middle East. By continuing to focus on the nostalgic sounds of the war years Benson’s band survived the changes that took place within the music industry in the 1950s, including the downsizing of bands and the introduction of rock and roll. She had to change the band’s name to Ivy Benson and her

Showband due to the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act which made discrimination against women or men illegal in the workplace - she joked that any man could join the band if they could fit into a 10-16 sized dress! (Ravenhill, 2007). During her last years, the band played mainly for private functions with the last gig at the Savoy Hotel in London in 1982.”

"Benson's band was by no means the first all-female ensemble in Britain, and the roots of the concept can be traced back to at least the late nineteenth century. Judith Tick observes the increasing ease of access to a musical education (including at conservatoire level) for women during the nineteenth century and their subsequent entry into the profession, noting that *'Whereas in 1841 around 13.7% of the musicians and music teachers in England were female, by 1891 the figure was around 50%, and in 1921 it climbed to 76%'*.

“However, professional possibilities for women instrumentalists at the turn of the century were restricted to music teaching as they were *'excluded from professional orchestras, from conducting posts, from positions in universities and from the professional musical life of the Church'* (Fuller, 1992 cited in Tick). This situation led to the founding of several all-female orchestras and chamber groups around the turn of the century, as well as all-female ensembles with more mainstream repertoire which performed in theatres, department stores, restaurants and popular cafes such as the Lyons Corner Houses which sprang up in London at this time (Gillett, 2000:190). Greta Kent confirms the widespread popularity of Ladies Orchestras at this time (cited in Wilson, 1996:43).

“Both the concept and reality of jazz in early twentieth century Britain was closely linked with the contemporaneous emancipation of women. When the word *'jazz'* began to appear in print in Britain (prior to the arrival of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band in London 1919) it was used more frequently as a verb than a noun to denote a new, freer, style of dance. It is no coincidence that the term *'jazzing'* was also used as a metaphor for sexual activity (Parsonage, 2005:21). Some women had gained not only the right to vote in 1918 (although it was not until ten years later that they were granted the same voting rights as men) but also social and sexual freedom during the First World War where circumstances allowed more informal contact with men. Subsequently, many women were determined to live life to the full in the spirit of the post-War *'Jazz Age'*. Dance halls and nightclubs were at the centre of the fashionable world, and jazz provided the soundtrack to free expression of a new female identity through dancing and dress, and more problematically, promiscuity and consumption of alcohol and drugs. (Parsonage, 2005:41-42)

“Women were active as musicians in jazz and dance bands both alongside men and in all-female groups as well as in the position of bandleader, especially in regional communities outside London. For example, Benson *alumnus* Eunice Cox recalled that her mother led a

band in the Nottingham area in the 1930s (Ravenhill, 2007). The jazz magazine *Melody Maker*, published in London from 1926, provides a snapshot of the considerable extent of female participation in British jazz (see Wilson, 1996: Chapter 2). In the years between the wars all-girl bands were extremely popular and successful. Jen Wilson discusses the example of Ynet Miles and *Her All Ladies Band*, who won the Greater London Open Dance Band Contest in 1927. Some of these groups were led by women such as Blanche Coleman, Gloria Gaye and Dorothy Marno, and others by men including Teddy Joyce, Don Rico and Rudy Starita. Whilst British jazzwomen were often appreciated for their musical abilities, critics would also tend to focus on matters of appearance. For example, Ynet Miles's band was praised not only for their performance, but also '*their silver frocks made a charming picture which was possibly the cause of the downfall of many of the male competitors*'. (quoted in Wilson, 1996:54). Wilson points out that female were often paid less than men and were subject to persistent discrimination by critics, employers and even the Musicians' Union.

"Although Ivy Benson's bands were remarkably successful in Britain and Europe over a forty year period, her story demonstrates that whilst there have always been men who have championed, supported and encouraged women jazz players there are also many who, albeit often implicitly, have done the opposite. Benson's bands provided important opportunities for in excess of 250 women to have high-profile careers in music, and it was not until the 1950s that significant numbers of women began to sustain these independently, performing alongside men at the highest levels. The impact that Benson had on the scene and the development and training of a whole generation of young British players, particularly '*the inspiration and empowerment that Benson seemed able to transmit to her musicians around female music making*' (McKay, 2005:283) should not be underestimated. Many women who were given their first break in the Benson band went on to become major British jazz artists. However, the all-girl format also served to increasingly restrict the band to being a nostalgic novelty, with the latter years spent performing at military bases and holiday camps.

"With this in mind, is interesting to note that later Benson *alumni* '*graduated*' and formed their own all-female groups which have provided opportunities for the explicit or implicit expression of feminist ideologies. **Deirdre Cartwright**²⁹ explained in a recent interview that she was first drawn to the guitar by Marc Bolan's performances with the English rock band *TRex* and noted the absence of female role models in the early 1970s when she began

²⁹ Born London, 27 July 1956

playing. She was self-taught, picking up ideas about jazz from gigs, recordings, books and magazines such as *Melody Maker*. Whilst acknowledging the importance of Ivy Benson's band, with whom she recorded in 1976, as the only professional women's band at the time which provided a good source of income along with good engagements for female musicians, Cartwright was liberated by the spirit of second wave feminism to find her own musical voice as a female guitarist (not just a guitarist). In the mid-1970s she started to play in a band called *Jam Today* with pianist **Laka Daisical**³⁰ and also met bassist **Alison Rayner**³¹, who she continues to work with to this day. *Jam Today* played mainly covers, blues, Latin and funky tunes. She also met saxophonist **Ruthie Smith**³² who introduced her to the London left wing feminist political field. Cartwright recalled that most of the female players in the 1970s were in their late teens or early twenties and played together at gigs, parties, benefits, major political conferences and many women only events. She describes *Jam Today* as a very political band which spent time discussing the role of women in the world and whether, for example, women should play with men; if they should play on a stage or even whether they should play instruments made by men. The group set up their own feminist record label, *Stroppy Cow*, and members of the band were active in constructing support networks for female musicians (McKay, 2005:286).

“At the same time, Cartwright was also playing in South London pubs with a heavy rock band called *Painted Lady*. Whilst the repertoire was mainly Thin Lizzy or Led Zeppelin, she would slip in the odd John Coltrane blues or other jazz standard. Such juxtapositions are common in feminist bands, as George McKay points out, ‘*For these women musicians, it was important to be more fluid in their musical approach, less masculinely purist*’ (McKay, 2005:285). Cartwright also organised jam sessions for women only with invited guests where they could learn from each other ‘*in a haphazard way*’. This became the basis for *The Guest Stars*, a highly successful small group in the 1980s with a repertoire of standards and original compositions ranging in style from ‘*jazz to Latin, African to pop, always with space for improvisation, and in their live performances always emphasizing dancing by the audience*’ (McKay 2005:285). The Guest Stars toured extensively and recorded several albums during the 1980s, reforming in 2004.

“The Guest Stars personnel provided the basis for the formation of two all-female big bands; the *Lydia D’Ustebyn Swing Orchestra*, which Cartwright describes as ‘*in a way a tribute*’ to Benson, and the *Sisterhood of Spit*, formed in early 1980s, the name of which was congruent

³⁰ Born Oxford, England, 8 Jan 1953

³¹ Born Bromley, England, 7 Sept 1952

³² Born Manchester, England, 24 Nov 1950

with contemporary punk and made reference to the masculine big bands 'Brotherhood of Breath' (McKay, 330). The pattern of female musicians initially forming small groups from the 1960s but later developing big bands is replicated amongst several Benson alumni. Drummer **Crissy Lee**³³, left Benson and formed her band '*The Beat Chicks*' in the late 1960s, and her jazz orchestra flourished in the 1990s. Trombonist **Annie Whitehead**³⁴ had a successful career within all-female and mixed gender groups and also as a session musician since leaving Benson in the 1970s. Interestingly, Whitehead performed with both the aforementioned Sisterhood and Brotherhood bands. Her style is particularly influenced by Jamaican and African music. She began leading and writing for her own bands in the 1980s with which she has toured internationally. In 2002 she formed the all-female *Vortex Foundation Big Band*.

"The most overt expression of feminism by a jazz-related group can be found in the radical *Feminist Improvising Group*, formed in 1977. FIG was set up almost a decade after the initial interest in improvisational experimentation had developed in Europe, mainly as a result of the changing political climate in the 1960s, which encouraged musicians to reject more established codified musical practices in favour of experimentation. The group included musicians drawn from art music and experimental rock as well as jazz.

"FIG was groundbreaking because free improvisation, despite claims to freedom, was played within a predominantly white and male improvising community in Europe on the margins of the avant garde and mainstream music (Smith 2004:128) As with much jazz music played by women, freely improvised music of this period remains largely undocumented making it hard to assess its significance and scope. With the exception of British jazz writer **Val Wilmer**³⁵, critics and writers have paid little or no attention to female jazz musicians. FIG began after Scottish free jazz vocalist **Maggie Nichols**³⁶ suggested to multi-instrumentalist and composer **Lindsay Cooper**³⁷ at a Musician's Union meeting in London that they form an improvising group with other women. In a personal interview with Smith, Nichols explained the rationale for this move: '*We recognised that women were being excluded and we wanted to just experience what it was like to play with other women. One of the strongest things for me that came out of the Women's Liberation Movement was the recognition of the connection between the personal and the political. So to say that for me it was a personal thing was also political. I wanted to feel the intimacy musically that I felt*

³³ Born Colchester, Essex 17 June 1943.

³⁴ Born Oldham, Lancashire, 16 July 1955.

³⁵ Born Harrogate, England, 7 Dec 1941

³⁶ Born Edinburgh, 24 Feb 1948

³⁷ Born London, 3 March 1951

with women. You know, when you hang out with women, the quality of shared experience. How would that translate artistically?’ (2004:231).

“The group’s performances were freely improvised in every way and highly theatrical using props, role play and performing on a range of household implements and were powerful and challenging for audiences. An area that it called into question was the notion of technical virtuosity as defined by men and they also sought to break down the barriers between musicians and audience. The presence of FIG as an exclusively female group also caused controversy in the improvising community. As Nichols states: *‘It’s amazing the number of men that were saying “Why are there no men?” And yet no one had ever dreamed of asking why there were men only (in groups). They’d say, well, there are just no women around. There’s a kind of weird twisted logic, whereby men think it’s not deliberate, we haven’t deliberately excluded women. And that’s even more insidious because they just haven’t thought about it. At least we thought about it.’ (Smith, 2004:239)*”

Final Reflections

"There are four macroscopic levels of difficulties to be faced and resolved: Absence of women composers from principal dissemination channels (curricula schools, universities, media and stakeholder networks, history books, encyclopaedias); from mainstream programming (theatres, festivals, radio, television) and in the private sector (commissions, commercial ventures) as well as from economic decision making (artistic directions, programming and commissioning)." WIMUST E-book 2013, www.donneinmusica.org.

In the Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist in 1980, ratified by every Country in the world, the United Nations defines an artist as: *«any person who creates or gives creative expression to, or re-creates works of art, who considers his artistic creation to be an essential part of his life, who contributes in this way to the development of art and culture and who is or asks to be recognized as an artist, whether or not he is bound by any relations of employment or association ».*

In addition, the recommendation declares that it is essential *“to give particular attention to the development of women's creativity and the encouragement of groups and organizations which seek to promote the role of women in the various branches of artistic activity.”*

According to the European Union, the artist lives in a particular situation within the labour world characterized by intermittent work that creates intervals of time between one job and the next; an unavoidable mobility with a low income made of payments from many different sources; a dependence from many kinds of brokers (agencies, editors, producers, etc.); a risk related to creativity and whose results basically depend on the success with the audience; the often indispensable intermittent overlapping of artistic work with another job, free-lance or employed. Also, artistic professions need time for regular training and rehearsal which is unpaid for. They need support, including the moral support that must come from the music world.

Fondazione Adkins Chiti: Donne in Musica believes that organisations such as “Women in Music” contribute to the empowerment of the status of women who create music, and jazzwomen, through different kinds of promotional activities, and research, that censure

that their names be included not only in programmes and on-line sites but in syllabi and books as well.

In a highly demanding society – which risks standardisation and passivity – the role of women artists (here we are speaking about women in jazz) acquires a new importance. They are the ones who look towards the future, who contest the present, who swim against the current. Society not only has a responsibility but also every interest in supporting the woman artist, helping her to live, work and express herself freely and this means presenting “her” music, “her” ideas and “her” creativity. Let us never forget that the women in jazz are part of that large army of creative women without whom the cultural industries would never be considered the most powerful economic motors in Europe.

The EUP *March 2009 Resolution on Equality of Treatment and Access for Men and Women in the Performing Arts (2008/2182(INI))* was addressed to all European governments and institutions inviting them to implement the proposals contained underlining “that discrimination against women holds back the development of the cultural sector by depriving it of talent and skillstalent requires contact with the public in order to achieve recognition.”

The Resolution notes that “whereas inequalities in career prospects and opportunities between women and men in the performing arts are very much present and persistent...the mechanisms which produce these gender inequalities should be seriously analysed..... (and encourages) Member States to produce comparative analyses of the current situation in the performing arts in the various countries of the Union, to draw up statistics in order to facilitate the design and implementation of common policies and to ensure that the progress achieved can be compared and measured”.

To date no country in the EU has undertaken the “comparative analyses” called for although a first project was set up by the (Statens Musikverk) Music Development and Heritage in Sweden in 2012.³⁸

Women constitute the majority of European citizens but their access to decision making positions in many fields, including the performing arts, is still limited.³⁹ The performing arts include all forms of theatre (prose, opera, operetta, ballet, dance, musical comedy,

³⁸ *Equality and Music at Music Development and Heritage Sweden (Statens Musikverk, 2012).*

³⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Facts of inequality between women and men in arts, culture and education*, 2012,

<http://www.eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Inequalities%20in%20arts%20culture%20and%20education_EN.pdf>. The overall objectives of EIGE’s work are to contribute to and promote gender equality including gender mainstreaming in all Community policies and resulting national policies, to fight against discrimination based on sex, and to raise EU citizens’ awareness of gender equality. The website lists architects, lecturers, and directors of museums, Nobel Prize laureates in literature, university graduates and professors. No theatre directors, conductors, choreographers, composers, songwriters, authors or performers.....

variety, marionettes), music (symphonic, chamber, traditional, electronic, alternative, jazz, pop, rock, world music, impro, sound installations) circus and street performance. “The main branches of the performing arts offer many different types of employment pattern. There is a division in performing art forms between resident/producing organisations, receiving venues, regular producing organisations (any of which can be publicly owned/operated, independent but subsidised from the public purse, or independent and commercial), producers of occasional projects and individual artists. These last may be salaried, on short or long-term contracts or freelance.....the organisations or producers will have administrative and operational staff and technicians and these categories too have their freelance cadres and the sector as a whole will support a penumbra of independent or linked service providers (marketing and publicity or technical services for example)... There is little apparent common ground between the symphony orchestra, with contract or perhaps self-governing players performing mostly in its own hall, recording or undertaking structured tours nationally and internationally, and the jobbing character actor or dancer fresh from training trying to put together a year of freelance work or finance a project with the prospect of uncertain periods of unemployment and a struggle with the social security system at the end of it”⁴⁰ Employment is characterised by temporary contracts and composers, songwriters and authors work on an intermittent basis on their principal artistic activity while experiencing periods of unemployment (or underemployment). Income consists in payments or contributions from different areas – salaries, unemployment benefits (in some countries), paid commissions (in others), fees, percentages from performing or collecting rights societies. All composers hope to gain income from PRS and digital downloads (a central concern) and revenue for the use of recorded music in public, on the radio, or for advertising. In many countries, the music-generated income is well below national poverty level. Few countries give creativity sabbaticals, stipends, and worthwhile commissions, guaranteed number of performances of new works, finance for research, recording, promotion and production. To date very few European countries have introduced measures to improve the access of women to positions of influence, to grants and subsidies. ⁴¹

⁴⁰ With reference to Polacek, R. (FIA): *Handbook of Good Practices to Combat Gender Stereotypes and Promote Equal Opportunities in Film, Television and Theatre in Europe*, FIA, 2010.

⁴¹ Siukola, R., “Gender mainstreaming in Finland’s government administration : Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming at Governmental Level in the EU Member States Finland”, in Biller, H., Sterner, G., *Gender Mainstreaming in the EU Member States : Progress, Obstacles and Experiences at Governmental level*, Stockholm, Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, 2007, p. 23.

For Future Reading:

Women in Jazz: Music Publishing and Marketing

Dissertation Proposal Submitted to Northcentral University Graduate Faculty of the School of Business for the Degree of DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MARKETING by Joan Cartwright, Prescott Valley, Arizona, October 2016

Abstract

This qualitative research study explored the relationship between women jazz musicians and their earning capacity as composers and music publishers. The study examined the business practices of a sample of 20 women in jazz in the United States, between the ages of 30 and 64, who compose jazz music and brand themselves through performance and marketing their published music.

Aside from articles posted by organizations with the mission of promoting women musicians, very little scholarly literature addressed this segment of the music industry.

The variables of this qualitative study were education, the number of songs the participants composed, incorporation as a publishing company, affiliation with a royalty collection organization, and how they used marketing, branding, promotion, and advertisement techniques to identify, attract, and negotiate opportunities to perform, teach, and distribute music (Anonymous, 2014b).

Although participants discussed financial challenges based upon gender and age discrimination on the part of family, friends, associates, teachers, musicians (male and female), radio hosts, agents, managers, promoters, venue owners, cultural producers, grantors, reviewers, critics, record labels, publishers, filmmakers, music contractors, and educational institutions, this study remained focused on how their understanding and utilization of business tactics and strategies for operations and marketing effected their professional musical careers.

This study explored implications for future research and policy, and recommendations for the best business practices for women musicians in the jazz genre were delineated.

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