

Jazz Encounters.

Foundations and Potentials of Music Mediation in Jazz

Although the concept of music mediation can be applied to diverse practices and musical styles, it is currently employed “with a focus primarily on so-called Western art music, respectively classical music” (Chaker and Petri-Preis 2022, 11). While music mediation has grown remarkably within classical concert life, in the field of jazz – characterized by a comparatively less established system of financial support and institutional structures – it is still in its early days.

Developments can be observed on a smaller scale. Some festivals and venues host concerts for children, or include workshops and outreach activities in their schedules, a few organizations, such as Jazz at Lincoln Center (n.d.), have developed substantial educational programs, and some individual musicians and bands are working on alternative approaches to encountering others through their music. Around ten years ago, the first jazz-related initiatives started dedicating themselves to various aspects of music mediation, such as the Europe Jazz Network (n.d.) and the annual trade fair jazz-ahead! in Germany (Siedenburg 2018, 1).

Nevertheless, research and exchange on music mediation in jazz remain scarce. In 2024, a conference on music mediation in jazz took place at the Gustav Mahler Private University of Music in Klagenfurt (Austria), which revealed a variety of exciting perspectives and approaches, as well as a great desire for professional and academic exchange. It gave rise to the idea of dedicating the third issue of the International Journal of Music Mediation to the topic of music mediation in jazz.

This present issue includes seven thematic contributions – three research articles and four reflections on practice. It turns the spotlight on the foundations of a jazz-oriented music mediation, documenting and considering a variety of pioneering current music mediation projects in the field of jazz. These projects are supported by a wide range of protagonists and take place in diverse settings: major concert halls, small jazz bars, schools, and universities. The first two articles transpose key aspects of the general discourse on music mediation to the field of jazz and discuss their potential implications for this domain.

- Ilka Siedenburg’s contribution critically interrogates prevailing approaches to music mediation and their limitations, particularly the reinforcement of cultural hierarchies through passive learning paradigms. It proposes new directions for music mediation in jazz, outlining strategies for “jazz encounters” in third spaces.
- Julian Schunter and Martin Krechlak offer a theoretical framework and practical guidance for designing jazz concerts for children. Building on relevant literature and

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their own professional experience, they introduce six key aspects to consider, while especially emphasizing the interactive potential of jazz.

- The third article discusses immersive listening events, which are inspired by Philip Arneill's *Tokyo Jazz Joints* project documenting Japanese jazz *kissa* culture. The paper combines autoethnographic reflections with the project's background as a way of exploring how these events foster shared and transformative experiences while listening to jazz.
- A reflection on practice by Benjamin Holzapfel, Hans-Georg Spiegel, and Charles MacInnes combines two innovative jazz mediation initiatives at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg: The *Jazz Academy* offers an intensive collaborative setting for young jazz musicians to develop artistic ideas together with renowned mentors. The *Elbphilharmonie Education Seminar*, as part of the *Dr. Langner Jazz Master* program at the Hamburg University of Music and Drama, leads university students towards their own jazz mediation workshops.
- Ulrike Schwarz introduces an additional project within the context of higher education. The multi-perspective program *Jump into Jazz* engages jazz and music education students at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts in the development and implementation of a participatory jazz concert for and with elementary school children, involving professional jazz musicians and music teachers.
- Katharina Osztovics' reflection on practice outlines the Austrian project *Jazz macht Schule – Schule macht Jazz*, in which secondary school students and artists explore jazz in collaborative workshops. The initiative focuses on interdisciplinarity, female jazz musicians and the artistic and historical dimensions of jazz, and culminates in a public event for International Jazz Day.
- Jonas Brinckmann introduces the pedagogical philosophy of jazz musician and educator Harald Rüschenbaum, based on an interview about his former work as artistic leader of the Bavarian State Youth Jazz Orchestra. The text examines how Rüschenbaum's approach shapes participatory concerts in schools and positions jazz mediation as a dynamic process of shared musical experience.
- Alongside the thematic focus, the issue presents an independent contribution by Judith McGregor. She presents findings from her doctoral thesis, a qualitative study of instrument teachers in Austria and Germany who are also active in music mediation. In this contribution, she examines the factors that shape their engagement in this field. Her findings show that music mediation functions as a counterbalance to institutional pressures, fostering aesthetic experience, as well as cultural and social participation.

We hope this issue will inspire musicians, mediators, educators and scholars, foster informed discourse, and serve as a foundation for further theoretical, empirical, and artistic research on music mediation in jazz.

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Editorial Team

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