

Y v e t t a K A J A N O V Á

The Book of Slovak JAZZ



MUSIC CENTRE

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More than fifty years have passed since the first appearances of Slovak jazz musicians on the scene. In retrospect, it can be said that the history of Slovak jazz has seen three generations of jazz musicians. The first pioneers started to foster swing music as soon as after World War II (1947-56, Pavol Polanský, Siloš Pohanka, Ján Siváček, Jaroslav Laifer) and continued throughout the 1950's, in the period of appearance of musicians who were strictly advancing modern tendencies in jazz (1954-61, Juraj Henter, Karol Ondreička, Laco Déczi, Jozef "Dodo" Šošoka). They achieved important success both home and abroad (Déczi), recorded several of their pieces (Karol Ondreička made with Combo 4 the first jazz recordings in the Slovak Radio in Bratislava in the early 1960's, music of Juraj Henter and his pioneer cool jazz combo has not been preserved on any sound carrier). The first big bands were established during the period of freedom (1939: Ladislav Faix Studio Jazz Orchestra, 1940: Orchestra of the Union of University Students - Ján Ondruš); later, they were formed in the post-War environment (1947: Orchestra of Bratislava University Students with founder Pavol Polanský, 1947 conductor Gustav Brom). The jazz scene of the 1950's consisted of swing orchestras including Kolektív 50, Ján Siváček Orchestra, Siloš Pohánka Orchestra, Jaroslav Laifer Orchestra and of the bands including Karol Ondreička Quintet (1956-57), Combo 4, Academia Club, Medik (Medicine Student), East Coast Combo, West Coast Combo, Bratislava Studio and Bratislava Jazz Quartet. In the 1950's, new situation intervened for jazz music, since jazz was perceived in the society as the music of American imperialism, element of the imported Western culture and cosmopolitan élite art. Gradually, this prejudice was successfully eliminated through disseminating the view that jazz was "the music of the oppressed black people".

The Second generation of Slovak jazz musicians (Peter Lipa, Gabriel Jonáš, Lubomír Tamašovič, Dušan Hüšcava, Vladimír Valovič, Cyril Zelenák) started throughout the 1960's and have carried on with music up to present days. This period also meant a partial release of cultural and political pressure on the evolution of jazz. Some jazz musicians also accomplished success abroad e.g. Miloš Jurkovič's "Medik" band - 1962, golden medal in the competition of jazz and dance orchestras at the 8th International Festival of Youth and

Students in Helsinki; Laco Gerhardt won the 1st prize for the best performance at the International Jazz Festival in Karlovy Vary in 1962; Ladislav Martonik was selected by jury in 1965 at the competition of trumpet players in Vienna for studies at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz; Ján Hajnal became in 1966 a finalist of the contest of young jazz musicians in Vienna; Traditional Club - successful appearances at jazz festivals in Vienna (1965), Budapest (1966), Munich (1966); Revival Jazz Band - 1st prize at the Festival of amateur traditional bands in Zurich (1969). This revitalisation of the Slovak scene and establishment of contacts with foreign countries was consistent with the developments in jazz across Europe, where several prominent jazz personalities were being formed throughout the 1960's.

As a result of cultural and political events, further extension of foreign contacts was frozen between 1968-72 in Slovakia, and so was the whole jazz life.

In the 1980's, the third generation of Slovak jazzmen takes over. No direct continuity had been established between the first and second generations (partially due to political events and to social environment). In the early 1960's, some of the proponents of modern jazz left for Bohemia (Prague - Laco Déczi, Laco Tropp, Stanislav Sulkovský, Ivan Dominák, Brno - Helena Blehárová), while others switched to popular music (Ján Siváček, Siloš Pohánka, Jaroslav Laifer, Braňo Hronec, Juraj Velčovský). Another harmful factor to the continuity of the evolution of Slovak jazz was the artificial rupture between 1968-69, when several notable musicians emigrated (Igor Čelko, Peter Móric, Pavol Molnár, Ervín Padušický - Istropolitana, Zuzka Lonská, Gustáv Riška); the departure of Ladislav Martonik from the Slovak jazz scene in 1968 was especially painful - he was shot by the Russian invading troops (since 1990, the Slovak Jazz Society awards the best Slovak jazz musicians with Ladislav Martonik Prize). The establishment of a well-rooted jazz tradition in Slovakia, promotion of jazz among lay audience as well as the creation of Slovak jazz school with its specific features, are a fruit of efforts of several generations of jazzmen. When we inquire who is the "father" of Slovak jazz, a possible answer would be that this privilege belongs to those, who remained faithful to jazz from the very start until present days -

to saxophonist Juraj Henter and guitarist Karol Ondreička. Juraj Henter Quintet was active between 1954-56, Karol Ondreička Quintet played in 1956-57. From the historical point of view, they can both be considered as pioneers of Slovak jazz. However, Slovak public did not start realising the existence of Slovak jazz until the early 1980's, when it had become blended with the national culture. Until then, jazz was seen as a part of movement undertaken by students, young people and intellectuals. The credit for a far-reaching public promotion of jazz in Slovakia goes to the singer Peter Lipa, who is perceived as a relative symbol of "father" of Slovak jazz by the lay audience.

Development of Jazz in Slovakia in the 1980's and 1990's.

The start of the 1980's generated fairly positive conditions for jazz makers. Still, the social and political environment of their artistic activity was "artificially" isolated from the Western jazz development through ideology; the system's isolation was however not perfect, leaving room for loopholes. Free choice of one's artistic direction, style, artistic approaches, means of expression, manner of presentation in front of a certain type of audience were conditioned by the artist's loyalty to the establishment. However, in order to succeed with the listener, the musicians were obliged to maintain familiarity with the international developments and to stay conversant with modern and latest tendencies in jazz abroad.

The musicians perceived this period as unsatisfactory due to the absence of regular concerts, caused to a certain extent by the discrepancies in the standards of cultural environment between large and small towns. The towns that enjoyed large listeners' background were those where festivals were held and where secondary music education, the conservatories, were concentrated (Bratislava, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Martin and Košice). The promotion of artists both home and abroad was virtually non-existent, which resulted into lack of concert opportunities in foreign countries. A kind of underground sub-culture emerged

within Slovak jazz; the main gatherings of the musicians and fans being events such as Bratislava Jazz Days, Blues on the Danube, Gitariade, partially also Poetic Lyre and Concert of the Young Ones (the two latter were accompanying events of the Bratislava Lyre international festival of popular songs). Thanks to the mentioned events, several prominent artists from the world scene of jazz were invited to perform in Slovakia, which provided for many listeners a chance to get in touch with the culture and life of Western countries. The audience was characterised by distinguished taste and advocated time-proven values in jazz.

Opus, the only recording company, favoured publishing of pop music recordings, much less of jazz, folk, country and western, alternative rock and chanson. It was also popular music that enjoyed official support and promotion in the mass media, other fields were seen as so-called "minority genres", designed for restraint communities, and were thus left without institutional backing. As a result, many of the renowned jazz personalities could release profile albums rather late, after their long-time appearance on the scene. Domestic production was supposed to be held up in radio and television broadcasting; however, in comparison with the hit production of pop music, jazz was underrepresented. As for the proportion of jazz programmes, they were appearing on the radio much more often compared to television broadcasts.

The main reason that urged artists to leave for Western countries in this period, was inadequate connection with foreign countries, absence of free artistic environment, since the artistic production was controlled by the establishment, another reason was the wish to get to the centre of the world jazz activity and to become partners of world personalities. Those who left Slovakia in this period included the trumpeter Laco Dėczi with his son, drummer Laco "Vajco" Dėczi (1985, Germany, 1987, USA), drummer Pavol Kozma (1978, USA), drummer Ján Fabrický (1988, Switzerland), Peter Breiner moved out later in the 1990's (1992, Canada).

The figures of Slovak jazz were performing usually in European countries - however, not exclusively at festivals and concerts, but also in clubs. In the 1990's, the possibility of professional encounters with foreign countries arises for

the jazzmen, implying active co-operation with Czech, German, Austrian, Polish, Italian, Hungarian and American musicians. Some foreign musicians stayed in Slovakia over a long period of time, influencing thus the standard of Slovak jazz to a greater extent. For example, Peter Cardarelli (sax., USA) has since 1996 given over 300 concerts across Slovakia and recorded 2 CD's with Slovak musicians – Mr. Knight, Pbib Rec. 1998 and CD Peter Cardarelli Bratislava Blue, EWP 2000. Another American saxophonist, Shawn Loescher, was active on the Slovak scene between 1995-98 and collaborated with several Slovak musicians and equally participated on the CD Matúš Jakabčič Tentet, feat. Greg Hopkins, HF 1998. The connection with the European and world top was ensured by the appearances of foreign artists at festivals, single concerts and club events in Slovakia, in which the 1990's were quantitatively richer.

After 1990, the performances of Slovak jazzmen in foreign countries became more frequent. First steps were taken towards the non-commercial promotion – CD's (7 titles) and promotion materials were published by the Music Fund in co-operation with the Slovak Jazz Society (see entry). Some of international achievements are to be mentioned – the position of the pianist Pavol Bodnár among 8 finalists with his composition "Cheerful Afternoon" at the Concours International Composition de Thèmes de Jazz in Monaco (1990); Matúš Jakabčič ranked among the final 12 compositions with his Rhythm in 1997 at the same contest; first place of the band Stop Time at the International Festival in Karlovy Vary (1988); Bratislava Hot Serenaders won the 1st place at the New Orleans Jazz competition in Saint Raphael (France) in 1994; Juraj Bartoš became the triple recipient of the "Jazzový Kája" (Jazz Charlie) award in 1993 and in 1995, at the 31st year of the Bratislava Music Festival, he became one of four winners of the International Tribune of Young Performers etc. Another success involves the granting of scholarships for the Berklee School of Music in Boston, for Jozef "Dodo" Šošoka, Pavol Kozma, Pavol Bodnár, Juraj Burian and Matúš Jakabčič. Several musicians set on important international tours with their bands, e.g. T-R Band appeared at the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee 1992 festival in California, S-Quartet (Netherlands, Belgium), Stop Time (France, Spain, Germany, Netherlands), ASHBand (England).

Several prominent musicians have been successful in establishing international contacts (Jozef "Dodo" Šošoka, Peter Lipa, Juraj Bartoš, Matúš Jakabčič, Juraj Tatár, Pavol Bodnár, Cyril Zelenák, Juraj Kalász...). They form ensembles with guest foreign musicians from USA, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary etc.

Music industry performs a rise in the 1990's, a number of private Slovak as well as foreign publishing houses and recording companies have been established and release CD's of Slovak jazz musicians. It is also thanks to this fact that many musicians released their profile albums in this period. New situation arose for the broadcasting of radio and television jazz programmes – despite of an increase in the number of Slovak media, the television and radio productions are governed by the laws of the business.

Development Stages of the Period

In the 1980's, a new generation of Slovak jazzmen appears, influenced by the jazzrock boom and by the interest it attracted among the young people, as well as by the shift from the rock background to a more profound study of fusion music. This development was largely contributed to also by the teaching of jazz composition and arrangement at the Conservatory in Bratislava since 1980 (Bohumil Trnečka, conductor, teacher, trombonist), implying the rise in the number of musicians, accompanied by the extension of the range of styles in Slovak jazz. Young musicians are facing a particular task – they need to master the basic jazz attributes, including the typical characteristics of genres and styles, as well as the jazz repertory, the standards. The formation of the Big Band of Bratislava Conservatory in 1982 was of great help in their efforts.

During the 1980's, a new generation of Slovak jazz is rising with the appearance of figures such as Juraj Bartoš, Juraj Griglák, Matúš Jakabčič, Juraj Kalász, Andrej Šeban, Adriena Bartošová, Richard Šarközi, Andrej Kellenberger, Pavol Bodnár, in the late 1980's: Stano Počaji, Ľubor Priehradník, Peter Preložník, Martin Gašpar, Marcel Bunta, Marek Minárik, Emil Frátrik, Mikuláš Škuta, Pavol Ruček, Martin Ďurďina, Peter Adamkovič, Martin Marinčák, in the 1990's

Sylvia Josifoská, Daniel Szalontay, Igor Sabo, Michal Vaňouček, Ján Demenčík and many others. They collaborate with established personalities (Peter Lipa, Gabriel Jonáš, Dušan Húščava, Pavol Kozma) who assist them in their artistic and professional development as well as in their music career. The new generation of Slovak jazz focuses mainly on fusion music, with links between jazz, rock and pop music, jazz and European music, as well as on the mainstream, where they are based on post-bop streams and on modern acoustic jazz. The beginning of the 1990's makes them tackle a responsible and demanding role – they themselves become the main actors who form the Slovak scene and are equally active as educators. After 10 years of active professional career, they turn to teaching at schools (Bartošová, Jakabčic, Buntaj) or to lecturing in jazz workshops and in the Music Fund (Šeban, Počaji, Griglák, Kalász, Buntaj etc.)

An important role in the promotion of jazz was played by the Slovak Jazz Festival in Žilina (1986, see entry). It provided a platform for young musicians, supporting thus the emerging Slovak amateur scene. The Rostrum of Slovak Jazz 1987, part of the Bratislava Jazz Days festival (see entry), should be quoted as another milestone, since it became a gathering of almost all Slovak professional jazz bands, and many others were established at the instigation of the festival. 1989 saw another important event, the establishment of the Slovak Jazz Society (see entry), with the aim to support and organise Slovak jazz life. More festivals were created in the 1990's, including Jazz Prešov, Jazz For Sale in Košice, Jazz Festival Bardejov, Pet Jazz in Bratislava's suburb Petržalka, the Trenčín jazz festival – Jazz pod hradom (Jazz under the Castle), the Košice Slovak-Czech Jazz Festival (originally Cassovia Jazz Košice), Summer Jazz Workshop (see entry Jazz events) etc.

A large number of jazz clubs opened in Bratislava, Košice, Levice, Žilina, Priešťany, Banská Štiavnica, Prievidza, of whom many had to close because of problems with their running. However, the ever more positively developing activities could not escape the influence of the economic situation in Slovakia. Many jazz ensembles were suspending their activities, being not able to run orchestras due to bad economic conditions – Swing Big Band Žilina (1986-92), Big Band Radio

Bratislava (1991-94) or lacking concerts opportunities (Alef, Bossa Noha, Just Jazz, Kelly Jazz Band etc.).

Permanent bands who are presently active include Adriana Bartošová and Scat, ASHBand, Madre, Slovak Young Swing Generation, Big Band of Bratislava Conservatory, Bratislava Hot Serenaders, Traditional and Revival Band, Peter Lipa and Band, A'Conto. In the period between 1986-1995, the following bands were appearing on the Slovak scene: Stop Time, S – Quartet, Just Jazz, Jakabčic – Burian – Jaro Trio, Alef, (Juraj Kalász) Czechoslovak Quintet, (Peter Preložník) Brož Band, THS Band, The Quartet, Juraj Bartoš Quintet, Tralala Band, AMC Trio, Mr. Band, Chorávrana (Sick Crow). On the whole, the late 1980's and the early 1990's can be characterised as a highly volatile and unstable period as far as the formation of new bands was concerned.

Characteristics of Genres and Styles of the Period

The most prominent representative of traditional jazz between 1986-96 in Slovakia is the T+R Band with singer Peter Lipa; since, 1996 this attribute goes to Traditional and Revival Band (Vlado Vizár as leader). Amateur ensembles for traditional jazz abound, scattered throughout Slovakia (Ali Jazz Band from Sereď, created in 1946, is one of the oldest; Dixielands from Komárno, Priešťany, BB Band Banská Bystrica – released an album BB Band - Dixieland Jazz Band, MM Rec. 1996, Kelly Jazz Band from Žilina, Hot Sound Dixie Band from Žilina etc). Those specialised in swing include mainly the following orchestras: Bratislava Big Band (1981-93), Swing Big Band Žilina (1986-92). In the early 1980's, the mainstream direction in jazz prevails (Laco Gerhardt Quartet, Slovak Jazz Quintet – Jozef "Dodo" Šošoka, Šošoka's international projects, occasional ensembles led by Gabriel Jonáš, Peter Lipa Combo), while the latter half of the 1980's, and with it also the rise of a younger generation of musicians, bring to the foreground rather fusion music and funky (Big Band of Bratislava Conservatory, Adriana Bartošová and Scat, Bossa Noha, Madre, Stop Time, Jakabčic – Burian – Jaro Trio, Tutu). The only figure to perform ragtime is Max Menšík, similarly to Bratislava Hot Serenaders being the only band focused on hot dance music of the late 1920's

and 1930's. A special place within Slovak jazz is held by Peter Breiner with his concept of the 3rd stream, symphonic jazz. Another lonely runner is the free-jazz oriented ensemble Meditation Jazz Trio led by Jozef "Dodo" Šošoka.

Theoretical Works and Writings on Jazz in Slovakia

In 1980, the first volume of the Encyclopaedia of Jazz and Modern Popular Music, the subject entries, comes out in the publishing house Supraphon Praha, as a result of group work of several authors, especially of Czech scholars Antonín Matzner, Ivan Poledňák and of the Slovak author Igor Wasserberger (1983 - 2nd edition). The Encyclopaedia, which laid the foundations of encyclopaedia writing in the field of pop music and jazz, consisted of three volumes. The first volume comprised the subject entries, the second one listed the figures of the world scene and the third volume (Supraphon, Praha 1990), co-authored by the Slovaks Igor Wasserberger, Ladislav Šoltýs and Július Kinček, contained a directory of the personalities from the Czechoslovak scene. The Encyclopaedia offered an erudite overview of the fields of modern popular music and jazz and served for several years to come as a guide to mass media, as well as to culture and education professionals, offering a better knowledge of the mentioned fields. Jazz received larger and technically deeper coverage, rock, folk, country and western and popular music are dealt with to a lesser extent.

In the middle of the 1980's, new figures appear in music journalism and musicology dealing with modern pop music and jazz. Some of them had received also specialised education, especially graduates of Musicology studies at the Faculty of Arts of the Comenius University or of Music Theory of the Music Faculty of the Academy of Music and Drama, including Natália Bajcurová, Pavol Beka, Marián Jaslovský, Yveta Lábska - Kajanová, Branislav Slyško etc. Others found jobs as journalists - Vladimír Brožík, Juraj Čurný, Iveta Pospíšilová, Patrick Španko etc. In the late 1980's, greater attention is paid to the non-commercial promotion of modern popular music and jazz. English translations of Slovak publications come out, the credit for this form of

promotion in the 1990's goes especially to the Music Information Centre of the Music Fund and to the Slovak Jazz Society. Several Ph.D. and Master theses are written on the subjects of jazz (Igor Wasserberger, Peter Breiner, Yveta Lábska - Kajanová, František Turák, Augustín Rebro, Zuzana Vachová), as well as occasional monographs on jazz topics (Igor Wasserberger, Yveta Kajanová, František Turák).

PETER ADAMKOVIČ*(b. 24 June, 1970 in Prešov)*

- piano, keyboard instruments, composition
- studied at the Faculty of Education of the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Prešov (1987-92), in 1995-96 was the recipient of the Music Fund scholarship

Music career:

- 1992-94 plays keyboard instruments in the fusion-music Tralala Band, with whom he performed at the FIMU festival in Belfort, France (1993, 1994)
- 1993: founder of mainstream-oriented AMC Trio (Adamkovič - p., Marínčák - bass., Cvanciger - dr., Železnák - guit.), recorded with them an album for the first time and contributed with his own compositions (A Song for Mummi, Frustrating Tolerance)
- 1994: founded a mainstream band Interface Marínčák - bass., Piotr Olszewski - guit., Poland, Jozef Elias - dr., Poland), 1994 plays in mainstream band Cassovia Jazz Quartet (Marínčák - bass., Železnák - guit., Szabados - dr.)
- 1994: member of Prešov Big Band
- since 1996: teaches jazz piano at the Primary School of Art in Prešov
- 1999: appeared at the BJD with musicians Monty Waters (sax., voc., USA), Titus Waldenfelds (guit., Germany), Ľubo Šamo (vi.), Marínčák (dbass.), Gejza Szabados (dr.)
- collaborated with Peter Lipa, Peter Cardarelli and others

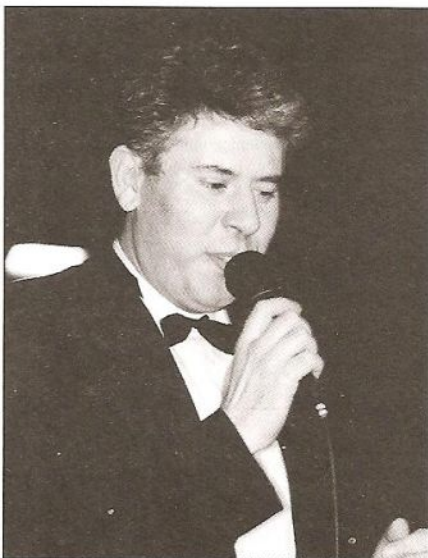
Peter Adamkovič has been inspired by the style of playing of modern pianists while the influence of bop musicians is felt in more dynamic parts. This provides him with opportunity to find his place within mainstream as well as in fusion music. He is fond of juggling with an idea along with the model of Bud Powell and Bill Evans.

Discography:

CD Young Slovak Jazz, (AMC Trio), 1995 HF

BARTOLOMEJ BALOGH*(b. 3 November, 1961 in Bratislava)*

- vocals, percussion, composition
- studied viola at the Conservatory in Bratislava (1978-84) and percussion at the Jazz Conservatory in Helsinki (1993)

**Music career:**

- made his debut in 1980 in a funky band Tamis, consisting of Conservatory students; concert performances in Bohemia and Slovakia, as well as at the Bratislava Lyre festival in 1993; after the split of Tamis (1983), he was a singer in the Tagore band (1983-85)
- 1987: got the engagement in Vlado Valovič VV System orchestra focusing on fusion music; they appeared at the Bratislava Lyre festival in 1987, receiving the Bronze Lyre for the song Millionaire (music by Bartolomej Balogh, lyrics by Daniel Mikletič), as well as at various festivals: Copenhagen Jazz, events in Bulgaria and in the USSR
- 1988: he won the Golden Bratislava Lyre and the Silver Lyre in the international contest of the Bratislava Lyre festival for the song "Farbami dnes dýcha noc" (The Night is Seething with Colours), (music by Pavol Kvassay, lyrics by Monika Kozelová)