



PROFESSIONAL MUSIC ASSESSMENT

*Determining quality in Jazz performance during
the Conservatory Final Exam*

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Abstract

This text explains the notion of professional listening versus common listening. At the heart of common listening lies the individual's reaction to the music with the main issue being, "do I like this or not?" With professional listening, the question is whether the music has achieved what it set out to accomplish. The professional is first of all concerned with the intention of a piece of music and therefore takes into account its complete context such as parameters, style, stylistic history, etc. If the professional is a player, there is an added concern of performance practice. Every piece of music (or art) radiates the criteria by which it wants to be judged. The professional listener is capable of determining what these criteria are and evaluating them. The professional, of course, is an individual with likes and dislikes too. These however will not mar his view. The personal take on the music will be part of an overall well-balanced judgment that takes all angles into account. This more objective approach will do justice to a musical performance instead of misjudging or misrepresenting it on the narrow basis of an accidental personal taste. To illustrate: for many years I participated in a programming board of a jazz venue. Bands seeking a spot on the concert program would submit tapes and we would dutifully listen to them. Free Jazz recordings were submitted, too, but were turned off quickly amid such comments as, "This is terrible," and "We don't want this." Free Jazz is valid and has its own set of criteria by which it can be judged, but this notion was foreign to these amateur jazz enthusiasts. A conservatory musical examination committee - a jury - consists of professional listeners and players. This document will describe and define the way in which a jury makes an assessment. It will focus on the jury's premise and justification and will illustrate the context in which it works, how it arrives at conclusions and what qualifications a jury member must have.

Chapter 1 will deal with two examples of common music evaluation that are counterproductive and will look at the many ways one can perceive music. Chapter 2 will summarize the theory of Field, Capital and Habitus by Pierre Bourdieu and Chapter 3 will apply them to jazz. Chapter 4, headed again by Bourdieu, will look at the nature of classification. Chapter 5 has the analysis of eleven final exams played during the 2006/07 scholastic year with the author participating in the jury as either member or chairman.

Apart from the Bourdieu theories, the justification of this text is the current practice of the Maastricht Jazz Department examination committee together with the author's 20 years experience as a performer, recording artist, faculty member (guitar, band performance, jazz history and head of jazz department), jury member and chairman. This makes this text an "an insider's job".

Introduction

A music conservatory has nothing to hide. On the contrary; music only works if played in the open. But there is one secretive ritual in music conservatory life -- when a closed-door jury convenes and grades a student's efforts from 1 to 10. Even though jury members will eloquently explain in both words and writing how they came to their conclusions, there is still something mysterious about what happens behind closed doors. If the exam was a success, the magic continues in that the student, in a performative way, is declared to be a qualified musician. A diploma stating the same will be issued when all other requirements of the curriculum are fulfilled. In committing to the lectorate *Autonomie en Openbaarheid*

(Autonomy and the Public Domain), the Maastricht Conservatory decided to focus on the process of the final exam as the link between Autonomy and the Public Domain. In choosing research this topic, the Conservatory narrowed down the broad field of A&O to a more manageable size. This text deals specifically with the Jazz Department.

The word “conservatory” in Dutch indicates a professional musical training program. It is the highest form attainable of professional musical schooling. In English the word indicates a music school with no distinction between amateur or professional. In the Anglo-Saxon system professional musical programs are part of a university. In this text the word “goes Dutch”. The term “senior recital” in the Anglo-Saxon system is called “final exam” in Holland, both being a students’ last academic performance in a four year program.

1. Perceiving Music

1.1. What’s Up

If one were to ask an Australian to point upwards, he would – good chaps they are – stretch his fingers towards the skies. The same would apply to a European asked to perform the same action: up is up. Looking at these two pointing fingers from an imaginary location in space, one would observe two earthlings pointing in opposite directions. Something as apparently obvious as “up”, turns out to be very subjective. It is not an objective notion but rather a locally defined conception. However, it works, because there is a lot of truth in it and most people, or at least enough, agree upon it. Not until we send our finger spotter into space would the good or wrong vision of where “up” is become a problem.



In music, contradicting views of what is good and what is not, does pose a problem. In Jazz it has even led to “war” as can be illustrated in the case of the so-called Moldy Figs versus the Modernists. The Moldy Figs were purists who considered the first form of jazz, the New Orleans style, the only true form of jazz. They went through great lengths to build their case. They even “revived” an early New Orleans jazzman, Bunk Johnson (picture). Johnson had stopped playing professionally in the early 1930’s because of problems with his teeth. He was tracked down, provided with new set of teeth and given the opportunity to record, all in an effort by the purists to get as close as possible to the original jazz source. The second group, who gave the revivalist their sobriquet, were the advocates of the newest Jazz style, Bebop, the style that revolutionized Jazz away from Jazz’s second stylistic period, the Swing. The pro’s and con’s in this discourse were so heated that music critic Bernard Gendron finally resorted to using the word `war` to describe the discourse. His 1942 editorial in *Metronome Magazine* was called: *Moldy Figs and Modernist: Jazz at War*.¹

The problem underlying these irreconcilable views on Jazz is the fact that listening to music is an interpretative activity, by its nature subjective. The only objective thing one can say about music is of a physical nature: it agitates air molecules into motion. As of the moment that these vibrations reach the listeners ears and especially the perceptive brain, the whole

¹ The critic Gene Santoro has used the term latter-day moldy figs to mean Wynton Marsalis c.s. in their ongoing attempt to make Bebop, or Hardbop (also Hard Bop) for that matter, the holy jazz style. “L’histoire se répète.

phenomena become subjective. If we could leave it at that, we could let the matter rest. This however is not the case. Listeners will talk about their musical experience, will put value into it, and will compare their experience with the experiences of others. In their musings, they will find (and this is where one would wish for the proverbial fan to stop rotating) that their music and their experience are superior to that of others. In venting their views they will find kindred spirits that agree on the quality of *their* music but they will also encounter adversaries and this, as with the feuding jazz factions in the early 1940's, can lead to deeply divided factions resorting to vicious name calling. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in his book *La Distinction* ascertains that accusing someone of having a bad taste is detrimental for a relationship. Accusing someone of belonging for example to the "wrong" political party is something a relationship will stand; allegation of bad taste however, will destroy it.

This ensuing melee about the quality of music has given way to the assumption that it is impossible to talk about the quality of music; it is just too subjective². This, of course, is not the case. Duke Ellington, with a colloquial turn of speech, was right when he said: "There is two kinds of music: good music and the other kind". Of course, he had the privilege of being diplomatic about it and calling it "the other kind". A jury in a professional music department does not. It has to be very explicit and convincing in the process of objectifying music, its reasoning has to be convincing. Contrary to general belief it is possible to talk about the quality of music; it is even possible to have opposing views on the same piece of music and, more importantly, without animosity. It should be understood that complete objectivity cannot be attained. However, this does not pose a problem, as long as the anomaly, deviation or irregularity can be measured and explained. In developing the methodology for this research the thought occurred to experiment with one exam adjudicated by two or even more boards of examiners. This would have been a loss of time. If by chance, and this would even be a large chance, the resulting grades would be the same (and even some or maybe all of the wording) this would constitute only a coincidence because eventually, if this experiment was to be repeated, different grades and argumentation would come up. The main point however is that, if done professionally, the differences between deviating assessments would be definable, explainable and understandable. And when put together the "opposing" juries should be able to work out a common view. It is educational to understand another professional's take on a musical performance and the joint understanding does the performance justice.

Music (and arts in general) is not alone here. Multiple visions are common in almost any field. Some seem to have the aura of absolute objectivity and seem determined by a single vision but in reality, too, they are the result of opposing views united in a professional decision. This view should be the best possible decision but should always be under constant scrutiny in order to establish either its continuing validity or its untenability. In talking about other fields: especially with hindsight in centuries, one can state that the field of medicine has stopped bleeding patience and law will now try to correct convicts instead of torturing them.

The Moldy Figs vs. Modernist discourse was a fan brawl, an unprofessional scuffle that could not come close to a professional evaluation of the value of New Orleans style and Bebop. The one crucial thing they missed is that both sides in the Moldy Figs vs. Modernists were right. They did just not have the professional insight to fathom the truth in the arguments

² Politicians and policy makers are especially good at using this argument to be able to shy away from taking a position on where they stand in cultural affairs.

trusted at them from the opposing sides. The Figs and Modernists were not giving music a fair evaluation. The transition from New Orleans & Swing to Bebop could be conceived as Bebop killing something very valuable (with the Moldy Figs understandably angry about this) but also as Bebop finally doing away with something that had become obsolete and replacing it with something new with an exciting future (with the Modernists rejoicing). Bebop, in its turn too, had to yield to Cool Jazz, Hard Bop and all consecutive styles. Truth is that Dizzy Gillespie did not do away with Louis Armstrong, nor Charlie Parker with Johnny Hodges. They were all part of a valid historical development and both styles are still with us very much either in its pure original form or partly present in other styles.³ The Moldy Figs and Modernists were too caught up in their own feelings about their beloved respective style and unable to transcend these emotions and approach it from a overall esthetic and historic view in which one jazz style develops into the another with one style not being superior to the other and each style having its own unique set of characteristics. This, in essence, is the assignment of a jury in a Jazz Department: evaluating a performance through professional listening. Professional listening transcends the mere obvious primary emotions music has on a listener although it is aware of these basic effects. A conservatory jury member evaluates music from a wider perspective, based on the experience of being a performer next to being a reflective listener to music in general and especially the music of the field of expertise. One crucial element is the jury members' insight into the fact that the many ways one can look at the same performance are complementary rather than divisive. The combination of the different ways of looking at a musical event gives the full picture, not small narrow minded approach.

1.2. Doing Justice

Doing justice is a key word in evaluating music. A typical example of the opposite is the following newspaper review written by Rene Vlems for the Limburgs Dagblad on May 4th, 2000.

Joao Gilberto - Joao voz e violao

Eindelijk een probaat slaapmiddel gevonden. Het lag plompverloren in de bakken bij de platenboer. Onder de G van Gilberto. Roepnaam Joao. Inderdaad, dé Joao Gilberto. De foto op het hoesje van Joao voz e violao (Verve) leidde mij naar de vondst: een Braziliaanse juffrouw drukt haar wijsvinger tegen haar fraai gevormde lippen en maant de luisteraar daarmee tot absolute rust. Een wijs gebod, want wie Joao wil horen, moet zijn oren wel heel erg spitsen.

The image shows a newspaper clipping from 'Limburgs Dagblad' dated 'Donderdag 4 mei 2000'. The article is titled 'LD-CD POP' and reviews 'João Gilberto – João voz e violao'. The review text is in Dutch and describes the album's cover art, which shows a woman with her finger to her lips, and discusses the artist's performance style. The reviewer's name, René Vlems, is visible at the bottom right of the clipping.

³ The Dutch critic Bert Vuijsje has correctly, in a similar debate about the reactive stylings of Wynton Marsalis versus more explorative types of jazz, proposed the following logical but not often adhered to option: Would it not be possible to like both styles?

De hele cd lang zit de ouwe Braziliaan nauwelijks hoorbaar voor zich uit te murmelen, daarbij zachtjes plukkend aan de snaren van zijn afgeleefde, akoestische gitaar. Van het beroemde Desafinado, waarvan in de loop van de tijd zoveel dartele covers zijn verschenen, maakt Gilberto een lijflied voor manisch depressieven. De overige songs sukkelen eindeloos voort en doen hun stinkende best om de luisteraar naar dromenland te sturen. Steeds weer die sombere stem en dat futloze getokkel. Gaap, gaap. Dodelijk traag is vooral Coracao Vagabundo, dat zelfs door een invalide schildpad voorbij wordt gestoke... zzz... zzz... zzz...

The translation could be something like this:

Finally found an efficacious soporific. It was laying around in one of the record vendors trays. Filed under G. Calling name Joao. Indeed thé Joao Gilberto. The picture on the cover of Joao voz e violao led me to the discovery: a Brazilian miss presses her fingers against her well-shaped lips and admonishes the listener to complete silence. It is wise admonisher because those who want to hear Joao have to prick up their ears. For the duration of the CD the old Brazilian is mumbling, hardly audible in the mean timing plucking on his worn-out guitar. He turns the famous Desafinado, that in the course of time has know so many frisky renditions, into the anthem of the mentally depressed. The other songs plod along endlessly and do their stinking utmost to send the listener to dreamland. Again and again with the gloomy voice and the listless plucking. Yawn, yawn, yawn. Especially Coracao Vagabundo is so sluggish, that it could be overtaken by a disabled tortoise....zzz..zzzz...zzzz.

Analysing this review one finds two types of information being conveyed, one being the reviewers' personal account of listening to this music, the other factual information pertaining to the cd. The negative effect the music has on the reviewer seems to be the main aspect of this piece; in a very show off-ish way he tears into the record leaving the reader with no desire to listen to this cd. Factual information is given, but very little and very poor. The critique starts as an anecdote with the main characters' attention being drawn by visual information – the cover picture – to the cd and actually acquiring it. The first information of a musical nature is the fact that the music is very soft and Gilberto is murmuring. He is not. This type of singing is referred to as speech-singing. This in essence comes from an African-American artistic approach. In this aesthetic, it's not the absolute quality of sound that is important; it is the effectiveness of expression that counts. In this case soft introverted singing is preferred over the qualities that are appreciated in Western singing such as diction, projection, audibility, etc. In Gilberto's case this is done by a voice that Miles Davis has said about: *He could read a newspaper and sound good*. The other musical information given is that Gilberto plays an old guitar. This is not very likely. I do not know which kind, but it is reasonable to assume that he plays a top of the line classical guitar. What most likely has led the reviewer astray is the fact that Gilberto does not use his finger nails in producing the sound on the guitar. On nylon strung guitars there are basically two ways to produce sound: one with the finger tips only striking the string, the other adding the finger nails to brighten the sound. The last one is used by most classical guitarists. The rounder and softer "finger-tips-only" style is characteristic of non-classical players. This quasi more "primitive" sound is typical of the Bossa Nova style that Gilberto introduced. This guitar sound can especially be appreciated on Luis Bonfa's sound track to the movie Orfeo Negro, especially the track Manha de Carnaval.

Unfortunately, crucial information about this cd - on the level of a newspaper reader - is not given. First of all the title: Joao voz e violao / Joao voice and guitar. The recordings that

made Gilberto famous in the late 1950's and early 1960's where big productions with large ensembles. Except for a rhythm section, these recordings usually included strings and wind players. The interesting thing about this solo recording is that one can appreciate the intricacies of Gilberto's vocal and guitar style now, uncluttered by other instruments. Also, when this record was published in 2000, Gilberto had not recorded since 1991. This in itself was a major event, the fact that the person the Brazilians call O Mito (= the legend) was still active. Here is an artist that – and there are few in the world that can claim this – created a new style by redefining the Brazilian Samba by de-emphasizing the extroverted, percussive and rhythmic aspect and enhancing the melodic and harmonic content. Gilberto is a master in completing his guitar chords with a note in his voice that is not a note in the guitar voicing. Tensions in tempo are created by singing ahead or behind the guitar almost like creating different beats in his singing and in his guitar accompaniment.

This review then is based on common listening and the information it gives is limited to the limited experience and insight of one person. It is understandable that the reviewer finds the cd dull and sleeps inducing. This record can definitely be perceived this way. However, in defining it, the monotonous element is very small and in stressing this element; the cd is completely misrepresented. Funny enough, within the lack of information this review gives, it gives ample information not intended. The review says a lot about its author and the level at which he chooses to examine music. It also says a lot about the newspaper itself and the editor and in the end it defines the people that subscribe to this paper. Another element in this type of reviewing is that the sensation is conveyed that the reviewer is superior to the artist and his performance. "I don't like this, so you're no good and I know it, so I'm better" is a feeling that the reader is left with after reading this verdict. This is especially annoying since the review clearly indicates that its author is not very knowledgeable about the performance and its context, so far be it from him to pass a judgement of superiority.

In discussion about reviews and reviewer one often comes across the commonplace: "It's only a one man's' opinion", indicating that one should not give the review too much weight. As is the case with a lot of truism this is very true but also completely wrong. Even if it is only the opinion of "one man", it should have quality, should be correct and should reveal respect and authority especially if published in the public domain. A comparison with other fields of journalism makes this very clear. If an unqualified journalist would publish about politics, sports, weather, etc. and in his poor authority misrepresent the subject, he or she would be admonished by the editor. It is of course perfectly ok for the reviewer not to like the Gilberto cd. However in misrepresenting the cd, the review becomes nothing more than a "one man's opinion" and serious art evaluation should never be just "one man's opinion".

1.3. The Many Ways of Music

In his « Espace social et genèse des classes⁴ » Bourdieu defines the social world and the origin of social classes as follows. The individual has certain qualities that allow him to deal with his surroundings. These surroundings, in their turn, are limited by their own possibilities. The way the social world is perceived is a result of a constant interworking between the individual's possibilities and the boundaries of the surrounding world. At the same time the boundaries of the social world will have a rebound effect on the individual or participant, making him change his outlook on the world and/or making him alter the social world. The

⁴ Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, n°52-53, 1984.

social world to a certain extent, states Bourdieu, is what the actors⁵ make of it at any given point. But they only have a chance to renew this world if they base themselves on a realistic assessment of this world and their own position therein.

The analogy with music is pressing. Each individual is equipped with the ability to respond to sounds. On a very basic level every human being will be startled by a sudden loud sound (and so will animals) as will they experience irritation by something that is too soft to be exactly perceived. Every human learns to pinpoint sounds, give them a meaning and respond to it effectively, be this the sound of an approaching car (with the ability to aurally classify vehicles, truck, small car, jeep, etc.) or to distinguish between the sounds of one's child or someone else's child. On a more abstract level, each individual is able to give meaning to structured sounds, usually referred to as music. The exact nature of this meaning or interpretation depends on all of the varying parameters that constitute life such as: age, sex, character, social background, talent, motivation, etc. The range of possibilities humankind has in discerning elements in music is immense. It ranges from tone deaf to absolute pitch, the ability to memorize huge quantities of music even at first hearing and notating them (sometimes as a quip referred to as the Mozart syndrome). It includes the ability to hear types of chords (major, minor, etc.) and their relationship (the so called functional harmony) and the ability to hear rhythmic (in)accuracy. Apart from this type of hearing, there is the ability to distinguish the artistic value of music. A point in case here would be to confuse the music of the Bill Evans trio with cocktail music, Paul Desmond's playing with elevator music or Ornette Coleman's record Free Jazz with noise. Determining the actual emotional value and depth and/or exposing music pretending to have depth indeed is a special listening ability. These facilities, summed up as passive musicality, are not equally divided. Pierre Bourdieu's book « La Distinction » has numerous indications that the accessibility of art surmises a set of mental tools that are unequally distributed. Bourdieu in an interview freely admits that he too at one point shared the illusion of cultural communism.

For music, most people develop in the same way. For very young children, this development is automatic. The first pitches very young children can understand are the minor third, the so-called calling third (sol-mi) of "ma-ma", calling the mother. The range then extends to a whole step above this, resulting in the material (mi-sol-la) of many children songs. The range then extends to the root, the "do", with the remainder, the "re" and the guide tone "si", completing the Western 7 tone scale, the scale that determines the key center. The remaining five notes, the so-called chromatic notes, are the next step in the aural development. A similar process more difficult to describe takes place with rhythm and sound. Determining the meter of a piece of music aurally, clapping on say beat two and four and similar musical skills have to be learned. Understanding and appreciating the sound of musical instruments from a foreign culture is a learning process. Although the sensation of being intrigued is possible, the reaction of abhorrence when hearing a foreign instrument or a foreign way of singing is all too common. World Music, at heart a marketing concept, has contributed tremendously in making music of foreign cultures accessible and raising appreciation of foreign music aesthetics. For every human being musical development is automatic but at one point, musical training becomes necessary to keep the development going, or in other words, training becomes necessary to develop the musical habitus and making music part of one's personality. However, just like in Bourdieu's social world, the

⁵ Bourdieu prefers this neutral word over individual or person

individual has qualities, wide or small, that allow him to deal with his musical surroundings or field.⁶

Music is omnipresent. Even if one excludes all concert music - all activities that have performers and audiences convene with the sole purpose of engaging in music - there is a vast array of music that an individual will encounter between birth and death. Music is present in all religious activities. A few examples to illustrate: it seems a sine qua non in determining individuality in puberty and every new generation has its own soundtrack (from the 1920's Jazz Age to 1970's Punk and nowadays House and Techno) to which it enters mainstream society; the get togethers in huge football stadiums and singing along with the main music attraction swaying to a lit lighter in the hand; etc.

Music can be perceived in myriad ways and it is very subjective. Individuals can and will respond differently to the same piece of music. This however does not mean that quality cannot be determined. This quality might not be recognized by everyone but – when well defined – can be recognized by everyone willing to learn. There is not a piece of music (or art) in the world that has not caused completely opposing responses. What is a life changing event or product for one individual will leave another impervious. The record *Kind of Blue* by Miles Davis (1959) is arguably the greatest jazz album of the 20th century (even Amazon says so). Still, confronted with this record, many listeners will remain unaffected by its sounds.

Every reaction to a piece of music (or every other event for that matter) is unique, whether emotional and/or intellectual or conscious and/or subconscious. It is impossible to prove this statement, or the antithesis, to be true for the simple reason that it is physically impossible to feel someone else's emotions. Still one can assume that the statement is true because every human being is unique. At this point, it is not possible to qualify one reaction or sensation as superior or inferior to the other. Hierarchy does not exist at this point. If the experience was a positive one, the listener will try to repeat it and will shy away from it if it was an unpleasant experience. At this stage, every individual's sensation or feeling is unique, private, holy, untouchable, etc. and more importantly not inferior or superior to the sensations and feelings of others. At this stage of emotion or personal experience every individual is equal. It is impossible to distinguish hierarchy in the feelings of someone that has thoroughly enjoyed a sentimental pop song (like the "levenslied" in Dutch) or someone elated after listening to a Free Jazz player screeching away for 45 minutes on a bass clarinet. And when happy with their experiences, why dabble with it? This happens when our two listeners are exposed to each other's music. It hard to make black and white statements about other people's reactions but, for the sake of argument, it is likely the "levenslied"- lover is abhorred by the bass clarinet noise and the Free Jazz cognoscente will look down at the simplicity of the songs, its sentimental drivel, simple melody and harmonies. At his point hierarchy has set in. Not only will each of our two listeners classify their music as superior, they will consider the other individual as different from themselves. The only way to overcome the misunderstanding about both the music and the individual is a learning process. This process highly depends on the individuals' innate abilities, social back ground, etc. The professional listeners has gone through this learning process, is not sideswept by these primary notions

⁶ Oliver Sacks' book *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* (2007) deals with numerous cases of people afflicted with strange musical disorders or powers. It shows the tremendous positive power music has but also the negative one or when the perception of music has turned awry.

but constantly strives to put perception of music and consequent interpretation on an absolute level.

2. Bourdieu: Field, Capital and Habitus



Habitus, Capital and Field are terms the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu⁷ introduced to define social dynamics. In essence, he tries to get away from views of the social world that do not do justice to its complexity. Bourdieu divides the social world into what he calls fields. These social spaces are ordered by rank. Within the field there is a constant struggle of social actors trying to occupy the dominant positions within the field. “Illusio” is the term he uses for the silent recognition of the value of this struggle also referred to as game and especially to be invested, taken in and by the game. Illusio is the opposite of indifference or ataraxy (“without care”), a detached and balanced state of mind achieved the Greek Stoics tried to achieve by suspending judgment. Being in a state of Illusio means engaging in the game which intrinsically means pursuing certain interests.

The means with which the actors engage are called capital. This can mean “capital” in the Marxist way, economical capital, but Bourdieu has extended this concept to include social capital (such as connections, networking, relationships) cultural capital (such as family upbringing and education, taste and style) and symbolic capital (diplomas, certificates, awards, honorary degrees). The habitus is the ability of an individual to observe and assess his surroundings and to act according to his findings; it is the way in which each individual manages this capital. It results in cultural structures in body and mind. For the level of success of this management Bourdieu coined the term *le sens pratique* (“resourcefulness” or “feeling for the game”). It is not equally distributed among individuals, but can be acquired through practice. It is the ingenuity which permits individuals to free themselves from their social surroundings. An individual is not defined by social class membership but by the amounts of each kind of capital he or she possesses. A very typical example of habitus is the ability to assess art more in terms of form aspects, originality and its relationships to other art forms as opposed to looking at it for its immediate value and purpose and ability to evoke emotion. Instead of defining people to one-dimensional beings that do not exist in real life, Bourdieu favors a definition based on the many relations people have and the position they occupy in an multidimensional social space. Field and habitus are intertwined dialectic. There is a learning process implied between the Field and the Habitus; because of an individual’s actions the field will change but the objective elements of the social world will influence the individual’s habitus and *sens pratique*. In his attempt to not look at the world in a too black and white way he favors defining relationships and their ever changing characteristics instead of defining objects in stressing their opposing nature, like the proletariat and the ruling class. An example clarifies: workers and management of an industry might as a rule find themselves on opposing sides. An international crisis might change this and find both parties addressing the current problem from the same perspective.

Though all fields have their own characteristics, there still are some common traits. First of all: a field only works if there is something at stake and these stakes are specific to this field. Then: the capital is specific to the field and can only be converted to other fields under certain circumstances. An issue will only be recognized when it is part of the logic and history

⁷ (August 1, 1930, Denguin, France /January 23, 2002, Paris, France)

of the field and its dispositions. Amplification of musical instruments and voice is a common procedure in jazz but is not in composed/classical music and as such often misunderstood. The Bourdieu term “field effect” means that a work can only be understood if one knows the history of the field of production of the work. Knowing the jazz field is understanding that amplification is not only part of it but also an esthetic criterion. This then too is a justification for a jury to be made up of jazz musicians. They know the field as such and are qualified to pass judgment.

A striking common feature of fields is the fact that newcomers will never destroy the field they want to be part of. As newcomers they will attack the existing monopoly. Their heresy will challenge the so-called doxa or common opinion. But they will not attack with unfair means because this would destroy the very field they want to be part of. There is consensus about what is worthwhile to fight about. They will rock the boat but not tip it over. Behind the antagonism there is a common interest in preserving the field for the obvious reason that this will guarantee self preservation. Even better: a newcomer can even hide his own agenda by presenting his case as serving the common cause. By furthering the common cause he can stealthily gain as an individual. By appearing unselfish on the outside and seemingly meeting the requirements of the field one can pursue a specific profit.



A case in point of the jazz field being rocked is the emergence of the bass guitar in jazz. When this instrument took its rightful place beside the traditional up-right double bass in the early seventies, traditional listeners abhorred it. When the instrument entered the jazz programs at schools some years later, some faculty members belittled the instrument and its players⁸. Still the electric bass canon created say between Jaco Pastorius and say Richard Bona and Marthe Linley proved naysayers wrong.

Capital is accumulated labor in either materialized or internalized form. It offers the social energy to deal with the social world. One of the main characteristics of all forms of capital is that it needs time to accumulate and one has to acquire it one self. Just like getting a sun tan, it cannot be delegated. Getting what is called *Culture* in English, *Bildung* in German and *Cultivation* in French is a time investment. And, as the expression goes, time is money. So even though Bourdieu has expanded the concept of capital beyond the mere financial, money is still a controlling force. Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, defined as long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state in the form of cultural goods like pictures, books, instruments, etc. and in the institutionalized state, the diploma. Cultural capital has as its immediate benefit that it distinguishes its bearer from the mere mediocre. The fringe benefit is that cultural capital appears to be unselfish. Having €10.000 makes one a money owner, owning paintings for that amount sets one apart from mere capitalists as being an art lover or at least appearing to be one.

What is important to understand about Habitus is that is not one destiny. It should not be seen as something genetic that will determine one’s walk of life. Individuals that have been in a field since their birth of course have an advantage because their habitus is fully internalized. However, as stated, one can and will learn from the field and for this process Bourdieu uses the phrase “a having” that has changed into “being”.

In chapter 3 the Bourdieux terms field and capital will be applied to Jazz. In chapter 4 the term Habitus will be narrowed down to mean the behavior of the members of a final exam jury.

⁸ In Dutch the instrument was referred to as “het plankje”, little wooden board or slat.

3. The Jazz Department from the Perspective of the Field, Capital and Habitus Theories

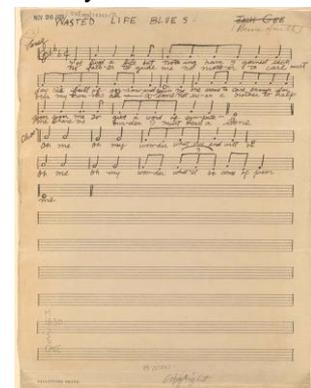
3.1. Defining the Jazz field



The first definition of the Jazz Field is a chronological one, by its history consisting of approximately 100 years now. It is generally accepted that jazz originated at the beginning of the 20th century. There is no factual proof for this. We have to make do with a statement and a recording. One of the first famous Jazz musicians, Jelly Roll Morton (picture) has said that he has invented Jazz in 1902. On the one hand, this is a self-serving remark that definitely furthered his career on the other hand, however, Morton had cleverly observed a different way of playing rhythm in both his playing and that of his contemporaries. In retrospect, this is the stiffer way of playing Ragtime giving way to a looser rhythm that would indeed be called jazz. The other given is a fact; a white New Orleans group called the Original Dixieland Jazz Band made the first jazz recordings in 1917. The two sides the band recorded in New York City on February 26, 1917 for the Victor Talking Machine Company, "Livery Stable Blues" and "Dixie Jass Band One Step" are not defining the best of jazz. It would last until 1923 before the first large body of black recordings was made. Among the names that recorded that year are Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, and Fletcher Henderson. These were defining recordings. The fact that the musicians just mentioned, usually warrant a chapter each in Jazz history books, indicates the defining quality of these recordings. Still the 1917 date still stands and somewhere between Morton's bold statement and the ODJB sides Jazz originated. Jazz has been declared dead many times but it is alive and kicking. Frank Zappa has tried to soften the blow by saying that it is not dead, "it just smells funny", but even that is not the case. Jazz is present in all its stylistic forms and is constantly developing new editions.



During the same time frame that jazz originated and developed, so did the ability to record sound and with this, Jazz created its canon. A Jazz performance is a unique event. The quality of the performance is based on the player(s) unique qualities and his ability to improvise. Even though there is some leeway between the handwriting of Bessie Smith and a meticulous score by Thad Jones, still notation is not an option. Jazz in essence is a



music that can only be documented by recording. Fortunately Jazz and sound recording developed hand in hand. The Jazz field is thereby defined by an enormous recorded canon. At times not all of these recordings were publicly available after they had been issued for the simple reason that they were sold out or eventually worn out. The quality of the sound carriers however improved over the decades with the advent of the LP and the CD. Both LP and CD also started huge reissue programs of earlier Jazz. With the advent of the CD almost everything worthwhile recorded in Jazz became available. Now with the PC as an added sound carrier and the common practice of internet connection it is possible to get any Jazz recording either through commercial means or P2P exchange facilities. If a recording is not digitally available through

commercial channels, private users will digitalize their vinyl stock and share them in P2P programs.

As its name implies, African-American music is a new musical genre that fuses African and American influences. African music is the tribal music of mainly West-Africa, the so-called Slave Coast. American influences are the cultures of the European immigrants, being the range of music from Anglo-Saxon folk music to European composed art music and from folk dancing to religious music. Indigenous American music (Indian music) plays no role.

In understanding Jazz, one has to be aware of some crucial characteristic of African-American music and especially its African part. There is the element of repetition. African music in essence repeats as opposed to European music, which will develop. If European music repeats a section, as is the case in the Exposition of a Sonata form, it is because the musical material of the Exposition will be developed in the Development section of the Sonata and needs to be instilled in the listeners mind. The African attitude is: if it is worthwhile to state once, it is valid. If it stands a repeat, it is even more valuable and if it stands many repeats it must be very valid and true. Added to this is the fact that performing a repetition in a convincing way is hard. The typical sound associated with most jazz is rife with repetition, the drums and bass being the most obvious. Evaluating their function should not be the fact that they do repeat but on the level of the quality of their repeating. On a more hidden level most jazz performances are based on a repeated harmonic form of e.g. 12 bars, 32, 36 bars etc. It is what the player does with this repetition that is the evaluation point, not the fact that there is repetition.

European music has a standard ideal sound or tone. All performers of a specific instrument or in an ensemble try to reach this determined esthetic goal. African music will search for an individual sound, something that sounds unique and likens nothing else and is effective. This search for a unique sound is at the core of good Jazz.

The European separation performer-audience / stage-concert hall is not a common one in Africa. Music is always part of a social activity where there are no onlookers only participants. It is common practice to play jazz and other African-American musical forms in settings that are not 100% concert settings.

A crucial difference between European and African-American music is the beat. In European concert music the beat (tempo and meter) is a function of the melody (or harmony). As a rule the beat is stated separately in African-American music and is independent of the melody. The full extent of actual definable differences between white and black American music and their fusion are beyond the scope of this text, suffice it to say that African musical principles by way of African-American music plays an important role in Jazz.

The Jazz field is also defined by the American culture as defined by the black and white racial social structuring of the USA. Going into detail on this subject is beyond the scope of this text. Suffice it to say that there is a black and a white American identity. Understanding the black culture identity is instrumental in understanding the musical expression of this identity. To give an indication of the scope of this subject, a quote from Gunther Schuller's scientific *Early Jazz* is effective. In writing about the secretive use of singing and native drum languages by black American slaves, Schuller adds a footnote stating: *It should be noted that to this day many Negroes – perhaps a majority- think of jazz a just such a medium of personal, if not secretive communication with their own race.*

In the beginning, the USA determined the way jazz sounded. In early 1918, US army lieutenant James Reese Europe's military band toured France playing its pre-jazz hot ragtime style for soldiers. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band recorded the first Jazz in 1917 and already in 1919 they performed in England including a command performance for King

George V at the London Palladium. The clarinet and saxophone player Sidney Bechet, who together with Louis Armstrong, was one of the first important soloists, had an extensive career in France – he died in Paris – facilitated by his background as a Creole. It was not until after WWII that the migration turned around. Django Reinhardt had already recorded with visiting American jazz musicians in the late 1930's, but after the war he would perform in the USA with Duke Ellington, be that not as a member of the band but as an added attraction towards the end of the evenings 'show. The continent of Europe really became an independent voice in the jazz world as of the 1970's. In the aftermath of Free Jazz, which originated in 1960, many European musicians transformed this style in to something that was recognized as truly European and was supported by subsidization programs of several European countries. This style would be named after the country (Nederlands Geïmproviseerde Muziek, British Improvised Music, etc.) but also be referred to as European Improvised Music. There was a deep division between European musicians that played American Jazz and these free improvisers. The rift between these factions did not seem to heal until the 1990's. Another American stronghold was broken when a European record company called ECM, grounded in Munich 1969, finally challenged the American supremacy of labels like Blue Note, Impulse, Verve, etc. paving the way for Black Saint / Soul Note, Label Bleu, etc. As of the 1970's a lot of European conservatories extended their program with jazz departments. Independent Jazz Schools were also started. The basic curriculum of these schools however is American Jazz.

Defining the jazz field from the perspective of the music industry, one has to understand that the Jazz market for cd's is a small one. The RIAA (The Recording Industry Association of America's) issues Consumer Profiles in which it specifies the shares of the different musical styles taken in the overall size of the U.S. sound recording industry based on manufacturers' shipments at suggested list prices. In the 2006 10-year Music Consumer Trends Chart, Jazz ranges from 1.8% total U.S. dollar value in 2005 to 3.4% in 2001. A previous sheet shows 1989 with an all height record of 4.9% with rock at 41.7%. It should be noted that Jazz includes Pop Jazz by for example Kenny G. and excludes big band and Fusion.



THE RECORDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

2006 Consumer Profile

Phone: 202/775-0101

Web: www.riaa.com

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total U.S. Dollar Value	
Genre												
Rock	32.5	25.7	25.2	24.8	24.4	24.7	25.2	23.9	31.5	34.0	%	The figures below (in millions) indicate the overall size of the U.S. sound recording industry based on manufacturers' shipments at suggested list prices.
Rap/Hip-hop ²	10.1	9.7	10.8	12.9	11.4	13.8	13.3	12.1	13.3	11.4		
R&B/Urban ³	11.2	12.8	10.5	9.7	10.6	11.2	10.6	11.3	10.2	11.0		
Country	14.4	14.1	10.8	10.7	10.5	10.7	10.4	13.0	12.5	13.0		
Pop	9.4	10.0	10.3	11.0	12.1	9.0	8.9	10.0	8.1	7.1		
Religious ⁴	4.5	6.3	5.1	4.8	6.7	6.7	5.8	6.0	5.3	5.5		
Classical	2.8	3.3	3.5	2.7	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.0	2.4	1.9	1997 \$12,236.8	
Jazz	2.8	1.9	3.0	2.9	3.4	3.2	2.9	2.7	1.8	2.0	1998 \$13,723.5	
Soundtracks	1.2	1.7	0.8	0.7	1.4	1.1	1.4	1.1	0.9	0.8	1999 \$14,584.5	
Oldies	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.1	2000 \$14,323.0	
New Age	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.4	0.3	2001 \$13,740.9	
Children's	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.6	2.8	2.3	2.9	2002 \$12,614.2	
Other ⁵	5.7	7.9	9.1	8.3	7.9	8.1	7.6	8.9	8.5	7.3	2003 \$11,854.4	
											2004 \$12,338.1	
											2005 \$12,269.5	
											2006 \$11,510.2	
Format												
Full-length CDs	70.2	74.8	83.2	89.3	89.2	90.5	87.8	90.3	87.0	85.6	%	Methodology The 2006 profile data represents a combination of data collected by Peter Hart Research and The Taylor Research & Consulting Group, Inc. The data for the period from the beginning of 2004 through the end of July 2004 were collected by Peter Hart Research, while the data from August 2004 on was gathered by The Taylor Research & Consulting Group. ¹ Data based on telephone survey of past-month music buyers. For 2006, the reliability of the data among 1,200+ past-month music buyers is +/- 2.8% at a 95% confidence level. With respect to genre, consumers were asked to classify their music purchases. Permission to cite or copy these statistics is hereby granted as long as proper attribution is given to the Recording Industry Association of America.
Full-length cassettes	18.2	14.8	8.0	4.9	3.4	2.4	2.2	1.7	1.1	0.8		
Singles (all types)	9.3	6.8	5.4	2.5	2.4	1.9	2.4	2.4	2.7	3.4		
Music videos/Video DVDs	0.6	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	1.1		
DVD audio	NA	NA	NA	NA	1.1	1.3	2.7	1.7	0.8	1.3		
Digital Download	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.2	0.5	1.3	0.9	5.7	6.7		
SACD	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.5	0.8	1.2	0.0		
Vinyl LPs	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.6		
Age												
10-14 Years	8.9	9.1	8.5	8.9	8.5	8.9	8.6	9.4	8.6	7.6	%	
15-19 Years	16.8	15.8	12.6	12.9	13.0	13.3	11.4	11.9	11.9	12.8		
20-24 Years	13.8	12.2	12.6	12.5	12.2	11.5	10.0	9.2	12.7	9.8		
25-29 Years	11.7	11.4	10.5	10.6	10.9	9.4	10.9	10.0	12.1	12.7		
30-34 Years	11.0	11.4	10.1	9.8	10.3	10.8	10.1	10.4	11.3	10.2		
35-39 Years	11.6	12.6	10.4	10.6	10.2	9.8	11.2	10.7	8.8	10.6		
40-44 Years	8.8	8.3	9.3	9.6	10.3	9.9	10.0	10.9	9.2	9.0		
45+	16.5	18.1	24.7	23.8	23.7	25.5	26.6	26.4	25.5	26.1		
Channel⁶												
Record Store	51.8	50.8	44.5	42.4	42.5	36.8	33.2	32.5	39.4	35.4	%	
Other Store	31.9	34.4	38.3	40.8	42.4	50.7	52.8	53.8	32.0	32.7		
Record Club	11.6	9.0	7.9	7.6	6.1	4.0	4.1	4.4	8.5	10.5		
TV, Newspaper, Magazine												
Ad Or 800 Number	2.7	2.9	2.5	2.4	3.0	2.0	1.5	1.7	2.4	2.4		
Internet ⁷	0.3	1.1	2.4	3.2	2.9	3.4	5.0	5.9	8.2	9.1		
Digital Download	NA	6.0	6.8									
Concert	NA	1.6	2.7	2.0								
Gender												
Female	51.4	51.3	49.7	49.4	51.2	50.6	50.9	50.5	48.2	49.6	%	
Male	48.6	48.7	50.3	50.6	48.8	49.4	49.1	49.5	51.8	50.4		

¹Calendar year 2004 data based upon a combination of survey data collected by Peter Hart Research and The Taylor Research & Consulting Group, Inc. Includes only partial-year data, as Hart did not interview during the months of March, April, June, and July of 2004. 2004 Channel data derived solely from Taylor August-December interviews.

²"Rap": Includes Rap and Hip-Hop.

³"R&B": Includes R&B, Blues, Dance, Disco, Funk, Fusion, Motown, Reggae, Soul.

⁴"Religious": Includes Christian, Gospel, Inspirational, Religious, and Spiritual.

⁵"Other": Includes Big Band, Broadway Shows, Comedy, Contemporary, Electronic, EMO, Ethnic, Exercise, Folk, Gothic, Grunge, Holiday Music House Music, Humor, Instrumental, Language, Latin, Love Songs, Mix, Mellow, Modern, Ska, Spoken word, Standards, Swing, Top-40, Trip-hop.

⁶2005 and 2006 channel data based on all purchases made, 2004 and earlier channel data based on only the first purchase made each month

⁷Internet does not include record club purchases made over the Internet or digital downloads

Continuity is the main thing that is missing in Jazz concert practices. Venue and clubs come and go, as will festivals. Moreover, if they do not disappear they will have to give in to commercial trends to attract the audiences and income. Compared to the amount of money spend on classical symphony orchestra, subsidization in Jazz is almost non-existent. If there

is a form of subsidization it is usually awarded to amateur organizations who can hardly ever surpass their amateur status in organizing Jazz concerts and activities.

3.2. Defining Capital or Stature in Jazz

Obvious capital of course is being a good player/musician_ and for jazz this always means being an improviser with the befitting melodic, harmonic and rhythmic characteristics_ “Good” has many definitions. It can be a majority consensus within a given social, professional, geographic, etc. context or by a minority basing their assessment on not yet widely recognized uniqueness of a performer. Respect is awarded to both technical mastery of a musical instrument and to the ability to use the instrument to convey emotions. There is a whole range of possibilities here. On the one end there is appreciation for technical instrumental prowess on the other end a musician will be appreciated for conveying musical intent with limited instrumental means. The technical abilities can be very well defined. Speed is one of them, being the ability to play passages with a lot of notes fast. Range is another, e.g. high note blowing for brass instruments or vocalists singing high. On a more subtle level there is the ability to control register, being able to control the sound of the instrument through all octaves and making it sound even over the whole range. This is referred to as not having a register break. Defining the emotional aspect of musical intent of course is harder. What is interesting is that if transferring of emotion takes place with limited instrumental technique, this lack of technique is an added benefit. The lack of something becomes capital.



An interesting form of capital is the fact that something appears to be simple on the surface, but upon closer inspection turns out to be hard to perform. A dreaded mistake in Jazz is overplaying; the improviser is not able to streamline his thoughts and starts to ramble, playing notes that – as the expression goes – go nowhere. The opposite of this is a player where what he not plays becomes as important as what he does play. Miles Davis is a good example of this. Early recordings of this innovating American trumpet player show that he could play fast, but the style that would make him famous was a sparser style. Guitarist Kenny Burrell’s solo on his own composition “Chitlins con Carne” is also a fine example of minimizing the amount of notes in favor of radiating a control over affairs with just the right limited amount of notes. A group or band will be appreciated for their ability to play well together. This is defined by the bands individual abilities but especially the bands overall sound, the way they interpret the beat, time together, play the form, play over the form, etc. A Jazz bands ability to play well together is described by terms as “groove” or “in the pocket”. Determining if someone is a good teacher can be done in many ways. The simplest one is to see if the teacher is a good player. A good player is almost automatically considered to be a good teacher. Most conservatories try to fill their faculties with name players. This in itself attracts attention and is very useful in publicity campaigns. The fact that there is no proven

relationship between being a good player and being a good educator does not always play a role in hiring faculty members. It is hardly ever questioned that a successful player might not necessarily be a good instructor. The basic assumption is: if you can do it, you can explain it. Other criteria to determine if one is a good teacher come with the school one works at, the amount of students one has, the success and the type of success a student has after graduation.

Publications of pedagogical tools are important too. If the book is by a famous player it will attract attention right away. The size and respectability of publishing house can carry capital as can the subject matter. Improvisation is a tricky subject. How can one practice what one is suppose to improvise? In half a century of jazz education, educators were able to distill unifying principles in analyzing transcribed improvised solos. These principles or “rules”, as guide tone line, chromatic approach, delayed resolution, tension arpeggio, etc. are handy educational tools. The introduction of these ideas was widely considered an improvement in Jazz education.

A special place is awarded to the educators that conduct workshops. In Jazz workshops are usually rehearsal bands of novice players that learn to play under the tutelage of a professional player. This professional is appreciated for his ability to make these novice players function in spite of limited abilities and vast unequally distributed abilities among the diverse players. Holland even has an organization that organizes workshops.



Although Jazz is an improvised music, the improvisers need a vehicle to improvise on. So the Jazz composition is usually not a lengthy piece of music – they usually cover one or two pages – but its value is seen in the fact if the piece provides an interesting setting for improvisation. The own composition is considered so important by some schools, that it is a prerequisite for some examinations.

Independent of the quality of the recording, having recorded a cd is capital. Obviously, if the cd sells in great numbers and/or gets good reviews, this increases the volume of capital. Having a recording contract with a label, is major capital. The current fashion on MySpace to indicate if a musician is signed has come up with a wonderful euphemism for those not signed: Indie, short for independent. An alternative is: unsigned. Airplay on radio, with or without interview, carries weight and TV of course is the strongest medium for immediate impact. Radio carries more quality.

The amount of musician's capital will rise not only with sheer volume of appearance in the media, but also with the quality of the media he appears in. A review in a respected Jazz Magazine will be more powerful than the praising on the poster of a local jazz bar.

Jazz musicians have been known to be excellent reporters. Piano player Mike Nichols is a point in case with excellent articles on the state of jazz in the 1940 and insightful reviews on Thelonious Monk. The trombone player Mike Zwerin eventually became more known for his writing than for his playing. Paul Desmonds was an excellent writer of funny short stories.

Through Jazz history musicians have come to the foreground as spokesmen for improvement in Jazz but also for idealistic causes such as social injustice of poverty. Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra, started in the 1970, played political music. Their first album focused on the Spanish Civil War and their 1982 album "The Ballad of the Fallen" commented again on the Spanish Civil War as well as the political instability and US involvement in Latin America.

A musician can carry a lot of clout if he or she also runs a venue or a festival or is on the advisory board. There is of course respect for the fact that this particular organizer enhances

the jazz world with added playing possibilities but he or she also decides who will perform and who will not. This person therefore holds a very powerful position that automatically commands respect.

4. Professional Music Assessment

4.1. Classification

Before looking at the jury for the final exam from the Habitus aspect, a look at another passage by Bourdieu is important. In the same "Espace social et genèse des classes » Bourdieu explains that in the natural desire to classify, one comes across the ambition to create the correct classifications and make them useful as operational tools in managing affairs. Therefore, at the basis of classification and assessment we have: good intent. Bourdieu writes about social classes, but this applies to adjudicating music too. An examination committee deliberates a musical performance (at length sometimes) with one goal only: to bring forth a correct classification. Just like Bourdieu, the jury's goal is to distinguish between the "sacred and the profane", "the good and the bad", "between the vulgar and the sophisticated". In defining social classes Bourdieu writes about "a creative observation" or "contemplation of the world" and about "letting things exist from one's own presentation". In music, we have no other choice than to be creative in interpreting what we hear. What we have at the basis are vibrating air molecules. From there on we have subjective interpretation, but with the intention of making the correct interpretation and classification.

Bourdieu writes about a creative philosophy of life that allows things to exist from one's own representation. If one would not find meaning in vibrating molecules, they would only remain that, a natural phenomenon. However, listening people have the ability to make things visible and turn quivering molecules into something that constitutes a truth. The illusion as such is not illusory. There is an objective truth about the subjective. This is the examination board's job in a nutshell. Moreover – this is again Bourdieu – if the jury wants to be successful about this and wants to be understood, it has to be objective about its own process of objectifying and clearly define its own Field, Capital and Habitus.

One could of course try to do without classification. Bourdieu refers to the Greek Stoics who tried to achieve a detached and balanced state of mind (ataraxy or "without care") by suspending judgment since one is not capable of ever discovering the truth. In theory, a conservatory could enroll students, teach them for four or five years and never at any point give its opinion on the students' progress, never test them with an exam and make the students leave with only a paper stating that they were enrolled. Bourdieu counters ataraxy with the term *Illusio* which is the opposite of indifference and means engaging in the game which intrinsically means pursuing certain interests. A conservatory that would not adjudicate would consequently not pursue its main interest: making the best possible music. In making a distinction between good and "the other kind", the conservatory will of course accuse and find fault. But then Bourdieu points out that the etymology of the word category comes from *kategoreshai* or public accusation. Within the field of its expertise, the conservatory has an obligation to speak out against music that does not meet the requirements. Apart from all this, not evaluating students at regular intervals and at a final exam would also conflict with nature of teaching. The whole process of learning and teaching is a chain of decisions distinguishing between what works and what does not, between good and bad. There is, as

Bourdieu writes, a natural desire to classify. The job is to find the tools to make the correct classification.

4.2. Final exam

The following diagram shows both the number of exams and their scheduling. This text deals with the highlighted exams: two exams in the Bachelor program and three recitals in the Masters.

Bachelor Program		
Exams		
	<i>Semester 1</i>	<i>Semester 2</i>
1 year		Propaedeutic
2 year		Qualifying
3 year		Qualifying
4 year	Presentation	Final Exam

Master Program		
Exams		
	<i>Semester 1</i>	<i>Semester 2</i>
1 year		Recital 1
2 year	Recital 2	Recital 3

The basis for these exams is the curriculum. This defines a progress in both instrumental/vocal abilities and an understanding of the inner working of music along stylistic parameters. The two exams in the Bachelor program are different. The first one, the Presentation, evaluates the candidate's craftsmanship in that the curriculum dictates the kind of music to be played. It does so, not in terms of titles of pieces as would an exam for the department of classical music, but in terms of harmony, tempos, rhythmic styles, types of improvisation, stylistic criteria, etc. The student has to adhere to this fixed set of requirements and the jury will use it in its assessment. Though the criteria differ slightly from instrument to instrument, the criteria look something like this: playing a wide variety of pieces such as a blues, a standard, a jazz composition, playing one piece in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, variation of tempos and different rhythmic feels such as swing and straight (e.g. Latin or Funk). For the Final Exam the OER (Onderwijs en Examen Reglement / Schooling and Examination Regulations) states the student is free to shape the program along the lines of his own musical ideas, though this needs to be done in conjunction with the main subject teacher. During this second exam the candidate's artistic personality is evaluated. This freer program does not imply of course that craftsmanship does not apply here anymore. The grade for the Final Exam is the final grade that appears on the diploma which gives this exam an added weight. The Master Program is based on a contract between the Conservatory and the student in which musical goals (or goal) are defined. These goals are loosely defined such as "jazz improvisation" or "developing jazz concepts" to specific goals as "improving vocal techniques", etc. Each exam session lasts about 1,5 hours with the performance taking approximately 45 minutes and the jury deliberation and reporting the results to the candidate taking another 45 minutes.

4.3. Putting together a jury

The jury consists of jazz musicians that are part of the jazz field, carry jazz capital and have a jazz habitus as described in chapter 2. This simple sentence defining a Jazz Department jury already is a major decision in favor of a jury consisting out of professionals instead of laymen. It is very unlikely the candidate will ever again perform for a completely professional audience. After the final exam, playing will mainly take place for a general public, in other words for a section of the Jazz field other than the pros and even for listeners on the fringe of the Jazz field. So why not let them, the outsiders, do the final judging even if they do not know that it is not the mistake a player makes that should be judged, but the way the mistake is dealt with? This discrepancy is solved by the notion that if professionals like it, a general audience will like it too or will come to like it with proper guidance. And that, through the conservatory training the candidate is equipped with the tools to deal with views that differ from the academic situation. All in all, a final exam only says one thing: whether a professional jury is pleased or not with the efforts of a candidate by rules made by the conservatory stemming from professional Jazz practice. A repetition of this success in the outside world is only implied.

When putting together a board of professional examiners a whole set of criteria applies. Represented in the board should of course be know-how of the instrument that is being examined. Examiners that play other instruments than the one under scrutiny, balance this. The reasoning behind this is that knowing too much of the examined instrument can cloud the perception of the performance and the music per se. E.g., judging a trumpet exam with 4 trumpeters can give a one-side perspective on the proceeding. The official rules state that the size of the board is determined for each exam with the minimum being two members. In practice, the size of a board should be useable; too many cooks spoil the broth. Three to six members, usually however four to five, are considered effective. It gives a balance between the type and amount of knowledge and makes for effective deliberating.

As in all other forms of higher learning, professionals involved in the training of the candidate do the examination. This means that most members in varying degrees know the candidate. The main subject teacher of course knows the student very well. The other might know the student from combo classes, theory classes or just in an informal way as a member of the Jazz Department community. This inevitably means that part of the evaluation is process oriented. In order to balance the subjective approach that the faculty members are bound to have, external jury members are invited to the final exam of both the Bachelor and Masters Program. These members do not know the candidate or at least not that very well. The outside expert might hear a candidate two times: once for the Final Exam and once for Recital 3. The outside expert is not appointed by a third party but is selected by the conservatory on the basis of "School of Thought"; they think along the lines of the Jazz Department and respect the field of this department. They might be faculty members of other Jazz Departments, independent performing players, alumni, etc. Examining is done in two ways: one can look at the performance as a product or as process. In the first case the concert is seen as an independent entity which is judged by the criteria which the music puts forward. In the second case the current performance will be compared to a previous presentation by the candidate and progress or the absence thereof will be taken into account. The nature of the composition of the board means that inevitably these two approaches will be present. They can be manifest or hidden, but not denied. If it is manifest it can actually be part of the debate or negotiation in as far that a jury member (or the chair)

can insist on considering the candidate's progress or on the contrary asking for the performance to be judged by its current appearance only.

Overlooking all is the chairperson, appointed by the Exam Committee, the official body responsible for the formal completion of exams (This is not the board of examiners!). The Head of the Jazz Department usually does the chairing though this can be done by anyone appointed by the Exam Committee. The chairperson is a faculty member too and thus, as a musician, qualified to partake in the judging. The second person always included in the board is the candidate's main subject teacher. So the basis for any of these exams is:

Chairperson
Main subject teacher

If a department has two teachers, the second teacher is on the jury too because he or she was also involved in the students' progress, most certainly as a juror on previous exams and maybe as a teacher. The second teacher is also involved in order to monitor the level of the department. If a department has three (or more) teachers the third is not necessarily included since the instrument specific know-how might be overrepresented.

Chairperson
Main subject teacher
Colleague main subject

So this format already is an official jury for any exam except Final and Recital 3 and can e.g. appear as follows:

<u>Guitar Presentation /Recital 1&2</u>
Chairperson / Guitar
Guitar
Piano main subject

<u>Piano Presentation /Recital 1&2</u>
Chairperson / Guitar
Piano Main subject
Piano secondary subject

<u>Drums Presentation /Recital 1&2</u>
Chairperson / Guitar
Drums Main subject
Drums Main subject

The Maastricht Jazz Department Faculty has the following personnel division ordered by subject:

Vocal	3
Guitar	2
Bass (e-b & d-b)	2
Drums	2
Piano (main subject)	1

Piano (secondary subject)	1
Saxophone	1
Trumpet	1
Trombone	1
Arranging	1
Theory (also piano player)	1

The next criterion for completing the jury is instrument groups: wind instruments, string instruments and chord instruments. For a brass exam both trumpet and trombone faculty members are usually included. One or two are also included in a saxophone exam. For a bass exam one could include one of the guitar instructors and for a piano, being a chord instrument one could invite the other chord instrument, the guitar. Drums exams usually are complemented with a bass teacher since drums and bass work closely together in jazz. What is important to understand is that jazz musicians work with what I would like to refer to as a common repertoire. Although each player in a jazz combo has a unique role, they all play the same piece and have a thorough knowledge of the other players' function. The distance in classical music that exist say between a piano players' repertoire and that of a recorder, does not exist in jazz. With the word repertoire I also mean the recorded jazz canon. There is a huge body of recorded music that all jazz players, indifferent of their instrument, are aware of and can refer to at will. On a more practical level, one criterion is availability. Not all teachers are present at the conservatory on a daily basis.

4.4. External and Internal Criteria

What the board will examine is whether the candidate is an independent, performing, professional jazz musician. The main factors that determine whether someone is a jazz musician are the players' ability to deal with pulse and rhythm, phrasing, sound, improvisation, repertoire and concept. Two factors are closely examined: the craftsmanship and the artistic content. The following question defines the first factor: has the candidate mastered the instrument to a degree that allows him/her to cope with the requirements that a professional situation will present? The artistic content is defined by the jazz field. The candidates' effort is examined in its relationship to the jazz canons' stylistic laws. Apart from direct musical laws, other criteria apply such as creativity, authenticity, personality, variation, stamina, continuity, feeling for style, etc. All criteria are seen in the light of and related to a four or six year studying program (Bachelor and Master). These are criteria I would like to refer to as external criteria. These are demands placed upon the examinee, requirements that cannot be controlled other than to live up to them.

The internal criteria come from the candidate and reflect his or her musical personality. It's the candidate saying: "This is what I have added to the external criteria. I have dealt with those - you can hear from my playing - but this is me. This is my position in the external criteria." In other words: the presented music program should by its sheer nature and maturity indicate what the internal criteria are by which it wants to be judged. The performance should radiate these criteria and the amount of success in meeting these determine the amount of authenticity and individual character of the performance. A jury of professional listeners hears these criteria and judges the extent in which the presented work meets these emitted criteria. The internal criteria work two ways. First of all, a board of examiners should not be asked to guess as to the musical and artistic intentions of the candidate. If these are not apparent from the students' playing, the performance is most

likely not very good and should be judged accordingly. Secondly however, if the criteria are clearly audible from the performance, the board, in its turn, should rule by the presented criteria and not by what the board might want to hear. This makes up for professional music assessment. It is done by a body of jurors that are aware of external and internal criteria and assess independent of their personal taste and preferences. For example: if a candidate plays a program in which jazz and world music is combined, the product should not be judged as to the presence and quality of bebop lines but if the candidate does play bebop lines they should make sense in this altered musical situation. Or: a Fusion program should not be judged by Bebop criteria. Or on a more difficult level: perfect time playing is an important element of jazz but not of all jazz! If a performance uses agogic time⁹ it should not be evaluated according to the perfect time criterion.

These internal or emitted criteria are sometimes inconspicuous. In order to detect them one has to be prepared for the smallest and apparently inconspicuous elements. The mere fact of instrumental combination already puts the listener in a certain listening mode. Whether it is a big band or an acoustic duo in itself is a statement that the listeners more or less unconsciously respond too. A jury member has to be conscious of this. The same applies to the choice of piece, the keys, the tempos, overall dynamics, etc. Also: these are young, beginning players. One should not expect earth-shattering personalities at this point and be on the lookout for small telltales. One of the ideas the outside world has of a conservatory is that this school is preparing the next generation of players that will change the face of jazz in a revolutionary way. Once graduates they will, within the confines of their career, find their way into jazz history books with their cutting-edge style. This of course is not excluded, but players like that are only a few per century. The core business of a conservatory is a socialization process and the final exam measures the level of socialization. Now in music (and the arts in general), antisocial behavior is important in order for the music to progress or at least not become stale. This ability to behave musically unsociable is examined in the students' creativity and authenticity. It is a dual track of rearing students in the jazz field, explaining to them the inner workings of Jazz and the external criteria and in the mean time helping them finding their own voice or personality and formulating their internal criteria.

5. Analysis of Final Exams

Immediately after the concert the jury convenes for deliberation. The examination ethics dictate that there is no talking amongst examiners between the concert and the convening of the jury. This is not enforced but taken for granted in good faith. For the two last exams (Bachelor: final exam, Master: 3rd recital) the meeting actually starts with the members committing to a grade (between the numbers 0 and 10) in writing without prior consultation. The chairperson mediates the grade and announces the outcome. This being a secret ballot it is only clear to the chairperson who has given what grade. After this, each individual member orally explains the given grade. After everybody has done this, there is the possibility to change the original grade. The proceedings end when the chairperson determines that everybody agrees with the average grade. The chairperson drafts a short written commentary about the jury's findings, which is ok-ed by the jury. Then the student is

⁹ This is a way of playing in which some notes are emphasized a bit longer in duration than the surrounding notes thus very slightly shifting their time of onset.

invited into the room and notified of the grade and the chairperson orally reports the findings of the jury back to the candidate, aided if necessary by the jury members.

Using numbers in grading exams has been the topic of many heated debate. What mars this discussion is that it is not understood that the grade is a simple summary of a complicated process. Every exam has, apart from the grade, an oral and written report for the candidate. This report explains what the grade implies. This report is the more informative result of an exam. These remarks actually help the candidate in a very precise way. The grade is more a rough indication of what the jury holds of the exam. Still where a written report and an oral exam can be very precise, they can, on the other hand in their wording, shroud and soften criticism. A grade, it all of its roughness, cannot hide or conceal always rings true in all its bluntness.

Of the 11 exams examined in this text, five followed this procedure. As a rule the initial votes already indicate a consensus.

Exam 2)	Range: 2 (7 to 9)	Initial consensus	Individual grade = final
Grade given	8	2 of 4 give 7	0 of 4
Member a (chair)	9		
Member b	7		
Member c (former teacher)	7		
Member d (external & teacher)	8,5		
Average	7,8		
N.B. At the initial vote none of the members gave the final note!			

Exam 7)	Range: 0,5 (8 to 8,5) Initial: 7,5 to 8,5	Initial consensus	Individual grade = final
Grade given	8,5	3 of 5 give 8,5	3 of 5
Member a (chair)	8		
Member b	8,5		
Member e	8,5		
Member f (former teacher)	8,5		
Member g (external & teacher)	8 (initial grade 7,5 making average 8,2 which would have resulted in final grade 8)		
Average	8,3		

Exam 8)	Range: 3 (6 to 9)	Initial consensus	Individual grade = final
Grade given	8	3 of 6 give 8	3 of 5
Member a (chair)	8		
Member b	8		
Member c (former teacher)	7,5		

Member h	6		
Member I (ext. & doc.)	9		
Member J (ext.)	8		
Average	7,75		

Examen 10)	Range: 0,5 (5 to 5,5)	Initial consensus	Individual grade = final
Grade given	5	4 of 5 give 5	4 of 5
Member b (teacher. & chair)	5		
Member a	5		
Member k	5,5		
Member l	5		
Member m (ext.)	5		
Average	5,1		

Exam 11)	Range: 0,5 (6-6,5)	Initial consensus	Individual grade = final
Grade given	6,5	5 of 6 give 6,5	5 of 6
Member b (teacher & chair)	6,5		
Member a (former teacher)	6		
Member k	6,5		
Member l	6,5		
Member m (ext.)	6,5		
Average	6,5		

Three exams have a difference in range of only 0,5, the other a difference of 2 and one with a range of 3. (This exam really had a 1,5 range when the “6-giver” explained why the 6 was given. This particular exam presented an element on stage which was not related to music and the juror felt unqualified to assess this non-musical entity).

At this point the chairman will start the actual deliberation. In essence, this part of the meeting will determine the relationship between the imminent and the absolute, the imminent of course being the recently heard concert and the absolute being the Jazz canon as interpreted by the school’s curriculum and examination requirements. The members of the jury have listened with open ears to the concert. The thoughts, emotions, feelings, sensations, etc. they have experienced, they will now rationalize. This pretty much along the line of the way a judge in a court of law rules. After have tried the case, a judge has a feeling, an emotion about what justice in this particular case constitutes. This emotion is then rationalized, professionalized if you will, though a strainer of knowledge, insights, experience, good taste, etc. and worded and explained to all involved. Since a board of examiners consists of more individuals the process of negotiation resulting in consensus is needed in order to do justice to the music just performed.

The chairperson usually invites the external member to start the proceedings since this member does not know the candidate and can give a fresh and unbiased assessment. This is not a mean feat. In a way the examiners are being examined too in as much as they have to display their habitus and capital now too in a peer group. Of course their habitus will not be evaluated on a formal level, but they can impress – or not – their fellow examiners by what

they have heard, how they interpret it and who they word it.¹⁰ Especially for the first speaker (and especially the external one) there can be an initial shyness in these negotiations, a certain timidity to put forward an opinion since, without intending it, the opening statement can be completely different from the common view on this concert and this student. Or it can very eloquently set the path that other examiners will take too in doing justice to this performance and the student. Another way to deal with the “first speaker issue” is cockiness, expressing the opinion in a more aggressive way with a “if you do not think this way too, you are wrong”-attitude. Whatever form is chosen in expressing the initial statement, it is very important that the speaker backs up what and how it is being said in a convincing way.

Exam #	Grade
01	7
02	8
03	8
04	8
05	8
06	9
07	8,5
08	8
09	6
10	5
11	6,5

Grade	Was given
5	1 x
6	1 x
6,5	1 x
7	1 x
8	5 x
8,5	1 x
9	1 x

The best way to pass an exam is to play (or sing) very well. This also makes for the easiest deliberations but, unfortunately, top grades like 9 or 10, as the above table shows, occur only rarely. The eleven researched exams only had one grade 9. Grade 7 and 8 also usually make for harder deliberating by the jury. Deciding between a 5 or 6 (with 5,5 being a passing note) is the hardest since it constitutes the difference between failing and passing. Grade 4 is easier again as the performance was really below standard, but this only happens very rarely.

Exam #06 was graded with a 9 and constituted an interesting deliberation. The exam did not call for a blind voting but the chair decided to do one anyway. As it turned out all four members unanimously voted 9, indicating consensus on a high level exam. The only flaw the chair saw in the performance was that at about three quarters into the concert the tension dropped a bit. The chair put this to the board and all agreed. The chair then invited all

¹⁰ Chapter 3 “Percieving music” gives an indication of what individuals can and cannot hear.

participants to concentrate on this particular item and to come up with an advice to give to the candidate to would help in sustaining musical tension throughout the performance. The ensuing discussion touched upon many subjects such as phrasing, technique, appearance, etc. In the end, the board did not give the candidate a lot of practical advice since it did not want to push the candidate into a specific direction. The board gave general advice deeming the candidate strong enough to fill in this general advice with own solutions. The only practical advice given was to use more vocal acrobacy. The general term advice was along the lines of more confidence, give the music an edge, look for adventure, take risks, make it more spectacular, etc.

Of the exams graded with an 8, #02 constituted an interesting one since none of the jury members gave the final grade in the initial voting. This exam presented a form of Nu Jazz that was lounge oriented. It is a form of music in which a great number of musical parameters, usually present in music, are set to zero. All tempo's are similar, there is little dynamic, improvisations are somewhat uniform and presentation and visual aspects are static. Even when played at top level, this music has its limitations as far as expression is concerned. It is a type of music that is better to "live in" than to listen to. The opening statement during deliberation correctly assessed that the band had a tendency to let the concept slip into a form of back ground music rather than basing their jazz on real lounge. The jury members had a hard time putting their personal musical preferences to the side but in the end were able to pinpoint the good and bad elements of the performance. Especially when the students' progress was taken into consideration, the positive elements became clear. Since the last performance the overall sound had improved, the groove and interplay were better and the timing had developed. The lack of cross bar lines unfortunately still marred the candidate's phrasing.

Exam #01 was performed by the same band as #02. Even though the compositions were different, the concept was the same. The candidate responsible for this exam was graded with a 7 however. This was mainly due to the displayed technique on the instrument, which had improved but was not on the level of an 8.

Exam # 03 could be categorized as a halo-exam, the effect by which superior qualities in a performer or the personality cover up lesser qualities. Even though there was a lot of criticism directed at the candidate; the fact that he is an excellent instrumentalist and a searching creative musician were considered more important than flaws in the current performance. One jury member can be quoted as saying that many imitators of Keith Jarrett can be heard at many piano exams all over the world but that this jury member preferred the kind of creativeness and originality he just witnessed. The same candidate played exam #08 with same grade and for an exam that was graded along the same criteria.

The two other exams that were graded with an 8 are typical exams of talented students with correct studying attitude and a jury that is very satisfied with results and progress. For exam #04 some of the positive elements that were mentioned are: not only are the themes interesting but the improvisations match the interest of the theme; the eagerness with which the candidate plays the instrument is considered positive and even referred to as hedonistic. In the oral and written report the candidate is requested however to control his eagerness because there is a tendency to overload and to become hectic. The candidate is also advised to give the way he positions his instrument in relation to the accompanying instruments on stage some serious thought.

The bottom line to exam #05 is the fact that the candidate has acquired a good solid foundation and can explore contents that are more artistic from here. The jury correctly

analyses that the candidate has turned her smaller tonal palette into an advantage. Instead of forcing her range, the lower register is now more easily available.

The maxim “Fake it till you make it” applies to exam 07. This exam gave the jury a hard time in deciding between the process or product oriented way of adjudicating. The initial vote (8, 7,5 and 3 x 8,5) showed a consensus: this was a good exam. Most jury members however felt that the performance was below the candidates own standard and possibility. Everybody agreed that the learning process had been excellent, but that today’s performance was not that good and the candidate had not met her full potential and talent. The candidate’s personal situation was to blame for this. (The nature of this will not be divulged here, but was recognized as true by the board of examiners). What was appreciated was the fact that candidate had not lowered the own standards regarding the experienced difficult situation. In spite of personal adversity, the candidate had fought to present an outstanding performance. The extended ensemble she presented was beyond the scope of the average ensemble presented at these exams. The overall sound of the instrument had improved, improvisations were better, snafu’s in the PA did not throw the candidate off, conducting and cueing the band was done very well, the repertoire was original and very well thought out, still there was an element of wanting to control matters more than necessary which hampered a unconditioned flow. The fact that she had not developed the stage professionalism where a performer, when feeling not up to par, instead of presenting the “real thing” fakes it, was not held against her. Healthy bragging is an asset, faking bragging of course is a wrong decision. All in all a 0,1 stopped the exam to receive a grade 8,5. The 7,5 was changed to an 8, raising the average to 8,3, resulting in final grade 8. In reporting the results back, the candidate first reaction was that the grade was higher than expected, revealing self-knowledge on the part of the examinee.

The three candidates of exam 09, 10 and 11 played the same instrument and were examined by the same jury. These exams constitute interesting cases since they received the lowest grades and the only fail of the researched exams.¹¹ Exams bordering on the edge of pass or fail are the hardest. The main problem with exam 09 and 11 is something that can occur in teaching and is dreaded very much: a student reaching his limits. Both students had reached a point during their studies where further development had stopped. Still their results were sufficient in so far as they had developed a workable sound on their instrument, were able to improvise within the form, had some originality, displayed a creative attitude and had challenged themselves to the top of their abilities. As the grades 6 and 6,5 indicate this was not great music, but the candidates were able to present a professional result.

Exam 10 however was bad. The candidate did not at any point indicate that he was able to effectively put to use the things he had learned on his instrument. Because of this his accompanists – in themselves not great players – were not able to provide any effective backing. There was no idiomatic Jazz language, the performance seemed without roots and was not original. Everything seemed to be in chaos with no articulation. The interesting part of all of this is that the candidate was considered to be very talented. However, as the four year program draws to an end, the students own initiative becomes more and more important. As it appears, previous results during the candidates’ studies were achieved because he was closely monitored by his teacher. With more freedom and responsibility the student had lost the way. It is interesting to see how the jury was affected by this on an emotional level. Somehow they heard the talent, but also the inability to bring this talent to

¹¹ A failed exam is not a final situation. Re-examination is possible.

audible result. It's not nice to fail a student but then it is worse to lie to the candidate. But the decision was right and could be explained to the student for during the after meeting the student completely agreed with the jury's assessment.

6. Conclusion

In contrary to common believe, it is possible to ascertain quality in jazz performance (and music in general). This is done by means of professional listening. This type of listening takes into account the whole context of the performance and is, first of all, interested in what the music wants to be instead of responding to it on a personal level only. Judgment is not passed until the external criteria (the context) and the internal criteria (the music's intention) have been into account. Common listening does not do this. It will only fathom its own reaction and will pass judgment on this notion only. The professional is aware of the jazz field, jazz capital and will have a jazz habitus enabling the conservatory final exam jury to put its own reaction in a broader context. The professional will also constantly be aware of the fact that his initial reaction might be wrong and will constantly be on the lookout for new information that might contribute to a better understanding of the music. Professionals also are aware of the fact that one and the same piece of music can be perceived in many ways. If this is done in a professional way, different views will be complementing rather than opposing (and need not cause "a war"). Juries for a final exam at a conservatory are players themselves and bring the additional element of expertise of musical performance practice to the judging. The bottom line is that justice has to be done to a musical performance, not a put down for the wrong reasons.

The conservatory has a fine system in place for determining quality in musical performance in both craftsmanship and artistic content. All the above mentioned criteria for professionalism are accounted for. In committing its findings on both paper and word, the jury takes care of another important condition brought forward by Pierre Bourdieu: in order to be objective about something as subjective as music a jury has to be objective about its own reasoning.

There will be a difference between the academic assessment and the reaction of a general audience outside of the conservatory. This is inevitable since a professional jury listens differently than a general jazz lover. The jury is determining quality in the broadest sense whereas the amateur is evaluating a personal response. It's a problem as old as art itself. Some art just needs to be explained, or in other words, the gap between common and professional listening has to be closed. The difference in appreciation becomes a pressing problem if making a living is concerned. If a graduate from a conservatory cannot make ends meet in the outside world, art soon dies. Even more than before this seems a concern to the Ministry of Education and conservatory Board of Directors and management what with the introduction of the Cultural Entrepreneur programs in the conservatories. These are great initiatives that hopefully give talent young players a better chance to disseminate their art. These programs should however never touch the artistic contents of the curriculum. A good musician should be able to play the correct music for a gig at a senior citizen home or the correct music for a party at a small business and make money that way. However, if this type of playing would become the criterion for music at a conservatory, art would die too. A jazz department at a conservatory should be an art school, not an institution for vocational education. Such a school would not exist very long since students are interested in art. (And I would really like to see the assessment principles for that type of school!)

Since, as Bourdieu points out, there is an innate desire to classify, it makes sense to do this professionally. This text describes an excellent procedure. And, on a final note, if all mentioned in this text fails, it is not bloody likely that four to five professional players are way off base in their appraisal of a music performance, be it good or bad.

Thank you's

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