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EMÍLIA BARNA AND TAMÁS TÓFALVY (2017). *MADE IN HUNGARY: STUDIES IN POPULAR MUSIC*, 1ST ED. NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 192.

Reviewed by Adam Havas

Now that the Hungarian volume of the Routledge Global Popular Music Series, *Made in Hungary: Studies in Popular Music* (Barna and Tófalvy, 2017) has come out, popular music scholarship has clearly arrived at a new stage in Hungary. The collection of fourteen studies on the historical development, sociological approaches and musicology of Hungarian popular music embraces half a century, from postwar state socialism to contemporary issues associated with a wide range of topics. The contributors, affiliated with universities of the most important intellectual centers in the country, such as Budapest, Debrecen, and Pécs, are trained in various disciplines from sociology to musicology, history, communication and philosophy, thus the reader encounters not only an array of issues discussed in the chapters, but different angles of investigation depending on the above listed disciplinary practices.

The creation of the colorful panorama offered by the chapters was guided by the editorial principle of making clear the context for international audiences presumably unfamiliar with the country-specific social and cultural factors shaping the scholarly discourse within this field. For that reason, the historical narrative of popular music research also plays an important role in the book, which aims to cover the major figures, issues and contexts of its subject matter.

From an insider perspective, as the author of the current review is a member of the Hungarian IASPM community, it is remarkable that the volume also strengthens the identity of this relatively small and fragmented research community of Hungarian scholars who dedicate themselves to this often neglected, quasi-legitimate research area, shadowed by "grand themes" such as social stratification, poverty or even classical music research. Nevertheless, this "insider" position is considered here as an opportunity to be critical instead of waving the flag over the chapters of this volume.

The variety of approaches made it possible to organize the book into three thematic sessions: *Scenes, Culture and Identities*; *History, Politics and Remembering*; and *Artists, Receptions and Audiences*.

The more critical tone undertaken in the course of writing the review is also due the structure of the volume, as short summarizing "breaks" are wedged in between each section, where the co-editor, Tamás Tófalvy, introduces the content of the chapters, their main findings and also outlines what connects them so that

they appear in the same section. In order to avoid writing a meta-review of the book based on the reformulation of the editor's summaries in the introduction and the three short breaks, the emphasis will not be equally divided between the chapters. Therefore, the somewhat arbitrary choice was made to engage with one or two essays more in detail from the three parts of the volume due to my background as a cultural sociologist, not too competent in matters of musicology or popular music history.

The book starts with an historical outline of the major research trends and discoursed on popular music. This retrospective summary designates three main traditions in the second half of the 20th century: musicology (not separate from classical musicology in the '50s), sociological research – both quantitative and qualitative – and the study of (youth) subcultures. In the '50s, officially legitimate music theoretical discourse was determined by the state-doctrine of establishing social realist aesthetics in both classical and popular music. For that reason, in musicology there was no difference between classical and popular music. In the '60s however, when the first sociological studies of music began to be written, the separation of popular from classical music can be observed, parallel to the institutionalization of the low-high binary, which resulted in classifying popular music as "light" and classical music as a "serious" cultural practice. The social and institutional genesis of this distinction emerging in the late '60s is crucial in order to understand how popular music is talked about, and why it stands as a quasi-legitimate object of scientific analysis today. The current embeddedness of popular music research in the academia can be traced back to this era, when the Institute of Musicology and its departments were founded in 1969.

The differentiation and professionalization of music research also went along with the development of some autonomy from the state Party, making possible both quantitative and qualitative investigations on jazz, folk music, and youth cultures. In the '70s musicology-oriented popular music research from within musicology began to undergo a decline which lasted almost over 3 decades until the millennia, when quantitative studies on music and youth cultures started to (re)gain credit in the scientific field.

Part I, *Scenes, Cultures, Identity* contains 4 studies on 3 music scenes (black metal, jazz, Lo-Fi) and Hungary's biggest international Festival called Sziget. The first chapter by Szemere and Nagy titled *Setting Up a Tent in the "New Europe": The Sziget Festival of Budapest* functions somewhat a "prelude" preceding the aforementioned scene-studies. In their study, the authors critically revise the cultural significance of the festival as a very "European fair" by outlining its history, cultural goals and its multicultural identity in the changing political climate of Hungary. Drawing on personal experiences gained from 10 interviews done with festival visitors, the authors conclude that domestic audiences are being priced out, as foreigners have purchased more than 85% of the weekly tickets

since about 2012. Despite its claim to be a diverse, multicultural melting pot, "setting the tent" is not equally available for local Hungarian visitors, which contrasts the propagated egalitarian identity of the festival first organized in 1993, three year after the fall of the Wall and one year before the 25th anniversary of Woodstock. The day when I write this review a Facebook event captured my attention in which the Sziget founder, Müller Péter Sziámi's concert was advertised by the slogan "Students of the Universe City" to re-live the old Sziget feeling, when it was called "Student Island" at its start. Needless to say, events organized for maintaining the "Sziget feeling" outside the festival well illustrate the above discussed phenomena, the commodification of the festival.

The following chapter, *Taming the Extreme: Hungarian Black Metal in the Mainstream Publicity* by Gyulai takes a closer look on the reception and constitution of the black metal scene by exploring the issues leading to its relative neutralization, together with counter-productive tendencies that dig the scene's own grave. In short, the chapter scrutinizes the "contradiction between the story of Hungarian black metal and the genre's ideology". The most important internationally well-known figure and "founding father" of the scene, Attila Csihar is treated something like a celebrity in Hungary due to the media representation of his international success as the singer of the Scandinavian cult band called Mayhem. This media representation goes against provocation and moral panic implied in black metal and clearly contradicts the ideology of the genre founded "on the politics of authenticity", which is why the author describes this process of neutralization as "taming the extreme". In the 3rd chapter *Learned Helplessness of a Cultural Scene: The Hungarian Contemporary Jazz Scene through the Eyes of Its Participants* Szabó investigates the contemporary Hungarian jazz scene, the very same topic the present reviewer writes his doctoral thesis of, and wrote about extensively besides co-editing the 101-102 volume of Replika Journal (2017) dedicated entirely to jazz studies. Instead of focusing on the structure of the scene by analyzing the aesthetic and socially conditioned differences of jazz musicians, Szabó took another legitimate stance in explaining the general discontent that characterizes the Hungarian jazz life, an experience we both share as researchers of the jazz scene. Basing her analysis on in depth qualitative interviews, she uses the psychological concepts of "learned helplessness" and "vicarious helplessness" in providing an account of the self-segregation, the lack of collective action and interaction within the members bound together as a whole by very weak ties. Although the applied concepts shed light on the mechanisms responsible for the current state of the scene, i.e. jazz musicians are socialized within the scene not to act collectively, Szabó does not dig deeper to understand neither the historical factors nor the scene- – or as I prefer – field-specific stakes responsible for the currently experienced apathy, which is deeply related to how the meaning of jazz is constructed both discursively and by de facto musical practices.

The co-editor's, Emilia Barna's study on the Lo-Fi scene, (chapter 4: *A Translocal Music Room of One's Own Female Musicians within the Budapest Lo-Fi Music Scene)* brings gender relations into the center of her analysis. This "bedroom" scene, which is described by one interviewee as recording regular tracks "under irregular circumstances", is discussed in the context of the relatively strong masculine dominance, observed in all music scenes, transcending "styles, genres, and geographical regions". By analyzing interviews with three active members of the scene, Barna seeks to explore how music production is carried out and interpreted by members of this this micro scene, characterized by home-based music-making in the "bedroom", or in the "room of one's own", a telling metaphor borrowed by Virginia Woolf. The DIY Lo-Fi musician's interpretation of the relationship between technology, music production and consumption can be well grasped by oppositions such as the "bedroom" (private) and the stage (public), imperfection and perfection or the opposition between "mistake" and conscious artistic production. This sociological-ethnographic approach is far beyond the relevance of this micro scene as it discusses how the gender inequality and masculine dominance shapes this contemporary musical practice, which is what makes this "bedroom" micro scene worthy of analysis.

Part II, *History, Politics and Remembering* contains studies on different music scenes of state socialist Hungary. Chapter 5, written by Hammer offers the most overarching view on the institutional control mechanisms of the popular music industry, therefore it proves to be an important reading for the contextualization of the following 3 chapters. The author argues that cultural policies of the 1990s-80s "quite curiously repeat themselves in the context of digital environments", when he explains that bad quality popular music content in the Eastern Block remains neglected even after the "democratic" transition, unlike in the West, where marginal contents could gain access to wider audiences through TV and the tabloid press. In providing a possible answer for this phenomenon, he discusses retrospectively the three most important institutional filters responsible for what he relevantly calls the "social construct of silence". Professional licensing managed by the Bureau, recording opportunities and access to the media were the most decisive institutional filters of the hegemonic popular music industry that determined success and failure of musicians, who occupied different positions ranging roughly between "revolting", isolated underground and ideologically neutral, or more regime-conform stances. After outlining the logic of the popular music industry, Hammer illustrates the system through the career of Neoton Familia, a popular Hungarian disco pop band concluding that "past still haunts" as contemporary success also often depends on the relation to the state.

Chapter 6 written by Ignácz, "*Hungarian in Form, Socialist in Content" The Concept of National Dance Music in Stalinist Hungary (1949–56)* examines the ideologies and major turning points governing state politics towards nation-

al dance music. Music politics in the most oppressive "Stalinist" period of the socialist era is discussed with a strong focus on the contradiction between the national character and the communist ideology. In more abstract terms this signifies the (forced) reconciliation of the particular, the national with the more universal or ideological claims of communism, a conflict that manifested itself in official cultural politics. The first "doctrine" is related to the Minister of People's Education, József Révai, who recognized that national symbols and traditions could be integrated into the communist agenda making it more attractive to wider audiences. The state was hostile towards culture coming from the West, and labeled certain cultural practices with ideologically constructed attributes such as "cosmopolitan" and "capitalist". As a result, jazz music for example was excluded from the domain of officially allowed music making in the '50s, which implied the exclusion from venues and from the media. János Maróthy, a leading ideologist and intellectual of the Popular Music Department of the Institute of Musicology was the other important figure influencing cultural politics within which music occupied an important role. Music politics by Maróthy could be understood partly as unsuccessful attempts for synthetizing "hungarianness" and popular music aesthetics. Telling examples are the implementation of the "verbunkos" technique suggested by him. As a result of this "communist-Hungarian" aesthetic program some chords and beats associated with swing rhythm or jazz were also excluded from the official canon, which clearly resembles Benjamin's idea on the politicization of aesthetics contrasted with the aestheticization of politics. Relying on rich empirical material Ignácz's study convincingly shows how ideological pressure resulted in aesthetic consequences until the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, – both in form and content.

The following article (Chapter 7) *Paper Mohawk: On a Missing Hungarian Punk Monograph* aims to reconstruct the evolution of the Hungarian punk movement, a subculture which the author, Vass, now sees as forceless and without social bases. At the beginning, the reader's attention is called to the ambiguous status of Hungarian punk, as in the happiest barrack of the socialist camp officially there was no unemployment, therefore the development of Hungarian punk cannot be explained by theories applied to capitalist "welfare" states. Being a punk in Hungary rather meant the projection of a generation's frustration against forced uniformity, and the discrepancy experienced between the communist ideology and the monotonous, futureless perception of their daily struggles. In reflecting on monographs written on punk by former insiders, Vass outlines some methodological difficulties stemming from the lack of credibility of State Security documents. Among the authors writing about punk, Vass probably sympathizes the most with the book by Pozsonyi, a punk musician himself, in which he aims to categorize generations within punk, in addition to providing a detailed insider perspective of the scene. As the narrative of punk was constructed mostly

by insiders, the chapter closes by emphasizing the importance of works which should be written from the "opposite" perspectives, State Security and cultural politics in order to gain a more profound and multi-layered view on how punk was developed.

In chapter 8 *"Nothing But the Music …" The History of Hungarian Funk Music* Havasréti aims to explore the influences and reception of funk in Hungarian popular music. In doing so, he scrutinizes how this style was adopted by popular musicians and how it's cultural meaning was constructed. This task is hard, as funk never formed a relatively autonomous musical domain, rather its stylistic elements were influencing important Hungarian popular music bands. The ignorance of researchers towards funk is partly due to its rejection as an unimportant hedonistic music, flourishing in disco dance floors. The article contains a detailed presentation on the reception of funk in certain bands and styles such as jazz rock and the disco era.

Rónai's essay in PART III: *Artists, Receptions and Audiences* scrutinizes the career of Bea Palya, a Hungarian singer, whose music cannot be classified neither as popular nor underground due to its eclectic complexity (Chapter 9: *The Insecure Village Girl Who Found Success, and her Gentle Deconstructions*). In writing the essay the music journalist author does not hide his admiration towards the singer calling her success the "greatest promise of the Hungarian pop scene". The most important components of her success and peculiarity according to Rónai are the role of "avant-garde" sections in her songs, the blurring of the song's boundaries, questioning the past through reimagined Hungarian evergreens and "a hard-hitting surprise in the middle of her most pop album". Gentle deconstruction present in the title refers to how the traditions are combined and interpreted by the singer. Although the author is quite specific in designating the "differentia specifica" of Palya's eclectic popular music aesthetics, the lack of theoretical sophistication resulting from the lack of references of popular music or cultural studies literature, rather makes the essay a detailed, but hagiographic study on this contemporary musician's career.

In Chapter 10 *("Gloomy Sunday" The Hungarian "Suicide Hymn" between the Myths and Interpretations*) Patakfalvi analyses the history, reception and the construction of cultural meaning of the internationally known Hungarian "suicide song" "Gloomy Sunday", which has now over 79 versions worldwide. The historical reconstruction of the song's cultural significance, often associated with melancholia, is based on articles from 10 newspapers of the respective period. The story of the song's bittersweet triumphal march goes back to the '30s, which was the era of the Great Depression, the modern development of the stardom culture around artists, and the growing importance of media in creating (and destroying) celebrities. The pianist, Rezső Seress, who became famous in the '30s with his song "Gloomy Sunday" was a key member of Budapest's cultural life

regularly playing at bars and restaurants of cultural importance. The song was soon associated with the suicide wave it "opened" as it was connected to more than 17 cases. Meanwhile the song has spread to the world and was played by several artists, from Charlie Parker to Billie Holiday and Ray Charles. The dubious fame of his composition, however, didn't prevent Seress to commit suicide in poverty in 1968.

Chapter 11, *"This Kind of Music Informs You About the Present State of the World" DJ Palotai's Position within the Contemporary Hungarian Underground Culture* aims to apply a Bourdieusian approach in studying a specific music field, in this case, the underground electronic music scene. The study is based on the reconstruction of Palotai's career path, who has been making music for over 25 years and is often referred to as the father of Hungarian drum and bass and electronic music. The author's ambitious aim is investigating "what position Palotai holds within the Hungarian cultural field and how it can be described" by theoretically leaning on two works of the eminent French sociologist: *State Nobility* and the *Outline of the Theory of Practice*. Both monographs are important pieces in Bourdieu's oeuvre, but not necessarily key texts in the sociology of art and culture, such as the *Field of Cultural Production* or the *Rules of Art*, just to mention the two most cited ones in the field, besides the opus magnum, the *Distinction* published in 1979. Drawing on interviews done with Palotai, Kálai aims to outline the components of the artist's habitus and provides a somewhat simplified image of it: a habitus "not defined by ego", but based on "team spirit and cooperation". If one accepts the assumption – based on the considerable amount empirical studies influenced by the field theory[1] – that the analysis of cultural fields should engage with the explanation of the logic of struggles of agents endowed different capital compositions to (re)define or to accumulate field-specific symbolic capital in order to occupy dominant positions in a field, – to put it overly simple in one sentence –, the author's effort leaves place for criticism. The reason for this, in my view, is the strong adherence to the concept of habitus, without involving into the scope of analysis the complexity of a Bourdieusian theoretical apparatus, in which such concepts as "*illusio*", "*doxa*", "*nomos*", "*autonomous* and *heteronomous principles of hierarchization*", "*position-taking*", "*entrance fee*", "*institutionalization of anomy*", "*collusio*" etc. play an important role. Despite the subjective claim that this analysis could have been more complex by being more reflexive to a wide range of practices present in field analysis today, this chapter is strong in outlining historical aspects of the Hungarian underground electronic music.[2]

The 13th chapter written by Guld (*The Way They Were Subcultural Experiences of Emo Fans from a Retrospective Aspect*) is dedicated to the study of emo subculture, which reached its peak of popularity between 2007 and 2011. Leaning on post-subculturalist theoretical references, the author's primarily concern is to

explore not only the personal motives behind the attachment to this trend, but also the motives responsible for separating from it, which holds the prospect of understanding more the dynamics of popular culture. As a result of mapping the most important turning points of subcultural career paths of 3 insiders based on biographical analysis, the author supports the idea that frustration and insecure family background are important factors in being an "emo-kid" besides simply following a cultural trend. By focusing on the separation from the style, Guld points out two phenomena known in subcultural research under the terms "aging out", which means that by getting older and more "matured" members of a scene tend to leave certain styles, and "spin-off", referring to the "transformation dictated primarily by the latest fashion trends". Instead of generalizing from the three voluntary interviews, the author, who builds his account on the previous three studies, instead uses the information to enter into dialogue with researchers of music and subcultures such as Bennett or Muggleton, which is an attractive feature of his work.

Chapter 13 by Antal, *The Growth of the Hungarian Popular Music Repertoire Who Creates It and How Does It Find an Audience?* does an important service to researchers of popular music as it aims to – using the author's words – "introduce through a few examples the new data sources available for researching the size, scope and basic characteristics of the works, musician population and audience analyzed in this book". The article contains a detailed presentation of the characteristics of the most important European music industry statistics and data sources, such as the European Statistical System Network on Culture (ESSnet-Cultur) and the Cultural Access and Participation survey (CAP). From a Hungarian perspective, the first Hungarian music industry report (the ProArt Music Industry Report) is of particular relevance because the sociological and economic data "helps explore and limit the scope of research by defining the size of the research area in question".

The final chapter by Szemere (Chapter 14: *Coda: "My Genes in My Suitcase, My Forehead in the Atmosphere" Perceptions of Hungarian Popular Music and Its Research Abroad* reflects on the current situation and embeddedness of Hungarian popular music research. Besides drawing the attention towards strategies of institution building, Szemere in the chapter seeks to find answer(s) to the following question: "is all music made in Hungary Hungarian?" By asking this seemingly simple question, the author problematizes the cultural identity of music "in the era of global cultural hybridization", an issue of great importance in music making today. The question of a music's cultural identity is discussed with reference to carefully selected illustrative case studies. The "puzzling case of Little G. Weevil (born as Gábor Szűcs in Hungary)" an internationally acknowledged blues guitarist, for example, sheds light on the complexity of one's musical identity shaped by "the tangled nexus between music, place, biography, and cultural

identity". A musician's particular embeddedness in the local and global (central and peripheral) fields of power and institutional structures involves certain music making and artistic strategies. Szemere points out the irony in some cases when, for instance, local musicians' particular "Hungariannes" is questioned by nationalistic or openly racist discourses, while another observed legitimate strategy is "downplaying their [the musicians – A.H.] or the music's national identity" to gain success by the targeted, often international audiences instead of emphasizing the local ethnic, or national cultural characteristics.

What I found important about the book's significance in popular music research from within and beyond Hungary I mentioned in the beginning of this review. Therefore, what remains for the reader is to explore the depths of the chapters presented briefly, to which the present review may be considered a critical contribution.

References

Nicholas Brown, and Imre Szeman, *Pierre Bourdieu: Fieldwork in Culture* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 256.

Hans van Maanen, *How to study art worlds* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 211.

Notes

1 Many of these studies of the "Bourdieu industry" are available in the journal "Cultural Sociology" which has even dedicated a whole volume (Vol 7, Issue 2) to "field analysis" (2013 May). Moreover, beyond a considerable number of Bourdieu-oriented works in JCS and else, the edited book titled *Pierre Bourdieu: Fieldwork in Culture* (Brown and Szeman 2010) and Van Maanen's (2009) *How to Study Artworlds* could have been relevant sources.

2 The interview in the Afterword of this volume also contains some additional important features of the Hungarian and global electronic music scene through the reflections of Yonderboi on his own musical two-decade long career.