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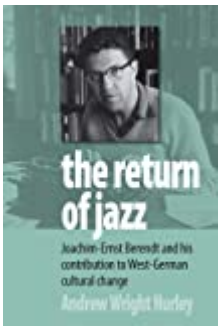

Andrew Wright Hurley. *The Return of Jazz: Joachim-Ernst Berendt and West German Cultural Change.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. xxiii + 296 pp. $95.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-84545-566-8.

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Published on H-German (January, 2010)

Commissioned by Susan R. Boettcher

Interpreting the Life and Work of West Germany's "Jazz Pope"

Neither composer nor performer, Joachim-Ernst Berendt (1922-2000) may nonetheless have been be the most influential German in the history of jazz. Berendt's *Jazz Book*, which first appeared as a Fischer paperback in 1953, became standard reading for a generation of budding jazz enthusiasts in the young Federal Republic. Yet the reach of *The Jazz Book* extended well beyond this historical moment, and beyond even the lifetime of its author. Published in numerous editions and translations worldwide, the book remains one of the most widely read introductions to jazz. The most recent English-language edition appeared in the United States in 2009.[1] But Berendt accomplished much more. His articles appeared in a broad spectrum of publications–not only in music journals, but also in popular magazines like *Twen* and *Stern* as well as the more highbrow *Frankfurter Hefte* and *Merkur*. He served as in-house jazz specialist at the *SÃ¼dwestfunk* (SWF) radio network. He produced concerts and coordinated festivals, including the annual Berlin Jazz Days, which attracted worldwide talent and bolstered the city's image as a Cold War cultural showcase. What's more, he might be seen as "one of the pioneers of jazz's globalization" (p. xii). Berendt advised the Goethe Institute on its overseas jazz programming, and his own Jazz Meets the World record series linked European jazz with Indonesian gamelan music, Brazilian bossa nova, and other non-western idioms. Berendt's influence reached a pinnacle in the mid-1960s, when the author, impresario, and record producer had his hand in an astonishing array of jazz initiatives throughout the Federal Republic and abroad.

Despite–or perhaps because of–the long shadow cast by Berendt over the German jazz community, a new study by Australian scholar Andrew Wright Hurley is the first comprehensive look at the life and work of the so-called Jazz Pope. In *The Return of Jazz: Joachim-Ernst Berendt and West German Cultural Change*, Hurley uses "the central figure of Berendt as a new prism though which to take a view of the West German jazz scene" (p. 3). Part biography, part social history, Hurley's book fills an important gap in the historiography of jazz and twentieth-century Germany.

Surprisingly little has been written about the development of jazz in the Federal Republic, given the idiom's role–as captured by Hurley's title–in the process of "West German cultural change."[2] To the ears of most Germans in 1949, jazz was aesthetically (and perhaps even racially) suspect; even among fans, its image was lowbrow. Four decades later, jazz performance in the Federal Republic had shifted almost completely from dance halls to concert stages. Jazz became a diverse and sophisticated art form associated with cross-cultural understanding, creative experimentation, free expression, and other ideals central to the cultural identity of the mature Federal Republic. This transformation occurred in part through the stylistic evolution of jazz itself, but Hurley suggests that broader changes in West German society and culture were also a contributing factor.

Perhaps more than any other individual, Joachim-Ernst Berendt played a key role in jazz's transformation, as depicted by Hurley in the three sections of his study. In part 1, Hurley "sketches the contours of the West German jazz scene" (p. 9) in the 1940s and 50s, emphasizing Berendt's multi-pronged efforts to promote jazz and encourage its acceptance as serious art. In collaboration with Heinrich Strobel, Berendt helped to introduce jazz at the Donaueschingen Music Days, a stronghold of the postwar avant-garde. He also emphasized jazz's affinities with older, Baroque-era music. Berendt acquired his first taste of "jazz diplomacy" in this era, making small contributions to Voice of America jazz programming and, more significantly, accompanying West German musicians to a landmark Polish jazz festival in 1957. The section's main themes include jazz's mobilization in the Cold War rivalry between East and West, as well as its role in reflecting and defining West German attitudes toward racial difference in the post-Nazi era. Much of this section's material will seem familiar to readers of Uta Poiger's work on jazz and German "respectability." Hurley's chief contribution is to frame changing attitudes toward jazz in the 1950s within the context of contemporary debates about the nature of (and distinctions between) art and entertainment.

By the 1960s, the existential question facing the West German jazz community was no longer whether jazz was art, but rather, how this community could make jazz its own. Again, Berendt assumed an outsized role in the discussion, which Hurley adopts as the focus of his book's second section. In the 1960s and 70s, Berendt bore the greatest influence as a concert and record producer. He produced numerous records for the independent label Saba (later, Musik Produktion Schwarzwald), which gave voice to European artists who might otherwise have been overlooked by larger record labels. Among the most significant of these productions was the debut album of the Globe Unity Orchestra, widely regarded as a milestone in the "emancipation" of European free jazz from American models.

Hurley demonstrates how European jazzmen of this era turned not only to free jazz, but also to folkloric traditions, for inspiration in their music. Yet Berendt and his West German colleagues avoided engagement with *German* folk music, feeling that its sounds were too freighted by the recent National Socialist past. Instead, Berendt incorporated a wide array of other national and ethnic traditions into his festivals and recordings, arguing for the notion of a "global folklore" that, in Hurley's words, "became a suitable ideological bedfellow for jazz, which Berendt had sought to establish during the 1950s as the universal music *par excellence*" (p. 98).

Part 3 ("Jazz Meets the Other") focuses explicitly on Berendt's engagement with world musics in the 1960s and 70s. In addition to overseeing his numerous professional obligations in Europe, Berendt traveled widely throughout Asia, South America, and the Caribbean. His interactions with non-western musicians and traditions informed numerous radio specials and articles, and he became an enthusiastic "engineer of intercultural encounters," both in live performance and on record (p. 157). Hurley argues that Berendt's and his West German colleagues' "interest in the musical Other was–like the interest in jazz before it–partly driven by a flight from Germanness," and thus "the presentation and reception of world musics was not infrequently romanticized" (p. 229). Berendt idealized the virtues of Balinese and other Asian cultures. His writings from this era tended to highlight these cultures' exoticism and inner nobility–similarly to his earlier portrayals of black America–while assuming their peaceable integration within his universalistic, "one world under jazz" philosophy. Berendt was deeply opposed to the separatist Black music ideology that influenced a growing number of African and African American jazzmen at this time, and he drew a clear link between the cultural dangers of Afrocentrism and National Socialism.

Berendt's fascination with world musics ultimately sent his career in a new direction. By the end of the 1970s, he had largely withdrawn from the European jazz scene. Berendt exchanged his passion for jazz for a newer, transcendental notion of *Weltmusik*, which aspired to integrate the world's musical cultures into a greater, utopian

whole. His book, *Nada Brahma* (1983), provided "solace to those concerned about rationalized, (post)modern Western society, and searching for a heightened consciousness and a more meaningful existence" (p. 221). It became a cult bestseller of the New Age movement, and (like *The Jazz Book*) remains in print today.

The last years of Berendt's career are among the most intriguing, but they also draw attention to the limits of Hurley's study. Berendt provides the most effective "prism" for viewing and interpreting the West German jazz scene in the 1950s and through the mid-1960s. At the height of his reign as "Jazz Pope," Berendt exerted a defining influence throughout this scene. Chiefly active as author and critic, he reflected constantly on jazz's status within the Federal Republic. This state of affairs changed by the end of the 1960s. Berendt himself shifted his energies to record and concert production, and a younger generation of jazz critics and musicians came to the fore and rebelled against his authority. In a sense, Berendt was a victim of his own success; the acceptance and expansion of jazz in West Germany meant that he no longer dominated its development. Thus, Hurley's well-rounded portrait of the early West German jazz scene becomes more diffuse and idiosyncratic after 1968. His detailed analysis of the Jazz Meets the World series is fascinating, and clearly appropriate for any study of Berendt's life and work–yet the specific focus creates a kind of imbalance with earlier chapters of the book, overshadowing the broader story of jazz's changing role in West German culture.

Likewise, *The Return of Jazz* feels incomplete as a biographical study of Berendt. Hurley states that his book is, "in part, a *critical biography* of Berendt" (p. 3). The emphasis is Hurley's, presumably signaling that the book's focus will be on the professional, rather than personal, aspects of Berendt's life. Yet the two aspects cannot always be separated, as is evident when the author argues that Berendt's "egocentric, authoritarian style and (mis)use of power to promote his own productions" ultimately contributed to his diminished influence within the jazz community (p. 134). Berendt appears to have been a complicated, intensely driven individual, but Hurley is reluctant to explore the jazzman's personality in greater depth. Happily, a brief epilogue by Wolfram Knauer, director of the Jazzinstitut Darmstadt and a personal acquaintance of Berendt's, provides readers with additional insights.

The book occasionally hints that personality traits can be central to understanding its subject's activities and achievements. Hurley relegates Berendt's four wives, literally, to a footnote, without suggesting if or how these women might have influenced his development. Even so, he does acknowledge that Berendt's love for foreign cultures was not merely academic; the jazzman engaged regularly in extramarital affairs during his travels overseas. Moreover, he writes that "Berendt's cultural theories often had a sexualized dimension, which cannot be easily removed from his personal libertinism" (p. 63). These brief observations beg for more thorough exploration. The West German jazz scene shepherded by Berendt was by no means gender-neutral. The serious "jazzmen" depicted throughout Hurley's narrative are indeed, without exception, men. At the Berlin Music Days and in the Jazz Meets the World records, female performers received attention primarily as an "exotic" highlight, as demonstrated by the prominent placement of Japanese "koto girls" on the *Sakura Sakura* album cover, as well that of Brazilian dancer Marly Tavares on the cover of *Folklore e Bossa Nova do Brasil*. Hurley himself draws attention to these representations, so he is certainly aware of their implications.

To be fair: thoroughly investigating the role of gender in the West German jazz scene, or formulating a comprehensive social history of jazz after 1968 would be impossible within the scope of a single monograph. In *The Return of Jazz*, Andrew Wright Hurley has admirably demonstrated Berendt's influence upon the emerging jazz scene of the early Federal Republic. Hurley shows how Cold War politics and rejection of the National Socialist past heightened Berendt's sense of mission. For Berendt, jazz was more than an avocation; it was a program for social and cultural reform. It is to Hurley's credit that he raises so many important issues surrounding jazz's development in the second half of the twentieth century. Indeed, the questions left unanswered here point the way for future scholarship in the fields of jazz and German cultural history.

Notes

[1]. Joachim-Ernst Berendt and GÃ¼nther Huesmann, *The Jazz Book: From Ragtime to the Twenty-first-Century*, trans. H. and B. Bredigkeit (Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 2009).

[2]. The jazz scene of the late 1940s and 50s has been examined most thoroughly. See Horst Lange, *Jazz in Deutschland: Die Deutsche Jazz-Chronik bis 1960* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1996); Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 137-67; and Michael Kater, "New Democracy and

Alternative Culture: Jazz in West Germany after the Second World War," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 52 (2006): 173-87. A broad overview of developments in West German jazz can be found in Klaus Wolbert et al., eds., *That's Jazz: Der Sound des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Erwin Bochinsky, 1990).