

Preface

This anthology contains seven texts by Kurt Blaukopf (1914-1999), which were published over the last 40 years, mostly in German. They exemplify the sociological and epistemological position of this pioneer of Austrian music sociology. Blaukopf's efforts were aimed at a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach and analysis of music as a cultural phenomenon and as social practice. He recognised that music sociology often rather concerned itself with the general conditions of music, but at the same time he warned that music sociology should not lose sight of music as a creative practice and as a work of art.

Blaukopf's passion for music is rooted in his biography. He grew up in Vienna in a middle-class Jewish family, and although he followed his father's wish and studied jurisprudence his intellectual attention was devoted to music. From the early 1930s he did extended studies in musicology but at the same time he was deeply aware of the social roots of music, and thus he enriched his approach to music with insights from Max Weber's writings. However, the rise of Nazism in Germany and the Wehrmacht's invasion of Austria forced the young man to leave Vienna. During the years in exile he continued his informal studies in music sociology, but he also became increasingly interested in the epistemological foundations of his own ideas on the subject.

I believe it is no exaggeration to state that Kurt Blaukopf represents the solid Austrian scientific tradition that began with Bernard Bolzano's and Ernst Mach's philosophy of science in the late 19th century. This tradition had been incorporated by some exponents of the Vienna school of art history (Alois Riegl) and musicology (Guido Adler) and developed further by the members of the Vienna Circle and especially in the social sciences by Otto Neurath. Usually described as positivism, the tradition is characterised by a strong reservation towards highly abstract and speculative theories. Furthermore there is a programmatic commitment to fluid boundaries and to linking different specialist disciplines.

These three elements – the Vienna school of art history and musicology, Max Weber's sociology of music and the Austrian philosophy of science – are the epistemological pillars of Blaukopf's intellectual development. The reader will immediately recognise them, as they were

determining for Blaukopf's own understanding of the aim of music sociology, namely, the "collection of all the social facts relevant to musical practice, the ordering of these facts according to their significance for musical practice and the recording of the changes of facts that decide practice".¹ The ideal of positivism, namely normative neutrality, distinguishes both Blaukopf's writing style as well as his intentions. "The taste judgements and preferences of the sociologist must remain separate . . . for him, what counts is the proud motto of Spinoza: I do not condemn nor praise; I merely study."² In line with this idea of neutrality, Blaukopf exercised a remarkable openness and an interest in different forms of music from different cultural realms and epochs, which extended to contemporary phenomena such as pop music and experimental music. Being a creative person, Blaukopf discovered new topics and therefore he can justifiably be called a pioneer of Austrian music sociology. In the texts selected for this anthology he investigates fundamental questions on the development of music, highlights the role of media and technology, and discusses the link between music and cultural policy. Additionally, he argues against theories of determinism (e.g. sociological Marxism) and goes along with Max Weber's call for sensitivity to the subtle embedding of music in society. Blaukopf finally argues that music sociology must aim for interdisciplinarity and a higher musicological competence.

Kurt Blaukopf was a man who had first-hand experience of the historical developments that had a formative influence on central Europe in the 20th century. His sociological approach to music often indirectly reflects this background.³ He searches for the innumerable and manifold relations between music and society – and especially the sociography of musical life – constantly aware that music is not determined by societal effects in a narrow sense. However, it is interesting to mention that the effects of Blaukopf's scientific commitment extended beyond the sphere of academia. He also involved himself both as a member of the executive

1 Kurt Blaukopf, "Musik", in Wilhelm Bernsdorf / Friedrich Bülow (eds.), *Wörterbuch der Soziologie* (Stuttgart: 1955), 342–346.

2 Kurt Blaukopf, "Patterns of musical behaviour", manuscript in German and English, 1977, 18.

3 Fortunately, Blaukopf himself took stock of his impressive life and intellectual development in an autobiography titled *Unterwegs zur Musiksoziologie* (Graz/Vienna: 1998).

council of Unesco and as an expert in Austrian cultural policy, and he demanded the achievement of two central aims: the democratisation of culture through the improvement of public access and the participation of the whole population in cultural life, as well as the safeguarding and improvement of the economic and social situation of artists.

One of the primary aims of this anthology is to make Blaukopf's work better known in the English-speaking world. It offers the interested reader:

- first, with regard to the history of ideas, an exciting and fruitful analysis of the relation between music sociology and its sister disciplines, for example musicology
- second, a solid reflection in terms of the philosophy of science on the possibilities and limits of music-sociology research, and
- third, after the end of Bourdieu's era, a highly topical discussion about the significance of intrinsic artistic aspects in music sociology. This issue should be highlighted, not just because alongside the general conditions of music Kurt Blaukopf also emphasised the importance of the praxis, but also because he was a music expert who was successful as a writer on music. (His Mahler biography should be mentioned, for example – for 40 years considered a standard work, translated into several languages and reprinted this year.)

In this sense, the anthology touches both on the interest of scholars researching the history of ideas as well as the interest in currently relevant and widely discussed issues, such as the question of mediamorphosis, the sociological analysis of artworks and the sociological explanation of artistic processes of creation.

Editing Blaukopf's texts I was confronted with several details that forced me to make a few changes or textual interventions.

The translation by David Westacott is in British English; the two passages from the already published volume *Musical Life in a Changing Society* with the titles "Goals of the Sociology of Music" and "The Mediamorphosis of Music as a Global Phenomenon" were published in the early 1990s, translated by David Marinelli in US English. As a result there are two different styles in this anthology. Apart from the elimination of minor mistakes in the bibliographical references, I have made only one change to the original texts: in both texts we have replaced

the key term *Musiksoziologie*, which was given there as “socio-musicology”, with “music sociology”. The reasons for this are simple: on the one hand I wanted to assist the reader’s understanding, on the other the term “music sociology” has in the meantime become internationally established.

Please note also that the structure of the references and literature differs. All apart from the two texts already translated into US English have footnotes – that is, in the original, Kurt Blaukopf put all bibliographical references in the footnotes. The texts from *Musical Life in a Changing Society* use a different reference system: the bibliographical references are incorporated in abbreviated form in the main text and there is a complete bibliography at the end of each text.

The translation of some terms is not always unambiguous. Thus in some cases I have added editorial notes. These can be found either in square brackets in the main text or in the footnotes.

This anthology has been prepared within few months. I would not have been able to fulfil this task without the help and advice of David Binder, Michael Parzer and Alfred Smudits, who deserve my thanks.

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