

JIŘÍ STIVÍN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CZECH JAZZ

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The title should not be misunderstood: if I mark out Stivín I do not wish to deny the appearance of interesting personalities of Czech jazz before or after Stivín; if I place Stivín in the „European“ context I do not wish to claim that before or apart from him Czech jazz would have developed in some sort of vacuum or without any international response; in other words, even though I introduce a single name I do have in mind also a more general tendency of the period.

Can what I want to write about and what the title gives a hint of be summed up in a slightly more elaborated, albeit still lapidary thesis? I believe it can, and the thesis might perhaps be formulated as follows: in Stivín's personality and in the activities around Stivín Czech jazz has reached an age of maturity, a stage where it is made and socially applied as a matter of course and without any inferiority complex, where it enters the sphere of international contacts as an equal partner, and where it can produce no longer just a high standard but also some original and remarkable works. Formulated in this way, of course, the thesis gives rise to a host of subquestions. For instance: into what stages can the development of Czech jazz be classified; what were the main features of „pre-Stivín“ history; what are the characteristic activities of the „Stivín period“; what are Stivín's distinctive signs, and what, in fact, has Stivín contributed?

Let us first deal with subquestion No. 1, i. e., the periodization of the history of Czech jazz music. Let us bear in mind that any attempt at periodization in the history of art tends to be difficult because the periodization invariably rests on a kind of compromise between at least two main types of criteria: the main principles of general social (political, economical etc.) development, and the main principles of the intrinsic development of the particular sphere. This is exactly the case of Czech jazz except that the turns in the social assertion of jazz coincide, to a large extent, with the major political turning points. This overlapping appears to be due to the fact that jazz was than just a very thin and delicate cobweb extremely vulnerable to any outside interference. Indeed: although Czech jazz – unlike that of most of the Middle and East European countries – can boast a long and rich history and tradition, it did experience in its past periods of darkening when the intensity of its life was precariously attenuated and when its very continuity was in jeopardy.

The first such act of outside interference in the 1940s was the windstorm of the 2nd world war and the nazi occupation of Czech lands. Another came in the 1950 with the



Jiří Stivín and his flutes

communist cultural policy generally referred to as „Zhdanovism“, which was hostile against everything coming from the West and jazz was identified with America and its culture. Both these external waves of interference resulted in a developmental slow-down, in the necessity to justify one's own existence again and again, the necessity to re-tie laboriously the torn lines of development or to bridge gaps. It would not be much of an exaggeration to say that Czech jazz did not have to begin once but three times.

Once, Lubomír Dorůžka and myself in our joint effort – a book *Czechoslovak Jazz. Past and Present* (Prague 1967) – tried to divide the evolutionary path into segments. At that time, we counted four such large segments which we specified as follows:

The first period of the development of Czech jazz could be called Early infiltration (this is where we included the beginnings of jazz music in Czech country in the early 1920s, the first wave of attempts at blending jazz with classical music, intensified jazz orientation at the turn of the decade).

The following period could be described as swing era (the main features there included the burgeoning of new ideas of jazz exemplified mainly in the propagative efforts of the critic Emanuel Uggé, the activities of Jaroslav Ježek's Jazz Band of the *Osvobozené divadlo* (Liberated Theatre) and of the Gramoclub Band, the swing wave proper at the turn of the 1930s, the swing craze of the post-war years before the Communists came to the power in the end of the forties).

The third period could be described as The prerequisites for today. The following main characteristics were singled out there: the struggle of Czech jazz for survival under the communist regime, the build-up of a new jazz wave in the shape of Gustav Brom's and Karel Krautgartner's big bands in the fifties, the appearance of the modern chamber jazz ensemble Studio 5 marking the dawn of normalization in the development of Czech jazz.

The fourth period of development was in our book described as The Czechoslovak jazz school, and characterized mainly by the efforts of three big bands – the Karel Vlach Orchestra, the Gustav Brom Orchestra and Czechoslovak Radio Dance-Jazz Orchestra, and by the activities of the SHQ group, which was the successor of Studio 5 ensemble.

Now that twenty five years have elapsed since the birth of this outline of periodization quite a few things are inevitably seen in a slightly different light. The launching of the Studio 5 ensemble, the first ever group in Czechoslovakia to devote its professional work exclusively to modern jazz, was really the breaking point from where a new phase of history of Czech jazz music started in the late fifties. That era lasted roughly until the end of the sixties. That phase could be designated as the „stage of burgeoning“ since it was a stage of struggles and founding activities; a stage which saw the establishment of classical jazz institutions such as jazz clubs (in Prague then Reduta, Viola, in Brno Ornis), jazz festivals (International Jazz Festival in Prague, Czechoslovak Amateur Jazz Festival in Píseň), jazz organizations (Czechoslovak Jazz Federation), the appearance on the scene of a fairly numerous and erudite community of jazz critics (Lubomír Dorůžka, Jiří Fukač, Josef Kotek, Antonín Matzner, Stanislav Titzl and others), the development of relations with the outside jazz world, the appearance of the first attempts at jazz pedagogy, a major expansion of the spectrum of Czech jazz styles (from traditional jazz revival up to the third stream) and of the range of genres (jazz as entertainment, as concert music with artistic aspirations, as part of performances of the jazz & poetry type, and so on).

In particular, however: there was an unprecedented growth in the number and quality of musicians engaged in jazz. Czechoslovak jazz then ceased to be a cobweb of a few personalities and events to become a phenomenon of a definite social and musical relevance, strength and compactness, a phenomenon no longer quite so vulnerable to outside interference. What had been built during that stage was there to stay for good. From today's point of view, however, it seems obvious that labelling this era as the „Czechoslovak jazz school“, as it was done in the above-mentioned book, was somewhat too optimistic and voluntaristic. Those few specific features of the period (e.g., the good standard of the big bands) would not do to justify the classification of a „school“, for a number of the other specificities were, in fact, rather weaknesses due to a number of

circumstances, e. g., to a scarcity of foreign contacts, a state persisting in spite of all improvement. A „school“ means a definite unanimity of orientation, a characteristic quality, a distinct and recognized role in the international exchange of values; i. e., something that was characteristic of, say, Polish jazz of the time. Most of that was still non-existent in Czechoslovakia in the sixties.

The beginnings of the next period of development began to loom on the horizon exactly when that „period of burgeoning“ changed into one of „normal evolution“ with its exploitation of the relatively complete and operational structure of jazz activities of the period taking the form also of the rise of outstanding musicians and deeds of art wherein the „Stivín“ phenomenon represented a kind of interim tip of the iceberg. This does in no way imply that this period should not have its own organizational, artistic, philosophical and political (remember, this was the time of the soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia!) problems and crises. The new feature was the fact that there was no longer the necessity to start from nought, that there was a base and continuity.

The last period we can see in the time after the big political change of Czechoslovak society in November 1989. From this time the jazz scene is open, the barriers are broken. Stivín and other Czech jazz musicians are a part of big international jazz community.

From this tentative specification of the evolutionary periods of Czech jazz let us go on to the question of what features were characteristic of Czech jazz during the last periods. The aforementioned book *Czechoslovak Jazz* stated, among other things, that with regard to all sorts of circumstances Czech jazz had always had to catch up with developments not only in the USA as the home country of jazz but also in a number of European countries. The standard of Czech jazz was measured by the length of the delay, and there was much rejoicing when this found to be less than a whole decade. And even the relatively promptest responses to foreign outbursts (let us recall, for instance, the Shorty-Rogers orientation of Brom's band in the mid 1950s) then represented but an unsubstantial move, in fact, something rather ephemeral in the general pattern of the music scene. This gap with its two main causes, namely a lack of direct contact with world developments, and the general political suspicion of being in the wake of current cultural world trends, began to narrow in the course of the 1960s. The new generation of jazzmen who had benefited from routine training in jazz clubs, who already had some opportunities to make recordings in diverse grouping of all sorts of compositions, and who had been in some extent co-operating with their foreign colleagues at home and abroad, was already able to respond, with no major delay, to anything that was going on in the world of jazz, and in their foremost representatives, and even to start bringing in new, original values great enough to attract foreign attention.

The development of style, too, offers an interesting view. In the initial stage of burgeoning there was still some echoing of variously blended and alternated elements of progressive jazz, cool jazz, west-coast jazz, but also of earlier style, notably swing and bop. This was, roughly, the make-up of the musical world of the Studio 5 group, of the Gustav Brom band, the newly set up Czechoslovak Radio Dance/Jazz Orchestra, the SHQ group and other ensembles. In due time, some of the more topical shades of style began to take foothold, in particular, soul (with mainly Luděk Hulan's ensembles as its representatives in the Czech lands) and hard bop (with the Reduta quintet as its main follower). The predominance of eclecticism was a characteristic feature of the Czech jazz scene; efforts at a greater consistency of style were an exception.

As if on the margin of this eclecticism a process called the third stream could just be noticed in what were attempts at bringing closer together the world of jazz and contemporary experimental serious music. But then the ground was fertile for that as it was possible to follow up on early traditions linked with such names as Erwin Schulhoff, Jaroslav Ježek, Bohuslav Martinů and others, to take advantage of the potential of erudite composers (Pavel Blatný and Alexej Fried were particularly active there) or of some of the ambitious-minded jazz makers (e. g., Jaromír Hnilička). That accounts for what were even major international successes. Admittedly, these third-stream experiments failed to catch the ear of the broader public and left Czech jazz as such largely unaffected except, no doubt, that later on they made the adoption of free jazz, or at least some of its elements, so much easier.

The eclectic music making referred to above had its positive as well as negative consequences. The former include especially the fact that Czech musicians had developed considerable versatility which made them capable of creative communication with representatives of the world jazz scene. This brought benefit at the turn of the 1960s, for instance, in the shape of large-scale international projects organized by Czech jazz (concerts and recordings by international ensembles under the heading of Interjazz). The negative consequences include situations where the „everybody can do everything“ approach very often precludes the chance to discover one's own creative self. And yet, while jazz is admittedly an art of the nameless (as, for instance, is most of the jazz club production), it is, on the other hand, exactly an art of specific-profile personalities. In other words, besides third-stream music, Czech jazz could hardly boast of anything more than a solid body of good musicians. As time passed, though, the eclecticism of style did change into a more homogeneous modern mainstream production to become an open conscious and declared credo of some Czech jazzmen (here I have in mind, in particular, Karel Velebný, musicians from his SHQ group and, indeed, a considerable part of Czech jazz musicians up to this day). However, as the British jazz critic Francis Newton once said, the problem of mainstream jazz is that it can give rise to lots of good or even very good music, though not to any truly original clean-cut music production.

While already the stage of burgeoning could offer a sound body of fine musicians, that same period was still marked by the absence of major, internationally acclaimed No.1 personality. True, there were more reasons why Czech musicians fell short of top standards, then, especially the still not quite adequate international intercourse, the need to earn one's living outside jazz, limited numbers of musicians, lack of social appreciation. Personalities of the Dr. Jan Hammer, Karel Krautgartner, Karel Vlach type had, in fact, by then exhausted their authentic contribution while the new generation made up of Audes, Déczi, Hnilička, Hulan, Konopásek, Velebný, etc., were spending the best of their power to have the situation of Czech jazz normalized by the world standards.

The body of jazzmen was growing steadily, albeit continually weakened by the departure of many musicians taking up commercially more attractive jobs at home as well as going abroad in many cases from political reasons. However, the close of this stage of evolution was already marked by the emergence of new personalities who, in conjunction with some of the „veterans“ (in particular, Hulan, Velebný and Laco Déczi) were to give shape to the 1970s and 1980s. However, due to diverse circumstances, some of those new personalities came fully into their own really outside the domestic Czech context of development (here I have in mind particularly Jan Hammer Jr., Jiří Mráz,

Miroslav Vitouš). Their exceptionally successful performance in the forefront of the American jazz scene drew attention to the vigour of Czech jazz while, naturally, sapping some of it at the same time. This generation stratum entering their careers in the late 1960s included also Jiří Stivín, who has remained permanently tied to the domestic jazz scene and yet succeeded in making his presence felt in the broader international exchange of values. In Stivín there appeared not only a musician capable of international communication thanks to his perfect command of the mainstream „esperanto“, but also a truly creative and innovative personality arousing much interest and respect in various domains of musical life.

Let us examine Stivín's contribution to the Czech and European jazz scene. First, a few facts and figures about his life as an artist, and then a tentative assessment of his main achievements.

Jiří Stivín was born on November 23, 1942 in Prague. There were Muses standing at his cradle – his mother was a theatre and film actress. After completing his grammar school education Stivín enrolled at the Film Academy to study the direction of photography. While it is true that he graduated from the school with success (1965), it is equally true that he had become totally engulfed in music before. Already as a child he played the violin but it was the flute that he fell for learning to play it first as an autodidact, later on with prominent Czech flute players active in the sphere of serious music – Milan Munclinger and Jiří Válek. More or less simultaneously, however, he threw himself into musical life. He started with the Sputniks, a pioneering Czech rock formation (1961–62) but soon took up jazz. Along with Martin Kratochvíl he led combo Jazz Q, one of the first Czech ensembles to model its work on Ornette Coleman and other champions of the jazz avant-garde of the day. Towards the end of the 1960s, Stivín worked with the SHQ quartet, the backbone of the development of modern Czech jazz. With them he made recordings, some of them for foreign companies, too.

Already then, Stivín tried his hand at serious music as part of his co-operation with the experimental Prague ensemble QUAX pursuing *Musica Nova*. At that time, Stivín went to Britain to extend his musical education by studying composition and arrangement with Johnny Dankworth at the London Royal Academy of Music. It was then that he also co-operated with Cornelius Cardew's Scratch Orchestra. On his return home, Stivín resumed, for a brief period, his ties with the Jazz Q ensemble only to part with Kratochvíl for artistic reasons and to start his own Stivín and Co. Jazz System. As a guest player he often performed with the Czechoslovak Radio Jazz Orchestra as well as with Václav Zahradník's occasional big bands (*Interjazz*), and took a share in other undertakings. This phase of Stivín's efforts was wound up in 1972 with a remarkable gramophone record album, *5 Hits in a Row*, to which he also contributed a few outstanding pieces and in which also Barre Phillips and Zbigniew Seifert played side by side with Czech musicians.

The next, roughly five years of Stivín's career could well go under the newspaper headline of „his rise among the European top“. Together with Rudolf Dašek, an outstanding guitar player, Stivín founded a two piece formation fittingly called System Tandem. Born more or less by chance at the turn of 1970, the duo eventually tied the two outstanding soloists in long-term co-operation which not only released their creative potential as improvisers but also permitted the true jazz art of dialogue between the two players themselves as well as with the audience: Tandem was then able to attract strictly jazz-bent fans as well as young rock enthusiasts. Enjoying great appreciation from

concert-goers and critics Tandem took part in the major European jazz festivals, held a large number of concerts, and recorded the highly valued gramophone record albums – *A Concert in Ljubljana* and *System Tandem*. In other words, Dašek's and Stivín's fame never remained limited to Czechoslovakia only; and so soon the two were heading the Jazz Forum opinion polls in their categories. Both won acclaim for their work as composers as well and, in addition, Stivín began to be appreciated as a multi-instrumentalist.

Having spent their artistic potentialities, the System Tandem duo broke up, though Stivín's occasional co-operation with Dašek has never really been wound up altogether and, especially since 1985, it has been developing again under the name of System Tandem Reunion. Nevertheless, Stivín's main activity at that time was that of a soloist joining in a number of diverse collective projects. He often performs alone to tape recorded accompaniment (this type of appearances gave rise to the album *Zodiac*, the winner of the Supraphon company annual prize for 1977); working twosome he play with the Slovak pianist Gabriel Jonáš or Czech percussionist Alan Vitouš or in variously made up ad hoc formations, organizing all sorts of – often happening-type – appearances at jazz festivals. In particular, however, Stivín realized various gramophone record projects (taking his fair share in, for instance, the excellent album *The Good Old Circus*, 1979). As for Stivín's own production, there is especially his double album called *Outings* which he recorded in conjunction with Pierre Favre and which the journal *Jazz Forum* rated among the most remarkable items of European production of 1981, or his album *Mirror Images* resulting from his co-operation with Mirka Křivánková as the vocalist (1984).

In this creative phase Stivín further substantially extended his field of activities. He consolidated his education as composer by taking a university course with Václav Dobiáš and Jiří Dvořáček at the Faculty of Music of the Prague Academy of Arts. The bulk of his production were jazz compositions presented to the public at his concerts and in his albums. A fairly large part of Stivín's work as composer consists of music for the theatre, television and film; he has also written several compositions of a chamber character. In due time, Stivín has built up respect for himself also as a participant in various creative workshops as well as a teacher, for instance, in the Czech Music Society courses at Bechyně or in the Czech Jazz Society courses at Frýdlant. Since 1985, Stivín has been teaching the recorder to students at the Prague Conservatoire. For the FOK concert agency he repeatedly arranged cycles of commented concerts on the subject of *Flutes of All Types*, he organized a number of educational concerts abroad, too, notably in France, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Switzerland.

As an interpreter, Stivín has been concerned with the introduction of early music for recorders (beginning with 1975) as well as of contemporary music. As for the former, he created and led the ensembles *Collegium Quodlibet* (performing mainly mediaeval, Renaissance and Baroque music) and the occasionally appearing *Prague Baroque Trio*, and co-operated with a number of ensembles such as *Ars Rediviva*, *Due Boemi di Praga*, the *Prague Madrigal Singers*, the *Prague Chamber Orchestra*, the *Slovak Chamber Orchestra*, etc. As for the latter field, one can mention the *Artistic Improvisation Group* which Stivín founded and which makes use of the principles of minimal music, the first ever performances of several works by contemporary Czech composers (Jan Klusák, Marek Kopelent, Ivan Kurz, Milan Slavický, Miloš Štědroň, and others), or the resurrection of half-forgotten works (e.g., Stivín's production of the *Hot Sonata* for

Saxophone and Piano by Erwin Schulhoff, a member of the pre-war music avant-garde).

This story of Stivín's musical career contains, in quite a few points, rudimentary characteristics and evaluation. I shall now propose a few comments to extend and specify those characteristics and that assessment.

What is so peculiar and unusual about Stivín, that he is so popular by broad audiences and critics, too? Maybe just the fact that he exhibits a wonderful identity of personality and work. He exudes what is called charisma – no sooner he appears than we can feel the presence of a personality. And what this personality has to offer, the work itself, brings in not disappointment but fascination. Remarkable balance and unity of the intellectual and emotional components are characteristic features of Stivín's personality and work. This is apparently one of the main reasons why Stivín, complete with his sometimes almost shocking experimentation, is well received. Stivín can be counted among the few who have been returning to modern jazz its audiences.

Stivín was no musical child prodigy. He did not develop any serious interest in music until rather late in life but when he did, he made an unusually thorough job of it so that now he belongs – not only in his home country, but also in Europe – among the most erudite, efficient and versatile personalities in terms of both music and art in general. He is never smug about what he has already achieved. Especially as an instrumentalist he keeps discovering for himself more and more instruments, sparing no effort to master them to the limits of their potentialities. He plays all sorts of pipes, flutes, saxophones, the harpsichord, percussions, he has been increasingly interested in singing and conducting. To this list, formidable as it is, we should add his abovementioned composing, educational and organizing activities. Even more important, however, is the quality that Stivín has achieved in all the many field of his activity, and the fact that he feels equally at home in jazz as he does in serious music. This puts Stivín on a par with Leonard Bernstein, Friedrich Gulda, Gunter Schuller and a few other leading personalities of the current music scene.

Moreover, Stivín is not only a music maker, he is also a kind of „scene mover“. He is present at anything that is interesting, and far from just taking advantage of the situation. He will invent events, he will play with anyone he can expect any stimuli from, he will fear no risks in his search of the new.

Stivín must drive hopeless anyone who loves labelling. This, however, does not in the least imply that Stivín would play indiscriminately anything in jazz, or that he is bogged in routine eclecticism. His career is singularly linked with the evolution of world jazz over the past two decades. Very soon, he found himself in unison with the post-Coltrane and post-Coleman jazz idiom, he got acquainted with jazz-rock, and then ran parallel with all manner of free-jazz experiments belonging among those who had the most resource to overcome the diverse pitfalls of this particular stage of development (such as mere shocking, loss of communication power, etc.), later on to make use of the principles of minimalism within the framework of the so called creative music. But besides all these and other influences Stivín has his own music and he has enough taste and musical culture not to produce only a potpourri of styles. It is a real synthesis he is aiming and getting at. Music is to Stivín a means of human communication: he does have things to say, and he wants the others to understand what he says, the others being both his co-players and the audience. At the same time, music is to him a matter of joyful, spontaneous, activating play. This unfettered playfulness apparently also accounts for

Stivín's sense of humour and, which is particularly valuable and rare – of musical humor incumbent in the very structure of music. Stivín has a nose for links that exist between seemingly unrelated things and that enable him to dance between dream and reality just like Chagall's floating violinists to whom he was some time ago compared by German jazz writer Joachim Ernst Berendt.

And one thing more about Stivín style: The old communist call for making jazz and popular music on the base of domestic folklor was a bad dream for Stivín and for other Czech musicians as well. But now, in the atmosphere of liberty and on the stage of maturity, Stivín and other Czech jazz musicians like – from time to time – to use Czech and Slovak and other folklor material for their compositions. They feel they can do that without losing their jazz integrity and identity. The testimony of it gives the album *Inspiration with Folklor* (Jiří Stivín & Co. Jazz Quartet) from 1991.

A few words as a short conclusion. By Stivín and in the time of Stivín's activities the Czech jazz reached a stage of maturity. Now we are in Czech jazz confronted with a broad scene with many groups, tendencies, institutions and with several independent creative personalities. Jiří Stivín is the pioneer of this achievement and to these days one of the leading personalities not only of Czech jazz scene but even of Czech music life as a whole.

JIRÍ STIVÍN UND DIE ENTWICKLUNG DES TSCHECHISCHEN JAZZ

Zusammenfassung

Der Autor ist bei der Bearbeitung des Aufsatzes aus seinem Buch über Jiří Stivín ausgegangen (Mně všechno dvakrát aneb o Jiřím Stivínovi, Praha 1989, Panton, 240 S.). Stivín (geb. 1942) ist ein hervorragender tschechischer Jazzmusiker (hauptsächlich Flötist und Saxofonist) und zugleich Interpret der Flötenliteratur aus dem Bereiche des Barocks, der Klassik und der zeitgenössischen Musik. In dem ersten Teil des Textes hat sich der Verfasser bemüht, Stivín in den Entwicklungskontext des tschechischen Jazz einzureihen und in diesem Zusammenhang befasst er sich mit der Charakteristik und Periodisierung des gegebenen Musikbereiches. Der einstige Periodisationsversuch (im Buch *Československý jazz – Minulost a přítomnost* von Lubomír Dorůžka und Ivan Poledňák, Praha 1967, Supraphon), der vier Perioden unterscheidet, wird nun vom Verfasser auf sechs Perioden erweitert; Stivín wäre dabei mit den drei letzteren zu verknüpfen. Stivín's Bedeutung sieht der Autor hauptsächlich darin, dass dieser Musiker der erste unter den tschechischen Jazzmen ist, der mindestens an die europäische Spitze vorgezogen ist und so den tschechischen Jazz von dem Minderwertigkeitskomplex befreite, welcher durch ehemalige Absention von wirklich schöpferischen, originalen Persönlichkeiten verursacht war. Stivín wird von dem Verfasser als charismatische Persönlichkeit charakterisiert, eine Persönlichkeit, welche fähig ist, Jazzfans aber auch weitere Kreise von Musikliebhabern anzusprechen, eine Persönlichkeit, welche dem modernen Jazz das Publikum zurückwerben mithilft.

Autor při zpracování stati vyšel ze své knihy věnované osobnosti Jiřího Stivína, jazzového hudebníka (zejména flétnisty, saxofonisty) a zároveň interpreta flétnové literatury z oblasti vážné hudby starší (zejména barokní a klasicistní) i soudobé (Mně všechno dvakrát aneb o Jiřím Stivínovi, Praha 1989, Panton, 240 s.). V první části textu usiluje autor o to, zasadit Stivína do kontextu vývoje českého jazzu a v této souvislosti se zabývá charakteristikou a periodizací vývoje dané hudební oblasti. Někdejší periodizační pokus rozlišující čtyři velká vývojová stadia (v knize autorské dvojice Lubomír Dorůžka – Ivan Poledňák Československý jazz – Minulost a přítomnost, Praha 1967, Supraphon) rozšiřuje autor na šest stadií, přičemž Stivína spojuje s posledními třemi. Stivínův význam autor spatřuje zejména v tom, že tento hudebník je prvním českým jazzmanem, který pronikl do (přinejmenším) evropské špičky a zbavil český jazz komplexu inferiority, jenž byl motivován někdejší absencí vskutku tvůrčích, originálních osobností. Stivína charakterizuje autor jako charismatickou osobnost, osobnost schopnou oslovit zejména díky mimořádné virtuozitě jazzovou i nejazzovou veřejnost, osobnost pomáhající vrátit modernímu jazzu širší publikum.

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