



A brief history of
the magazine
Jazz Forum

Jazz Forum

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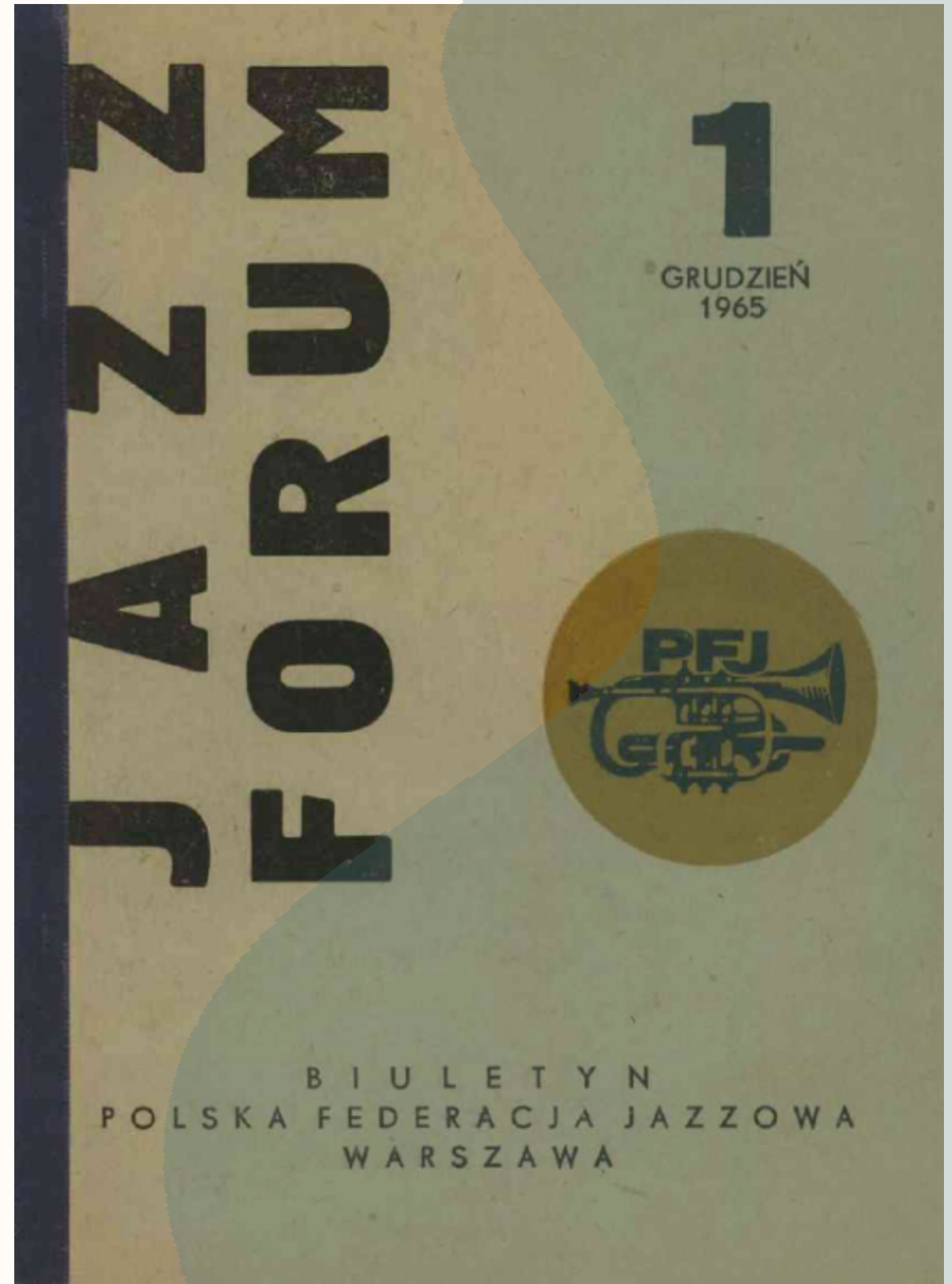
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The first issue of
Jazz Forum -
December 1965



The beginnings of Jazz Forum

A modest A5-format bulletin or the first issue of Jazz Forum appeared in December 1965. The bulletin was printed on a duplicator with, among other things, an article by Adam Slowinski "PANORAMA OF POLISH JAZZ".

The article begins as follows: After a tumultuous period of struggle for a place in musical life, Polish jazz has achieved a certain stability. It is marked, most generally, by the sublimation of this music, an increase in its aesthetic qualities, while at the same time the interest of listeners has decreased. During the frenetic period of '54-58, as long as jazz, until recently a "forbidden fruit," still had a taste for novelty, being for many not so much a music as a manifestation of a new way of being, it was accompanied by a large and noisy crowd. However, when jazz became generally available, entered the halls of the philharmonic hall, appeared on the radio and on records, when it was covered by the patronage of state institutions, and especially since the advent of hard-hitting music, this multitude of fans began to melt, to assume normal proportions in the rest.

Founder of Jazz Forum magazine

Jan Byrczek is the originator of the name and the founder of the magazine. Initially a double bassist, Byrczek played alongside Krzysztof Komeda. However, due to a hand injury, Byrczek abandoned the instrument and transitioned into the role of a music organizer. In a short period, he became the president of the Polish Jazz Federation. Concurrently, as Jazz Forum emerged, the existing monthly magazine "Jazz" by Józef Balcerak had been in publication since 1956. In the mid-1960s, the Polish jazz community, primarily musicians, clamored for their own space to voice opinions, leading to the creation of Jazz Forum.



Źródło: Hans Kumpf

Jan Byrczek w siedzibie korporacji PARC w Nowym Jorku, 1989 r.

JAZZ FORUM 1-2/1996

JAZZ FORUM



Polish version

1965 - till today



English version

1967 - 1992



German version

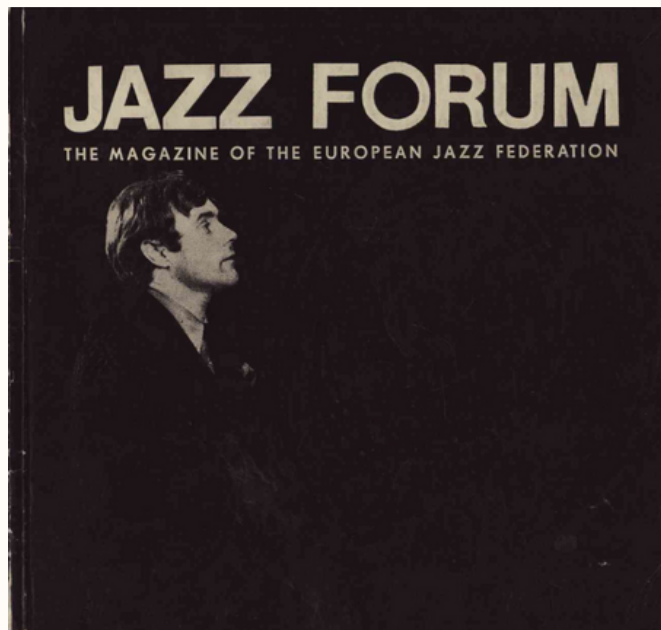
1976 - 1981

Golden years of Jazz Forum (1)

The golden years of "Jazz Forum" were 1976-1981, when three language versions (Polish, English and German) were published. The magazine was subscribed to by readers around the world, and was sold in some outlets in New York, San Francisco, Chicago and London. After Byrczek left for the US in 1977, the magazine opened its Manhattan office, an unprecedented event in the history of the Polish press. At its peak, "Jazz Forum" had correspondents in almost a hundred countries around the world. Throughout its existence, "Jazz Forum" also promoted Polish musicians: Tomasz Stanko, Zbigniew Namysłowski, Adam Makowicz, Michał Urbaniak and Zbigniew Seifert.



Golden years of Jazz Forum (2)

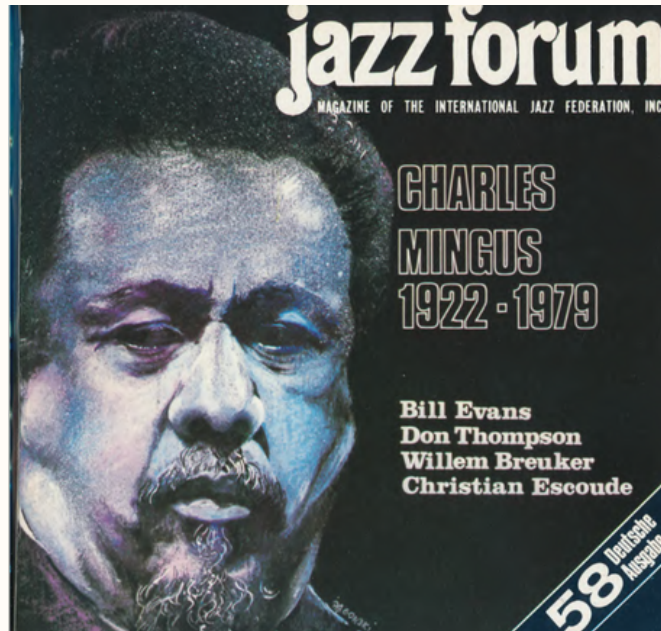


The following years saw incredible growth for Jazz Forum. The magazine was published in three language versions, with a total circulation of almost 50,000 copies. Byrczek founded, together with activists from various countries, the European Jazz Federation, which significantly influenced the development of Jazz Forum. Critics from all over Europe came to the most important festival in that part of Europe at the time, the Jazz Jamboree. Meetings were held in the editorial office of "Jazz Forum" and then the idea of founding the European Jazz Federation was born," recalls Pawel Brodowski, the current editor-in-chief of the magazine. Byrczek acted with the method of accomplished steps. The first edition of "Jazz Forum" in English was the program of the Jazz Jamboree in 1967. Two years later, the international edition became the official organ of the European Jazz Federation. This was an unprecedented affair - in fact, the only press export product of the People's Republic of Poland. Published in the country of real socialism, the international magazine quickly caught the attention of the jazz community on both sides of the Atlantic.

Golden years of Jazz Forum (3)

The German "pope of jazz" Joachim-Ernst Berendt (author of the famous Das Jazzbuch), Lubomir Doruzhka (former editor-in-chief of the Czechoslovak monthly "Melodie"), Randi Hultin from Norway (on her initiative Jan Garbarek first came to Poland), Valerie Wilmer from England, Alexei Batashev from the USSR and the legendary Leonard Feather from the USA (author of the Encyclopedia of Jazz) wrote for the magazine. In the 1980s, American critic Mike Zwerin wrote an article in the International Herald Tribune under the title "Polish magazine unites the jazz world". The editors of "Jazz Forum" paid honoraria to foreign journalists, but only in zlotys, which could not be transferred outside Poland. However, as part of the cooperation, the authors of the articles were invited to the Jazz Jamboree," recalls Brodowski. "At the time, Jazz Forum, Jazz Jamboree and the European Jazz Federation were a system of communicating vessels interacting with each other.





Golden years of Jazz Forum (4)



The commitment to the English-language version took its toll on the Polish version, which ceased publication in 1969-73, but in February 1973 it was relaunched (on Jan Borkowski's initiative) as a supplement to the English-language edition, and four years later the Polish version was already appearing regularly as an independent entity. Many people in Poland at the time did not appreciate the fact that the magazine was published in English, says Brodowski. - But always in those days the English version was the most important for us. In 1969 the magazine adopted its characteristic square format, to which it remained faithful for two decades. In 1990, it began publishing in its current form.





Rafał Olbiński – graphic editor of Jazz Forum

Rafał Olbinski was responsible for the visual side of the magazine throughout the decade of the 1970s. Rafał would do the covers, he would get a theme, make one proposal, but it was always good, so it was not up for discussion," says Brodowski. - When he came to the editorial office, he would take foreign magazines and cut out what he found interesting. I always kept an eye on him - because we needed these magazines for other reasons - but he would constantly bring that big folder of his, unceremoniously cut out what he wanted, and take it away. Rafał didn't particularly reckon with anyone - he would get the whole thing, the pictures, and paste it up. What set him apart was his professional hand and his ability to understand reality in a condensed way. Graphically he was able to capture the essence of things. And even when acting under great stress, he kept the looseness of an artist. He was always cool.



ŻYCIE TOWARZYSKIE I JAZZOWE

Z Rafałem Olbińskim na Manhattanie rozmawiała Krystyna Gucewicz

Malarz, plakacista, ilustrator, od 1982 roku w USA. Urodzony w Kielcach, absolwent Wydziału Architektury na Politechnice Warszawskiej, do wielkiego świata trafił przez jazz i JAZZ FORUM. Najprzystojniejszy mężczyzna na Manhattanie. Mieszka w Nowym Jorku, kocha Nowy Jork, małego Nowy Jork. Zdobył sławę i pieniądze oraz pozycję wybitnego surrealisty końca XX wieku.

JAZZ FORUM: Nonszalancja, róża w butosiernie, usmiech gwiazdy Saffo — czy właśnie po to wyjechałeś do Stanów?

RAFAL OLBINSKI: Hmm, czuję się zadowolony pytaniem... zasłonię się jazzem. Przez to, że miałem do czynienia ze środowiskiem jazzowym, ta nonszalancja, róża w butosiernie były czymś codziennym. Nawet w Polsce lat 60. Tomek Stańko chodził z długimi włosami w kapeluszu, jak Gato Barbieri.

JF: I może chciałeś zmalsować to na swój sposób?

RO: Nie malowałem ich. Marzyłem tylko, żeby mieć taką swobodę, która jest popularna nie tylko tym, co robię. Oni byli świetnymi muzykami i dokładnie w nosie mieli całą resztę. Mogli, bo byli świetni w tym, co robili. Zresztą ten sam „świetlany przykład” miałem wcześniej na Wydziale Architektury. Moi profesorem, sławy przedwojenne, ubierali się zupełnie inaczej niż szamoznanstwo dookoła. Z szanacyjnym charmem. Przewski, Hryniewiecki, Boguszewski — piękne twarze, piękne garnitury, fulary, krawaty...

JF: Czyli jednak zgadliam. Po to pojechałeś do Ameryki?

RO: Alóż oczywiście, że po to.

JF: Ubieranie się jest dobrym tematem. Moda nie pojawia się bez powodu. Styl jest sposobem maskowania lub wydobycia czegoś z siebie. I ty o tym dobrze wiesz.

RO: Lubię ubierać się inaczej i lubię być dobrze ubrany. Może to wynika z tego, że w Polsce „za moich czasów” były takie szalone braki na rynku. Pamiętam, kiedy jako 19-letni chłopak pojechałem do Zakopanego na



Rafał Olbiński w nowojorskim Lincoln Center: „Jazz jest filozofią życiową, a nie tylko muzyką. To muzyka z założenia jest improwizacją, takim luzem, rozkręcaniem śrubek w sobie... Żeby się poczuć jak po paru kieliszkach martini, niekoniecznie z użyciem trumby”.

nary, a nie miałem butów narciarskich. Wybruliem się w półbutach, jedyne zresztą, a kopielem je za jakąś nagrodę, którą wygrałem w konkursie dla artystów-amatorów w Kielcach. Pamiętam czasy, kiedy po busy jeździło się do Berlina...

JF: Dziś nosisz czerwone laskierki.

RO: Zdarza się. A pamiętam, kiedy się ubierało „na ciuchach” na Pradze i chodziłem we wspomnianym skórzanym płaszczu, imponującym sztywno jakiegoś oficera Abwehry. Lubilem takie prowokujące rzeczy. Wszyscy moi koledzy robili to samo. Był to jakiś sposób, żeby wyjść z szarości, która się ustnie narzucała. Wszyscy — z urzędu — mieli się tak samo ubierać, tak samo zachowywać, tak samo marzyć, mieć zaprogramowane kariery...

JF: Jazz też był wtedy prowokacją. Czy pamiętasz swój pierwszy koncert,

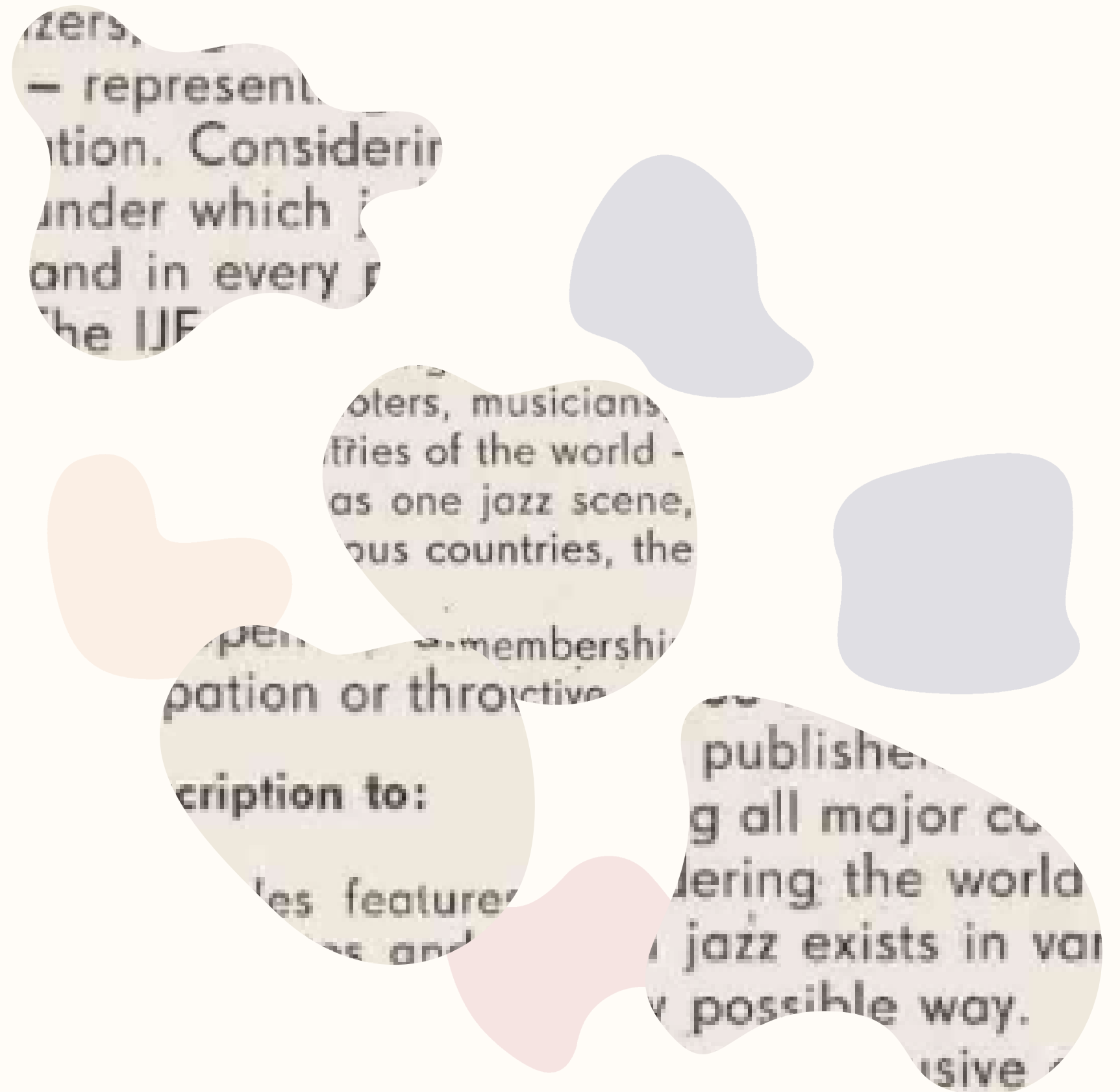
pierwszą rozkołysaną fascynacją? Czy to było tak, jak u wielu z nas: Willis Conover i „Głos Ameryki”?

RO: W sumie tak. Chociaż istotne stało się kino. Takie filmy jak „Niewinni czarodzieje”. Ja wtedy jeszcze na prowincji, może już w liceum, a może nie, oglądałem ten inny świat. Te filmy głośnikowały male, hermetyczne środowisko i nam to się kjarzyło z jakimś „lamogajem”, z bliskiem i ze swobodą. Z tym, że nie musiało się wstawiać o 7 rano do roboty i jechać jakimś tramwajem, tylko o siódmej właśnie kończyło się koncert, wychodziło i wędrowało wprykiem po ulicy, dopijając reszki wódki.

JF: Kto pierwszy otworzył ci drzwi, żebyś mógł w nie wejść, przejść do jazzu — nie tylko jako fan, ale jako członek rodziny?

Censorship in communist Poland

Censorship was in force in communist Poland, and "Jazz Forum" was no exception. It was also forbidden to mention people who had a quarrel with the people's government, such as Leopold Tyrmand, who had been living in the USA since 1966 - a figure that is difficult not to mention when writing about the history of jazz in Poland. The editors at the time generally used formulas about the author of the book "At the shores of jazz." In 1981, on the wave of the Solidarity thaw, "Jazz Forum" was the first in Poland to disenchant his name by mentioning his merits as the organizer of the legendary jazz festivals in Sopot (1956-57). In January 1985, Pawel Brodowski conducted an interview in America for "Jazz Forum". - as it turned out - the last interview before his death with the prominent writer and leader of militant jazz from the era of "catacombs" and "frenesis."





After 1981

The development of the magazine was abruptly halted by the introduction of martial law. A major change came in the first years after the fall of communism - in the new reality, publishing an international version proved impossible and the last English-language issue was published in May 1992.



Jazz Forum authors



In the 50-year history of the magazine, the most prominent critics of Polish jazz wrote to "Jazz Forum": Mateusz Świącicki, Adam Sławinski, Roman Kowal, Tomasz Szachowski, Krystian Brodacki. Also musicians themselves, such as Jan Ptaszyn Wróblewski, Janusz Szprot, Wojciech Karolak, Krzysztof Zgraja and - later - Piotr Kaluźny, Piotr Baron and Ryszard Borowski. Canonical texts were published in "Jazz Forum", which to this day shape the opinion of jazzfans about the most important phenomena and figures of improvised music. The stylistic range of the described trends stretched from American free jazz, through European ECM aesthetics, to the activities of local traditional jazz bands.



Paweł Brodowski – editor-in-chief

ostatni chorus



Spotkanie Zarządu Międzynarodowej Federacji Jazzowej w Baden-Baden, 1981 (od lewej): Werner Wunderlich (RFN), Janusz Kęcik, Paweł Brodowski, Andrzej Jaroszewski, Joachim Berendt, Kjell-Ake Svensson (Szwecja), Charles Alexander (Anglia), Janos Gonda (Węgry), Roman Waschko, Richard Mayo (USA) i Arnvid Meyer (Dania)

At the end of 1979, Paweł Brodowski took over the duties of editor-in-chief from Jan Byrczek (he has worked in the editorial office since 1972, in 1975 he became deputy editor-in-chief), and he still holds this position today.

The magazine continues to be Poland's only regular print periodical devoted to jazz music. "Jazz Forum was a unique magazine fulfilling an extremely important role in the history of Polish and European jazz," says Brodowski. – It continues to fulfill this mission. I hope it will survive the next 50 years.

Archived Jazz Forum
magazines can be found
at:
www.polishjazzarch.com

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