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***Institutionalizing Music Sociology and Popular Music Studies in Socialist Hungary***

Popular music studies is often viewed nowadays in Eastern Europe as a brand-new and typically western-oriented discipline, while popular music related research beginning in the state-socialist era still remains almost entirely unexplored and unknown, even on a local level. This research, however, was not about following the contemporaneous Western trends unfolding during the early 1960s. The different political, social and institutional frameworks beyond the Iron Curtain resulted in work that was particular in terms of methods, topics as well as motivation, and that was not connected to fans or rock musicians, but rather, to classical music educated academic scholars from important political and musical institutions. Their work was, moreover, regularly motivated by cultural policy objectives such as forming the taste and aesthetic sensibility of the masses and aiding young people to acquire the perception of music deemed valuable by those in power. Within the Eastern Bloc, Hungarian musicology and (Marxist) music sociology was considered as one of the most important locations for such experimentation. The most important figures of the first generation of Hungarian popular music research were Ágnes Losonczi, János Maróthy and Iván Vitányi. In my paper I will concentrate on the ideas of Vitányi and the research groups led by him in the Research Center for Mass Media (Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont) and the Institute of People’s Education (Népművelési Intézet), because both the effect of Marxist ideology and the simultaneous openness to the contemporary Western sociological and philosophical trends could be felt in their work the strongest. Although Vitányi and his young colleagues were also primarily motivated by the intention to harmonize social and scientific needs within the framework of social educational policy, they attempted to approach the phenomena of popular music with an original, unprecedented methodology (called the study of Generative Musical Abilities) which could be evaluated as a genuine novelty even at an international level.

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