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**Jazz musicians' emotional attitude towards their profession  
and creativity in old age<sup>\*1</sup>**

**Abstract:**

One of the goals of the fieldwork research into the strategies of acting of jazz musicians conducted in the form of in-depth interviews in Belgrade since 2012 is to examine the ways in which they emotionally experience their own profession and creativity in old age. The number of currently active jazz performers in Belgrade ranges from fifty to one hundred, about a dozen of whom are in retiree status. It is the narratives of the latter that have been used to gain insight into the attitude of the older generation of jazzers towards the limitations imposed on them by *old age*, when the latter is understood as a social construct. What is characteristic of this professional group, however, is that the social restrictions habitually faced by persons who have formally withdrawn from active working life do not apply to them in most cases. On the contrary, the interlocutors emphasize the feelings of happiness and pleasure derived from the fact that they are “allowed” to work and be creative in their old age. What adds to those feelings is the chronically unstable socioeconomic situation on the Serbian jazz scene as well as the awareness that the distinctive nature of their profession puts them in the privileged position of being able not only to supplement their retirement income but also to express their creativity and preserve their social relationships. Resulting from all these circumstances is preserved *quality of life*, which is at especial risk of deterioration in old age.

**Keywords:**

jazz musicians, happiness, pleasure, old age, quality of life.

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## Introduction

Conducted in Belgrade continually since 2012, thus going on for several years now, the research into jazz musicians' strategies of action involved also studying their emotional "take" on the profession and their own creations as one of its objectives. In addition to the factors that attract the most attention, such as socio-economic ones, it is the emotional factors, as will be shown, that strongly affect the professional but also personal choices made by jazz musicians. Understanding the synergy of these factors will thus serve the purpose of a more complete examination of strategies of action that, in the broadest sense, may aim to overcome an unfavourable situation or improve the current state of affairs. However, since this paper focuses on the older members of this professional group, it will be possible to show also how certain strategies of action actually place certain situations that could even have been interpreted as unfavourable in previous phases of their lives among the ones whose maximum possible extension has become highly desirable.

To put it shortly: "when people solve problems, they construct strategies of action –persistent (but not fixed or immutable) ways of ordering action through time" (Laz 1998, 102), where it should be taken into account that they may vary also depending on the age of individuals to be understood also as active, sometime skilled users of culture whom we actually observe (Swidler 1986, 277). In other words, what it is that older jazz musicians *can* and are *allowed* to use as their own advantage in relation to most members of the older population, aiming to achieve or (in the older generation even more importantly) maintain the desired *quality of life*, is one of the key questions that this paper is attempting to answer.

## Interviewee profile

The material that will be used for presenting specific results of the research was obtained through in-depth interviews with jazz musicians who had had the pensioner status for a shorter or longer period of time. This status, at the same time an indicator for the jazz professionalization process in Serbia but also for *old age* being a social construct (for more on old age as social construct see Milosavljević 2014), was obtained by some informants after finishing their working life in one of the institutions where jazz is played or studied. This way of acquiring the pensioner status is characteristic primarily for men taking part in the research. As for women, two of them, who are the only singers, it is to be noted that

they retired early under the disability insurance scheme, in their fifties, as freelance artists having acquired this status through the Association of Musicians of Jazz, Pop and Rock Music, originally established as Association of Jazz Musicians in 1953.

The number of active elderly musicians interviewed, about a dozen, should be understood in consideration of the assessment made by the informants that there are somewhere between fifty and one hundred jazz musicians, ranging from the youngest to the oldest, active in Belgrade. For this paper, however, of importance were the data obtained from the latter, who, then, may further be divided into two categories: active musicians, regularly playing or singing, and those who today perform only on certain occasions<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, it should be noted as well that majority of the interviewees mentioned their health was harmed due to the biological process of aging but also because of occupational diseases and injuries; however, they still saw it as good or satisfactory, and often even better when compared to other people of the same age no longer professionally active, regardless of their previous occupation. Revitalising and therapeutic power of work, closely connected to creative expression, as will be seen, can thus be fully manifested.

## Examples of advantages

Although interviewees did mention the negative aspects of old age and growing old, this paper focuses on certain advantages that interviewees claimed to have now in comparison with other members of the same generation or with earlier phases of their life. This existence of differently valued aspects of life, where their variation depends both on the age when they are valued and on belonging to a specific professional group, indicates also the need to examine the experience of *quality of life* of senior members of the society. In the most general sense, QoL research includes diverse aspects – social, environmental, structural, and health-related ones (Walker and Mollenkopf 2007, 3), and thus they remain relevant in this research as well. However, the emphasis is placed on the subjective evaluation offered by informants themselves, showing in the bottom line that they actually evaluate their own quality of life in positive terms primarily due to the fact that they are still musically i.e. professionally active, which, consequently, allows them to meet a whole range of needs.

2 After retiring they still remained active in their line of work for a period of time, which is why their experiences were of importance for this research.

Such an anthropological aspect of looking at the quality of life as a kind of self-assessment was also dictated by the fact “that there is no agreement on how to define and measure QoL” and that there is “no theory of QoL in old age”, but that “in practice, it operates as a meta-level construct, which encompasses different dimensions of a person’s life” (Walker and Mollenkopf 2007, 5), which will also be shown by this paper, placing in the limelight the feelings of happiness and satisfaction, being fulfilled and independent in various aspects, and leaving in the background the feelings of insecurity, fear and discontent also present in the interviewees’ statements, but given, however, a secondary importance with regard to the circumstances they defined as advantageous.

Here it is of utmost importance to point out that “sources of QoL in old age often differ between groups of older people” (Mollenkopf and Walker 2007, 247), and also between different professional groups. The most important advantage of jazz musicians over most other professional groups, as they themselves highlight, is that they can, almost without any obstacles, continue their creative expression through their profession even after formally retiring. This potential may be threatened by lack of work or poor psychological and physical health, which was not the case among the interviewees. To the contrary, their previous presence on the jazz scene, high motivation and capability to respond to demands of the profession, allowed them to work even when the volume of work, due to the constantly unfavourable socio-economic situation that had over the decades also been reflected on the jazz scene, was not very large. Thus, their additional earnings, combined with the pension as the only certain income in Serbia, enabled informants to have economic independence as well, an advantage that played an important role in their life, in addition to expressing creativity. The confirmation of that may be found in the narratives of the majority of informants, but the importance of additional income is certainly the greatest in the case of those who retired early due to disability reasons, whose pensions are smallest, or, in other words, where such fees actually help them survive: “We all of us have very small pensions. Less than RSD 30,000... and when you add to that another RSD 20,000 or so, you can somehow live modestly on it... We are not used to anything else”. This narrative, further, despite the fact that no overall assessment of the economic status of the informants may be made based on the amounts of pensions or fees<sup>3</sup>, which would admittedly be out-

<sup>3</sup> Such an assessment would, further, lead to analysing economic sources in assessing the economic situation of the elderly, where economic sources, in a nutshell, “include all income streams, savings, financial as well as tangible assets that can also be employed to gain income (letting, leasing, or sale)” (Smeeding according to Weidekamp-Maicher and Naegele 2007, 67).

side the scope of this research, gains importance because it indicates the tendency that personal evaluation of an individual’s financial situation is performed based on two (related) incomes: (certain) pensions and (variable<sup>4</sup>) fees, seen together.

However, when it comes to the mentioned income, in addition to being able to live in the manner that they see either as satisfactory or as better than the one they would enjoy on their pension only, they also directly or indirectly showed also that money is not just a legal tender of payment, but also a measure of dignity and indicator of their usefulness, important sources of feeling satisfied by your own life. Or, in the words of one interviewee as he spoke about the amalgam of the creative and existential:

I found my salvation in the quintet and I know exactly which programme I want to play. I found what is best for me... so I can be satisfied while playing, for the audience to be satisfied, and for me so I can live a little... This part related to existence gives you some self-confidence. I feel better.

If I’m not happy and if I’m thinking about how I’ll survive, I truly feel my drumstick’s not lying in my hand properly... Psyche influences the physique... How many times it was the drums that lifted me up – psychologically. When I see that I am *totalschaden*, like the Germans say, I sit at my drums, play for an hour, and I restore my self-confidence and immediately feel different.

The following narrative may be seen as being along the lines of the previous one:

To me, this money brings pleasure, but do you know how happy I am, how I fill up on some nice energy... I close my eyes and sing some lovely ballads, and then some pop songs... Without that I would soon be gone... For me it is a truly revitalising force. Without it I would probably come down with some disease... I’m an active and quite unusual pensioner. Unusual for my neighbours as well...

For me personally, I find gigs very important, even if waiters go by, people eat, drink, glasses clinking... I love it too much. It is my soul, my heart, my everything.

At this point, thus, earning through work and the very work itself as creative expression should be understood as benefits, advantages coming from the same source but being completely different in nature. The aspects of work were even redefined so the inherent insecurity of jazz musicians in a professional sense, mostly related to the vulnerable position of

<sup>4</sup> In terms of both amount and frequency, but potential loss as well.

a freelancer<sup>5</sup>, becomes a kind of an advantage in the old age, primarily as part of the experience through which they developed different strategies of action under unfavourable circumstances. Willingness to adapt, and to get by somehow, but also, as some of them said, to act like managers, is a part of their professional vitality that is often lacking in pensioners who had spent their working life in some of the professions that provided the so-called safe jobs. Exceptions are those professions that involve specific and always needed knowledge and skills, while in other spheres the need for the employee ceases at the time of retirement, which is why this transition is difficult and even threatening to the ones experiencing it. Two Croatian scientists, therefore, summarising the positions of a large number of authors dealing with adjustment to the period after retirement, and “linking retirement with a higher level of depression, health problems, smaller income and fall in the number and quality of social contacts”, attract attention to the fact that retirement includes transition that may be seen not only as a change in roles, but also as redefining former roles in the career, and add: “Since the career roles are linked to the social status, identity, power and resources, this life transition may be seen as a period of potential crisis” (Bara and Podgorelec 2015, 64). Strategies for overcoming this *crisis potential* may differ. A reflection of one such strategy may also be registered at the level of language itself. Namely, it should be noted that pensioners often describe themselves either as former members of a professional group or as if still belonging to that group, albeit not working (see Milosavljević 2011, 146). What seems to be important in this group of informants is that they understand themselves not in the category of a *former jazz musician*, since they continue performing; nor as *jazz musicians* with no work or creative expression where referring to the profession would only be a reflection of the times gone by forever. The reason for that may be, in part, found actually in the possession of specific knowledge and skills and maintaining a special role in the society, not only artistic but also entertaining<sup>6</sup>, among other things. These factors place the interviewed musicians undoubtedly in the working field, allowing them to satisfy their creative needs as well, but at the same time undermining “the myth about unproductivity and inactivity of the elderly” that is “not based on facts and leads to wrong conclusions about productive and creative capacities of the elderly” (Bara and Podgorelec 2015, 66). On the other hand, when it comes to the elderly individual in the society, i.e. informants themselves, these factors directly lead to their

<sup>5</sup> The position that most informants had had an opportunity to experience.

<sup>6</sup> See more about tension at the level of the relationship musician – audience, which may involve a conflict between the artistic and entertaining as well, in Brand et al. 2012, 647.

retirement not being made equal with loss. Statement by one of the interviewees, who at the time of the interview was seventy years old, clearly confirms this:

I did not see my leaving as a turning point... On my last working day I played the same as always. At one moment I felt a little... you know, when your heart sort of aches... However, since I am very much present even at this time, I don't feel bad at all... And I know that some of my colleagues got ill when they retired. In their heads it was the end. They didn't know what to do with themselves. They would go out in the street and wouldn't know which way to go...

The contrasts are also seen in the statements made by the interviewees and the feeling of deprivation stemming from the fact that now they may enter what used to be their place of work only as guests. However, more importantly, the premises are still there for them. What once used to be, for most of them, another workplace, a parallel one, i.e. a club – has now become a key area where the activities which are of utmost importance for them take place. Playing in the club, which also presents health and social risks (particularly for the youngest players), for the ones who have reached a more advanced age becomes a place where the informants may, in addition to what was already said, also maintain and preserve their social network as well as the flow of information of importance for them. To be present, to express themselves imaginatively, and to create – that is a source of happiness which is at times clearly defined in the statements such as: “I am a happy man since I can do what I want to do for as long as I want to keep on doing it”; “I put all my heart and soul in my playing. That is the right place for me to be and that is where I give it all”; “I will play for as long as I shall live”. Their answers also reflected the therapeutic effect of their playing. Thus, one interviewee said: “Music and love for music can help you in your direst moments. I got satisfaction in that aspect too – I do something that gives people strength for new creation, for survival and for the purpose of life”.

At times these positive emotional attitudes towards the profession and creation may be identified even through comparisons with friends who did not continue working after becoming pensioners or with colleagues, more frequently women, who belonged to other music genres. The former were predominantly described as “dead people who gave up on themselves” and the latter were defined even as “poor women” who lost their voice or were no longer attractive enough to appear on the stage.

The last statement gives rise to the need to point out different *types* of aging. Growing old is a process, namely a biological inevitability inherent to everybody, informants included; however, there are special rules there due to the nature of their work. Despite the fact that “there has been very little research on the correlation between aging and physical problems among musicians” (Gembris et al. 2018, 3), some<sup>7</sup> of them attract attention to the fact that music performances of at least two thirds of the informants, by the time they reach fifty, will be affected by physical problems<sup>8</sup> (Gembris et al. 2018, 14). Psychological problems, caused by stress, often follow and accompany the physical ones. When it comes to jazz musicians, what is also taken into account are environmental factors that are recently most often linked to alcohol abuse (see Dobson 2015). Such a situation was detected also in the answers given by elderly men participating in the research who pointed out either that they had stopped drinking or that their drinking today was by far less often and reduced to the limits acceptable to them. In essence, prolonged physical and psychological exhaustion, along with the natural aging processes, makes the informants elderly people with bodily limitations, but still does not threaten to keep them away from their profession. Thus one of them, who openly discussed the treatment for alcoholism that he had undergone successfully, said that he no longer heard speech well, but that he could hear music. One of the female informants was even more specific:

At times things are difficult for me, physically. You charge your batteries and then you empty them. I have had both my hips replaced. My spine hurts. I don't see as well as I used to. I don't remember the lyrics as I used to. All that is what happens in this profession... But thank God my voice is still good.

However, besides this mode of aging, a very interesting aspect of this research was to identify the social factors which made the informants experience their *professional old age*. This is, essentially, a kind of a paradox, considering that it (professional old age) was imposed on them in some earlier periods of their lives, even several decades before the current phase which is still a phase that implies active work. Namely, the informants state that the audience sees quite differently the performers who are in the limelight and those who are in the background. Thus, vocals and wind instruments players are the first to become 'spent', while the ones in the background may remain in the eyes of the audience for a longer time since they are actually less visible. This is confirmed also by the fact that the largest number of informants were drummers. The story

<sup>7</sup> Referring to musicians in orchestras.

<sup>8</sup> See more on types of occupational disorders in musicians in Foxman and Burgel 2006, 309.

of one of women jazz singers is a good illustration of how female singers, not necessarily jazz oriented ones, are seen and treated. Back in the 1980s this woman, now in her seventies, refused an invitation to sing the so-called newly-composed folk music and thus practically isolated herself for many years to come. This refusal of hers coincided with another set of circumstances due to which she withdrew, and which made her believe that the audience had treated her more cruelly when she was younger:

It's our mentality. You know what people are like. They say: "She's finished already. *She is old*". We have young girls now. I am not against them but if this is art that we are dealing with, then performer's age should not be an issue. Unfortunately that is precisely as it is here in the hills of the Balkans. I have lived whole my life in fear, in terrible fear... Now, when I look back, I am amazed that I have survived. Even today it makes my hair stand on end when I remember what I have gone through.

Although the compromise she had been offered could extend her career and provide her with financial security<sup>9</sup>, the fact that – as she said – she had not 'given in', had not compromised, allowed her to continue singing jazz in her sixties and seventies when she no longer had to be attractive, which is why she described her current situation as a happy end.

The above described position, although it presents the role of a woman singer in local circumstances, a role inherited from the world of folk music where, assumingly, sexual characteristics are given priority over talent or vocal capabilities, is not typical for this world only. Studies in the United States and United Kingdom that covered the role, participation and feelings of female jazz singers showed the same. Namely, they highlighted that, barring a few exceptions, before mid-1980s women “were always second-class citizens in jazz, the most macho of all the arts” (Gourse 1995, 7). Jazz was recognised, actually, for a long time, as a field where men dominated and where women were traditionally denied unlimited access, and what access they were given was in the roles of singer and piano player (Wehr 2015, 1). This can be seen also in the analysed example, indicating easier survival of a woman in jazz in the role of a singer that still had to meet some visual standards. Her old age, on the other hand, seemed to free her from this *requirement*.

On the other hand, when jazz playing or singing is concerned, we must admit that no negative evaluation of older players is visible, regardless whether this evaluation is made by the audience or the colleagues who even give them a kind of preference, stressing the experience they have in music as their advantage. That it was not always like that, not even

<sup>9</sup> Playing folk music was actually quite often the strategy of action of men jazz musicians.

where jazz is believed to have been born, can be seen from earlier sources. Thus Nat Hentoff, a well-known jazz critic, witness to and chronicler of an important phase in the history of jazz, former editor of *DownBeat* (1953-1957) and *Jazz Review* (1958-1961), in his famous book *The Jazz Life* (1961), wrote about the conditions at the prestigious Newport Jazz Festival, stating that a special irony about the way that the Festival exploited older players was that, although they mentioned engaging older players as proof that they recognise jazz as having its history that ought to be respected, older players were never given sufficient time for rehearsal or enough attention in planning their appearances so they could be seen at their best (Hentof 2012, 109).

Obviously several generations of jazz musicians were to grow old, in the music that was seen as music for the young people, in order for the situation to change. Several informants claimed the same, but still mentioned that it was *in the West* that older artists, and jazz musicians as well, were more respected and valued. However, they said that they did not feel they were directly discriminated against based on their age, and that they still divided themselves into two groups: those who were good, and those who, when it comes to artistic creation, were not good. However, there was indirect discrimination, as they called it, and primarily among women, which is seen from the following quotation:

Two years or so ago I was going to a jazz club to work, and a couple of meters ahead of me there were two young men talking about where they would spend their evening. I heard them because I was walking behind them. And they came to this club and one of them said: "Hey, let's go here. This is great. I was here the other night. An old woman<sup>10</sup> sings there, she rocks". And then the other one said: "Oh come on... Let's not. Let's go somewhere else". They went in anyway. I followed them because they made me laugh so much. And they stayed. Even the other one who resisted, he also stayed... There are such things but I don't pay attention.

Here light should be shed onto the role of the employers, owners of clubs and restaurants where they perform. In Belgrade, namely, there is no jazz club as such, i.e. there is no club that offers only jazz music five to seven days a week and that would host foreign performers in addition to national ones.<sup>11</sup> This circumstance originated to a great extent from the

<sup>10</sup> *Baba* in Serbian.

<sup>11</sup> Existence of local places where specific music is performed such as clubs, restaurants, and other similar establishments, but also of organized events such as concerts and festivals, is a prerequisite for the existence of a developed music scene. In that way the preconditions for developing a local form of jazz are created. For an example of the influence of a local festival on town identity see Ristivojević 2014.

requirements and demands of club owners where jazz is played.<sup>12</sup> As a main criterion to get work informants mentioned their profitability for the owners but also that they were constantly exposed to the risk of a cancellation "if their till is not overflowing at all times". However, in addition to this easily explainable condition for playing jazz in a public space, the interviewees mention yet another reason they found of importance for getting hired, and that was that their price on the market was lowest in comparison with performers from other music genres, their fees ranging from RSD 3,000 to 5,000 for an evening<sup>13</sup>. Nonetheless, although they found the fees inadequate, they also include other advantages that they are aware of. Low price for public performances<sup>14</sup> when they were younger was a source of frustration leading many of them to replace their freelancer lifestyle with the public sector job, still remaining in the jazz sphere and playing in a club from time to time. Their pensions today, regardless how small, with even the smallest of fees for their gigs, are actually translated into a whole set of recognitions for them: from creative and fellow musician values; through often underlined importance of continuity, whether professional or artistic; then through satisfying the important feeling of belonging to a professional group of jazz musicians; to the feeling of respect and even love felt by those who come to listen to them. This self-assessment of quality of life may therefore easily be further explained through the words of Bara and Podgorelec:

Individuals have a tendency to grow old in the manners that are in line with the patterns of feelings and behaviour from previous periods of life. They want to keep the existing patterns despite significant changes in their personal environment, whether it is their lives during their growing old or it is the social changes. If a person is highly active socially, mentally or physically in their middle age, it is very probable that they will keep such a level of activity, provided that their health status allows it<sup>15</sup>, even in the period of retirement. Therefore, the patterns of behaviour, or the level of activity represent the elements of personal identity and strengthen the individual's feeling of self-respect (Bara and Podgorelec 2015, 67).

Among other mentioned factors the individual's self-respect is certainly influenced by social recognition that can be seen or expressed in different ways. Some of the informants won life achievement awards giv-

<sup>12</sup> Sometimes it is only one evening per week, and other genres are played on other nights.

<sup>13</sup> From EUR 25 to 40 for an evening.

<sup>14</sup> Or their too small a number.

<sup>15</sup> What should be added here is the overall socio-cultural environment where the retirement process is taking place, since its impact on the retirement process is strong (Milosavljević 2011, 144), and it provides grounds for the informants' remaining in the activity space.

en to them by jazz festivals and organisations. Another kind of social recognition for jazz musicians, often mentioned, is the so called *nacionalna penzija*, pension-like monthly allowance awarded for outstanding achievements in the field of culture. Social recognition should be, by all means, understood as especially important when evaluating the quality of life in this category of the elderly members of the society, since that in addition to the symbolic support it can also offer a financial one. However, in addition to the positive aspects, different opinions were also voiced in the interviews, emphasising negative effects with regard to the jazz scene:

Many retired early and they could still work... They found a comfy spot for themselves, living off those pensions. They should work from time to time, but they always say "they don't pay me enough". Nobody is paid enough in this country. That is that – money and their believing they're stars. I think there are no stars... I meet a lot of stars from all over the world and they are all normal and friendly and modest...

It is here, thus, that the key importance of maintaining balance between the desired and the possible should be added, as one of the fundamental prerequisites for the feeling of satisfaction by quality of life in the old age. To embrace the possible and accept the limitations seems to be the strategy of action with the best outcome for the ones who have a need to be creative at an advanced age as well, as is the case with the informants who participated in this research. This need, but also another one of importance for the quality of life<sup>16</sup>, is best illustrated by the last statement:

The worst playboys are those who are in their sixties and start chasing girls. They try to act smart and so they say: *third age*. I don't know what they are talking about. I am very down-to-earth... It is only normal that I cannot play as I used to. Psycho-physique is not the same as it used to be... Simply, that is what our body is like... I accept my age and everything will depend on how I feel... If I feel fine, then I play and there are no problems.

### Final considerations

One of the most important conclusions of the research indicates that jazz does not exclude its oldest and longest active creators. Quite to the contrary, even in the conditions that are quite unfavourable for playing this kind of music, where public performances are immanent, there is a

<sup>16</sup> For more on another need that is seen as very important for the quality of life in old age and that may be placed under the umbrella term of partner relationships, see Milosavljević 2015.

channel allowing even the oldest among them to satisfy a range of their needs. Some of them place elderly jazz musicians in the same group with other pensioners who need additional income on top of their pensions. However, what makes them different is that jazz musicians can actually meet this need. Public performances, even more importantly, do not satisfy just this function, the most obvious one. The need for continuity is also satisfied. Through long lasting presence and recognition, which can be validated through different sources, older jazz musicians experience satisfaction by the quality of life that they often verbalise as happiness and fulfilment. The mentioned continuity, however, is also an important leverage when it comes to adaptation to the period after formal retirement. Although facing certain changes, the informants avoid, in the described manner, the feeling of loss that potentially arises on leaving the active sphere of work. The sphere of work is for them now transformed into an *active* one to the extent that seems to be optimum for the informants. Work, thus, did not stay behind in the forever gone phase of life, but continues to exist in the advanced years as well, where it is the source of dignity, independence, creative expression, creativity, and an indispensable condition for the quality of life to be defined as satisfactory, and even good.

As the final conclusion it should be added that maintaining the earlier style of life, in previous phases assessed as unstable and even threatening, achieves actually a compensatory value in jazz musicians' old age. Remaining in the domain of the known and familiar, which involves successfully overcoming professional barriers, resulted, further, also in their experiences being less negative than they had supposed they would be. Bearing in mind everything said so far, old age may also be seen as liberating, the time when you 'can' but 'do not have to', and also as a potential where it is possible to manage your own choices aiming to meet the whole range of different needs.

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## Ljubica Milosavljević

### Emocionalni odnos džez muzičara prema sopstvenoj profesiji i vlastitom stvaralaštvu u starosti

Jedan od ciljeva terenskog istraživanja strategija delovanja džez muzičara, sprovedenog putem dubinskih intervjuova od 2012. godine u Beogradu, jeste i proučavanje njihovog emocionalnog doživljaja sopstvene profesije i vlastitog stvaralaštva u poznijoj dobi. Broj trenutno aktivnih džez muzičara u Beogradu kreće se od pedeset do sto, a u statusu penzionera se nalazi njih desetak. Upravo narativi potonjih poslužili su za sagledavanje odnosa starije generacije džezera prema ograničenjima koja pred njih postavlja starost, kada se ona razume kao društveni konstrukt. Međutim, za ovu profesionalnu grupu je karakteristično da ne važe društvena ograničenja koja se uobičajeno postavljaju pred pojedince koji formalno izlaze iz aktivne sfere rada. Suprotno tome, sagovornici u prvi plan stavljaju doživljaje sreće i zadovoljstva, koji proističu iz činjenice da im je „dozvoljeno“ da rade i stvaraju u starosti. Na prisustvo ovih doživljaja dodatno utiču kontinuirano nestabilna socioekonomska situacija na srpskoj džez sceni, ali i svest o tome da su, zbog specifičnosti poziva, u privilegovanoj poziciji da, pored sticanja dodatnih prihoda, ispolje vlastitu kreativnost i očuvaju socijalne veze. Sve navedeno rezultuje očuvanjem *kvaliteta života*, koji je, kod starih ljudi, u posebnom riziku od opadanja.

**Ključne reči:** džez muzičari, sreća, zadovoljstvo, starost, kvalitet života.