PDF hosted at the Radboud Repository of the Radboud University Nijmegen

The following full text is a publisher's version.

For additional information about this publication click this link.
http://hdl.handle.net/2066/187839

Please be advised that this information was generated on 2018-04-03 and may be subject to change.
Immediately after the end of World War II, Jack Bulterman's light and joyful swing songs struck a chord among both the Dutch citizens and the liberators. In the Netherlands, jazz was no longer associated with the notion of sinful, primitive, uncivilized music. Rather, the cultural opposition towards the music of the German occupiers turned jazz into the soundtrack of the liberators. Syncopation, swing, blue notes, and improvisation became loaded with political associations. As Kees Wouters suggests, by objecting to jazz, Dutch people risked the stigma of siding with the former enemy: "Playing a Nat Gonella or a Benny Goodman record on a birthday party, one demonstrated that one was on the 'right' side" (Introduction 507).

The attitude towards jazz in the Netherlands would soon become more nuanced and polarized. In 1945, Bulterman recognized an opportunity to fashion himself into a musical mediator par excellence.

After the end of World War II, Bulterman played with The Ramblers in Belgium for U.S. troops. Among the most successful numbers was Bulterman's composition Bouncin' In Bavaria, which became a standard in big band repertoires and gained recognition in many European countries. In Great Britain, Bouncin' In Bavaria was one of the most requested programs due to its attractive selection of songs (Morley 131). Bouncin' In Bavaria was considered to be the best song of a concert in Groningen in February 1950.

An article in Nieuwsblad van het Noorden identified the song as a well-known AFN tune ("Bouncin' in Bavaria, de van de AFN welbekende 'tune,' was een van de beste nummers van de avond"; 7; translation by the author). The association with the American Forces Network radio invites an exploration from the conceptual perspective of intersonic clusters.

The mission of the American Forces Network in Germany was to set up studios in Berlin, Bremerhaven, Kaiserslautern, Frankfurt, Munich, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, and Würzburg, in order to entertain American soldiers and their families.

After 1946, the AFN program consisted of daily broadcasts from five in the morning to one o'clock at night. Turning to so-called V-discs, Victory Discs, imported directly from U.S. radio stations, moderators presented - imitating (stereo)typical American-style radio voices - popular music, blues, country, and jazz,
and later also rock and soul to the American forces. When American stars played shows in Germany, AFN often recorded and broadcast the shows. With the song *Bouncin' in Bavaria* as the signature tune for the AFN Munich radio show of the same name, the sound signature of one of the influential tunes, which connected young German audiences to jazz in the 1950s, was indeed a Dutch composition. A photo from December 1948 shows The Ramblers orchestra in front of the AFN studio in Kaulbachstrasse in Munich, where they performed live on the air (see left).

The show *Bouncin' in Bavaria* was broadcast daily from 17:05 to 17:50 from 1953 to '56. Thus, by the time AFN first used the song as an opener, it was already seven years old. Since AFN was established in order to create a special emotional link between American soldiers, who found themselves far away from home in a different social and cultural environment, it is surprising that a Dutch composition could provide the illusion of 'feeling American.' The song was so popular that listeners protested when the programmers removed the show. It would not take long and *Bouncin' in Bavaria* returned to AFN (Bulterman 121).

After 1953, the number of letters which AFN received from German listeners surpassed the number of American audiences (Schäfer 311). Thus, it can be assumed that the signature song was also particularly popular among Germans. This phenomenon needs explaining in the context of the appeal of jazz after the end of World War II and the function of AFN radio in Western Germany.

Why did *Bouncin' in Bavaria* become such a success on AFN Munich? From the end of World War II until early January in the following year, The Ramblers toured Belgium, particularly Brussels and Antwerp. Here, they played for the American forces. Many GIs recognized the orchestra as an excellent U.S. Army band. The Ramblers recorded a stunning number of 50 records "by permission of the American authorities" (Oudejans), as the Decca labels explained. Among the songs was *Bouncin' in Bavaria*. No doubt, Bulterman had chosen the song to please his American audience and meet its expectation of a sweeping swing number. The number picks up where the most famous swing song of World War II ends: Glenn Miller's *In The Mood* culminates in a fanfare finale in which the horn section moves towards a chromatically rising musical exclamation mark on the tonic base chord of Ab major (ex. 1).

After a three-bar musical exclamation mark in F minor in mid-tempo, *Bouncin' in Bavaria* starts with a chromatically rising five-note motif rhythmically enhanced via the snare drum and thus sets the tone for the swing number (ex. 2 - see next page).

![Ex. 1: Last page of The Ramblers' arrangement for Glenn Miller's *In The Mood* with fanfare at the end. Courtesy of Ramblers member Bert Paige](image-url)
This introduction is repeated throughout the number to separate two different syncopated melodic lines. The second motif is clearly inspired by a Bavarian folk tune and is followed by a third melody played by saxophones.

With this song Bulterman plays a musical joke on Bavarian folk music and the arrival of American troops. What in the United States was known as ‘ragging the classics’ in the 1910s, Bulterman applies to Southern German folk dances within the genre of swing. The song also appeared in Germany under the title Swing Im Oberland with a clear reference to the foxtrot genre (ex. 3).

Published by Musikverlag Melodie in Berlin, the joke of the Dutch composers on the American cultural invasion of Southern Germany gets easily lost or is at least veiled in a German cultural environment.

At the turn of the twentieth century, many American composers exploited European music, i.e. opera, as a source for burlesque musical theater. For example, Irving Berlin’s ragtime opera Watch Your Step (1914) infuses operatic classics from Giuseppe Verdi, Georges Bizet, Giacomo Puccini, Charles Gounod, and Ruggiero Leoncavallo with syncopated features of contemporary dance music (Magee 53).

The technique of ‘ragging’ offered American composers and the audience of burlesque musical theater a chance to laugh at the hallowed European art of opera. Likewise, Bulterman takes the second melodic movement of a typical Plattler dance such as the Auerhahn Plattler, and adds syncopations to make the melody swing, or, as the title suggests, bounce (exs. 4 and 5). He transforms the original 3/4 rhythm into a syncopated 4/4 meter. Starting with a descending four-note pattern, he follows closely the melodic progression of the Plattler, assigning the original accordion sounds to a horn section consisting of trumpet, trombone, and saxophone. The term ‘bouncing’ or ‘bounce’ was a popular reference to
upbeat jazz numbers, which became a staple of the bebop style of Charlie Parker. 'Bouncin'" stands for a lively jazz tempo. According to the Oxford English Dictionary "more bounce to the ounce" was a popular phrase at the time.

As a general verb, 'bounce' means "to rebound from an impact," which again has apt associative overtones with the function of music for war-weary citizens in European cities ("Bounce"). In 1945, Billie's Bounce (dedicated to Billy Shaw by the Yardbird) by Charlie Parker's Re-Boppers was a hit tune, which entered the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2002. In the summer of 1946, the same year that Bulterman composed Bouncin' In Bavaria, the New York jazz pianist Earl Rudolph 'Bud' Powell composed Bouncin'With Bud, which quickly became a jazz standard. A few years earlier, Fats Waller commented musically on the V-disc practice of AFN with his number Bouncin' On A V-Disc. These government-sponsored twelve-inch Victory Discs were exported to U.S. overseas radio stations to entertain the troops starting in the year the American Forces Network went on the air in Europe in 1943.

The fact that the 1946 song, composed in honor of the American liberators and as a token of the Dutch admiration for American jazz as a sounding-singer for a newly-won sense of freedom, could become the signature tune for an AFN Munich broadcast on jazz, shows a certain indifference on the side of the programmers regarding the national dimension of musical compositions. AFN transnationalizes the song by suggesting that the Dutch take on German folk music could easily be presented as an American musical joke. It is also in line with the observation that, e.g., German big bands were often lagging behind regarding cutting-edge musical developments in the United States. However, the American occupation forces were in favor of hearing European adaptations of American swing in the vein of Glenn Miller's orchestra. The performances and recordings of the Dutch Ramblers in Munich document the enthusiasm of Gis for the orchestra. Yet it is most likely that the majority of listeners was not aware of the national origins.

With the title Swing Im Oberland, the Germanification further blurred the Dutch background and the musical joke.

**Works Cited**


Nieuwsblad van het Noorden. 6 Mar. 2016.


**Sheet Music**


---. Ach, Fraulein Gretchen! Leipzig: Musikverlag City, Hans Sirkoski, 1940. Print

---. Bouncin’ in Bavaria. Brussels: Bens, 1948. Print

---. Bag, Schatteboutje! Amsterdam: Metro Music, 1940. Print

---. Swing in Oberland (Bouncin’ in Bavaria). Berlin: Musikverlag Melodie, n.d. Print


---.