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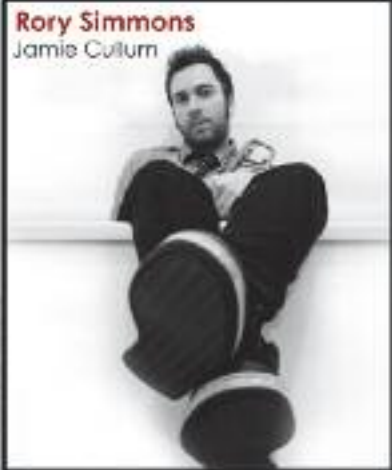


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## MELODY GARDOT

THE INTERNATIONAL SINGING STAR'S NEW ALBUM FOR DECCA, *CURRENCY OF MAN*, IS DUE OUT IN JUNE. *JAZZ RAG 137* WILL INCLUDE A FULL FEATURE ON MELODY. IN THIS ISSUE LOOK FOR A CD COMPETITION (PAGE 16) AND REVIEW (PAGE 27).

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## UPFRONT

As jazz moves decisively into its second century, we seem increasingly aware of anniversaries, of the value of commemorating births, deaths and events. Certainly a sense of historical perspective comes with the passing of the years. For instance, it would be good to study the effects of the landmark event celebrating its 60th anniversary this year: the agreement between the MU and the AFM to allow musician/band exchanges between here and the States.

For now let's turn our attention to two anniversaries of births: Billie Holiday would have been 100 this year, Tubby Hayes 80. Each of the anniversaries has produced a burst of creativity – justification in itself for what some may term an unduly retrospective approach to jazz. Both are the subjects of major new books: *Billie Holiday: the Musician and the Myth* by John Szwed (Heinemann) and *The Long Shadow of the Little Giant* by Simon Spillett (Equinox). Both will be reviewed in *Jazz Rag 137* and, on pages 14-15 of this issue, Simon discusses the book and some of the other ways Tubby's 80th is being commemorated. Billie's 100th is also giving rise to any number of tributes and on page 16 we examine probably the most comprehensive, a whole weekend of *Holiday in Birmingham* as part of that city's jazz festival in July.

## WATERMILL JAZZ

At the Friends Life Social Club, in Dorking, a fine programme of Thursday evening jazz continues with the Tony Kinsey Quartet (April 23) and the Steve Fishwick Sextet, including Alex Garnett and Steve's twin brother Matt (30). May kicks off with Barb Jungr (7) before a special 50th anniversary celebration of *Under Milk Wood* with Clark Tracey, Bobby Wellins and narration by Ben Tracey, Stan's grandson (14) and performances by the Steve Waterman Big Band (21) and Partikel's String Theory (28). So far announced for June are Amina Figarova's New York Sextet (4), the Asaf Sirkis Quartet featuring Gareth Lockrane (11) and the Basil Hodge Quintet paying homage to Horace Silver on the 1st anniversary of his death (18). The next Watermill Jam Session in association with Glenn Weston takes place free of charge on the afternoon of May 3.

Tel.: 07415 815784

www.watermilljazz.co.uk

## DIGBY AT BUDE

Digby Fairweather is the specially featured artist at this year's Bude Jazz Festival (September 1-4),

with the whole line-up full of interest. Jeff Barnhart appears in several guises and a totally random sample of the fine musicians on offer comes up with Amy Roberts, Kevin Grenfell's Jazz Giants, the Pedigree Jazz Band, the Remi Harris Trio with John Hallam, the Savannah Jazz Band, Roger Marks' Cornish Armada Jazz Band and - with a commendation for the most ingenious name - Men Behaving Tradly.

www.jazzfestivalbude.co.uk

## NEW ENLARGED UPTON FESTIVAL

This year's Upton-upon-Severn Jazz Festival (June 25-28) boasts various improvements including two Thursday evening sessions for early arrivals. The bill is, as always, packed with familiar names, most, but not all, of the traditional persuasion. European bands appearing this year are the Stockholm Stompers and Norway's Statoil Big Band, plus the multi-national Buck Clayton Legacy Band. A sample of the British bands produces Ben Holder's Gypsy Fire, Keith Nichols Hot Six, Kevin Grenfell's Jazz Giants, the Original Rabbit



Ben Cummings

Foot Spasm Band, the Savannah Jazz Band and T.J. Johnson and his Band. Among other musicians at Upton are Matthias Seuffert, Alan Barnes, John Hallam, Trevor Whiting, Spats Langham and - with a tribute to Chet Baker and Gerry Mulligan - Ben Cummings. Tel.: 01684 593254

www.uptonjazz.co.uk

## RAY DAVIES AT BRECON

One of the country's most celebrated songwriters Ray Davies brings his band to Brecon Jazz Festival (August 7-9). Also headlining is Dr. John who interprets Louis Armstrong in *The Spirit of Satch*. The Kenny Barron/Dave Holland Duo, the Robert Glasper Trio, Phronesis

and GoGo Penguin are among many other top bands at the festival.

www.breconjazz.com

## JAZZ WEEKENDS WITH THE LAWRENCES

June and July are busy months for Denise and Tony Lawrence and their Jazz Weekends, typically two- or three-nighters in good hotels in attractive and interesting surroundings with plenty of time for leisure between the jazz sessions. The Cliffside Hotel, Bournemouth, hosts three evenings of jazz from

June 5 with Colin Bryant's Hot Rhythm Orchestra, Gerry Brown's Mission Hall Jazz Band and the Denise Lawrence Band with Ron Drake. The Summer Jazz Weekend at Langstone Cliff Hotel, Dawlish Warren (July 3-5) is one night fewer, but with extra lunch-time sessions and one more band: Denise's West Country Jazz and Ron Drake are joined by Dave Martin's Jabbo Five, the Steve Tucker All Star Jazz Band and Terry Williams' Ambassadors of Jazz. The Mercure Whately Hall Hotel (July 17-20) features Matt Palmer's Millennium Eagle Jazz Band and

Dave Stradwick's Sussex Jazz Kings alongside the Lawrence Band. www.cliffsidebournemouth.co.uk www.langstone-hotel.co.uk www.mercurehotelsdeals.com/jazzbreaks

## KING PLEASURE AT FESTIVALS

King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys have embarked on their usual run of highly varied festivals, with the next one up the Breda Jazz Festival in the Netherlands (May 14-15). Following on from that are the Solihull Jazz Festival (May 24), KirkFest in Kirkclevington, North

Yorkshire (June 6), Beverley Folk Festival (21), Ascona Jazz Festival in Switzerland (July 3-5) and Silda Jazz Festival, Norway (August 6-9). Also in Norway the band plays Havly Pensjonat and Cafe in Bremanger on July 12-13. Other UK dates include Forest Arts Centre (April 25), Beacon Park, Lichfield (May 23), Playhouse 2, Oldham (29), Clair Hall, Haywards Heath (June 5), the Carding Shed, Hepworth (13) and Evesham Arts Centre (26). Tel.: 0121 454 7020 www.kingpleasureandthebiscuitboys.com

## HOT OFF THE PRESS

Always a pleasure to read Dick Laurie's *Hot News*, now up to issue number 55. Entertaining and wise in equal measure, it ranges from Dick's experiences as a jobbing gardener to his extended tribute to the Jazz Repertory Company. Ian Smith and Ralph Laing contribute detailed reviews of Alan Barnes' *A Christmas Carol* and Upbeat's *Young Satchmo* CD respectively. There are plenty of funnies, though banjos get off lightly. Most appealing, though, is the quantity of material assembled under the title *The Bald Eagle Has Flown!*, tributes to the late Rex Bennett and entertaining images of a long and varied life.

An equal delight - especially in those issues where English prevails over Dutch in some articles - is *Doctor Jazz Magazine*, in its 53rd year and on DJM 228. What is most impressive about DJM is the almost obsessive digging out of the often obscure past coupled with total open-mindedness. Here Aldert Toornstra investigates Will Marion Cook's Southern Syncopated Orchestra, to be followed by a feature on Buddy DeFranco. An image of Frank Sinatra shares the cover with the listing of features on the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and Dutch jazz history. And it's nice to find a tribute to Acker Bilk.

Hot News: email alasdick@waitrose.com  
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## FOR THE BENEFIT OF WAKEFIELD JAZZ

May 8 sees a special benefit gig at Wakefield Jazz to boost club funds. Liane Carroll is joined by Loose Tubes saxophonist Julian Nicholas and break-through Manchester quintet Jam Experiment, featuring BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year Alexander Bone. Also on Wakefield's Friday evening programme are the Wakefield Youth Jazz Orchestra (April 24), the Gascoyne/O'Higgins Quartet (May 1), the Perico Samba/Arnie Somogyi Quartet (15), the Simon Spillett Quartet (22), Nikki Iles' 50th Birthday tour - the Printmakers including Norma Winstone (29) and Snake Davis' New Band (June 5).  
Tel.: 01977 680542  
www.wakefieldjazz.org

## SCARBOROUGH IN THE SWIM

Despite Director Mike Gordon's insistence that 'the morning swim awaits you,' Scarborough Jazz Festival (September 25-27) promises to be as enjoyable an experience as ever. The three days in the elegant Spa Complex

are compered as usual by Alan Barnes who also appears as half of the Dave Newton/Alan Barnes Duo and as co-leader of the Kofi Barnes Aggregation. Also on the bill, along with many others, are Barry Green's New York Trio, Gareth Lockrane's Grooveyard Unplugged, Ian Shaw with Guy Barker, the Jam Experiment, the Darius Brubeck Quartet and the 26-piece Engines Orchestra led by Phil Meadows.  
Tel. 01723 821888  
www.jazz.scarboroughspa.co.uk

## SOLIHULL JAZZ FESTIVAL

Solihull Jazz Festival takes over the town centre during the days of May 23 and 24, with two stages in Mell Square and the Map Room of the Touchwood Centre always in the action from 11.00 to early evening. Acts appearing on one or both of the stages include King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys, Tipitina, Harpers Ferry, Remi Harris, Ricky Cool & the In Crowd and the Broombusters. Workshops in a gazebo on the High Street are being taken by Yolanda Brown, Bostin' Brass (who also head Saturday's parade) and Tipitina,

plus an intriguing Ukulele Workshop. There is a single evening concert each night: Ricky Duo and the In Crowd (Missoula - Saturday) and Harpers Ferry (the Assembly Rooms - Sunday).  
Tel.: 0121 285 1370  
www.solihullbid.co.uk

## CONCORDE SESSIONS

The Concorde Club in Eastleigh hosts the reunited Pizza Express All Stars on April 22, with original members Dave Shepherd, Digby Fairweather, Roy Williams and Len Skeat joined by Martin Litton and Stan Bourke. The following week the Wednesday Jazz Night sees the appearance of the Ken Peplowski/Rossano Sportiello Quartet (29). The May programme begins with French clarinettist Aurelie Tropez joined by an outstanding British band with Enrico Tomasso, John Pearce, Dave Green and Steve Brown (6), followed by the Big Screen Show (Dave Newton, Tom Farmer, Matt Skelton - 13) and *Swinging at the Cotton Club*, with Harry Strutter's Hot Rhythm Orchestra and the Jiving Lindy Hoppers (20). There is no jazz on May 27, but Clare Teal is scheduled for June 3.

There's plenty of jazz-related music on Friday evenings, too: Kyle Eastwood (May 1), Georgie Fame (8) and Shakatak (15). And every Sunday except May 24 the Concorde offers traditional jazz for dancing with such bands as the Pedigree Jazz Band with Roger Marks (May 3) and Chris Pearce and Andy Leggett's The Sopranos (May 31).  
Tel.: 023 8061 3989  
www.theconcordeclub.com

## SWANAGE JAZZ LINE-UP

An impressive line-up for the 26th Swanage Jazz Festival (July 10-12) include such names as Keith Nichols' Blue Devils, the Magnificent Seven, Jean Toussaint's Art Blakey Sextet, the Larry Bartley Quartet, the Christian Garrick Quartet, the Georgia Mancio Quartet featuring Dave Newton, Dennis Rollins' Velocity Trio, Renato D'Aiello's Italian Quartet, the Stan Tracey Dynasty Octet, Phil Robson's Organ Trio and many others.  
Tel.: 01929 422215  
www.swanagejazz.org.uk

## JAZZ IN NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Jazz & Blues Festival (May 22-25) begins with a single concert at Newcastle-under-Lyme School on Thursday and ends with a splendid postscript on June 1, a concert in the New Vic Theatre with Claire Martin, Ray Gelato and the Dave Newton Trio. For the three days of the Bank Holiday weekend jazz, blues, funk and rhythm and blues take over the town centre bars, pubs and restaurants, featuring the likes of Roy Forbes, the Alex McKown Band, Tipitina, the Whisky Brothers, the Rumblestrutters, Elvis Fontenot and the Sugar Bees, Harpers Ferry, Little Jo and the Misfits, the Jake Leg Jug Band, Ricky Cool and the In Crowd and the Old Fashioned Love Band.  
www.newcastlejazzandblues.co.uk

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Graham Brook's Tuesday Jazz and Swing at Wilmslow Conservative Club features the Brownfield/Byrne Hot Six (April 21) and Dave Newton with special guest Rosie Harrison (28). May bookings include Jo and Jim Burke (5) and Lee Gibson (12), both with Dave Browning on trumpet. Later in the month Zoe Kyoti and Suzanne Fonseca (19) and Shades of Shearing (26) make their appearance. The Masked Jazzman (on reeds) brings a touch of mystery to June 2, followed by Gilad Atzmon (9), John Patrick (16) and John Hallam (23/also July 21 and August 18). Dave Browning also features with the Sinatra Swingers in their first Thursday of the month dates at Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club, with now a guest singer each month: Rosie Harrison (May 7/also September 3), Marilyn Royle (June 4) and Debbie Wilson (July 2).  
Tel.: 01625 528336

The Big Chris Barber Band can be heard at the Regent Centre, Christchurch (May 29), Wiltshire Music Centre, Bradford-on-Avon (June 20) and Llandudno Jazz Festival (July 24-26).

An international line-up of over 30 musicians has already been assembled for the 2015 Mike Durham Jazz Party, aka the

Whitley Bay Jazz Festival, at the Village Hotel on November 6-8. The American contingent includes Duke Heitger, Andy Schumm and David Boeddinghaus, there is a particularly strong Northern European squad (Bent Persson, Matthias Seuffert, Frans Sjoström, Lars Frank and many more), Michael McQuaid represents Australia and Enrico Tomasso, Spats Langham and Keith Ingham are a tiny sample of the home-grown musicians.  
www.whitleybayjazzfest.org

Next dates on the tour of *Lady Sings the Blues* to commemorate Billie Holiday's centenary see Val Wiseman and an all-star band at the New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme (April 27). Dates in May are at the Winter Gardens, Ventnor, IOW (3) and the Pavilion Theatre, Gorleston (16).  
Tel.: 0121 454 7020  
www.bigbearmusic.com

The 46th Sevenoaks Summer Festival (June 20-July 5) has a varied programme of the arts, including the Back to Basie Orchestra at the Stag Theatre and Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames at Sevenoaks School.  
www.sevenoaksfestival.org.uk

John Hallam & friends (with Art Themen, Amy Roberts and the Tom Kincaid Trio) is a weekend festival at the Burnside Inn at Bowness-on-Windermere from April 17 to 19. John Hallam is also staging a Swing & Jazz Break at the Rendezvous Hotel, Skipton, on May 24-26, with the Swing Commanders, G.I. Jive, the Remi Harris Trio with John Hallam, the Jamie Brownfield/John Hallam Swingtet and the Savannah Jazz Band.  
www.johnhallamjazz.co.uk

Headliners at the Ribble Valley Jazz Fest (May 1-4), based primarily at the Grand, Clitheroe, are the Alan Skidmore Quintet, Stacey Kent, the Soweto Kinch Trio, the Andy Sheppard Quartet and the Northern Jazz Orchestra with Georgina Jackson.  
Tel.: 01200 421599  
www.rvjazzandblues.co.uk

The Stafford Jazz Society, with Sunday lunch-time concerts at its new venue, the White Eagle Club, hosts New Orleans Heat (April 26 - an extended evening concert), Frog Island Jazz Band

(May 3), Pedigree Jazz Band (10), Matt Palmer's Aces of Rhythm (17), the Original Panama Jazz Band (24) and the Tame Valley Stompers - Terry's Dead Good Boys (31).  
Tel.: 01785 226950  
www.staffordjazz.org

The 24th Jennings Keswick Jazz Festival (May 7-10) features over 90 performances over four days by such big names as Jeff Barnhart, Jim Fryer, Alan Barnes, Enrico Tomasso, John Hallam, Michael McQuaid and Ken Peplowski.  
Tel.: 017687 74411  
www.keswickjazzfestival.co.uk

Headliners at the Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival (July 17-26) are George Benson (26) and the Jools Holland Rhythm & Blues Orchestra, with guests Ruby Turner and Marc Almond (25). The festival will feature over 150 concerts, including celebrations of the centenaries of Frank Sinatra and Willie Dixon and such family-friendly free events as the Mardi Gras (July 18) and the Edinburgh Festival Carnival (19).  
www.edinburghjazzfestival.com

On April 26 (lunch-time) the Pizza Express Jazz Club celebrates two very special anniversaries: singer/conga player Frank Holder's 90th birthday and his 70 years in the music business. Frank, one of the few musicians who played the London jazz scene in the 1940s and 1950s to be still performing, worked with the likes of Leslie 'Jiver' Hutchinson, Joe Harriott, John Dankworth, Ronnie Scott and Duncan Lamont. At the Pizza Express he is joined by Stan Robinson, Geoff Castle, Shane Hill, Val Manix and Les Cirkel.

The Sodbury Jazz & Blues Festival has announced two headline concerts for the Town Hall: the

Pasadena Roof Orchestra (June 5) and the Pee Wee Ellis Assembly (June 6).  
Tel.: 01454 334410  
www.sodburyjazzandblues.com

The Plymouth Jazz Club continues at the Royal British Legion Club, Crownhill, with the JB Jazz & Blues Band (May 3) and Lee Gibson with the Martin Dale Quartet (17). On June 7 John Burgess and Roy Williams team up with the Craig Milverton Trio followed by the Pedigree Jazz Band, led by Chris Walker and Roger Marks (21).  
Tel.: 01752 721179/774343  
www.plymouth-jazz-club.org.uk

This May's Southport Jazz Festival features events all over the town, with the focus particularly on the Atkinson where four concerts cover a huge range of music. The James Morton Quartet features Pee Wee Ellis on May 8 and the following evening sees the Riot Jazz Brass Band in action, a 9-piece playing a mix of funk, soul, hip-hop and jazz. May 10 sees two events at the Atkinson: Jazz in the Afternoon with Digby Fairweather and Craig Milverton, plus afternoon tea, followed by the Joshu Cavanagh-Brierley Group for the closing concert of the festival.  
Tel.: 01704 533333  
www.theatkinson.co.uk

The Scottish National Jazz Orchestra directed by Tommy Smith is joined by the Grammy Award winning vocalist Kurt Elling for a series of concerts under the name *Kurt Elling Swings Sinatra*. After the Sage Gateshead (May 20), the orchestra returns North of the border to Caird Hall, Dundee (21), Music Hall, Aberdeen (22), Usher Hall, Edinburgh (23) and City Halls, Glasgow (24).  
www.snjo.co.uk

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# HOLIDAY IN BIRMINGHAM

**LADY DAY AT 100**

The world-wide appeal of **BILLIE HOLIDAY**, in what would have been her 100th birthday year, is shown in a remarkable tribute to the singer at the 31st Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival involving performers from France, Lithuania, Italy and the Czech Republic as well as the UK.

Sarah Lenka



Sarah Lenka is highly regarded as one of the top singers on the Paris scene, constantly busy in the capital as well as opening on big tours for the likes of Taj Mahal. In 2007 she won the SACEM Award - a sort of French Grammy - in the New Voice category and her very Gallic approach is to sing of 'extreme aspects of love seasoned with a sense of humour, but also mystery and sweetness.'

But Sarah's material is not typical French chansons. Many of her songs come from the repertoire of Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday. This is why she was so delighted to join the Birmingham festival's *Holiday in Birmingham* weekend (July 10-12). Though she studied in London and lived there for five years, her only gig in this country so far came as backing singer in a folk band in those student days. Accompanied by top British musicians on her UK festival debut, she will sing a Billie Holiday programme under the title *A Flag for Lady Day* on the Friday at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts and the Penta Hotel. And so on for further performances over the weekend.

Sarah's involvement with jazz and with Billie Holiday in particular

WINNERS: DIGBY FAIRWEATHER COMPETITION JAZZ RAG 135 MRS. HAZEL P. TAMKIN of Newton Abbot, Devon, and PETER MORTON of Oadby, Leicester.

owes a great deal to chance, but also shows the impact that Billie's music can have. Originally she was into folk, pop and trip hop, but then in London she met an American double-bassist:

'He asked me to come and play some jazz songs with him, but I didn't know any! So I looked at my room-mate's jazz CDs and found one of an unknown singer, but I loved the song *Don't Explain*. When I sang it, the bassist told me I had a similarity to Billie Holiday, but I had never heard of her and didn't dare to say so. So, when I came home, I discovered more of her music. At first I didn't like it, but, as I sang more, I just felt close to all those songs, all this truth she can sing, all those feelings that can only be expressed through music! For me Billie can sing silence and that is what made me feel so close to her music - to sing with only what you have in you, those things that make you who you are!'

*Holiday in Birmingham* will take on many different aspects. Several of the artists appearing at the festival will include spots of 20 or 30 minutes within their sets commemorating the work of Billie Holiday. Those who have already been signed up (and more will follow) include Lithuanian swing band the Schwings, featuring award-winning singer Laura Budreckyte, festival favourites Les Zauto

Stompers from France, Pepper and the Jellies from Italy, one of the sensations of last year's festival, and the always-popular Czech reedman Jerry Senfluk.

The intention is to make the whole weekend a tribute to the singer who many regard as the greatest in jazz history - and the performances by a host of present-day jazzers are only a part of it. Question and answer sessions, discussions and interviews, plus tributes to the musicians in her great 1930s bands, will be added in time - and already lined up are two film showings: *The Long Night of Lady Day*, a programme of short films, and the Diana Ross film, *Lady Sings the Blues*, at the Mockingbird Theatre on July 11. And, of course, the UK's most successful Billie Holiday musical programme, also *Lady Sings the Blues*, will be there, getting the Holiday weekend off to a flying start at the Library Studio Theatre in Birmingham's acclaimed new Library. Originally staged in Birmingham over a quarter of a century ago, the show still showcases the talents of Val Wiseman, Digby Fairweather, Roy Williams and Len Skeat, now joined by Julian Marc Stringle, Brian Dee and Eric Ford. Setting off on the show's 2015 tour, *Lady Sings the Blues* seems to be as fresh as ever, judging from Lance Little's comments on *Bebop Spoken Here* in a review of the tour's opening date in Durham: 'Whilst few, if any, have equalled the poignancy and emotional content of Billie



Pepper & The Jellies

Photo by Merlin Daleman

*Holiday in Birmingham* should be the highlight of Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival (July 3-12), but there is much more to enjoy. As usual the number of high-quality free concerts is remarkable and some of the venues surprising. A random sample of artists appearing in addition to those involved in *Holiday in Birmingham* emphasises the variety of the festival experience: Art Themen, the strolling musicians from Switzerland Saxitude, Stockholm Stompers, Bruce Adams, Becky Brine, Remi Harris, Alan Barnes, Hot Jazz Alliance, King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys and the Rumblestrutters, plus many more.

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Holiday...Val Wiseman came as close as possible without losing her own identity.'

So July 10-12 in Birmingham should be a weekend with many top singers and performers paying tribute to the great Lady Day - but let's leave the last word to Sarah Lenka:

'I am very excited to come and be part of it, very honoured, impressed to sing with great English musicians! I can't wait to share Billie's music! She is the one who allowed me to start my career, so I just hope I will be able to honour her and the festival!'

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY BILLIE FROM MADELEINE PEYROUX

**LADY DAY AT 100**

The acclaimed singer, songwriter and guitarist from Athens, Georgia reflects on the influence of Billie Holiday.



Photo by Rocky Schenck

I don't think any sound can stop you in your tracks like the sound of Billie Holiday. It's instant immersion, no distractions. When she did it to me, I was a teenage runaway aspiring to be a singer, or just to be somebody. I was struck with her simplicity, her power of suggestion, and a sense that we weren't so different, she and I. Vulnerable and tough, blissful and forlorn, naive and bitter. I dug in deep. Wherever I looked, I found more

and more Billie. Ten volumes on Columbia Records with the small group sessions that would define an era's sound and material. From the late thirties to early forties she recorded every song under the sun with the masters of understatement at her side: Teddy Wilson, Lester Young, Freddie Green, Jo Jones. Each song has an alternate life below the surface, sometimes its best life, in her reading. In 1939 she stood still, bold, and strong, and performed

*Strange Fruit* at every show. She was a force! It unleashed a racist campaign against her that would eventually take her life.

As I grew into singing, I wanted to dig deeper into Billie. I explored her later arrangements with Decca and Verve, and her final masterpiece, *Lady in Satin*. I had to watch out. With her, you could be swept away on a wild ride through the whole of comedy and tragedy. It was a ride

from which, at times, I was afraid I might never return. There is a kind of despair that teens know well, and though I was singing her songs, I faced my own fears and tragedies. My inner demons and their voices overtook hers, and at eighteen I had to stop, to step back and deal with depression. But, as a dark and scary path becomes the path to triumph, I came through and I was given the chance to sing again.

Unbeknownst to me at first, my career would be an *hommage* to Billie Holiday. By career I mean identity, sisterhood, tenacity and strength. In her company I'd found self-worth, kindness and love. This is not a wild ride from which one wants to return. No! It urges us onward! Pioneer, poet, martyr, woman: Happy Birthday Billie! In our ears you are still singing. In our hearts, you live forever.

**MADELEINE PEYROUX**



Photo by Marina Chavez



Photo by Rocky Schenck

## KEEPING LOUIS ALIVE

**RICKY RICCARDI** is Archivist at the Louis Armstrong House Museum in Queens, New York. On a visit to Bristol International Jazz & Blues Festival to give a presentation on Armstrong, he talked to **RON SIMPSON** about his work – and his hero.



Ricky Riccardi has his dream job, one for which he travels for 2 ½ hours from his New Jersey home four days a week and one that he never tires of enthusing about:

'The Louis Armstrong House Museum contains the world's largest archive for a single jazz musician. It started off as just Louis Armstrong stuff. When he died, his wife never touched

anything, never threw anything out, and, when she died in 1983, everything went to Queens College. The archive opened in 1994. In Armstrong's house there were five trumpets, 15 mouth-pieces, 750 reel-to-reel tapes containing private conversations, practising, fighting with his wife, telling dirty jokes, 85 scrap books, 270 big band arrangements, his book

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JULY 26 Usedom Jazz Festival 8pm [www.usedomjazzfestival.de](http://www.usedomjazzfestival.de)  
JULY 29 Barford The Orchard 7.30pm [www.orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://www.orchardtheatre.co.uk)  
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collection, his record collection, awards, paintings, autobiographical manuscripts, letters he wrote, letters fans wrote to him, personal papers – it's a monumental collection! And since 1994 we have continued to acquire – we have eight separate collections there now!

Part of Ricky's job is to arrange and catalogue a constant stream of acquisitions and donations as well as helping researchers using the archive, producing a newsletter, curating exhibitions in the House itself, going round the world talking about Louis Armstrong – as he says, 'every day is different.' The main focus of the operation is, of course, the House, some 10 minutes drive from the Archive:

'The House is Louis Armstrong's house as he lived in it for the last 28 years of his life and everything in it is 100% original: the ash-trays, the lamp-shades, the cigarette-lighters, everything you see is his! People who take the tour always say they feel like Louis maybe just went out for lunch for an hour. We have excerpts from his private tapes and they play in certain rooms – maybe you'll hear him in his den talking about music and practising his trumpet – people get a chill by the end of the tour!'

The basement houses an exhibition area, with a trumpet given to Louis by King George V in 1932 on permanent display, and different themed exhibitions that Ricky curates on a rotating basis, but an exciting new development will get under way as soon as this winter's freakishly severe weather permits:

'We get multiple school groups come in almost every day – young kids, middle school kids, high school kids, college kids, they all come to learn about Louis Armstrong – and our visitation has increased to the point where we've raised 20 million dollars to construct an education centre. In about two years there'll be a huge state-of-the-art facility right

across the street from the house. Everything that I work with at the Archive will be packed up and move to one location.'

Ricky's job can hardly be considered part of a conventional career path, but it's the sort of thing he has always seen himself fitted for. When I ask, tongue in cheek, if he went to the careers officer at school and said, 'I want to be the archivist for Louis Armstrong,' Ricky laughs and says, 'In my mind I did!' He tells the story of his obsession with Armstrong:

'I first heard Louis Armstrong's music in 1995. When I saw *The Glenn Miller Story*, it changed my life. I started reading everything, learning everything, absorbing everything, about him. From the beginning I had this crazy idea I wanted to write a book on the last 25 years of Armstrong's life. Every book that came out just zoomed through those years as if they weren't important. I thought they were tremendously important. I always kept that at the back of my mind. I went to Rutgers University and got a degree in Journalism, then a master's degree in Jazz History and Research. I studied with the jazz historians at Rutgers such as Dan Morgenstern and wrote a 350-page master's thesis on Armstrong's later years. Soon after graduation in 2005 I started going to the Armstrong Archive just to do research. I also set up an Armstrong on-line blog, so I was beginning to get a bit of a reputation as an Armstrong expert.'

It was this reputation – and the fact that he knew so much about the Archive and the people there – that stood him in good stead when the post of Archivist was advertised in 2009. Though he had never been to Library School, he applied:

'They called me up for a phone interview and the first questions were all Louis Armstrong questions – and I'm thinking, this is easy. Then the second half was



all library questions – "What are the pitfalls of retrospective conversion?" – and so I'm mumbling, I don't know what I'm saying! But they called me in for interview and showed me the collection. They showed me a photograph and, as soon as I looked at it, I said, "That's the All Stars at a Mercury recording session in 1964!" They said, "How did you know that?" and by the end of that day they offered me the job. Give them credit – they could have hired a real library professional, but they figured it was easier to hire an Armstrong expert and teach him how to become an archivist rather than hire an archivist and teach him about Louis Armstrong.'

Five and a half years later Ricky reckons he has 'got his archiving chops together!' By fortunate coincidence, though his book on Armstrong, *What a Wonderful World\**, developed from his master's thesis, was completed shortly before he took up his post at the Archive, the publisher delayed bringing it out for a year. The result was that Ricky was able to incorporate material from Armstrong's tapes and other items in the Archive.

So there he is, in his dream job, but how did this obsession (Ricky doesn't dispute the word) begin? What is special about Louis Armstrong? We go back to *The*

*Glenn Miller Story*. The teenaged Riccardi watched it initially because he liked old movies and James Stewart. Before that he'd had the occasional stirring of interest in jazz. He liked Woody Allen films and that had introduced him to the music of Benny Goodman and The Preservation Hall Jazz Band; he found his father's Louis Prima records fun; but Armstrong somehow was a synthesis of all these things he liked. In *The Glenn Miller Story* Louis only has one song, but that was enough to fire the teenager who fortunately had helpful parents:



'My mother took me to a library in New Jersey and there was a whole wall of compilations – I had no idea where to begin. I found one called *Sixteen Most Requested Songs*. It was produced by George Avakian and it's all Armstrong 1950s recordings. One track after another knocked me out and Track 14 was the 9-minute version of *St. Louis Blues* from *Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy*. When Trummy Young plays trombone, then Louis takes over, I just felt something shift in my brain. I had never been so moved by music before. That was when I started checking out the books. The first books I checked out – James Lincoln Collier, Gunther Schuller – were taking the typical line of, "Never has there been a genius who so failed his own talent. He had to scratch out a living as a good-natured buffoon." And I thought, "Wait a minute! I kinda like this music." In 1997 a book came out by Laurence Bergreen, *Louis Armstrong: An Extravagant Life*, and Bergreen spent 424 pages on Louis's life up to 1943 and 70 pages on the last 28 years of his life. I'm 17 years old and reading this book and I'm saying, "Why is he going so quick?" and I had the thought, "Has anyone written a book just focussing on the later years? That would be a great book!"

And it is. Incidentally Ricky is not naturally inclined to dismiss other writers' books. This neglect of the later years was (still is?) a genuine problem in appreciating Armstrong's work and Ricky is

full of praise for such excellent writers as Gary Giddens and, particularly, Terry Teachout who, he reckons, was the first to pay real attention to the All Stars years and thus opened the door for Ricky himself.

As he talks unstoppably about Louis Armstrong, it's clear that Ricky Riccardi is an unusual mixture of fan and academic. The music fires and excites him, but then he wants to gather together all the information, set the record straight – and every burst of enthusiasm is accompanied by a date or even the number of the track on an album! But he is not an academic who asks us to seek solemnly for artistic significance as I find when I raise the subject of cultural snobbery:

'I think they put modern standards on Armstrong that he knew nothing about. Jazz in the 1940s – Charlie Parker, Miles Davis – becomes Art with a capital A – no more dancing, come out on stage with a quiet policy in the club or concert hall – this is America's classical music, you hear that phrase all the time. When Louis Armstrong was coming up, jazz was entertainment. His closest friends and biggest influences in vaudeville were comedians – Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson, Bert Williams. All you have to do is listen to his complete output. If you listen to his greatest hits – *Cornet Chop Suey*, *Potato Head Blues*, *West End Blues* – you hear an instrumental genius making



serious art, but, when you listen to *Butter and Egg Man* and *Irish Black Bottom* and *Tight Like This*, you can see that he was also, if not a clown, certainly a gifted entertainer. When I was researching my book, I found a bunch of reviews of him in the 1920s, calling him a comic sensation, talking about his dancing and doing routines in drag.

'Then, when jazz became 'art' in the 1940s, they're looking at Louis Armstrong and saying, "'What happened?'. The first rash decision they make is to say he must be pandering to the audiences for money and applause, but he was the same guy his entire career. There's an interview on one of his tapes where a journalist asks him about clowning and he gets very upset. The first thing he says is that people enjoy it and he says, "In my book the majority rules – if they're going to have a laugh, I'm going to have a laugh with them." But then he says, "Clowning is not such a cute phrase – clowning is when you can't hit a note." In one of his manuscripts he knocked the New Orleans cornetist Freddy Keppard, called him a clown, because he couldn't play any more. In that same 1959 interview Armstrong says, "I might be egotistical to admit this, but I can do things on the horn that nobody else can do." To him the clowning was just his natural effervescence. The most interesting thing was that jazz got less and less popular each year and Armstrong got more and more popular. The jazz world couldn't handle it, looking at him on TV and hearing *Hello Dolly* and watching him sing *La Vie en Rose* and saying, "What happened?"

His career is a kind of a continuum...'

And here Ricky sets about proving the point, demonstrating the continuum of varied popular success with a high-speed list of examples from the 1920s to the 1960s: from Noel Coward's *Poor Little Rich Girl* to *Mack the Knife*. In the persuasive Riccardi view of jazz history, Louis Armstrong carried on doing the same things throughout his career; it was the expectations of the jazz world that changed.

Another misconception that Ricky constantly challenges – and was preparing to challenge in Louis' own words in his presentation to the Bristol festival – is the belief that Armstrong was soft on racism, even an Uncle Tom. Ricky insists that Louis was a major agent for change:

'He's the first African American to have in his contract that he can't play a place unless he can stay there; he's the first to get featured billing in a Hollywood movie with *Pennies from Heaven* in 1936; the first African American to get a sponsored radio show with the Fleischmann's Yeast Show in 1937. When he started the All Stars, he insisted they be integrated. He knew, even if the audiences were segregated, the fact that he and Jack Teagarden could have their arms around each other on something like *Rocking Chair* would get people thinking a bit differently about race. He always said, "Let me do things my own way." As the 1950s go on and African Americans are getting more outspoken, at first he didn't want

any part of that. He knew he was making a difference in his own way. And he was criticised for that: "Oh! He's singing *Sleepy Time Down South*, he's clowning around with Bing Crosby, he's a lost cause!" But, when he spoke out, my goodness! The most famous example is 1957, Little Rock High School, when the nine African American schoolchildren were going to integrate the high school, but the governor of Arkansas, Orville Faubus, sent in the National Guard to prevent the black kids from entering. There were crowds of white people screaming, spitting and shouting – and Armstrong was watching it on TV and got upset. On September 17th Louis unleashed an outburst about "the way they're treating my people", says the government can go to hell and Eisenhower has no guts for letting Faubus run the country, "when I get to Russia, what am I going to tell them?", and so on. He put his career on the line and sure enough Eisenhower sent in the troops a day or two later, though probably not as a direct result. What hurt Armstrong was he got criticism from white commentators which he expected, but also from black commentators, people like Sammy Davis Junior and Adam Clayton Powell who said, "Don't listen to Armstrong. He's only a musician. He's not up on current events." And Armstrong said, "I might not be up on current events, but I'm up on head whupping!" The hardest thing to deal with was musicians. Dizzy Gillespie had called him a plantation character and there were all these whispers about Uncle Tom and Uncle Louis, and none of them spoke out, they all ran. About two years before he died Louis wrote a very bitter manuscript about his race never having stuck together and never stuck by him – and it has taken 44 years after his death for people to understand that he was a Civil Rights pioneer.'

Not surprisingly – and justifiably – Ricky Riccardi finds good in almost everything Louis Armstrong did, though he admits that with some of the songs he was given in his later years, such as *Give Peace a Chance*, you have to dig a bit deeper to find it. A particularly telling phrase he uses about the album, *Louis and the Angels*, a corny concept graced with wonderful singing and trumpet playing, is 'you have to tune everything out and hear what he's doing.' When I suggest I have always had a hard time enjoying *Hello Dolly*, Ricky laughs understandingly, but is quick to point out, 'It's a great trumpet solo, though. I was with Jon Faddis one time and *Hello Dolly* came on and he shushed everybody in the room and sang along with every note. When Armstrong had finished, he said, "I dare you to play a better trumpet solo on those chord changes." And they all nodded their heads.'

But, if there's good everywhere in Louis Armstrong, it's not all on a level, so inevitably I want to know which version of the All Stars Ricky rates most highly:

'I think the 1950s. When Trummy Young and Billy Kyle joined the band, it really came to life. In the 1940s Barney Bigard was brilliant on clarinet, but – he admitted himself – by the mid-50s he was tired, just going through the motions. So, when he was replaced by Edmond Hall, the band caught fire. Everything they did from 1955 to 1958 I would hold up against anything Armstrong ever did. I did a 9 CD Mosaic box set that came out last year with a special focus on that group and, if that doesn't convert you, nothing will. That band, with

When I ask him about *Sleepy Time Down South* and lyrics that seem to perpetuate a pernicious myth about happy days on the plantation, Ricky doesn't hesitate:

'I love it. Armstrong was completely unapologetic about that song. The original lyrics are not politically correct – they mention darkies twice – but later

he changed that. Armstrong was proud that this song was written by black writers about black people. Some people thought he was forced to do it to appease the white man, but he gave interviews where he said he understood the life of that song, everything was his life in the South. Tomorrow at the festival I'm going to be showing footage of the last TV appearance of Louis Armstrong. He does *Sleepy Time*. He looks like he's dying, but the love that comes through for that song breaks me down every time.'

Trummy pushing Armstrong and Barrett Deems playing rock'n'roll on the drums, was irresistible. That band was so exciting that it crossed over into more than just a jazz band. It was such a mix of music that you couldn't say this is a Dixieland band or a swing band or whatever. That's how he wanted it – Armstrong hated categories. Because of that it frustrated critics who always like to put a name on something.

'My other favourite edition is the very first edition, with Jack Teagarden, Barney Bigard, Big Sid Catlett, Arvell Shaw and Dick Cary on piano. Earl Hines was a genius, but I'm not a huge fan of his tenure in the All Stars. He and Armstrong were at odds at times because Hines didn't want to be a sideman and you can hear on some recordings he's not really listening. There's one version of *Dear Old Southland* where Hines is tripping Armstrong up, playing too much, not really listening. At the Symphony Hall and Town Hall concerts – and a previously unreleased Carnegie Hall concert – the playing is rich and breathtaking – and Big Sid Catlett is my favourite drummer and Armstrong's favourite drummer. I was proud I could produce the complete *Satchmo* at *Symphony Hall* release that came out in 2012 and that's another concert that can stand next to anything that Armstrong ever did.

'The difference between the 1948 and 1956 bands lies in the excitement level. Armstrong and Teagarden were a great team, but Teagarden was never a great ensemble player. He was kinda quiet and Barney Bigard played well, but his features were all noodling around. God bless Big Sid Catlett, but he leaves in 1949 and Cozy Cole was kinda dry. Arvell Shaw could always swing, of course. That was a band of many egos. Earl Hines and Jack Teagarden were leaders and in a sense were always looking to get back on the own. In the mid-50s band they were all there for Louis and they gave him 100% support.'

One charge that was frequently made against the All Stars is the predictability of the programming: as soon as *Sleepy Time* was over, *Indiana* came roaring over the horizon and we were on a familiar, even

unchanging, journey. Not true, says Ricky – well, perhaps partly true, but for good reason. Typically, he quotes chapter and verse:

'I spent years analysing this and I never found two shows with the same sets in. There were patterns, of course, but look at a two-set concert and see what's not there. When we did the *Mosaics*, I was shocked to find that in the entire 9 CD set – over 11 hours of music – there were no versions of *Kiss to Build a Dream On*, only one version of *Blueberry Hill*, and they're two songs you'd think would be there every night. He had a deep deep repertoire he could draw on. But, of course, Dan Morgenstern made a great point when he said this band was on the road 300 nights a year travelling to a different city every night – they'd get to town at 6, maybe have dinner, play from 8 to 11, Louis signs autographs all night, they sleep, get on the bus, travel to the next city. You don't have time to really rehearse and Armstrong never wanted a jam session – he was always very leery of special guests sitting in – so it was very much like a Broadway show and everyone knew their part. So it helped the band that they could walk off the bus and do a show that they knew worked.

'Armstrong was also blamed for playing the same solos every night – and again that's not completely true. If people think he always plays the same solos, I ask them to sing along: he's always varying it a little bit. But people again are pushing modern perspectives on his music. Armstrong came up in a generation that, when you'd mastered your solo, that was it: King Oliver had his *Dippermouth Blues* solo....' (Ricky launches it a whole catalogue of famed jazz solos!) 'They knew it was a different audience every night, no one's out there recording the gig. Why would you play a spectacular solo and then say, "That was great. Now I'm going to scrap it!" Armstrong used to compare himself to Paul Robeson and Marian Anderson. Paul Robeson did *Ol' Man River* the same way for 40 years and every night the house would come down – standing ovations. And Marian Anderson the same – with spirituals and classical music

– and he would put himself in their class.'

A fascinating glimpse into Armstrong's methods of building a solo can be found in a 10,000 word blog that Ricky wrote analysing every version he could find of Armstrong playing *Indiana*:

'For the first five years every solo is completely different. Then the last eight bars are the same, then the last 16 bars are the same. Then the first four bars are the same, but not the next four bars. And after five years he had his solo and, once he had it down, he almost never varied it. He was composing on stage every night and what he did became part of the composition. Armstrong felt strongly about that. When Earl Hines joined the band in the 1940s, they continued to play *West End Blues*. There is one surviving version which I think is spectacular, but Armstrong still plays it like it was 1928 – he plays the cadenza, holds the high note, everything you'd expect from *West End Blues*. Hines' solo, though, is fantastic, but completely different. In a 1956 interview for the Voice of America Armstrong said they used to beg Hines, "Why don't

you play the original solo? The whole world knows that solo – it's your best solo ever." But Hines would say it was old-fashioned, corny and out of date and Armstrong could never understand that.'

An hour with Ricky Riccardi is stimulating and oddly frustrating because he knows so much about his favourite subject (which is pretty high up in my list of favourite subjects, too) that so much is still left uncovered. In the end we don't have time to do more than scratch the surface of Louis' great duets, long enough for Ricky to claim he's 'the greatest duet partner of all time' – and why not?

**\*What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong's Later Years by Ricky Riccardi (Pantheon)**

[www.dippermouth.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.dippermouth.blogspot.co.uk)  
[www.louisarmstronghouse.org](http://www.louisarmstronghouse.org)

Photographs of Louis Armstrong chosen by Ricky Riccardi from the Archive's collection. Courtesy of the Louis Armstrong House Museum



# IN THE SHADOW OF TUBBY HAYES

In the last few years tenor saxophonist **SIMON SPILLETT** has been the 'go to man' for information and insight on his great predecessor **TUBBY HAYES**, partly because of his intensive work on Tubby's biography. Now *The Long Shadow of the Little Giant* has just been published by Equinox. **RON SIMPSON** asked the questions.



The Hayes-Spillett connection is pretty much taken for granted these days. Simon's own playing has something of the same unstoppable quality as Tubby's, but also he has proved himself the perfect Hayesophile, whether via reissued CDs, filmed interviews or articles – and now finally a solid chunk of biography, nearly 400 pages long. But there is no direct link between them – Tubby had been dead 18 months when Simon was born – so how did it all start?

'The first time I was aware of him was a *Jazz 625* with his big band which my dad had recorded off the TV and which I saw when I was about 12 or 13. And that was it! Up to that I'd always thought, quite wrongly, that British jazz was a bit toothless. In my teens I started buying his records and trying to find out about him. There wasn't much to buy in those days – one of the reasons I decided to write the book was that he seemed, if not forgotten, at least overlooked. The interesting thing was that, when I went back and looked at my dad's yellowing copies of *Melody Maker* and *Jazz Journal* from the 50s and 60s, Tubby was everywhere – and yet, in some of the jazz encyclopaedias, he wasn't

Photographs of Tubby Hayes from the Simon Spillett Collection

much about someone who died in their 30s?" I sent back a two word reply, "Charlie Parker?" Tubby shared Parker's appetite for life which makes his an interesting story.'

The 'interesting story' can make an interesting book, of course, but it also created problems for Simon. He had no wish to produce a string of gossip column stories, he wanted to concentrate on matters musical, but how can you keep the balance in a serious biography if you shut out whole areas of your subject's private life?

'People come up to me on gigs and say, "I've got a good story for your book" – and it's a story about how Tubby had 12 pints of Worthington and fell over before the gig. I made a conscious decision not to ignore the vices in the book – he wasn't squeaky clean – but the music was my primary concern. His phenomenal technical command of the tenor saxophone is on a par with Coltrane and Rollins, Johnny Griffin and Stan Getz – he's up there with those guys. The second thing that makes him unique is how quickly he was able to synthesise what was going on in modern jazz. He arrives at the age of 15 and he's like Stan Getz and Zoot Sims, the players of the day in the early 50s. Fast forward a bit to the *Jazz Couriers* and he's interested in Hank Mobley and Johnny Griffin and he's interested in hard bop language. In the mid-60s he starts to become interested in John Coltrane and slightly freer things. Towards the end of his life he's experimenting with free improvisation, jazz rock and popular idioms. He's very much a man of his time, but the overall thing, whether he's playing tenor saxophone, flute, vibraphone, arranging, composing, leading a big band, is the integrity and authority and authenticity of his playing. It doesn't make him unique among British musicians, but I think he was streets ahead of most of the others, as we see

even mentioned. Gradually I pieced together his life: 23 year professional career – died when he was 38, turned professional when he was 15 – into which he packed a gargantuan amount of music making and a lot of living as well – an ideal candidate for a book! Very colourful personal life, tragedy, ill health, the jazz vices – not that I wanted to concentrate on those! – I was just astounded that no one had written a book!

Before the interview I would not have been surprised to find *The Long Shadow of the Little Giant* described as 'the first major biography of Tubby Hayes' or some such, but the first book of any sort about him – now that is surprising! Nor was there much immediate demand for it:

'Finding a publisher was, to say the least, difficult – which is why I was so pleased when Equinox took it on board because they are the ideal people. I tried across the pond with a couple of American publishers and one (who shall remain nameless) sent me a very long questionnaire to fill in on why they should consider publishing a book on Tubby Hayes. I told them how big it was, bigger than it is now, and they said, "How can you write so

in winning all those polls and going to America when no one else was doing it.

'If you're going to pick a peak year, it was probably 1961. Tubby never went to the States on any of the band exchanges following the lifting of the MU ban – I don't know why, it's a bit of a mystery – but he was the obvious choice as the first soloist to go. When Ronnie Scott's decided that, in order to keep the wolf from the door, they needed to import soloists rather than bands, Zoot Sims came here, Tubby went to the States. He plays the Half Note for two weeks and on his opening night Miles Davis is in the front row, Al Cohn comes in, Paul Desmond, Cannonball Adderley. All of a sudden he's on the front pages of the daily papers – triumph in the U.S.!

Simon points out the inevitable carping at Tubby's fluency (apparently Ronnie Scott said it all came out as if he was turning on a tap) and the fact that he was, it seemed, everywhere – 'the ubiquitous face of British modern jazz.' As Simon lists off the many media outlets for Tubby, I'm brought up short by his reference to variety shows on radio and television. This I did not remember!

'Yes, when you look through the archives, you find lots of references to him appearing on variety shows, just doing one number with the band. The last thing he recorded for radio, six or seven weeks before he died, was on the Bruce Forsyth show where Bruce plays piano, Tubby plays tenor. He had a very broad appeal. He fits quite neatly into that 1950s and 60s British culture.'

Perhaps even more remarkable from the viewpoint of 2015 is that in 1961 Tubby had his own TV show, *Tubby Hayes Plays*, running for 13 weeks, half an hour each week. Simon points out that it wasn't tucked away in the obscure corners of the



schedules, but early evening Friday, with the Tubby Hayes Quartet and special guests, people like Harold McNair, Ronnie Scott, Vic Ash, Ronnie Ross, Bobby Jaspar – clearly Tubby's choice. And they even gave him a second series!

Not surprisingly, Simon's attention tends to focus on the tenor saxophone, but, when I direct him to Tubby's multi-instrumentalism, the story of Tubby's prodigious talent continues:

'There's the famous vibraphone story. He had been doing a gig with Victor Feldman all week. Victor was late and Tubby starting eyeing up the vibes and thought, "I'll have a go." He did more than have a go. He ended up buying Victor's vibraphone and within six weeks was playing it on gigs. I've heard tapes recorded shortly after that and he's just astounding. Again he bought the flute on spec. He'd gone to a music shop in the West End to buy an alto saxophone for a TV show and he saw a flute and thought, "I'll have a go at that." And he played it on gigs in within three nights.

'And he still casts a long shadow over British jazz. People who worked with him and are still playing today – and those I interviewed for the book who are no longer around – all said he was a catalyst and a big

inspiration. Allan Ganley said, "I did 50 years with John Dankworth off and on and I did two years with Tubby Hayes and I reckon I gave more in two years with Tubby than I did in 50 with John Dankworth." He was a very canny talent scout who spotted people's potential: he spotted Tony Levin, Spike Wells, Terry Shannon, all these players he brought out of the woodwork.'

Simon is an accomplished jazz writer, as readers of *Jazz Rag* will know – articles for various magazines, 70 sets of liner notes, polishing Vic Ash's autobiography – but he had never attempted anything on this scale before. The interviews began in 2004 and, whilst talking to musicians, family members, ex-girl friends, fans and writers, he was also researching Tubby through press clippings and recordings before starting writing in 2008. He sounds totally genuine when he says:

'I must say I've had so much help with this book. It's like everybody wanted me to do it. But it's been a real labour of love. Finding out about Tubby has been a bit like pulling on a ball of wool, you keep pulling, but always there's more and more and more. I started off wanting to have a very revisionist stance. I didn't agree with a lot of what had been written, I didn't agree with the over-sensationalised (and at times completely incorrect) accounts of his death and his problems

with narcotics. As I researched and interviewed, there were no great revelations about his private life, there were no great revelations about his music. The greatest revelation was how tangible he still seemed to everybody I spoke to. This man's been dead for over 40 years, but people still talk about him with passion, he still inspires them. And another striking thing about Tubby is that, whatever he said he wanted to do, he did! An incredibly inspirational character!'

Simon describes his book as 'an old-fashioned traditional biography', but he wanted to escape from the 'And then he played on this record...' format which can be (in Simon's fairly kindly word) 'tiresome'. There is plenty on the musical, cultural and social background, Tubby's life and times. It is not just a saxophonist's book about another saxophonist, 'all mouthpieces and reeds' (though Simon admits there is some of that) and those of us who dread seeing pages covered in musical notation can relax!

However, it would be wrong to underestimate the importance to the book of Simon's being a musician – and, most remarkably, the effect of the book on his own musical career:

'I don't think the book would have been as well researched or as interesting if I hadn't been a musician because it gave me a slant on him that a writer outside the music business might not have had. When I started interviewing people the guys I met – Allan Ganley, Spike Wells, Alan Skidmore, Bobby Wellins – didn't know me as a musician. I had no name as a musician, I was just gigging around locally, but the encouragement those guys gave me when they found I was a player changed everything. I probably wouldn't be playing as I do now if it hadn't been for those people.'

With so much to talk about on *The Long Shadow of the Little Giant* – and Simon even has pertinent things to say on the rigours of compiling an index, so often an inexact science these days – there's hardly time to discuss other celebrations of Tubby's 80th, most of which also involved Simon, but we can't ignore the

film *A Man in a Hurry*, already offering up fascinating snippets on Facebook:

'There have been attempts before to make a documentary on Tubby which ground to a halt because apparently there was a lack of available footage which I think might just have been the Beeb obfuscating because there's plenty of footage that's survived. I was contacted by Lee Cogwell, the producer, and Mark Baxter who's writing it. They interviewed me and I ended up being a talking head in the film, but, I suppose, a sort of consultant as well. I wanted to make sure the script tells the truth – and it does.'

The much anticipated release of *A Man in a Hurry* in the Summer will be the latest event in a Tubby Hayes commemoration that began for Simon with a concert at Ronnie Scott's on the actual birthday in January, his quartet made up of musicians who had worked with Tubby: John Crichtinson, Dave Green and Spike Wells. And stand by for other quartet commemorations, a collaboration with Clark Tracey on Tubby's big band music at Herts Jazz Festival, albums of previously unreleased material, plus any other tributes staged by Tubby's many admirers. As Simon says, in a tone of mild surprise:

'It's quite an exciting time, really!'

[www.simonspillett.com](http://www.simonspillett.com)

COMPETITION – WIN A COPY!

*The Long Shadow of the Little Giant* was released on April 15 and will be reviewed in *Jazz Rag 137*. Thanks to Equinox THREE readers will already have their copies by then!

Answer the following question and send your answer to Tubby Hayes Competition, PO Box 944, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8UT, or email it to [admin@bigbearmusic.com](mailto:admin@bigbearmusic.com), by May 22nd, 2015.

In April 1957 a new quintet debuted at the Flamingo Club. Its members included Tubby Hayes, Terry Shannon, Malcolm Cecil and Bill Eyden. Name the group and add the name of the missing tenor saxist.



# NEW ORLEANS LEGEND

50 years ago MIKE POINTON toured Europe with GEORGE LEWIS. Now he reflects on *The Fabulous George Lewis Band: The Inside Story* by Barry Martyn with Nick Gagliano, published by Louisiana State University Press (paperback, with bonus CD - 978 0807136980 - \$39.95 - also available from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))



Call Him George, by Dorothy Tait (a.k.a. Jay Alison Stuart) in 1961, gave a journalist's perspective of George Lewis, if somewhat romanticised, but this was the first time anyone had the

initiative to document in detail the period when the young Nick Gagliano helped George promote his newly-formed band after Bunk Johnson's death in 1949. Barry Martyn's lifelong love

of George's music enabled him to ask just the right questions to bring out the best in Gagliano's reminiscences and there is clearly a rapport between them when discussing those formative years. We get a unique insight into the way a little-known New Orleans musician unintentionally developed into a world-famous icon for an endangered style of jazz. Although George had led bands pre-war he became recognised as a sideman with Bunk Johnson during the revival and, when the band dissolved in acrimony after their groundbreaking trips to New York, returned to gigging around his home town, initially with a small group at such neighbourhood bars as Manny's Tavern. The young Gagliano, just discharged from the navy, first heard Lewis in 1947 and became a New Orleans correspondent

for *Downbeat*. He booked George's group for his Catholic social club – quite a breakthrough in those days of segregation - and the band was an unexpected success, leading to their friendship.

Eventually Lewis, realising he needed proper management, asked him to be his 'go-between' and handle work for the band. After their disappointment with Bunk they needed a fresh chance. At that time Jim Robinson wasn't a regular but Elmer Talbert was on trumpet and George had recruited Joe Watkins on drums to work alongside Alton Purnell, Lawrence Marrero and Slow Drag to form the classic powerhouse rhythm section that impressed Ken Colyer so much. In 1950 *Look* magazine came to New Orleans to do a feature on the jazz scene and the young jazz

fan/photographer Stanley Kubrick gave the Lewis band at Manny's nationwide coverage. Much of this was due to local enthusiast Bob Greenwood who diverted those in charge from just shooting such obvious tourist attractions as Papa Celestin and Sharkey Bonano. This important period is covered in great detail as is the formation of the New Orleans Jazz Club which expanded its horizons, thanks to Don Perry and Fred Hatfield, from mainly showcasing white jazz.

After residencies at the Mardi Gras Lounge and El Morocco, Gagliano helped launch the Lewis band, by then including Percy Humphrey and Jim Robinson, on the burgeoning college circuit. (He makes a point of repudiating some of the factually inaccurate information in Tom

Bethell's 1978 book on Lewis.). The work the band also did on the west coast helped their reputation immensely although by that time Kid Howard had replaced Percy Humphrey who had a demanding day job.

Los Angeles critic Floyd Levin contributes a fascinating section explaining how singer Monette Moore devised her unforgettable lyric for the vocal version of *Burgundy Street Blues*, recorded in Hollywood in 1953. By the following year Dorothy Tait took over management of the band since Nick had decided to enter law school – he eventually became a respected New Orleans lawyer - and the story winds down except for an intriguing George Lewis' Genealogy section dispelling many myths and one on Recordings & Broadcasts. Apart

from including several unreleased tracks by the band from 1953 there are some interesting dialogues between George, Alton Purnell and others.

Curator of Tulane University's William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive, Bruce Boyd Raeburn sets things off nicely with his perceptive introduction and among the many insightful features are Alton Purnell's song list for the college tours, and an interview with Bill Huntington, nowadays a distinguished bassist, who talks about the tuition he had as a young banjoist from Lawrence Marrero. Unfortunately there is no index but Sam Charters' affectionate Reminiscence of George Lewis from those early days is by itself worth the price of the book and gives a moving view of George's personality that makes one

realise once again, all these years later, what an important event it was for us lovers of New Orleans music to see him with Ken Colyer's Jazzmen at the Stoll Theatre, London, in 1957 and to hear his band on their European tour two years later. Thanks to Barry's bringing George back to Europe to tour as a soloist with his band in 1965 I had the good fortune to meet and work with him. I found him to be a modest, almost shy, man but once he was on stage his personality became felt in a subtle way and his warm Albert system tone seemed to envelop the stage without being strident. Somehow the gentle spirit of the man projected itself to his audiences who were always captivated by his soulful music. I'll certainly never forget him.

## WIN MELODY GARDOT CD!

THREE copies of eagerly anticipated CD, *Currency of Man*, for *Jazz Rag* readers who can answer the following question: Melody Gardot was born in New Jersey, but in which city did she grow up and go to college? Answers to Melody Gardot Competition, P.O. Box 944, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8UT, or email [admin@bigbearmusic.com](mailto:admin@bigbearmusic.com).

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## CLARK TERRY – ONE OF A KIND

by Scott Yanow



Clark Terry had the happiest sound in jazz. His flugelhorn solos were always full of joy and were instantly recognizable within two notes. Terry's lovable personality and sense of humour were always reflected in his music. Onstage he had some routines and tricks that were humorous no matter how many times one saw them. He would sometimes have a 'conversation' between the flugelhorn and a muted trumpet, playing both of their parts and switching quickly between them. He could play the flugelhorn upside down (the horn, not himself). And, starting in 1963 when he recorded *Mumbles* with the Oscar Peterson Trio, he took often-hilarious vocals that were purposely incoherent and unintelligible. They were inspired by him listening to some ancient blues singers and not being able to understand a word that they sang.

Clark Terry's death on February 21, 2015 at the age of 94 not only robbed the world of a colourful character but of a brilliant jazz musician and a very important teacher. A superb technician, Terry was very comfortable as a

studio musician but he could also improvise swinging solos on a moment's notice. Every musician from virtually any style loved his playing. And because he felt that he was not encouraged by older musicians when he was coming up, he made it his mission to always help younger players. Among the countless number of musicians who he taught and cheered on through the years were Quincy Jones (Terry's first student), Dianne Reeves, Terri Lyne Carrington and pianist Justin Kauflin, his co-star in the heartwarming and touching documentary *Keep On Keepin' On*.

Born on December 14, 1920 in St. Louis, Missouri, Terry grew up in a very poor family. Inspired by hearing such early St. Louis trumpeters as Dewey Jackson and Charlie Creath, Terry took up the trumpet and his natural abilities were apparent from the start. By the early 1940s he was approached by a teenaged Miles Davis who he helped and encouraged. Terry played in a Navy dance band while serving in the military during World War II and had stints with the big bands of Lionel Hampton, George

Hudson, Charlie Barnet (1947-48) and Count Basie. When Basie had to break up his orchestra at the end of 1949, Terry became part of his septet for a year. He gained fame during his eight years with Duke Ellington (1951-59), emerging as a swing-to-bop stylist with his own exuberant sound.

Terry was part of his former student Quincy Jones' big band for a year and switched his focus to the mellower flugelhorn in the early 1960s. He became the first African-American staff musician for NBC but always continued playing jazz. Terry was with the Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Band, co-led a quintet with valve trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, and was featured with Johnny Carson's Tonight Show Band on television. He appeared on a countless number of record dates during the 1960s, '70s and '80s, was a popular attraction at jazz festivals, led both a combo and his own big band in the 1970s, and was always a joy to see. By the 1990s his problems with diabetes began to affect his eyesight, walking and general health but, despite his steady decline, he almost always played great and retained both his good humour and his desire to help others. During his last playing years, he would be introduced at a club or festival to great applause which would gradually die down as he made his way very slowly to the stage, often assisted by others. When he finally appeared on stage, C.T. would invariably grab the microphone and simply say, 'The golden years suck!'



21 years ago, on January 9, 1994 when he was 73, I had the pleasure of interviewing Clark Terry. Since there was just a limited amount of time, we mostly discussed his early years. Here is some of what the great man said:

'I was exposed to rhythmic music at a very early age at the Sanctified Church. The people were able to let out their frustrations by clapping their hands and banging the floor with their feet. It was my first introduction to rhythms. My older sister was married to a top tuba player of the time, Cy McField, who played with Dewey Jackson. I used to hear their rehearsals and liked their music very much. The band would play at Salter's Park in St. Louis. Black people except for performers were not allowed there, but as kids we would go and manage to hide so we could enjoy the music.

'My first instrument was the garden hose. As kids we wanted to start our own band. My brother played an ice pan from an old ice box, hitting it with sticks since it could sound a little like a snare drum. Another buddy played a couple of old chairs like drums. One friend played an old beer mug by blowing into a discarded vacuum hose, sounding like a jug but with a more descriptive sound. I wanted to play in the band so I concocted the idea of using a water hose. I blew into an iron pipe that I attached on one end while the other end had a kerosene funnel. It was funny looking but I was able to make a



lot of noise! It sounded so horrible that the neighbours got tired of hearing that sound and they chipped in and bought me a horn from a pawn shop for \$12.50.

'At that time I was most impressed by Dewey Jackson's band, George Hudson and the St. Louis Crackerjacks. Dewey Jackson was the loudest trumpeter in St. Louis. He used to work on riverboats. Parents would let their kids go on the boats to hear the music and the way that they would know that the boats were on their way back was that they could hear him playing miles away. I couldn't afford trumpet lessons but a friend got them and I would have him show me what he learned. My brother-in-law hooked me up with a band led by trombonist Willie Austin and pianist Mary Johnson. Their band had a job at a carnival with Ida Cox's Darktown Scandals. Ida Cox had a dominant and powerful voice. She never needed any amplification. She could shatter your ears when she wanted to. Those old blues singers were awesome.

'I love Miles Davis. Not too many people came up the way he did. He never wanted for anything since his father was a very successful dentist. He was like a poor little rich boy. He appreciated what I was into and he always said that I encouraged and inspired him. When I met him, he was a timid shy kid who couldn't look you in the eye. At

the time he wanted to sound like Harry James but when he couldn't, he developed his own special sound. I always wanted to have a mellower sound than the other trumpeters. I used to take an old felt hat, cut a hole in it, and hang it over the bell of the horn. Years later I switched to the flugelhorn to get that sound. At the time there were only two or three guys who were regularly playing flugelhorn including Miles, Shorty Rogers and Emmett Berry, but they were using their trumpet mouthpieces on it and still hitting high notes. I thought that that was like putting hot sauce on ice cream!

'When I got out of the Navy, I joined George Hudson's band in St. Louis. We visited New York and played at the Apollo and the Savoy Ballroom. It was a really swinging band. We had a lot of Basie charts and Ernie Wilkins wrote for the band. Charlie Barnet had heard of me and, after we returned to St. Louis, he offered me a job. After getting back to New York, I went to the club where Charlie Barnet was playing. I was in the audience when Charlie spotted me. He was right in the middle of a coast-to-coast broadcast and he announced on the air that he had a new trumpet player who hadn't even taken his horn out of the case yet and he wanted to feature him on this tune. Luckily it was a familiar song that I could hear the changes on and that's how I joined the band, before all of those people.

'After Charlie Barnet, I worked with Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson and Charlie Ventura. With the Ventura band, Red Rodney and I were featured together on *How High The Moon*. I made my first records with Cleanhead including *Kidney Stew*. 900 years later on one of my Pablo dates, I had Cleanhead on it and we did *Kidney Stew* but that time I sang it instead of him.

'Count Basie needed a trumpeter to join Sweets, Emmett Berry and Ed Lewis. At the audition they threw one of the hardest songs in their book at me, *Hey Ruth* which had high C's, E's and G's in it. After that they had me play a song called *Solid* which they had just recorded when Snooky Young was in the band. On my part was a high A which for me was impossible. But somehow I hit the A big and full. I don't know where it came from; I had never hit it before and I haven't hit it since. Of course I acted like it was no big deal, asking them what else they had; I got the job. A little later Basie broke up the big band because he had got in trouble with the horses. The only way he could get caught up was to cut the band down and take a lower salary to pay off his debt. I played with Basie's small group for a time. However Duke Ellington was scouting around for another trumpeter. I had sat in with his band twice before, subbing once apiece for Francis Williams and Al Killian. Duke had me meet him at the elevator to my hotel room, keeping it real

quiet. I met him there and, as we walked to my room, Freddie Green saw us. That night right at the gig with Count Basie before he said hello to me Freddie said, "Damn fool if you don't!"

'When I met with Duke, he said that he couldn't just take someone out of his buddy's band, so he suggested that I pretend to get sick and go home to St. Louis to recuperate. Since his band was going to be playing a concert in St. Louis soon, I could just happen to sit in with him and join his band. Meanwhile he'd put me on salary. So I told Basie that I was ill and that I had to go home. Basie had just given me a raise, from \$125 to \$140. When I put in my notice, he took the raise back for the final two weeks. Years later I still felt bothered about all of this so I went to see Basie backstage at Carnegie Hall. I confessed to him that I hadn't really been sick and that I knew at the time that I was going to join Duke. Basie smiled and said, "Why do you think I took the raise back?" He knew the whole time!

Fortunately Clark Terry lived long enough not only to be the subject of the documentary *Keep On Keepin' On* but to write his autobiography *Clark* (published by University of California Press). Still, at 94, he left us much too soon.

**SCOTT YANOW is the author of 11 jazz books and over 750 liner notes. He can be contacted at [scottyanowjazz@yahoo.com](mailto:scottyanowjazz@yahoo.com).**



## BRISTOL INTERNATIONAL JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

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It's the regular complaint of promoters, even of the most successful festivals, 'Where is the young audience? There'll be no audience left for jazz in 20 years!' – Bristol International Jazz & Blues Festival confounded such gloomy prognostications. Extremely well attended generally, it drew in vast numbers of enthusiastic, often highly excited young people, most particularly on the opening night.

Paradox Ensemble, led by trumpeter/electronics whiz Nick Walters, offered a challenging, but oddly accessible, start to the formal programme in the smaller hall, the Lantern. Very structured, often layered from a simple basis (sometimes no more than a rhythmic pattern or a minimalist phrase), their music exploited varied sound patterns, with accordion and sousaphone adding extra colour. Solo power was pretty impressive, with trombonist Tim Cox and Aidan Sheppard on accordion making their mark.

It was after that in the main Hall One that the first surprise came. A double bill of the Big Swing featured Ray Gelato and the Giants and the Bruce/Ilett Big Band. Some 20 rows of seating had been removed to make a large dance space, decently filled during the Gelato set. From a jazz point of view the highlight was Ray and Alex Garnett (temporarily returned to the Giants) trading JATP-style on Flip Phillips' *The Claw*, but the mix of Louis Prima favourites, a touch of Cab Calloway and a few sentimental Italian ditties was always appealing – and Sebastiaan de Krom's incisive drumming kept the show on the road.

The major surprise came with the big band session, not with the music itself, a very capable big band playing such swing favourites as *Don't Be that Way* and *Opus One* in straightforward versions for dancing. Jonny Bruce was the out-front trumpet star, white suit and all, and Denny Ilett unobtrusively took charge of the band – as the festival wore on, it became obvious that this was a typical role for the splendidly self-effacing Artistic Director. No, the surprise came with the audience. Before the start somewhere in the region of 200 dancers, many young, many dressed for the occasion, took instruction in swing dancing and, once the band started, my view

from the back of the stalls was uncannily reminiscent of scenes from *The Benny Goodman Story*. So is that the answer to the problem of bringing in the young? Turn the clock back 75 years?

In fact, though a Louis Armstrong tribute brought the nearest thing I saw to a full house in the main Colston Hall – 2,000-plus is a lot of seats! –, Bristol Jazz Festival doesn't rely on turning the clock back to bring audiences in. The free Foyer sessions in every style imaginable were consistently packed and enthusiastically received: I had to go up five levels to get even the slightest view of Katya Gorre in her Tom Waits programme!

A major feature of the programme is the use of interlocking themes. The festival took advantage of Bristol's recent twinning with New Orleans to programme features on the city and on Louis Armstrong. I left before the last night concerts by Dr. John and by Pee Wee Ellis with the music of New Orleans, but the Armstrong sessions were a delight. In a fascinating presentation on Louis Armstrong's Life and Legacy Ricky Riccardi left the heavy lifting to Louis himself via rare home tapes and extracts from television programmes, ranging from joking around with opera singer Robert Merrill on *Vesti la Giubba* (he could make a fair fist of singing it, too) to the last tape in his machine the night before he died: *April in Paris* by Ella and Louis.

The major Sunday afternoon tribute concert to Louis Armstrong showed the odd sign of limited rehearsal, not least in over-running by some 25 minutes – a good thing, too, 75 minutes was never enough given the riches available and the talent assembled. Vocals were shared between Lillian Boutte (who got most of the New Orleans/Louisiana-based songs), Enrico Tomasso, Don Vappie, Ben Cummings and an Armstrong imitator uncredited in the programme. A fine six-piece of Tomasso, Vappie, Evan Christopher, Ian Bateman, Sebastien Girardot and Julie Saury attacked the Hot 5 repertoire, Tomasso majestic on *Struttin' with Some Barbecue* and *West End Blues*. Pee Wee Ellis,

having sat in the section all the concert, brought the house down with two blistering solos late on. Clarke Peters delivered extracts from the wit and wisdom of Louis Armstrong with engaging warmth. Best of all for me – and slightly disappointing in number – were the charts from the Armstrong big bands of the 1930s and 1940s: *Sweethearts on Parade* with Ben Cummings doing the honours on trumpet and vocal, a real tear-up on *Swing that Music*, the lazy-sounding sax figures behind Tomasso's idiomatic vocal on *Sunny Side of the Street*.

Sunday afternoon provided two festival highlights in quick succession, with the remarkable Tcha Limberger immediately preceding the Armstrong tribute. Initially Limberger seems yet another excellent virtuoso guitarist/violinist in the Hot Club tradition (he plays both instruments), alternating joyous versions of such American standards as *My Blue Heaven* and *Liza* with Manouche numbers, though none of the well-known Django favourites. But this is also music of the unexpected: wry vocals in the Romany language exploded into passionate declamation, the violin became a ukulele accompanying a vocal or a bass solo, the violin traded phrases, or sang along with, scat vocals. And ideal accompaniment came from master-rhythm guitarist Dave Kelbie and Sebastien Girardot's bass, plucking, slapping and strumming with almost as much variety of colour as Limberger himself.

All this leaves little space for the varied Saturday programme: a delightfully relaxed concert of Cartoon Jazz, with excellent big band, gospel-styled vocals from Celestine Walcott-Gordon and massive community choir; the restful lyricism of the Andy Sheppard Quartet, with guitarist Eivind Aarset providing a one-man soundscape with his array of electronics; Clarke Peters insisting that he's an actor, not a singer, but daring to tackle *Lush Life* before treating us to his musical calling card *Five Guys Named Moe*; and Carleen Anderson with a remarkable vocal range that suggested soul's answer to Yma Sumac.

RON SIMPSON

## JAZZ ON A WINTER'S WEEKEND

BEST WESTERN ROYAL CLIFTON HOTEL, SOUTHPORT, FEBRUARY 6-8

Like Mark Twain's death reports of the demise of the Southport Jazz Weekend were exaggerated. In the end it was business as usual: the format works, so why change it? The Royal Clifton, with its variety of public spaces, is ideal for a festival that has ongoing art exhibitions, workshops, talks and informal music sessions in support of the eleven main concerts from Friday afternoon to late night Sunday.

The concerts themselves, as always, took in everything from tried and tested festival favourites (a new chunk of the collected works of Alan Barnes is obligatory) to the experimental, the seldom seen and the specially assembled. The feeling was that this year there was perhaps a heavier concentration of straightahead, small group jazz than usual, but there were still surprises and opportunities for emerging musicians.

The final evening provided a highlight for all those given to the exuberant side of jazz. This was the first regular concert appearance for Pete Long's Jazz at the Phil and both Pete and festival director Geoff Matthews seemed concerned about whether the audience would take to it – unnecessary! JATP was always controversial (in their day words like Roy Eldridge and Illinois Jacquet were akin to expletives to the po-faced establishment), but audiences never had a problem. Under Pete Long's ebullient direction, the 2015 British version kept up the traditions, from Nick Dawson's Peterson-esque *Tenderly* to the riotous concluding *Lester Leaps In*. The trumpet duel was in the best of bad taste, with George Hogg matching the bravura playing of the splendid Ryan Quigley. Callum Au confirmed his place in the forefront of younger trombonists by blasting into his opening solo like Bill Harris reincarnated and later contributed some characterful muted work. When the tempo dropped and melody appeared,

the three reeds (Alex Garnett, Dean Masser and Pete himself) did justice to a trio of Ellington ballads and Paul Morgan rounded off a festival full of fine bassists with a persuasively melodic *In a Sentimental Mood* accompanied only by Nigel Price's sensitive guitar. But for the most part it was high-octane stuff, as with the extended and very loud drum feature by a remarkable young player, previously completely unknown to me, Ed Richardson. In a totally enjoyable two hours I was especially impressed by the rhythm section: after all, with strings of solos and features, the horns had time to recoup their energies before the next battle or assault on the stratosphere, but not so Messrs. Dawson, Price, Morgan and Richardson, swinging, ever-resourceful, sometimes subtle and always beautifully integrated.

I guess the most keenly anticipated event was the Saturday evening concert, with young alto-saxist Dmitry Baevsky, Russian-born, New York-based, leading a truly international quintet assembled for the occasion. Trumpeter Joe Magnarelli is these days regarded with something approaching awe and the French/Greek/British rhythm section of Alain Jean-Marie, Giorgos Antoniou and Steve Brown promised much. In the end it was perhaps a little predictable, with Magnarelli playing well, but not tearing up any trees, and Jean-Marie, clearly an excellent player, taking time to make his mark. The tunes – Sonny Rollins, Art Blakey, etc. – were obvious choices and it was probably no coincidence that the final number of the first half, *If*

*Ever I Should Leave You*, the first off-the-wall choice, was also the first to truly excite the audience. But Baevsky is a terrific player, equally adept on ballads, of which there were not enough, and Magnarelli's delighted reactions to Steve Brown's drumming were shared by the audience.

A not dissimilar group earlier in the day had, in fact, more bite. Jump Monk was assembled for the 2013 Birmingham Monkathon and included Birmingham Conservatoire's Jeremy Price on trombone. Under the leadership of Arnie Somogyi and now combining Monk and Mingus compositions, the band had real attack: the sheer presence of the ensemble sound on the opener, *Haitian Fight Song*, made me also jot down a note praising the sound man. And Tony Kofi's playing was outstanding throughout. Between the two quintet sessions came the only concert to strongly divide audience opinion – and certainly the most experimental of the weekend. The Norwegians Marius Neset and Daniel Herskedal duetted on saxes and tuba, playing their own compositions and Norwegian folk songs. The range of effects Herskedal produced from the tuba included playing a drone to his own melody line and Neset was a creative and inventive soloist, but I could understand the reaction of those who looked in vain for jazz content. My attention sometimes wandered during two full sets, but I loved the chorale-like passages and the typically Scandinavian sense of space between soaring soprano and sonorous tuba – and it was certainly canny programming to

put Neset and Herskedal in as contrast between the quintets.

The Barnes session this time was a sort of joint musical biography of his 38 years of friendship and frequent collaboration with Dave Newton. Typically they had assembled a fine septet, with the polished Martin Shaw immaculate on trumpet and a nice contrast between the tenor/baritone players Derek Nash and Robert Fowler. The understanding between the two principals was never better seen than on *The Hawk*, with Alan on clarinet trading fours with Dave's piano. Much of the material was familiar, but dividing it between Barnes and Newton compositions gave enough variety and it was good to hear how well *Blue Note*, one of Barnes' songs to words by the late Alan Plater, fared as an instrumental.

Among the late night shows pianist/singer/composer Theo Jackson coped well with having to replace his entire quartet: a confident singer of some range, as a pianist he led an accomplished group, with Binker Golding excelling as a late replacement for Nat Facey. There were too many good trios and quartets to mention all and the Birmingham Conservatoire Jazz Orchestra under Jeremy Price, the solitary big band, played the music of Bob Brookmeyer, Jim McNeely and Maria Schneider with discipline and skill, polished section work and some very decent solos (including a notable contribution from guitarist Gareth Fowler on *El Viento*).

RON SIMPSON



Tony Kofi

Photo by Robert Burns



Wes Montgomery

## WES MONTGOMERY

## IN THE BEGINNING

Resonance HCD-2014 2 CDs, 69.39/67.02

This two CD set covers Montgomery's work from 1949 to 1958. The sound quality of the early sessions from 1949 is understandably poor with the guitarist a little overwhelmed by the other instrumentalists at times. In the event only three tracks date from this period but it's still good to have access to the music. The remaining tracks date from 1955 to 1958. The majority of the music was recorded live at the Turf Club and at the Missile Lounge both in Indianapolis, with only eight being studio recordings.

Amongst various groupings we hear Wes in the company of brothers Buddy on piano and Monk on bass. Saxophonist Alonzo Johnson takes centre stage on much of the first CD. Vocalist Debbie Andrews is featured on two of tracks. Unusually, on *Ralph's New Blues* Wes switches to bass and Buddy is featured on vibes on this Milt Jackson tune.

We hear less of Johnson on disc two and hear Montgomery in various quartet formations. He comes into his own on *A Night in Tunisia*. The five tracks recorded at Columbia Studios, NYC in 1955 benefit greatly from being produced by Quincy Jones. All the musicians shine here.

Saxophonist Gene Morris is featured on three tracks and he seems better suited to the group

sound. The final track includes vocalese from Sonny Parker.

A comprehensive 48 page booklet provides interesting background detail and photographs of the time.

## ALAN MUSSON

## HAROLD CORBIN

## SOUL BROTHER

Fresh Sound Records FSR 1667 37:35

Corbin's brief career ended within a year of this recording session. He was twenty-nine – an age at which his mature style would surely be emerging. My impression is that he still had a long way to go. He certainly swings in the accredited fashion of his era, but it's all a bit heavy-handed, especially in the left hand, where the incessant stabbing chords are obtrusive. Stylistically, he seems to have a penchant for Ahmad Jamal's idiosyncratic approach but he lacks the subtlety and finesse necessary to pull it off. This is particularly apparent on the standards *Don't Blame Me*, *Never Been In Love Before* and *Our Love Is Here To Stay*. His attempts to play with the time and phrasing of the themes result in a snatched delivery that is neither witty nor tantalizing.

The rest of the material is mostly Corbin originals. He had a local hit with *Soul Sister* – a twelve-bar swinger with shades of Miles in the left hand rhythmic pattern. There are a couple of pretty ballads and a number of swingers which do just that, thanks to

excellent work from ex-Blakey alumnus Spanky De Brest on bass, and drummer Eddie Campbell.

The pianist's own improvisations are competent but, to my ears, lack the flair and invention of the best of his contemporaries. On this showing, I would describe him as a journeyman jazzier.

## HUGH LEDIGO

## THE JAKE LEG JUG BAND

## EVERYTHING'S JAKE

Lake LACD 340: 50.43

This band isn't actually a jug band (nary a jug can be heard) but a group consisting of five musicians playing an impressive range of instruments, including banjo, guitar, harmonica, double bass and washboard, with vocals. They perform a variety of material, including country blues, ragtime, novelty songs, jive, gospel, and the occasional popular song. The musicians' abilities vary, with some good guitar solos from Neil Hulse, who is also a fine exponent of the mandolin. Purcy Harmonica's harmonica punctuations are authentic, and she plays a few notes on musical saw in the last song. Guest trombonist Mike Pembroke contributes some rather amateurish trombone. Producer Paul Adams even plays skulls in *Hot Feet*. The vocalists don't always enunciate clearly, which is a pity as many of the songs tell interesting stories. But this is good-time music from a good-time group.

## TONY AUGARDE



The Jake Leg Jug Band

## JACK TEAGARDEN

FEATURING BOBBY HACKETT, HANK JONES, BUD FREEMAN, BOB WILBER, DON GOLDIE, GEORGE WETTLING, GENE SCRHOEDER, ED SHAUGHNESSY AND GEORGE DUVIVIER.

Solar Records 4569935 75.58

Compiled from the original LP of the same name and with the addition of seven tracks from the Newport Jazz Festival of 1959, this is, as the football pundits would say 'a game of two halves'.

The 'Teagarden' set, while nothing with that mouth-watering personnel could possibly be anything but listenable, comes over as fairly desultory on this session. It was recorded in 1961, a time when Big T was in failing health and the repertoire (chosen by the A and R manager, I suspect) is not conducive to dynamic improvisation. *Moon River*, *Never on a Sunday*, *Secret Love*; not instant choices for a successful Jam Session. The musicians strive to make it all work and there are some spirited moments but it could all have been so much better with the right material. Teagarden still retains much of his gorgeous tone but this is a giant in decline.

In contrast, the Newport tracks from two years earlier, with a less starry personnel, catch the trombonist in party mood. These performances are feisty and bubbling with ideas. All the participants are out to prove themselves. The inclusion of Don Goldie, an underrated player with a formidable tone, gives Hackett

someone to play off and the little known Stan Pulis on bass and Ronnie Greb on drums manage to raise their game and together with the veteran Don Ewell, on stride piano, and the impressive Henry Cuesta on clarinet, keep the session bouncing along. Teagarden is in wonderful form particularly on *Stars Fell on Alabama* and *I Can't Get Started*, two ballads which could have been written for his inimitable, drawing vocals.

## JOHN MARTIN

## ANITA O'DAY

## FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS: SECOND SET

Avid AMSC 1126 2 CDs 79:55/79:55

The Avid record company has been going to town recently with reissues of LPs by Anita O'Day on double CDs. This one is a mixed bag, containing Anita's two most memorable tracks plus a variety of others ranging from the commendable to the regrettable. *Pick Yourself Up* from 1956 accompanies O'Day with a variety of groups arranged and conducted by Buddy Bregman. Anita was invariably better when backed by small jazz groups rather than large ensembles, since the former gave her more freedom to display her shining talents in improvising and scatting. Nevertheless this is an enjoyable set with contributions by the likes of saxist Bud Shank and vibist Larry Bunker.

The second LP is 1959's *Cool Heat*. Here Jimmy Giuffre's arrangements are slightly more discreet, leaving Anita more space to express herself. Frank Rosolino is outstanding among the accompanists. *Incomparable!* from 1960 has arrangements by Bill Holman, which are as 'cool' as expected. *Avalon* is a track which illustrates O'Day's ability to take a song and turn it into something unexpected. Here and in *The Party's Over*, the introductory lone bass accompaniment (probably by Joe Mondragon) suggests what Anita could achieve with a minimal backing. The fourth LP also comes from 1960: *Waiter, Make Mine Blues* was arranged by Russ Garcia using two groups – one

with several trombones which are stodgy, the other with strings which are mushy. Incidentally, the presentation of the personnel and track details on the sleeve is an error-crammed disgrace.

The 'Plus' in the album's title represents a couple of tracks which most of us will associate fondly with Anita O'Day for ever. Recorded at the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, *Sweet Georgia Brown* and *Tea For Two* are consummate works of art: inventive, witty and faultless. Buy this double album just for these two tracks.

## HUGH LEDIGO

## HARRY ALLEN / JAN LUNDREN QUARTET

## QUIETLY THERE

Stunt Records STUCD 14142 58.15

Every time I hear Harry Allen play, I feel a smile coming on. There is something about his playing which is instantly communicable and exhilarating. It has an easy, uncomplicated bounce and a strong melodic content. He is deeply rooted in swing in the Sims, Hawkins, Flip Phillips tradition and close in

style to Scott Hamilton with whom he has been paired and compared with on many occasions.

On the face of it this is an odd match. Lundren is an avowed bebopper with a spare piano style and the choice of material, too, is unusual focussing entirely on the music of Johnny Mandel. Unusual but merited. Just as oddly, it works. Allen's insouciant swing merges easily with Lundren's ruminating piano. The mood overall is reflective. Hans Backenroth on bass and Kristian Leth on drums are a good fit. There are memorable moments



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Kenny Wheeler

specifically on *Cinnamon and Clove* where the band really cuts loose and a rhapsodic *Just a Child* where Ben Webster's influence on the tenorist is discernible.

It is salutary to be reminded, in the choice of repertoire which includes *Emily* and *The Shadow of Your Smile* that Mandel, whose primary occupation was in the world of film scores, also, wrote some really first-rate tunes.

JOHN MARTIN

## KENNY WHEELER

SONGS FOR QUINTET

ECM2388-52:16

Kenny Wheeler passed away in September 2014 and this represents his final recording, made at Abbey Road studios during December 2013. Wheeler assembled a fine group of musicians including Stan Sulzmann on tenor saxophone, John Parricelli on guitar, Chris Laurence on bass and Martin France on drums, exploring nine original compositions. Wheeler had refined his technique on trumpet and flugelhorn to such an extent over the years, developing the fragility of his tone reflected perhaps by the work of the late Art Farmer, to become a unique voice in jazz.

Wheeler's compositions here have a sense of melancholy about them, which is enhanced by the beautifully burnished tone of his flugelhorn. Sulzmann is outstanding throughout, his long exploratory passages weaving an excellent counterpoint to Wheeler, and guitarist Parricelli is superb with his comping chordal lines. In summary, here are five highly compatible musicians excelling in musical ability expressing the compositional

ability of the leader - mark him well, for we will not see his like again.

GREG MURPHY

THE TUBBY HAYES  
BIG BAND

RUMPUS

Savage Solweig 03 56:25

Back in the mid-'nineties, when the first samples of my 'sixties live recordings from Ronnie's and elsewhere were released on the Jazz House label, I imagined mine were the only unheard location takes of the brilliant playing of Tubby Hayes, whom I first met when he was just 15. But after my *Night And Day* compilation made its mark, reissues followed, and other unreleased material began to be discovered.

Now musician/writer/researcher Simon Spillett, the acknowledged guardian of, and expert on the Hayes legacy, has happily acquired Tubby's own archive of recordings, and created his own label to issue them on. This one is apparently the only evidence of how Tubby's final big band sounded, in his last few years, captured in concert at The Torrington Arms, North Finchley, in May 1969. I heard some of his earlier bands, and I agree with Simon, as indicated in one of his valuable, copious notes, that this was probably his best. Certainly it is in terms of ensemble enthusiasm and drive - and, it must be said, volume.

*Song For A Sad Lady* is said to be dedicated to a former girl-friend - I believe I know who. However, the music is far from sad, and Tubby's initial solo spate has a diversity of phrasing. Also heard, but rather behind in the mix, is guitarist Louis Stewart. *Dear*

*Johnny B*, for the late drummer Johnny Butts, is understandably dominated by Spike Wells's powerful drumming. Peter King's alto sounds a bit tenorish, and Kenny Wheeler blows manfully amid the strong surroundings. Other highlights among the seven tracks are the boppish title-piece, which has some individualistic tenor by Brian Smith, a *tour de force* for the leader's ballad warmth, some unaccompanied, on *You Know I Care*, and a stirring statement of Victor Feldman's *Seven Steps To Heaven*. A collectors' piece indeed.

LESTOMKINS

## EARL HINES

FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS  
PLUS

Avid AMSCI 152 79.57/78.59

Let me nail my flag to the mast. For me, Hines has always been the most exciting and satisfying of jazz pianists. Relentlessly and restlessly creative, he produced very few dull recordings. The accuracy of this statement can be tested via this Avid reissue of four of his albums recorded between 1954 and 1961. In two cases, Hines is heard heading a rhythm section, which for many was when he was at his best, thrown back on his own resources, imperious in his improvisatory command. In contrast, there's *A Monday Date* from 1961, originally part of the Riverside *Chicago The Living Legends* series where he fronts his Dixieland band then resident at the Hangover Club in San Francisco. Rhythmically strong, with Hines heard in short bursts and Pops Foster bounding in on bass, this album is notable for the crisp trumpet of Eddie Smith whose take on *West End Blues* is quite exceptional. Trombonist Jimmy Archey is predictably bouncy while clarinetist Darnell Howard sounds past his best if still enthusiastic, the overall effect relatively tame.

The other band set *The Incomparable Earl 'Fatha' Hines* (ex-Nocturne) teams Earl with some rather more hip characters like trumpeter Gene Redd, Dicky Wells on trombone and reeds star Jerome Richardson in a mixed bag from 1954 split

between band numbers and trio things. Then comes the trio album, *Paris One Night Stand*, taped there in November 1957 for Philips with Earl at his best, ebullient in his attack, with that unmistakable brightness in his harmonic choices and his rhythmic derring-do, his French compadres on bass and drums suitably inspired in support. Just to hear Hines re-invent the dreaded *Perdido* as a stride-style tour-de-force is worth Avid's price alone. Then again, there's the reflective *Am I Wasting My Time*, just soft notes and calm exposition. The final album is *Earl's Pearls* from 1960 (from MGM) with an all-American quartet and a similarly eclectic list of standards, *Tea for Two* like a master-class in extemporisation. So, a feast for Hines followers and novitiates alike. There were even greater triumphs to come but these will do for now.

PETER VACHER

## SUE RANEY

LATE IN LIFE

Fresh Sound FSR 5054 CD  
50:30

These 13 tracks carry a double significance. The songs themselves, as per the title track, celebrate romantic triumph at late stages. The whole album represents the wonder of artistic longevity. Listening to the clear, expressive, flexible voice of Sue Raney, recorded recently, a casual listener would assume she was fairly youthful - but this lady has been recording since 1958. Her performances are heartening to hear.

For this venture, she has been fortunate to enlist the services of the man who co-wrote the title song, Shelly Markham, a singer/songwriter, who not only produces and arranges, but is her accompanying pianist. Also excelling in support are Jeff Driskill on alto, tenor, clarinet and flute, Barry Zweig on guitar, Kevin Axt on bass and, on two tracks, MB Gordy on drums.

I cannot cite any stand-out songs - all are brilliantly conceived and executed. I can only mention interesting elements in a half-dozen instances. On the opening



Sue Raney

*I Didn't Know What Time It Was*, she quotes ingeniously from *Time On My Hands*. A new one to me is *You Are Not My First Love*, and I like its denouement, stating that the recipient is 'the first to last'. *It Amazes Me* is an unhackneyed Coleman/Leigh song that I'm always glad to hear - never more than on Sue's feelingful reading with a strong climax here. *Something New In My Life* is one of two eminently-singable Legrand/Bergman songs that sound as if they're from shows. *You Stepped Out Of A Dream* benefits nicely from its Latin groove. She closes the album with a completely out-of-time exposition of a classic Leslie Bricusse item, *When I Look In Your Eyes* - another great song, perfectly sung. Let me just refer to her acceptable scat spots and her various high-swooping finishes, before confirming this as a highly recommended release.

LESTOMKINS

## IRMA CURRY

LOVE IS A NECESSARY EVIL

Fresh Sound FSR CD 851  
50:32

There has been a trend, recently, for the record companies to issue and re-issue records by singers from the 50's and 60's who are, and were, fairly obscure. As these artists are now in their 70's and 80's or, otherwise long gone. I can't see the point. Surely, not revived careers at this time.

Most of the product has been pleasant but unremarkable but, very occasionally, the same companies unearth gold. This

time the record company struck a rich seam in Irma Curry, a superb singer. She has clear diction, perfect pitch, faultless intonation and a great feel for the lyrics of a song. In other words, she ticks all the boxes.

She sang with the Lionel Hampton band for two years back in the late 50's, guested with Benny Carter's orchestra and, on this occasion in 1962 she has the multi talents of the late, and much missed, Don Elliott behind her. His group is excellent, sporting highly professional names such as Hal McKusick, Barry Galbraith and Jo Jones. There are nineteen tracks including six bonus tracks from the 50's with Hampton and Carter.

Unfortunately, the material she was required to sing on this session was unremarkable fare. Those first thirteen tracks were, seemingly, intended for a musical that never happened and not even Al Cohn's deft arrangements can rescue it. I can't, honestly, offer any of the songs as memorable.

It is a great shame that this lady did not get the breaks. At the time she was favourably compared with Ella and I don't think that comparison is excessive. I find a closer match with Sarah Vaughan. She has Sarah's range. In any case, she is in that class.

At the end of the session, in awe of Jo Jones' drumming she asked for his autograph. 'Never mind that', said Jo, 'could I have yours?'

JOHN MARTIN

**Joe STILGOE NEW SONGS FOR OLD SOULS**

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DAILY EXPRESS

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LINN *Just Listen*



Jimmy Giuffre

**JIMMY GIUFFRE/JIM HALL TRIO**

**COMPLETE STUDIO RECORDINGS**

Phono 870227 4 CDs, 78.54/72:15/77:59/74:20

Giuffre now seems to be an almost forgotten musician but his influence on the course of 'modern' jazz should not be underestimated. His development of a form of free interplay between musicians anticipated forms of free improvisation to come.

Not only do we get all of the studio recordings but two unaccompanied Giuffre tracks from the same sessions and some live trio recordings. The sound quality is good and the 24 page accompanying booklet contains all the discographical information and reproduces the original sleeve notes and photographs from the time.

The duo of Giuffre and Hall, of course, remains constant, but there is a changing roster of

bassist on hand including Red Mitchell, Ralph Pena and Ray Brown and Bob Brookmeyer is featured on piano and his more customary valve-trombone. All of the material has been re-issued previously with the exception of *Song of the Wind*.

Giuffre's delicate tone on all of his instruments is something to behold and his sound on clarinet is almost flute-like. On several of the pieces he plays four overdubbed tenor sax lines.

The recordings cover the period from 1956 to 1959 and appear in chronological order. I particularly enjoyed the very original re-workings of *California, Here I Come* and *Forty-Second Street*. It's interesting to compare and contrast the versions available here.

Of course, no collection of Giuffre's music would be complete without *Train and the River* and two versions are included here. All-in-all a very worthwhile collection.

ALAN MUSSON

**GILAD ATZMON AND THE ORIENT HOUSE ENSEMBLE**

**THE WHISTLE BLOWER**

Fanfare Jazz FJ1501-47:28.

Atzmon is a multi-threat musician, using alto and soprano saxes, clarinet, accordion, and guitar; he's joined on this recording by Frank Harrison on piano, Yaron Stavi on double and electronic bass and Chris Higginbotham on drums. Add to the mix the fact that these four also vocalese and have two guest vocalists, the musical diet is going to be anything but plain.

The opener, *Gaza Mon Amour* has an insidious theme before Atzmon starts a five minute improvisation on alto, suitably intense before giving way to Harrison's lyrical piano; *Forever* has a gentle abstract theme, spelled out on soprano and doesn't last forever, coming to a gentle halt just 4:35 later. But from this point, things start to go downhill; on *The Song Atzman* uses the accordion, with bizarre effects and on the closing *The Whistleblower*, there are vocals with sound effects, which makes one grateful the track lasts 2:47!

From a jazz viewpoint, this is an underwhelming listen.

GREG MURPHY

**MELODY GARDOT**

**CURRENCY OF MAN**

Decca (to be released June 1st); 48.45

Melody Gardot defies categories, even to the extent of claiming to be 'a citizen of the world' rather than a native Philadelphian, and her musical style – as singer and songwriter – is not easy to pin down. On her highly impressive new album the jazz influence is strongest on *Bad News* with hints of Peggy Lee's *Fever* and an accompaniment including wailing sax and economical and incisive piano. Vocally she is rooted on gospel and the blues, but with huge variety: *Preacherman* – with blues rock guitar – is all power, the lovely *Morning Sun* restrained, but no less emotional. The variety of character in the songs fits well with Melody's claim that this album as a new departure based on the people she meets in Los Angeles. Best of all are a couple of timeless ballads (notably *If Ever I Recall Your Face*) given poised treatments over lavish string accompaniments. Gardot and producer Larry Klein's eclectic choice of accompaniments – a touch of electronics, a hefty horn section, Latin percussion – adds to the appeal of a very accessible album that is never simple: *It Gonna Come* starts off all repetitive and straightforward, but don't let that fool you, *Currency of Man* is much more subtle and sophisticated than that! And Melody Gardot is a very accomplished singer who can shade and shape her voice to match the shifting mood and style of her songs.

RON SIMPSON

**ECHOES OF ELLINGTON**

**THE TATTOOED BRIDE**

Toad TOAD 05: 42.15

Echoes of Ellington is Pete Long's big band which recreates Duke Ellington's music. They do a good job of it, reproducing the band's sound almost exactly in some very precise arrangements which show that they are serious in appreciating the Duke's music. I particularly like their revival of

the title-track: an adventurous piece premiered by Ellington at Carnegie Hall in 1948 and mostly forgotten thereafter. The band's strengths include Laurence Ungless's bass playing, especially in *Sepia Panorama*, and Jay Craig's baritone sax, which manages to sound very like Harry Carney.

This band succeeds in bringing some of Duke's music to fresh life again. But therein lies a problem, which is common to all 'tribute' ensembles. Would you rather listen to Echoes of Ellington or Ellington's original recordings? This album has the advantage of crystal-clear recorded sound over Ellington's sometimes ancient recordings, but Pete Long's clarinet doesn't have exactly Jimmy Hamilton's academic tone, and saxist Colin Skinner doesn't sound just like Johnny Hodges (could anybody?). However brilliant the arrangements are, Echoes of Ellington can never quite replicate every Ducal asset. In the sleeve-notes, Pete Long is quoted as saying 'I'm not trying to recreate history. It's the greatest fun to hear it live'. But for some listeners, a recording can't compete so strongly with Ellington's originals.

**DIGBY FAIRWEATHER'S HALF DOZEN**

**THE BEST OF...**

Rose Cottage Records RCR 007: 72.42

In celebrating the Half Dozen's 20th anniversary, Digby Fairweather makes a point of emphasising the band's range, the difficulty of pigeon-holing it. *The Best of Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen* proves his case perfectly. The sort of relaxed, fairly 'traditional' small group jazz we might expect is there, in *Lazy River*, with Digby's warm trumpet keeping it simple and melodic, or a romp through *Running Wild*, but there's much else, too. The disc begins with three originals from 1998: Digby's *Twelve Feet off the Ground*, a 1930s-style swing piece, Malcolm Earle Smith's impressionistic *Morning Song* and Digby's *Babe*, complete with band vocal group and rather good whistling. You only need compare the solos of Julian Marc Stringle



The award-winning and riveting WHIPLASH is out on Blu-ray™ and DVD June 1.

Starring Miles Teller and Oscar winner J.K. Simmons, it's the story of Andrew an ambitious young jazz drummer, single-minded in his pursuit to rise to the top of his elite east coast music conservatory.

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We have 3 Blu-ray copies of this exhilarating, inventive and suspenseful film up for grabs.

Just answer the following: who directed Whiplash?

Entries to Whiplash Competition: P.O. Box 944, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8UT or email [admin@bigbearmusic.com](mailto:admin@bigbearmusic.com) by May 22nd 2015



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and Craig Milverton (permanent fixtures in the band) on the first two to realise the range of their musical talents. The Half Dozen is happy to stray into classical territory, adding a string quartet on one track and focussing on Delius on two tracks from 2012, with excellent guitar from Dominic Ashworth and unDelian arrangements that become increasingly ambitious as a three-part medley segues into *Florida Flare Up* (not Delius' title, obviously!). Three tracks celebrate the Half Dozen's association with George Melly, *The Joint is Jumping* adding Derek Nash as a guest to trade non-nonsense tenor sax exchanges with Julian Stringle. In contrast to the variety in the music, the album shows the stability in the group, though oddly the present line-up appears only on photographs! Fairly early on Chris Gower takes over from Malcolm Smith on trombone, but Len Skeat is magisterially present on all tracks here and the resourceful Bobby Worth misses only two tracks.

**The Half Dozen's anniversary is also being celebrated in the reissue of a souvenir edition of Zoltan Films' documentary, *Scenes from a Jazz Life*.**

RON SIMPSON

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG**

YOUNG SATCHMO

*Upbeat URCD 256: 74.51*

How do you package 1920s Louis Armstrong? In this excellent compilation (produced by the late John Griffith) Mike Pointon seems to have the intention of presenting the 'Birth of a Jazz Genius', the album's sub-title, without recourse to the Hot Five and Seven. And it works very well. The three King Oliver tracks, with good quality sound, show different aspects of the emerging cornetist, notably in the virtuoso breaks on *Tears*. Louis is famed for loosening up the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra and the three tracks from 1924-25 prove the point: the last one, *Sugar Foot Stomp*, has the band playing much more freely in a spry Don Redman arrangement, with Louis producing an

authoritative variant on the Oliver cornet solo. Probably the most exciting tracks are those by Clarence Williams' Blue Five, with Buster Bailey and Sidney Bechet sharing soprano sax duties and only Eva Taylor's rather ponderous vocals inhibiting the performances. Louis' accompaniments to blues singers are justly famous, laying down the marker for sensitive obbligatos and concisely powerful solos – and here he is heard with Chippie Hill, Maggie Jones and all the Smiths. Some of the piano work on these is a bit stodgy, but I always have a soft spot for Fred Longshaw's otherworldly harmonium with Bessie Smith. Spirited performances by Lil's Hot Shots (aka the Hot Five) and Jimmy Bertrand's Washboard Wizards round off the album, but I particularly enjoyed Armstrong's regular employer, Erskine Tate's Vendome Orchestra, making hooligan music on *Stomp Off, Let's Go*, with Teddy Weatherford's manic piano.

RON SIMPSON

**STANLEY COWELL**

ARE YOU REAL?

*Steeple Chase Records SCCD 31790 63:34*

Cowell, seventy three when this disc was recorded last year, shows no diminution of his skills. A younger contemporary of Bill Evans and close one of McCoy Tyner and Cecil Taylor, all three influences are evident in his music. His technique also reveals a formal Conservatory of Music training. Add, to this formative background, stints with Kirk, Roach, Rollins, Getz and J.J. Johnson, plus a penchant for writing his own material, and you have a consummate musician equal to any situation.

On these eight quite extended performances he was teamed at short notice with Jay Anderson on bass and drummer Billy Drummond, with whom he had never worked before. The outcome, with so little preparation, is so closely integrated that they might well be an established trio.

The fact that both members of the rhythm section would not



Stanley Cowell

have been out of place in Bill Evans' Trio heightens Cowell's inclination in the same direction and must have contributed greatly to the group's cohesion.

There are two originals by the pianist: *Photon In A Paper World* is fairly fast with some appropriate high-tech dissonances. *The Wedding Recessional* is also quite up-tempo with a rock-based rhythm – perhaps something of a misnomer, but it has some nice ecclesiastical harmonies. Pieces from the pens of Tyner, Byard, D'Rivera, Dameron and Golson receive suitable treatments, and the disc concludes with Monk's *Off Minor* on which Cowell manages to retain the composer's idiosyncratic approach without compromising his own polished technique.

Last century's music, I suppose, but still alive and well.

HUGH LEDIGO

**KEITH JARRETT/  
CHARLIE HADEN/  
PAUL MOTIAN**

HAMBURG '72

*ECM2422-55:27*

It's more than forty years since Jarrett first came to notice as pianist with Charles Lloyd's crossover group, and he quickly moved on as a restless experimenter who pioneered

long-form solo improvisation, recording a bewildering number of multi-disc sets which gave new meaning to solo piano recitals. With a trio, he also explored *The Great American Songbook*, reinterpreting the classic songs of Tin Pan Alley. Amazingly, Jarrett seems to have made his debut four generations ago with his ability fully formed.

The present material comes from the archives of NDR recorded at a NDR-Jazz-Workshop in Hamburg in June 1972 and affords the opportunity to hear Jarrett using a wider range of instruments than the usual piano; flute, percussion and soprano saxophone are utilised. The opening title, *Rainbow*, is an outing for piano, with a gentle opening, very introspective yet seemingly unresolved by the close; *Everything That Lives, Laments* brings on the flute, with Jarrett darting to and fro against Haden's bass until Jarrett returns to the piano for an out-of-tempo statement. *Piece For Ornette* is almost free, Haden and Motian playing independently of Jarrett yet setting a firm pace. Jarrett using the soprano saxophone with a harsh tone and sinuous lines. *Take Me Back* finds Jarrett at the keyboard, with beautiful chords and Haden and Motian setting a propulsive rhythmic backdrop for a remarkably extrovert outing.

This intriguing recording shows the fine interplay between the

three men and has such variety that makes it worthy of investigation.

GREG MURPHY

HUMPHREY LYTTTELTON

IN CANADA

Sackville 3033 43.03

Humph was guesting at a local jazz festival in July 1983 in Toronto when John Norris of Sackville Records lined him up with expatriate Scot Jim

Galloway and a piano-less Canadian rhythm section, guitarist Ed Bickert the standout. All eight pieces are by Humph and deploy the maestro's (mostly) muted trumpet alongside Galloway's succulent soprano and meaty baritone, the latter instrument well heard in relaxed mode on *Sprauncy*, a neat tune that lives up to its title, bassist Neil Swainson and Bickert getting to play. Needless to say, Galloway is rewarding on each instrument but it's his soprano, edgy and hot, quite distinct from that of Bechet or Wilber that is his defining voice.

Humph's calibre as a composer shines through viz *Squiggles*, clarinet harmonising with trumpet, tightly drawn with hints of the John Kirby sound, Bickert lucid in his solo. Humph often looked for opportunities to record away from his band situations and clearly relished this chance to play with compatible musicians who felt as he did. He's on excellent form throughout even unpacking his clarinet to duet with Galloway on the very bright *Caribana Queen*.

Given the recent sad loss of the likeable Galloway who made such a success in his adopted

Canadian home and also travelled and toured extensively in Europe, it's good to have this reminder of his quality. Cheerful music: reissued by Delmark retaining the original Sackville CD number.

PETER VACHER

MARTY GROSZ / FAT BABIES

DIGA DIGA DOO

Delmark De 256 72.53

Marty Grosz, guitarist, raconteur, vocalist, jazz activist, now 85, is



Humphrey Lyttelton

caught here in a 2013/2014 recording in the company of The Fat Babies, a band of Neo-Revivalists, all much taken by the white jazz and hot dance music of the 1920s and 1930s. In effect, players like the Bix-ian cornetist Andy Schumm and pianist James Dapogny are jazz historians who play, careful to keep within stylistic boundaries and happy to pursue an antique path. Of course, Grosz, something of a custodian of obscure songs from the early days, sounds quite at home among them, chording quietly or taking acoustic solos.

There's an overall brightness and a delight in peppy swing that permeates the entire album. If the greater issues of our time are not addressed, so what? This is engaging music, brightly played and a tonic to the ears. If the likes of Keith Nichols and Martin Litton are your cup of tea, then this is one for you. Schumm, who plays the Whitley Bay jazz party, is authentic and highly accomplished, genuinely hot when needed; much the same can be said for his confreres like reedman John Otto and trombonist Dave Bock. Lovely note by Grosz, by the way.

PETER VACHER

BILL EVANS

PEACE PIECES

Dream Covers 6093 71:41

Bill Evans was to the 'fifties through to the 'seventies what Teddy Wilson had been to the previous generation. Stylistically and harmonically they were very different but they shared many

attributes. Both were immediately identifiable, with a superb touch and an ability to produce long, flowing, lyrical lines. Both achieved a distillation and summation of their respective eras. Both left an unfillable hole at the end of their careers.

This CD has Evans in his late twenties-early thirties at the height of his abilities: accomplished performer, creative improviser, original and imaginative composer. These fourteen titles demonstrate the range of his compositional talents – from the beautiful, tender *Waltz For Debbie* (the solo version is I think preferable to the one in which Cannonball Adderley's aggressive four-four contribution spoils the mood) via the complexities of *Interplay* which explores the interlacing of bass, guitar, piano and trumpet lines, the unexpectedly down-to-earth evocation of the blues on *No Cover, No Minimum*, the meditative rendering of what sounds to my ears like birdsong over a hypnotic ground-bass figure in *Peace Piece*, to *Five* with its sort of refined Monk-ish theme.

Despite Evans' at that time recent involvement with the Miles Davis group that included Adderley, I feel the altoist is less than happy on his two tracks, whereas Freddie Hubbard's Davis-inspired trumpet is entirely compatible.

But the ten trio tracks, all with drummer Paul Motian, several with bassist Chuck Israels, present the pianist in his most comfortable habitat making beautiful music.

HUGH LEDIGO

## ADVERTISING FEATURE

## GENEVA BRASS

Having started life in a North Yorkshire workshop, Geneva Instruments' steady rise to international acclaim is one that makes the brass instrument manufacturer proud of their growth over a short period of time and enthusiastic about the company's bright future.

Geneva Instruments started in 2000 when company founder, Tim Oldroyd set out with the objective and goal to produce a range of trumpets and flugel horns that met the high musical demands of the modern day player. Tim coupled that with producing trumpets with a craftsmanship and build quality that he felt many other instrument manufacturers had started to overlook and disregard.

After consultation and advice from some of the world's leading trumpet players Tim developed a range of trumpets that he was confident everyone from the finest horn players to the enthusiastic hobbyist would appreciate and enjoy the feel, response and character of the 'Geneva sound'.

Speaking on the design and build quality of the trumpets, company founder and instrument designer, Tim Oldroyd said, 'We find that when we meet traders and customers for the first time they're always impressed with our passion for our products and the brass musical instrument industry in general. We're in

times when many musicians are questioning the quality and standard of instruments being produced. Geneva Trumpets are certainly bucking that trend and anyone who chooses to play Geneva is guaranteed that passion and finesse has been poured into every instrument.'

Having amassed an enviable list of trumpet endorsees and artists, the Geneva Instruments family is growing month on month. Geneva Instruments Marketing Director, Duncan Cartledge remarked, 'There is a great amount of interest in our trumpet range and a lot of confidence in our products that is abetted by endorsements from the great artists we have playing our instruments. We're proud to work with artists such as Steve Waterman, Gerard Presencer, Rory Simmonds of Jamie Cullum's band and the recently appointed principal trumpet of the RPO, James Fountain, to name a few.'

Following the same fastidious approach in the development of trumpets, Tim once again sought out the advice and opinions of the finest exponents from the brass band movement and began developing a full range of traditional British brass band instruments. It was important that the quality of this range of Geneva Instruments paralleled that now expected of the Geneva Instruments brand and the company's brass band range of instruments is now regarded as one of the leading brands of brass band instruments all over the world with many



Gerard Presencer

international solo artists and bands choosing Geneva instruments, including the world famous Brighouse and Rastrick band.

In addition to the dedication to the character and sound of each product, the build quality, plus the ongoing research and development of instruments, Geneva Instruments prides itself on providing an unparalleled customer service for each and every one of its clients.

Duncan added, 'We look to provide an exclusive and personal service for all our customers so that they are able to make a more informed choice when selecting a new instrument. Our sales team is available to meet with players so that they can try our products in their rehearsal rooms or at home. The instruments can also be tailor made to fit your personality or preference with a vast array of instrument options and finishes that include 24K gold plate, platinum, satin or bright silver plate that ensure that your

Geneva trumpet is as individual as our customer service is to you.'

Duncan continued, 'Our customers are important to us and every Geneva Trumpet sold comes with a lifetime guarantee, free annual service and first year's insurance free. We are dedicated to surpassing the expectations our customers have of an instrument manufacturer and support them in maintaining their instrument for many years of happy music making.'

The Geneva Instruments team believe that the passion and dedication they have for developing and promoting what are widely regarded to be some of the finest instruments around is evident in the look, feel and playability of their products and that is passed on to every customer all over the world who chooses Geneva Instruments.

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# RON SIMPSON'S ROUND-UP OF RECENT CDS

**Bill Perkins** is usually labelled a cool tenor saxist, maybe from the company he kept in California in the 1950s, but to me his playing is far more muscular and robust than that, though he has a tender way with a ballad, as on *A Hundred Years from Today* from *On Stage*, one of the 1955/56 albums on **FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** (Avid AMSC 1121: 2 CDs, 79.59/79.03). *The Five* (Perkins, Conte Candoli and rhythm playing Shorty Rogers arrangements) and *On Stage*, an octet album and the only one released simply as a Bill Perkins group, are fine, but the meat of the set comes with the two albums featuring tenor stars: *The Brothers* (Al Cohn, Richie Kamuca and Perkins on a classy set of originals by Cohn, Perkins and the likes of Nat Pierce) and *Tenors Head-on* (just Kamuca and Perkins, looser, less arranged, with cracking versions of standards such as *Cotton Tail* and *I Want a Little Girl*). **Stan Getz** shows the cooler side of tenor sax mastery on **THE COMPLETE INTERPRETATIONS SESSIONS** (Essential Jazz Classics EJC 55661: 2 CDs, 78.18/79.31), urbane chamber jazz, perfect in its way, with Bob Brookmeyer on valve trombone

on three Norgram albums from 1954. There are a couple of Brookmeyer originals (more on the bonus tracks with a similar group) and a rousing romp through *It Don't Mean a Thing* (two takes), but mainly the album is full of melodic treatments of lovely standards such as *The Nearness of You* and *Give Me the Simple Life*. Apart from Nat Hentoff's enthusiastic *Down Beat* review, I can't find much evidence of acclaim for *Interpretations*: maybe players and audience are too firmly in their comfort zones. On the other hand **THE BRIDGE** (EJC 55663: 73.28) attained instant classic status as the album **Sonny Rollins** made in 1962 after his three-year lay-off woodshedding on the Williamsburg Bridge. Though he did not unveil a whole new method, the authority and freedom of his improvisation on challenging originals and soulful ballads – notably a beautiful treatment of *God Bless the Child* – announced his return. The piano-less quartet (the admirable Jim Hall on guitar) leaves plenty of space for Rollins. The bonus tracks are very well chosen: two from the album performed on Ralph Gleason's television show and two numbers from his next studio album, including a bold 12-

minute deconstruction of *If Ever I Should Leave You*. **LUSH LIFE** (DreamCovers 6092: 77.40) is a somewhat controversial album in **John Coltrane's** output. Released in 1961 after he had left Prestige, it was made up of unreleased tracks from three late-1950s sessions, put together without Trane's approval – and, of course, by then his music had moved on. On the other hand, musically it's excellent. The 15-minute title track is outstanding, with poised and delicate work from Trane, Red Garland and Donald Byrd, but my favourite tracks are the trio performances with Earl May and Arthur Taylor (the pianist didn't show up), from a melodic and harmonic exploration of *Like Someone in Love* to a trademark slow blues. The DreamCovers reissue fills up with more tracks from the same sessions. Yet another tenor saxist, **Sandy Mosse** is another of Jordi Pujol's forgotten men re-released – and, like most of them, he is well worth a listen, but hardly a neglected jazz genius. **RELAXIN' WITH SANDY MOSSE** (Fresh Sound FSR CD 845: 77.56) foregrounds the single album he made under his own name (1958) with a good quintet (Junior Mance or Eddie Higgins on piano) and additional unhelpful strings on some tracks. Mosse is an attractive player, in a sort of underplayed post-Lester Young style, with a nice way with a ballad melody, but after re-hearing so many tenor greats it all seems a bit lightweight, with the exception of an extended *Birks Works* with fine piano from Mance. Also here are the Cy Touff album, *Touff Assignment* (Touff's accomplished bass trumpet added to the Mosse quintet) and some tracks from an earlier album entitled *Chicago Scene*, with Mosse and guitarist Jimmy Gourlay making the most impression.

Moving on to the alto sax, **COMPLETE LIVE IN TOKYO 1963** (Solar 4569956: 3 CDs, 75.00/69.15) by the **Cannonball Adderley Sextet** is highly recommendable. The extracts from three concerts in Tokyo have long been available and much admired, but here we have the first release on CD of an earlier concert: exact date and

venue unknown. The sextet, with the dynamic Louis Hayes on drums and Yusef Lateef adding so much variety to the front line (including that rarity, successful jazz oboe), is on superb form in these concerts, ranging from standards to new 'Japanese' pieces, following an eerie *Primitivo* with a blistering *Work Song*. **MIDNIGHT SUN** (DreamCovers 6091: 78.39) is a 1960 **Lou Donaldson** album for Blue Note that epitomises the label: straight-ahead hard bop, powerful and economical alto sax, some thoughtful ballad playing, but still with a hard edge. Mysteriously, DreamCovers underplays the second album, *Blues Walk* (1958), much the more distinctive and exciting of the two. Only conga player Ray Barretto appears on both, with Donaldson's regular pianist, Herman Foster, showing up on *Blues Walk* to splendidly idiosyncratic effect. An appropriately blues-drenched title track, a headlong assault on Denzil Best's great flagwaver *Move* and a moody *Autumn Nocturne* are highlights of the album. **FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** (Avid AMSC 1151: 2 CDs, 79.54/80.00) by **Phil Woods** is about the best introduction to his 1950s work that you'll get. Unlike the *Three Classic Albums Plus 1* reviewed recently, these are all proper Phil Woods albums and they are wonderfully varied. *Woodlore* finds him relaxed and sunny, the only horn in a quartet playing a mix of originals and standards. *Pairing Off* – the best of the four in my book – is a robustly competitive hard-blowing session with two altos (Woods and Gene Quill) and two trumpets (Kenny Dorham and Donald Byrd) backed by a terrific rhythm section in four Woods originals. *Sugan* finds him in compatible company (Red Garland and Ray Copeland) in a mix of Parker favourites and originals. *Rights of Swing* (a bit later – 1961) is a five movement suite composed by Woods and conducted by Quincy Jones: the notes refer to 'third stream', but it stays firmly on the jazz side of things, often quite melodic, with good solos all round (including Julius Watkins on French horn).

Jerome Kern's dislike of jazz



musicians messing around with his beautiful melodies is well known, but he might have made an exception for **Kenny Drew** on the rather misleadingly re-titled **THE COMPLETE JEROME KERN/RODGERS & HART SONGBOOKS** (Phono 870230: 77.36), made up of two 1957 LPs. Accompanied only by bassist Wilbur Ware on *I Love Jerome Kern*, Drew treats a dozen of Kern's best with kid gloves, decorating them with elaborate ornamentation that might have appealed to Kern's European/romantic sensibilities. With Philly Joe Jones added, *Jazz Impressions of Pal Joey* is a much more robust affair with much more appeal to a jazz audience – and what great tunes! Popular songs don't come better than *Bewitched* or *I Could Write a Book* – and they aren't even among *Pal Joey's* three greatest hits! **SOLO FLIGHT** (Phoenix 131606: 77.40) highlights the remarkable work of **Charlie Christian**, mainly with the **Benny Goodman Sextet**. As a pioneer of the electric guitar, his single-line improvisations a foretaste of bebop, he recast the jazz landscape in a mere three years on the national scene before his early death. These tracks are from broadcasts from 1939 to 1941, with bonus tracks from a jam session with the Jerry Jerome Quartet. There are two main small groups here (personnel

listings are not completely reliable): the sextet with Goodman as the only horn and Lionel Hampton on vibes and the seven-piece with no Hamp, but a front-line of Cootie Williams and Georgie Auld (and often Gene Krupa on drums). Both groups swing like mad, the combination of BG, Hamp and Christian threatening spontaneous combustion on *Flying Home* and *Gone with What Wind* and Krupa powering a dynamic *Air Mail Special*.

It's always a pleasure to come across a really impressive new release by someone I've never heard of. Though the members of his quartet (Peter Zak, Neal Caine and Jason Marsalis) are familiar, North Carolinian tenor saxist **Stephen Riley** is new to me. He has released other albums on SteepleChase before **BAUBLES, BANGLES AND BEADS** (SCCD 31792: 64.13), but even so all I could find on the internet, apart from a few album reviews and listings, was a blog about Great Unknowns! Most of his material comes from the Great American Songbook, though Robert Johnson and Hank Williams songs produce forays into blues and country. The opening title song begins with the breathiest tenor since Ben Webster, but the strongest influence, it seems to me, is Paul Gonsalves. His treatments of the

songs are respectful, but seldom totally conventional. Jerome Kern's *Who?* is typical, the opening quirkily jagged before bouncing into the melody at a healthy romp – or *Bewitched*, with Riley's delicate tenor sharing the melody with Caine's bass. Recorded in Spain over 2013-2014, **TRADEMARK** (Losen Records LOS 120-2: 47.46) is an always interesting trio record, very much the work of Norwegian guitarist **Christer Fredriksen** who wrote all the tunes and produced. The liner notes' emphasis on the variety of the material is justified, with aggressive, almost rocky numbers (Bjorn Stiauren a very upfront drummer) succeeded by typically Scandinavian outdoor sounds. The presence of Spanish saxist Perico Sambeat on four numbers is a real bonus. On *Let the Dead Man Sleep* the interplay between him, Fredriksen and bassist Audun Ramo builds to a climax before he gently leads the way on the evocative final track, *Thirteen*. **Wadada Leo Smith's THE GREAT LAKES SUITES** (TUM CD 041-2: 2 CDs, 41.46/48.35) is an impressive project, if rather too *avant garde* for my taste. The plural of 'suites' is important: each of the six movements (he adds in Lake St. Clair) is a sort of mini-suite, combining written composition with free improvisation. In his own words Smith seeks to combine flatness with volatility, often broad melodies from his trumpet and/or Henry Threadgill on alto sax or flute over busy figures from Jack de Johnette and the remarkable bassist John Lindberg. Smith's own playing combines lyricism with a whole range of smears and bent notes. And TUM Records deserve an award for the magnificent presentation, including a booklet

that contains colour photos, information on the Great Lakes, detailed biogs, explanations of the music and poems by Wadada Leo Smith! ECM, on the other hand, supplies only basic information to go with pages of pics for **Chris Potter's** ambitious **IMAGINARY CITIES** (ECM 2387: 71.30). The album is built round a four-movement suite which takes about half the playing time. The 'Underground Orchestra' contains a string quartet along with a seven-piece jazz unit (Potter the only horn) and what is most striking to me is the quality of Potter's writing for the strings, as in the almost Bachian opening to the first track, *Lament*. Elsewhere Bartok is an influence and the whole thing forms a pretty successful fusion of jazz and classical music. Potter as ever plays with great range, intelligence and controlled intensity and there are telling contributions from the likes of guitarist Adam Rogers and Steve Nelson on marimba. Finally, **LIVE** (Stunt STUCD 14152: 57.42) by the **Dorado + Amati Schmitts Group**, recorded last year in Copenhagen, is yet another example of high-quality gypsy jazz. Dorado, established as a guitarist/violinist/composer, has added his son, Amati, on guitar in recent years. The band makes no secret of the tradition it belongs to, with four Django compositions out of 11 tracks. On the evidence of this CD the Schmitts' own compositions tend towards the rhapsodic: Amati's *Ballade Amati* is very much in the tradition of Django's *Nuages* (also on the album) and Dorado's *Tendresse* lives up to its name, with poignant violin. But the Schmitts also display high-speed virtuosity, as on the band's romp through *Shine* following a teasingly slow introduction.



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