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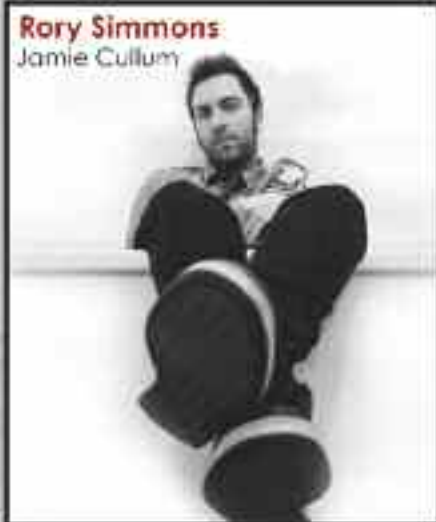


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Photo by Katja Toivola

LEROY JONES (PAGE 8)

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UPFRONT

NO TITLEY, BUT SPIRIT LIVES ON

When it first started, Titley Jazz Festival was seen as a successor to the sadly-missed Appleby Jazz Festival. Now Titley has ceased to be, but the spirit lives on. In the introduction to the new Llandudno Jazz Festival's website, the festival is proud to put itself in the direct line from Appleby and Titley.

The new festival (July 24-26) in a marquee in Bodafon Fields fills three days from midday to nearly midnight with single-set concerts by 40 of the top British musicians. Themed concerts pay tribute to Cannonball Adderley, George Shearing, John Coltrane, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and the Ernie Wilkins Big Band. As always the list of musicians serves as a reminder of the quality on today's British jazz scene: a random selection includes Peter King, Dave O'Higgins, Denys Baptiste, Anita Wardell, Art Themen, Alan Barnes, Mark Nightingale, Steve Brown, Jamie Brownfield and Andy Cleyndert.

As well as the intensive programme on the Main Stage, Fringe events around the town of Llandudno feature the Big Chris Barber Band and the Digby Fairweather Quartet among others.

Tel.: 01492 872000
www.llandudnojazzfestival.com

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JAZZ AT THE CONCORDE

Wednesday Jazz at Eastleigh's Concorde Club is a little irregular in the Summer months. On July 8 the Main Club session is replaced by free admission jazz in the Moldy Fig with Dave Shepherd and Paul Francis, then on July 29, August 26 and September 3 there is no jazz. In between, however, there is plenty of good music. On July 15 the 19-piece Bratislava Hot Serenaders hold the floor, followed by the Bateman Brothers' Tribute to the Louis Armstrong All Stars with Maggie Reeday (22). August brings the Dutch Swing College Band (5), the Kourosh Kanani Quartet (12) and a celebration of the 45th Anniversary of the Concorde (19). On its opening in Stoneham Lane the club featured the Alex Welsh Band. In this celebration a top-class band plays in a similar style: Rico Tomasso, Roy Williams, Julian Marc Stringle, Martin Litton, Dave Green and Bobby Worth. Meanwhile Sunday Jazz is pretty much undisturbed, though on July 12 Fanfare for the Few, an all-afternoon show with Swing Unlimited Big Band, takes over. Regular traditional-style

bands fill the rest of July and August: John Maddocks' Jazzmen (July 19), Muskrat Ramblers (26), Westside Syncopators (Aug. 2), Cuff Billett's New Europa Jazz Band (9), Bob Dwyer's Bix and Pieces (16), Brian White's French Quarter All Stars (23) and the Solent City Jazzmen (30).
Tel.: 023 8061 3989
www.theconcordeclub.com

JURASSIC JAZZ

Swanage Jazz Festival (July 10-12) bills itself as 'great jazz on the beautiful Jurassic Coast' and once again has an impressive line-up for a Summer weekend. A mere sample comes up with the names of Keith Nichols' Blue Devils, the Laurie Chescoe Reunion Band, Martin Litton's Red Hot Peppers, the Hot Jazz Alliance, Ben Holder, Spats Langham, the Stan Tracey Dynasty Octet, Alan Barnes Reed Breed Octet, Jean Toussaint, Art Blakey Project and Karen Sharp-Robert Fowler Quintet Plays Al and Zoot.
Tel.: 01929 422215
www.swanagejazz.org

BUDE JAZZ

Bude Jazz 2015 (September 1-4) has the usual packed line-up of



Jean Toussaint

bands and musicians of a generally traditional persuasion. Some of the names featured this year are Bob Dwyer's Bix and Pieces, Dave Stradwick's Sussex Jazz Kings, Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen, Jeff Barnhart's St. Austell Tribute Jazz Band, Jeremy

Huggett's Band of Gold with Jim Fryer, Men Behaving Tradly, Reeds United and the Remi Harris Trio with John Hallam.
Tel.: 01288 355694
www.jazzfestivalbude.co.uk

KING PLEASURE AT THE FESTIVALS

July sees King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys at the Ascona Jazz Festival in Switzerland (3-5), followed by the Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival (9) and the Truck Festival, Steventon (17), followed in August by the Y Not Festival in Matlock (2) and Silda Jazz Festival in Norway (6-9). An earlier visit to Norway takes the band to Havly Pensjonat and Cafe in Bremanger (July 12-13). Other Summer dates include Woking Park (July 11 - lunch-time), Astor Theatre, Deal (11 - evening), Walsall Arboretum (19), St. George's Guildhall, Kings Lynn (24), Lynton Town Hall (31) and the Lowry, Salford (Aug. 11).
Tel.: 0121 454 7020
www.kingpleasureandthebiscuitboys.com

40 YEARS OF NORTH SEA JAZZ

The first North Sea Jazz Festival included performances from such jazz legends as Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy Gillespie and Count Basie. Sadly these are no longer with us, but for this year's 40th festival (July 10-12) five artists from the first festival return to Rotterdam as part of the Founding Fathers of '76 series. Drummer Han Bennick played on the opening day of the first festival and pianist Randy Weston, alto saxophonist Lee Konitz, saxophonist Hans Dulfer and drummer John Engels also took part in 1976. In 2015 they share the headlines with Melody Gardot, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Joshua Redman, Marcus Miller, Terence Blanchard, Jamie Cullum, Dianne Reeves, Roy Hargrove and many others.
www.northseajazz.com/en/

SAME VENUE, NEW NAME FOR THE WATERMILL

Watermill Jazz at Dorking continues in the same venue, now re-christened the Aviva Sports and Social Club following the merger between Aviva and Friends Life. The Julian Arguelles Septet plays the club on July 9, followed by the Jim Mullen Organ Trio (16), the Mark Nightingale/Ben Castle Quintet (23) and the Brandon Allen Quartet (30). August gigs arranged so far feature the Man Overboard Quintet led by violinist Thomas Gould (13) and

the Humphrey Lyttelton Band (20). The Watermill is looking forward to September 10 when the club room will accommodate two grand pianos for solo/duo performances from Gwilym Simcock and Michael Wollny. Free entry jam sessions are on the afternoons of July 5 and August 2.
Tel.: 07415 815784
www.watermilljazz.co.uk

EFG LONDON JAZZ FESTIVAL

The EFG London Jazz Festival (November 13-22) has just announced a second wave of bookings to add to such big

names as Kurt Elling, Cassandra Wilson, the Average White Band and James Farm. Singers figure largely, with Melody Gardot at the Royal Festival Hall and Cecile McLorin Salvant and Juliet Kelly, both at the Cadogan Hall. Also announced (among many others) are Maceo Parker, the Steve Gadd Band and Andy Sheppard. Alex Webb's theatrical presentation of the songs of Billy Strayhorn, *Lush Life*, unites singers David McAlmont and Allan Harris with the Frank Griffith Festival Tentet.
www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

80 IS JUST A NUMBER...

John Critchinson, who celebrated his 80th birthday last December, is returning to a classic jazz piano trio with Dave Green and Trevor Tomkins. As leader and sideman Critch has played with a Who's Who of the finest British players, notably Ronnie Scott with whom he worked for 16 years, and an impressive roster of trans-Atlantic stars, such as Chet Baker, Johnny Griffin, Bud Shank, Michael Brecker, Joe Henderson and many more. Now, as well as his many other commitments, he looks to pay tribute to the great jazz piano stylists.
www.johncritchinson.com

RETROSPECTIVE

Booklet notes written by Digby Fairweather: Jazz trumpeter and author, founder and lifelong patron of the National Jazz Archive

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St Albans Arena
29th October | 01757354488

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Rose Theatre Kingston
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Malvern Festival Theatre
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The Concorde Club*
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RNCM, Manchester
11th November | 0161 987 5200

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5



Robert Glasper

UPCOMING
EVENTS

The Robert Glasper Trio has a short tour of the UK in August with the slogan, ‘The next experiment is a return to jazz.’ Glasper is joined by bassist Vicente Archer and drummer Damion Reed for concerts at the Manchester Jazz Festival (8), Brecon Jazz Festival (9), Edinburgh International Festival (10) and Ronnie Scott’s as part of the International Piano Trio Festival (12-14).
www.serious.org.uk/robertglasper

Abersoch Jazz Weekend (September 25-27) at the South Caernarvonshire Yacht Club features, among others, the Amy Roberts and Richard Exall Quintet, Kevin Grenfell’s International Jazz Giants with Paul Harrison, Martin Bennett’s Old Green River Band and a Gospel Service led by Canon Ron Cassidy with the Pwllheli Band and Marcia Pendlebury.
Tel.: 01758 712929

In association with the City of London Festival, the Royal Exchange, a historic building full of luxury boutiques and restaurants, is staging a series of jazz performances by up-and-coming singers from July 6 to 10. The event, supported by Jazz FM, features singers such as Jonathan Carr, Emily Dankworth, Noemi Nuti, Claire Phoenix and Jess Radcliffe.

Graham Brook’s Tuesday Jazz and Swing at Wilmslow Conservative Club continues on July 7 with Mike Hall and the Andrzej Baranek Trio. Then the Vinnie Parker Trio accompanies two pairs of top saxophonists: Alan Barnes and Greg Abate (14) and Amy Roberts and John Hallam (21). After the Brownfield Byrne Quintet (28), September brings Tom Kincaid solo (4), Paul Sawtell with the Andrzej Baranek Trio (11) and John Hallam/the Masked Jazzman/Tom Kincaid Trio (18). Over at Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club the Sinatra Swingers are joined by guest singers Loretta Scott (August 6) and Rosie Harrison (September 3).
Tel.: 01625 528336



John Hallam

Folkestone Jazz Club at the Tower Theatre, Shorncliffe, has a fine programme for July and August: Clark Tracey Quintet (July 7), Digby Fairweather/Julian Marc Stringle (16), the Tony Kofi Quartet (23), Rachael Hutchings with the Cliff Hall Trio (30), Theo Travis Quartet (Aug. 6), Nigel Price Trio (13), Dave Barry Quartet (20) and the Craig Milverton Quartet (25).
Tel.: 01303 277175

Hull Truck Theatre starts its Jazz Festival on July 23 with the New York Brass Band and finishes on July 26 with the Zoe Gilby Quintet and the Jazz Festival Brunch. In between are performances by Clare Teal and her Trio with the songs of Doris Day, A Love Supreme with Gary Crosby and Denys Baptiste, and A Dread Supreme.
Tel.: 01482 323638
www.hulltruck.co.uk

In July and August Plymouth Jazz Club holds only two of its regular fortnightly Sunday evening sessions in the Royal British Legion Club, Crownhill: Jazz Company with veteran Plymouth saxophonist Terry Sloggett (July 5) and John Hallam and John Wurr with the Craig Milverton Trio (August 2). Replacing the normal sessions in the other two

weeks are the club’s special summer events. On Saturday July 18 Jazz on a Summer’s Evening sees the club decamp to Buckland Abbey for jazz from 6.00 to 11.00, plus a Hog Roast and assorted refreshments. The jazz is provided by John Maddocks’ Jazzmen and Richard Leach’s 7 Stars of Jazz. Then, on the early evening of August 16, the Riverboat Shuffle up the River Tamar has music, appropriately enough, from the Tamar Jazz Band led by Malcolm Hurrell.
Tel.: 01752 721179
www.plymouth-jazz-club.org.uk

Tipitina can be heard at the Mockingbird as part of the Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival (July 9), Roa Island Jazz Club (11) and Otterton Mill, Budleigh Salterton (August 20).
Tel.: 0121 454 7020

Serious brings star bassist Marcus Miller to the UK for a major tour in October: Liverpool Philharmonic (19), the Sage Gateshead (20), Usher Hall, Edinburgh (22), Bridgewater Hall, Manchester (23), Cork Jazz Festival (24), the Barbican, London (26), the Corn Exchange, Cambridge (27) and Birmingham Town Hall (28).
www.serious.org.uk

THE LAWRENCES’ JAZZ WEEKENDS 1990-2015

July 17 at the Mercure Whately Hall Hotel in Banbury sees the final event in one of the longest-running and successful enterprises in British traditional jazz: the Denise and Tony Lawrence Jazz Weekends. Starting in 1990, the Lawrences’ jazz weekends built up in number to 20 a year by the late 1990s and remained consistently at 12 or more annually and, as Tony pointed out in mid-June, the last two weekends were sold out in advance.

So the decision to retire from festival organisation and jazz in general has nothing to do with dwindling support. One reason is simply feeling that this is the right time, a wish not to go on too long (Tony hints that some jazzmen do, but is too polite to name names!) and above all the feeling that 25 years of booking bands, negotiating with hotels, driving all over the country and loading and unloading PA systems is enough for anyone! Also it has become harder to present events that have an individual character when, these days, jazz musicians are more likely to play in several bands. The Lawrences have tried hard for variety in their jazz weekends: not easy when the musicians you associate with Band A show up with Band B! Tony also sees a problem that young musicians, good players as they are, do not bring their own audience, with the ageing demographic of the public for traditional jazz (and possibly all jazz).

On the other hand Tony has nothing but praise for the bands he and Denise have booked over the years. 400 or so festivals each involving an average of three other bands means that they have booked well over 1000 bands - and he is astonished and proud that no band has ever showed up late!

Tony is insistent that he and Denise have been very lucky, having travelled the world playing jazz. Some of us would ascribe it more to their hard work and disciplined approach, but he tells the story of their start in jazz where luck certainly stepped in. He was a pharmacist and read in a trade magazine of a major company wishing to recruit musicians for a traditional jazz band. The editor of the magazine was Denise not-yet-Lawrence. The result was that Tony and Denise met and got married as well as touring such exotic locations as Malta, Hawaii and Hong Kong with the Apothecaries of Jazz, sponsored by Winpharm.

Over 30 years of running their own band began with the Storeville Tickle and the Reading Jazz Club, playing with fine guest stars such as Alan Elsdon, Bruce Turner, Johnny van Derrick, Roy Williams and Digby Fairweather. Then came the jazz weekends. At one time many were under the aegis of Warners which involved lunch-time and evening sessions, but, since those ended some 10 years ago, the Lawrences have happily settled for the upmarket end of jazz weekends, with 4-star hotels and a relaxing time-table - at least for the guests!

And now, they reckon, it’s time to go out on a high, with sell-out weekends and a band Tony describes as the best they have had.

Jazz events at the Stables, Wavendon, include the Dutch Swing College Band (July 11), Alec Dankworth’s Spanish Accents featuring Emily Dankworth and Jesus Olmedo (16), Ginger Baker’s Jazz Confusion (August 30), the Big Chris Barber Band (September 3), Juliet Kelly (15), Martin Taylor (16) and 100 Years of Jazz in 99 Minutes with a sextet including Enrico Tomasso, Pete Long and Richard Pite (20).
Tel.: 01908 280800
www.stables.org

The next dates on *Lady Sings the Blues*’ celebration of Billie Holiday’s centenary, with Val Wiseman and an all-star sextet, are at Burton Agnes Jazz Festival (July 4), Birmingham Library Studio Theatre (10) and the Tivoli Theatre, Wimborne (24).
Tel.: 0121 454 7020

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LEROY JONES – KEEPER OF THE FLAME

The New Orleans trumpeter looks forward to his October/November tour of the UK with Joe Stilgoe and Ian Shaw.



This is a major tour. Is this your first tour of the UK on this scale?

Actually, the first tour I've ever done on this scale of the UK was in 1994, with my quintet, as the opening act for Harry Connick Jr's *She Tour*. Practically all the concerts were performed before a capacity audience. We played London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Newcastle, Manchester, Nottingham and Brighton. I think my favourite venue was the Royal Albert Hall, in London. What was interesting though, is that my quintet seemed to have been more appreciated than the main act. Harry had recently switched gears, recording and touring music outside of his jazz routes. His album *She* consists of original material, more along a New Orleans funk, soul and R&B nature. Most of the audience was expecting the style of music where he gained his popularity, a swing, à la Sinatra musical genre. My ensemble provided more of what they desired. Although, whenever Harry would change the mode and bring me and

trombonist Lucien Barbarin center stage to give the audience an interlude, a bit of old New Orleans, with classic tunes like *St. James Infirmary* and *Basin Street Blues*, the crowd went wild.

I had also toured the UK earlier, with Harry, when he was strictly doing the big band thing, circa 1990-93. Of course I was in the trumpet section, surrounded by 16 other talented young musicians from New Orleans and various other parts of the US. I must share with you one of the funniest moments I can remember when we were on the road.

Whenever we tour domestically, we travel via tour bus. The same held for the European legs, after crossing the big pond by air. It's early on, during our first run through the US and everyone is just getting to know each other.

One late afternoon, before heading to the venue for sound check, guitarist Russell Malone pulled a prank I'll never forget. This particular day I happened to

be standing near the bus, chatting with our road manager, Jack Hylen and trumpeter Jeremy Davenport, when Russell walks up to us, interrupting the conversation with a look on his face as if he'd seen a ghost. Suddenly he fell to the ground, on his back, flopping around like a cockroach that's been hit with some bug spray, eyes rolling to the white part and foam oozing out the side of his mouth. Jeremy became quite visibly frightened for him, as Jack and I were shocked and somewhat worried ourselves. We thought he might be having a seizure. Just as Jack was about to call for paramedics, Russell popped up from his back, almost as quickly as he went down, straightened himself up, pointing his finger at us, chuckling and saying, 'Got ya.' Well you you can imagine we didn't find it that funny initially. I think Jeremy really almost had a heart attack. Afterwards he told us he had placed a couple of Alka-Seltzer tablets underneath his tongue just before approaching us. It was an exceptional performance!

Partnering you with Joe Stilgoe and Ian Shaw is certainly interesting. I guess this owes something to your success with Harry Connick. Who had the idea originally?

This definitely owes something to my success with HCJ. Not to mention, Joe and Ian are household names in the UK. It's great to extend the New Orleans tradition to Britain and to do it with British musicians. I admire their music and Joe and Ian are huge fans of mine. The credit for the idea of this collaboration and tour concept goes to Alexander Fane, of Fane Management. I'm delighted to have recently signed with this UK based artist management company.

Do you know yet what form the concerts will take?

Most likely the form of the concerts will be Leroy Jones Quintet, special guests, LJQ, a finale number with special guests.

Is the line-up for the band finalised?

Yes! The band personnel is finalized. And I'm excited to be accompanied by some of the finest young British musicians on the scene, like the great percussionist Pedro Segundo, who has recently been on tour with Bryan Ferry. Completing the stellar lineup are guitarist David Archer, contra bassist Fergus Ireland and Finnish born trombonist, Katja Toivola.

What can British audiences expect from you, Joe, Ian and the band?

The audiences can expect this: The concerts will probably open with the quintet performing some New Orleans instrumental traditional jazz standards and some with vocals from yours truly, with also the possibility of a couple of original compositions and a few mainstream standards. At some point before midway into the concert, Joe and/or Ian will be introduced and probably perform a couple of numbers on their own with the band, concluding with a tune where I will join them. They exit, the quintet plays a couple more selections, then concluding with an encore number, Joe and/or Ian joining in, on perhaps something like *When The Saints Go Marching In*.

Writing about the French Quarter Festival, one of our contributors, Peter Vacher, referring to yourself and other musicians, said that New Orleans has always been a trumpet town. Do you agree?

I agree. New Orleans has always been considered a trumpet town. That legacy dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, from Buddy Bolden, to Joe 'King' Oliver, to Bunk Johnson, to Louis Armstrong, to Wynton Marsalis, to yours truly, to Kermit Ruffins, several between and to follow. But I must say that New Orleans has also been a drummer town, when you consider Baby Dodds,



Freddie Kholman, Ernest Elly, James Black, Idris Mohammed, Joseph 'Smokey' Johnson, Earl Palmer, Bob French, Zigaboo Modeliste, Johnny Vidacovich, Stanton Moore, Shannon Powell, Herlin Riley and Gerald French, to name a few. I remember when I first took up a musical instrument, in school band, the majority of the other children picked either the cornet or drums. With all due respect to that popular upper brass instrument, ultimately drums and rhythm remain synonymous with New Orleans.

What was the first jazz you remember hearing?

The first jazz I remember hearing was via LPs and a few 78s my parents had and played on phonograph; the music of Louis Armstrong, the Olympia Brass Band, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Shorty Rogers, Al Hirt and Billy Butterfield.

My folks had an old stereo in our garage that they had passed on to me, where I would practise. Every weekday, when I came home from school, during the late afternoon, my usual routine was to do my homework, then hit the garage with my horn and woodshed for a couple hours until dinner time. After the meal with the family I'd practise some more, until my mom called me in to get ready for bed and the next day. I would practise four, sometimes five hours a day.

Who are the New Orleans trumpet greats in your opinion?

In my opinion the current New Orleans trumpet greats are Wynton Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, Wendell Brunious, Gregg Stafford, Dalton Rousseau, Nicholas Payton, Leon 'Kid Chocolate' Brown, Tracy Griffin, David Decuir, Michael 'Patches' Stewart, Troy 'Trombone Shorty' Andrews, Kevin Louis, Glenn Hall, John Michael Bradford and other young up and coming talent

stimulated my spirit even before I picked up a musical instrument. Carmouche, who also employed the services of one of the real old-time pianists, Frank Moliere aka Lil' Daddy. I learned so much, greatly increasing my repertoire during my stint with Hollis and Lil' Daddy from 1978 through 1980. That was also when I began to sing. Lil' Daddy would sing a few songs. But aside from that, I was the only other vocalist in the band.

I did a two year tenure with the Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble from 1980 through 1982, making my first trip to Europe with them, to France during May of '82. I formed my own band, which was a quintet, called New Orleans' Finest and from 1980-85 we performed at all the famous jazz clubs on Bourbon Street in New Orleans. In November of 1982, I travelled to the Netherlands for a three week stay performing in Amsterdam and Gouda with my quintet. That group comprised Edward Frank on piano, Walter Payton bass, Shannon Powell drums, Lucien Barbarin on trombone and myself.

That would be late 1960s, I guess, so how many of the old-time musicians were still active?

Yes, late 1960s, early '70s. Many of the old-time musicians from New Orleans were still active, like the original members of the Olympia Brass Band, Onward Brass Band, Young Tuxedo Brass Band, Floyd Ankle's Majestic Brass Band, the Excelsior Brass Band, Kid Thomas Valentine, Louis Albert Cottrell Jr., Sweet Emma Barrett, Willie and Percy Humphrey, Alvin Alcorn, Kid Sheik Cola, Jack Willis, Waldren 'Frog' Joseph, Dave 'Fat Man' Williams, Frank 'Lil' Daddy' Moliere, Edward Frank, Albert 'June' Gardner and of course Danny Barker, to mention a few.

I even had the opportunity to play with some of them. When I was 18 years old, drummer June Gardner was the first one to let me sit in with his jazz band where they performed at a club on Bourbon Street called La Strada. He was always encouraging and unselfishly promoted young talent like myself and trombonist Lucien Barbarin. During that same time I also got to meet and hear a great pianist named Edward Frank, who performed nightly at a joint next door to the La Strada, called Mama Mia's. Ed would later become a great musical influence and perform with me on my debut album, *Mo' Cream From The Crop*.

In 1978 I landed my first steady gig at the Maison Bourbon, another jazz club on the strip, where I met clarinetist Hollis

Seated at the piano was the real old-time pianist, Frank Moliere aka Lil' Daddy. I learned so much, greatly increasing my repertoire during my stint with Hollis and Lil' Daddy from 1978 through 1980. That was also when I began to sing. Lil' Daddy would sing a few songs. But aside from that, I was the only other vocalist in the band.

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Southeast Asia was my base from July 1985-88 with Trevor Richard's Camellia Jazz Band, spending a year in residence at a five star hotel in Singapore. We also performed in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Borneo, Korea and the Philippines.

The end of the 80s brought me back home, once again to work the Bourbon Street circuit and get my foot into the door at Preservation Hall. Percy and his brother Willie Humphrey were very kind to me and from the encouragement of Bob French, would let me sit in with the band sometimes. Eventually I became a regular on Wednesday and Saturday nights, doing most of the solo work, as Mr. Percy was at a stage and age where he wasn't blowing the horn so much. This was more education for me! After the Humphrey brothers passed away I took over the band leader's duties at the Hall and have been a regular fixture there once a week with my own six piece band since the early 90s. Best of all, I've always had the liberty to continue going out on the road and returning to my seat at the historical music venue. This panned out perfectly,

for I joined Harry Connick Jr's orchestra in June of 1990 and periodically over the next seventeen years would tour the United States and abroad.

Did you listen to many of them on record?

Back then the only ones from that lot I really listened to on recording were the Olympia Brass Band, Young Tuxedo Brass Band and Louis Cottrell Jr. with Avery 'Kid' Howard's jazz band.

You started playing in public (even, I think, leading a band) at a very early age. How did that happen?

Well, I first got to play in public via the band program at St. Leo the Great Elementary School, between 1968-69, at the age of 10. But my first professional or 'paying' gig was at the Louisiana Jazz & Heritage Fair during the spring of 1971, with the Fairview Baptist Church Christian Marching Band, later to be known as the Fairview Brass Band. The following year the Heritage Fair's title was changed to the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and relocated to a larger venue at the Fairgrounds.

The band was a group of adolescents brought together by Danny Barker at the request of his pastor Rev. Andrew Darby of the Fairview Baptist Church in 1970. Mr. Barker and his wife Blue Lu were members of the church and lived in the neighbourhood around the corner from where I lived, grew up and had my start playing music. The church was located on the corner from my house, less than 70 feet away. Danny used to hear me practising the trumpet in my parents' garage and upon meeting me, discerned that I was mature for a young person and musician. He appointed me as leader of the Fairview band. By 1974 Mr. Barker had to cut us loose because of rumours being spread around town by some of his peers, basically stating that he was exploiting us. That was so untrue.

Anyway, by this time we were old enough to fend for ourselves. A new group was formed and Mr. Barker suggested that we be called the Hurricane Brass Band, because when we marched up

the streets we would blow like a storm. By 1977 some of the Hurricane band's personnel went on to become founders and core members of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band.

You have worked with an astonishing range of New Orleans musicians: from Danny Barker to Harry Connick. What have been the highlights for you?

I reckon the highlights thus far have been getting an opportunity to experience the life of a musician, an artist, at an early age and travel the world, making a living doing what I enjoy; meeting, collaborating with other musicians and bringing a lot of joy to the listening public.

I never actually played with Danny Barker's band. Although occasionally he did join in on his six string banjo with us at some of the Fairview band engagements. While in Vancouver, BC, towards the end of the summer of '83, I had the pleasure of a two week run with Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson in Gastown at the Anchor music club. Those days Mr. Vinson sang more. But when he'd bring his alto saxophone to his lips, his sound was sweet and his swing impeccable.

The World Exposition was held in New Orleans in 1984. A brand new Inter-Continental Hotel opened on St. Charles Avenue, featuring live jazz in one of its venues called Pete's Pub. I landed the gig there five nights a week with my quartet. During the grand opening ceremony and festivities, we had the honor of accompanying Ms. Della Reese. Now that woman could sing the blues.

What changes have you seen in New Orleans music – post-Katrina obviously, but not just post-Katrina?

I haven't really seen many changes in New Orleans music post-K or otherwise, with the exception of the influx of street musicians from other parts of the United States and even from abroad. These days the city's music and culture lures musicians and non-musicians in as if they're making a pilgrimage to Mecca. And many decide to stay.

Are you still New Orleans-based?

Yes. I reside in the historic Faubourg Tremé with my wife, Katja, and our miniature schnauzer, Tipitina.

What sort of a touring schedule do you have?

In recent years I haven't been on the road a whole lot. But I usually have some dates during the summer either with my trombone-playing wife's band in Finland or as a guest in Southern Europe with other musical associates. I've also been making annual appearances with my own aggregation in South America, specifically Brazil. They love the music from New Orleans down there. Although, this summer I will make a 4 week run through parts of the US with Harry Connick Jr. When I'm home, in New Orleans, I've a steady gig at Preservation Hall and perform at other local music venues.

Do you have any recording project planned?

I have plans to go into the studio and produce my next solo recording at some point before the end of 2015. It will be another independent release, with assistance from Threadhead Records.

Up to now what do you rate your most successful album?

Up to now I think the album I'd rate my most successful is *Sweeter than a Summer Breeze*. It was my fifth self-produced, independent release in 2009. Although the albums that put me on the map were *Mo' Cream From The Crop*, released under CBS/Sony Music Inc. in 1994 and *Props for Pops* in 1996.

www.leroyjonesuktour.com

SEE LEROY AT RNCM

Fane Management has kindly provided ONE PAIR of tickets for Leroy Jones at the Royal Northern College of Music on November 11th for a reader answering the following question and posting his/her answer to Leroy Jones Competition, P.O. Box 944, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8UT, or emailing admin@bigbearmusic.com by September 1st.

Which band, led by Percy and Willie Humphrey in the 1970s and later, at different times, by the Brunious brothers, has featured Leroy plus various of his musical associates such as Lucien Barbarin and Shannon Powell?

THE SURPRISING MELODY GARDOT

On Spring Bank Holiday Monday hundreds of reproduction bank notes were released from a roof top in Carnaby Street, London. RON SIMPSON explains their part in the always surprising career of singer/songwriter/guitarist/pianist MELODY GARDOT.



The bank notes (which Melody's PR people hastened to explain were biodegradable!) bore her image and could easily be dismissed as a mere publicity stunt for her latest CD, *Currency of Man*, reviewed in *Jazz Rag* 136 and available on Decca from June 1. And no doubt she was happy to draw attention to the CD and her appearance the following evening on *Later with Jools Holland*. However, the notes also related to the philosophical basis for *Currency of Man*: blank billboards had already appeared in London asking the questions, 'What is our worth? And how do we define it?' And her essay in the CD booklet specifically says, 'The currency of man is about the worth of our lives, a commentary of sorts.....'

No doubt the seriousness of her approach to her music, a sense of the sanctity of song, comes – at least in part – from the remarkable, even heroic, circumstances that effectively began her career as singer-songwriter. Born in Philadelphia in 1985, she studied fashion at the Community College there and played piano in bars (favoured repertoire Duke Ellington to The Mamas & The Papas!) before an accident in

November 2003 changed her life. While cycling, she was struck by a car whose driver had run a red light and suffered severe head and spinal injuries as a result of which she was confined to her hospital bed for a year.

But this is not just a story of a brave teenager rising above frightful injuries; it actually shaped her career. She was afflicted with memory loss and difficulty with speech, so an attending physician suggested that music might help her brain injury improve. Thus began the long process that led to her writing songs for the first time. So severe were her injuries that she is still troubled by them, most noticeably in her hypersensitivity to light – hence the permanent dark glasses – and for some years she travelled regularly with a physiotherapist. However, strange benefits accrued. Her sensitivity to sound meant that she could tolerate nothing louder than a whisper which has helped create her distinctive voice quality. At one stage, while re-learning how to walk, Melody found it too uncomfortable to play the piano and decided she must learn the guitar. Now, even on an album with a large string section or a considerable cast of top

rock/blues/country session players, she plays both guitar and piano.

No wonder Melody Gardot is an ardent, and vocal, advocate of the benefits of music therapy!

The next remarkable development in the life of Melody Gardot was the release of the album, *Worrisome Heart*, in 2006. Things happened at speed and by 2005 – a mere two years after the accident – she was recording the songs, all her own compositions, which became an independently issued album which was then taken up by Verve in 2008. The result: an instant world-wide success. Though it made less impact in the UK than her later albums, reaching Number 8 in France and going gold in Germany hinted at the beginning of a major international career. *My One and Only Thrill* (2009) hit Number 1 in Sweden, Number 2 in Norway and Number 4 in both France and Germany, while *The Absence* (2012) peaked at Number 1 in Norway and Number 3 in Sweden and France.

The idealism that characterises Melody's work is there in her very personal notes to *Worrisome Heart*: 'My only intention..was to make a record that at the end of the day I was happy with.' So, too, is the sense of wonder and surprise at the astonishing journey she has been on:

'We started recording in the early weeks of November. To be honest it was like something out of a dream. Every day I would wake up and pinch myself just to make sure I was awake and it was all really happening.

'One evening held particular significance for me when I realised the date: November 11th. Two years prior I was lying in a street, unable to move and being slammed into by the front end of a jeep. I thought back to the cold hospital and the insensitive doctors, the many months spent lying in a hospital

bed wanting nothing more than to be able to get up and run, the harsh reality of realising I was disabled and the eventual grace and understanding that came with time.'

The songs are astonishing for a 20-year-old who had turned to composing as a therapy in her hospital bed. The title song takes us into blues-styled territory, with Dave Posmontier's piano and Joel Bryant's Hammond setting the mood for Melody's entry, a light voice, but with the melancholy and latent power of blues. Loss and melancholy are there, but so are a chirpy 1920s/1930s vibe to *All that I need is Love* and a good-time country feel with David Mowry's dobro and Melody's guitar on *Sweet Memory*.

But with Melody Gardot it's as well to expect the unexpected. For instance, on *The Absence*, produced by Heitor Pereira with a luxurious string section, Latin sounds and a certain exoticism take over, though the songs remain authentically Gardot.

That has all changed with *Currency of Man*. The sound is decidedly heavier, less elaborate, as befits an album which gives special thanks to 'the vagabonds, the rambles, the thieves and the gamblers, the dug up and sunk down. The blood of what is LA town.

'From an artist, who seems to be ever-evolving her recipe for style, here is a new flavour of sonic impressions. Urban and concrete, unapologetic, original and innovative, deliciously experimental.'

And in the same piece of writing she characterises herself as 'filled with a fiery discontent.' She may have found grace and understanding in the months after her accident, but there is nothing bland or accepting about Melody Gardot's world-view.

VISITING BIRMINGHAM

The Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival always has a strong contingent of European musicians, many of them unknown or little known in this country, who often return to this and other festivals. Before the festival *Jazz Rag* talked to five of this year’s performers, two of them newcomers, three returning after successful earlier appearances, about their early exposure to jazz and their attitudes to their music.



SARAH LENKA, singer from Paris

At first I had no culture for jazz. I was not interested in jazz at all – I was listening to rock, trip-hop and folk. When I was in my first year at music college in London, the students and my tutor told me I had a voice that would be suitable for jazz. So I started looking through my room-mate’s CDs and the first thing I heard was *Good Morning, Heartache* – and I loved it! I was amazed how much I liked it! I was lucky to discover jazz through such an amazing song.

My family liked music, but it is not a family where music is part of their everyday life. Everything I discovered in music was 100% myself. My parents are very proud and happy that I have been able to have a career in music, but in the beginning they were not against, but thought it was some crazy idea of an 18 year-old. They thought I’d get over it in a year and have a career as a lawyer!

How I first met Billie Holiday is quite funny. My room-mate in London had a CD by a Swedish singer and the song I really liked was *Don’t Explain*. I didn’t know it was by Billie Holiday. When I came back to Paris I went to a jazz workshop and we all had to

bring one song, so I brought *Don’t Explain*. The teacher said sarcastically that I sounded like Billie Holiday and I didn’t dare to admit I didn’t know who she was, so I said yes. When I got home, I checked on the internet and discovered she was one of the major figures of jazz. At first I was sceptical, I didn’t even know if I liked her, but I was intrigued by the timbre of her voice and the rush of emotion. So I started listening to her songs and reading about her life – and then began singing her songs – and that’s when I found my way. She can sing despair, she can sing happiness, she can even sing silence. She can sing any colour of emotion in the most direct way. I discovered myself and the way I wanted to sing through her songs and the way she approached music. If I have to choose my favourite period of Billie’s career, it would be the very beginning, when she was chubby and had a smile on her face, hoping she’d be happy some day, though one of my favourite tunes is *I’m a Fool to Want You* which she sang at the very end of her life.

Having to sing in English was never a problem because, when I was young, I used to travel a lot to the United States and so my ear was used to hearing the English language – and I used to

mimic movie stars. I studied in London for six years and my teachers would correct me if I was wrong, so singing in English is OK, though I still have to work at it. This will be the first time I will sing in England as a professional, so of course I am a bit apprehensive, but I hope the audiences will enjoy the emotion and sense of pleasure.

My next move after Birmingham is to record my third album. We’ve been working on it for more than a year and we go into the studio in September. It’s a tribute to Bessie Smith. It’s a project I’ve had in mind for a long time, but I felt I was not prepared or mature enough. Now seems to be the right time. It’s a new approach, with a different vibe, more personal, more for my generation. Then we tour from October – and the album comes out in January next year.

REMIGIJUS RANCYS, saxophonist with Lithuanian swing band THE SCHWINGS

I first heard jazz music in the 90s when I was about 8 years old. Nobody in my family listened to that sort of music, but I heard it on the radio. There was a programme called *Jazz Train* in Lithuania. I was very excited by the bass line, so had a theory that, if the bass line was very tricky or very interesting, the

music was good. I wanted to be a bass player, but now I play saxophone!

In my family everyone plays guitar and sings Lithuanian folk music, but no one is a professional musician. I was surrounded by music and every time we went on a long car journey my mother would sing Lithuanian folk songs. I was not very excited by this, but then I discovered my own music. I became obsessed with jazz – none of my friends were listening to it. I was studying classical piano at music school, but we never talked about jazz in class.

We play all over Lithuania and in the other Baltic states. Audiences can be very different, but, if the audience doesn’t know much about what we play, I try to communicate and make a connection between the music and the audience. If I play my own songs, I always tell them how I wrote the song, what was my inspiration.

I think for any musician it is important to play with kindred spirits who feel the music in the same way. For me it is very natural. I have played with my good friend and musical partner for many years and it is a good musical relationship. Playing with someone is not just playing on stage. There is a lot of travelling, a lot of discussion, a lot of things you can’t talk about, but just do.



The Schwings



Saxitude

After we play Birmingham, we have many projects. We also have an orchestra and we are playing a big concert with Lithuania’s top jazz singer and another movie concert with the big screen and live music. We are touring to Finland, Latvia and Estonia, just travelling around making beautiful music.

ROBI AREND from the Luxembourg saxophone quartet SAXITUDE

I began playing saxophone at the age of 8 or 9. When I was 15 or 16, I used to listen to jazz/rock bands like Spyro Gyra and Steps Ahead and was a big fan of Michael Brecker, but at that time all my studies were in classical saxophone because, if you wanted to be a professional saxophone player, you had to be a teacher. I don’t come from a musical family and, when I discovered jazz, I was on my own because my school friends preferred rock or pop. But my parents were always supportive, there was never a problem.

In Saxitude we are able to play many different types of concert which is why we are able to play 60 events a year: anniversaries, markets, exhibitions, all kinds of events you can imagine. I was very lucky to find the great musicians who play with me in Saxitude; we are all four very happy to play together. We played the Birmingham Festival last year



Pepper and the Jellies

and I think people were very happy with our music which is why we are back playing eight or nine concerts this year. I don’t think there is much difference between audiences in different countries. After Birmingham we have a festival and five concerts in France, then back to Luxembourg for the summer festivals.

ILENIA APPICCIAFUOCO of the Italian group Pepper and the Jellies

I don’t remember when I first heard jazz music, but I do remember when I first knew I would like to sing this stuff. I was eight and I had an examination in how single people changed the society they lived in. I read the story of Bessie Smith. Reading about her life pushed me into listening to her music. The first song was *Muddy Water* and it was love at first listen.

Jazz was not popular among my family and friends. My mother is very up-to-date: she loves contemporary sounds and I love the old styles. When I was 13 or 14 I studied opera and contemporary European pop music. There are too many singers who have influenced me. Bessie Smith was the first, but also Victoria Spivey, Alberta Hunter, Ruth Etting and the wonderful Annette Hanshaw. Another singer of the time I listen to is Lee Morse, a very



Les Zauto Stompers de Paris

interesting personality and a very interesting singer. I could mention Billie Holiday, of course, and Ella Fitzgerald, and a woman who I think is the incarnation of jazz in her time, Anita O’Day. There are many male vocalists, too: Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, Cab Calloway, Jon Hendricks and, naturally, Fats Waller.

I am happy when I sing, when I perform. I think, if you have a talent, you must take advantage of that – or it is a cause of sorrow and frustration in your life. There are many brilliant musicians in Abruzzo and the Pescara Jazz Festival goes back to 1969 and has hosted many jazz greats: Chet Baker, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie and many others.

I am very happy because there are more people every year who start to discover swing and the roots of jazz. When I go out with my friends, there is always music. Maybe it is not always in my style, but I have the chance to discover different styles of music.

We try to play all over: jazz clubs, restaurants, pubs, open air events. When an audience doesn’t know anything about this type of music, it’s better in a way because it’s a challenge for us. When a person who has never heard this music before starts to dance or clap, you’ve made it. It is not easy to find kindred spirits to play this sort of music, but I am very lucky because I found three musicians who are swing machines! They are three saints! I love their ability to mix the old and the contemporary – I just hope I’ll keep this band for years and years and years.

English audiences are maybe more enthusiastic than in Italy, but that may be because of the language – they understand better what I am singing. We love the Birmingham festival very

much because it was our first festival abroad. We will introduce our new CD at Birmingham, then after the festival we play in Switzerland, then in Rome and other Italian cities. Then in September I’m proud to say we perform for the first time in Paris!

JEAN-MICHEL FRANCOIS, of Les Zauto Stompers de Paris

When I was young, we heard many of the great jazz songs on the radio, either by the original performers or by French singers. There were no musicians in my family, but I practised guitar as a teenager with my friends, then, when I started playing sousaphone, I created my first Dixieland band.

I started my career as a chartered account and, when I began playing jazz, my children were very young, but my wife agreed. So far as finding musicians to play in a suitable style, the beginning of Les Zauto Stompers de Paris was not difficult. There is a great concentration of population around Paris and it is quite easy to find a trumpeter, a banjo player, a clarinetist, a sousaphone player... More generally there are many young musicians who love the old music coming out of music school. I love to listen to the bands playing in the old style, keeping the spirit of Dixieland.

Old style jazz has disappeared from the media, though the local press will cover local festivals. We are very happy to come to the Birmingham festival for the fourth time and in July we are also playing festivals in Germany and Brittany, then we have to return to Paris because some members of the band are taking part in a musical comedy!

CLUB 90 REVISITED (FOR THE LAST TIME)

In 1995 *Jazz Rag* started a new series with a visit to Jazz 90 at Albrighton. 20 years later RON SIMPSON revisited the club, still flourishing, but sadly forced to close.

I remember a phone call from John Howell, then publicity man for Jazz 90, suggesting that it would be a good idea for *Jazz Rag* to carry a series on the small jazz clubs of Britain - and would we like to start in Shropshire at the Harp, Albrighton? It proved an excellent suggestion and *Club Call* ran for many years. And, sure enough, *Jazz Rag 36* carried an account of my visit to Jazz 90.

In April 2015 John Howell reported that Jazz 90 was having to close. It wasn't lack of audience numbers: the session I attended, with guitarists Arthur Ebeling and Chris Quinn entertaining with fine old standards, blues and the odd novelty song, found the lounge so crowded that it was easier to get a beer in the adjacent bar.

In *Jazz Rag 36* I wrote that the Harp is clearly a jazz pub, even though there are only two sessions per week. That remained so till the end, with a Jazz Club 90 banner behind the band, the walls smothered in jazz photographs and even a reference on the pub sign outside.

No problem with getting bands to play, either, despite the club's modest resources. John, now running Jazz 90 with his wife Marie, points out that in recent years, he has been able to fill the programme with bands ringing him for gigs so that he had a full year's diary to cancel when the closure came.

What has happened was clearly - if accidentally - predicted in 1995:

'The moral of this tale is that a good landlord's worth his weight in gold and changes of pub management are the bane of a jazz club's existence.'

At the time of writing that referred to Jazz 90's nomadic years from 1990 to 1993 (the club was welcomed by several hostelrys before being asked to move on with a change of management) and the benign influence of Terry Plibworth, landlord of the Harp. The closure

is indirectly connected with the sad death of Terry eight years ago. Fortunately for the club his daughter took the pub on and announced that she wanted the jazz to continue as before.

However, late in 2014, she decided that the combination of a full-time job and running a pub was too much and sold up to the Hop Back Brewery. The brewery installed a relief manager and things went on on the same financial basis, though understandably without the same interest from the pub management until John received shock news. As he tells it:

'The Brewery wanted to limit the jazz from eight or nine gigs a month to two Sunday sessions a month, to be reviewed after two months. Marie also had to stop doing her world-famous cheese and onion rolls which would cut our income. This would give us four gigs before the review to somehow change the funding of the sessions. We decided that this would not be financially viable and decided to go out on a high rather than fade away after a couple of months.'

When I visited in May, the last Tuesday session had already passed and, after Arthur and Chris, a final Sunday with the New Orleans Zhulus was all that remained of the club's 25 years. John is particularly sad that no constructive discussion of the club's position took place. Wryly - and with tongue halfway to cheek - he blames the ageing demographic of his audience, 'The generally older age group of our audiences didn't drink enough!' He doesn't mention it, but maybe greater observation of drink-driving laws doesn't help - Albrighton's a small place and the jazz club probably needs a partly motorised clientele.

However, to be more positive, John happily supplies a summary of the highlights of 25 years of a jazz institution in a small pub in Shropshire, starting from the time when the club started booking more than local talent:

'About 1995 I saw that the superb jazz and blues singer from Tyneside, Carole Clegg, and her band Speakeasy, were appearing at the Bude Jazz Festival, followed by a Saturday session at Clevedon. Reasoning that Albrighton was on the way back to Newcastle from the West Country (with only a small diversion!), I rang Carole and she agreed to come to the Harp on the Sunday lunch-time for our usual enormous fee which probably just about paid their petrol bill! The session was so successful that Carole and Speakeasy have returned several times.

'This was followed by a cheeky request for my long-term hero Kenny Baker to play for us which he did quite brilliantly accompanied by John Burnett's Jazz Bandits. This was the most amazing gig! The pub was packed in every room and passageway, and ardent fans were even standing outside the windows on a cold November day!'

The next important phase for Jazz 90 came when John saw a paragraph in *Jazz UK* about an Arts Council scheme of grants for small organisations. With the help of West Midlands Arts John applied for, and got, a series of grants that enabled Jazz 90 to book a few bands or musicians every year who would normally be outside the club's range:

'The first of these gigs just had to be a repeat visit by Kenny Baker, this time backed by local favourites Swing Parade to produce another superb session. Others included blues and boogie pianist Steve "Big Man" Clayton, the legendary Tommy Burton with "Spats" Langham and Richard Vernon, followed by another great trumpet player Bruce Adams, backed by the Jazz Bandits.

'Phil Mason's New Orleans All Stars, with the delightful Christine Tyrrell, attracted so much interest that about 16 eager fans were sitting in cars outside the Harp when we arrived at 11.15 for the 12.30

start. By midday you couldn't move in the pub.'

Other bands and musicians booked by the club on the strength of various grants include New Orleans Heat, Sarah Spencer from the United States, Jellie Babies from Sweden, Jazz Connection from Holland and the 10th Avenue Jazz Band from California.

Local bands that have been the mainstay of the club over the years include Nova Bounce, the Martinique Jazz Band, the Zenith Hot Stompers, Ken Ingram's Vintage Jazz, Europa Jazz and, more recently, Chris Carmell's Jazz with Bob Smith, Millennium Eagle Jazz Band, Robin Mason's Jazz and Swing Band, Wabash Jazzmen and Old Comrades Jazz Band, plus young musicians such as Ben Holder and Carl Sinclair who were introduced to the jazz circuit by Jazz 90.

John has lasting memories of two remarkable sessions, both featuring star musicians with one of Jazz 90's stalwart local bands:

'At one John Burnett session Bruce Adams was the guest and he brought along Alan Barnes on alto, Pascal Michaux on tenor and Pete York on drums - it was heaven! Legendary vibes player Peter Appleyard, over here from Canada, dropped in "just for a couple of numbers" with the Heart of England Jazz Band and in the nicest possible way took over the whole session, much to the delight of the Hearts and the audience!'

So yet another jazz club falls victim to regime change, leaving John and Marie 'devastated', but full of thanks to the many musicians and fans who became friends - and looking forward to taking a holiday!

KEEP ON KEEPIN' ON

Keep on Keepin' On, the documentary about the esteemed jazz trumpeter Clark Terry, is the perfect antidote to the poisonous feature *Whiplash*, which posited the thesis that only a cruel, ruthless taskmaster can teach youngsters how to become professional jazz musicians. The only love that works is tough love, brutal love. *Keep on Keepin' On* puts the lie to that fascistic notion by showing how Clark Terry operated as a teacher and mentor over his long career as a jazzman. Terry, who died earlier this year at 95, came out of poverty and hardship in St Louis (his mom died when he was seven) to play with the likes of Count Basie, Duke Ellington and Quincy Jones, winning plaudits for his warm, expressive, deeply felt horn work. Terry also led his own band for many years and was a featured player on countless albums, television shows and jazz concerts. All along the way he gave of himself as a teacher, selflessly and whole-heartedly.

His desire to help others took root in him when he was a youngster, a wanna-be trumpet player. None of the oldtimers he went to for lessons would help him, so he had to somehow teach himself to play, first on a home-made instrument, then on a hock-shop horn (purchased by his neighbours). Because he had innate gifts, Terry was able to turn pro at seventeen, but that happened only after ten years of struggle and failure. Vowing to spare others from that kind of anguish, Terry began a teaching career that has touched tens of thousands of young students over the years. That's right-- thousands. That's because he has not only taught privately (Miles Davis, Dianne Reeves and Quincy Jones, to name just a few) but on the university and music-school levels. Many of his students went on to become teachers themselves; those teachers have bred other teachers, exponentially.

One of Terry's prize students was the pianist Justin Kauflin, who is given almost as much screen time as Terry in *Keep on Keepin' On*. Kauflin, who is blind and depends on a seeing-eye dog to get around, was a teenager when he

came to Terry for help. Terry himself was beginning to go blind as a result of diabetes, which also affected his blood circulation and led to the amputation of both of his legs. But even when he was bedridden and suffering grievously, Terry still found time to coach Kauflin, encourage and inspire him.

He did this not in a sappy, sentimental way; he was always honest with the kid, quick to point out his weaknesses, pinpoint his problems. But this

was always done with love, the love of a father for a son, a guru for his disciple. Kauflin responded to this kind of teaching in a miraculous way, growing in every way as a musician. It's not that things came easy to him; on the contrary, he had a bitter failure (coming out a loser in the Thelonius Monk International Jazz Competition). But with Terry's counsel and encouragement ('You can't do it the easy way, you gotta work hard at it, you gotta keep on keepin' on'), Kauflin hung in and

ultimately was rewarded for his courage and perseverance. Just recently the young pianist released an album, *Dedication*, produced by Quincy Jones. The latter is another important figure in *Keep on Keepin' On*; his love and respect for Clark Terry (and the latter's wife, Gwen) fill the screen and help make the documentary the moving, inspiring film that it is.

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A TALE OF THREE CITIES: NEW ORLEANS, CHICAGO AND NEW YORK

PETER VACHER gives his impressions of a jazz journey

I should explain from the outset that this trip wasn't a research exercise, or an investigation of the current American psyche. No, it was quite simply a holiday with added jazz. Well, not quite that either; if you consider that the first aim was to cover the 32nd edition of the French Quarter Festival which ran over four days in early April and write about it for *Jazzwise*. In that the FQF is entirely open-air, spread around the Quarter and spilling over onto the Mississippi river-front there was really rather a lot of jazz, with some 1600 performers lined up. Mind you, this being New Orleans, the mix of music stretched the jazz boundaries to the limit, what with r&b, blues, gospel, soul, zydeco, bebop and yes, plain old traditional jazz. At least that was the plan.

Over the course of a number of visits to the FQF, I've always been blessed with fine weather. After all, this is hot and humid Louisiana in the American South. Not so this time, as two of the four days were virtually washed out with stages deserted or abandoned, as the rain descended in torrents. It turns out a tornado was passing through northern Louisiana on its way to Illinois where it destroyed a small town. Happily, though, no damage to the Crescent City itself. Just rain and more rain. Still, there were compensations for the Festival also offers a parallel world of indoor films, lectures and presentations, a number of which provided a safe haven as well as their own special kind of enlightenment. Take for example,



L-r. Barry Martyn;
Andrew Hall; Clive Wilson

a session devoted to the memory of the late Cosimo Matassa, the legendary local recording engineer, hosted by the British expatriate writer John Broven, with pianist/composer Allen Toussaint and veteran r&b singer Deacon John. Apart from the banter, just to hear Deacon John sing *It's Raining* accompanied by Toussaint was a joy, given what was going on outside. Toussaint had performed on the Festival's first day to a tumultuous riverside crowd, wearing his own high-visibility jacket, all shimmering green and gold, with a tough band and some rather extraneous female back-up singers. He's a star, a New Orleans treasure (and about to appear at Ronnie Scott's) with a back catalogue of hit numbers like no other. Ellis Marsalis is another home-town hero and presented a rewarding set on the Jackson Square main stage (in the dry) that introduced two new names to me in Ashlin Parker, trumpet, and Derek Douget, soprano and tenor, both Crescent City born and each involved in jazz teaching roles in the city. Theirs was hard-swinging – the marvellous Jason Marsalis on drums - and tough-minded modern music. Another Marsalis son, trombonist Delfeayo scored later in the Festival with his Uptown Jazz Orchestra, a big band with funk leanings that just managed to stay afloat amidst yet another downpour and then proved its hardiness by parading through the poncho-clad crowd. Earlier Dixieland cornetist Connie Jones had created his own pleasing mood, much



Aaron Fletcher,
Jackson Square

energised by drummer Hal Smith, the appearance on stage of veteran clarinetist Pete Fountain, now frail and no longer a player, acclaimed by the Jackson Square crowd.

New Orleans has always been a trumpet town and the line continues, what with Kenneth Terry, a youthful veteran of the brass band revival movement who struts his stuff in Jackson Square, and the very fine newcomer Kevin Louis, heard at the Palm Court Café on Decatur Street in a band led by trombonist Lucien Barbarin. Kevin is a New Orleanian who studied at Oberlin College and then spent a dozen years in New York, working and touring in Europe with the present-day Duke Ellington Orchestra and spoke appreciatively of his section-mate there, James Zollar. Back home for good now, he really sparked into life when the trilby-hatted trumpeter Wendell Brunious dropped by to sit in, bassist James Singleton and

drummer Karl Budo responding with alacrity. Yet more trumpeters came and went on the main stage with the very urbane Jeremy Davenport, a smooth-toned modernist who sings like Harry Connick, his quintet boasting another hot young talent in altoist Aaron Fletcher, preceding Leroy Jones who wrapped up the festival in an engaging set. He thanked us for staying out in the rain and that was that.

Of course, there's still a substantial British contingent at play in the city, with Palm Court reedman James Evans just the latest to take root. Mind you, the fact that Café owner Nina Buck is his mother-in-law may just help his employment prospects. Long-term expatriate trumpeter Clive Wilson put together a fine traditional band on one of the street stages and then re-appeared alongside Barry Martyn, Andrew Hall, and Chris Burke in a nearly all-British sit-down version of the Society Brass Band

playing in the US Mint gardens to a miniscule audience too wet to worry. Rain or no rain, this city's music still scores, with informal brass bands on every corner, dread-locked kids playing snare drums like crazy, impassioned clarinetist Doreen Ketcher performing for change in the street, spasm bands and blues guitarists crammed into corners, topless ladies offering their own special joys and all kinds of would-be hipsters living out the dream. They call it the Big Easy. And so it is.

I don't know whether Chicago is still toddling - whatever that means - but this is a city that's impressive on every level. Chicago luxuriates in some of the classiest architecture anywhere, having spawned Louis Sullivan the much-lauded pioneer of the skyscraper, with Mies van der Rohe as his clean-lined successor and Frank Lloyd Wright his own idiosyncratic self, every square and corner boasting public art of startling quality. Take Anish Kapoor's shiny Cloud Gate sculpture set in Chicago's Millennium Park close to Frank Gehry's outdoor music pavilion.

Talking music, and yes, this is a jazz magazine not a travel supplement, there's the famed Jazz Record Mart, home of Delmark Records, said to be the 'world's largest jazz and blues shop' and a good place to find any or all three of the city's free local jazz magazines. Calling at the Jazz Institute of Chicago, we picked up yet more info and the very strong suggestion that we make for the Jazz Showcase, the club run by the legendary and somewhat taciturn Joe Segal, now 89 and lately named a NEA Jazz Master. Just ten minutes from our hotel in the Loop, the club is housed in a former train station with a box-like interior, a bar at the back and a raised stage, the walls papered by posters from yesteryear, and covered in photos and memorabilia of every stripe.

The 10.00pm show, the third of the day to feature the Dee Alexander Quartet, was sparsely attended but hugely worthwhile. Alexander is an engaging performer whose vocal style speaks of her African-American roots with its trace elements of soul and gospel, these overlaid by the kind of canny harmonic

awareness that makes you think of Carmen McRae. Her MD is pianist Miguel de la Cerna, a native Chicagoan of Filipino ancestry and another sophisticated whose keyboard dash was eye-opening. Bassist Junius Paul and drummer Yusef Ernie Adams completed the group, their whole approach tightly focussed and rhythmically bright. How is it that a band of this quality isn't more widely known? By happy circumstance, we met writer and head of the Jazz Journalists Association Howard Mandel and the brilliant jazz photographer Marc PoKempner there, all of us at one in our enthusiasm for Ms Alexander. Did we go down to the South Side or locate other clubs? Not this time: so much to do, so little time, as Muir and Norden's Tommy Irons once had it.

Onwards and upwards to New York. Here again, time was against us, but we fitted in a stopover in Fred Cohen's splendid Jazz Record Center, this emporium located incongruously on the 8th floor of an office block on W.26th Street. Behind its plain-looking door, there's a positive cornucopia of good jazz things including the best stock of books anywhere, CDs, LPs in abundance and photos, all informed by a sense that Fred knows what's what and who's who. A haven for jazz people, for sure.

This city also boasts no fewer than three free jazz magazines, each loaded with gig information and readable features. Still, we had other aims of our own, the first being to attend the Jazz Vespers at Saint Peter's on Sunday. This striking edifice is shoehorned into the Citicorp building on 54th Street at Lexington Avenue and is both a performance venue and the religious centre for the jazz community. This time the music came from the Joshua Crumbly Quartet, all young and highly talented. LA-born bassist Crumbly, a recent Juilliard graduate, has already toured with Terence Blanchard, but seemed unsure that the highly competitive New York jazz scene was for him, a view shared by his companions, Joshua Jackson, alto, the brilliant pianist Glenn Zaleski and drummer Jonathan Pinson. That said, they excelled, playing original music and fitting in with



Allen Toussaint with
Herman Ernest

the liturgy in pleasing fashion. I'll long remember their version of *Blue Monk*. Rather movingly, at the end of the service, to the haunting alto of Jerry Dodgion, the ashes of the late Frank Wess, the old Basie stalwart were laid to rest in the church columbarium.

Our remaining jazz pleasures came out of friendship. The first with Al Vollmer, founder and safe-keeper of the long-established Harlem Blues and Jazz Band who invited us to his 86th birthday party at Local 802 AFM. First up were sundry locals sitting in for the regular Monday night jam session, the best moments coming from tenor-player Michael Camora and bassist Alex Layne. Cake to hand with candles lit, Al then introduced his full band starting with 100-year-old tenorman Fred Staton, brother of Dakota, and then Joey Morant, trumpet, trombonists Art Baron and Ronald Wilkins, Ray Blue, tenor, Dave Lee Jones, alto, Zeke Mullins, piano, Bill Wurtzel, guitar, Michael Max Fleming, bass and Jackie Williams on drums. These sterling players, each with career stories worth the telling, then produced a glorious set, their version of *Lester Leaps In* like a master class in swing.

A day later, we took up trumpeter John Eckert's suggestion we attend a rehearsal of the New York Jazz Nine, a rather more modern ensemble, at his apartment down near 12th Street. He lives in an artist's residence - drummer Nasheen

Waits is a neighbour – and had crammed his fellow musicians into his smallish living room. A run-through of *Love for Sale* set the scene and then they got into the meat of some demanding complex arrangements by Japanese pianist Noriaki Mori with altoist Bobby Porcelli and the dread-locked baritone-saxist Jason Marshall in stirring form. He's a burly chap who had arrived on his bike complete with his baritone case strapped to his back and told me he had been in London just days before running an instrumental workshop. There was yet another British connection in the presence of UK-born pianist Tim Harrison, a composer and arranger who went to North Texas State and then stayed on. All these talented players impressed, this just another way of saying that there is in New York an array of jazz musicians of the highest calibre who seldom gain wider international attention.

All the more reason, to keep visiting this jazz-loaded city, of course. And New Orleans and Chicago, for that matter. There's a whole lot of music to be savoured in each of these cities. You'll need some cash to spare, for the big clubs are not cheap. Imagine Ronnie Scott's prices and the expectation that they'll turn the house but rest assured, it will be worthwhile.

Photographs by Peter Vacher

THE GREAT AMERICAN BIG BANDS SINCE 1945

by Scott Yanow



After a decade of providing the soundtrack and dance music for most Americans, the big band era ended during 1945-46. Its demise was due to a wide assortment of reasons including the effects of World War II, a recording strike that during 1942-44 opened the door to pop singers, the rise of bebop, singers, Dixieland, and rhythm & blues, a cabaret tax that closed dance halls, and an excess of big bands seeking to make money from the swing craze. Many of the swing orchestras that survived 1946 attempted to play bebop with mixed results, hoping that that would be the next pop music. By 1950, with the end of that idea and the proliferation of TV sets, nearly all of the swing big bands were gone. Small-group swing survived but the big bands would never come back, at least not to their former prominence.

However big bands never became extinct in jazz. A few of the swing era greats continued to lead orchestras for years, big bands shifted from playing dances to performing at concerts and clubs, arrangers often had a need to put together large ensembles to play their works, and many local stage bands continue to play occasional gigs and make yearly recordings. While the number of fulltime big bands in the United States is minimal (other than the Lincoln Center Big Band and the Count Basie ghost orchestra) and tours are rare, big bands are still with us.

Here is my pick for the 39 most significant American big bands since 1945, listed very roughly in chronological and stylistic order

and with their main years in parenthesis. My apologies to the many worthy orchestras that have been left off the list including the bop era bands of Benny Goodman and Charlie Barnet, the nostalgia bands, Ray Anthony, Bill Berry, the Jazz Composers Orchestra, Dave Holland, Harry Connick Jr, Sam Rivers' Rivbea Orchestra and the Blue Wisp Big Band.

Duke Ellington (1925-74) – In 1946 Ellington had already been a bandleader for over 20 years and he had 28 to go. His accomplishments as pianist, arranger, composer and leader are nearly infinite and his band was as significant in 1967 as it was in 1927. Consider that his orchestra during the 1950s and '60s often had as many as a dozen major soloists, including the pianist.

Lionel Hampton (1940-2002) – While Hampton's many big bands rarely lived up to their potential, the excitement of his screaming brass sections, the honking tenors and his constant enthusiasm (on vibes, two-fingered piano, drumming, vocals, soft-shoe and anything that might work) were not to be denied.

Billy Eckstine (1944-47) – The second bebop orchestra (after Earl Hines' unrecorded 1943 band) featured the who's who of bebop including Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Fats Navarro, Miles Davis, Dexter Gordon, Gene Ammons and many others. Eckstine kept the band going as long as possible before reluctantly breaking it up and starting his lucrative solo career.

Woody Herman's First Herd (1944-46) – Few big bands were more fun than Herman's First Herd with its joyous and explosive ensembles along with its personalities including Bill Harris, Flip Phillips, Chubby Jackson and Pete 'Superman' Candoli.

Boyd Raeburn (1944-47) – Raeburn's ensemble evolved from a Count Basie-influenced swing band to an oversize orchestra of virtuosos playing the often-outlandish and always-futuristic arrangements of George Handy. It did not stand a chance of surviving but its crazier performances (including lots of dissonance behind its singers) are still unique.

Dizzy Gillespie (1946-49) – This orchestra was not only the perfect bebop big band (*Things to Come*) but the beginning of Afro-Cuban jazz.

Stan Kenton (1940-48, 1950-79) – Kenton took his progressive jazz out of the dance halls and into concert halls, used his orchestra as a vehicle for adventurous arrangers, and featured superb soloists, particularly during 1947-65.

Ray McKinley (1946-50) – The likable swing drummer had Eddie Sauter write much of his band's book, creating unusual performances that still sound fresh today but probably did not help his band's commercial appeal!

Claude Thornhill (1946-50) – Thornhill's second big band, with its two French horns, tuba (by 1947), altoist Lee Konitz, unison clarinets, lack of vibrato, leader's tinkling piano, and Gil Evans arrangements paved the way for Cool Jazz.

Woody Herman's Second Herd (1947-49) – While not quite as exuberant as the First Herd, this soft-toned bop band introduced the Four Brothers sound with Stan Getz, Zoot Sims and Serge Chaloff.

Count Basie (1939-50, 1952-84) – After his first classic big band had to break up (Basie had too many losses at the racetrack), he formed his 'New Testament' orchestra in 1952 and swung for another 32 years. While he relied more on arrangers and less on soloists than earlier, Count Basie retained his sound, constantly toured, and led the definitive swing institution.

Harry James (1939-83) – The most popular jazz big band leader during 1943-46, James occasionally explored bop in the late 1940s before reverting to a swinging Count Basie-style orchestra that also played his hits. He was a household name for 45 years.

Dizzy Gillespie (1956-58) – This superb big band toured the world for the U.S. government and left some memorable recordings including explosive music from the 1957 Newport Jazz Festival. The young Lee Morgan, Phil Woods, Al Grey, Billy Mitchell and arranger Quincy Jones were just a few of the stars along with Gillespie who was at the peak of his powers.

Maynard Ferguson (1957-64) – No one could hit high notes like the always cheerful Maynard Ferguson. The trumpeter led several orchestras through the years but this bop-oriented big band, which recorded a series of gems for the Roulette label, could not be topped.

Terry Gibbs Dream Band (1959-62) – Although not a full-time orchestra, this Los Angeles big band was filled with major West Coast jazz musicians. Its recordings swing with the spirit and high energy of vibraphonist Gibbs.

Sun Ra Arkestra (1955-93) – With his love of both ancient Egypt and outer space, his band's costumes, erratically released recordings, inscrutable personal philosophy and other trappings, it is easy for Ra's innovative music

to be overlooked or dismissed. As a keyboardist and bandleader, Ra was decades ahead of his time, and 'Space was the place.'

Quincy Jones (1959-61) – The famous arranger-composer was often associated with big bands but his own short-lived working orchestra practically starved during a disastrous European tour. Fortunately recordings and existing TV appearances show how strong this band was.

Woody Herman's Young Thundering Herd (1959-87) – Herman kept his final orchestra together during his last 28 years. The 1961-65 version, with the great tenor Sal Nistico, trombonist Phil Wilson and lead trumpeter Bill Chase, held its own with the first two Herds.

Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Band (1960-62) – The bridge between the Claude Thornhill and the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, the Concert Jazz Band (with arrangements by Mulligan and Bob Brookmeyer) successfully transferred the style of Mulligan's pianoless quartets to a big band.

Gerald Wilson (1960-2014) – Wilson was always proud of his ability to write in five-part harmonies for his Los Angeles-based big band. His Pacific Jazz recordings of the 1960s are filled with modern hard bop gems that he would enthusiastically perform for decades.

Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra (1966-74) – The writing of Thad Jones, with soprano sax in the lead, gave this all-star orchestra, which appeared each Monday night at the Village Vanguard, its own personality. The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra has continued its legacy to the present day.

Buddy Rich (1966-87) – The 'world's greatest drummer' put together a hard-swinging orchestra in 1966, a time when it was considered quite foolhardy. Rich's big band was a surprise success with *Channel One Suite* (starring Don Menza on tenor) being one of the recorded highpoints of his career.

Don Ellis Orchestra (1966-78) – Arguably the most exciting big band of the late 1960s/early

'70s, Ellis' orchestra often included several bassists and drummers, horn players who utilized electrical devices, and a strong wit and drive. Ellis and his musicians were masters at sounding comfortable playing in unusual time signatures, not just 7/4 but also 27/16.

Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra (1969, 1989-90, 2004) – The bassist, grounded in both 1950s cool jazz and Ornette Coleman, formed the Liberation Music Orchestra to reflect his leftist/liberation politics and the arranging talents of Carla Bley. It was an occasional project that during each revival resulted in at least one memorable recording.

Gil Evans Orchestra (1969-88) – While Evans is most acclaimed for his 1950s recordings with Miles Davis and his solo recordings of 1957-64, he only infrequently led his own orchestra in clubs until his last 20 years. Blending together acoustic and electric music, he created his own brand of fusion on a regular basis including during a five-year Monday-night stint at Sweet Basil's.

Toshiko Akiyoshi/Lew Tabackin Orchestra (1973-2013) – Based in Los Angeles before its move to New York in 1982 (when Akiyoshi became listed as its sole leader), this orchestra featured Akiyoshi's writing (bop-oriented with occasional pieces celebrating her Asian heritage) and Tabackin's dual musical personalities on tenor and flute.

Frank Capp/Nat Pierce Juggernaut (1975-96) – This all-star Los Angeles big band (which still performs infrequently) sometimes sounded more like Count Basie's band than Basie himself. Its Concord recordings are all worth getting.

Louie Bellson (1959-2009) – One of the great big band drummers, in addition to uplifting the music of many other bands (including those of Ellington, Basie and James), Bellson led his own swinging orchestras. At one point he had two different big bands, one on each coast of the U.S.

Carla Bley (1975-) – After being a major force behind the Jazz Composers' Orchestra, Bley has led her own occasional large ensembles for 40 years. Her adventurous and frequently ground-breaking writing has almost always featured her unique humour, often just beneath the surface.

Jaco Pastorius' Word Of Mouth Orchestra (1981-82) – Imagine a big band backing an electric bassist! In Jaco Pastorius' musical worlds all things were possible, at least until his deteriorating mental health cut short this very promising band's existence.

Bob Florence's Limited Edition (1979-2008) – A major arranger starting in the 1950s, Bob Florence performed with his big band in Los Angeles band and recorded a series of modern jazz gems for the Discovery/Trend, USA and Mama labels.

Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra (1985 -) – When it comes to swinging, this Los Angeles ensemble (co-led by arranger-composer-bassist John Clayton, altoist Jeff Clayton and drummer Jeff Hamilton) is at the top of its class.

Either/Orchestra (1985-) – Founded and led by Russ Gershon and based in Massachusetts, Either/Orchestra is influenced by Gil Evans and Charles Mingus, open to the influences of both rock and early jazz, and has always had its own quirky personality.

Bill Holman Orchestra (1975-) – Holman, a veteran of Stan Kenton's band in the 1950s, constructs dense and unpredictable arrangements that swing despite their complexity. His superb orchestra utilizes musicians who are not only masterful jazz soloists but studio musicians.



George Russell Living Time Orchestra (1989-2009) – Decades after he made his initial impact as a composer and author of the Lydian Chromatic Concept, Russell organized his own occasional orchestra to play his most ambitious works.

Mingus Big Band (1991-) – Founded by Sue Mingus, this remarkable and enduring New York institution exclusively performs Charles Mingus' innovative music, including his most forbidding works. If only it could have existed during Mingus' lifetime!

Maria Schneider (1992-) – Considered by many to be today's most significant jazz arranger-composer, Maria Schneider creates highly original music that grows in interest with each listen.

Gordon Goodwin Big Phat Band (2000-) – Arranger Gordon Goodwin's ensemble is remarkably popular in Los Angeles, regularly drawing sellout crowds for its brand of entertaining, good-humoured and modern swing.

Darcy James Argue's Secret Society (2005-) – Arranger-composer Argue, who is now 40, has his own style, blending together the influences of jazz with advanced rock, classical music and the avant-garde, creating new big band jazz for the 21st century.

SCOTT YANOW is the author of 11 jazz books and over 750 liner notes. He can be contacted on scottyanowjazz@yahoo.com.



ANDY SHEPPARD
QUARTET

SURROUNDED BY SEA

ECM 2432 - 53:30

Andy Sheppard has enhanced the music of a number of bands, most recently that of Carla Bley, as well as producing music by his own small groups. *Surrounded by Sea* is the latest of these and sees Sheppard leading a quartet featuring Elvind Aarset on guitar, Michael Benita on double bass and Sebastian Rochford on drums. It's an introspective session, even allowing for the beautiful three-part Gaelic ballad *Aoidh, Na Dean Cadal Idir*, explored in three parts, which nevertheless reduces the jazz content somewhat.

Overall, it's disappointing to report that the music seems to lurch from one introspective moment to another. Only *Looking For Ornette* breaks the mould (as you might expect) but not by much, leaving a rather disappointing recording.

GREG MURPHY

RED GARLAND TRIO

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Texas-born pianist Garland earned his spurs with Miles Davis in the 1950s with his distinctive richly chorded approach. So it was with some sense of anticipation that I put this double CD though the aural mincer. Here was Garland with two other stalwarts of the music in bassist Leroy Vinnegar and the consummate drummer Philly Joe Jones, another Davis alumnus, caught in action late in his career at the famed Keystone Korner club in San Francisco in December 1977.

Previously unreleased, these turn out to be relatively routine club sets, the material largely confined to standards, Vinnegar's bass slightly over-amplified, with Philly Joe's drum interjections often irritatingly unfocused and over-frequent for my taste. Garland plays well, especially so on the opening *Love For Sale* which fairly

motors along, using right-hand trills and chorded placements as he develops his variations, these seldom departing too far from the original. He's alert and alive on *Billy Boy* taken at speed, but here the trio's cohesion is all over the place, Jones on another planet and Vinnegar playing as if on a different path, his bass sound unvarying, each note given the same weight before Jones intrudes yet again.

So engaging enough but sadly far from essential, Garland deferring too often to Jones for unwelcome drum barrages and to Vinnegar for humdrum solo passages, all this with that inevitable sense of it being just another gig, the slower ballads like *If I'm Lucky* offering the odd tantalising glimpse of Garland's special way with chords. The booklet is more valuable than the music.

PETER VACHER

EARL BOSTIC

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Earl Bostic's name does not feature high on a list of jazz greats. In fact, it might not even make the bottom of the Charts. His decision to follow a commercial path in his career brought him a number of million selling records but, also, a wave of opprobrium from some jazz critics and, as every reader must know, having commercial hits excludes an artist from future entry into the cloistered halls of jazz, forever. Jazz critics tend to show no mercy.

The facts are that, although he played very little jazz in his career, (these two records seem to be his only jazz output) when he did get together with established jazz musicians such as Joe Pass and Richard 'Groove' Holmes, and he played 'pure jazz', as he termed it, he reminded us what an exciting powerhouse of a player he was.

The tracks on this album are selected from two sessions he

did for King Records in 1963. His technique is phenomenal and he uses it to great effect romping through some lovely blues. As one would expect from his long career in R and B, he is happiest with the blues material and that is what takes up all of the record. It proves fertile ground. This is raw, uncompromising music, vibrant performances loaded with power and passion.

Bostic was shrewd in his choice of Holmes and Pass. Holmes' background was in blues and soul and his earthy, elemental lines and massive chords keep the energy level high. Pass was just beginning to attract notable attention at that time, and his sinuous guitar adds finesse.

Drummer Shelly Manne enlivens four tracks and swops stimulating fours with the leader on *Telestar Drive*, a storming track, and if *Fast Track* doesn't get you up on your feet then your dancing days are over.

JOHN MARTIN

JOHNNY
DANKWORTH
ORCHESTRA

DUET FOR 16

Vocalion CD EA 6230 78.15

On its launch in 1956 the band's publicist, Kitty Grimes, described the Dankworth band as 'cool, cultured and couth' ---a description which fitted its style admirably.

Ted Heath's band was the big name at the time and it was inevitable that the new Dankworth band would be judged against the Heath crew. But that judgement would not have been comparing like with like. Heath's band was a big brassy, commercial outfit. albeit with a laudable library of jazz. The Dankworth Orchestra was an out-and-out Jazz aggregation although, ironically, it did have a few commercial hits. As the Heath band was in your face, Dankworth's was in your ears.

The repertoire was meticulously selected and burgeoning new talents were thrust to the forefront. Danny Moss, Dickie Hawdon and the young Kenny

Wheeler are three outstanding soloists featured, together with the formidable Laurie Monk on trombone.

Dankworth, also, had imaginative writers in Dave Lindup, Dave Lee and himself. The band was urbane, sophisticated but not effete. It could roar with the best as can be heard on *Dogging Around*.

The repertoire for these BBC 1959 transcriptions was an eclectic mix of mainly, originals with a few unhackneyed standards, *Willow Weep for Me* with a characteristically, subtle solo by the leader and, also, a fine reading by him of *Ill Wind*.

Kenny Wheeler and Dickie Hawdon lock horns on a coruscating trumpet duel on *Two's Company* and Hawdon's tenor horn adds a distinctive sound to the brass section. The ultimate track *Royal Ascot* is an opportunity for the main soloists, Laurie Monk, Kenny Wheeler, Derek Smith, Dickie Hawdon, Danny Moss and Dankworth to display their jam session credentials.

JOHN MARTIN

LISA SIMONE

ALL IS WELL

LABORIE JAZZ 30 49:44

Lisa is, as readers will know, the daughter of the late Nina Simone, but has made a name for herself on the Broadway stage, among others. On this album she's accompanied by Herve Sambe on guitar, Reggie Washington on bass and Sonny Troupe on drums and percussion, on a programme of originals and standards. Lisa reflects some of that Broadway heritage with her powerful interpretation of songs such as *Finally Free* and the insidious title track, whilst *Child in Me* has a gentler, almost reflective treatment.

This writer was left unimpressed by Lisa's treatment of Leonard Cohen's *Suzanne*, and the same can be said for *Revolution* where Lisa turns up the volume somewhat. It has to be said that there is little jazz substance on offer here; Lisa has no inflection in her vocalizing, no trying to

bend her voice in the manner of an instrument. It grieves me to be so dismissive, but improvisation is what jazz is about - and there's little of that to be heard here.

GREG MURPHY

ART BLAKEY AND
THE JAZZ
MESSENGERS

AT THE FREE TRADE
HALL 1961

Solar Records 4569958 79:17

Was there ever a modern jazz quintet as to match this one? OK, so Miles's various fivesomes might have done more in pushing the envelope of the music, and Horace Silver's post-Messengers units arguably did far better in the populist stakes, but no band captured the mood of modern jazz as it stood at the dawn of the 1960s quite like this edition of Blakey's lifelong dynasty.

Drawn from the tranche of tapes recorded off the PA mic at Manchester's famed concert venue (and in decent sound), this generously timed release of previously unissued material - a welcome adjunct to the bands litany of celebrated Blue Notes - illustrates every virtue the group possessed. Whether it be jazz-funk (*Dat Dere*), a classic bop piece (*Night In Tunisia*), a nod to the then-new modal sound (*The Summit*) or a elegant standard (*Like Someone In Love*), everything Blakey and his men touch turns to gold. And there's oodles of contrast in the contributions of the three main soloists too; Morgan, in his cocky, garrulous prime; Shorter, bookish, broaching a new musical language between hard bop and the 'new thing'; Timmons, the ultimate groovy hipster.

As for the boss himself, the volcanic solo on *Tunisia* delivers proof-positive of his central part in the lineage of jazz drumming. Elsewhere, his admonishing rattlings, tsunami-like press rolls and relentless rivet cymbal drive all before them. Indeed, was there ever a modern jazz quintet to match this one? *Highly* recommended.

SIMON SPILLETT

KEVIN EUBANKS
STANLEY JORDAN

DUETS

Mack Avenue Records MAC
1092 48:17

The music is evocative, often poignant, moody, impressionistic; it makes much use of ground-bass, pedal notes and ostinato devices and is, for the most part, slow. But it is unquestionably jazz. Stanley Jordan's guitar is heavily impregnated with the blues, although there's also a country, down-home feel just below the surface. Kevin Eubanks' piano draws strongly on the gospel tradition. A pervasive improvisational quality colours the proceedings - indeed, such is the empathy between the two musicians that the entire performance might well be improvised.

Jordan plays electric guitar throughout except for one excursion on to piano. He makes full use of the tonal and sustaining characteristics inherent in the instrument without resorting to distortion or strident effects and is capable of coaxing gentle, tender sounds from his strings as well as attacking, ferocious passages worthy of Django. Much has been made of his revolutionary two-handed technique enabling him to approach his guitar rather as a pianist might. This unique method - which apparently took him nine years to perfect - enables him to

create complex textures and contrapuntal lines that I find really exciting.

Kevin Eubanks, having studied violin and trumpet before settling on guitar and studying at Berklee College, plays piano to very good effect, in addition to acoustic and electric guitars, bass and keyboard vibes. His role here is, I suppose, that of accompanist and yet he offers far more than just support. His contributions are essential in shaping and structuring the music. Truly a meeting of equals.

HUGH LEDIGO

J.J. JOHNSON

THE COMPLETE '60S BIG
BAND RECORDINGS

Phono 870229 2
CDs 74.14/66.39

Having been the principal progenitor of bebop trombone, J.J. Johnson (1924-2001) morphed into a substantive arranger and big band front-man. Later, of course, he was to become a composer for hire, turning out charts for TV and films, and even later, he returned to active performance, touring internationally with his quintet. This double CD release on Phono (a new name to me, possibly of Andorran extraction) brings together four of his RCA Victor large ensemble albums from 1964-66 and a welcome return they make.



Art Blakey

First of all, they make clear that he remained the consummate modern trombone soloist and second, that he was an orchestrator of rare skill, this immediately apparent on the opening set of bebop standards, theses bedecked with solos by Clark Terry and flutist Jerome Richardson among others. Mind you, it's J.J.'s own sound that stays uppermost in the memory, buttery and firmly-centred, as on Nelson's timeless *Stolen Moments*. There's also ample evidence that his chart ideas are distinctive, the voicings sometimes analogous to those of Gil Evans and Oliver Nelson, each piece cleverly re-imagined. The retention of the original liner notes is helpful in identifying soloists etc and everything else is properly detailed in the comprehensive booklet that accompanies the CD. So, with 42 tracks to entice you, go for it, as they used to say.

PETER VACHER

DAVE BAILEY QUINTET/SEXTET

THE COMPLETE 1 & 2 FEET IN THE GUTTER SESSIONS

Phoenix Records 131609 2CDs
79:20/66:33

Dave Bailey plays drums with flair and finesse, as you might expect from an oft-times collaborator in Gerry Mulligan's various enterprises.

On these two CDs he gets to be band leader although, beyond talking to his invited audience, most of his undoubted leadership skills (he was also a pilot, flight instructor and executive director of an organization called The Jazzmobile) were employed behind the scenes. He does contribute excellent breaks and brief solos, but is clearly more concerned with the music than the limelight.

The bands on these five sessions are pick-up groups formed from Bailey's favourite musicians and the musical format is essentially that of the time-honoured jam session – a 'head' and a succession of solos – but, unlike the familiar 'safe' tunes common to most such occasions, the material here is all highly original

and by no means just an excuse to kick off the ensuing improvisations. In fact, many of the themes are quite demanding and the resultant chord progressions give the soloists something to get their teeth into. Riffs emerging behind the soloists are also out of the usual run.

There are personnel changes from one recording date to another, but the performance standard remains uniformly high throughout. It's interesting to compare the work of trumpeters Clark Terry and Bill Hardman, very much from the same school but the former being the more mercurial. Tenorists Charlie Rouse and Frank Haynes, both warm, free blowing stylists, make a striking contrast with Junior Cook's Coltrane-based sound.

But these are not cutting contests – just great straight-ahead jazz.

HUGH LEDIGO

BILL WATROUS QUARTET

LA ZORRA

Progressive PCD-7154 49.30

Watrous is a true virtuoso of the trombone, a player whose technical command of this often recalcitrant instrument is quite awe-inspiring. This enables him to play complex lines at blistering speed but also, and here's the remarkable bit, to play chords on the instrument. This he does by blowing a note on the trombone and humming a vocal sound simultaneously, which then triggers a higher harmonic note, the resulting chord rather like a cultivated raspberry. Used sparingly, it's an interesting trick; used too often it's a bore. Happily, Watrous manages to stay the right side of that particular equation on this album for much like scat, a little goes a long way.

This recording dates from December 1980 and was one of a series issued originally on Famous Door, producer Harry Lim's successor to his justly-celebrated Keynote label. It teams the leader with a group of little-known, then-young Hollywood sidemen, their opener *La Zorra* [aka 'The Fox'], a fast-



moving line with multi-tracked trombones, additional percussion and a Latin feel. Watrous plays with his customary busy command, crowding every bar to the full, ahead of Jim Cox on Fender Rhodes, an instrument whose nuance-free sound seems dated now. *Jitterbug Waltz* is taken entirely solo and is the better for it. This, to use the cliché, is a tour-de-force, complete with chorded passages and complex ideas, all unfolding before one's very eyes, as it were. *Mudslide Solly* is an original with decent work from the rhythm team, even if the bass solos are rubbery and dreary, and demonstrates Watrous's emphasis on precise articulation and middle-order dynamics, as he eschews smeared notes or sudden movements of the slide. *How About You* gets a peachy ballad treatment, indicating that there is more to Watrous than machine-gun delivery on up-tempo stuff. I guess he's still at work in and around Hollywood but he's been quiet recently on record so this might be the best way to get to know him.

PETER VACHER

TONY SCOTT

MUSIC AFTER MIDNIGHT

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 850 70:51

For clarinet devotees, like myself, this is a treat. Here are 15 quartet tracks, taken from five 1953 sessions - three live, two in studios, in New York and New Jersey - illustrating the outset of Tony Scott's six poll-winning years of playing what could be termed 'normal' jazz. From 1959 till 2007 he lived outside the States, being involved in Asian and 'New Age' music.

During that limited 'fifties period, the Scott clarinet style was said to be 'more cool' than the long-lasting Buddy De Franco - but this collection contradicts that claim. Particularly on the eight live tracks, the sheer swing and flowing vitality of his playing stems directly from that of Benny Goodman. Likewise, the piano lift of Dick Katz is very much in Teddy Wilson vein. And to judge by the vociferous audience reactions, they liked it that way.

Inevitably, the seven studio-recorded pieces are much quieter. Track 9, *I Cover The Waterfront*, is the first example of his ballad approach, and includes a verse I'd never heard. His sound is warm and mellow, but still brings B.G. to mind. *Blues For Ava* is a welcome six-minute easy-paced outing, wherein he builds from a low-register touch to some wailing stuff. The other original in this set is an uppish swinger called *Swootie Patootie*, which could easily be taken for a Goodman special. The overall jazz value of this package is boosted by the presence of such drummers as Philly Joe Jones and Osie Johnson, and such bassists as Milt Hinton and Percy Heath.

LESTOMKINS

JAMES MOODY

COOKIN' THE BLUES AND ANOTHER BAG

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 846: 76.28

Two LPs from 1961 and 1962 respectively are combined on this generous CD, featuring the versatile James Moody: equally adept on alto sax, tenor sax and flute. On the first LP, Moody is in a septet with trumpeter Howard

McGhee and trombonist Bernard McKinney. Vocalist Eddie Jefferson joins them for two tracks, singing in his wild trademark style which used vocalese, often delivered at lightning speed. On the second LP, Moody is in a sextet including that fine pianist Kenny Barron.

The whole album is dominated by James Moody, and he takes most of the solo space. Moody played in Dizzy Gillespie's big band, and his playing is imbued with bebop as well as the blues. Some of his playing seems to consist of long strings of notes without much meaning but when he introduces an element of the blues, his playing assumes more shape. He is equally powerful on alto or tenor, but his personality changes when he takes up the flute, as in the gently lyrical *Ally* and the poignant *The Day After*. *Another Bag* has the benefit of five originals and seven arrangements by Juillard graduate and well-known composer-arranger Tom McIntosh. The sound quality is fair and this is essentially an album for fans of James Moody.

TONY AUGARDE

MALENE MORTENSEN

CAN'T HELP IT

Stunt Records STUCD 14162
48:56

In the absence of any note with this CD, I can only relate to the information that it was recorded in Brooklyn, New York in March 2014 and later mastered in Elsinore, Denmark. The name of singer Malene Mortensen suggests Danish origin, but the rhythm men's names, Christian Sands, Burniss Earl Travis II and Terreon Gully may suggest otherwise.

Anyway, the music content is a mixed bag. Four of the 11 songs are by Mortensen and Sands. On most of the standards, Malene's is a jazzy-sounding voice, but I'm not sure what she's trying to do with it. I'm faced with some quibbles and queries. *Alone Together* includes some vocalese, and I wonder what instrumental it's using. A mixture of scat and lyrics midway feels awkward. The back card names a supposed original merged in, but it is not to be heard. Then *Alfie* is sung

faultlessly and perfectly straight. *I Can't Help It*, supposedly by Stevie Wonder, has her partly excitable, but lyrically inaudible.

By contrast again, a one-off song, *The Best Of Mine*, by Paul Banks, a guitarist who plays on this track only, is very appealing and well-enunciated, with a range of words. Yet one called *The Heat And Flames* has very repetitive lyric lines, allied to edgy rhythms and mixed tempos. Total incoherence afflicts their other material, prompting me to ask 'What's it all about?' But the most dislikeable track is a standard. Her treatment of *My Favourite Things* is would-be 'cute', but contrived, pretentious. Her playing around with the lyrics just grates on the ear. A curate's egg, but is it good in sufficient parts?

LESTOMKINS

BILLY STRAYHORN

DAY DREAM

Essential Jazz Classics
EJC55667 2 CDs, 79:21/78:48

An interesting compilation, that illustrates some aspects of the jazz talent that was Billy Strayhorn. Though his crowning achievement was the co-composing/orchestrating of dynamic suites with Duke Ellington, he was also active as a pianist and songwriter.

Two separate eras are looked into. First we find him in 1961 in France running through ten of his melodies. Three including the title song have the Swingle-ish Paris Blue Notes ooh-ing and ah-ing. A couple have the mellow Paris String Quartet. Seven tracks are a 1959 set by a tight, groovy septet that features sterling solo statements. The characteristic quirks and peaks of Shorty Baker on trumpet, Quentin Jackson on mainly-muted trombone, Russell Procope on clarinet and Johnny Hodges on alto make this by far the most distinctive part of this double album for me.

Then we jump back to 1947 for two pleasant solo piano pieces, and an odd but listenable spate of Harry Carney's lugubrious baritone backed by a string section. Eight tracks are remastered rarities from 1950 -

Billy Strayhorn



piano duets by Billy Strayhorn and Duke Ellington, in which the great associates alternate, interweave and unify to good effect. One called *Tonk* is ear-catching, and reprised interestingly later on the disc. There are also four tracks wherein the two men accompany the novel cello of Oscar Pettiford.

LESTOMKINS

CECIL PAYNE

THREE CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS

Avid Jazz AMSC1150 2 CDs,
79:58, 69:03

Cecil Payne (1922–2007) began his musical life in his native Brooklyn on alto saxophone, but switched to baritone in 1946 whilst working with J.J. Johnson and quickly developed a light, flexible approach on the larger instrument with tone that had many echoes of Lester Young.

The sessions here are from 1956 (*Patterns of Jazz*, Randy Weston Trio plus) 1961 (*Performing Charlie Parker Music*) and 1962 (*The*

Connection). Payne's individual approach can be heard from the outset of *Patterns of Jazz*, with the sprightly Arnetta and the gentle *How Deep*, before trumpeter Kenny Dorham joins in for four titles; his solo work is outstanding, with rapid multi-note passages. The piano work of Duke Jordan is supportive to both the quartet and quintet sides.

The session devoted to the music of Charlie Parker is the litmus test. Payne manages to imbue great mobility to the unwieldy horn and navigates at a rate of knots through some classic Parker compositions, which would be difficult enough on a smaller horn. The session is enhanced by Clark Terry's nimble trumpet and, once again, Duke Jordan's piano.

Only *The Connection* lacks impact in this company, but at least it contains a good dose of Bennie Green's elegant trombone. This music has not been widely available for some time, and it's good to have it gathered at a budget price.

GREG MURPHY



Courtney Pine

DIZZY GILLESPIE BIG BAND

COMPLETE 1956 SOUTH AMERICAN TOUR RECORDINGS

Solar Records 4569960
2 CDs, 78/05/78.41

Gathered together here are all existing live recordings by the mid-fifties Gillespie Big Band. The group featured the talents of Quincy Jones, Lee Morgan, Melba Liston, Al Grey, Phil Woods and Wynton Kelly amongst others. Also included are two sambas recorded with a Brazilian orchestra and four tracks with the tango orchestra of Osvaldo Fresedo.

Much of the repertoire is familiar Gillespie material from the period including *Cool Breeze*, *A Night in Tunisia*, *Manteca* and *The Champ* and all expertly played.

Austin Cromer is the featured vocalist on several tracks which he handles well in the style of a young Billy Eckstine. Arrangements come from Ernie Wilkins, Quincy Jones, Tadd Dameron and Melba Liston as well as Dizzy himself. All-in-all an enjoyable set which succeeds in capturing the atmosphere of these live performances.

The samba and tango tracks, although interesting to hear are for die-hard Gillespie fans only. The 12-page CD booklet contains a wealth of information and photographs from the time. This is a valuable document of this short-lived band's South American tour.

ALAN MUSSON

KEN PELOWSKI & ALAN BARNES

AT THE WATERMILL

Woodville WVCD 143 63.46

Throughout Britain there are dedicated people who strive to keep jazz alive for the public. The Watermill in Dorking, Surrey holds monthly sessions featuring good jazz musicians. And for several years I enjoyed attending the Blackpool Jazz Party, a get-together over a long weekend where we could hear various permutations of about 20 different jazzers. One of the permutations I enjoyed most was that of Ken Peplowski and Alan Barnes.

The session on this CD was recorded at the Watermill in 2010. Peplowski and Barnes have already released two albums together, and their togetherness is evident in the harmonies they create and the ways they interact. Peplowski tends to solo more melodically than Barnes, who delivers impressively fast runs which show his prowess. It is sometimes difficult to tell who is doing what, as they both play clarinet and the tenor sax. The repertoire is nicely varied, with a couple of funky pieces by Horace Silver, a few tender ballads, and some seldom-heard compositions by jazzmen which deserve more exposure. *Perdido* is reconfigured in bebop style, and the nicest piece of togetherness is in the closing *Pee Wee's Blues*, where Alan and Ken duet on clarinets. The rhythm section (John Pearce, Dave Green, Steve Brown) ensures a steady beat. Hurrah for jazz musicians – and jazz promoters.

TONY AUGARDE

COURTNEY PINE

SONG (THE BALLAD BOOK)

Destin-E Records 777102468X
52:35

Song is something of a departure for Courtney Pine, with an economic approach in a programme of duets with the fine pianist, Zoe Rahman; furthermore, he sticks to one instrument, bass clarinet, throughout. Pine produces a superb, warm tone from the instrument producing lyrical explorations; consider the gentle exploration of *A Child Is Born* and the unlikely *Amazing Grace* where he runs through the octaves to great effect.

One Last Cry is a haunting work, using the upper registers of the bass clarinet but as an example of his versatility, consider the lower-register explorations on the forty-second *Intro* before Pine moves straight into *A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square* which is a near ten minutes of sheer delight; Pine is so fluent on the bass clarinet, producing some dazzling runs. On the title-track, Pine is superb, with a long solo, leading to a fine contribution from Zoe Rahman.

Song is as much Zoe Rahman's disc as it is Pine's; her accompaniments are subtle and melodic, yet she is adventurous on her soli without interfering with Pine's progress. She fills the spaces behind Pine with grace and aplomb and provides rhythm just where and when needed. That she can keep pace with Pine's improvisations says much for her musical ability. The way in which they keep pace with each other makes for a hugely enjoyable musical experience.

GREG MURPHY

DENNIS ROLLINS VELOCITY TRIO

SYMBIOSIS

DRV 0001-47:05

Dennis Rollins has been quietly making a name for himself in recent years as the man behind Badbone and Co and 2005 the

remarkable Boneyard, an ensemble featuring ten trombones, a sousaphone and drums. Now, as if downsizing, comes the Velocity Trio a compact unit featuring organist Ross Stanley and drummer Pedro Segundo. This is a powerful outfit who have jointly composed seven of the ten titles here, although it must be said 'compose' is inaccurate when the spontaneous sound of the trio is considered.

A major feature of this recording is the integration of the musicians; *Boneyard* is a case in point with Rollins and Stanley sharing the theme statement kicked along by Segundo's drums, leading to some intriguing solo work by Rollins. The lively *Bakkra* has a fine unison statement from all three musicians but is disappointingly short, ending at 1:12. *Utopia* sets the standard for ensemble work, with fine work from Rollins including some snappy theme statements, followed by a tempo change which brings out the full power of the trio.

A trio it might be, but it sounds more like an octet such is the power of the voicings; credit too to each of the musicians for their individual and ensemble contributions.

GREG MURPHY

SONNY ROLLINS/COLEMAN HAWKINS

TOGETHER AT NEWPORT 1963

Jazz on Jazz 244552 70:58

When it was first released in 1964, Sonny Rollins's on-record meeting with Coleman Hawkins, the man he openly acknowledged as his 'idol,' left many listeners scratching their heads in wonder. One contemporary reviewer even described the effect of hearing the two tenorists together as akin to attempting to digest a meal of steak and kippers, while Hawkins' biographer John Chilton thought their dialogue '[like] that of two Harold Pinter characters talking earnestly and simultaneously on different subjects.'

This set, however, taped a week

before the RCA studio summit, and previously unissued, is an altogether more palatable proposition, finding the two front-men feeding off one another for an engrossing forty or so minutes. At this point in his career, Rollins was trying to find ways in which to accommodate the influence of the avant-garde into his playing, leaving some of his work from the period a rather awkward mish-mash of coherence and bluster (as on the original *Sonny Meets Hawk* album). Here though, he plays with enormous purpose and drive, clearly energising his co-front-man. Indeed, perhaps the album's strongest plus point is hearing Hawkins with a young, adventurous rhythm section, including pianist Paul Bley, who clearly spur him on. Take his solo on *All The Things You Are*, for example - revealing a musical curiosity far from moribund.

The bonus material, from a Hawkins-less Half Note broadcast earlier that year, finds Rollins 'accompanied' by McCoy Tyner, a mouth-watering prospect that sadly turns out to be something of an anti-climax. The leader is at his most unfocused, tumbling from one theme to another, thus creating no real opportunity for the kind of hand in glove co-operation Tyner was to enjoy with his regular boss of the time, John Coltrane. Buy it for the Hawkins tracks.

SIMON SPILLET

WARREN VACHE QUINTET

REMEMBERS BENNY CARTER

Arbors ARCD 19446 63.46

This album arose when Benny Carter's widow asked Vaché to play at a tribute concert for the late Benny Carter in Connecticut. Warren decided to make this CD with roughly the same group. Warren Vaché is a first-rate exponent of the cornet, able to play forcefully as well as softly, often muted, adding the occasional growl. Tenorist Houston Person is as reliable as ever, fusing seamlessly with Warren when they harmonise. Houston is featured playing radiantly with the rhythm section

in *Evening Star*. Perhaps the biggest star of the group is bassist Nicki Parrott, who contributes fine bass solos, as well as singing movingly on several tracks. But drummer Leroy Williams seems determined to break up the beat as if this is a bebop session. Benny Carter's songs are not all very memorable, several of their melodies depending upon repeating the same phrase. But *Lights Are Low* and *Only Trust Your Heart* are deservedly jazz standards.

This pleasurable album may erase from my memory the sight of Warren Vaché on stage at the 2006 Ascona Jazz Festival, smoking relentlessly – while a vocalist was doing her best to sing alongside. Hardly professional – or considerate.

TONY AUGARDE

JOE STILGOE

NEW SONGS FOR OLD SOULS

Linn AKD 484 48:07

Here's Joe's first for illustrious Linn, but his previous three are shown as being available on the label. It's another great listen - with ten out of the dozen being his own new songs. The *Old Souls* titling clearly relates to the facts that they have the quality of actual standards and the aura of nostalgia that pervades the dazzling stylings. For instance, at least three of them have the rollicking feel of Louis Prima about them. The whole album has that Stilgoe stamp, which I would term happiness personified.

The superlative constituents that make up a JS production need to be itemised. His appealing vocal sound has power or tenderness as required, and his diction is admirable. The latter virtue is essential in transmitting his cleverly-constructed lyrics. He is a skilled, swinging jazz piano soloist, as heard on several tracks here. A major ability is his arranging, which productively utilises groupings up to full big band, spiced with effective vocal choruses and soloists. His musician colleagues all being first-rate, the end-result is unremittingly entertaining.



Warren Vache

The two non-Stilgoe compositions fit in very nicely. Brian Wilson's *I Just Wasn't Made For These Times* suits the overall mood, and compatibly combines Joe's singing with that of the unique Liane Carroll. A penultimate treat is a heartfelt Stilgoe rendition of the Lane/Lerner classic *Too Late Now*. Delivered with just his trio, it's a moving performance, containing perfect piano. In fact, perfection is the word for this collection.

LESTOMKINS

HOT STUFF

EARLY JAZZ REVISITED

Upbeat Jazz URCD 264 61:24

Double nostalgia. Not so much the tunes (They pre-date even me!) but the sound which is decidedly Chicagoan, redolent of a mis-spent youth for those of us above a certain age. And then there's the guys in the band. Some *still* playing – but a lot, not.

Chez Chesterman plays hot, incisive cornet with strong Wild Bill Davison overtones, though his voice is reminiscent of Woody Herman. Dick Charlesworth – he of the City Gents, if I remember aright: clarinet à la mode but a robust 'forties tenor if ever there was one. Mike Pointon's trombone spans the eras from New Orleans to Swing with an impressive facility. Pat Hawes – a pianist I remember from 1954! More Alton Purnell than Fats but boy, does he swing! As does the entire rhythm team, with fine work from Jim Forey, banjo/guitar, rock-steady yet propulsive bass from John Rodber and superb drumming from the late Rex Bennett who must have graced

the studios, the big bands and the jazz groups since before the old king died.

Tunes from the likes of Lil Hardin, Jabo Williams, Jimmy Yancey, Scott Joplin and Ellington predate the Swing era and there are some oddities reflecting an age when jazz and popular music weren't so far apart: *Never Swat A Fly* and *Keep Smilin'*. I detect Dick Charlesworth's predilection for the absurd here. They're fun, as is all the music on this disc. It's also Hot Stuff! Nostalgic but decidedly not a museum piece.

HUGH LEDIGO

RYAN TRUESDELL

LINES OF COLOR: GIL EVANS PROJECT

Blue Note ASBN 0133

This sumptuous album, recorded live at New York's Jazz Standard club in January 2015, is the latest product of composer/producer Truesdell's continuing desire to keep Evans's music in front of the jazz public. Truesdell already has form in this field – his *Newly Discovered Works of Gil Evans* album won Evans a posthumous Grammy recently. This time he has included six more 'never before recorded' works by the much-lamented composer, plus two arrangements with previously unheard sections and three of his well-known charts. Funded via a collaboration between the famed Blue Note label and the Artist Share crowd-funding concept, Truesdell assembled an orchestra packed to the gunwales with star players from the wider New York scene for this club engagement,

augmented by classical woodwind specialists and a single viola. The resulting recording is of the very highest quality and the degree of enterprise involved is similarly quite outstanding.

Part of the album's fascination lies in the way it illustrates Evans's early mastery of the conventional swing band idiom as well as his more radical stance on the later pieces where they take on something of Mingus's concern for tumult and momentum. The orchestra is large, studded with great soloists, the charts often marked by exultant passages for the trombones with the tuba below, fluttery motifs for the flutes and the kind of voicings that stay in your consciousness. Once heard, never forgotten, you might say.

There's a version of *Greensleeves* taken as a bravura performance by trombonist Marshall Gilkes, originally written for a Kenny Burrell album in 1965. How good to hear it again and in such expert hands! Almost as exciting in its way is *Gypsy Jump*, a swing piece that Gil wrote for his then employer Claude Thornhill in 1942 but which was never recorded. It opens with a trumpet flourish and settles into a clarinet-led motif over Jay Anderson's poised bass, the result a danceable pleasure. Then again, there's *Concorde*, the John Lewis composition originally arranged by Gil for the 1964 *Individualism* album and here given a rumbustious reading, with the stellar trumpet of Greg Gisbert featured. Or Bix's *Davenport Blues* re-imagined in the hands of yet another exciting trumpet player in Mat Jodrell. A previously omitted section here brings out a bevy of soloists and again emphasizes the care with which Truesdell has approached the project and his concern to work from primary sources, thus ensuring that the full richness of the original material is laid bare. I don't have sufficient space to describe all the wonders of this recording: it is vibrant, packed with incident, touching and hugely well done. Great playing, fine solos, sweet vocals from Wendy Gilles, all in perfect sound and with a booklet that deserves a Grammy all of its own. Get this now.

PETER VACHER

BILL EVANSTRIO

KÖLN CONCERT 1976

Domino Records 891228 59:33

The most significant aspect of Evans' trio work as heard on these tracks is its astonishing collective improvisation. Apparently free yet never stepping beyond the harmonic structure or rhythmic framework of the compositions, the interplay between piano and bass is extraordinary, and the drummer supports and emphasizes the shifting dynamic and rhythmic flow with a subtle drive that never intrudes.

Evans' keyboard facility is formidable. He is quoted as saying '...the technical problems have never been that great to me'. Two or three years of intensive practice on Bach, Beethoven and Bartok in his early career have no doubt helped but, if they have given him security in performance, there is little overt 'classicism' in his style.

Bassist Eddie Gomez, to quote Evans again, is '...a complete virtuoso... but the virtuosity is always motivated by a musical thought'.

The result is a meeting of independently creative minds sometimes running in parallel, sometimes converging into passages of spontaneous concord. Not easy to listen to - the melodies don't always fall readily on the ear, the harmonies border on the abstruse, and the interweaving lines are quite complex. As with much chamber music, you need to be aware of the individual voices as well as the overall effect.

The first seven tracks, recorded in 1976 with Eliot Zigmund on drums, include pieces by Brubeck, Earl Zindars and Bobby Gentry. All other material is Evans' own. Most, like *Time Remembered*, *34 Skidoo*, and *Turn Out the Stars* are familiar numbers in the pianist's repertoire.

Not easy listening but well worth some effort.

HUGH LEDIGO

PAT HALCOX

REMEMBERING PAT HALCOX

Lake Records LACD338 2 CDs

For me there couldn't be a more welcome release than this tribute to a marvellous trumpet player and a really nice bloke. Full marks to Paul Adams at Lake Records for letting us remember just how great Pat Halcox was. Two CDs, one with him in the Chris Barber Band and the other guesting with various groups in jam sessions and sit-ins.

The Barber CD takes us through four decades of that band and four different incarnations. As Chris extended his musical range from fundamental New Orleans jazz to early mainstream and blues, Pat adapted easily to the new ideas.

The tracks are all known Barber material and carry the recognisable stamp of impeccable musicianship with Pat supplying a strong and elegant lead. Kenny Ball and Alex Welsh sit in on two numbers but Pat stays in command on both. Good, also, to be reminded just how superb and irreplaceable Otilie Patterson was as a blues singer on her two numbers.

But it is the second CD which I want to comment on. Chris never restricted Pat in any way. In fact, he encouraged his adventurous flights. But, still, being part of a band essentially requires a certain accommodation and so the tracks on this second CD allow us to hear how Pat may have developed in different circumstances. His pairings with old chum, Colin Kingswell, are happy affairs and the inclusion of another old friend, Sonny Morris, leads to a boisterous free-for-all on *Give me your Telephone Number* with Pat driving a hard lead.

Wabash Blues and Confessin' are marathon pieces and feature American guest pianists Don Ewell on the first and Art Hodes on the second. These numbers give Pat an opportunity to stretch and he blows some wonderful choruses. To demonstrate how flexible and audacious he was, he fronted the

Alex Welsh Band when Alex was indisposed and he depped for Humph in a similar situation, taking these challenging roles in his stride. He performs beautifully on flugelhorn on *Blue Orchid* and his All Stars give a convincing rendition of Woody Herman's *Apple Honey*.

Pat's almost chameleon-like ability to shine in any musical company makes me wonder just what direction he might have taken. His playing brought to jazz a warm tone, a constantly inventive mind and exemplary taste and he brought a genial and much-loved personality.

Pat, truly, was a one-off. He is sorely missed.

JOHN MARTIN

THE BIX PROJECT BAND

BIX OFF THE RECORD

Lake Records LACD339 56:45

This is the latest in a series of Vintage Recording Projects on Lake Records. The initial idea being to recreate a vintage recording session using only one single ribbon microphone. This time around the recording parameters were broadened using a multi-microphone set-up, but still utilizing ribbon microphones.

The recording grew out of the Classic Jazz Party held annually just north of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. This event attracts top players of classic-style jazz from all over the world. Four countries are represented by the musicians on this recording.

This is a sextet of wonderful musicians, four of whom are in their 20's or 30's. Their technical proficiency is without doubt as is their commitment to authenticity.

The idea behind the project was to recreate what Bix could have played and, in some instances, what he almost certainly did, but never had the chance to record. The material for this CD includes tunes bands Bix was associated with performed, songs composed for Bix, or as a tribute to him, some of his personal favourites,

and other choices that were around during his time and that perfectly fit his style.

What we have here is a very enjoyable CD of classic jazz expertly recorded and played. Well worth investigating if you have even a passing interest in the jazz of this period.

ALAN MUSSON

EDDIE THOMPSON TRIO

THE BOSENDORFER CONCERT 1980

HEP CD 2102: 60.20

Nearly 30 years after his death Eddie Thompson is too little remembered by the British jazz public. He had three things in common with the much more famous George Shearing: he was blind, he went to the same London school and he conquered America, though by the time of this recording (1980) he had returned after 10 years in New York. For the concert at the Palace Theatre, Mansfield, Thompson was coupled with an instrument that matched his virtuosity, a Bosendorfer Imperial with an extra octave in the bass for him to rumble around in. The opener, a fine version of *On Green Dolphin Street*, is typical of his idiosyncratic confidence of approach: he toys delicately with the melody, switches tempo, puts in a burst of stride, displays the instrument's sonorous tone in rhapsodic passages. At times the impression is that Eddie Thompson can do almost too much on the piano. At 11 minutes each *Theme from Corcovado* and *Satin Doll* are long for piano trio numbers where the capable bass and drums of Pete Stables and Pete Taylor are for the most part merely supportive. Of the two the Ellington piece is much the more fun, with the theme recurring in varying dynamics in between teasing fragments of other tunes from Thompson's capacious memory. *Corcovado* is more intense, more about complex harmonies, and I preferred a constantly changing *Baubles, Bangles and Beads* as a showpiece for Thompson's virtuosity. Having said that, a breakneck 3 minutes of *Sweet Georgia Brown* has to be the

highlight of the set – Anthony Troon's reference in his liner notes to a Tatumesque tempo is the perfect comparison.

RON SIMPSON

THE JIMMY HEATH SEXTET & ORCHESTRA

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 858 76.29

This very welcome reissue came just as I was half-way through Jimmy Heath's absorbing memoir, *I Walked With Giants*, published in 2010. The modesty inherent in that title shines through the entire text as he details a busy jazz life spent in the company of the greatest players of the day, without making any grandiose claims on his own behalf. For all that, Jimmy deserves high praise for his prowess as a tenor-saxophonist, one of the best from the hard-bop era and as a composer and arranger, many of his originals having entered the hard bop lexicon. Of course, Jimmy, who is still active in New York at the great age of 88 is one of a family trio, each of whom attained jazz fame, with his elder brother, bassist Percy the best known while younger brother, drummer Albert 'Tootie' Heath is also highly rated. Up until Percy's death in 2005, the threesome went out as the Heath Brothers band.

Fresh Sound invite us to look at an earlier period in Jimmy's life with the *The Thumper* from 1959, his first album for Riverside and *Really Big!* by, you've guessed it, a larger band made a year later. Of the seventeen compositions featured over the two sessions, ten are by Jimmy and there is not a dud among them. The Sextet album teams him with trombonist Curtis Fuller and cornetist Nat Adderley, with the mercurial Wynton Kelly on piano and Tootie on drums. The first thing to say is that Jimmy's music radiates joy, the writing bright with Kelly's literate piano a highlight. As he solos, Jimmy shows an awareness of John Coltrane's style, this superimposed over a Gordon-like rhythmic feel. Adderley is fiery, much influenced by Clark Terry and the whole album is a delight. The larger band retains Adderley, with Terry alongside,



Jimmy Heath

the writing nicely open, with French horn for added colour and altoist Cannonball Adderley in sparkling form. There have been many more Heath albums since these but rest assured, this early work signalled a talent destined for greatness.

PETER VACHER

RUBY BRAFF

BRAFF!

Phoenix 131608 58.51

Recorded in June and July 1956, this album consists of three very disparate sessions, all featuring cornetist Ruby Braff (here credited as playing the trumpet). This was comparatively early in Ruby's recording career, but he already sounds confident and mature. He is put into three different groups, numbering nine, six and four musicians respectively. In the nine-piece group, Ruby shares the main solo space with trombonist Lawrence Brown and tenorist Coleman Hawkins, who both play with the mellow sweetness we have come to expect from them. Brown and Hawk drop out of the quintet sessions, where the Basie-ish rhythm section (with the incomparable Freddie Green on guitar) lays down a solid rhythm. The quartet is the ensemble

most suited to display Braff's talents, with guitarist Steve Jordan replacing a bass player and Dave McKenna at the piano. In each session, Ruby Braff displays some wonderfully controlled playing, full of melody and lyricism. He also seems to have a knack for choosing just the right tempo for relaxed, swinging musicianship.

TONY AUGARDE

WES MONTGOMERY

IN THE BEGINNING

Resonance HCD-2014 2 CDs, 69:37/67:00

The wondrous Wes peaked all-too-briefly as the top jazz guitarist in the 'sixties, but during most of the previous decade, he was still gigging in his home town, Indianapolis alongside his brothers, pianist Buddy and bassist Monk. The 16 live tracks here, unearthed from local club sessions, document his solo brilliance and show the stylistic progress that led to his first commercial recording in 1959.

CD1 presents the five-piece that teamed him with a tenorman named Alonzo 'Pookie' Johnson, who proves to be a palatable player. This is 1956, and certainly Wes's thumb-picking technique is



fully in evidence, as is his phrasing eloquence. He and Pookie make a good 'front-line' and share blowing space democratically. Plus there are nimble pianistics from Buddy M. The grooviest track is their version of John Lewis's *Django* - a joyous romp indeed. A nice interlude is Debbie Andrews vocalising strongly on *I Should Care* with only blissful guitar in support.

We turn to CD2, and in three quartet tracks two years later the missing ingredient emerges - the octaves. Here in 1958 are the familiar octave-leap passages that have subsequently influenced his followers. What a great shame it was that he only had another ten years to amaze the jazz public, live and on record. I'm thankful that in 1965 I was in Ronnie's to catch as many as I could of his sparkling sets.

LES TOMKINS

ALLISON NEALE

I WISHED ON THE MOON

Trio Records tri593 59.56

Just once in a while someone comes along whose playing is so fresh and different that it revives a jaded palate. Alto saxist Allison Neale is one of these musicians and what she brings to the current scene is an entirely alternative influence to the hard boppers. Allison cites her creative

source as the West Coast jazz of Art Pepper and Paul Desmond. To my knowledge she is unique among young British jazz musicians in pursuing that course.

This is the lady's third album and it, like the others, it has received lavish praise from serious jazz critics. Bravely, the album was recorded in concert style; straight through with no tinkering and it reflects that spontaneity. She has a strange sound, variously described as 'airy' and 'soft' but those descriptions are misleading for, although, there is a kind of floating quality to her playing, she has a sinuous and intense way of phrasing and a direct approach, lying back slightly behind the beat. She seems to dance in and out of the ensembles and she is unceasingly melodic. Above all she swings mightily on a varied choice of originals by Jimmy Heath, Lennie Tristano and Marty Paich and a few well chosen 'evergreens'.

She is supported by a superior rhythm section of Leon Greening (pno), Julian Bury (bs) and the ubiquitous Steve Brown on drums. Greening, in particular, is a surprising discovery. A percussive pianist who sounds, at times, like Brubeck, he more than pays his way with intelligent backing and some wonderful mazy runs.

All the tracks deserve attention but *Chilly Peppers*, a hectic romp and a tribute to Art, and *The Night*

We Called it a Day, a heartfelt treatment of that song, are particularly appealing.

Vibraharpist Nathaniel Steele is another welcome find on four tracks on which he sounds both fluent and inventive. It is heartening to hear the West Coast style again after so long an absence.

This is music to be cherished as attempting to give us something really different.

JOHN MARTIN

KEN COLYER'S ALL STARS WITH SAMMY RIMINGTON

COLYER FROM THE ARCHIVES

Upbeat URCD 265 72.43

This album is described as a 'newly discovered live session'. It was recorded on a Thames riverboat in the early 1970s, which means that it contains a large amount of the happy customers shouting and chatting in the background. But that could be said to add to the 'live' ambience of the recording, which features a couple of sidemen from Colyer's previous bands: clarinettist Sammy Rimington (whose snake-charming clarinet adds some delightful decoration) and drummer Colin Bowden. Colin certainly brings passion to the first track: a jolly singalong version of *Dinah*, in which Bowden's powerful drumming accentuates important moments.



Colyer's Studio 51 club had recently closed, so he assembled this group to play regularly at the 100 Club. Mike Pointon is on trombone, Annie Hawkins plays bass, and Bill Stotesbury's banjo keeps the band tightly together. The playing is very similar to that of Ken's other bands, although perhaps more easy-going. Colyer is often portrayed as a purist for New Orleans jazz, but parts of this session suggest that he was happy to please the crowd with some Dixieland favourites played in a relaxed style. There are some signs of inadequate preparation, like the scrappy opening to *Milenberg Joys* but the atmosphere makes you want to join in. The sound quality is variable.

TONY AUGARDE

RANDY WESTON

FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS

Avid Jazz AMSC 1153 2CDs 77:14/79:20

Jazz is either intended to evoke a mood and create an atmosphere or it is the expression of a performer's musical identity. The opening eight tracks of Disc 1 are devoted to Cole Porter's exquisite songs, and these performances fall into the latter category though, whether the identity under consideration is Weston's or Thelonius Monk's, I'm not really sure. Weston has assimilated Monk's phrasing, his harmonic and rhythmic approach to a point where he seems to play what his idol would have



done given the equivalent technical facility.

Chronologically, the next session (though it opens Disc 2) was recorded only seventeen months later in 1955. Already Weston's Monkish ardour has subsided, though it never goes away entirely. The repertoire here is a mixture of interesting originals, golden-age standards and, improbably, *Twelfth Street Rag*.

The second half of CD1 has a similar mix of material including six solo tracks on which the pianist reveals himself as an introspective, harmonically searching ballad player. The spirit of Monk may still lurk but I suspect we are hearing the real Randy Weston here.

CD2 finishes with eight numbers from a live performance that also features the baritone sax of Cecil Payne whose husky tone and flowing lines add a fresh tone-colour to the trio format.

Weston's highly proficient piano

COMPETITION WINNERS TUBBY HAYES BOOK

Answer: Jazz Couriers/Ronnie Scott

Winners: LANCE LIDDLE of Newcastle-on-Tyne, P.H. GREEN of Northampton and BRIAN FIDLIN of Codsall, Wolverhampton

MELODY GARDOT CD

Answer: Philadelphia

Winners: RAY WHITEHOUSE of Rochdale, HELEN HANCOCK of St Columb, Cornwall, and MICK DAY of Woodley.

WHIPLASH BLU-RAY

Answer: Damien Chazelle

Winners: COLIN MIDDLEBROUGH of Wirral, MRS. M. BARNES of Newcastle-on-Tyne and IAN EDWARDS of Birmingham.

playing is well represented on these recordings though, at this early stage in his career, I suspect he was yet to find his mature voice. Nevertheless, there is much to be enjoyed and admired in these performances.

HUGH LEDIGO

DIGBY FAIRWEATHER WITH THE CASS CASWELL TRIO

LIVE AND KICKING

DVD AIR Productions, 59.00

At present, quite rightly, much of the publicity around Digby Fairweather is to do with the Half Dozen which has added longevity to excellence by clocking up 20 years on the road, so it's good to find a DVD that concentrates on Digby as musician, not leader. He is on fine form here, successfully essaying bravura cadenzas, pinging the high notes confidently and soloing

with wit and imagination. He avoids over-extended solos, preferring alert and empathetic exchanges with the members of the trio. So who are the Cass Caswell Trio? First impressions are that, for a group I had not heard of, they are remarkably accomplished - it turns out that they are Bristol-based and that bassist Caswell and the excellent pianist John Martin have worked with the best, often in television

studios. Left on their own, they come up with a bluesy, organ-dominated *The Preacher* and a more sophisticated reading of Frank Foster's *Shiny Stockings*. The DVD is made up of a few numbers each from two concerts in 2014 - at Chipping Sodbury Baptist Church and the Brunswick Club in Bristol - with slightly different choice of material. The Chipping Sodbury set is rather more traditional, including a rollicking *Hindustan* with Martin, Caswell and drummer Eddie John seizing their opportunities with relish. For the club set Digby switches for some numbers to a beautiful old cornean, finding a warmer tone and a more lyrical vein for songs like *I Want a Little Girl*. The DVD recording is unexciting, but efficient. There are plenty of cameras using different angles, but the backgrounds are dull enough (brick wall with big cross, blue curtains) and audience shots are very limited. However, the video presentation has the advantage of pointing up the easy teamwork between the four musicians.

RON SIMPSON

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GUEST
REVIEWER
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THE LONG SHADOW
OF THE LITTLE
GIANT: THE LIFE,
WORK AND LEGACY
OF TUBBY HAYES

SIMON SPILLETT

Equinox, hardback, 978 178179 173 8, £19.99

It has been a long wait for this biography of Tubby Hayes, indeed for any biography of the British tenor sax giant, whose legendary status grows with every passing year. Simon Spillett’s book has been well trailed, through his articles, in interviews (most recently here in *Jazz Rag* 136), and through his richly informative inserts for many CDs that are part of the recent flood of previously unknown or reissued Hayes recordings.

The wait has surely been worthwhile. Vivid, richly detailed and based on a staggering amount of research, this book goes far beyond the kind of labour of love that most jazz biographies – certainly most biographies of British musicians – represent. Despite its almost obsessive accumulation of facts backed by 30 pages of endnotes, it is a real page-turner, eloquently and carefully written, and an essential read not only for Hayes fans but for anyone who wants a sharp, insightful picture of British modern jazz in the period when he was active between the mid-1950s and early 1970s.

Spillett’s approach is strictly chronological, starting from Hayes’ suburban childhood in Raynes Park where he was brought up mainly by his doting mother, a former revue artist; his father, a successful dance-band leader, was rarely around but did instil in young Tubby a musical work ethic that had him reading music by age eight, and accustomed to tough practice regimes (initially on violin, his father’s instrument) before he got his first tenor. Apparently it

was love at first sight with the instrument. Having seen one in a shop window when he was five, he made his father keep a promise to buy him one when he was 12. Spillett documents, from press cuttings, recordings and dozens of interviews, every aspect of Tubby’s career once it gets going, but even he has not discovered much about how the saxophonist developed his dazzling instrumental skills so quickly and completely (Hayes said little except that he was self-taught). By age 15, however, just out of school and sitting in with Ronnie Scott, he ‘proceeded’, as Scott said, ‘to scare the daylight out of me’.

After that, Hayes’ quick ascent begins through bands such as those of Kenny Baker, Ambrose, Vic Lewis and Jack Parnell to his own first group in 1955, created full of optimism but soon worn down by the demands of dance hall managers and promoters. Braving the hazards and frustrations of coping with endless one-nighters around the country and audiences who often wanted to dance rather than listen, Hayes, like others in the little band of British modernists, tried to play jazz in the styles of their American heroes and affected a lifestyle hip enough to keep at bay a drab, uncomprehending outside world of, as Spillett often portrays it, bleak austerity and grey suburbia.

Some things stand out, such as a long, on-off partnership with trumpeter Jimmy Deuchar, clearly Hayes’ real soulmate in the late 1950s, and the two year existence of the Jazz Couriers (the ‘inside’ history of the band and of Tubby’s relationship with co-leader Ronnie Scott is particularly well told). Several playing and recording visits to the USA in the early 1960s enabled Hayes to impress the American giants on their own turf, and in 1964 at the Ellington Orchestra’s London concerts he inspired surges of patriotic pride among local fans when he depped at short notice for Paul Gonsalves at the Duke’s request. The formation in 1966 of his last great band with Mike Pyne, Ron Mathewson and Tony Levin allowed him to create what Spillett acknowledges as his ‘true musical masterpiece’, the ‘*Mexican Green*’ album.

Stylistically, it summed up the path of his most productive years: from an early Stan Getz influence, through the muscular, technically exhilarating hard bop of such as Johnny Griffin, to the harmonic switchback ride of John Coltrane’s ‘*Giant Steps*’ and – despite troubling doubts about Coltrane’s later work – a wary sampling of what the avant-garde might offer.

Along the way Spillett doesn’t hide his subject’s chaotic personal life: the devastation of drugs and booze, the failed marriages, the human disaster area of his relationship with singer Joy Marshall, and the final, tragic collapse of his health. He treats all these matter-of-factly, setting out events as they happened and not sparing intimate details, but also not dwelling pruriently on them; just showing them as part of the complexity of a roller-coaster life.

The virtues of the book go beyond those of a good story well told. As a saxophonist himself, Spillett offers interesting but never intimidating technical insights (even explaining why Hayes’ switch to a new mouthpiece mattered) and he can convey for non-musician readers something of the experience of playing. He also has an apt way of summing up musicians’ styles. And although very firmly in Tubby Hayes’ camp, having no doubt that he was ‘every bit the saxophone giant

that Getz and Coltrane were’, he tries to be even-handed, recognising the criticisms that have been levelled at his hero; indeed he often expresses them better than the critics themselves: ‘high-energy feats of musical daring at the expense of all else’, ‘direct and at times near-slavish emulation’, ‘wearing his latest American influences a little too readily on his sleeve’; above all, just ‘too many notes’.

If there is a criticism to be made of the book it is that the author doesn’t actually answer any of these charges. They just seem to bounce off Teflon Tubby. While Spillett sees the force of some of them intellectually, he seems to reject them emotionally. The book certainly won’t end controversy over Hayes. Perhaps appropriately to the era it discusses, it invokes American comparisons as its sole yardstick of musical quality so that, although the author insists on the ‘Britishness’ of Hayes’ jazz, we never really know what that is. Tubby himself always relied on trans-Atlantic comparisons and so, in a way, was always playing a rigged game: how could non-Americans ever really beat the natives at playing American jazz shaped by American culture? It needed a different mind-set and a distancing from American models really to allow European jazz its distinct identity. Spillett’s book is a wonderful evocation of a time when in Britain such a distancing was almost impossible to imagine.



Tubby Hayes

BEALE STREET
DYNASTY: SEX, SONG,
AND THE STRUGGLE
FOR THE SOUL OF
MEMPHIS

PRESTON LAUTERBACH

W.W. Norton & Co., hardback, 978 0 393 08257 9, \$26.95 (£18.27 on amazon.co.uk)

Beale Street Dynasty is not a book about jazz, but it will appeal in large measure to those interested in the music’s hinterland. It charts the rise of Beale Street post-American Civil War to become ‘the Main Street of black America’ and its decline into racism and urban blight, followed by a sort of rise into tourist attraction. The success of Beale Street was founded on tolerance of black and white and a sort of integration of criminal activity and the vice trade on the one hand and responsible political governance and civic development on the other. Preston Lauterbach uses Robert Church Senior and Junior as the centre of his story, the father who became the South’s first black millionaire (though his father was, in fact, a white steamboat captain) and his son who moved his focus more towards increasing black electoral power.

It’s a lively, entertaining, sometimes tragic and pathetic story told with great verve via short episodes that bring in a vast array of vividly drawn characters. And that’s where the jazz interest comes in. Jelly Roll Morton arrives in town and takes on the local piano champion. Ralph Peer, Victor’s man on the road, records the Memphis Jug Band on Beale Street. But the main jazz-related story is that of W.C. Handy who led bands and wrote music in his Beale Street office for many years. I was aware that *Memphis Blues* was originally a campaign song called ‘Mr. Crump’. I did not know that Boss Crump ran the Democratic Party machine for decades, sometimes with formal office (Mayor, Congressman), sometimes without, but with no loss of power. Beale Street prospered under the uneasy alliance of Crump and Church; ultimately, as they split, Crump presided over

an increasingly racist regime – an ironic career step for the man in whose praise the first formally named blues was composed.

Beale Street Dynasty apparently contains 22 photographs, but I have to take that on trust as I reviewed it from an advance copy (textually very accurate – proof-reading lives at Norton). Similarly I hope the on-sale version contains an index, necessary in such a sweeping history.

RON SIMPSON

BILLIE HOLIDAY:
THE MUSICIAN &
THE MYTH

JOHN SZWED

William Heinemann, hardback, 978 1 785 15027 2, £20.00

The most remarkable feature of *Billie Holiday: The Musician & the Myth* is that it does exactly what the title says; this is not one of those books that comes up with an eye-catching title, then gives way to lazily conventional biography. The first part, *The Myth*, mainly deals with her autobiography *Lady Sings the Blues*, its troubled progress to publication (lawsuits threatened from the likes of Tallulah Bankhead, followed by lengthy cuts) and the reaction to it. John

Szwed deals clearly and convincingly with the underlying reasons for its notorious unreliability whilst making a case for its essential truth. In particular co-author William Dufty comes out with surprising credit. For instance, the opening sentence – ‘Mom and Pop were just a couple of kids when they got married. He was eighteen, she was seventeen, and I was three’ – is memorable, but also inaccurate: they never married and were several years older when Billie was born. The elegant economy of expression is Dufty’s, but the fabricated facts go back to a 1945 interview with Billie. The final part of *The Myth* deals with film appearances by Billie, the film *Lady Sings the Blues* and what Szwed sees as the best photographs of her: in the circumstances it’s odd that the book has almost no illustrations.

His tendency to tell the back stories of the likes of Orson Welles’ involvement with jazz in the early 1940s is a foretaste of the oddest chapter of the book, the first in the longer second section, *The Musician. The Prehistory of a Singer* tells us about things one would never expect to find in a book about Billie Holiday such as minstrel shows. Certainly the most bizarre fact to emerge is that Eva Braun used to pose in blackface in honour of her favourite performer, Al Jolson.

LADY DAY AT 100

John Szwed could perhaps be accused of irrelevance!

The final sections are much more focussed on Billie’s art as a singer, full of interesting information, conveying much of her skill and emotional appeal and not resorting to technical points or musical notation. The songs he analyses and concentrates on come from throughout her career, and the events of her life drift in and out of the narrative, largely dependent on whether Szwed feels he has anything new to say, so her time with Artie Shaw gets more space (nice long account by Helen Forrest) than her time with Basie.

Anyone turning to *The Musician & the Myth* for a full account of Billie Holiday’s life and career will be very disappointed. It reads at times like a series of essays on things about Lady Day that interest John Szwed. But most readers will find they interest them, too, and it is very capably written, stylish and very readable which may encourage a bit of skipping when Szwed embarks on one of his lists of names or the back story to the French *chanson*.

RON SIMPSON



Billie Holiday

RON SIMPSON'S ROUND-UP OF RECENT CDS

Volume 7 of Lake's **BRITISH TRADITIONAL JAZZ AT A TANGENT: THE CHICAGO-DIXIELAND STYLE BANDS** (LACD 341: 78.07) is definitely one of the best in that series despite leaving out the most famous bands (Alex Welsh, Freddy Randall, etc.) which appear under their own names in the Lake catalogue. Four tracks from Carlo Krahmer's Chicagoans get things off to a superb start: the first two feature a really hot young trumpeter, Humphrey Lyttelton, and the other two are more relaxed in the company of ex-Wolverine Jimmy McPartland, on a UK visit. The Bixian connection remains with Archie Semples' Capitol Jazz Band giving Alex Welsh full rein on *Singing the Blues* and some lovely trumpet from veteran Jack Jackson with a Mark White group on *Davenport Blues*. Other bands – all of them good – are led by Bobby Mickleborough, Joe Daniels, Laurie Gold and Sid Phillips, the likes of George Chisholm, Kenny Ball, Vic Ash and

Don Lusher put in appearances, and the excellent, if neglected, trumpeter Alan Wickham steals the show by appearing on half the tracks with three different bands.

EMBRACEABLE (Storyville 101 4296: 72.21) is a recently discovered and thoroughly enjoyable **Svend Asmussen** session from 1985 at the tiny Le Petit Opportun club in Paris, released earlier this year to celebrate the violinist's 99th birthday. A playful *Singin' in the Rain* sets the tone, with Asmussen in relaxed and expansive mood with a French trio including the always admirable pianist Georges Arvanitas. Standards predominate, but Asmussen is quite capable of swinging into *Things Ain't What they Used to Be* immediately after an expressive treatment of a Chopin Prelude. Also just issued for the first time are live recordings made in the late 1970s by alto saxist Alan Gauvin of the **Buddy Rich** so-

called 'Killer Force'. **BIRDLAND** (Lightyear/Lobitos Creek Ranch 5265646223: 58.39) is dynamic big band jazz in the image of its leader who actually solos sparingly, but whose influence in always present in, for example, the title track where Steve Marcus' wailing soprano sax is set against a compelling bass figure and Rich's inventive and propulsive drumming. These powerhouse Buddy Rich bands boasted few known soloists (in this case, mostly in the sax section, with Marcus, Bob Mintzer and Turk Mauro), but no-holds-barred section work by tireless and committed young musicians. Not that it's all hit-them-between-the-eyes impact: for instance, listen to *God Bless the Child* with Mauro's warmly melodic baritone. Two out-of-the-ordinary recent big band recordings include **MY PERSONAL SONGBOOK** (In and Out Records IOR 77123 9: 79.40), originals by **Ron Carter** recorded by the great bassist with the **WDR Big Band** of Cologne. The elegantly packaged Limited Deluxe Edition includes a DVD of most of the tunes, but sadly gets in a real muddle with track order, so there's an element of guesswork in my comments. The music is fine, though, Carter's subtle and eloquent bass playing standing out on such tracks as *Doom Mood* and *Blues for D.P.* The compositions range far and wide, from straightahead blues to delicate miniatures such as *Little Waltz* to more complex creations enhanced by Rich DeRosa's stylish arrangements. In the circumstances identifying soloists is not always easy, but Frank Chastenier (piano), John Horlen (alto sax/flute) and John Marshall (trumpet/flugel) all impress. **ALMOST SUNRISE** (Gut String Records GSR 019: 61.58) is the debut album of the fine big band led by Tel Aviv-born, New York-based reedman **Eyal Vilner**. There is a nice tribute to Frank Wess as Vilner's mentor, so it's no surprise that the opening original, *The Rabbit*, is decidedly out of the 1950s/60s Basie bag. Compositions by Clark Terry, Harry Edison, Duke Ellington and Nat 'King' Cole show Vilner's roots clearly enough.

Comparatively few of the players are known to us here (Dan Block, John Mosca, one or two more), but there's decent solo power as well as excellent section work. There are too many vocals for my taste, but the three singers have their moments, notably when working together, as on a bit of post-Lambert, Hendricks and Ross on Sweets Edison's *Centerpiece*.

A big band reissue, **THE HUSTLER: ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK RECORDING** (Soundtrack Factory 606346: 79.51) is of limited interest musically. Film-goers may be attracted by a CD of three Paul Newman films (the very thorough booklet dwells as much on movie as music), but this is very much soundtrack, not music from the film – the fact that there are 36 tracks in 80 minutes shows how snippety the whole thing is. Kenyon Hopkins' music for *The Hustler* uses a big band full of classy players, with the best of the brief solos coming from Phil Woods' alto. *Paris Blues* gives us decent versions of a couple of Ducal classics by the 1961 Ellington band and Louis Armstrong soloing majestically with a studio orchestra, but also snatches of dialogue and some less interesting music; *The Long Hot Summer* starts off Alex North's score with Jimmie Rodgers' bland rendition of the title song. A more pleasing album reissue is **THE WARM SOUND** (Phono 870226: 64.33) by the **Johnny Coles Quartet**. You could add to that the impressive range, the pure tone and the crisp phrasing of Johnny Coles' trumpet. Much praised by fellow-musicians, Coles never really caught on with the record-buying public and this 1961 album was the first of only four under his own name in a long career. On the evidence of *The Warm Sound* I guess he wasn't distinctive enough: despite the quality of the accompanying trio (Kenny Drew and Randy Weston sharing piano duties), this is accomplished rather than exciting – and the same applies to two bonus tracks (listed out of order) from an Eddie Chamblee session featuring Coles where the tenor saxist never quite hits his most



raucously swinging vein. The best of the album reissues to come my way is **COMPLETE RECORDINGS** (Groove Hut Records GH 66721: 2 CDs, 75.52/67.32) by **Gene Ammons and Brother Jack McDuff**. You know what you're going to get from Ammons and McDuff, direct, passionate, big-toned tenor sax and soulfully aggressive Hammond organ respectively, both steeped in the blues, but with a way with a ballad, too. The three albums here, from 1961-62 (there are a few bonus tracks of Ammons minus McDuff) feature them in different settings and there is plenty of variety to go with the solid basis of straightahead swing and punchy phrasing, with more than a touch of subtlety along the way. *Twisting the Jug* is the only one to include a bass (the others rely on the pedals of McDuff's Hammond) and, with Joe Newman and Ray Baretto in the band, is furthest from the typical organ trio in style – even the material (with *Satin Doll* and *Moten Swing*) nods to an older tradition. *Soul Summit* is to my ears the best despite Charlie Persip's sometimes intrusive drumming. Ammons and Sonny Stitt's tenor sax duelling is driven on (as if driving were needed) by McDuff's urgent playing. On *Brother Jack Meets the Boss* Ammons joins McDuff's group and, despite the presence of tenor saxist Harold Vick, it's the interplay between the two stars that occupies the foreground.

Veronica Mortensen is nothing if not challenging, both to herself and her listeners, in her bold choice of songs and upfront emotion. **PRESENT PASSED**

(Stunt STUCD 15022: 57.05) begins most impressively with a bluesy *Born to be Blue* (fine guitar from Per Mollehoj), followed by the sadly neglected *They Say it's Spring*, always associated with Blossom Dearie. A song-list of material by Kenny Wheeler, Michel Legrand, Dave Frishberg and Thad Jones shows what a serious artiste Mortensen is, but the harshness in her voice grates at times (*We'll Be Together Again* suffers) and the delicate-toned trumpet of Thomas Fryland, a nice sonic contrast, tends to meander. **SOULFULLY** by **Helen Tzatzimakis** (Final Touch/Cobalt: 50.54) is most helpfully titled: the music ranges over a number of styles, including jazz – or, perhaps, occupies a hinterland adjacent to many styles – but the common factor is soulful, mostly sad songs. Tzatzimakis communicates effectively and dramatically, sometimes over-dramatically, including the overt emotionalism of the most obviously jazz-based number, *Don't Explain*, which, however, also features some excellent muted trumpet from Stelios Chatzikaleas in the Miles Davis vein. Accompanied by a trio under versatile pianist Manos Athanasladias, Tzatzimakis covers everything from Patsy Cline (*Crazy* comes over very well) to Balkan folk song via Jacques Brel and Chilean composer Violetta Parra's *Gracias a la Vida*. The vocals of Nicole Pasternak Lalama are an important component of an attractive album with a strange booklet full of rather old-fashioned black and white photos of two little lads. These are the **Lalama Brothers** who decades later produced **THE CREPUSCULE**

VARIATIONS (no label: 75.40). Tenor saxist Ralph and pianist Dave both spent time with top big bands, Ralph is well known for his musical association with Joe Lovano and Dave is an academic at Long Island's Hofstra University as well as a bandleader. Here they jolly their way through 13 standards they first learnt from their parents, relaxed, pretty much unprepared duo performances with melody and warmth the key elements. Ralph's bit-toned tenor and Dave's busy, two-handed piano are joined on 7 of 13 tracks by the poised vocals of Ralph's wife, Nicole, who has an established reputation in her own right in New York and New England. A new British recording, **BACK IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD** (BELLCD 514: 57.42) by **Chris Hodgkins & Dave Price**, also gets great value out of grand old songs, mostly pretty familiar ones. There are a couple of Hodgkins originals, but it's possible to guess the mood of the album from such titles as *Sweethearts on Parade*, *A Kiss to Build a Dream On* and *I've Never Been in Love Before*. Sure enough,

it's relaxed, easy-swinging, with the emphasis firmly on melody. Most tracks feature the assured trumpet of Chris Hodgkins with Dave Price on piano and one of two double bassists, Erika Lyons and Ashley John Long, but on two tracks the trio consists of both basses and one other: *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square*, with Price's delicate piano and arco double bass, is probably the most unusual number on a warmly attractive album. A contrast to the preceding trio albums comes with the sophisticated conversations between piano (Marc Copland), double bass and drums (Joey Baron) in **NOW THIS** (ECM 2428: 57.49) by the **Gary Peacock Trio**. Though ECM's booklet is as elegantly uninformative as ever, I think this is a newly formed or ad hoc group (though Peacock and Copland go back a long way), but the understanding between them is impressive. All but one of the tracks are originals by one of the trio, but the mood is improvisatory, made up of meditative lyrical fragments, often delicate and enigmatic.



