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BRECON JAZZ FESTIVAL (PAGE 14)

ACCLAIMED SINGER/SONGWRITER LAURA MVULA IS ONLY ONE OF THE STARS OF THE FESTIVAL. ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE HUW WARREN TALKS ABOUT 30 YEARS OF BRECON.

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UPFRONT

30 YEARS OF BIRMINGHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL

This year is the 30th Birmingham International Jazz and Blues Festival. That sounds an impressive enough number in terms of years, but how about 5498 performances? That's the figure the statisticians at BIJBF have come up with for Birmingham 1985-2013, so make that 5499 by adding in the inaugural M&B Jam Session (Humphrey Lyttelton (right), Digby Fairweather et al.) in Cannon Hill Park in 1984. And, of course, by the time Birmingham 2014 is over, that figure will be moving towards 5700!

The 30th festival has provoked some looking back. For instance, the line-up for 1985 contained four musicians who are on the 2014 bill and have been at Birmingham for pretty much every festival in between: Digby Fairweather, now the Festival Patron, Len Skeat, Roy Williams and John Patrick.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



Chris Hodgkins

Photo by Merlin Dalemán

CHRIS HODGKINS
RETIRES

After 29 years at the helm of Jazz Services, Chris Hodgkins took his retirement in June, playing two full sets at his retirement party on June 3 with his band (Karen Sharp, Julie Walkington, Sophie Alloway and Max Brittan) and numerous guests such as Henry Lowther and Julian Siegel. Many tributes have been paid to Chris’ work on behalf of jazz and musicians and Jazz Services are committed to try to build on his achievements. The future trajectory of Jazz Services depends to some extent on the Arts Council’s upcoming spending plans and so no permanent Director is yet in place. Communications Director and Editor of *Jazz UK* John Norbury-Lyons is the Interim Director, with Dominic McGonigal as Interim Chair. As for Chris, his future plans undoubtedly include more trumpet playing, including (so rumour has it) a new CD. www.jazzservices.org.uk

SEAT SPONSORS
SPANISH JAZZ

When the Granada-based Potato Head Jazz Band arrives in the UK for a busy 9-day tour, its members will be able to travel in comfort thanks to the generosity of Spanish car giant Seat. One of the hottest bands at last year’s Birmingham International Jazz Festival, the Potato Head Jazz Band returns to Birmingham together with a series of gigs from Southport to Eastleigh – sponsored by Seat. After playing at Nottingham Rhythm Club (July 17), the band moves to Birmingham for a gig at StarCity (18) before heading off to Boston Spa Village Hall (19), the Westwood Club, Coventry, and the Concorde Club (both 20),

before returning to Birmingham for gigs at the Brasshouse, the Solomon Cutler, St. Paul’s Churchyard and Birmingham City University (21/22). Then the final stage of their tour takes them North to Risley Park Jazz Club, Derbyshire (23) and the Atkinson, Southport (24) before a final day in Birmingham: Colmore Square and Blackheath Library (25). **Tel. 0121 454 7020**

JOHN CUMMING, OBE
In the Queen’s Birthday Honours list John Cumming, one of the three directors of Serious, was appointed OBE. John’s award, for Services to Jazz, reflects a long career in music promotion and jazz education. From the late 1960s John worked primarily in theatre as director and lighting designer, with the shift towards music programming occurring in the 1970s in Bracknell where he founded the Bracknell Jazz Festival. As well as operating as promoter of many tours of internationally famous musicians and programming for several venues elsewhere in the country, Serious is best known for the Camden Jazz Week which grew into the EFG London Jazz Festival which celebrated its 21st birthday last year. John has also been a member of a number of Arts Council and Regional Arts panels and a board member of Europe Jazz Network. This year’s EFG London Jazz Festival (November 14-23) already has an impressive roster of artists appearing including, among many others, Branford Marsalis, Bugge Wesseltoft, Dan Berglund, Ian Shaw, Marcus Miller, Regina Carter, Bill Frisell, John Surman, Kenny Barron, Jane Monheit, Snarky Puppy and the Bad Plus. www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

**SEPTEMBER IN
SCARBOROUGH**
As usual the Scarborough Jazz Festival (September 26-28) fills the seafront Spa with a vivid series of concerts linked by jazz’s drollest compere, Alan Barnes, who this year also revives his Johnny Mandel programme starring Anita Wardell. An interesting choice of bill-toppers pairs Nigel Kennedy and John Etheridge and the main programme also includes (among many others) the Clark Tracey Quartet, Dennis Rollins’ Velocity Trio, Gwilym Simcock and the Little Radio – Iain Ballamy and Stian Carstensen, plus fringe events and the Jim Birkett Trio in the bar with guests. **Tel.: 01723 821888**
www.scarboroughjazzfestival.co.uk

JAZZ WEEKENDS
WITH DENISE AND
TONY

Even by the standards of Denise and Tony Lawrence, two Jazz Weekends in two weeks is pretty good going, but that’s what they’re providing in September. First up is the Mercure Cheltenham Queen’s Hotel (12-15). The first two evenings are devoted to Richard Leach’s Clubhouse 5 and Kevin Grenfell’s Jazz Giants with Matt Palmer, respectively, with Denise and Tony providing interval jazz, then the Sunday evening brings out the full Denise Lawrence Band with Robin Reece. At the Lyndhurst Park Hotel, New Forest (26-29) Saturday evening sees a gala dinner (black tie optional) and the music is provided by the Sunset Cafe Stompers (Friday), Colin Bryant’s Hot Rhythm Orchestra (Saturday) and the Lawrence Band with Ron Drake (Sunday). The pace doesn’t ease up in October, with the Mercure Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Hotel (17-20) followed by the Shanklin Hotel (24-27). www.mercurehotelsdeals.com/jazzbreaks (Cheltenham and Stratford) www.forestdalehotels.com/lyndhurst (New Forest) www.shanklinhotel.co.uk

GUITING FESTIVAL
The 44th Music Festival at Guiting in the heart of the Cotswolds (July 25-August 3) presents ten outstanding concerts in many styles of music,

ranging from Imogen Cooper playing Schumann, Brahms and Schubert to Gigsanner, led by ex-Steeleye Span guitarist Peter Knight. The jazz element consists of the Jason Rebello Quintet, with gypsy jazz band Swing from Paris in support (July 27) and Gwilym Simcock and his Jazz Quintet (30). www.guitingfestival.org

BIRD LIVES!
Jazz Rag readers will be familiar with Willard Manus’ occasional despatches from the West Coast of America. Recently he informed us that his play about Charlie Parker, *Bird Lives!*, was running at the Barbara Morrison Performing Arts Center in Los Angeles. Now we hear that, with a change of actor playing Bird in the one-man play, it is due to open at the Attic Theater in LA in August for a six-week run.

HERTS JAZZ
With a packed all-day programme through Saturday and Sunday in the Hawthorne Theatre and its foyer, Herts Jazz Festival (September 12-14) draws on the best in British jazz. The Friday night curtain-raiser features the Big Chris Barber Band, followed by after hours foyer jazz with the Brian Dee Trio. The main concerts in the theatre include the Art Themen Quartet, Jean Toussaint’s Art Blakey Tribute, the Clark Tracey Quintet, Stickchops (Orphy Robinson, Anthony Kerr and Clark Tracey) and the Alan Skidmore Quartet plus Georgie Fame. Free foyer events include Nigel Price solo, the Leon Greening Trio and Alan Barnes/Dave Newton. **Tel.: 01707 357117**
www.hertsjazzfestival.co.uk

PERSHORE JAZZ
The Pershore Jazz Festival (August 15-17) offers more than 30 sessions at 4 venues in one location – Pershore College. The Bohem Ragtime Jazz Band from Hungary and American duo Jeff and Anne Barnhart are joined by a top-flight selection of British bands and musicians including Alan Barnes, Amy Roberts, Enrico Tomasso, Jamie Brownfield, Keith Nichols’ Blue Devils, Kenny Ball Junior Jazzmen, Pete Allen, Roy Williams, Slide by Slide and Tad Newton’s Jazz Friends. **Tel.: 01386 554235**
www.pershorejazz.org.uk



Alec Dankworth

REVOICE!
Georgia Mancio’s hugely acclaimed international voice festival, *ReVoice!*, celebrates its 5th anniversary with 12 nights of performances across four venues in and outside London from October 9 to 20. The series begins at Watermill Jazz in Dorking, with Claire Martin and Joe Stilgoe performing their new show, *Paris – the City of Light*, an eclectic mix of songs from Gershwin to Cole Porter, Charles Trenet to Maurice Chevalier. Also on the Dorking bill are Georgia Mancio herself and pianist Robin Aspland. The festival is co-promoted with the Pizza Express Jazz Club and nine of the performances take place there, with further detours to the 606 Club and Hunter Club in Bury St Edmunds. A stellar list of singers is topped by Carmen Lundy who has sung with a litany of jazz greats, from the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra onwards. A sample of the other names on the bill comes up with such favourites as Liane Carroll, Rebecca Parris, Ian Shaw, Gabrielle Ducomble and Christine Tobin, plus many appearances by Georgia Mancio with different accompanists. www.revoicefestival.com

**SUMMER AT
CONCORDE**
The Wednesday Night Jazz programme at Eastleigh’s Concorde Club continues through July with a special event *Remembering John Dankworth* (16), featuring Mark Nightingale, Andy Panayi, John Horler, Jim Hart and Julian Jackson. Following on from that are the Bratislava Hot Serenaders (23), the Bateman Brothers Jazz Band (30), Warren Vache with Robin

Aspland, Andy Cleyndert and Matt Home (August 6) and the Dave Shepherd Quintet (13). After this activities resume with the Amy Roberts Quintet (September 10). The Sunday evening traditional jazz programme includes the exotically named Original Rabbit Foot Spasm Band (July 13) and Spain’s Potato Head Jazz Band (20) as well as such established British bands as the Sussex Jazz Kings (August 17) and Chris Pearce’s Frenchmen Street Jazz Band (31). **Tel.: 023 8061 3989**
www.theconcordeclub.com

JAZZING THE PROMS
This year’s BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall contain a distinct jazz-tinged element, though mostly confined to the late-night concerts. On August 8 Clare Teal presides over a Battle of the Bands, to be broadcast live on Radio 2 and 3 and recorded for television (BBC Four). The bands in question are the rather coyly named Count Pearson Proms Band (under James Pearson) and Duke Windsor Proms Band (Grant Windsor). Female singers are, in fact, the order of the day: Laura Mvula with the Metropole Orchestra (August 19) and Paloma Faith with the Guy Barker Orchestra (September 5). The main evening Prom on September 9 with the BBC Concert Orchestra includes the UK premieres of two pieces by Chris Brubeck, one of them an arrangement of *Blue Rondo a la Turk*. www.bbc.co.uk/proms

UPCOMING
EVENTS

Watermill Jazz in Dorking continues its weekly programme throughout the Summer, with Alec Dankworth’s Spanish Accents including Emily Dankworth on vocals (July 17), followed by the Nikki Iles Trio with special guest Josh Arcoleo (24) and Tony Kofi and the Organisation (31). August at the Friends Life Social Club brings the Warren Vache/Alan Barnes Quintet (7), the Ollie Howell Quintet (14), the Sarah Gillespie Quintet with *The Life of Bessie Smith* (21) and the Reuben James Trio (28). **Tel.: 07415 815784**
www.watermilljazz.co.uk

**30 YEARS OF BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**
Also of interest is to look at some of the names who played the Festival when it was still just the International Jazz Festival: Jimmy McGriff/Hank Crawford, Robert Cray, Buddy Guy/Junior Wells, Albert King, the Blues Brothers Band....how did it take so long to add ‘and Blues’ to the title?

This year’s Birmingham International Jazz and Blues Festival runs from July 18 to 27, with an opening party the evening before the festival at the Blue Piano, with the New Orleans Jump Band from the Costa del Sol – appropriate enough, as the European element is especially strong this year, with bands and musicians from Spain, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovakia, Hungary, Luxembourg, France and Italy. There are many returning favourites, but Birmingham audiences will have a first chance to hear Saxitude, a saxophone quartet from Luxembourg, and Pepper and the Jellies from Italy (see pages 10-11). For the first time Birmingham ventures into electro-swing with the Electric Swing Circus at the Botanical Gardens on the final day, while at the other extreme, chronologically and stylistically, StarCity hosts three concerts on the first weekend, with, in turn, the Potato Head Jazz Band from Granada, Spain, Val Wiseman’s Billie Holiday tribute, *Lady Sings the Blues*, and King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys – festival favourites, all! **Tel. 0121 454 7020**
www.birminghamjazzfestival.com

Following a lunch-time appearance at Searcy’s at the Rep on July 20, the Remi Harris Trio makes several more appearances at the Birmingham International Jazz and Blues Festival between July 22 and 25. Further July and August gigs for Remi include Keighley Blues Club (July 18), the International Gypsy Guitar Festival near Gloucester (26), Artrix, Bromsgrove (August 2), Brecon Guildhall (10), Clifffords Mesne Village Hall, Gloucestershire (15) and Bodenham Village Hall, Herefordshire (29). **Tel.: 0121 454 7020**

After the band’s appearance at StarCity in the Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival on July 20, August is festival month for King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys, with Norway’s Silda Jazz Festival (7-10) sandwiched between a whole sequence of British festivals: the new Southport Jazz Blues and Soul Festival (2), Y Not

Festival, Derbyshire (3), Fishguard Jazz (22) and Twinwood Festival (25). **Tel.: 0121 454 7020**
www.kingpleasureandthebiscuitboys.com

The Midland Youth Jazz Orchestra presents special guest, trumpeter Jon Faddis, at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall on the afternoon of July 13. **Tel.: 01675 442050 (enquiries)**

July gigs for Tipitina include Roa Island Jazz Club, Barrow (12), Newport Jazz Weekend (19) and Birmingham Central Library as part of the Birmingham International Jazz and Blues Festival (27). **Tel. 0121 454 7020**

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RHINO

Jazz singer Tierney Sutton has embarked on a tour of the Joni Project, devoted to the songs of Joni Mitchell, presented in intimate concert settings, many featuring Turtle Island Quartet cellist Mark Summer and Parisian guitarist Serge Merlaud. July and August see her criss-crossing the United States, from San Francisco to Ogonquit, Maine, but European dates in the Autumn are promised soon.

The Wigan International Jazz Festival (July 11-14) is headlined by Jools Holland & his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra featuring Gilson Lavis, Mel C, Marc Almond, Ruby Turner and Louise Marshall. Also on the bill are Jon Faddis, Clare Teal and the Hollywood Orchestra, the Helen Sung Orchestra, AJ Brown and his Band, the Super C Big Band, MYJO and many more.
 Tel.: 01942 828271
www.wiganjazz.net

Guesting with the Sinatra Swingers on their regular date at Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club (first Thursday of every month) are Zoe Kyoti (September 4) and Debbie Wilson (October 2). Meanwhile Graham Brook's regular Tuesday Jazz and Swing at Wilmslow Conservative Club continues to present attractively varied fare, with Don Weller (September 2), Gilad Atzmon/Rosie Harrison (9) and the Janet Seidel Trio (16) kicking off the Autumn programme and Brian Dee (October 7) and Greg Abate/Brownfield Byrne Quintet (November 11) among the later attractions.

Reedman John Hallam is promoting two jazz weekends at the Burnside Hotel, Bowness-on-Windermere, both featuring himself and the Tom Kincaid Trio. September Song (Sept. 12-14) also stars singers Lee Gibson and Mellow Baku Avstreich and Jazz at the Burnside Hotel (November 14-16) adds brassmen Mark Nightingale and Jamie Brownfield. In each case the package includes two nights dinner, bed and breakfast and a Sunday buffet lunch.
 Tel.: 01942 811522/07801 844678
www.johnhallamjazz.co.uk

The final concert before the summer break (July 18) of the Friends of the Upton Jazz Festival

features an international pairing of pianists, Stephanie Trick from the United States and Italy's Paulo Alderighi, with James Evans and Nick Ward. As usual the venue is Hanley Castle High School, one mile North of Upton. The Autumn programme contains two October dates: Martin Litton's Ellingtonians (3) and the Basin Street Brawlers (31) – and then it's Christmas! The Friends' Christmas Party (December 13) includes a two-course supper in addition to music from Richard Leach's 7 Stars of Jazz.
 Tel.: 01684 593794
www.uptonjazz.co.uk

The newly formed Jazz Promotion Network holds its first conference at the Midland Hotel, Manchester, on July 23 and 24, hosted by the Manchester Jazz Festival. Keynote speakers, opening each day, are Soweto Kinch, Ethan Iverson and David King from the Bad Plus.
 For details email conference@jazzpromotionnetwork.org.uk

The vintage orchestra from Slovakia, the Bratislava Hot Serenaders, has a nine-day tour of the UK this summer, beginning with a double-header on July 19: Marlborough Jazz Festival (afternoon), the Boisdale at Canary Wharf (late evening).

Following on from that, the Serenaders play the Stables, Wavendon (20), the Electric Cinema as part of the Birmingham Festival (21), the Brewhouse, Taunton (22), the Concorde Club, Eastleigh (23) and Exeter's Barnfield Theatre (24) before finishing up in Scotland for the Edinburgh Festival's Spiegeltent (26) and the Merchant City Festival in Glasgow's Old Fruitmarket (27).
www.serenaders.sk

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ARTWORK BY JAZZ GUIDE

10 OVERLOOKED JAZZ GREATS WHO YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

SCOTT YANOW reminds us of the forgotten men (and women) of jazz.

It happened virtually every time. Dorothy Donegan would sit down at the piano bench, realizing that half of the audience did not know who she was. She would launch into an over-the-top and overly emotional ballad, switch unexpectedly to some classical music, launch into some virtuosic striding, and finally play some of the hottest boogie-woogie one could imagine. In her seventies at the time, she would climax the song by standing up while she was playing and dancing while revealing her legs. It always caused a riotous reaction from the audience, many of whom were undoubtedly asking themselves why they had never heard of her before.

While jazz history is filled with celebrated greats (including the recently deceased Horace Silver), there are also many major talents who are now barely known, even to jazz collectors. It is not so much that they are underrated (an overrated word that can apply to nearly every jazz artist) but that, due to various circumstances that took place in their lives, they ended up outside of the spotlight. Most jazz fans can come up with their own list of overlooked jazz greats. Here are ten that I highly recommend discovering.

Phil Napoleon (1901-90) had a certain amount of fame in the

jazz world, particularly in the 1940s and '50s. He was known as a Dixieland trumpeter who led a spirited group that sometimes featured Original Dixieland Jazz Band drummer Tony Sbarbaro doubling on kazoo. But few during that era or in the half-century since probably realized that Napoleon was the first swinging jazz trumpeter to be active in New York City, preceding Louis Armstrong joining Fletcher Henderson's orchestra by three years on records. If one listens to recordings coming out of New York during 1921-22, most trumpeters or cornetists are heard using a staccato-oriented phrasing and, like Johnny Dunn, were not too subtle in their playing. Their lead and brief solos tended to be full of effects and obvious ideas. In contrast, Napoleon was a melodic player with a warm tone and excellent technique, and one who was expert at placing his notes in a most effective way.

Napoleon actually made his first recordings in 1916 when he was 15 as a classical cornetist although those records are long lost. In 1917 when he formed the first version of the Original Memphis Five, none of whose musicians were actually from Memphis - it was named after both the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and W.C. Handy's *Memphis*

Blues. Napoleon's Memphis Five made a huge number of recordings in the 1920s counting those made under such names as the Ambassadors, Bailey's Lucky Seven, the Broadway Syncopators, the Cotton Pickers, Jazzbo's Carolina Serenaders, Ladd's Black Aces, the Savannah Six, the Southland Six and the Tennessee Ten. Napoleon headed a group usually consisting of Miff Mole or Charles Panelli on trombone, clarinetist Jimmy Lytell, pianist Frank Signorelli and drummer Jack Roth, cutting over 100 songs during 1922-23 alone. However, as the 1920s progressed and other more innovative and flashier trumpeters rose to prominence, the quiet Phil Napoleon was overshadowed. Red Nichols gained some of the work, Louis Armstrong became the pacesetter, and Bix Beiderbecke ended up as the era's legend. In the fame department, Phil Napoleon never stood a chance. He spent much of the 1930s as a studio musician, led a short-lived big band in 1938, was part of the Dixieland revival, moved to Florida in 1956, and stayed active until the end of his life. But few that saw Phil Napoleon knew of his great importance to early jazz.

In 1929, Jabbo Smith (1908-91) was arguably the #2 trumpeter in jazz behind only Louis

Jabbo Smith



Armstrong; Bix and King Oliver were fading while Red Allen was moving quickly on the way up. Smith was just 20 but he had already been a star soloist with Charlie Johnson's Paradise Ten and had subbed with Duke Ellington, recording *Black And Tan Fantasy* and foolishly turning down a chance to join Ellington's band. In 1929 he recorded 19 selections with his Rhythm Aces that are full of dazzling if occasionally reckless trumpet solos (check out *Jazz Battle*) and reveal him to be the Roy Eldridge of his time. Smith even took an excellent trombone solo on one song and his singing is quite infectious and full of scatting. His potential seemed endless, but by 1931 he was a has-been. Smith's drinking, the poor record sales, the onset of the Depression, and his eventual decision to settle in Milwaukee sealed his fate. Although he made attempts to come back as late as the late 1970s (performing with European trad bands and in the show *One Mo' Time*), it was way too late. But Jabbo was great in 1929.

Annette Hanshaw (1901-85) was one of the top jazz singers of the 1926-34 period, uplifting many recordings, writing verses to some of the songs, and often being joined by top-notch jazz musicians. Billed as 'The Personality Girl', she had a delightful voice and always swung, but she hated performing in public. Appearing on the radio

and making records was fine but Hanshaw turned down opportunities to make films (she was only in one short) and rarely made public appearances. Instead of being a top singer during the swing era, Annette Hanshaw made her last record in 1934 and retired three years later when she was 36 and happily married. Decades later when she was interviewed, she always put down her own records, but in this case record collectors know better.

Teddy Grace (1905-92) was a talented singer who was equally skilled at blues and swing standards. She first sang in public in 1931 when she was already 26. She was quickly discovered and worked with Mal Hallett's big band. During 1937-40, Grace recorded 30 songs as a leader, holding her own with the likes of Bobby Hackett, Charlie Shavers, Jack Teagarden, Pee Wee Russell and Bud Freeman. She worked with Bob Crosby in 1939 but by late 1940 she dropped out of the music business, burnt out and tired of fighting with the Decca label over the material she got to record. In 1943 Teddy Grace returned and sang constantly at bond rallies and shows for the military, raising money for the Allied effort. She sang so much that in 1944 she completely lost her voice. While her speaking voice gradually came back, Teddy Grace was never able to sing again, working as a secretary for decades. Look for her recordings and be very happily surprised.

Don Stovall (1913-70) never led any record dates of his own but his alto playing with Henry 'Red' Allen's band during 1943-50 was consistently exciting. He had been a professional musician since the early 1930s, working with territory bands, Sammy Price, Pete Johnson and the big bands of Eddie Durham and Cootie Williams. A superb musician whose playing was a cross between Tab Smith and early Earl Bostic, Stovall held his own next to Red Allen and J.C. Higginbotham in Allen's rambunctious band, appearing on records and short films with Allen. But in 1950 he decided to retire from music, spending the remainder of his life working for the phone company.

Although rarely mentioned in jazz history books, Ernie Caceres (1911-71) was the second best baritone-saxophonist prior to the bebop era (only topped by Harry Carney) and virtually the only baritonist to play with Eddie Condon. Caceres, who also played clarinet, worked with his brother violinist Emilio Caceres, Bobby Hackett, Sidney Bechet, Jack Teagarden, Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Woody Herman and Tommy Dorsey. He eventually became a studio musician but during 1944-45 he was a regular on the Eddie Condon Town Hall concerts, showing that he was a masterful Dixieland/swing soloist who deserves much more recognition.

Jazz has only had a handful of significant jazz harpists, starting with the short-lived Casper Reardon in the 1930s and continuing later with Dorothy Ashby. Adele Girard (1913-93) was the best. She swung as hard as a pianist, and smiled while playing runs that were thought of as impossible on her instrument. She originally played piano, switched to harp at 14, and worked in the mid-1930s with the Harry Sosnik Orchestra and the Three T's (featuring Frank Trumbauer and Jack and Charlie Teagarden). Girard met clarinetist Joe Marsala in 1937 and they had a long and happy marriage. The harpist recorded with Marsala on several occasions in the 1940s, not as a background instrument but as a member of the frontline, taking solos that were inventive and lively. Adele Girard settled with her husband in Denver in 1949 and, although she played locally, she only recorded one album in the 1950s and late in life a CD with clarinetist Bobby Gordon. It is strange that no record label thought of having her lead a hot jazz band.

George Handy (1920-97) was one of the most adventurous arrangers of all time, and his charts for the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra during 1945-46 still sound futuristic and sometimes downright crazy. He attended Juilliard, took lessons from Aaron Copland, played piano in a few bands, and served in the military. Handy wrote some advanced swing arrangements for the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra in 1944, recorded in a quartet with guitarist Arv Garrison, and spent a brief time writing for Paramount Studios. When he

returned to Raeburn in 1945, Handy composed such unique numbers as *Tonsillectomy*, *Rip Van Winkle*, and *Dalvatore Sally*. He also wrote a funny reworking of *Over The Rainbow* that seems to change keys about a dozen times, and dissonant charts for *Body And Soul* and *Temptation* that had all kinds of distracting and abrasive effects going on behind the band's vocalists. But a personality conflict with Raeburn resulted in him leaving the band in mid-1946 and George Handy's career never recovered. He worked as a freelance arranger and pianist in obscurity for the next 40 years.

For reasons never quite verified, Beverly Kenney (1932-60) took her own life when she was just 28, probably due to the breakup of a love affair. Up till then she was one of the most promising jazz singers of the 1950s. She loved Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Mel Tormé, started her career in Miami, and in 1955 sang with the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra. Although there are earlier radio transcriptions and demos, she made her first official album in 1955. By then she had her own sound, swung such songs as the delightful *Destination Moon* and *There Will Never Be Another You* as well as anyone, and was clearly on her way up. In her career she recorded with guitarist Johnny Smith, a big band arranged by Ralph Burns, with Count Basie all-stars, pianist Ellis Larkins, and orchestras. Six albums were released during her lifetime. Kenney was outspoken in favor of jazz and against the new rock and roll music, performing a song she wrote, *I Hate Rock And Roll*, on the Steve Allen Show in 1958. Her very last recording was taken from a television show and can be seen on Youtube. Among the songs she performs is a version of *Makin' Whoopee* that is taken as a vocal duet with Hugh Hefner, who does not sound bad. But Beverly Kenney ended it all a few weeks later with a combination of alcohol and sleeping pills, robbing the music world of a potentially great talent.

Dorothy Donegan (1922-98) should have been a household name throughout her life. She made a few records in 1942 and, in the film *Sensations Of 1945* she is featured in a stunning piano duet with Bennie Payne while



Annette Hanshaw

Cab Calloway looks on. Donegan befriended Art Tatum who encouraged her and admired her talent. But despite doing well in nightclubs during the 1950s and '60s, she only had a few opportunities to record and stayed obscure. Perhaps it was her crazy medleys of unrelated songs or her tendency to switch styles during pieces which could cover swing, stride, bop, bossa-nova, classical and boogie-woogie all on the same tune. Maybe it was sexism or her flamboyant and assertive personality. Whatever it was, Dorothy Donegan did not start getting the attention she deserved until at least the late 1970s, and audiences were still discovering her brilliance and showmanship in the late 1990s.

The ten musicians covered in this piece all fell short of becoming stars. But fortunately their recordings live on, showing today's jazz fans that some of the greatest talents are not necessarily the best known.

Scott Yanow is the author of 11 books on jazz (including *Trumpet Kings* and *The Jazz Singers*) and more than 750 liner notes. He can be contacted at scottyanowjazz@yahoo.com.

Please let us know your choice of forgotten greats - or even take issue with Scott's selection. For instance, the feeling at the *Jazz Rag* office is that, on this side of the Atlantic, the wonderful Annette Hanshaw is not forgotten. One the other hand some of the names in Scott's Top Ten are total revelations to us.



Dorothy Donegan

RED HOT PEPPER

Those among our readers who prospect Youtube to find examples of authentic and enjoyable jazz will probably have been delighted by a series of recent postings by the quaintly named **PEPPER AND THE JELLIES**, a four-piece (with guitar, bass and drums) fronted by a young singer who adds proficiency on washboard and kazoo to a remarkable ability to get inside the music of the great singers of the 1920s and 1930s - and over a wide range of styles, from Bessie Smith and Annette Hanshaw. This is **ILENIA APPICCIAFUOCO** and British festival audiences will have a first opportunity to enjoy her music first hand when she appears for four days (July 24-27) at the Birmingham International Jazz and Blues Festival. Since (for the time being, at least!) Ilenia is little known in this country, *Jazz Rag* asked her to introduce herself.

You were born in a small village in Abruzzo. What music did you hear as a girl? Were there concerts in Teramo? Did you collect records?

Yes, I was born in Teramo, and I grew up in San Nicolò, which is a very small village placed near a river. I love music thanks to my mother. Since when I was child, she used to make me listen to bands such as the Cure, the Smiths, Cocteau Twins, Beatles, Smashing Pumpkins and Genesis. On my own I discovered Italian songwriters like Fabrizio De Andrè, Ivan Graziani, Rino Gaetano, Lucio Dalla and

Francesco De Gregori, among others. The fascination with jazz and blues came when I was eighteen years old, by chance. I was studying for an exam and one of the main topics was the influence of Bessie Smith on the African American population. The first song I listened to was *Muddy Water* and I fell in love immediately. After this, I started to listen to Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday, but I didn't dare to sing their songs, I thought I wasn't able enough to do it. Answering your question about Teramo, when I was very young I don't remember a great number of concerts in my town. In the

last years the musical scene is going better. But I can say there is a great music scene in Teramo, many punk, rock, pop and new wave bands and most of them are very good. I've never been a great collector, I started to do it two years ago and keep buying vinyl even if I don't already have a deck! Shame on me...

You have a Master's degree in journalism. Why did you choose that course? Do you work as a journalist?

I feel pretty sorry about the choice I made about my studies. If I could turn back time, I'd never go to university, but after upper school I'd take my luggage and go around Europe and the world, trying to learn English, French, German, Spanish languages and much more. But anyway... I think I started to appreciate journalism when I started to work as journalist. I had the opportunity to work as trainee for Adnkronos press agency, and nowadays I'm a freelance for *La Repubblica Sera* and the local newspaper *La Città*. I love writing, talking with people, even if I feel insecure when I ask someone for an interview much more than when I sing. In any case, I can define journalism as my second 'home'.

Did you move to Rome for your degree? Do you now live in Rome?

Yes, I lived in Rome for six years. Now I'm back in Abruzzo (my region, which is not really far from Rome) among mountains, and I feel happy.

Where and how did you start singing?

I started in the church when I went to Mass with my grandmother. I was 2 or 3 and my

grandma told me that I sang loudly! The old ladies in the church loved me. Maybe they thought I was a crazy baby and surely they were right. Then, when I was 16, I tried to attend the music school, studying the opera. But... I was lazy, I didn't like it very much, I didn't think it fit me very well, and I left. But with the help of good teachers I didn't stop studying singing technique.

You have led other bands before Pepper and the Jellies, I think. How is this band different?

When I was 20 I lived for 3 years in Urbino and I sang in a rock band. I have many pleasing memories about that years. Then, I moved to Rome and I became the singer of a wacky music ensemble. It was very funny! But music was just an hobby for me. When I was 25 I met a pianist named Paolo Fornara, in Rome. He founded the Vaudeville Stomp Revue band and I started to study washboard and 20s and 30s singing style. Paolo gave me the spark... but there were periods in which I studied and listened to records for 7 or 8 hours per day. I'm not overstating. At the same time, after a gig in the famous Cotton Club in Rome, I had the chance to meet Lino Patruno, one of the greatest jazz musicians in Italy and abroad. He introduced me to Gennaro D'Apote and his Hot Stompers, a

“ Maybe they thought I was a crazy baby and surely they were right! ”



wonderful 8 piece orchestra. I had the honour to sing in their ensemble and it was one of the most stimulating experiences of my life. Now, I can say that Pepper & the Jellies is a family. We are more focused on blues, and the time we 'cover', compared with the other band in which I sang, is more broad-spectrum (our repertory goes from 1920 to the late 1940). One of the peculiarities of the Jellies (Andrea Galiffa, Marco Galiffa and Emiliano Macrini), is the intention to start creating our own music. It will happen very soon. But we know we must still study, work and practise very hard.

How do you balance singing and journalism?

I try to do at my best both of my jobs. Sometimes it's difficult, but it gives me the opportunity to sustain myself and to live the life that I love, doing what I want to do.

Please tell me about the strange name of the band.

When I had to decide a name for the band I wanted to put Jellies somewhere because of its sexual innuendo. For Pepper I was inspired by Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers.

And please tell me about the Cotton Club. It looks good on the website. Do you sing there often?

The Cotton Club is one of the temples of jazz in Rome. It is run by the English singer Minnie Minoprio and her husband Carlo Mezzano, and I've played many times there, with the Vaudeville Stomp Revue mostly. I've had the opportunity to listen to (and in some occasions to sing with) many great performers of Italian jazz there: Lino Patruno, Gianluca Galvani, Guido Giacomini, the young and extremely talented pianist Luca Filastro, Engelbert Wrobel, and the 'Maestrino' Leo Sanfelice.

Where have Pepper and the Jellies performed outside Rome?

We perform often in Abruzzo, in a region near mine, named Marche. Individually, being experienced and professional musicians, the Jellies have performed many times all over the world. Marco Galiffa gigs and studies in New York for instance, Emiliano Macrini runs a classic orchestra which travels a lot, and Andrea Galiffa has performed several times in England.

I think you must have been asked this question many times. You sound so 'right' singing so many different styles of 1920s and 1930s jazz and popular music. How do you do that? Long practice and plenty of listening, I guess. And which singers and bands do you admire most?

Yes I do, I listen a lot. Really. After the first track, it starts a sort of 'hypnosis' which push me to keep on listening again and again. And I study the music, yes, because if I sing a pop song, for instance, my voice is completely different. Besides this, on stage, but more often when we play in the street (I hate microphones), I think the attitude is the most important. Even if you are not talented, charismatic, sexy and full of meaning like Bessie, Victoria Spivey, Ethel Waters, Mamie Smith and the great divas, when you sing this stuff you must believe you can express to the audience the same strength. And never forget that the blues is communication first of all. My favourites are Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Annette Hanshaw and Ethel Waters. Among bands, I love the Original Dixieland Jazz Band of Nick La Rocca and Fats Waller and his Rhythm.

“ Never forget that the blues is communication first of all ”

How would you describe the music of Pepper and the Jellies?

We want to make our own music soon and write our own songs. At the moment, I can say we persevere in performing and arrange the great African American and American popular songs at our best.

What are your plans and ambitions now?

Our main ambition, at the moment, is doing a great show at the Birmingham International Jazz and Blues Festival. After this 'task'-- which is very important for us, we will start making our own stuff, refining the style, and, mostly, trying to differentiate ourselves from the other bands which play this genre.

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON!

Just answer the questions correctly and send your answers to *Jazz Rag* Competitions, PO Box 944, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8UT. Please write the name of the relevant competition in the top left hand corner of your postcard, envelope or sheet of paper. If possible, add your telephone number or email as well as your address.
Closing date: 16th August, 2014

GREGORY PORTER IN CONCERT

(Closing date 2nd August)
Brecon Jazz Festival is providing ONE pair of tickets for the performance of Gregory Porter at the Market Hall on August 10th – a certain sell-out and a great prize!
1. Which famous jazz record label did Gregory Porter sign for last year?
2. His most recent CD won a Grammy for Best Jazz Vocal Album – what is the title of the album?

NINA ON CD

Warner has generously provided THREE copies of the 5 CD set of Nina Simone in the Original Albums series.
1. On one of the albums Nina sings three songs with lyrics by Oscar Brown Jr. Perhaps the most famous is *Work Song* – who wrote the music?
2. Which 1959 recording by Nina Simone became a Number 5 hit in the UK in 1987?

FRESH SOUND CDS

THREE lucky winners will receive a copy of ONE Fresh Sound reissue each, CDs by the Jazz Couriers, Arnett Cobb and Howard McGhee. Please indicate which you would prefer.
1. Arnett Cobb died in his hometown in 1989 – in which state, known for its tough uninhibited tenor saxists, including Cobb?
2. The Jazz Couriers was basically a two-tenor sax group, but what two instruments apart from saxes did co-leader Tubby Hayes play to a high standard?

DAVE GELLY BOOK

Equinox Publishing is offering THREE copies of Dave Gelly's excellent new book, *An Unholy Row*, which (among other things) deals with the early careers of Humphrey Lyttelton and John Dankworth.

1. Two distinguished trombonists played regularly with both Lyttelton and Dankworth, though in Humph's case the man in question did more as pianist/arranger. Name either of the trombonists.
2. A Humphrey Lyttelton recording spent six weeks in the charts in 1956 and a John Dankworth recording reached Number 9 in the charts in 1961. Name either one.

Dear *Jazz Rag*,

How lovely to see Ron Simpson's full-length portrait of a man I consider to be one of British jazz's national treasures, Chris Ellis (*Jazz Rag*, Spring 2014)

However Chris's inbuilt sense of self-deprecation, well-noted by Ron, has (on this occasion) led him to a rare lapse of memory. Of the album called *Vocal with Hot Accompaniment* (just reissued on my label Rose Cottage Records RCR 005) Chris is quoted as saying that 'the album was just supposed to be a private recording and if he's known it would see the public light of day he would have wanted to do retakes on three tracks'.

In fact the album (complete with those three tracks) was released with Chris' full knowledge and permission on Brian Hainsworth's Dormouse label (Dormouse DM15) back in 1987 and only deleted after Brian's death. Two years ago my old friend gave me permission to reissue the collection (with extra tracks included) and was only dissatisfied with one of them (*Everybody's crazy 'bout the doggone blues*) which had to stay on due to production problems - and also (to be honest) because my producer Dave Bennett liked it so much!

I feel sure you'll love the album too and thank you again Ron for your very kind review.

Digby Fairweather

WINNERS & ANSWERS NO. 131

JAKE LEG JUG BAND CD
Congratulations to: JOOP PEETERS of Breda, Netherlands; BILL CORNELL of Saffron Walden and ALAN BRINKWORTH of Redditch.
Walk Right In/Maria Muldaur

ATLANTIC JAZZ LEGENDS
Congratulations to: MR.P. DOYLE of Blandford Forum, Dorset, and GAIL KENNEDY of Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham.
Stritch and manzello/*Giant Steps*

CHRIS BARBER BOOK
Congratulations to: ROY YATES of Failsworth, Manchester; MICHAEL DAMMS of Rotherham and MRS. MARGARET BARNES of Whickham, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
Pat Halcox/Chris Barber Jazz and Blues Band



Nina Simone

PROPAGANDA SWING

In September the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, stages the world premiere of a play that focuses on the use of jazz for propaganda purposes in Second World War Germany. RON SIMPSON found out more from PETER ARNOTT, writer of *Propaganda Swing*.

I had long been vaguely aware of the existence in Nazi Germany of Charlie and his Orchestra, but talking to Peter Arnott – and resultant visits to Wikipedia and Youtube – brought home the full monstrous absurdity of the Third Reich's approach to 'entartete Musik' – degenerate music which firmly included anything by Jews or black musicians. This pretty much did for jazz, music played by black men ('Negermusik') marketed by Jews, as the Nazis saw it; they could, of course, have thrown in the vast numbers of Jewish musicians and songwriters!

Unfortunately, degenerate or not, this music was very popular! Not only did an underground jazz scene flourish in Berlin, but Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels saw swing as a way to spread the message of German superiority to the Allies. Hence saxophonist/bandleader Lutz Templin, singer Karl Schwedler (the eponymous 'Charlie') and others were taken on board to provide suitably doctored recordings and broadcasts.

Peter Arnott first came across Charlie and his Orchestra when researching an article for the *Glasgow Herald*. A version of *Making Whoopee* sounded pretty good instrumentally – Lutz Templin and others had an honourable musical background dating back to the dance bands of 1920s Berlin – but a heavily-accented vocal reminded him irresistibly of a Mel Brooks movie! Then came the real shock, lyrics that Gus Kahn would never have recognised:

'Thus we throw our Yiddish names away,

We are the Kikes of the USA.'

Prompted by Peter's story, I later checked out Youtube, to find a smartly swinging version of *You're Driving Me Crazy* which ended up as a monologue by a depressed Winston Churchill on the theme of 'The Germans are driving me crazy!' ('I thought I had brains,

but they shot down my planes....')

Peter's involvement in his subject led him into an enthusiastic canter through the Nazi policies on degenerate music. Though essentially serious, his play has its comic side and his relish for the absurdities of the situation shines through. For instance, a register of musicians listed those who were not suitable for employment or broadcasting, including such eminent Jews as conductor Bruno Walter (ironically, the prime Wagnerian of his day). Somebody somewhere must have been a fan of swing clarinetist Artie Shaw (born Arthur Jacob Arshawsky) as he was identified as Irish, the son of George Bernard Shaw!

Most bizarre of all is a list of 10 rules for dance bands signed by Reichsmusicfuhrer Baldur von Blodheim and produced with mischievous glee by Peter, so gloriously absurd that one can only hope it's genuine. The first might belong to the BBC of John Reith - 'pieces in fox-trot rhythm (so-called swing) are not to exceed 20%' - but thereafter we're in a nightmarishly alien world. Lyrics should be joyful, not 'Jewishly gloomy'. 'Negroid excesses in tempo (so-called hot jazz)...or in solo performances (so-called breaks)' are totally banned, as are riffs which, unsurprisingly, are 'conductive to dark instincts alien to the German people'. The opposition to saxophones and scat singing is to be expected, but I hardly foresaw the condemnation of 'provocative rising to one's feet during solo performance'. Baldur takes a scattergun approach to his targets: alongside the Negroid excesses we find that mutes are accused of turning 'the noble sound of brass-wind instruments into a Jewish-Freemasonic yell.'

Peter built the story of *Propaganda Swing* around a fictional American journalist in Berlin and his romance with a singer called Lala. The play is set within a radio station and those scenes which take place

elsewhere are presented in the form of a radio play. So far, so fictional, but the presence of singer Lala puts us in touch with the greatest World War II story of the power of popular music and the failure of the powers that be to control its impact.

Lala is based on the singer/songwriter Lale Andersen, though it's not recorded whether she ever romanced an American journalist! Andersen famously recorded *Lili Marleen* just before the war, but, as it became popular with German troops a long way from home, the Government tried to suppress it – after all, what would the good Aryan boys at the front want with a song about a prostitute? But it was also a song about longing for home and the momentum was unstoppable. The song became a hit on Belgrade Soldiers Radio (Peter enjoys the Belgrade link), after the battle of Tobruk British troops found it among a pile of records in Afrika Korps camps and Andersen ended up recording it in 11 languages and enjoying a singing career until the 1960s (including singing in the 1961 Eurovision Song Contest!). Though not jazz or swing, the strange story of *Lili Marleen* rightly figures largely in *Propaganda Swing*.

Peter sees the actions of Lutz Templin and the others are a sort of Faustian pact: they made a bargain in which they were allowed to play the music they loved, but only in the service of an evil paymaster. The musicians themselves were probably politically neutral and many, including Lutz Templin, continued their careers successfully after the war – it's even rumoured that 'Charlie' himself ended up in the United States!

Charlie and his Orchestra was, of course, a big band and the economics of modern theatre mean that it's impossible for the Belgrade Theatre to afford that. However, in Hamish Glen's production, Musical Director Hilary Brooks will be using a

small jazz group, with members of the cast playing instruments themselves. Lutz Templin, for instance, is to be played by Tomm Coles whose ability as a saxophonist was recently highlighted in the tour of *Miss Nightingale*, set, coincidentally, in the same period.

Peter has used music copiously in the 40 or so plays he has written, but this is the first about musicians. As for the music in *Propaganda Swing*, there will be some instrumental music composed by Hilary Brooks (based on period songs), but lovers of pre-war jazz will find plenty of old favourites to enjoy: from *Big Noise from Winnetka* to *Tiger Rag*, apparently the epitome of everything the Nazis wished to avoid.

Peter sees *Propaganda Swing* as having a happy ending – the music wins! – and sums up its theme engagingly and with a sense of inter-war German history: 'It's the story of the minor characters in *Cabaret* and what they did next.'

***Propaganda Swing* plays the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, on September 13th-27th and Nottingham Playhouse from October 2nd-18th.**



Lutz Templin

THREE DECADES OF BRECON

In August Brecon Jazz Festival celebrates its 30th birthday. RON SIMPSON talked to artist-in-residence HUW WARREN about some of the elements that make up the Brecon experience.

It's good news to find Brecon Jazz flourishing on its 30th anniversary. A few years ago this was by no means certain. In 2008, though the festival went ahead, the festival company fell victim to an accumulated deficit and went into liquidation. At this point Hay-on-Wye Festival stepped in to run it, by no means unsuccessfully, but, as Huw points out, many people felt that having a major neighbouring festival in charge lost some of the distinctive qualities of Brecon. For instance, fewer events took place in the town centre as the focus moved towards Christ College. Thus, when Pablo Janczur and the Cardiff-based Orchard Media and Events Group took over, there was a conscious effort to make Brecon Brecon. Huw is obviously proud to relate that last year, the second under Orchard's control, many punters commented that the old atmosphere had returned to Brecon.

Huw was associated with the festival in the Hay-on-Wye days, but has taken a much more prominent role in the last three years. He was involved in helping to prepare the Orchard proposal when the Arts Council of Wales asked the company to submit its bid and is now in his third year as artist-in-residence.

His most striking contribution this year is his suite, *Do Not Go Gentle: Wales Meets Dylan Thomas*, to be performed on August 9 on the Chapter Stage of Brecon Cathedral (and then toured) with three long-time associates of Huw: Iain Ballamy, Steve Watts and Martin France. Huw explains the background to it:

'I've always been fascinated by Dylan Thomas, coming from the same part of the world as he did. I've been wanting to write something based on his work for 25 years now, but I've found it difficult because his poems are so musical in themselves. Now it's been triggered by two things: the Dylan Thomas centenary, of course, which is being commemorated by hundreds and

thousands of projects in Wales, and people approaching me to re-write Stan Tracey's *Under Milk Wood*. I love *Under Milk Wood*, but that didn't really appeal, so I've paid respect to Stan by writing this.'

Do Not Go Gentle will contain some narration and some poetry: Huw is nerving himself to read that! It relates to different things written by or connected with Dylan Thomas: poems, yes, and characters from *Under Milk Wood*, but also places. When I comment that the literature-based suite is a popular form in British jazz, Huw explains that most of his projects have used non-musical themes: photographs, maybe, or books. Appropriately, *Do Not Go Gentle* follows A Tribute to Stan Tracey in the Brecon programme, Clark Tracey bringing a quintet to the Theatr Brycheiniog on the Saturday lunch-time to pay tribute to his father.

In many ways Huw Warren is the perfect artist-in-residence for the Brecon Jazz Festival. It is a festival with a dual identity. As the largest and most established jazz festival in Wales it is what Huw calls 'the cherry on the pie' for Welsh musicians; at the same time it has to field a suitably impressive international bill. Huw, in fact, claims that Brecon has three or four different audiences. And his career suggests the same mix of native Welsh and international that Brecon seeks. A quick flip through his CV comes up with, on the one hand, projects like *Closure*, a 2012 study of a rural Welsh community with a photographer and a video artist, and the self-explanatory Welsh Hymn Project, and, on the other hand, collaborations with such international performers as Maria Pia de Vito and Theo Bleckmann. Not surprisingly, one of his intentions for Brecon is to get more Welsh jazz onto the main stages, not just leave it as a sort of Cambrian Fringe.

Huw is often asked what it means to be an artist-in-residence. He has an input as a programming consultant, though



Huw Warren

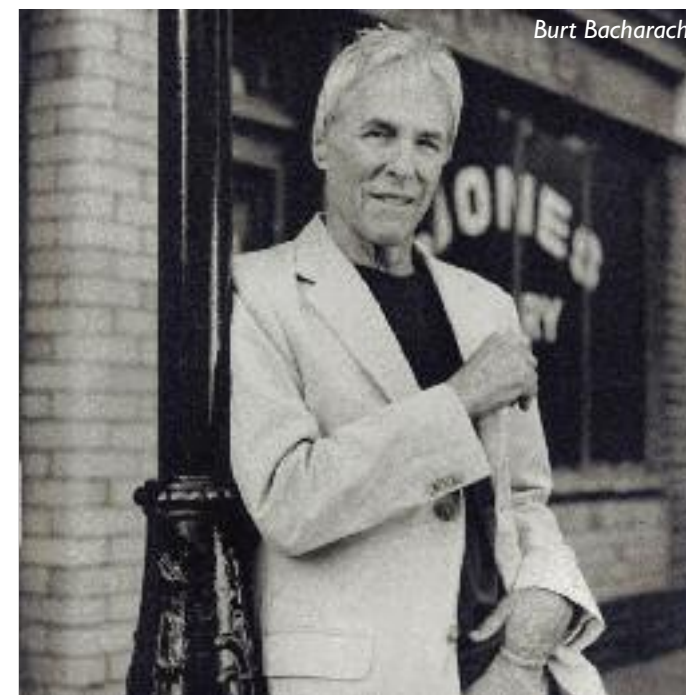
not especially with the big-name high-profile commercial events. He sounded as intrigued as I am by the booking of Burt Bacharach as a sort of festival curtain-raiser on August 7th. Like mine his knowledge is confined to Bacharach as quality song-writer, though he has been assured that Bacharach puts on a superb show with a fine band – Huw has every intention of being there to find out!

The artist-in-residence also has an educational role, organising the excellent series of masterclasses at Brecon, this year taken by Paula Gardiner (bass), Jean Toussaint (saxophone), Gabriele Mirabassi (clarinet), Clark Tracey (drums), Kit Downes (composition) and Chris Batchelor (trumpet). The unique element of Huw's role at Brecon is his development of the World Wide Wales theme, this year focussing on Mirabassi who joins Huw on Sunday in an Italo-Welsh

collaboration highlighting the music of – where else? – Brazil.

One specifically Welsh element is the Guildhall Welsh Jazz Club running from noon to mid-evening on the Sunday, with four concerts promoted by different Welsh jazz clubs and featuring bands and musicians from Wales and the adjacent bits of England. Organic is a quartet led by saxist Dominic Norcross and organist John-Paul Gard while Nadine Gingell teams up with a Bristol-based band as Lady Nade and the Silhouettes. The star guitarist Remi Harris, from Herefordshire, brings his Gypsy Jazz Project and the quaintly named Jim Barker Trio Meets Bluesy Susie seems to involve a biggish band of quality guests. The important selling point of this is that one stroller ticket covers all four concerts.

The concept of the Stroller Ticket or Day Ticket is crucial to Brecon's desire to return (to



Burt Bacharach

some extent) to its roots. Huw is very frank about the headache caused in the past by fringe events and – more especially – fringe characters. He explains that, in the days of stricter licensing laws, Brecon Jazz's all-day licence was an irresistible temptation to many people who had little or no interest in jazz. The nuisance element of this is obvious, but it also led to fringe events in pubs which were often not jazz, but still contributed to the atmosphere of Brecon. While not advocating alcoholic excess (as if jazz fans ever would drink too much!), Orchard is looking to bring back the informal element. Perhaps, Huw speculates, the Fringe and the main Festival could become more fully integrated.

Hence the publicity this year for the Captain's Walk, an open-air stage operating throughout Saturday and Sunday, with admission each day by a single ticket. Huw describes the music at the Captain's Walk as 'typical open air music' and I can see his point. The evening sessions feature the multi-award winning big band Beats and Pieces and the samba percussion of Rhythms of the City. During the day there are township jazz and the puzzlingly-named, esoteric and undoubtedly entertaining Imperial Kikistan; Dennis Rollins and dynamic drummer Ollie Howell are hardly shrinking violets; James Clark's Lonely Hearts Rugby Clwb is apparently a raucous circus-style 19-piece playing music from Bulgaria to Brazil. Then there's

the Mike Harries Root Doctors! Looking back 30 years to the first Brecon Jazz Festival, the organisers have included on this year's bill two of the first line-up, appropriately enough one Welsh institution (Mike Harries) and one international star, Warren Vache, playing the Theatr Brycheiniog on the first evening with his quintet featuring Alan Barnes.

Huw is confident that Brecon Jazz this year caters for its various audiences, not forgetting the traditional Brecon audience alongside the younger generation. Asked which concerts he is particularly looking forward to, he – immediately and unsurprisingly – plumps for



Loose Tubes

Loose Tubes, the astonishing 21-piece that took London by storm 30 years ago (a nice coincidence!) and played its first gig outside the capital at Brecon in 1985.

'Loose Tubes were a big influence on me. I heard them in London in the 1980s and at the time never thought that I'd end up playing with most of them in one band or another. And it will be great to hear the John Taylor Trio. He is one of my main influences, too, and – oddly enough –, though he's recognised as a great pianist, we don't get to hear him so often.'

After Huw has cited Polar Bear and Penguin Cafe among his other favourites, I mention Gregory Porter who, we both agree, is a current phenomenon. Recognised as a fine jazz/blues/gospel singer for some years, he seems to have exploded all over the media since signing for Blue Note last year – so his appearance at the Market Hall on the final evening of the festival is a certain sell-out. Huw points out

that, with such a compact festival full of quality gigs, there's a good chance of spin-off from sold-out concerts: apparently last year audience members turned away from Jools Holland's concert were not lost to the festival, but found other performances to enjoy.

Brecon Jazz 2014 begins with a solitary concert (Burt Bacharach) on Thursday August 7th, followed by six on Friday evening, then really hits its stride on Saturday and Sunday. Both days have some 20 events, from a Cathedral service to masterclasses at Christ College. And, as for keeping different audiences happy, the range of bands and musicians spreads from the 60-odd year veteran Chris Barber to the latest singing sensation Laura Mvula, later to crown an amazing year by an appearance at the BBC Promenade Concerts.

Tickets available from www.breconjazz.com



Gregory Porter

SOUTHPORT WINTER JAZZ

At the 10th Southport Jazz on a Winter's Weekend earlier this year, Festival Director **GEOFF MATTHEWS** made the dramatic announcement that there would be no 2015 festival unless somebody else took it over. Now he's still in charge and the Southport schedules are fuller than ever. **RON SIMPSON** asks the questions.

In February at the end of Jazz on a Winter's Weekend's sixth successive sell-out, Geoff Matthews launched into what he has taken to calling his 'Gettysburg Address', though it clocked in at a good deal longer than Lincoln's two minutes. Pointing out that two of Southport Melodic Jazz's board members, both rising 80, had decided to retire, that some of the other organisers were only a decade behind them, and that no support seemed to be forthcoming from either the local council or younger enthusiasts, he declared that this was it – if someone else wished to take over, the 2015 dates were booked at the Royal Clifton Hotel, there was a loyal audience and he was happy to advise.

Yet, on June 22nd, shortly before the urbane, almost classical precision of Dave Newton, Andy Cleynert and Colin Oxley brought an end to Southport's Jazz on a Summer's Day, Geoff was telling me of a new festival in



Dmitry Baevsky

August and a new series of events at Southport Melodic Jazz – and, most important of all, enthusing about the programme he has lined up for Jazz on a Winter's Weekend on February 6th-8th, 2015. So what's changed?

To some extent Geoff acknowledges his 'Alex Ferguson' moment when he realised he wasn't ready to retire, but the situation is subtly different now:

'We have two new helpers, both very experienced. John Taylor was Head of Leisure and Culture for Sefton Council and was the man who saw through the renovation of the Atkinson (Southport's new/old multi-purpose arts centre) from scratch and he only retired when it was finished. He's very experienced in business and management, but also stimulating because he thinks outside the box. Dr. Tom Sykes is a college lecturer, a musician, a really capable guy in touch with the current media: his Ph. D. was on Jazz in the Digital Age.'

So Geoff can look forward to greater help with administrative decisions and the use of social media to promote Southport Jazz, but my memories of the Winter Weekend include the board members doing plenty of physical labour in terms of chair shifting and suchlike. Two people aren't going to make enough difference to that!

'We have pushed the hotel to give us some proper back-up. They tend to let us get on with it. It's one of the biggest weekends of the year for the hotel, so they were horrified when they heard we were going to stop. The owner came to see me and said, "What do we have to do?". I said, "Not a lot, but you have to take a more hands-on management role that weekend. All I want is one person who reports to me who's on your staff, with bags of overtime, to get things done when we want them."'

For all that, Geoff is still unsure whether it was the right thing to give vent to his frustration. The problem is that, if you just say, 'We're overworked, we need help,' people say, 'Oh, yes!' and

expect things to carry on as before. If you take a radical line, as Geoff did, the problem is different: people believe you! He has gained expert assistance and a more proactive approach from the hotel, but what will the effect be on the audience? Jazz on a Winter's Weekend had (hopefully, still has) a devoted following: how many of them will have booked a winter cruise in their disappointment at his announcement? As we spoke, it was just over a week before tickets went on sale – July 1st!

Where Geoff has no doubt is the quality of next February's programme. He takes me through the whole programme, pointing out where he heard them, why he booked them, from old favourites such as the Alan Barnes-David Newton Sextet to the exciting Russian altoist Dmitry Baevsky whom Geoff saw on a video from Marciac and who has added Joe Magnarelli to his quintet. I reckon the sax-and-tuba pairing of Marius Neset and Daniel Herskedal is particularly appetising!

And what of the extras in Southport Melodic Jazz's programme? As a stylish Victorian resort still with much of its elegance and a reasonable amount of its prosperity, Southport is a town of festivals and galas – and jazz is no exception. There is the council's own jazz festival in May. SMJ has a liking for mini-festivals: Jazz on a Summer's Day (polished Liverpool-based singer SueYo with a fine quintet, nicely varied songs with guitars from Willy Fluss and Vernon Fuller over dinner; the superb Newton/Cleynert/Oxley) is matched by the Christmas Special (December 14th) with Alan Barnes going all literary and Victorian again with *A Christmas Carol* followed by dinner accompanied by accordionist Harry Hussey and an evening (again) of David Newton in trio mode, this time with Alan Barnes and Simon Thorpe.

Then there is the Flower Show. Let Geoff explain:

'The owner of this hotel is also the Chair of the Southport

Flower Show. The council gave it away 20 years ago because they couldn't do it and gave the show a very long lease on Victoria Park. It's a charity, but they run a very good business. They maximise their asset, the park, and encourage other groups to use it. So they said to us, "We'll give you the marquee. Why don't you put some music on? We'll pay most of the fixed costs.'"

The result, tailored to the venue, is Jazz Blues Soul in the Park (August 1st-3rd), an unusual sort of festival, a mixture of two grand events and some 12 hours of almost free music. For £2 admission punters can listen to eight bands on the Bandstand, camp out and picnic, then on Friday and Saturday evenings, in the vast Marquee, a hog roast or a two-course dinner accompanies the music of A.J. Brown and the Swingshift Big Band (Friday) or King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys and Vernon Fuller's Soul Call (Saturday). It seems an ambitious idea, but Southport might just be the right place for it.

Then, of course, there's the monthly SMJ programme at the Royal Clifton, resuming on September 21st with Tommy Smith and Brian Kellock, and the music programme SMJ books at Dobbie's Tea Room, generally the last Thursday of the month. And, far from winding down, an extra series of Sunday afternoon concerts by the Swingshift Big Band under Phil Shotton has been added, starting with the music of Count Basie on September 7th.

Southport Melodic Jazz and, especially, Jazz on a Winter's Weekend seem like a total success story – a jazz event that sells out, makes a profit and still dares to experiment! – but the shenanigans (Geoff's word) of the last few months show that nothing's simple and, to some extent, he's still waiting to see what happens next.

For full details of the SMJ programme and both festivals, go to www.jazzinsouthport.co.uk

LITHUANIA'S SINGER OF THE YEAR

RON SIMPSON discusses her career and the Lithuanian music scene with **GIEDRE KILCIAUSKIENE**, winner of the **M.A.M.A.** award as Lithuania's Female Singer of the Year in 2013, the same year as she made her first appearance at the Birmingham International Jazz and Blues Festival.

At one time the word 'international' applied to a British jazz festival was sometimes just a reminder to the audience that a few American musicians were in attendance. Now it usually suggests a fascinating mix of old favourites and new talents from Europe across an ever-widening range of countries. For instance, Lithuania as a nation displays an enthusiasm for spreading the message of its jazz musicians abroad that puts the UK to shame. This year is the second in succession that the Lithuanian Embassy has supported musicians at the Birmingham festival.

Who better to talk about the Lithuanian jazz scene and her own career than Giedre Kilciauskiene, voted Lithuania's top female singer last year, with a career that goes back to 1995 and has successfully encompassed many different styles?

Giedre has no doubt of the popularity of jazz in her country: in a small country there are six or eight major festivals featuring famous names from all over the world. Even under what she calls the 'occupation', jazz was popular and there were a few festivals in the Soviet era, but she makes a telling point:

'Of course Lithuanian jazz never had traditional roots like in the USA or Western Europe. The older generation did the best they could, but now everything changes for the better. If the old generation played free jazz most often, now we are more open for other styles. Jazz should become more popular in the future because now we have places to study it. Of course classical musicians still think that jazz is not a serious thing, but I'm happy that young open-minded people work in the Lithuanian government and they support jazz music as much as they can.'

Giedre, who was 11 when Lithuania declared its

independence, received a sound musical education. She started singing at the age of eight, went to elementary music school and then studied pop and jazz vocal at the J. Tallat-Kelpso's Conservatoire and the University of Applied Sciences, both in Vilnius. 'Pop and jazz vocal' is the key. Though she began singing in bands at the age of 16, it was not until 2011 that Giedre finally turned to jazz. After performing with a few rock bands, she became part of the pop/electronic music band Empti (she carefully insists on the spelling – not 'Empty'!) and by 2000 Empti was picking up many music awards in Lithuania: best debut, best album, best dance music group. With Empti she recorded three albums, the last in 2010 when the band re-formed after a break. During that break she had what she describes as 'a great time' with the electro/punk/jazz band Milky Lasers who recorded for the German label Phazz-a-delics.

During this time Giedre was teaching singing and improvisation at the University of Applied Sciences which, of course, included jazz, but oddly she only began to sing jazz on stage three years ago. For that she expresses her gratitude to pianist Andrey Polevikov who, she says, 'treated me not like a pop singer'.

For Giedre's visit to Birmingham last year, she was accompanied by Andrey. This year it's slightly different: Andrey returns, but as a member of the quartet Jazz Miniatures. Giedre tells me about the group:

'Jazz Miniatures started in 2011. Andrey Polevikov has arranged jazz standards and a few pop and rock songs in jazz style. Double bass player Vytis Nivinskas and drummer Darius Rudis are both very good and well known jazz musicians in Lithuania. I'm very happy to sing with my dream team – any singer would be



Photo by Merlin Dalemán

jealous of me! And I'm very happy to come back to the Birmingham Jazz Festival where we will play new songs which we want to record in the near future.'

These new songs will feature on Jazz Miniatures' second album. Their first, eponymous album was released in 2013, plus Giedre's first solo album – Giedre, *Optine apgaule* (which means 'optical illusion'). For this Giedre wrote the music and lyrics herself and she describes it as 'pop music with jazz colours'.

Giedre's career has taken her through many styles and now she is confident across a wide range of genres. She is amused by my question about how she would describe her style of singing now:

'I'm trying to remember which style of music I don't sing! I just love to sing any style except classical music, but only because I haven't studied the technique.'

As things stand, Giedre Kilciauskiene is in a good place: 'I am teaching at my old university as well as singing. I joke to my friends that I have no job, but I have the good fortune to do what I want to do in my life and get money for it.'

Despite the success with Empti and Milky Lasers, this is the highpoint of her career so far, crowned by the M.A.M.A. award, but, in a quietly unselfish way, she has the ambition and confidence to take things much further:

'This is not my last stop. Now I want to bring my music worldwide. And I know how to do it. I have to be honest to myself and the others, work hard and be kind to the people who have helped me to become a good musician.'

Giedre Kilciauskiene Jazz Miniatures appear at Birmingham International Jazz and Blues Festival on July 21-23.

THE FRESH SOUND OF BARCELONA

Much of the current jazz output on CD, especially in the field of reissues, emanates from Barcelona. RON SIMPSON asked JORDI PUJOL of Fresh Sound Records for the background to the situation.

In the UK we are always impressed, but quite often confused, by the situation in regard to the many labels in Barcelona reissuing on CD albums from the 1950s and early 1960s. So much good music emerges, yet there are oddities: two labels, for instance, issuing the same album at the same time, even on occasion with the same newly-written notes, odd claims for 'Complete' collections, etc. There are similarities between the packaging of some of the product, so we speculate on whether these labels come from one company or whether the companies are linked or indeed separate. The strongest personality to emerge via the CDs, producing some outstanding sets and writing his own liner notes to go with the original sleeve notes, is Jordi Pujol of Fresh Sound Records, so it seemed appropriate to ask him the difficult questions.

I have noticed recently how many new recordings also emerge from Barcelona, some on Fresh Sound and its subsidiaries, some on other labels, so what about the role of Barcelona in Spanish and European jazz?

'Barcelona has been recognised as the capital of jazz in Spain since 1920, as I related in my book *Jazz en Barcelona 1920-1965*. But many other cities including Valencia and Madrid have been enjoying an interesting local jazz scene. That said, for all its history, musicians and the continuing activities relating to the genre, our city remains the most important when it comes to jazz.'

The Fresh Sound website advertises for sale CDs by Essential Jazz Classics, Lone Hill and the rest, but so do many other sites and Jordi is emphatic that he is not involved with these other labels: all the jazz that he has produced has been on Fresh Sound, Blue Moon or labels related to them, such as FS New Talent, FS World Jazz, Swing Alley and Jazz City. When I mention

having read the same notes on two CDs for different labels, Jordi is initially horrified, before I investigate and find the albums in question were the EJC and Phoenix reissues of *Jazz at Massey Hall*:

'On top of the original liner notes, I usually add, where possible my own notes to each project, some longer than others. If you have seen a CD which is not a Fresh Sound or Blue Moon release with the same notes as ours, it must have been the original liner notes – at least I hope so!'

So that's half the mystery solved. I remain perplexed by the contrast between excellence of product and packaging and eccentricity of presentation (and release policy) in the other Barcelona companies, but for now we can forget that and discover how Fresh Sound came about. The company has, in truth, a longer history than I imagined:

'Fresh Sound released its first album in August 1983. It was a Billy May LP on Capitol, *The Girls and Boys on Broadway*, and it featured some good Hollywood studio soloists. The first idea was to release West Coast jazz albums, something that only the Japanese were doing back then. I was – still am – a big fan of all Californian arrangers: Marty Paich, Bill Holman, Shorty Rogers, Johnny Mandel, Bob Florence, Russell Garcia, and the rest. That's why I chose the name Fresh Sound when I was reading an article about the new 'fresh sound' coming out from the West Coast.

'My first trip to Los Angeles was in the summer of 1984, during the holidays from my work as a designer. I went there to record the first FSR production, *Dave Pell Octet Plays Again*. This initial trip allowed me to come back the following year and Dave put me in contact with some musicians who would help me a lot during the next few years: Bob Keane, Harry Babasin, Roy Harte, Marty



Paich and many others. Then I went to New York (Roulette, Jubilee, Roost, Bethlehem, Seeco, etc.) and little by little FSR started to gather a large catalogue of reissues, over 400 LPs in about four years, mostly coming from major labels like EMI, RCA, CBS and MCA.'

Clearly our perception of Fresh Sound as a company that operates (responsibly and totally legally) on the edge of the copyright deadline is far too limited a view, but where did Jordi Pujol come from to start the company over 30 years ago?

'I was a draughtsman/designer for a printing pattern textile company. I worked at that job for 17 years, including the first four years of FSR. I spent four years in Lyon, France, in the early 1970s, drawing in a studio. At that time I played trumpet as an amateur just for fun. My boss, Raoul Bruckert, was not only a good designer, but also a good musician. He played tenor sax (Lester was his idol) with his own group, The Seven Brothers, at the amazing old Hot Club, rue de l'Arbre Sec. I had some wonderful experiences there.

'Then, when I returned to Barcelona at the end of 1975, I continued playing occasionally in jam sessions at the Terrassa Jazz Club until around 1984. After that I didn't have time to do everything: my designer job and setting up FSR took all my time, so I stopped playing, a decision I really regret.'

The image of a jazzman frustrated by his work releasing the music of other jazzmen is ironic or poignant depending on your temperament, but not strictly true. Now Jordi concentrates on jazz recordings, but in earlier years he created many labels dedicated to other styles: Tumbao, Caney and Palladium for Cuban and Caribbean music and Latin jazz, El Bandoneon for tango, Ubatuqui for Brazilian jazz and bossa, Alma Latina for boleros and rancheros, other lines for blues, flamenco, zarzuela and soundtracks. With such an output – and a jazz output so large he can't remember how many albums he's issued – surely there's a danger of putting out too much mediocre stuff. Jordi puts me firmly in my place, with regard to jazz and the other musics:

'The different brands include a vast list of names particular to each genre, so obviously, if a label covers the history of early Cuban music, you are going to find all kinds of artists, from big names to lesser known musicians, but "lesser known" doesn't translate to "less interesting" and, although in some cases it can be of less interest to someone, I don't like to use the adjective "mediocre". All of them contributed to the growth of their chosen genre in their own way.'

I mention recent releases which I have reviewed by Bea Abbott and Jim Timmens, to me decent, enjoyable, relatively unremarkable performances from the late

1950s. Jordi does not dispute my assessment, but to him they remain a part of jazz history – and he likes them! Similarly he doesn't lay claim to anything special in the more remarkable of Fresh Sound's releases:

'I try to select artists or projects that I think can be interesting and I try to produce them in the best possible way. After that everyone is entitled to their own opinion about the CDs. When I first heard Bea Abbott singing, I liked her and I felt that a CD compiling her recordings would be nice. It's easy to take the risk that they won't sell – you just need enough motivation to go into a project fully.

'Again I don't try to make remarkable CDs. I just try to make interesting products. Obviously there are some that, from my personal point of view, I like more than others, but I always enjoy doing all of them, that's the nicest thing in my daily job. When I decide to make a project, it's because it piques my interest enough to work on it.'

He finds it difficult to recall the most successful CDs sales-wise and points out that some of the best sellers were not on Fresh Sound: a box-set of Chano Pozo on Tumbao, for instance, or *Los 60 mejores canciones de Carlos Gardel* on Blue Moon. When I ask about his favourite releases,

expecting him to take credit for the extraordinary 11-CD box-set of the Keynote Jazz Collection, for instance, he maintains the stance of a father who won't have a favourite among his children:

'They are all my favourites while I'm working on them and, after I've finished, my next project becomes my favourite. Sometimes you dedicate a lot of time, even years, to finishing a project, but that doesn't mean it will be a big seller. I have always prioritised my own motivation over possible sales, although, as you can imagine, sales are important for us, too!'

How does Jordi view the future? There are, it seems to me, two difficulties lying in the way of any company issuing CDs of music that falls outside the 50-year copyright limit. One is the decline of the CD as the main means of listening to recorded music and the other is the change in the copyright laws, at least in the UK. With an extension of recorded copyright to 70 years, it will be 2035 before the recordings of 1965 which record companies would normally be eyeing at this time can be issued copyright-free. Jordi is realistic, but definitely positive:

'The market today is decreasing, but we still survive, and I feel that we have good support from the



jazz aficionados, and, even if I would like to see better sales figures, our final balance is still positive. The copyright laws are the same in Spain and the new law will affect us somewhat, but luckily not all our productions are affected by it. The Spanish market is small compared to the UK, France or Germany, but similar to the rest of the countries. Japan and the USA remain our biggest importers.'

One reason why Jordi can say that the new copyright law does not affect all FSR product is the new recordings, many of which he works on as producer or associate producer:

'The new productions are very important to me. I like to hear new jazz artists and projects. This is the part of my job that really keeps me in permanent contact with today's scene and I dedicate a lot of my time to.'

Finally I tried to get a picture of the actual work-load of Jordi Pujol, a remarkable man who claims he doesn't make remarkable albums:

'I take care of every project from the beginning and I like to do the projects in my own way, especially the reissues. I compile all the material and have worked

very well with the same graphic designer for many years. I have always collected jazz pictures and magazines, even before FSR started. For the booklets I usually use my archives which all come from very different sources: from the musicians themselves, original negatives, collections, photographers, publications, catalogues, advertisements, etc. For FS New Talent the artists usually supply us with their artwork or their ideas for the CD design, so, whether we design the cover or they do, we always work in collaboration with them.

'I also have good external collaborators and friends that help me in the production of some projects, and the work done in the sound restoration of each reissue is very important. In particular I would like to mention all the work done by my friend Dick Bank since we met in 1994 – he has produced several great albums for FSR over the years.'

Jordi didn't name any of them – in the Fresh Sound family it doesn't do to play favourites!

www.freshsoundrecords.com

For some 20 years Discovery Records have distributed Fresh Sound in the UK:
www.discovery-records.com



Toots Thielemans

ROMANE & STOCHELO ROSENBERG

ELEGANCE

Fremaux & Associés
FA 544: 47:07

Django Reinhardt evolved a musical language all his own. Many guitarists have endeavoured to learn it over the sixty-odd years since his death, with varying degrees of success, but always the essential vocabulary has remained unchanged. Romane and Stochelo Rosenberg both possess a fluent command of Django's music, bringing to it a spontaneity and eloquence which goes well beyond mere imitation, or the fond recreation of bygone days. The music is their mother tongue and they speak it with such surety that, on a couple of listenings, I've not been able to decide who is soloing and who is playing rhythm at any given time.

Their compositions do, however, betray differences of personality, and it is fascinating to hear how the uniqueness of the language embraces both viewpoints without detriment to the essential Django-ness of the sound.

Romane's contributions reflect the 'thirties/'forties era in melody and underlying chord patterns. Even his titles have a savour of

the period: *Opus de Clignancourt* and *Pour Parler* might well have come from the pen of his mentor, while *Soir de Trottoir* is a waltz with the poignant drama of pre-war Paris. *Just Enough For Jazz* and *La Promenade* by Rosenberg seem to emanate from a decade later with their use of chromatic harmonies and slight boppish flavor.

Evocative yet ageless music brilliantly played.

HUGH LEDIGO

TOOTS THIELEMANS

CONTRASTS

Blue Moon Records
BMCD 839: 68.15

This is a re-issue on CD of two albums, originally produced in 1966 and '67, *Contrasts* and *Guitar and Strings and Things*, and is a tribute to him on his retirement at the venerable age of 92 in March this year. Four of the sets are with an orchestral backing of strings and female voices, used instrumentally. The remaining set is with a quintet. What is particularly interesting is that it mainly features the guitar skills of the master harmonica virtuoso and one tends to forget that the guitar was his first professional instrument, utilising it in the Shearing group and the Goodman band. What one, also,

tends to forget is just how advanced his ideas are and how adaptable he is to any genre from Shearing to Terence Blanchard and to the South American masters.

Basically he is a bebop player. Usually he is the perpetual winner in a one horse race topping the Miscellaneous Sections of Jazz polls for years on that unfashionable instrument, the harmonica but he is proof that, if you have genuine creative juices, then you can win over anyone but the fundamentalists. He is a prodigious improviser and he revels in his invention on these tracks. The solos are mainly all his but Jack Barker's empathetic arrangements, using the string section as a complementary background to Toots harmonica, are very effective.

JOHN MARTIN

JOHNNY CARISI

ISRAEL

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 817: 64.36

Perhaps the first question is, who was Johnny Carisi? A composer, arranger and trumpeter who was active in New York at the time of the Miles Davis *Birth of the Cool* recordings, is the answer. Carisi contributed *Israel*, a 'polyphonic' blues and his most celebrated composition, to that session, hence the title to this collection of recordings devoted to his wide-ranging work as both player and composer. Prior to the Davis assignment, he had already worked for the innovative Claude Thornhill orchestra, then famed for its contemporary repertoire, much of written by Gil Evans and Gerry Mulligan. In later years, he played less and composed more, providing pieces for a wide variety of small ensembles, and for TV and radio. He resumed more regular playing towards the end of his career and died in 1992, aged 70.

The opening seven tracks from 1956 are headed by Carisi himself who proves to be a clean-cut stylist in the then boppish manner, the writing for these re-workings of familiar standards like a breath of fresh air, with the Sims-like tenor of Eddie

Wassermann the standout. Perhaps unsurprisingly given his association with the cool sounds of the Davis nonet, the overall effect is somewhat similar, with clever contrapuntal writing and coherent interplay, aided by neat solo contributions from Carisi himself and his associates.

There follow gem-laden individual tracks from 1956 sessions led by Al Cohn, Tony Scott, Urbie Green, and a later version of *Israel* by Gerry Mulligan's Concert Jazz Band, marked by a typically wry solo by valve-trombonist Bob Brookmeyer as well as a reprise of the classic Miles Davis reading, to round out a vibrant and compelling release. Jordi Pujol, the album's compiler, calls this music 'well-schooled, classically informed, creative jazz' and writes of its overall concern for 'a greater sense of structure' and he's right.

PETER VACHER

CLARA VUUST

HERE'S TO LOVE

Storyville 1014288: 43.17

The female singing voice has great variety, particularly in jazz. It is the personal sound that either gets to me or doesn't. Here is a lady whose sound, for its warmth and expressiveness, appeals to me greatly. There is not a dud in these ten songs, three of which she co-wrote with her pianist husband.

Copenhagen's Clara Vuust opens with a little-known Kander/Ebb waltz, *I Don't Care Much*, and her virtues shine out. This is the first of five to feature a very fine clarinetist, Nico Gori, who fits well with Clara, and is equally enjoyable. Then she applies full feeling to a supersong I associate with Shirley Horn, *Here's To Life*, with the superb solo piano backing of hubby Francesco Cali. I've heard some good versions of the Michel Legrand gem, *Once Upon A Summertime*, but nobody has done it more justice than Ms Vuust here. Her moving exposition brings extra power to her delivery, further clarinet clarity, and a chance to mention the bass playing of Daniel Franck, there being no drums on the date.

The three Cali/Vuust originals are of high quality, melodically and lyrically. The 6/8 *Sicilian Love Song* and the 3/4 *Evening* have exotic atmosphere provided by Mr Cali on accordion, with the latter utilising the guitar artistry of Jeppe Holst. The easy Latin mood of *It's Happening Again* introduces tasteful trumpet from Flemming Agerskov.

Two other magical tracks are singable standards. Cahn/Styne's *Time After Time* has singer and pianist giving their all magnificently, and Chaplin's *Smile* has likewise, plus some deliciously smoochy clarinet from the great Mr Gori. Recommended, especially to lovers.

LESTOMKINS

TRICOTISM

FINGERBUSTIN'

Raymer Sound RSCD 948:
72.11

Tricotism (named after a jazz standard by Oscar Pettiford which is included on this album) is a trio comprising pianist Craig Milverton, guitarist Nigel Price and bassist Sandy Suchdolski. Craig Milverton is one of those jazzmen who has never quite become a household name, perhaps because he lives way down in the wilds of Devon. Yet he is a very talented pianist who has been heavily influenced by Oscar Peterson. This is clear from the inclusion of four Peterson compositions among the 11 tracks on this CD. Indeed, Craig sounds very Oscarish in Peterson's *Wheatland*. He hasn't quite got the whole of Peterson's breathtaking technique but who has? Nigel Price is another fine player, who contributes some shapely solos, as does bassist Sandy Suchdolski, although the bass tends to be under-recorded in a disc that is otherwise OK for sound.

The trio works sympathetically together, with several ingenious arrangements. Note, for instance, how the theme of Billy Strayhorn's *Isfahan* is played by the three instruments all contributing phrases in turn. And the up-tempo title-track arouses memories of the cheery Nat

'King' Cole Trio. This is accessible and unpretentious (yet skilful) music which should have a wide appeal.

TONY AUGARDE

RONNIE ROSS / ALLAN GANLEY / HARRY KLEIN / VIC ASH

THE JAZZ MAKERS AND THE JAZZ FIVE

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 820: 79.10

Without doubt, Gerry Mulligan can be said to have enhanced the acceptability of the baritone saxophone as a jazz solo instrument. But Britain's Ronnie Ross made a contribution too. In fact, it was after hearing him in a John Lewis orchestral work that I made him the subject of the first of my thousand-plus recorded interviews. The second was his co-leader on eight tracks here, the great drummer Allan Ganley.

Here are two prime samplings of late 20th century British jazz. Having formed their Jazz Makers quintet in 1958, Ronnie and Allan were able to record in New York the following year while touring the States. Utilising mainly originals by group members, they make an ear-catching sound. The affinity between the saxes of Ross and Art Ellefson (tenor) is potent, and their interplay at its height on some spates of simultaneous improvisation. Pianist Stan Jones and bassist Stan Wasser aid Ganley in keeping things swinging. For the information of Fresh Sound, the standard on track five is titled *It's A Wonderful World* (Adamson-Savitt-Watson).

Six tracks are devoted to The Jazz Five, with the same instrumentation, recorded in 1960, co-led by Harry Klein on baritone and Vic Ash on tenor. Brian Dee - still driving rhythm sections today - is on piano. The bassist is Malcolm Cecil, who subsequently was a brilliant sound man on Stevie Wonder's initial albums. The drumming role is shared by Bill Eyden and Tony Mann. Again, it's almost all lively originals. Klein, previously known as an alto player, had his own approach to the large horn. On

the one standard, *Autumn Leaves*, I welcome the flowing clarinet style of Vic Ash - the instrument on which he became a major exponent.

LESTOMKINS

COLEMAN HAWKINS

THE LOST 1950 MUNICH CONCERT

Solar Records 4569946: 72.05

This recording is an extraordinary discovery, and is indisputably the most important document of Hawkins to have been unearthed since his 1949 JATP set with Fats Navarro was released a decade or so ago. Not only does it feature the master himself in his best, barrelling form, it has the additional attraction of fellow US stars James Moody, Nat Peck and Kenny Clarke, with Moody's oh-so-hip boppisms acting as a nice counterweight to the leader's classic style. Add a clutch of European proto-boppers, including altoist Hubert Fol and bassist Pierre Michelot, and a nicely balanced programme showcasing Hawkins' staples like *Body and Soul*, *Riffide* and *Stuffy* alongside recent compositions by Tadd Dameron, Thelonious Monk and Sir Charles Thompson, and you have all the ingredients for what transpires to be a classic session, big on atmosphere, excitement and, above all, swing.

If any reader is waiting for the caveat, then I'm pleased to report there is none! Unusually for this kind of release sound quality is uniformly excellent, begging the question whether this was originally a radio broadcast or a series of transcription discs. As usual with Solar Records, the booklet notes (step forward one Arthur Morton) spend a lot of time telling you how many times Musician X recorded Composition Y, and nothing at all about how this remarkable recording from Munich's Deutsches Museum was made, lost and rediscovered. Music as important as this deserves to have its story told in full and - sorry, I guess there's a caveat after all - why stick a photo of Hawkins from the late 1950s on the cover when there's an excellent action shot of the line-

up heard on the album inside the booklet? Regardless of these cosmetic carps, go and buy this. It might well be my album of the year.

SIMON SPILLETT

BETTY BLAKE

SINGS IN A TENDER MOOD

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 821: 41.25

It is saddening to hear a 1961 album by an excellent lady singer, and to read that she vanished into obscurity and died 40 years later. Twelve tracks here display a strong personality and a warm, round sound, giving every indication of a positive jazz future. She is graced by five groupings of leading New York players, and is allowed to spread her talent to the full on quality songs, five of them by Alec Wilder, without any interpolating soloists - a justifiable plan.

One wonders if the titles hold any clue to what went wrong. The opening *Let There Be Love* has lots of life and a nice long note at the end. *I'll Be Around* also has a neat coda, as they all do. She is more restrained in the ballad *Trouble Is A Man*, although she gains power. An upbeat contrast is her ultra-jazzy *Love Is Just Around The Corner*. At 5:12, *Lilac Wine* is the longest track, but it's all hers - sensuous and full-voiced, at varying times. If I were to name the most choice items, I would have to cite her fine phrasing on *While We're Young*, her vigour and individualism on *All Of You* and her exciting Latin treatment of *Out Of This World*.

Four bonus tracks are singles she



Coleman Hawkins

Joe Harriott



made in 1957, and clearly she had advanced in four years. I'm sure she would, and should have gone on to greater glory.

LES TOMKINS

JOHNNIE PATE TRIO

COMPLETE RECORDINGS
1955-1956

*Fresh Sound Records FSR-CD
814: 66.35*

Pate: a pianist turned bass player; Ronnell Bright: something of a child prodigy concert pianist turned jazzier; and Charles Walton, a drummer with no discernible pedigree but undoubted ability, join forces in a series of originals and standards of an agreeably high quality. This is trio bebop as it was known in the mid to late 'fifties with neat arrangements, neatly played, Pate seems to have confined his activities to the Chicago clubs and, probably for this reason, there is nothing abrasive about his music to frighten the patrons. Indeed, a couple of tightly phrased unison vocals from the trio are clearly aimed at the punters, while two further numbers from an unknown but superior vocalist called Gwen Stevens are obviously intended to titillate.

The bassist's admiration for Oscar Pettiford is apparent in his solo work especially when he is responsible for the themes, but when he drops back into support mode he can generate a surging drive worthy of Ray Brown.

Ronnell Bright demonstrates a two-handed facility not always apparent in bop piano players. He moves from single note lines to chordal passages somewhat in

the Shearing manner though not, perhaps, with quite the same élan.

Highly accessible, audience friendly and, for those of us who remember, downright nostalgic.

HUGH LEDIGO

JOE HARRIOTT

SOUTHERN
HORIZONS/FREE
FORM/ABSTRACT

*Fresh Sound FSR-CD 826:
2 CDs, 65.06/68.12*

Joe Harriott (1925-1973) arrived in Britain in 1951 and quickly made a name for himself with his imaginative alto saxophone work, which had roots in Charlie Parker but a great deal of Joe Harriott, too. This double-cd reissues three albums all of which have been hard to find - *Southern Horizons* dates from 1959-1960 and features the regular quartet of trumpeter Hank Shaw, pianist Harry South, bassist Coleridge Goode and drummer Bobby Orr on a programme of originals and jazz standards. All receive a boppish treatment infused with Harriott's Parker-inspired solo work - there are some fine examples on *Jumpin' With Joe*, *Still Goofin'* and *Tuesday Morning Swing*, although *You Go To My Head* and *Señor Blues* are less convincing.

It is possible to detect Harriott's discontent in places, and this perhaps led to *Free Form*, an unfortunate title as it led to comparisons with the music of Ornette Coleman, a situation Harriott described at the time as 'an error', as with the benefit of hindsight, a comparison of the two bands shows considerable

distinctions, not just in the extra tonal qualities of the piano. Here, trumpeter Shaw is replaced by Shake Keane, pianist South by Pat Smythe and drummer Orr by Phil Seaman. *Free Form* is notable for the almost complete abandonment of thematic and the fierce soli of Harriott, with trumpeter Shake Keane acting as a foil with his subtle improvisation. It's here that Harriott shows what a fine improviser he was.

The third album, *Abstract*, took the concept even further, with the musicians picking up on Harriott's themes and developing them individually. Once again, Harriott and Keane's improvisations are a delight; the problem is that they sound distant, and that co-ordinated sound to be heard on *Free Form* is under threat here; some of the staccato themes irritate after several plays.

It's good to have this music available once again, for Harriott was a 'one-off'.

GREG MURPHY

LE LABEL SWING

EARLY YEARS 1937-1939

*Frémeaux & Associés FA 5424:
3 CDs, 65.05/66.02/62.25*

Charles Delaunay may be best remembered now through John Lewis's tribute tune *Delaunay's Dilemma*, which has become a jazz standard. But Charles Delaunay deserves to be remembered for many more achievements, such as promoting Django Reinhardt and the Hot Club of France, as well as writing several important books about jazz, most notably the *Hot Discography*. In 1937 he started a record label called Swing (possibly with Hugues Panassié), and this triple CD contains some of its recordings from the late thirties. I say 'some', because the sleeve-notes make it clear that the compilers have omitted any recordings that were included on previous reissue albums. This means that the collection excludes tracks recorded for the Swing label by the likes of Coleman Hawkins and Benny Carter; and there is only one track by Django Reinhardt.

Nonetheless, this compilation gives an interesting picture of jazz in Paris during the late thirties. Many American musicians came to Paris for the International Exhibition of 1937, and Delaunay made sure that he recorded them while they were available. This means that there are contributions from such musicians as Dicky Wells, Eddie South, Herman Chittison, Teddy Weatherford and Bill Coleman. Coleman is well represented here, and it is good to hear his graceful solos and his scat-filled vocals. Sadly, Eddie South only makes one appearance - on a 1938 version of *Honeysuckle Rose* which includes a strange vocal chorus supplied by 'The Glee Club'.

The visiting Americans don't have it all their own way. As in several other European countries (including Britain), much of France's jazz was quite derivative, both of styles and repertoire from the USA. But these discs remind us of France's pioneering spirit represented by such musicians as violinists Stéphane Grappelli and Michel Warlop, or brothers Django and Joseph Reinhardt, with their original manouche style. France wasn't just a pale imitation of the USA.

TONY AUGARDE

HORACE SILVER QUARTET WITH LOU DONALDSON

LIVE IN NEW YORK 1953

Solar Records 4569945: 78.45

Once in a while those Spanish labels like to slide a little gold nugget between all their repackaging and reissues. This is one such instance. Allegedly recorded at Birdland during the autumn of 1953 (my money's on a much smaller venue, with very different acoustics), it features a scratch band led by Silver which finds Donaldson picking up his night's wages alongside obscure bassist Jimmy Schenk and the even more mysterious Lloyd Turner on drums. All this might make the album sound like one of those awfully opportunistic 'let's issue this because no-one else has' CDs and, during the opening bars of the first number *You Got To My Head*, on which it

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THE JAZZ TIMES

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Scott Hamilton

sounds as if someone had attached a mic to Turner's bass drum pedal, you could be forgiven for thinking the worse. However, things soon sort themselves out, and the leader and his sidemen sound like they're having a ball.

At this point in his career, Donaldson was thoroughly smitten by Charlie Parker's example: Bird's signature licks come and go and, for minutes at a stretch, it's almost like hearing a mythical encounter between Parker and Silver. Indeed, if anyone regards Donaldson as a slightly lightweight jazz-funkster they'd do well to hear him here, playing the part of heir apparent just as well as Stitt, Woods or McLean ever did.

Silver is, of course, Silver through and through and if it were possible to single out just one example of his witty, in-the-pocket soloing, I'd plump for *Lou's Blues*, an incredible 18 minute performance during which the pianist alludes to nursery rhymes, pop tunes and even his own *Opus De Funk*. As with Solar's Coleman Hawkins' Munich concert, it would have been nice to know a little about where this set has been hiding, but even without the background information it makes a hugely impressive addition to the discographies of all those involved.

SIMON SPILLETT

SCOTT HAMILTON – DANY DORIZ

SCOTT HAMILTON PLAYS WITH THE DANY DORIZ CAVEAU DE LA HUCHETTE ORCHESTRA

Frémeaux & Associés CD FA 599: 63.37

Vibist Doriz is a veteran of French mainstream jazz [and incidentally, the artistic director of the Caveau de la Huchette club in Paris] while tenor-man Hamilton is the long-established banner-carrier for the neo-swing movement. So, ideal playmates, you could say. The short English note – the main text is in French – calls them 'living legends' and so they are. Happily, they live up to that status in this entertaining release, recorded last year.

Hamilton is a gun-for-hire these days and turns up increasingly often on European releases. Based in Italy now, he ranges over the continent, pausing regularly in the UK and clearly enjoys the playing opportunities that come his way. From close personal observation, I can confirm that his brand of warm-toned tenor entrances listeners whenever and wherever they hear him so any new opportunity to listen to him is to be savoured.

The choice of material here is eclectic, to say the least, Doriz's Hampton-like vibes given their

head on hot numbers like *Slipped Disc* and *Air Mail Special* while pianist Philippe Duchemin finds interesting things to say on each piece, Patricia Lebeugle's heartbeat bass and drummer Didier Dorise ensuring swing. Hamilton takes his chances well, notably on *Cherokee*, his purring extemporisation a gem before he exchanges choruses with Doriz in joyful accord. So, engaging mid-period jazz with genuine creativity, and that should include the guest appearances by guitarist Marc Fosset and Paris-based US trumpeter Ronald Baker, all accomplished with a kind of cheery ease. A latter-day delight.

PETER VACHER

ART PEPPER AND TED BROWN

THE COMPLETE FREE WHEELING SESSIONS FEATURING WARNE MARSH

Phoenix Records 131599: 77.51

Ted Brown is one of those many talented musicians who chose security over the insecurity of the music profession. He opted for a full time steady job in commerce. In December 1958 he was recording an album under his leadership in the company of Art Pepper and Warne Marsh and more than holding his own. Since that time he has continued to play steadily but as a part timer only.

He studied under Lennie Tristano for seven years and became part of that school which also included Warne Marsh, Lee Konitz and the British pianist Ronnie Ball although he has continued to turn up from time to time in various groups led by Konitz and other Tristano believers. He was still active in 2011.

There are sixteen tracks here with Brown present on nine of those. The line-up is Pepper, Brown and Marsh on horns with Ronnie Ball (pno), Ben Tucker (bs), and Jeff Morton and Gary Frommer sharing the drum duties. This is cool cerebral stuff, superbly intricate and Brown makes an impressive telepathic partner for Marsh's dry, considered lines.

Art Pepper, at the time still to make his enormous mark, is the perfect foil for the other two. Marsh is particularly impressive on the ballad *Crazy He Calls Me*. He usually avoided ballads but displays a huge aptitude for this one and Pepper and he are outstandingly competitive on *I Can't Believe that you're in Love with Me*.

Sixteen tracks of unhurried but impassioned music from the Cool School. Someone must have advised Ted Brown not to give up the day job. Pity.

JOHN MARTIN

VARIOUS

EUROPEAN COOL JAZZ 1951-1959

Frémeaux Associés FA 5428: 2CDs 75.55 / 76.07

The understated title conceals a positive cornucopia of cool cuts from France, Belgium, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Italy, Netherland and the UK. Forty-six tracks by such luminaries as Henri Renaud, Bobby Jaspar, Don Rendell, Lars Gullin, Jutta Hipp and Ronnie Scott among many others. The sheer dedication to the cause involved in making these selections should not be overlooked, this French label known for its major compilations. Happily the notes are in English and properly referenced with rare photographs included so a prospect to savour, you might say and impossible to fully assess in a short review. It deserves an essay.

CD1 open with a terrific piece by Renaud's 11-piece All Stars highlighting US ex-pat Jimmy Gourley's fluent guitar with a kicking rhythm section and some cool tenor. Belgian tenor-man Bobby Jaspar follows, more muscular than I'd remembered and confident, again with Renaud at the piano, the overall sound reminiscent of early Getz and Zoot. Indeed, it's the twin influences of Miles Davis's *Birth of the Cool* sessions and the Lennie Tristano collective improvisations that pervade the greater majority of these tracks. The music is supple and relaxed, and often quite startlingly good, even if the (still-active) French horn player

Dave Amram has to work hard to keep up with Jaspar.

It's clear that there was quite a coterie of French jazzmen intrigued by the cool style, and while it may seem derivative, much of CD1 is devoted to them. The writing is intriguing, understated and often complex, the sonority in line with Davis and Chet Baker's examples, the lines interweaving cleverly. Gullin evokes Gerry Mulligan in his many pieces on CD2 and pianist Bengt Hallberg's crisp piano is a standout as are the later tracks by John Dankworth, Vic Lewis, Ronnie Scott and Don Rendell (also heard earlier in Lester Young-like duet with Jaspar). Ideal for those who prefer a cooler kind of heat!

PETER VACHER

GINGER BAKER

WHY?

Motema 33846: 52.27

This session finds one-time Cream drummer Baker in a powerful quartet, with Pee Wee Ellis, a veteran of James Brown's band, on tenor saxophone, Alec Dankworth on bass and Abass Dodoo on percussion on a programme of eight titles. Needless to say, Baker dominates at times, reminiscent sometimes of Art Blakey; consider the intro to *Ginger Spice*, which sets the tone perfectly, before Dankworth enhances the rhythm and Ellis then enters, with a dark tone to his tenor. Ellis improvises over the shuffle rhythm and is even more intriguing on his self-penned *Twelve And More Blues*, taken out-of-tempo with Dankworth before the three men progress the piece, which soon showcases the improvisational

talents of the band; Ellis plays some sinuous lines over Dankworth's liquid bass lines, while Dodoo and Baker combine to set up a rhythmic line.

Cyril Davies is a gentle, haunting number inspired by memories of Davis, a prime mover in the British blues scene in the 'sixties who died at an early age in 1974. Ellis and Dankworth are outstanding here, and Ellis finishes with a falsetto note. The title track has an insidious theme, vaguely reminiscent of *Wade In The Water* but put across with great verve.

Overall, this is a memorable session, in which musicianship excels.

GREG MURPHY

KID ORY

STORYVILLE NIGHTS AND KID ORY PLAYS WC HANDY PLUS DIXIELAND MARCHING SONGS

Upbeat URCD 262D: 2 CDs, 56.02/69.45

With Kid Ory what you expect, you get. Nothing more or less. No complicated arrangements, no memorable solos just straightforward New Orleans tailgate trombone of which he is a master. His bands tended to be the same. These sessions are from the period 1959 to 1961. On this CD he covers 13 marching tunes, grist to his mill and despatched summarily with professional ease. These are all very short pieces and fairly indistinguishable from each other.

The Handy tracks, nine of those, are all blues and, again, comfortably within the leader's reach. The Morton tracks of

which there are four, seemed to promise something more challenging. After all, Ory was on the original Red Hot Peppers' recordings but these, too, are unadventurous and pedestrian. Ory has always had good players around him but, paradoxically, he seems never to allow them to stretch out. In this case he has the exciting, if sometimes wild, trumpeter Teddy Buckner reined in and Andy Blakeney, on trumpet on the second CD, is an interesting player but plays a cautious lead. Both pianists, Lionel Reason who played with King Oliver, and Bob Van Epps contribute the best solos on the session. The drums are very basic and overloud but don't blame the drummers. That is the way that Ory instructed them to play as deafness overtook him.

If it is basic New Orleans you want, this is for you. Otherwise it is all rather Ho Hum.

JOHN MARTIN

BILL PERKINS

PERK PLAYS PREZ

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 5010: 68.30

Jazz nostalgia isn't what it used to be. When in 1995 producer Dick Bank suggested to Bill Perkins that he recreate the music of his idol Lester Young, the tenor saxophonist initially demurred. Having got remarkably close to the powder-puff elegance of Prez during his 1950s stints with Stan Kenton and Woody Herman, Perkins had since been swayed by Rollins, Coltrane and Shorter, and turning back the clock seemed to him like a pointless idea. Thankfully Bank persisted and the result is an album that serves a genuine and unaffected tribute. Taking fourteen pieces associated with Young's late 1930s heyday, including *Shoe Shine Boy*, *Taxi War Dance* and *Dickie's Dream*, among others, Perkins and pianist Jan Lundgren's trio deliver a master-class in jazz continuity. Often the leader will play Young's original solo note for note before embarking on his own improvisation, an exercise that works simply because of both his pedigree and sincerity. Indeed, sometimes it's difficult to spot the join, so to speak. Make no

mistake, this isn't a Lincoln Center-style recreation, in fact, the overall impression one gains from Doug Ramsey's hugely insightful booklet essay is that for Perkins revisiting Lester Young's music was somewhat like catching up with an old friend. It's that sort of record – warm, affectionate and utterly natural sounding. A class act in every way.

SIMON SPILLETT

HART/GREEN/ RIDLEY/BROWN

MJQ CELEBRATION

King's Gambit KGR 001: 66.30

The late Mike Garrick first conceived the idea of a tribute group devoted to the music of the Modern Jazz Quartet, enlisting vibist Jim Hart, bassist Matt Ridley and drummer Steve Brown to complete his quartet. I heard their debut appearance at Swanage jazz festival and felt straightaway that they were on to something, especially given Mike's own quirky touches and Hart's invariable creativity.

So no direct note-for-note replications for this foursome, rather a fresh look at a familiar repertoire, now with pianist Barry Green in for the departed Garrick. Subsequent hearings have only confirmed my initial view and there has often been the added bonus of alternating tenorists Alan Barnes and Dave O'Higgins for that part of the back-story that brings in the MJQ's collaborations on record with Sonny Rollins. Since those early days, the group has become a regular feature at club and festival appearances up and down the country and gathered the most fulsome of compliments. Deservedly so.

For their debut recording on Ridley's own label, the quartet adds O'Higgins as 'special guest' and it's pleasing to report that the original concept hangs together really well. From the pristine opening to *The Golden Striker* with Ridley following the Percy Heath line perfectly right through to Green's probing solo interjections and Hart's ebullience, the group sounds animated and involved. While this music may seem simple at first



Bill Perkins

hearing, the component parts need to be well-judged and balanced, with no over-playing or sudden departures from the script. Hart is a wonder of the age, of course, with Green, Brown and Ridley not far behind. I loved O'Higgins on the Rollins driver *The Stopper*, fast-moving and fluent, with Hart and Green flying, and for me, it's the best thing on the album, with Brown at his best. Buy without hesitation- even better, catch the band live.

PETER VACHER

TIM GARLAND

SONGS TO THE NORTH SKY

Edition EDN 1051: 2 CDs, 49.58/53.04

An unsettling tendency has been noticeable in jazz during the past few years. Whereas musicians used to improvise on well-known tunes, nowadays they more often write their own music, perhaps feeling that the old songs are hackneyed. This would be fine if the new compositions were as

memorable as those in the Great American Songbook, but many jazz composers seem unable to write noteworthy melodies. This means that it becomes a problem to follow what the musicians are improvising upon. At the same time, some composers have strayed more and more into genres outside jazz, so that their compositions lose the reference points of jazz and become almost indistinguishable from classical music or film soundtracks.

All this is an attempt to describe what I think goes wrong with the second of the two CDs that make up this album. Tim Garland uses lush strings to accompany his own saxophone musings, portraying aspects of north-east England. Jazz-with-strings has been done before (Charlie Parker and Stan Getz come to mind) but previous ventures have maintained a jazz feeling, whereas Tim's pieces seem semi-classical and remote from jazz. The strings in several tracks remind me of Sibelius or Vaughan Williams rather than Eddie Sauter. I am not doubting Tim Garland's expertise for one moment – just asking that familiar question: is it jazz?

The first of the two CDs is closer to straightforward jazz, with Garland using strong rhythm sections led by three skilful pianists (Jason Rebello, John Turville and Geoffrey Keezer). Keezer is particularly adept at galvanizing the group into a thrilling mood reminiscent of a speeding locomotive.

TONY AUGARDE

MARY LOU WILLIAMS

THE FIRST LADY IN JAZZ 1927-1957

Frémeaux & Associés FA 5449: 3 CDs 71:46/73:58/72:08

Mary Lou, by age fifteen, was fully professional. At seventeen she recorded the first track to be heard on these CDs and had clearly mastered the art of stride piano. Four years on, she was staff arranger and pianist with the Andy Kirk band, helping to establish the swing style that would dominate the next two decades. This 3-CD set follows her career through till 1957.

CD1 features her as composer

and arranger. Ten tracks by the Andy Kirk band demonstrate her grasp of the swing idiom with surprisingly modern harmonies and voicings. Two 1945 excerpts from her orchestral *Zodiac Suite* are full of modern dissonances and textures – surely pre-dating the Third Stream school of Bill Russo et al. The last few tracks find her re-defining herself yet again in the company of emergent bop exponents including Idrees Sulieman, Deniz Best and Dizzy Gillespie.

CDs 2 and 3 concentrate on her piano performances predominantly in trio and quartet settings. The 'thirties and 'forties reveal Williams' indebtedness to her early mentors: James P, Earl Hines, and Fats. Her left hand is metronomic – a swinging foundation that could support even her first tentative essays into bop. A penchant for boogie figures stayed into her later work. By the 'fifties, when these discs end, she had made the transition to bop with considerable success but, to my mind, her playing was at its freest in her first incarnation. Maybe not chronologically the First

Lady, but one of the most accomplished and exciting female artists in jazz.

HUGH LEDIGO

LOVE & PEACE: THE MUSIC OF HORACE PARLAN.

Storyville 1014286: 72.17

Horace Parlan was active during the sixties in the USA, producing a string of albums for Blue Note (none of which seem to be available now) and from 1973 until recently in Denmark, where he produced a sequence of recordings for Steeplechase. He had a very personal style on piano, with a gift for understated emotion in his writing.

A trio of musicians - Jesper Lundgaard (bass), Doug Raney (guitar) and Bob Rockwell (tenor saxophone), played a concert for Parlan at his home in Korsor during 2012. Parlan was pleased with the results, and happily co-operated with the recording of this cd, with Henrik Gunde (piano) and Aage Tanggaard (drums) added for these 2013 sessions. The resulting music reflects Parlan's hey-day affection for hard-bop and the blues, and in the main, reflects his music from the Blue Note period, although there is some reference to the Steeplechase years. *Up In Cynthia's Room* is an energetic

performance, whilst *Back Home From The Gig* has some interesting tenor work from Rockwell, perhaps remembering Booker Ervin's scorching contribution on the original.

As a celebration of a jazzman who gave much enjoyment, it works well.

GREG MURPHY

BILL JENNINGS

ARCHITECT OF SOUL JAZZ THE COMPLETE EARLY RECORDINGS 1951-1957

Fresh Sound Records FSR-CD 816: 2CDs 69.07/73.13

When a giant such as B.B. King quotes Bill Jennings as a major influence you have to pay attention especially if you have never heard of Bill Jennings. Well, I have now and I am greatly impressed. These 52 tracks are recovered gems and back up King's admission and the acknowledgments of a new generation of guitarists including Rusty Zinn and Junior Watson who have, also, discovered him.

He was one of only three guitarists at the time who played left handed which enabled him to find notes which a right handed player might have found difficult or even impossible. He has the most fully rounded tone I have ever heard, thick and ringing, and

he combines it with fluency, even at the fastest tempos, which is breathtaking. He, also, swings mightily all the way through and, if I was forced to name special tracks, I would have to choose the astonishingly blistering *Get Hot* and *Big Boy*, two minutes of pure joy.

But his ballad playing is equally impressive. He takes the route of following the harmonies rather than the melodies in his solos and this brings a rare freshness to some old standards making one wonder why some other players haven't taken that route. Baritone saxist Leo Parker, another undervalued musician, joins him here for one engrossing set. So what happened? Why haven't we heard more of Bill Jennings? Well, heroin happened and destroyed the career of someone who, I feel, might have been the greatest guitarist of them all. Jennings died at the age of 59, poor and forgotten.

Fresh Sound are owed a great debt for excavating these classic tracks and bringing Bill Jennings back to his rightful place in jazz history.

JOHN MARTIN

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

A DRUM IS A WOMAN

Cheese Cake Records 8241: 50.23

A Drum Is A Woman is an allegorical representation of Jazz history from its African beginnings to the modernism of the mid-fifties. It is an extended concert piece with narration by Ellington himself. The protagonist, Madam Zaji, personifies the African drum which, in turn embodies the musical genre that is jazz. Her journeyings take her via New Orleans eventually to New York and even the moon and, at each point, the Duke's music illustrates the action with dramatic pizzazz.

OK, the libretto is hardly high literature and the story is fanciful and a tad incoherent, but the music is masterful. This must have been one of Ellington's finest line-ups. Each musician is an inimitable

stylist, yet the band as a whole is tight, swinging and exciting. Operatic soprano Margaret Tynes shows more than a passing understanding of the genre, and Joya Sherrill and Ozzie Bailey are excellent band singers.

Ellington employs his instrumental voices to telling effect, creating atmosphere rather than verisimilitude, and his orchestration is by turns thick and lush, strident and impassioned. It is, I think, a theatrical masterpiece, despite its literary shortcomings. The danger of ostentation is avoided by the Duke's philosophy that 'Jazz must have humour.' Add to that his consummate musicianship and you have a thing of beauty.

HUGH LEDIGO

ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS

COMPLETE STUDIO RECORDINGS

Jazz Dynamics 009: 5CDs. 72:55/75:41/67:08/77:05/79:31

Before we begin, let's state the obvious in that the title *Complete Studio Recordings* is not literal - what we have here is the complete studio sides by this third incarnation of the Messengers, a total of eight albums, seven for Blue Note and one for Impulse. The time span is between March 1960 and June 1961, and squeezed onto CD5 are four 'live' performances from Birdland during September, 1960. In retrospect this was arguably the finest edition of the Jazz Messengers, with the talents of trumpeter Lee Morgan, tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter and pianist Bobby Timmons, supported by the firm bass of Jymie Merritt and the driving percussion of Art Blakey, and the composing skills of Morgan, Shorter, Timmons and Blakey.

The albums in question are *The Big Beat*, *Like Someone In Love*, *A Night In Tunisia*, *Pisces, Roots & Herbs*, *The Witch Doctor*, *The Freedom Rider* and *Jazz Messengers!!!!*, the last of which was recorded for Impulse. Not all of this material was issued at once by Blue Note, in fact it wasn't unusual for some of it to

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be issued up to a decade later. *The Big Beat* (the first studio date for Wayne Shorter) is patchy but it does include Shorter's *Sleeping Dancer*, *Sleep On* (alternative take on CD1, issued version on CD2) hard bop of a very high order. *Like Someone In Love* is another roaring session with Blakey playing loudly and heavily, a real driving force, but it seems like a warm-up for *A Night In Tunisia*. Apart from the joyously-over-the-top treatment of the Gillespie standard, there are also outstanding compositions by Shorter and Morgan, played with an intensity by the trimuverate of Shorter, Morgan and Timmons. Although recorded in 1961, it didn't see daylight until 1970.

The Witch Doctor maintained the standard, with Shorter's title track and Lee Morgan's *Afrique* outstanding, but the mysterious *Those Who Sit And Wait* just the highlight here-but only just. *The Freedom Rider* reflects the Civil Rights movements in the southern states (the original Freedom Riders were both black and white who set out to test the Supreme Court decision that discrimination on inter-state travel was illegal) and Blakey's fierce drum solo on the title track is a masterpiece of cross-rhythms, but it's not all anger, with several intriguing compositions by Shorter and Morgan. The Impulse album, *Messengers!!!!* lacks the impact of its forebears, and signals the wind of change that was approaching-trombonist Curtis Fuller joins the group for six titles, and there's an over-reliance on The Great

American Songbook (as Alec Wilder referred to standards in his book of the same name). Fuller also features on the four titles recorded at Birdland in September 1960, but the intensity of the studio sessions is missing here.

This set shows the truly glorious talents of the musicians. Lee Morgan, with his lyrical, sparkling tone really hits the spot; Shorter, too, is outstanding, his dark tone on up-tempo pieces contrasting with a lighter tone on ballads, and as for Bobby Timmons, this set has encouraged this writer to reassess his reputation; his comping behind the horns cannot be faulted and his solo work is crisp and bright. Today, only Shorter, and Merritt are still active; Blakey died in 1990, Morgan was shot dead in a domestic argument in 1972 whilst Timmons died of a liver complaint in 1974 (at age 38). This set shows the heights the Messengers achieved, with surprisingly few lows and is highly recommended.

GREG MURPHY

LESTER YOUNG

THE COMPLETE ALADDIN RECORDINGS

Phoenix 131605: 2CDs, 79.19/79.42

These recordings were made after the saxophonist's release from prison and dishonourable discharge from the U.S. Army and

cover the period from 1942 to 1948, and not 1947, as stated on the CD cover.

Young is accompanied by the likes of Nat 'King' Cole, Vic Dickenson and Joe Albany. There is also a rare set featuring vocalist Helen Humes. There are eight bonus tracks from the Trio that he led with Nat 'King' Cole and Buddy Rich. The repertoire is a mixture of popular songs of the era, jazz staples and Young's own compositions. Much of the set is taken up with Young's 1945-1948 small group sessions, in all making for a varied listening experience. As with many re-issues on Phoenix, the CD booklet is informative and detailed. Recording quality is as one would expect for the time.

Young said that 'A musician should know the lyrics of the song he plays.' Young was a landmark figure in the evolution of jazz saxophone with a deceptively simple style – laid back, low key and relaxed and yet swinging, even on ballads. Ebullient joy to profound sadness – you can hear it all in his playing here.

ALAN MUSSON

NINA SIMONE

ORIGINAL ALBUM SERIES

Warner 2564628851: 5 CDs, 35.16/40.53/37.45/32.13/40.22

Wikipedia, in its matter-of-fact way, describes Nina Simone as singing blues, rhythm & blues, folk and gospel as well as jazz – fair enough, and don't forget her classical piano training sometimes showed through and now and again she had a pitch for the pop market. The jazz element is pretty strong through most of the five early albums packaged together by Warner. The only real exception is *Folksy Nina*, the latest of them (1964), taken from a Carnegie Hall concert, kicking off in gospel vein with *Silver City Bound* and moving on to English, Dutch and Israeli folk songs.

After that *Nine Simone Sings Ellington* is a touch disappointing. One reason is the accompaniments: on the previous two albums it was simply her piano and trio, here her arrangements veer from the ingenious to the overblown and the Malcolm Dodds Singers are an encumbrance. But once again you have to admire her refusal to conform. There are some Ducal classics (an ethereal *I Got it Bad* the best, *It Don't Mean a Thing* – which ain't got that swing – the letdown), but the choice is eccentric, with a quasi-operatic *Merry Mending* so bizarre as to be great fun.

All the other albums date from 1959-1961. *The Amazing Nina Simone*, her debut album for Colpix and only her second overall, naturally covers as much as possible of her astonishing

range: of material, of vocal colouring, of style and approach to the listener. Her smoky-voiced authority on *Blue Prelude* gets things off to the perfect start and she refines down her delivery on some fine ballad performances, especially *It Might as Well Be Spring*. *Stompin' at the Savoy* doesn't take off as I'd hoped and Bob Mersey's arrangements are conventional, sometimes cluttered, but *The Amazing...* is more than good enough for starters.

The next two albums, one live, one studio, are the main reason for buying this set. In *Simone at Town Hall* (mostly live, some tracks re-recorded) she announces herself with powerful piano at the start of *Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair*, then launches into a swingingly direct *Exactly Like You*. My dread at yet another appearance of *Summertime* is dissipated by her musical paraphrase, though I have to admit that a few more hearings will be necessary to reconcile me to a similarly iconoclastic *Fine and Mellow*, but overall this is a striking performance. The studio album, *Forbidden Fruit*, is even better, one main reason being the presence of three songs by Oscar Brown Jr.: A terrific *Rags and Old Iron* opens proceedings, the wickedly entertaining title track closes them and in the middle is a fine version of the Adderley-Brown classic, *Work Song*. Also look out for a trademark Simone number, *Gin House Blues*, and the lovely Carmichael-Webster song, *Memphis in June*, done straight.

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RON SIMPSON

SIMON SPILLETT reviews the 20-CD set of ATLANTIC JAZZ LEGENDS Rhino 8122796024

Boasting the sub-title *20 Original Albums From The Iconic Atlantic Label*, this boxed set presents an instant quandary: what exactly makes a jazz legend? A cursory glance at the roster of names involved reveals some indisputable contenders – Coltrane, Coleman, Mingus, Blakey – but who I wonder would nominate Joe Mooney or Dave Pike or even – if we're splitting jazz purist hairs – Mel Torme?

All this might make Atlantic's selection of artists and albums for this set appear to have been chosen at random, and those who know the label's history will doubtless argue over why the box contains nothing from Duke Ellington's brief tenure or why the seminal work of Ray Charles – as much a jazzman as anyone – is also excluded, but rather than highlighting the demerits of a set like this, let's begin by looking at its considerable plusses, perhaps the most obvious of which is how well it documents the labels dedication to new music. A better strap-line may have been 'Jazz Legends 1955-1970', as the set's contents are concentrated on the period in which Atlantic went from being a something of a jazz bystander to a major force in the development of those it signed and recorded. It's simply impossible to imagine the careers of The Modern Jazz Quartet or Ornette Coleman, to pick just two examples, without the endorsement of Atlantic. Indeed, the label's history is full of A&R successes: teaming young producer Joel Dorn with Roland Kirk finally provided the latter with the sense of genuine artist/producer collaboration he'd always needed and in letting flautist Herbie Mann experiment with everything from bossa-nova to fusion the label eventually garnered an unlikely late in the day jazz 'hit' with 1969's *Memphis Underground*.

There can be little doubt that the 1960's were Atlantic's peak years. Unlike Blue Note and Savoy for instance, the label wasn't in on the ground floor with bebop. At the time when Parker, Gillespie and Monk were setting down the defining documents of the movement Atlantic were busy clocking up an impressive series

of R&B hits from performers like Ruth Brown, Joe Morris and The Clovers, and although it didn't take them long to catch up, it was only with the recruitment of Ahmed Ertegun's brother Neshui to the company in 1955 that they really begin to take a serious interest in the second wave of modern jazz. Neshui had been living in Los Angeles and was initially responsible for signing uber-West Coast jazzmen like Shorty Rogers and Jimmy Guiffre (neither of whom is represented in this collection, oddly enough) but soon broadened the roster to include the popular Modern Jazz Quartet – without doubt the label's most prominent jazz success – and the unclassifiable maverick Charles Mingus. With an ear to the future, it was Neshui who also lured John Coltrane from Prestige Records in 1959, thus effectively launching the saxophonist's solo career. In fact, from 1960 to 1970 Atlantic's jazz catalogue was as good a barometer of the shifts taking place within the music as any: starting the decade with a series of barrier breaking albums from Ornette Coleman, they then went on to embrace the near-eastern mysticism of Yusef Lateef, the nascent jazz-funk-meets-hard bop of Freddie Hubbard, the down home pastorals of Mose Allison, the wildman antics of Roland Kirk and even Mel Torme's Ivy League cool. They also raised new stars into the firmament, Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea, Joe Zawinul and Roy Ayers among them, each being groomed for the sort of jazz super-stardom that would come to define much of the music in the early 1970's.

So with such a rich treasure trove to draw from, the compilers of this set must have had the devil's own job in deciding who was in and who was not. Coltrane's manifesto statement *Giant Steps*, Ornette Coleman's *Change of The Century* and Art Blakey's one-shot meeting with Thelonious Monk are just three of the mandatory inclusions that truly deserve the legendary sub-title but alongside such essential recordings the set also includes its share of fluff: for instance who would have plumped for the by-now all-but-forgotten Joe Mooney over, say,

Lennie Tristano or the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and whilst some of the albums are truly timeless, others reek heavily of period fashions which have travelled less well (Dave Pike's *Jazz For The Jet Set* is one, a record which hides behind a cover as pastiche-ridden anything from an Austin Powers movie). The majority of the artists included recorded more than one classic album for the label and so the listener will either be pleased or agog at which of their favourites does or doesn't make the grade. However, this mix and match effect can actually be rather refreshing, proving once again how eclectic was the label's policy during the twenty or so years the set covers. I for one would probably have never otherwise noticed - much less heard – an album like Mongo Santamaria's *Mongo '70* were it not included here. Listened to chronologically, the box also reveals a solid sense of programming logic: the first album is Chris Connor's eponymous set from 1956, a hip slice of understated vocal magic, the last is Billy Cobham's fusion landmark *Spectrum* and in between the music moves from hard bop to free to funk and beyond, pretty much as the wider jazz world did in these years. The fact that there are virtually no stylistic omissions is also noteworthy.

The real issues with a set like this aren't so much musical as fiscal: who will buy it and more pointedly why? On the one hand, it would be all too easy to slam Rhino for making yet another salami slice from their back catalogue, especially when all these albums remain simultaneously available as single CD issues, but at the same time, available at budget price and sturdily and attractively packaged the compilation actually makes a highly appealing purchase for both dilettante and serious listeners alike. And, such as it is, the selections included are a sort of aural equivalent of a chocolate box, inviting the listener to sample this or that artist's work simply because it's included in a nice, bright shiny context: 'here's one I know I like, and here's one I've not tried.' It might seem a little too high brow to call this set



Johnny Griffin

educational, but ultimately that's what it is – a historic overview of an incredibly vibrant period in jazz history, seen through the eyes of a major label. And, as we know, there's plenty of scope for further volumes.

This writer's stylistic preferences are certainly well catered for by its contents: indeed, it was wonderful to be reminded of Johnny Griffin in his prime, scrambling through Thelonious Monk's compositions with the terrier-like friskiness, and of Freddie Hubbard's cocky talent just before the lure of fusion blurred his musical vision. Then there's Chick Corea's *Inner Space*, a set which offers a nostalgic glimpse of the leader before it all got very weird and noisy during the 1970's. There's also an album which I consider to be one of the most criminally overlooked of the 1960's, Roy Ayers' *Virgo Vibes*. For those listeners who only know of Ayers' later semi-commercial output, the recording will be a revelation, as the vibesman works his way through a set of pure jazz in the company of heavyweights like Joe Henderson and Herbie Hancock. Blue Note may have got Bobby Hutcherson, but for a moment there Ayers looked as if he was in the lead.

In summary, *Atlantic Jazz Legends* is exactly the kind of release that both charms and frustrates: its grab-bag offerings will infuriate purists as much as they will delight neophyte listeners. That said, for anyone who wants a handy all-in-one survey of Atlantic's jazz activities during its golden era it's hard to beat.

BOOK REVIEWS BY RON SIMPSON

AN UNHOLY ROW: JAZZ IN BRITAIN AND ITS AUDIENCE, 1945- 1960

DAVE GELLY

Equinox Books, hardback, 978 1 84553 712 8, £25.00

At first thought it's difficult to know what makes *An Unholy Row* such a satisfying read. At 148 pages, plus assorted notes and an index that seems, on limited testing, far from perfect, it was never going to be a particularly full account of the career of Humphrey Lyttelton, Chris Barber, John Dankworth or Ronnie Scott. Secondary sources are well chosen, but there is little original research, and it is neither a polemic nor a comprehensive history.

Yet it's a book I greatly enjoyed reading and, even though most of the events and characters were familiar to me, one I learned much from. Dave Gelly has a gift for explanation and a breadth of focus that enables him to chart the class issues of post-war Britain as clearly as he does the changing fashions in music. He makes connections that seem obvious once he has made them, but which had eluded me. For instance, we can all work out that the decline of the dance bands drove musicians into the fringes of rock'n'roll, but what about the effect on the next generation of 'modern jazz' musicians deprived of the basic musical schooling of a professional band? Hence Ronnie Scott's comment on the then rising generation, 'Six months in a palais band would do them the world of good!'

Equally, whilst Gelly doesn't push the personal narrative, the 'I was there' factor gives further authority to his commentary. The title is derived from the comment of a friend's father on the makeshift band of teenagers, including the author, who were indeed making an unholy row sometime in the first half of the 1950s.

Dave Gelly writes fairly and judiciously about all the

movements in jazz: revivalism and bebop transmuting into 'trad' and 'modern', mainstream (not so much a movement, just some great jazz), skiffle, jazz suites, etc., as well as the great individuals. Much of the story is reflected through the careers of Humphrey Lyttelton and John Dankworth, but he has interesting and pertinent things to say about everyone from Ken Colyer to Joe Harriott, from Ray Ellington to Tubby Hayes.

I was reminded of a postcard I received from a schoolfriend on holiday in the late 1950s, explaining that he had met two jazz fans, 'one trad, one mod', as though they were two separate tribes. Dave Gelly, of course, will have nothing to do with such nonsense, but he fits British jazz of the 1940s and 1950s into its social context with uncommon skill. And, when he shows his hand in the final sentences with his most joyous memories of the time, he ends with one I can share: the incomparable Jimmy Rushing singing with 'the best Lyttelton band ever'.

THE EVOLUTION OF MANN: HERBIE MANN AND THE FLUTE IN JAZZ

CARY GINELL

Hal Leonard Books, paperback, 9781458419811, £15.99

Cary Ginell is as efficient a jazz biographer as he is prolific in his contributions to the Hal Leonard Jazz Biography series – and he is very prolific, Herbie Mann following hot on the heels of Cannonball Adderley and Billy Eckstine. He is firmly chronological in his approach – a little too much of the 'And then he recorded...' for my taste, but always thorough, never over-detailed – and concentrates very much on Mann's music and ambitions until the later stages when the 1980s and 1990s pass fairly quickly (less to tell, I guess) and Mann's third marriage to Janeal is foregrounded.

Ginell's face-to-face interviews with Mann over several days in 1999 are key to the book's success and he also makes good use of interviews with Janeal and

many musicians. The most refreshing feature of the book is his awareness of Mann's limitations. Beginning as a tenor saxist in the early 1950s, Herbie Mann set out to become the identifiable face (and sound) of the flute in jazz, to be 'as synonymous with the flute as Benny Goodman was with the clarinet.' Though less prominent in the years before his death in 2003, he achieved this, topping the *Down Beat* Readers Poll for 13 successive years until 1970. He was also, Cary Ginell explains, the first major jazzman to be primarily a flute player. Great jazzmen such as Bud Shank and Frank Wessex were saxists who also played the flute.

So you might expect the book to concentrate on Mann's wonderful flute playing. Not entirely so: the Foreword by the younger flautist Hubert Laws praises his 'acute business acumen' and concludes that he deserves respect for 'putting our voice on the musical map' – not a word about his inspired musicianship! And Mann seemed to share that view. There's a remarkable quotation reported by Sam Most who said to Mann that he wished he could be as successful and Herbie replied, 'One of us has to be the artist and one of us has to be the businessman.' Although Ginell clearly finds much to admire in Mann's playing, he is not averse to pointing out his weaknesses, slamming some of his poppier efforts and regularly reporting his lack of success with the critics.

So what emerges is a strange story in jazz terms, for its attention to ambition and image, but also because Mann's style changes were positively bewildering. Partly because he wanted to chase or start the latest trend to get popular success, partly because he had insatiable curiosity and rather less patience, he was liable to change tack every couple of years. Starting with bebop, Mann – a one-man World Music programme – worked through Afro-Cuban, bossa, percussion-based African music, disco, a concerto grosso, blues and post-bossa Brazilian music, only at the end of his life turning to his own roots in Eastern Europe.

MARABI NIGHTS: JAZZ, RACE AND SOCIETY IN EARLY APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA


CHRISTOPHER
BALLANTINE

University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, paperback, 978 1 86914 237 7, 255 Rand, available on Amazon at £22.01 (with CD of rare recordings)

Marabi Nights, first published in 1993 and updated with a light touch, is supremely well researched, with the author conducting well over 50 interviews in the 1980s and making excellent use of magazine and newspaper articles. It is full of information of which I, for one, was largely ignorant and is persuasively written from a liberal, never extreme position.

Christopher Ballantine writes (very knowledgeably) more about the sociology of music than about the music itself, though much of this is fascinating. I found especial interest in the racial balance in the 1920s and 1930s when there was certainly prejudice, segregation and random violence, but apartheid had not been introduced as a structured system. Here we find black musicians with white tutors and white and black bands playing the same concerts, but humiliating restrictions placed on blacks, sometimes of an almost comic nature. For instance, for an African to get a pass as a musician, he had to satisfy a white Afrikaner board of his ability – and the safest way was to play *Sarie Marais*!

Ballantine's sociological approach tells us much, but – he is not writing much about jazz as we know it. His main subject is marabi which depended on rhythmic attack and an endlessly repeating chord sequence. Though he covers various styles up till about 1960, oddly he excludes totally the Jazz Epistles from the late 1950s, the Blakey-inspired group that included three international stars-to-be, Abdullah Ibrahim, Hugh Masakela and Jonas Gwangwa, and the superb, if ill-starred, alto saxist Kippie Moeketsi.



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A veteran of the Count Basie Orchestra, Wesley also has worked with a who's who of artists including **Tina Turner, Ray Charles, George Clinton, Bootsy Collins, Pancho Sanchez, Van Morrison, Usher, The SOS Band** and **Cameo**, as well as, with his close friends and cohorts **Maceo Parker** and **Pee Wee Ellis** to name a few.

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RON SIMPSON'S ROUND-UP OF RECENT CDS

Whatever we choose to call it – Hot Club jazz, gypsy jazz, manouche – guitar-based jazz in the Django Reinhardt style is a constant growth area in jazz. With so many excellent groups I sometimes find comparison difficult. However, the Belgian group **Daniel Willem Gypsy Jazz Band** on **SINTO SWING** (Home Records 4446104: 46.20) is a bit different. The title, plus a few boisterous group vocals in Romani, pitch us back towards the root Manouche tradition, but the size of group, with accordion figuring largely, hints more at Paris cafes then caravans. Though Samson Schmitt is a fine guitarist, the emphasis is less on guitar virtuosity than in some gypsy jazz groups: apart from Willem's fluent violin playing and Tchavo Berger's accordion, there are guests on harmonica and sax/clarinet to add to the sextet. Some good original compositions, too, including a rumba and a bossa to vary the mix even more. A decided European ethnicity is also at play in **NEW CAT** (Discmedi Blau DM5106-02: 64.37), that being the New Catalan Ensemble, playing the compositions of pianist **Joan Diaz** and featuring the talents of singer/multi-instrumentalist Andrea Motis and saxophonist **Joan Chamorro**. Diaz' music is a sort of unconventional fusion: Catalan poems set to music, traditional Catalan instruments and rhythms, sophisticated melodies, edgy arrangements for brass,

challenging jazz solos. Central to the project are the precise and expressive vocals of Andrea Motis, but the quality solos are not confined to the big names: I particularly enjoyed Victor Correa's trombone. From the same label **TETE MONTOLIU INTERPRETA A SERRAT** (DM5093-02: 53.48) records a fusion of jazz and 'nova canco' (Catalan 'new song'). Pianist Montoliu, on the brink of an international career in the 1960s, met and briefly played with singer/songwriter/Catalan patriot/opponent of Franco Joan Manel Serrat. This 1969 album is his tribute to Serrat, reinterpreting his songs. The mood is reflective, occasionally reverential, the touch sensitive, the Tatum-esque runs part of Montoliu's armoury, but seldom brought out. Barcelona appears to be the current capital of recorded jazz, with a dynamic album from a subsidiary of reissue experts Fresh Sound: **RACAN ROL** (Swing Alley sa 024: 55.27) by **Sax Gordon and Lluís Coloma**. Consisting entirely of originals and arrangements by the two principals (Gordon under his real name Gordon Beadle), this is a hard-driving album featuring a powerful five-piece horn section. Pianist Coloma has his subtle moments, but generally hits hard with a percussive blues-and-boogie-based attack and Gordon's honking tenor sax betrays his blues background: Mallorcan guitarist Balta Bordoy impresses too, on a real 'nobody

sleeps' album. French bassist **Henri Texier** leads his **Hope Quartet** in **AT "L'IMPROVISTE"** (Label Bleu LBLC6713: 71.56), L'Improviste being a club on a Paris barge where this live session was recorded. Things kick off with drummer Louis Moutin setting the pace for *O Elvin*, a near-14 minute hard bop piece composed by Henri Texier – all the tracks are by him or his son Sebastien. Bass and drums are inventive soloists throughout, Francois Corneloup provides muscular baritone sax and Sebastien Texier shows the influence of the dynamic and idiosyncratic clarinetist Louis Sclavis, a former associate of his father, though occasionally his alto sax is gentler, more melodic. Some of the free improvisation and extended, barely accompanied solos don't really hold my attention, but clearly this was an exciting night in L'Improviste. Back in the UK guitarist **Nigel Price** is frank about his influences – Charlie Christian, Herb Ellis, Wes Montgomery – and they show to good effect on **HIT THE ROAD** (33JAZZ 241: 64.21). The title track, bluesy but melodic, probably the best of four Price originals, kicks things off and, by the time he's followed up with Freddie Hubbard's *Up Jumped Spring* and Billy Strayhorn's *Chelsea Bridge*, it's obvious that his Organ Trio (with Pete Whittaker and Matt Home) operates at the thoughtful creative end of such outfits, though there's no shortage of high-speed solos, too. A very well balanced album ends with the bonus of Greek tenor saxist Vasilis Xenopoulos joining the trio for a romp through another original, *Hot Seat*. Spats Langham takes a rather different approach to playing the guitar, as evidenced on **SMILE** (Lake LACD 331: 69.21) by his group **Hot Fingers**. It's easy to associate Hot Fingers with what Keith Nichols' note calls 'the full clarinet, banjo and sousaphone treatment' – with Spats' nonchalant vocals – sort of Temperance 3, with added virtuosity. But there's far more to the CD than that. With Malcolm Sked switching to double bass, Spats moving between guitar,

banjo and ukulele, Emily Campbell's cool, clear vocals and – above all – Danny Blyth covering the bases from guitar and mandolin to clarinet and bass clarinet via blues harmonica, the range of styles is enormous. So, too, is the knowledge of obscure or unexpected songs alongside such favourites as *On the Sunny Side of the Street*. Putney Dandridge, Ukulele Ike, Ray Davies! Even in Hot Club mode Spats decides to remind us of Django's semi-forgotten rival Oscar Aleman.

BRITISH TRADITIONAL JAZZ GOES TO THE MOVIES (Lake LACS 6: 76.05) is always historically interesting (including Paul Adams' detailed liner note) and contains some excellent jazz in a curate's egg of a package. Nearly half the tracks come from *It's Trad Dad!* which featured all three Bs, the Bilk band in rousing form with a powerful front-line of Colin Smith and John Mortimer. It's also good to hear authoritative playing from Dickie Hawdon with the Lightfoot band shortly before his departure for academia. I prefer Norrie Paramor's arrangements and compositions for Mike Cotton in *The Wild and the Willing* to the six short tracks he and Acker put together for *Band of Thieves* (nice clarinet, not a lot else). The two most appealing rarities come from Ken Colyer from *West Eleven* and Pat Halcox accompanying the lonely long-distance runner. Humph's jam session from *It's Great to Be Young* is better without the unnervingly bright teenagers miming badly, but there's nothing to be done for *In the Doghouse* by Dick Charlesworth! No shortage of rare material in Fresh Sound's delving into the jazz of the 1950s and 1960s: so many artists (singers, especially) who put in a fleeting claim to fame, then disappeared into obscurity. Like the majority **Bea Abbott** is well worth a hearing, could have had a longer career with luck, but is not so distinctive that we feel a great talent was lost. **THE TOO TOO MARVELOUS BEA ABBOTT** (FSR-CD 825: 72.58) comprises 24 tracks from 1957 with the **Hal Otis Quintet**, 8 of them instrumentals. Abbott has an attractive vocal sweetness,



articulates well at higher tempos (skating through *Mountain Greenery* at speed) and has a winning way with a torch song, if rather too consistently plaintive a tone. The Otis band (violin, accordion, guitar, bass, drums) is spry, musical and fairly conventional. **Jim Timmens** is an arranger about whom I found precisely nothing on the web, except for references to this release: **PORGY AND BESS /SHOWBOAT/GILBERT & SULLIVAN/HALLELUJAH – SPIRITUALS** (FSR-CD 822: 2CDs, 65.50/67.18). Jordi Pujol's note calls him a 'prolific craftsman' and he's right: the four original LPs were recorded in six months of 1958-59 and the arrangements are ingenious enough, even the G&S which are the hardest to transfer to a jazz-based big band. If the arrangements are not especially exciting, Timmens leaves plenty of room for outstanding soloists. On *Porgy and Bess* and *Showboat* Timmens casts musicians as individual characters. *Porgy* was originally released as by Stewart-Williams & Co, and Rex and Cootie appear as Sportin' Life and Porgy. Timmens features trumpet solos extensively throughout, Donald Byrd and Joe Wilder the stars on the other albums. Pianist **DOROTHY DONEGAN** (Storyville 1038437: 2 CDs, 59.12/36.55) is better remembered than Jim Timmens, but in the liner notes Scott Yanow makes a very good case for her being a much

underestimated talent – and these CDs support his view. Possibly she fell into the 'too many notes' category, unable to resist a surprising quotation, a thunderous climax or a sideslip into a different time or tune, but her comparative neglect is hard to fathom. CD1 consists of a live session in Copenhagen in 1980, with superb support from Mads Vinding and Ed Thigpen, mostly standards thrown together in unexpected medleys, with the occasional eccentric vocal. CD2 comes from Antibes in 1975, with another excellent rhythm pair of Arvell Shaw and Panama Francis, more bluesy originals and unusual choices (Stevie Wonder to Beethoven). Donegan is equally exuberant and idiosyncratic in both settings. In the case of **Zoot Sims** and **Bob Brookmeyer** the musicians are anything but unknown, but the mystery is why such a fine album as **STRETCHING OUT** (DreamCovers 6083: 78.34) appears nowhere in their discographies. Recorded in 1958, with Al Cohn (often on baritone), Harry Edison and an all-star rhythm section, it is amiably retrospective in its choice of material, with Brookmeyer's arrangements creating a big sound for an eight-piece and solos brimming with wit and invention. The bonus album, *Kansas City Revisited*, almost as obscure, is even better. Brookmeyer and Cohn are joined in the front line by Paul Quinichette, resulting in bristling

exchanges between the tenors, the material is mostly Basie-derived and Big Miller sings a couple, his blues clearly school of Jimmy Rushing.

Many of the later **Benny Goodman** recordings feature bands put together for special occasions and **BENNY IN BRUSSELS** (Phoenix 131601: 78.45) finds him at the 1958 World Fair: the CD, incidentally, combines two LPs and adds two bonus tracks. The orchestra was a pretty good one: only one old-time Goodman sideman, Vernon Brown, but plenty of fine players, notably the tenor sax pairing of Zoot Sims and Seldon Powell and pianist Sir Roland Hanna who makes the most of plentiful opportunities to shine. Jimmy Rushing is a surprising addition to the package: he only gets a couple of numbers, but both he and Goodman still sound on top of their game, BG particularly inventive in the small group pieces, though overall there is a certain predictability about much of the proceedings. By the late 1950s, as in the Jim Timmens CD, many big bands full of outstanding jazz musicians were put together under the command of arrangers, both inspired and insipid. **Marty Paich** was one who understood the workings of (especially) a bigish band such as the 13-piece on **I GET A BOOT OUT OF YOU** (Cheesecake 8242: 49.10). With his smart arrangements of jazz standards, including four Ellington favourites, and soloists headed by Art Pepper, Jack Sheldon and Victor Feldman, there is nothing not to like, though I'm not sure how much it

stands out from other similar albums. Four bonus tracks from three years earlier (1956) are a bit cooler, less commercial, less familiar (all Paich originals), with Paich taking the piano chair himself alongside regulars Joe Mondragon and Mel Lewis. Among the usual suspects on **MARK MURPHY SINGS** (Fresh Sound FSR-CD 823: 2 CDs, 70.10/59.50) are Conte Candoli, Joe Wilder, Ernie Royal, Barry Galbraith and Jimmy Cleveland on one or another of the three albums here in arrangements by Bill Holman, Ernie Wilkins and Al Cohn respectively. Aside from its high musical value, this is a fascinating glimpse into how record companies had trouble in marketing jazz singers half a century ago. Capitol went for popular success whilst trying to maintain Murphy's jazz credentials on *Playing the Field* (1960) and it doesn't quite work, despite half the tracks being accompanied by a classy jazz trio: Jimmy Rowles, Joe Mondragon, Shelly Manne. A singer whose prodigious technique and innate musicality could be compromised by affectation of delivery, Murphy sometimes goes over the top in his attempt to prove his jazz chops. Over on Riverside, things change for the better. With a much jazzier set on *Rah!* (1961) Murphy rises superbly to the challenge of *Doodlin'* and *Twisted* and is prepared to keep it simple on *Li'l Darlin'*. It's the same on *That's How I Love the Blues* (1962), from sailing through the Lambert-Hendricks vocalese on *Fiesta in Blue* to stretching out on *Wee Baby Blues*.



LIVE REVIEWS

By **RON SIMPSON**

CLEETHORPES JAZZ FESTIVAL

June 27th-29th

Someone ought to do a thesis on the relationship between jazz and seaside resorts. In its sixth year in its present form, run by Gillian Wilde and Grimsby Jazz, the Cleethorpes Jazz Festival takes us deep into the world of candy-floss and big dippers, moving for the first time to McCormacks Family Showbar in Pleasure Island, a mile or two from the town centre. Sadly, prom-strolling between sets is therefore out, but McCormacks offers a spacious, well equipped, well staffed room with a capacity around 170, near enough full throughout.

Cleethorpes is a packed Friday evening-Sunday evening festival, with 15 single-set (usually 75 minutes) concerts and a generally rapid turn-round. The flavour of the music on offer is easily gauged by such bill-toppers as Clare Teal, Enrico Tomasso and Roy Williams and Robert Fowler's Gerry Mulligan Big Band – it's high-quality accessible jazz from top British players. That can be a case of the Usual Suspects, but Cleethorpes fulfils the two main criteria for keeping it fresh: bringing in newcomers (from Phil Ware and Gabrielle Ducombe on the first evening onwards) and creating ad hoc groups with intelligence and discernment. There's much pleasure in hearing the likes of Dave Newton, Dave Green, Alan Barnes, Winston Clifford and Grimsby's own Pat McCarthy in different settings.

For instance, on my Saturday afternoon arrival (I caught about half the concerts in all), there was a pin-drop atmosphere for Georgia Mancio's ultra-cool bossa, her singing expressive and precise and the accompaniment of Julie Walkington and Pat McCarthy no less so, despite the fact that Georgia and Pat had met just half an hour before. Georgia was most impressive throughout, with individual treatments of great songs from *No More Blues* to *Falling in Love*

with *Love* and skills in whistling and scatting to go with her way with a lyric, the whole thing topped with a lovely straight *We'll be Together Again*.

As for Walkington and McCarthy, the following day they were together again with Alan Barnes on a range of instruments in some delicate super-civilised Sunday lunch-time chamber jazz. A highlight was *Without a Song* (Alan on baritone) which carried echoes of the Jimmy Giuffre Trio of long ago. Nothing could have been further in mood from Alan's previous concert, with Tony Kofi in quintet format, billed as being the alto equivalent of those two tenor battles – and living up to the billing. The contrasts between the two altos (Tony meatier in tone, more direct) came through in everything from extended solos to two-bar exchanges, with a remarkable *Creole Love Call* outstanding. Kofi's blues-drenched solo fired by Winston Clifford's explosive drumming.

The Kofi/Barnes Quintet was preceded by Dave Newton solo – contrasts again! The maverick composer Percy Grainger liked to use the term 'ramble' for his re-creations of existing pieces – and it fits Dave Newton well, in fact, the programme note comments wisely, 'Every tune is a journey'. Often moving from rhapsodic fragments into hints of the melody (or perhaps a different one), he sounds always on the brink of a medley, dense harmonies appearing alongside jaunty two-handed attacks and witty variations. And his finale was indeed a medley: *I'll Take Romance* and *Where or When* – over the weekend the Great American Songbook came to McCormacks Bar!

Matt Holborn and Remi Harris' Gypsy Jazz Quartet did exactly as billed, with some fine performances, mostly of pieces associated with Django, including a superbly poised version of Grieg's *Norwegian Dance*, delicately hesitant, irresistibly rhythmic. But very little was predictable at Cleethorpes. When violinist Matt Holborn left the stage to two guitars and a bass,

Remi decided there had been enough Django and delivered a North African piece originally written for oud! One thing that was predictable, however, was that a line-up of Mark Nightingale, Dave Newton, Dave Green and Steve Brown would be a bit special – and it was! In the middle of a whole series of wonderful songs brilliantly played Mark summed it all up, 'It's a pleasure just to play tunes with such great musicians.'

RENE MARIE

Howard Assembly Room, Grand Theatre, Leeds, April 23rd

Rene Marie has had an unconventional career, not singing professionally until her early 40s, so, by the time she won the Down Beat Rising Star Award in 2012, she had a deal of experience of life and music to draw on. Despite the award and her appearance at last year's London Jazz Festival, I think she is still something of an unknown quantity in this country. Her one-off gig in Leeds, on the back of a week at the Global Music Foundation's Jazz Workshop at Kings Place, was decently full, but far from a sell-out in a 300-seat venue.

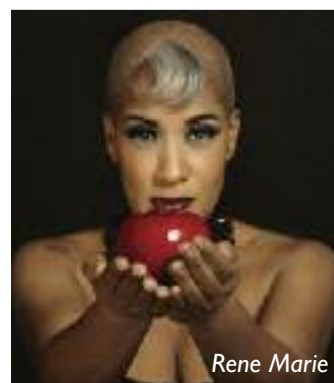
My previous acquaintance with Rene Marie was only via two of her albums – *The Voice of My Beautiful Country*, stunning at times, and *I Wanna Be Evil*, good fun, but lacking the heft of the earlier release – and so I was unprepared for such a superb live performance. To start from scratch with an *a cappella* medley (*When You're Smiling* the first of several 'smile' songs) was a triumph of confidence and technique – and also an early sign of her power in putting over the meaning of a song, the phrasing broken up from time to time into speech patterns, her pitching sometimes unexpected, but always precise, audience reactions plotted and controlled by gesture and facial expression.

Things didn't get any more conventional with the second

number, *Come on a My House*, delivered with a playful poise to the accompaniment of Stephen Keogh's hands-on drumming. It wasn't until the third number, *C'est Si Bon*, that her full trio (bassist Arnie Somogyi and the fiercely percussive American pianist Bruce Barth) joined her as she gave the song a thorough working over in English, French and scat.

My only criticism of her 80-minute set would be that four songs out of eight came from her Eartha Kitt tribute, *I Wanna Be Evil*, though it's fair to say that the live performances far surpassed the recorded ones, with Dave Frishberg's *Peel Me a Grape* (glorious bass introduction and solo from Somogyi) a particular highlight. The triumphant centre-piece of her performance was her gospel and blues version of *My Country 'tis of Thee*, the passionate vocal reminiscent of Dinah Washington, with Barth winding up the tension with wildly in-control piano. More of the same (or similar) would have been welcome, but at least Rene Marie's emotional and dynamic range was well shown by her sliding from that into a sensitive reading of the verse of *A Foggy Day*.

Rene Marie has often courted controversy and has been described as 'iconoclastic'. I wish she had trusted the Leeds audience with more material with a message, but this was a wonderfully entertaining programme, vocally assured and full of surprises, the mood consistently upbeat and joyful: she even admitted the musicians were 'not too slouchy'!



Rene Marie

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