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- 4 NEWS
- 7 UPCOMING EVENTS
- 8 JAZZ RAG CHARTS  
NEW! CDS AND BOOKS SALES CHARTS
- 10 BIRMINGHAM-SOLIHULL  
JAZZ FESTIVALS LINK UP
- 11 BRINGING JAZZ TO THE MILLIONS  
JAZZ PHOTOGRAPHS AT BIRMINGHAM'S  
SUPER-STATION
- 12 26 AND COUNTING  
A NEW RECORDING OF AN ESTABLISHED SHOW
- 14 NEW BRANCH OF THE JAZZ ARCHIVE  
NJA SOUTHEND OPENS
- 16 THE 50 TOP JAZZ SINGERS?  
SCOTT YANOW COURTS CONTROVERSY
- 18 JAZZ FESTIVALS
- 21 REVIEW SECTION  
LIVE AT SOUTHPORT, CDS AND FILM
- 32 BEGINNING TO CD LIGHT

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## UPFRONT

### FESTIVALS IN PERIL

In his latest Newsletter Chris Hodgkins, former head of Jazz Services, heads one item, 'Ealing Jazz Festival under Threat'. He explains that the festival previously ran for eight days with 34 main stage concerts, then goes on: 'Since outsourcing the management of the festival to a private contractor the sponsorships have ended, admission charges have been introduced and now it is proposed to cut the Festival to just two days. This is despite participation by top jazz artists and attendance levels remaining high. The outsourced company is still involved. To add insult to injury the Council intends to dispense with the services of Dick Esmond, the co-founder and the Artistic Director.'

This seems a familiar story on two counts. While *Jazz Rag* has no wish to pillory local councils and indeed is full of respect for the way many councils support jazz festivals, there are two common blindspots in the Ealing story. Chris mentions the 'hundreds and thousands of people' who have been attracted to Ealing by the festival. Councils often fail to realise the financial benefit to local shops, restaurants and hotels of a

**Continued on page 4**



Tom Cawley

## JAZZ AT SHEFFIELD

Sheffield Jazz operates, mainly on Fridays, at three different venues, the most frequent being the Millennium Hall at the Polish Catholic Centre: Jason Rebello (March 4), Jeff Williams Quintet (18), Tom Cawley's Curios (April 22), Vein Trio plus Greg Osby (May 6) and the Allison Neale Quintet (20). The Kofi/Barnes Aggregation (March 11) and Malija (April 1) play the Crucible Studio and the Tim Garland Electric Quartet appears at the Foundry at Sheffield University Students Union on April 14.

[www.sheffieldjazz.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldjazz.org.uk)

## STAFFORD JAZZ

The long-established Stafford Jazz Society, now some 35 years old, meets every Sunday lunch-time at the White Eagle Club. Special events in the upcoming months include an evening session with Pete Allen's Reeds & Rhythm (with Sean Moyses and Dave Browning - April 3), an extended lunch-time session of *Ragtime, Swing, Blues & Beyond* with Jeff & Anne Barnhart, Spats Langham and Graham Smith (May 29) and two big band concerts in the Stafford Music Festival. Swingin' Jim's Dance Band (May 8) is followed a week later by the Stafford Grammar School Big



Jeff Barnhart

Band. The regular programme features such bands as the Frog Island Jazz Band (February 28), Matt Palmer with both his Millennium Eagle Jazz Band (March 6) and his Rhythmic Reeds with Christine Tyrrell (April 10), and the evergreen Merseyside Jazz Band (May 22).  
Tel.: 01785 226950  
[www.staffordjazz.org](http://www.staffordjazz.org)

## JAMIE AT GREENWICH

The Greenwich Music Time Festival (July 5-10) takes place at the Old Royal Naval College with a variety of headline acts including Jo Bonamassa. Starring on the final night is Jamie Cullum

who is also curating a series of concerts by hotly-tipped young musicians. Already booked are Jacob Collier and Andrey Triana.  
[www.greenwichmusictime.co.uk](http://www.greenwichmusictime.co.uk)

## ARVE HENRIKSEN TOUR

Norwegian jazz trumpeter Arve Henriksen is to undertake a short tour with a difference organised by Opera North. The multi-media concerts are inspired by his acclaimed 2013 album, *Places of Worship*, which was derived by sacred sites and ruins. Appropriately enough, the concerts will take place in

historic buildings, though not all of them sacred. Arve will be joined by Jan Bang (samples) and Eivind Aarset (guitar), with visuals from Anastasia Isachsen, in concerts at the Holywell Music Room, Oxford (May 11), St. George's Bristol (12) and LSO St. Luke's, London (13).  
[www.operanorth.co.uk](http://www.operanorth.co.uk)

## JAZZ DIVAS AT ST. JAMES

A fine series of four concerts at St. James Theatre, London, highlights top British jazz singers under the banner of Jazz Divas 2016. First off Joanna Eden is joined by Alan Barnes and the Chris Ingham Trio on February 25. Clare Teal is accompanied by pianist Jason Rebello on March 31 and Norma Winstone by Gwilym Simcock on April 28 before Claire Martin, accompanied by the Gareth Williams Trio, brings the series to an end on May 26.  
[www.stjamestheatre.co.uk](http://www.stjamestheatre.co.uk)

## FRIENDS OF UPTON

The monthly sessions of the Friends of the Upton Jazz Festival, held at Hanley Castle High School, continue with the Basin Street Brawlers (March 11) and the JJ Vinten Band (April 15). American guitarist Howard Alden features with a quartet on May 13 and Dutch violinist Tim Kliphuis brings his trio on June 3. Sadly the July 29 concert with Ken Peplowski has been cancelled owing to his commitments in the United States.  
Tel.: 01684 593794

## JAZZ AT THE STABLES

The Stables at Wavendon has an outstanding jazz and jazz-related programme for the next three months. Evening concerts include, among others, the Andy Panayi Trio with *Tenor Madness* (March 8), the Puppini Sisters (15), the Jive Aces (25), Sax Appeal (April 3), Back to Basie (10), Bohem Ragtime Jazz Band (May 4), Roy Ayers (11) and *Swinging at the Cotton Club* (15). Sunday mornings also have a considerable jazz appeal with Brian Peerless in conversation with Digby Fairweather (March 20) and Enrico Tomasso (May 25) and Live Jazz Matters sessions with Marlene VerPlanck and an all-star trio (March 13), Stan

Sulzmann and Nikki Iles (April 24) and Rossano Sportiello (May 15).  
Tel.: 01908 280800  
[www.stables.org](http://www.stables.org)

## KING PLEASURE AT HOME

Between the Stadsschouwburg, Bruges on March 6 and the Riverboat Jazz Festival in Denmark on June 24-25, King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys are on home territory, with dates including Bristol International Jazz and Blues Festival (March 18), Jam House, Birmingham (April 7), Cornbow Hall,



Marlene VerPlanck

# Upton-upon-Severn Jazz Festival

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Booking Leaflet with Daily Band Listings and Tickets available from  
JAZZ FESTIVAL OFFICE, 18 RIVERSIDE CLOSE, UPTON-UPON-SEVERN, WORCESTER, WR8 0JN  
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CREDIT CARD BOOKINGS AVAILABLE AT FESTIVAL OFFICE

Ticket prices for advance bookings up to and incl. 30th APRIL 2016 (from 1st MAY shown in brackets), WEEKEND (incl. 2 Thursday evening sessions at Sports Ground Marquees) £68 (£78), FRIDAY £23 (£28), SATURDAY £33 (£38), SUNDAY £28 (£33), CAMPING/CARAVANS £30 per person (Thu - Mon).  
n.b. Camping/Caravan space on Sports Ground limited - book early

On the day from 6pm THURSDAY EVENING TICKET (2 sessions start 7pm and 8pm) £10 and FRIDAY or SATURDAY or SUNDAY EVENING TICKET £15 each day subject to availability.  
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**TO VISITORS OLD AND NEW, A WARM WELCOME  
AWAITS YOU - SEE YOU THERE!**

## Continued from page 2

successful festival. Similarly the importance of an unsung and often underpaid director who brings knowledge and experience to the task and is dedicated to quality rather than profit is often under-estimated.

All the above applies even to one of the most famous and longest established jazz festivals in the UK. Brecon survived the death of its inspirational founder, Jed Williams, in 2003 for a few years before plunging into a downward cycle during six or years of constant change and uncertainty. A missed year, the abortive take-over by Hay-on-Wye Festival, then it seemed that the Orchard Media and Entertainment Group had brought stability. After four years running the festival, the company has realised there is not enough money in it and has walked away, with the Brecon Jazz Festival website expressing gratitude for what Orchard achieved. There seems to be no initiative forthcoming from the county council despite the festival's boost to the economy of the town and the Arts Council of Wales appears at first sight to be rather muddled in its thinking. Last year ACW found £100,000 to support the festival - a mind-boggling sum to most organisers of jazz festivals - only to suggest in December that it would be a good idea for Brecon to take a year off now. However, ACW's response to our request for information suggests that it is well disposed to jazz and no more confused than the whole Brecon situation. ACW has committed no funding to Brecon as there is no body of the stature of Orchard to take on the administration of the festival, but is up to date with attempts by Brecon Jazz, the Cathedral and Theatr Brycheiniog to draw up some kind of a programme and would be sympathetic to applications for minor funding. A comparable response came from Brecon Town Council. The Town Clerk told *Jazz Rag*: 'Talks are ongoing with the stakeholder group about what is happening this year, though a festival is most certainly being planned. The Fringe Festival is also certain to be going ahead.'

Pleasing as it is to receive an immediate and optimistic reply from the Town Council, reading between the lines suggests that the Fringe is more certain than the main festival. So no doubt there will be jazz in Brecon on August 12-14, but will there be a Brecon Jazz Festival as we know it?

Similar stories of funding cuts and organisers struggling to maintain standards abound - to some extent, inevitably, with the pressure on local councils to make cutbacks, but equally, unimaginatively, given that jazz festivals pay for their own grants by the money they bring into the community. Fortunately many festivals have boldly decided to ignore the cuts and offer a quality product. The best programme for years at the Wigan Jazz Festival and a Swansea Jazz Festival of undiminished scale and excellence both defy the financial situation. Birmingham, which is still supported by the City Council, goes one step further and expands to take in Solihull.

So there is plenty of life in the British jazz festival scene, but what will happen when an ageing cadre of apparently tireless organisers decides that enough is enough? Will the local councils step in to protect a valuable resource? Not on the evidence of Geoff Matthews of Southport Jazz on a Winter's Weekend. Two years ago he retired, but found no local interest in taking over a very successful festival, so he withdrew his retirement and carried on. Now he has found an appropriate successor, Neil Hughes, both businessman and jazz enthusiast. The succession to the Festival Director will be key to many of our jazz festivals. Make the wrong choice or no choice at all and Brecon will not be the only major festival in danger.



Norma Winstone

Halesowen (8), the Carding Shed, Holmfirth (9), DW Stadium, Wigan (22), Spa Centre, Scarborough (23), Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough (May 14), Longfield Suite, Manchester (20), Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis (28) and Greystones, Sheffield (June 11).

Tel.: 0121 454 7020  
www.kingpleasureandthebiscuitboys.com

## MAJOR CONCERTS AT THE UNION CHAPEL

AGMP is promoting two outstanding concerts at London's Union Chapel during April. On April 14 the legendary Sun Ra Arkestra appears under the direction of its long-standing leader Marshall Allen. This is followed by the Grammy award-winning Roy Hargrove Quintet on April 19.

www.unionchapel.org.uk

## BIG BANDS AND A CELEBRATION

Southport Melodic Jazz celebrates its 25th birthday with a four-stage event on June 18. The Cliff Ray Ensemble plays a full-length afternoon gig, the two-guitar Hulme-Ormesher Trio accompanies the evening buffet and there's jazz in the Lounge at the end of the evening. As for the main concert, that's Alan Barnes, Gilad Atzmon and the Lowest Common Denominator. Before the Birthday Bash a Big Band Season starts with a double

header on March 20: the Swingshift Big band with Pete Long and Marlene VerPlanck and the Chris Holmes Trio. Afternoon events follow with Andy Prior and Emma Holcroft joining the Swingtime Big Band (April 17) and Dave Tyas' SK2 Jazz Orchestra with the music of Stan Kenton (May 15).

Tel.: 01704 541790  
www.jazzinsouthport.co.uk

## BLAYDON JAZZ CLUB

Emma Fisk's new Hot Club du Nord quartet, with James Birkett on guitar, makes its debut at the Black Bull in Blaydon on April 10. A varied schedule at Blaydon includes the Noel Dennis-Paul Edis Quartet (May 15), the Alice Grace Quartet fronted by the former NYJO vocalist (June 19) and the Reunion Band (July 10), featuring Hong Kong-based expat trumpeter Colin Aitchison and Italian clarinet virtuoso Franco Valussi.

## JAZZ AT THE CONCORDE

Wednesday evenings at the Concorde Club, Eastleigh, continue with the Southampton University Big Band (March 2), then, after a week without jazz, resume with the Grant Stewart Quartet (16), Ray Gelato's Enforcers (23) and Pete Long's Echoes of Ellington Orchestra (30). April brings Derek Nash/Dave Newton/Geoff

Gascoyne/Sebastian de Krom (6) and Spats Langham's Hot Fingers (20) either side of an interesting bill under the name *The Intimate Sinatra* (13). Matt Ford is accompanied by the Tippett String Quartet, harpist Hugh Webb and the Matt Skelton Quintet, with Callum Au, Dave Newton and Howard McGill. April 27 is another no jazz week, with the Concorde Festival taking over in support of Care After Combat. The traditional Jazz Night on Sundays also gives way to special events on several occasions, but March and April features four jazz nights: the Sussex Jazz Kings (March 13), Brian White's French Quarter All Stars (27), Jools and the Jazzaholics (April 3) and John Maddocks Jazzmen (10).

Tel.: 023 80613989  
www.theconcordeclub.com

## JAZZ NORTH EAST AT 50

In its 50th anniversary year Jazz North East presents Greg Osby (May 4) working with Swiss trio VEIN at the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle. Canadian trumpeter Ingrid Jensen visits the Black Swan, Newcastle Arts Centre, on May 28, followed by Sue Richardson's Chet Baker show (June 24) and Tim Richards' Hextet (28).

www.jazznortheast.com

## JAZZ REP AT CADOGAN HALL

The Jazz Repertory Company, headed by Pete Long and Richard Pite, has a programme of five concerts in 2016 at Cadogan Hall near Sloane Square. March 12 and May 8 bring two established and very popular programmes, the Benny Goodman 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert and 100 Years of Jazz in 99 Minutes, with

## JAZZ RAG CHARTS

New for this issue, *Jazz Rag* is publishing charts of sales of jazz CDs and jazz books. The demise of the specialist record shop is often predicted, but they continue to provide an invaluable service – and jazz CDs still sell, as, increasingly, does vinyl, in many cases providing a boost for the independents. This first chart draws on the sales of four independent specialist record shops: *Jazz Rag* would welcome any additions to the list – simply email admin@bigbearmusic.com. The book chart is derived from the sales of Waterstone's and *Jazz Rag* is very grateful for the co-operation of both the book chain and the record shops.

See pages 8 and 9

Goodman and Miller. Another 100 Years of Jazz and 1956 - A Jazz Jubilee follow later in the year.

www.jazzrep.co.uk

## JAZZ LONDON RADIO

Jazz London Radio has just appointed an advertising manager. Sales Executive Jay Bennett (jay@jazzlondonradio.com) can give details of sponsorship and advertising. Promoters wishing to publicise their gigs should contact official@jazzlondonradio.com. Interestingly Chris Hodgkins whose *Jazz Then and Now* slot features *Jazz Rag* choices, is now also presenting a programme on Pure Jazz Radio in New York. www.jazzlondonradio.com/listen/ to hear Jazz London Radio

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Dick Laurie's regular Sunday lunch-time residency with the Elastic Band at the Half Moon, Putney, has been confirmed for the whole of 2016 on the existing arrangement: the first and third Sundays of every month.

The weekly Tuesday Jazz and Swing at the Wilmslow Conservative Club features such favourites as Rosie Harrison and Terry Brunt with the Vinnie Parker Trio (March 8), Julie Edwards and Kevin Dearden (15), BBQ, the Brownfield-Byrne Quintet (29) and Bruce Adams and Rosie Harrison with the Steve Moore Trio (April 12). The first Thursday of each month see the Sinatra Swingers at Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club, with guest singers Rosie Harrison (March 3), Marilyn Royle (April 7) and Zoe Kyoti (May 5). Tel.: 01625 528336



Alexander Bone

Newcastle's Jazz Cafe features the return of Soundbone playing the music of Led Zeppelin (April 1). Trio Subtonic from America visit the Tyneside venue on April 8 followed by Partikel (28) and the John Bailey Quintet (29). The former AC Milan footballer-turned jazz guitarist Simone Gubbiotti flies in on May 13 and pianist Dominic J. Marshall appears on June 14. www.jazzcafe-newcastle.co.uk

The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff is the venue for the Finals of the BBC Young Jazz Musician competition on March 12. Last year's winner, saxophonist Alexander Bone, will be playing on the evening.

Wakefield Jazz goes up to the Easter break with the Geoff Eales Quartet featuring Noel Langley (March 4) and Lee Gibson with the Chris Holmes Trio and John Hallam (11). The sessions resume on April 8 with Gareth Williams Trio, followed by John Law's New Congregation (15), Noemi Nuti Band featuring Quentin Collins (22) and the Clark Tracey Quintet (29).

Tel.: 01977 680542  
www.wakefiled jazz.org

Scarborough Jazz, every Wednesday at the Cask in Cambridge Terrace, hosts Seven Pieces of Silver led by Paul Baxter on March 2. After that there are four weeks of featured soloists

with the resident Mike Gordon Trio: Ben Lowman (9), Toby Greenwood (16), Tina Featherstone (23) and Martin Jones and Matt Smith (30). April brings Manjula led by singer Vanessa Rani (6) and Adams, Kemp & Gordon (20), plus two more sessions of the Mike Gordon Trio, with Joel Purnell (13) and Jon Taylor (27). www.scarboroughjazz.co.uk

Bexley Jazz Club has an impressive line-up of quartets (the likes of Dave Newton and Bobby Worth cropping up more than once) led by Roger Beaujolais (March 7), Marlene VerPlanck (14), Pete Neighbour (21), Ted Beament (this one a trio - 28), Alan Barnes (April 4), Martin Speake (11), Geoff Eales (18) and Andy Panayi (25).

Folkestone Jazz Club's excellent weekly programme at the Tower Theatre, Shorncliffe, continues with the Humphrey Lyttelton Band (March 3), Alex and Willie Garnett (10), Jim Mullen Trio (17), Steve Waterman All Star Septet (24), Roger Beaujolais Quartet (31), Clark Tracey Quintet (April 7), Mick Foster Sextet (14) and *Jazzin' Jolson*, with such musicians as Enrico Tomasso and Julian Marc Stringle (21). Tel.: 01303 277175

Pinner Jazz's excellent monthly programme in the Parish Church

continues with the Dave Newton Trio (March 12), Keith Nichols' Septet with *Classic Jazz Revisited* (April 9) and the Art Themen Quintet (May 7). Tel.: 020 8429 1260  
www.pinnerjazz.org.uk

Durham Gala Theatre presents the duo of Graham Hardy and Paul Edis in another of its popular lunch-time sessions on April 8. The Gala Big Band plays a gig on home turf (April 28) and James Pearson leads the Ronnie Scott's All Stars on May 12.

Fortnightly jazz at the Epsom Playhouse continues with Geoff Cole's Red Hot 5 (March 7) and the Gresty/White Ragtimers (21). Tel.: 01372 742555

Sunday lunch-time sessions of the Erith & Belvedere Jazz Club at Park View Social Club, Welling, feature Band of Brothers (March 6) and Bob Dwyer's Bix and Pieces (April 3). Tel.: 020 8317 3837

Wigan Jazz Club presents the Al Wood Quintet in *Gerry Mulligan meets Benny Carter* on March 27 and the Sandbach School Brass Boys and the Wigan Youth Jazz

Orchestra on April 24 in Sunday lunch-time gigs at the Whalley ex-Servicemen's Club. Tel.: 01942 243974/01925 727408  
www.wiganjazzclub.co.uk

Jazz and jazz-influenced acts at the Cinnamon Club in Altrincham include Clare Teal and her Trio celebrating Doris Day (March 11), Dominic Halpin & the Hurricanes (17), Huw Jacob (18), the Jamie Leeming Trio featuring Emily Dankworth (May 1), Audrey Mattis & Trio (21) and Dominic Halpin & the Honey B's (29). Tel.: 0161926 8992  
www.thecinnamonclub.net

Watermill Jazz at the Aviva Sports and Social Club in Dorking continues with the Maciek Pysz Quartet (March 10), Geoff Eales Quartet (17), the Scott Hamilton Quartet (24) and Derek Nash's Sax Appeal (31). April begins in fine style with Freddie Gavita playing the music of Clifford Brown (7), followed by the Corrie Dick Band of Jazz (14), Alan Barnes, Gilad Atzmon and the Lowest Common Denominator (21) and the Mark Nightingale Big Band (28). www.watermilljazz.co.uk

# THE BIG CHRIS BARBER BAND

24 MARCH

Harrogate Theatre  
7.30pm  
www.harrogate theatre.co.uk

1 APRIL

Tewkesbury The Roses Theatre  
7.30pm  
www.roses theatre.org

19 APRIL

Bromley Churchill Theatre  
7.30pm  
www.churchill theatre.co.uk

21 APRIL

Wimborne Tivoli Theatre  
7.30pm  
www.tivoliwimborne.co.uk

22 APRIL

Portsmouth Kings Theatre  
7.30pm  
www.kingsportsmouth.co.uk

20 MAY

Middlesbrough Theatre  
www.middlesbrough theatre.co.uk

27 MAY

Lyme Regis Marine Theatre  
www.marine theatre.com

17 JUNE

Beckenham  
St Georges Parish Church  
www.stgeorgesbeckenham.co.uk

27 JUNE

Bury St Edmunds The Apex  
www.theapex.co.uk

9 JULY

Wigan Jazz Festival  
www.wiganjazzclub.co.uk

More performances to follow...  
For information check  
www.chrisbarber.net

# THE JAZZ RAG TOP 20

## UK JAZZ CD SALES CHART

1	ERROLL GARNER	COMPLETE CONCERT BY THE SEA	Columbia
2	KAMASI WASHINGTON	THE EPIC	Brainfeeder
3	METTE HENRIETTE	METTE HENRIETTE	ECM Records
4	TUBBY HAYES	MAN IN A HURRY	Mono Media Films
5	KARRIN ALLYSON	MANY A NEW DAY	Motema/EI
6	COUNT BASIE & HIS ORCHESTRA	KURHAUS CONCERT	Doctor Jazz
7	WOODY HERMAN	FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS	Avid Jazz
8	ABE LINCOLN	18 FINEST 1953/57	Retrospective
9	JOHN COLTRANE	A LOVE SUPREME - SUPER DELUXE EDITION	Impulse!
10	REBECCA KILGORE & NICKI PAROTT	TWO SONGBIRDS OF A FEATHER	Arbors Records
11	WARREN VACHE	REMEMBERS BENNY CARTER	Arbors Records
12	BRAD MEHLDAU	10 YEARS SOLO LIVE	Nonesuch
13	GERARD PRESENCER & THE DANISH RADIO BIG BAND	GROOVE TRAVELS	Edition Records
14	PEPPER ADAMS	FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS	Avid Jazz
15	JAY MCSHANN	HOOTIE'S BLUES 1941/55	Retrospective
16	BOB BROOKMEYER	THE BLUES HOT & COLD	Verve
17	TORD GUSTAVEN	WHAT WAS SAID	ECM Records
18	DUKE ELLINGTON	TREASURY SHOWS VOL. 20	Storyville
19	MILES DAVIS	KIND OF BLUE	Columbia
20	PAT HALCOX	REMEMBERING	Lake Records

This chart is compiled from sales in the following record stores

**CRAZY JAZZ, Northampton** www.crazyjazz.co.uk 01604 315287 Mail Order - www.crazyjazz.co.uk/main/orderform.pdf  
**JUMBO RECORDS, Leeds** www.jumborecords.co.uk 0113 245 5570 5-6 St Johns Centre, LS2 8LQ  
**MUSIC INN, Nottingham** www.themusicinn.co.uk 0115 978 4403 28-34 Alfreton Rd, NG7 3NG  
**RAYS JAZZ AT FOYLES, London** www.foyles.co.uk/rajs-jazz-classical-music 020 7440 3205 107 Charing Cross Rd, WC2H 0EB

# THE JAZZ RAG TOP TEN BOOKS

## UK JAZZ BOOK BESTSELLER CHART

1		<b>R. CRUMB'S HEROES OF BLUES, JAZZ AND COUNTRY</b> Robert Crumb (Harry N. Abrams)	6		<b>JAZZ AGE FASHION: DRESSED TO KILL</b> Virginia Bates & Daisy Bates (Rizzoli International Publications)
2		<b>EMPIRE OF SIN: A STORY OF SEX, JAZZ, MURDER, AND THE BATTLE FOR MODERN NEW ORLEANS</b> Gary Krist (Broadway Books)	7		<b>THE CHRONICLE OF JAZZ</b> Mervyn Cooke (Abbeville Press Inc.)
3		<b>JAZZ. NEW YORK IN THE ROARING TWENTIES</b> Robert Nippoldt and Taschen Hans-Jurgen Schall (Taschen)	8		<b>THE PENGUIN GUIDE TO JAZZ</b> Brian Morton and Richard Cook (Penguin Books)
4		<b>THE HISTORY OF JAZZ</b> Ted Gioia (Oxford University Press)	9		<b>R. CRUMB THE COMPLETE RECORD COVER COLLECTION</b> Robert Crumb (W.W. Norton & Company)
5		<b>JAZZ COVERS</b> Joaquim Paulo (Taschen)	10		<b>BUT BEAUTIFUL: A BOOK ABOUT JAZZ</b> Geoff Dyer (Picador)

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## BIRMINGHAM-SOLIHULL LINK-UP

Take two successful Midlands jazz festivals, very different in their histories, partly similar in their musical policies, less than 10 miles apart and programmed by the same company - and apply the logic! The result is that the 32nd Birmingham Jazz & Blues Festival will now be the first Birmingham and Solihull Jazz and Blues Festival.

Birmingham's history as one of the oldest-established and best regarded of UK jazz festivals is well known, but it is only in the last few years that Solihull BID has developed an excellent weekend festival over Spring Bank Holiday: in fact, the occasional Solihull concert has long been a feature of the Birmingham festival which has always adopted a fairly expansionist interpretation of the word 'Birmingham'.

The Solihull festival has from the start been programmed by Big Bear Music which runs the Birmingham festival so it is not surprising that there are some similarities, both in musical policy

and in organisation, with free access to open performances across the town/city. Essential differences are that Solihull operated as mainly an all-day festival with limited evening events (Birmingham tends to run for about 14 hours a day with the occasional pause for rest and refreshment!) and Solihull relied on two fixed stages, notably in Mell Square, cannily sited in the prime shopping area of the town.

However, these differences don't stop the two festivals being compatible; in fact, Solihull's presence will enrich Birmingham with yet greater variety of events and audiences. The 2016 festival will see a change of normal dates for both events, the Birmingham festival always avoiding major football championships when there is a date clash. So lovers of jazz and football can enjoy the European Championships and then support the Birmingham and Solihull Jazz Festival on July 15-24.

Melanie Palmer, Executive Director of the Solihull BID, has

no doubt of the value of the newly expanded festival to her town: 'Hot on the heels of Solihull Fashion Week which takes place this Spring we can't wait to welcome another major event to the town centre for the summer. The Birmingham festival has become one of the biggest events of its kind in Europe and it's great that Solihull is now a major part of its plans with some of the most acclaimed jazz and blues musicians performing here and delighting town centre music lovers.'

Possibly Birmingham's prime selling point has been the ability to bring in European bands, many of them previously unknown in this country, which then become festival favourites. Birmingham patrons will be looking forward to the return of Italy's Pepper and the Jellies, the Schwings from Lithuania, Saxitude from Luxembourg, Les Zauto Stompers de Paris and the Sarah Lenka Band from France, the Budapest Ragtime Band and, from the Costa del Sol, the New

Orleans Jump Band. Newcomers to the festival include the Busquitos from Holland and Iva and the Hotsy Totsy 5, led by Iva Blazkova, formerly of the great young band from Velke Losiny in the Czech Republic. American bluesmen lined up for the festival include the Walter Trout Band and Joe Fournier. Surely the festival's first band from India, the Rajasthan Heritage Brass Band is this year's most unusual inclusion in the programme.

The festival which will consist of a minimum of 150 concerts, most of them free, will also feature such UK bands and musicians as Alan Barnes, Art Themen, the Broombusters, Bruce Adams, the Catfish Kings, Derek Nash, Digby Fairweather, the John Patrick Trio, King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys, Remi Harris, Roy Forbes, Simon Spillett, Tipitina and the Whiskey Brothers.

Check out further details on [facebook.com/birminghamjazzfestival](https://www.facebook.com/birminghamjazzfestival)

## BRINGING JAZZ TO THE MILLIONS

In Birmingham's spectacular New Street Station there is a distinguished-looking plaque commemorating the visit of H.M. The Queen to open the splendid complex in November last year. Between December 4 last year and February 4 Her Majesty had to compete for the attention of the 6,095,061 visitors to the station with an exhibition of photographs of the 31st Birmingham Jazz & Blues Festival held in July 2015. (The surprisingly exact total is the official figure for users of the busiest UK station outside London.)

The 52 photographs, ranging from close-ups of musicians to crowd shots to jitterbugging dance troupe, attracted much attention from the passing crowd, though it is unlikely all six million stopped for a look! Strongly represented was the festival's official photographer, Merlin Daleman, but there were also fine photographs by a wide range of photographers, from Festival Director to local students: Greg Gdowski, Bradley Pearce, Jim Simpson, Charlotte Webb and Graham Young. The whole exhibition was arranged and prepared by students of Birmingham City University under the direction of Phil Thompson and part of the festival's photography project supported by Arts Council England.

Under this project photographers of all abilities of ages, abilities and experience were encouraged to work to a specific brief during the jazz festival. Given the brief by Festival Director Jim Simpson in advance, they then met with the festival's photographer-at-large Merlin Daleman who enlarged on this brief and advised them on possible approaches to jazz photography. During the event he monitored their work and eventually, two weeks later, gave a final debrief - by Skype, with Merlin in Sicily, Charlotte Webb in London and six other photographers in the Blue Piano in Birmingham! The New Street exhibition is a tribute to the success of the project, with excellent images from a variety of photographers.



Debbie Jones and Justin Randall of Tipitina at the exhibition.



The international team of student-curators (l-r) Casey Li (Ireland), Felicity Hall (Worcester), Nora Al-Hindi (Jordan), Francisca Borzea (Romania)

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## 26 AND COUNTING

**RON SIMPSON** discovers another Billie Holiday anniversary, rather overlooked last year: 25 years since the UK's favourite Lady Day tribute was first recorded.



Lady Sings the Blues 1990-style.

2015 was, of course, the year of Billie Holiday's 100th birthday - and, incidentally, Frank Sinatra's. *Jazz Rag* was not alone in finding various ways to commemorate the anniversary and *Lady Sings the Blues*, the most highly rated and most longest lasting of Billie tribute shows, took to the road with renewed vigour.

In July Val Wiseman and her musicians found themselves performing in the Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival at the Studio Theatre of Birmingham Library where Big Bear Records made a live recording of the concert. Now, with the CD to be released shortly under the title *Laughing at Life*, it seemed a good time to re-visit the previous *Lady Sings the Blues* recording, also on Big Bear. Was it, we hoped, some kind of an anniversary? Well, sort of. Val and the band (billed in those days as the LSTB Orchestra) went into the Black Barn Studio in February 1990 so last year's live recording could be seen as celebrating both Billie's 100th and the previous album's 25th.

What is most remarkable about the near-30 year existence of *Lady Sings the Blues* is that so many of the core personnel have

remained the same - and, in truth, all the members of that original band stayed with the show for many years, with the exception of drummer Eddie Taylor who found joining George Melly's ever-busy accompanists, John Chilton's Feetwarmers, committed him to a full-time job. The now sadly deceased Al Gay and Brian Lemon contributed gloriously to *Lady Sings the Blues* until they retired from active music-making and Jim Douglas was so closely identified with the guitar chair that, soon after he became unavailable for touring, the instrumental septet became a sextet, with a three-piece rhythm section.

But half of the eight musicians who assembled at Black Barn were still there at Birmingham Library 25 years later. Digby Fairweather has led the band indefatigably through the years and two of the most acclaimed of British jazzmen of the 1990s, Roy Williams and Len Skeat, are still among the best, as their consistently high placings in the British Jazz Awards indicate. As for Val Wiseman herself, in the years since 1990 she has become more ambitious, launching out into writing her own Bronte

show, while singing with undiminished quality.

If the first edition of *Lady Sings the Blues* drew on the elite of British jazzers in the late 1980s, the same is so today. Brian Dee is a masterly accompanist as well as an original soloist and the tenor sax/clarinet part, often these days filled by Alan Barnes, was taken superbly at Birmingham by Julian Marc Stringle. The most recent recruit on the recording, following in a distinguished line of drummers, most recently Bobby Worth, is Eric Ford who began as a pupil of acclaimed Birmingham drummer and teacher Malcolm Garrett. Eric went on to play with MYJO and, since leaving Birmingham University, has embarked on a varied musical journey that has included four years in Paris and playing on cruise ships. Now he is a member of the highly rated London-based trio, Partikel.

Looking back at the original credits for the 1990 recording, it's good (though sad) to be reminded of another enormously talented stalwart of the period, trombonist/arranger Pete Strange. He was responsible for most of the arrangements and transcriptions of Billie's songs.

Pete's career took in many of the best traditional bands and two stints with Bruce Turner before he developed a habit of founding or co-founding a whole variety of groups: Five-a-Slide, the Midnite Follies Orchestra, the Great British Jazz Band. A seriously underrated arranger, at the time of *Lady Sings the Blues* he was well into a 21-year sojourn in the Humphrey Lyttelton Band that ended with his death in 2004.

The repertoire on the original album leant decisively, though not exclusively, towards songs of the 1930s, with a bias towards the more cheerful songs, very welcome in view of the perceptions of gloom and heartbreak that can surround Billie's memory. It's interesting to compare the repertoire of *Lady Sings the Blues* 1990-style and 2015-style. *Lover Man*, *What Shall I Say?* and *Miss Brown to You* are scheduled to reappear on the new live album, the latter two in Pete Strange's original arrangements. Much of the rest has changed, from *Laughing at Life*, the opening title track of the album to *My Man*, for years now the show's dramatic finale. Over the years the concept of *Lady Sings the Blues* has evolved, always

without the need to include the melodramatic and commercially motivated song that gave the show its title. And there's still no shortage of fine songs to be considered, giving the lie to the old theory that in the 1930s Billie was given all the second-rate songs to sing, though admittedly *Eeny Meeny Miny Mo*, the first track on the original album, is not Johnny Mercer's most sophisticated lyric!

No one is better placed than Digby Fairweather to compare the early tours of *Lady Sings the Blues* with the present day or the 1990 album with the soon-to-be-released *Laughing at Life*. Despite reservations about his own playing (reservations not shared by other listeners) he is clearly still immensely proud of the earlier album:

'Many of my friends still remark on it as one of their favourite albums and Benny Green's comment that it might even be better than the originals really meant something. It's a marvellous monument to such legends of the British jazz scene as Brian Lemon and Al Gay.'

About *Laughing at Life* Digby is remarkably sanguine. All the things that he had imagined might go wrong never materialised and he is even modestly delighted with his own playing:

'It's my best performance on a live album, I think, and the album



itself will be on a par with the original M&B Jam Session in 1987 where I shared trumpet duties with Humph. The band excelled themselves. Julian Marc Stringle played wonderfully and to me Roy Williams is still our greatest jazz trombonist - I hear everything in him I always did.'

Digby was slightly surprised to find how the choice of songs had changed since 1990 and pointed out that the show was still essentially the same, with many of the original Pete Strange arrangements. Songs come and go from the programme and, of course, the albums don't cover the full repertoire of the show. Asked how he feels *Lady Sings the Blues* on stage has changed over

the years, his reply is simple: 'It's loosened up a lot. We know the arrangements so thoroughly that we can just concentrate on keeping it fresh.' This is true even when deps are required, as they will be over so many years and so many concerts: Digby pauses to enthuse over Alan Barnes' originality and star quality, but Julian Stringle's performance on *Laughing at Life* is the ultimate proof of the importance of quality deps.

And now Val and the band are preparing to get out on the road again, one of the few small swinging bands still doing so. (Probably the busiest of them all, incidentally, is Digby's Half Dozen, which includes Julian

Marc Stringle alongside Mr. Fairweather and had a boom year in 2015). *Lady Sings the Blues* kicks off the *Laughing at Life* Tour 2016 with March dates at the Queens Theatre, Hornchurch (12) and the Borough Theatre, Abergavenny (16). At the time of going to press, dates already fixed for May-July are: the Gatehouse Theatre, Stafford (May 19), Waterside Arts Centre, Sale (June 9), Charter Theatre, Preston (18), Norwich Playhouse (25), The Castle, Wellingborough (July 2), Guildhall Arts Centre, Grantham (15) and Hever Castle (31).

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## MINGUS BIG BAND IN LEEDS

Immediately before a week's residency at Ronnie Scott's the Mingus Big Band played a stunning concert at the Howard Assembly Room in Leeds on January 23rd. Tom Arber was on the spot to photograph the band in full cry.



# NEW BRANCH OF JAZZ ARCHIVE

**DIGBY FAIRWEATHER**, founder of the National Jazz Archive, talks to *Jazz Rag* about the latest exciting developments.



**So, Digby, there's a new department of the National Jazz Archive?**

Yes; in the Beecroft Art Gallery in Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea.

**An Art Gallery? That doesn't sound like a home for a jazz archive?**

No I agree, but there's a story. The Beecroft collections have been recently re-housed in what was once the Central Library in Southend; a four-storey building opened in 1974. I actually completed my librarian's career in there before going off on the road in 1977! Anyhow when our brand-new library called 'The Forum' opened up two or three years ago the old library building was left empty of course and the Beecroft collections were moved in leaving quite a lot of spare space unused. So - thanks to my good friend, the CEO at Southend Borough Council, Rob Tinlin and his team - we were able to take advantage of that.

**But why Southend and the need for extra space?**

Well, Southend is my home-town of course - which helps. But it's close to London (two rail-lines no more than an hour away from the City) and we also have a marvellous new airport opened up again for anyone who might want to fly in the future! So I think there could be a lot worse

places to set up our centre.

**OK - but why the need for extra space?**

Well, that's another story. Round about three years ago the National Jazz Archive (which I set up in 1988 in Loughton Central Library, East London) was told by its controlling authority Essex County Council that any further space for our collections was now absolutely impossible. Essex County have always been marvellous to us ever since we opened, but of course they've suffered drastically from government cuts in recent years as all local authorities have. And - much against their will, I'm sure - they've been forced to cut our book fund from 3K to nil; to serve notice on two of our working areas, and also place one or two small question-marks over our permanent tenure at Loughton which could - at least in theory - be terminated within a year. Of course that hasn't happened and Loughton is still doing extremely well. In fact they've just won a new HLF grant for £83,000.00 which is marvellous! But personally (a bit like Lester Young) I 'felt a draft' when the cuts began!

**So what did you do?**

First of all I went to see Rob Tinlin. Rob is a marvellous man and first of all said, 'Well, we'll be happy to accommodate the NJA right here in Southend'. Which

rocked me on my heels a bit! But of course I had to say no afterwards. The NJA has been at Loughton for twenty eight years now and not only has fantastic collections but a high visibility on the national jazz scene as we know. So to have uprooted it to anywhere else, including Southend, would have been absolutely traitorous - and luckily, as it turns out unnecessary too!

**So after that?**

It occurred to me that the NJA not only had a huge amount of duplicate stocks housed at Brunel University (which they were going to start charging us storage fees for) but that there were also smaller collections which we'd set up around the country for research purposes but which had never really taken off. So I thought, 'Well, if we could get them all together at Southend we'd certainly have a very fine second research centre in the making.' So several of the Loughton Trustees - including their Chairman Paul Kaufman and Nick Clarke amongst them - packed up the books; brought them down to Southend and we were away!

**How about the space at Southend?**

Well, Rob Tinlin and his arts team - Nick Harris and Rosemary Pennington - started by giving us a very big office space in the Beecroft and lots of shelving

from a local library which sadly had had to close its doors. That was a great start! But then the luck really started to happen! A big medical centre had just closed down too nearby, and its Director, Richard Campbell-Carr - who I've known since our schooldays - offered a complete suite of furniture including office chairs and desks, state-of-the-art PCs with full internet connections, tables - everything! Other people - including my dear friend Paul Richards who was Chairman of Governors at Southend High School when I was on the Board - came up with generous financial support too. And really - with them and a fantastic team of fifteen volunteers - we set up the whole department in less than three months.

**So what's in it?**

A pretty formidable research facility! Of course we have an enormous collection of books, periodicals and also a lot of rare film. But we also have a lot of marvellous museum items too; everything from the 'Louis Armstrong Special' trumpet to the complete Archives of Humphrey Lyttelton - his roll-top desk where he worked for all his life, his instruments and eight decades of his scrapbooks, private correspondence, scripts, interviews, cartoons, recordings - everything. That was given to the Archive on permanent loan by his son Stephen and collected by our Southend friends in very short order before Stephen moved house. We even have Sir John Dankworth's first-ever piano!

**So a museum facility too?**

Yes definitely - which caused a bit of a temporary rumpus with the NJA Trustees at Loughton. When I acquired Humph's collections - and the Dankworth piano - I was told: 'that's out of order - and completely outside our collections policy too!'. So I had a bit of a public telling-off! But I felt then - as I quite definitely feel now - that such artefacts are absolutely central to our British



Humphrey Lyttelton's desk

jazz culture and that we should go on collecting them in the future. So we finally had to agree to differ on that one! Of course it's important to remember, I think, that Loughton is currently completely out of space - and that must, by definition, put tight rules on their collections policy. And their broad terms of reference have always been 'anything you can read or study on the subject of jazz' - which really implies books, journals, letters, posters, photographs and so on. And they take their remit extremely seriously. So I hope that Southend may be able to open up more space for them to carry on with their specialisms - but also give us the chance to extend our own terms of reference in terms of what we collect.

**How about recorded sound - CDs, vinyl and so on?**

Well that's another thing. You see, when the NJA was set up and opened in 1988, we agreed not to collect jazz on record as that was officially covered by the National Sound Archive, a department of the British Library at Kings Cross. But my view has always been that a National Jazz Archive should cover *everything* to do with the culture - a bit like the Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies in Newark which was directed

for years by my great friend Dan Morgenstern. At Rutgers they have the horns of Lester Young, Jack Teagarden, Eddie Condon's guitar - dozens and dozens of the instruments of now-legendary performers. They have Ella Fitzgerald's on-stage dresses! They have everything from cylinders and 78s to vinyl and CDs. They have jazz on film. And of course they have one of the biggest research collections in the world too. So that would be my dream for a National Jazz Centre in the UK too.

**Do you think that's possible?**

Well, wouldn't that be wonderful? You never know...

**So when did you open?**

We had our Grand Opening Day on Saturday February 6th - and it was unbelievable. The Beecroft Art Gallery isn't - shall we say - 'over-populated' on a daily basis but on our day we had more than three hundred people through the doors and the place was packed from the moment we opened our doors! Our Lord Mayor, Andrew Moring, cut the ribbon to open the department and everyone wanted to look at the collections - and even play Sir John's piano! Our local MP Sir David Amess came in full of enthusiasm, and so did the great jazz journalist Chris Welch, who

wrote for *Melody Maker* in its golden years and later edited *Kerrang* magazine too. Currently Chris writes for *Jazzwise* and he's always been one of my journalistic heroes! We had record and book sales, jazz on film all day in our 100-seater cinema/lecture theatre and Simon Spillett came down - for free by the way - to show the marvellous new documentary on Tubby Hayes produced by Mark Baxter (who was there too!) called *A Man in a Hurry*. Simon played too at the end of the day with a great band including Mick Foster, Dominic Ashworth, Len Skeat, Alan Clarke - and I had a blow

too. There literally wasn't a seat to be had and I thought, 'This could be the start of something very big indeed!'

**So will the Archive be open regularly?**

Yes once a week every Saturday - although I hope the hours will be extended soon. It's a great place to research - or actually just to hang out, listen to great jazz and have a coffee. And I've had lots and lots of support from everyone from the BBC and local radio to enquiries from the Arts Council of England. So I suppose the word is, 'Watch this space.'

## THE AGE OF THE MELODICA?

After our recent coverage of the melodica it was good to read in that wise, if eccentric, jazz magazine, *Allegedly Hot News*, of Stan Robinson's response when impressed by a young Brazilian melodican (if that's the right word). Having asked the price, Stan opined, 'If you miss going to Sainsbury's once, you can afford one.'

Sadly, as with any jazz publication these days, the recently deceased figure fairly prominently in the Winter 2015 issue of *Allegedly Hot News*. Mike Pointon contributes memories of Micky Ashman and there are photos of the Rextravaganza celebrating the life of drummer Rex Bennett who died last year aged 93.

The usual collection of reviews includes John Latham of the Sandy Brown Society writing appreciatively about David Binns' new book, *Homes of the Hits*, about Sandy's sound recording studios. The customary mix of entertainment and instruction, the most recent edition does seem a little low on banjo jokes!

Email [alasdick@waitrose.com](mailto:alasdick@waitrose.com)



## THE 50 TOP JAZZ SINGERS?

by Scott Yanow

The powers that be at the *Jazz Rag* suggested that, in answer to the BBC's listing of their choices for the top 50 jazz musicians, I do the same. After quickly deciding that this was impractical if not impossible (how does Chick Corea's rank compare to James P. Johnson's?), I offered a compromise that is still a bit of a fool's errand. Instead of ranking every jazz performer, I would restrict myself to jazz singers, still a near-impossible task.

What is a jazz singer? I always thought of it as being someone who improvises through notes, words, sounds and/or phrasing. Scat-singing is not a must but consistent spontaneity is essential. Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Rosemary Clooney (each beloved by many jazz singers) rarely improvised so they are off the list. The qualities that I looked for in compiling this list include the originality of the singer's sound, their ability to improvise, the quality of their work, and the influence that they have had on others.

Knowing that there is no possible way that a list such as this can avoid being controversial, I am taking the plunge anyway. Many of these artists (17 males and 33 females) need no introduction as far as their significance goes so I will just mention why they are ranked at this level.

**1) Louis Armstrong** – Although he was not the first jazz singer (being preceded by Cliff Edwards, Marion Harris and a few others) or the first scat-singer, Armstrong's horn-like phrasing influenced virtually every jazz vocalist who followed. He permanently changed jazz and popular music.



Louis Armstrong

**2) Ella Fitzgerald** – In addition to being arguably the finest scat-singer, after the early 1940s nearly every one of Ella's interpretations of standards became definitive. Singers have learned how to sing hundreds of songs by listening to Ella's version.

**3) Sarah Vaughan** – She possessed one of the most wondrous voices of the 20th century and for over 40 years never seemed to have an off night.

**4) Billie Holiday** – Although her voice was small and her improvising was pretty subtle by her later years, Lady Day's behind-the-beat phrasing has led the way ever since the 1930s.

**5) Bessie Smith** – The Empress of the Blues had the most powerful voice of the 1920s and her passion still communicates to today's listeners.

**6) Anita O'Day** – 100% dedicated to swinging jazz, Anita O'Day constantly took chances in her improvising and scatting, always succeeding in the 1950s, her prime years.

**7) Carmen McRae** – Her warm voice, distinctive phrasing and full understanding of bop made her the perfect singer to interpret Thelonious Monk songs.

**8) Mel Tormé** – Virtually the only singer to improve while he was in his sixties, Tormé could scat on Ella's level, hold endless long notes on ballads, and always manage to sound like himself.



Anita O'Day

**9) Jimmy Rushing** – The top male band singer of the swing era, Jimmy Rushing never recorded a bad record whether it was blues, standards or ballads.

**10) Dinah Washington** – She was proud of her ability to sing pretty much anything, from blues and r&b to bop-oriented jazz and country-flavoured music.

**11) Joe Williams** – Although he had few equals in singing blues, Williams actually loved performing ballads the most.

**12) Mark Murphy** – One of the most innovative jazz singers of the past 50 years, Murphy's scatting, phrasing and use of words was quite unique.

**13) Ethel Waters** – She came out of the classic blues world to become a superior interpreter of popular songs in the 1930s and '40s.

**14) Bing Crosby** – The ultimate crooner, Bing learned from Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden, always loved New Orleans jazz, and could scat and swing with the best whenever he wanted. He was the #1 influence on pop singers prior to Sinatra.

**15) Betty Carter** – Starting in bebop, by the 1970s Betty Carter was avant-garde in the unpredictable ways that she treated standards, never being content to merely state a melody.

**16) Abbey Lincoln** – A supper club singer who became a protest singer with Max Roach, Lincoln in her later years was a superb interpreter of a wide variety of songs including many of her own.

**17) Nat King Cole** – Everyone loved Nat King Cole's very warm and friendly voice, even when he de-emphasized swinging for ballads in the 1950s.

**18) Oscar Brown Jr.** – While his singing was somewhat overshadowed by his songwriting abilities, Brown's dramatic delivery and solid sense of swing made his live performances a memorable and joyful experience.

**19) Dee Dee Bridgewater** – One of the top jazz singers of the past 25 years, the always-exciting Dee Dee has performed shows dedicated to Ella, Horace Silver and the music of Kurt Weill.

**20) Helen Humes** – Whether performing blues, early r&b, swing or ballads, Humes always sang with a smile in her voice.

**21) Big Joe Turner** – He never really changed his style from the 1930s to the '80s, and never needed to. Big Joe's blues are timeless.

**22) Kurt Elling** – The top male jazz singer since the deaths of Tormé and Williams, Elling combined Mark Murphy's innovations with his own personality and inventive ideas.

**23) Irene Kral** – Could anyone sing ballads with the heartbreaking sincerity and quiet passion of Irene Kral?

**24) Peggy Lee** – Lee showed that one could sing with intensity and sensual passion at a low volume.

**25) Shirley Horn** – Her phrasing, expertise at slow ballads, and consistent warmth are still very influential.

**26) Cab Calloway** – Can's scat-singing, over-the-top performances and constant swinging made him a sensation ever since he hit it big in 1930.

**27) Kay Starr** – Influenced by Dinah Washington but having her own Oklahoma twang, Starr was at her best on swing standards.

**28) Sheila Jordan** – A master at improvising words and making up stories on-the-spot while championing bebop, Jordan has been in her own special category ever since her first recording.

**29) Helen Merrill** – Always underrated, Merrill's recordings with Clifford Brown, Gil Evans, Dick Katz and Thad Jones are cool jazz classics.

**30) Jack Teagarden** – Ranging from vintage blues and Dixieland standards to the ballad *100 Years From Today* Mr. T. was as mighty a singer as he was a trombonist.

**31) Ernestine Anderson** – In a career that now dates back to the late 1940s, Ernestine Anderson has reinvented herself a few times but is at her best when she is bluesy and soulful.

**32) Roberta Gambarini** – Her beautiful voice and ease with creative bebop and ballads make the under recorded Gambarini one of today's greats.

**33) Susannah McCorkle** – In the 1970s and '80s, she was among the first young singers to come up with fresh interpretations of swing standards and obscurities.

**34) Jon Hendricks** – The genius of vocalese, Hendricks may not have had the strongest voice but it was one of the most adaptable, often singing his lyrics at remarkable tempos.

**35) Eddie Jefferson** – Similar to Hendricks, Jefferson on his vocalese lyrics could bring back the spirit and personality of many top horn players.

**36) Diana Krall** – The most famous living jazz singer, her vocalizing (inspired by Shirley Horn and Peggy Lee) helped revive many swing standards.

**37) Jimmy Witherspoon** – In the 1950s and '60s, 'Spoon's light-toned blues singing was a contrast to the rougher sounding Big Joe Turner. He could sing jazz and blues with equal credibility.

**38) Dianne Reeves** – While her choice of material and styles has remained erratic, when Reeves chooses to sing swinging jazz, she approaches the level of Vaughan and Ella.

**39) Karrin Allyson** – A masterful bop singer who has branched out over the years, Allyson has always had her own sound and a very appealing style.

**40) Annette Hanshaw** – In the late 1920s/early '30s, she was one of the very best at infusing pop songs with jazz singing.

**41) Banu Gibson** – The definitive classic jazz/swing singer of the past 30 years, Banu and her New Orleans Hot Jazz have starred at scores of festivals and shown that there is plenty of life to be found in songs of the 1920s and '30s.

**42) Nancy Wilson** – Before she largely turned towards pop and away from jazz in the late 1960s, Wilson was a delightful, subtle and swinging jazz singer.

**43) Bobby McFerrin** – If it were not for his long periods away from jazz, McFerrin would rank much higher. His unaccompanied solo concerts and ability to sound like two or three voices at once (making a sound when he inhales) are unprecedented.

**44) Mildred Bailey** – While her influence has declined through the years, the high-toned Bailey was a major force in the 1930s and '40s.



Oscar Brown Jr.

**45) Ann Hampton Callaway** – Her vocal talents have grown steadily through the years and today Callaway is capable of truly dazzling vocalizing.

**46) Cecile McLorin Salvant** – The brightest new voice on the scene, Salvant is always creative, even when tackling unlikely material from 1910.

**47) Maxine Sullivan** – Her light and gentle but always swinging style made Sullivan a strong influence on Peggy Lee, Rebecca Kilgore and all of the cool jazz singers.

**48) Rebecca Kilgore** – No matter what swing standards she chooses to sing, Kilgore uplifts the material with her gentle, infectious and subtle creativity.

**49) Chet Baker** – He never had the best voice but Baker's laidback phrasing, melancholy moods and honest singing has had a strong effect.

**50) Annie Ross** – During her prime years of the 1950s and '60s, Ross' singing (whether with Lambert, Hendricks and Ross or her solo records) was irresistible.

Of course there have been many more than 50 great jazz singers. Most painful for me was leaving June Christy (who would be #51) out of the top 50. Here are 102 other vocalists who deserve honourable mention for their often-remarkable careers: Lorez Alexandria, Mose Allison, Ernie Andrews, Susie Arioli, Fred Astaire, Claire Austin, Patti Austin, Alice Babs, Patricia Barber, George Benson, Big Miller, Janice Borla, Connie Boswell, Ruth Brown, Katie Bull, Blanche Calloway, Thelma Carpenter, Eva Cassidy, Ray Charles, Jeannie Cheatham, Jay Clayton, Freddy

Cole, Harry Connick, Jr., Chris Connor, Ida Cox, Jamie Cullum, Meredith D'Ambrosio, Barbara Dane, Blossom Dearie, Dena DeRose, Bob Dorough, Urszula Dudziak, Dominique Eade, Billy Eckstine, Cliff Edwards, Ruth Etting, Nnenna Freelon, Dave Frishberg, Slim Gaillard, Giacomo Gates, Sara Gazarek, Harry 'The Hipster' Gibson, Astrud Gilberto, Dizzy Gillespie, Babs Gonzales, Teddy Grace, Marty Grosz, Adelaide Hall, Marion Harris, Nancy Harrow, Johnny Hartman, Clancy Hayes, Lena Horne, Alberta Hunter, Al Jarreau (if only he had chosen jazz!), Etta Jones, Louis Jordan, Beverly Kenny, Stacey Kent, King Pleasure, Nancy King, Cleo Laine, Dave Lambert, Jeanne Lee, Julia Lee, Julie London, Carmen Lundy, Gloria Lynne, Kevin Mahogany, Janis Mann, Claire Martin, Tina May, Mary Ann McCall, Barbara Morrison, Lee Morse, Stephanie Nakasian, Lauren Newton, Alex Pangman, Gretchen Parlato, Rebecca Parrish, Otilie Patterson, Louis Prima, Flora Purim, Barbara Rosene, Vanessa Rubin, Jackie Ryan, Diane Schuur, Daryl Sherman, Janis Siegel, Nina Simone, Carole Sloane, Luciana Souza, Esperanza Spalding, Mary Stallings, Dakota Staton, Clark Terry, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Leon Thomas, Kate-Hammett Vaughan, Marlene VerPlanck, Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson, Fats Waller, Leo Watson, Lee Wiley, Cassandra Wilson, and Norma Winstone.

**Scott Yanow has written 11 books on jazz including *The Jazz Singers*. He can be contacted at [scottyanowjazz@yahoo.com](mailto:scottyanowjazz@yahoo.com).**

**Let *Jazz Rag* know your list of the top singers: email [admin@bigbearmusic.com](mailto:admin@bigbearmusic.com).**

## JAZZ FESTIVALS

## FESTIVAL LISTINGS MARCH-JUNE

## BRISTOL JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL

(MARCH 18-20)

A packed star-studded weekend at and around the Colston Hall with Maceo Parker, Melody Gardot, Courtney Pine, Pee Wee Ellis and Fred Wesley and many others, plus the Big Swing with King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys.

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

## NANTWICH JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL

(MARCH 24-28)

Venues throughout the town include the Church, the Museum, Civic Hall and Crown Hotel, for a bill including the Jive Aces, Swing Commanders, the Revolutionaries and Big Country.

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

## GATESHEAD JAZZ FESTIVAL

(APRIL 15-17)

The iconic Sage Gateshead, home to two concert halls and many other performance spaces, hosts such star names as Gregory Porter, Courtney Pine, Zoe Rahman, Terence Blanchard, Liane Carroll and Simon Spillett with the music of Tubby Hayes.

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

## PORTHCAWL JAZZ FESTIVAL

(APRIL 22-24)

Six venues in the town, including churches, hotels and the Grand Pavilion, host the likes of Claire Martin, Dave Newton and Ray Gelato.

[www.porthcawl-jazz-festival.com](http://www.porthcawl-jazz-festival.com)

## ISLE OF BUTE JAZZ FESTIVAL

(APRIL 29-MAY 2)

Beautiful Rothesay welcomes such bands as the Savannah Jazz Band, Richard White's Fivers and the Chicago Teddy Bears Society Jazz Band to venues around town.

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

## NEWCASTLE JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL

(MAY 27-30)

Newcastle-under-Lyme's well established Spring Bank Holiday festival takes over the town's bars and restaurants with jazz and blues. Among those appearing are Tipitina, Roy Forbes and Little Jo and the Misfits.

[www.newcastlejazzandblues.co.uk](http://www.newcastlejazzandblues.co.uk)

## NEWPORT JAZZ WEEKEND

(JUNE 1-5)

Newport, Isle of Wight, clearly believes in long (5 day!) weekends, but the jazz activity around the town becomes more intense from Friday. Top-class headliners include Amy Roberts' Magnificent Seven, Stacey Kent, Robert Fowler and Karen Sharp.

[www.newportjazzweekend.co.uk](http://www.newportjazzweekend.co.uk)

## KIRKCUDBRIGHT JAZZ FESTIVAL

(JUNE 9-12)

The 17 bands providing over 80 hours of jazz throughout the town include the Penman Jazzmen, the Big Easy and Spats Langham's Hot Fingers.

[www.kirkcudbrightjazzfestival.co.uk](http://www.kirkcudbrightjazzfestival.co.uk)

## SWANSEA JAZZ FESTIVAL

(JUNE 17-19)

With events across the whole Marina area, especially centred on the Dylan Thomas Theatre, the Swansea Jazz Festival covers a wide range of music under the direction of David Cottle, with headliners of the quality of the Alan Barnes Octet, Pee Wee Ellis Funk Assembly, NYJO, Darius Brubeck, Alec Dankworth's Spanish Accents and 360, made up of original members of the Average White Band.

[www.sjf.co.uk](http://www.sjf.co.uk)

## GLASGOW JAZZ FESTIVAL

(JUNE 22-26)

The 30th Glasgow Jazz Festival is a large-scale affair, using Glasgow's range of concert halls. Headlines already confirmed include Joe Bonamassa and George Benson.

[www.jazzfest.co.uk](http://www.jazzfest.co.uk)

## LICHFIELD BLUES AND JAZZ FESTIVAL

(JUNE 24-26)

The festival features big band and gypsy jazz and funk in addition to top blues performers at venues across the city.

[www.lichfieldarts.org.uk](http://www.lichfieldarts.org.uk)

## THAXTED FESTIVAL

(JUNE 24-JULY 17)

This year's festival celebrates the 100th anniversary of Gustav Holst's first concert in Thaxted Church. A small jazz element includes a concert by Tim Kliphuis.

[www.thetrumpet.co.uk/community/thaxted-festival](http://www.thetrumpet.co.uk/community/thaxted-festival)

## EAST NEUK FESTIVAL

(JUNE 25-JULY 3)

The festival spreads throughout the picturesque East Neuk of Fife, with mostly classical concerts, but performances of other musics, such as jazz, in settings as diverse as a cave and a potato barn!

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

## ALAN BARNES GOES FISHING

The final concert of the Cleethorpes Jazz Festival features an Alan Barnes suite commissioned by the festival and celebrating the fishing heritage of Great Grimsby. Alan is joined by an octet described as 'a diverse group of musicians' in the programme. The festival runs from **June 24 to 26** in McCormacks Bar in a packed programme of three events on Friday evening followed by seven a day. The bands and musicians range from local youth orchestras to some of the top names in British jazz: Matt Skelton playing Basie and Ellington with an all star septet, Liane Carroll solo, Mark Nightingale with a piano-less quartet of Robert Fowler, Arnie Somogyi and Steve Brown, Alan Barnes joining forces with Gilad Atzmon, etc.

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



Courtney Pine

## COMMUNITY JAZZ

As well as venues in the Atrium of Clitheroe Castle and the Grand Hotel, the Ribble Valley Jazz Festival has a Street Festival, Bandstand Gigs, a Blues Stage and a Buskers Stage. The May Day Bank Holiday event (**April 28-May 2**) has developed as a community-based event with Arts Council England support. Over 50 bands and 450 musicians are making their way to Lancashire's beautiful Ribble Valley, with headliners including Courtney Pine and Zoe Rahman, Claire Martin with Ray Gelato, Martin Taylor and Arun Ghosh.

[www.rvjazzandblues.co.uk](http://www.rvjazzandblues.co.uk)



Alan Barnes

## SOLIHULL JOINS BIRMINGHAM

In local politics the Borough of Solihull is always keen to differentiate itself from its big brother, the neighbouring City of Birmingham, but as of 2016 the two jazz festivals are to become one. In recent years the Solihull BID has run a very successful Spring Bank Holiday Festival, mainly consisting of all-day jazz on open stages in the town centre, and booked by Big Bear Music, directors of the Birmingham festival. This July the Solihull Jazz Festival will be integrated into the Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival which already runs at not far off 200 performances, nearly all free, thus giving the opportunity for all-day jazz over an even wider area, though the Birmingham Festival has long reached out to neighbouring outposts - in the Black Country, for instance. A further temporary change this year: as usually happens when there is a clash with a major football competition, the festival moves from early July, so the first **Birmingham and Solihull Jazz and Blues Festival** takes place from **July 15 to 24, 2016**. One thing never changes, the number of European jazzers who return year on year as Birmingham festival favourites (plus a few new ones each year), so fans of Pepper and the Jellies, Les Zauto Stompers and the rest will not be disappointed.

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



Pepper &amp; The Jellies

## JAZZ IN THE GARDEN

Jazz festivals take so many varied forms - from breezy weekends at the seaside to big city events to taking over half the licensed premises of a small town - that it's a real delight to welcome what bids fair to be a jazz festival with difference. The first **Sugnall Jazz and Blues (July 22-24)** takes place in Sugnall Walled Garden, a historic garden nearly 300 years old which already hosts a wide variety of events from traditional spoon carving to a Burns Night supper, from plant hunting to a Great Gin Event! The jazz festival will be by ticket on a daily basis, with the Saturday of the festival featuring no fewer than seven concerts. The programme will include such bands as Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen and King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys.

[www.sugnallwalledgarden.co.uk](http://www.sugnallwalledgarden.co.uk)



King Pleasure &amp; The Biscuit Boys

## JAMIE AT CHELTENHAM

Singing star Jamie Cullum is again Guest Director of the **Cheltenham Jazz Festival (April 27-May 2)**, a guarantee of continuing quality for one of the country's most highly rated and comprehensive jazz festivals. Unusual in operating under the umbrella of a whole raft of festivals in a town uniquely suited to the festival experience, the jazz festival is hosted in a tented village in Montpellier Gardens, with Big Top Stage, Jazz Arena and food, drink and market area. American visitors already confirmed include Grammy-nominated trumpeter Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, New Yorkers Tim Berne's Snakeoil, David Sanborn's Electric Band and the Becca Stevens Band, led by a rising singer-songwriter. A major new project is *Let it be Told*, exploring the music of South African exiles and receiving its UK premiere from composer Julian Arguelles, the Frankfurt Radio Big Band, Django Bates and Steve Arguelles.

[www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz](http://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz)



Jamie Cullum

## A FESTIVAL BEFORE A FESTIVAL

Most people would consider a series of seven concerts, featuring the likes of the Bohem Ragtime Jazz Band, Clare Teal, the Pasadena Roof Orchestra, Keith Nichols and Dom Pipkin, Enrico Tomasso and Pete Long, and Jeff Barnhart and Spats Langham, a pretty good festival in itself. However, that's just the prelude to the **25th Jennings Keswick Jazz Festival (May 12-15)**. From May 8 the Theatre by the Lake hands over its main auditorium and studio theatre to an excellent programme of jazz concerts, then on May 12 the main event starts! Described as the UK's largest celebration of New Orleans and traditional jazz, mainstream and swing, Keswick does its celebrating in every way possible, from talks to dance classes to parades through the town, with plenty of tribute and repertory concerts alongside a line-up of regular bands that fits firmly into the 'too numerous to mention' category.

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



Clare Teal



Georgia Mancio



Enrico Tomasso

**BESIDE THE SEASIDE**

There are several excellent, popular and long-running jazz festivals in coastal towns and resorts, but the **Scarborough Jazz Festival (September 23-25)** remains unique. The setting in the splendid Spa complex reminds us that Scarborough is the quintessential Victorian resort - and the patter of compere Alan Barnes evokes memories of many an end-of-pier comedian! Not that there's anything remotely old-fashioned about the music, including Alan himself playing in an all-star line-up with Mark Nightingale and Steve Waterman. Scarborough runs to a tight schedule, the main concerts all in the main Spa Hall, host to a succession of goodies throughout the three days. As always this year's Scarborough festival has plenty of established favourites (Liane Carroll, Georgia Mancio, Benn Clatworthy, Dave O'Higgins) alongside unexpected delights. *Charlie Parker on Dial* seems especially interesting: directed by Alex Webb, film combined with the music of a sextet including Nat Facey and Freddy Gavita.

[www.scarboroughspa.co.uk](http://www.scarboroughspa.co.uk)

**48 IN 31**

The **Upton-upon-Severn Jazz Festival**, now in its 31st year, crams what a quick computation tots up as 48 bands or solo performers in its one-evening-and-three-days time-slot (**June 23-26**). Of course jazz chameleons such as Alan Barnes and Keith Nichols appear in various different settings! The nine venues for Upton include four marquees and a riverboat and extra events include dance classes, parades and a church service. International performers include the piano duo Stephanie Trick and Paolo Alderighi and two bands from France, the Hot Antic Jazz Band and the Hippocampus Jass Gang. Among many favourites from Enrico Tomasso's Festival Band to Tom Langham's Hot Fingers, the Good Ol' Spit and Dribble Jass Band stands out as the oddest name!

[www.uptonjazz.co.uk](http://www.uptonjazz.co.uk)



Osian Roberts (r), with Frank Basile and Steve Fishwick

**JAZZ ON A WINTER'S WEEKEND: SOUTHPORT**

FEBRUARY 5-7

Two years ago Geoff Matthews, Director of the Southport Jazz on a Winter's Weekend, surprised everyone by announcing that he was stepping down, with no successor in view. This rather emotional response was brought about by his frustration at lack of support, and he soon did an about turn. This year, in very different mood, he made a similar announcement, but this time the succession is assured, with Neil Hughes of Altrincham's Cinnamon Club taking over. As of now he has no intention of making fundamental changes on the basis of 'If it ain't broke...'

Geoff Matthews' main achievement over 12 years has been to achieve remarkable audience figures while bringing in musicians new to the patrons alongside some tried and trusted favourites. This year two of the 11 main concerts were total sell-outs, most of the others not far off, and, as usual, the only thin attendances were during the late night concerts where, round about midnight, patrons started voting for sleep. There are plenty of subsidiary reasons for this high level of audience support (the Royal Clifton Hotel is a real bonus), but the main one has been patrons' trust in the organisers to bring in exciting musicians with the certainty that they will like at least some of them. To carry that on will be Neil Hughes' biggest challenge - and, promisingly, one of the hits of the 2016 weekend was a young singer/songwriter/saxophonist whom he had already booked at the Cinnamon Club.

Saturday was the day of the Scandinavian saxes. First up was the wonderful Mads Mathias. In a slightly less cutting-edge weekend than usual, the first sensation was an amiable young Dane who writes songs mostly in a conversational idiomatic English lyrics and attractive melodies, as well as playing coolly swinging tenor sax. Mads manages the feat of being simultaneously old-fashioned and original. On *My Favourite Kind of Girl* he had the jaunty insouciance of a Harry Connick Jr, *If I Were a Dancer* carried the conviction of a real situation recounted with self-deprecating wit, *Hen Pecked Man* was downright funny. Cleverest of all was *Fool for Love*, with adroit word-play and a slightly more complicated structure. Apart from the occasional over-ambitious tag, Mads kept it simple vocally, resisting the temptation to scat until the second half and, when he did, he picked the right song and scatted accurately and imaginatively. *Tea for Two* began with an expressive account of the verse (Mads' regard for words, his own or someone else's, was always obvious), then at increased tempo - not quite Anita O'Day country - scat choruses followed inevitably.

And Mads had a surprise for us - or, rather, his accomplished pianist Peter Rosendal did in the form of a flugabone which is a variant on the trombone developed for use in marching bands - and for two numbers the quartet offered a stylish reminder of the piano-less Mulligan Quartet with Bob Brookmeyer. Completing the quartet on what was generally a good weekend for bassists and drummers were the excellent Morten Ankarfeldt and, perfectly at home after 24 hours in the band, James Maddren.

It's difficult to imagine anybody not enjoying Mads' set, but the other Scandinavian saxist was a real opinion divider. It was Marius Neset's third visit to the Southport festival and he hasn't become any less uncompromising. He is a prodigious technician and again he sounded as though he was looking to discover and bring out every sound you could make with a tenor sax. Everything about Marius is in terms of contrasts. He received the biggest ovation of the weekend, but had more non-returnees after the interval than any other concert. He was the musician most likely to be seeking out quiet fragments of sound alone on stage and the musician who, with his quartet, produced the loudest assault on the ears. He is the ultimate vindication of Geoff Matthews' booking policy: he created a stir, 'What did you think of Marius Neset?' became the question of the weekend.

Most of Marius' numbers represent, to use a modern cliché, a journey. The first half began with pianist Ivo Neame establishing a rhythm in repeated patterns of sound; the second half began with Marius alone on stage trying out saxophone phrases. Each built into a sequence of melodies or sound pictures, some of them gently melodic or with an outdoor Nordic feel. This was typical of the whole concert. Sadly, especially in the second half, the final stage of the journey was often too explosive, too long, too lacking in melody. One short beautiful exception began with Marius establishing the rhythm simply by tapping the keys and the mouthpiece, oddly mesmeric, before Ivo's piano meshed in, sounding like Abdullah Ibrahim in meditative mood. Amazingly Ivo, bassist Petter Eldh and drummer Anton Eger played throughout as though working with a wayward genius is a walk in the park.

Sunday was home-grown day and included two outstanding sell-out concerts. The David Newton-Iain Dixon Quartet was notable for reviving the music from a long-gone album, *DNA*, and also for the reappearance of Matt Miles, bassist on the original album and teaming up with his erstwhile colleague Steve Brown as though the missing years had never been

- nothing official, but the consensus of informed opinion was that we will now see more of Matt once more. *DNA* was full of fine Dave Newton compositions, now seldom heard, and the whole concert was marked by Iain's impeccable control and lyricism and Dave's inventiveness and ability to switch from delicate sensitivity to two-handed attack. A straw poll among the *cognoscenti* found nothing better over the weekend than the pair's improvisations on *All the Things You Are*.

Barnes-O'Higgins and the Sax Section hardly needs any comment beyond listing a few songs (Benny Carter's *Doozy* and *Just a Mood, Topsy, Ko Ko and Our Delight*) and one or two of the musicians: Robert Fowler switching to alto as to the manner born, Karen Sharp on baritone, to me always her most expressive instrument, the muscular and flexible rhythm of Geoff Gascoyne and Sebastiaan de Krom. Highlights included Dave O'Higgins' transcription of Sonny Stitt and Dexter Gordon solos for the section.

Other brief snapshots from a festival where every concert was good, but not all were memorable: the amazing response of a huge late-night audience to Alec Dankworth's Spanish Accents (my first sight of a Spanish dancer on stage at a jazz concert); Osian Roberts, by far the most compelling soloist in an Anglo-American hard bop sextet; the quality of individual musicians in the RNCM Big Band, alto saxist Caitlin Laing and drummer Anthony Mann for two.

And then the perfect finale: established star (Jim Mullen) with talented young musician (Neil Burns), made the more poignant by the fact that Jim has mentored Neil for years and Robert Burns, the excellent resident photographer at Southport, is Neil's father. The concert took off from the moment that Jim set about *Just Friends* with a flood of notes and quotes. Neil gained in assurance by the minute and emerged as a real talent, Jim's wife Zoe dropped by for a few well-sung numbers and the Matthews era wound down in the right style.

RON SIMPSON

**JAZZ ON THE GOLD COAST**

Bude in Cornwall received a Gold Award for a coastal resort in last year's British travel awards, but that's by no means the only reason for a visit in August. The **Bude Jazz Festival (August 30-September 2)** spreads through nine venues from hotels to night clubs to golf club to castle, all within walking distance of the town centre. As always, one of the country's longest established and most popular festivals has a seemingly endless list of the best in British traditional jazz, even though the organisers express the ecumenical hope that 'modernists' will find something to enjoy. Take your pick from Jeremy Huggett's Band of Gold, Richard Leach's Seven Stars of Jazz, the Bateman Brothers Jazz Band, the Remi Harris Trio, Kevin Grenfell's Jazz Giants, Dave Moorwood's Big Bear Stompers, and many more....

[www.jazzfestivalbude.co.uk](http://www.jazzfestivalbude.co.uk)



Remi Harris

**THAT'S NOT ALL**

Annette Hanshaw was the perky teenage singer the world fell in love with in the last 1920s, with her cute little sign-off to songs, 'That's all.' As time has passed, she has been recognised more as a genuine jazz singer and less as a genuine teenage phenomenon - she had taken nine years off her age! One of the delights of **Mike Durham's Classic Jazz Party** at the Village Hotel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (**November 4-6**) is the enterprising choice of themed and tribute programmes prepared, transcribed, arranged and played by a line-up of top classic jazz stylists from all over the world - and Annette Hanshaw is one of this year's less predictable selections, alongside the likes of UK-based bandleaders Jack Hylton and Fred Elizalde, West Coast Territory Bands and the superb arranger Don Redman. Whitley Bay doesn't neglect the obvious, either, and audiences can enjoy the music of Hoagy Carmichael, Johnny Dodds, Ragtime and the Ellington Small Groups.

[www.whitleybayjazzfest.org](http://www.whitleybayjazzfest.org)



Annette Hanshaw



## AMEEN SALEM

## THE GROOVE LAB

Viva Veneto Jazz VVJ103 78:20

Ameen Salem is accomplished on both acoustic and electric bass, and leads a nonet which includes Cyrus Chestnut on piano, Stacey Dillard on tenor and soprano saxes and Roy Hargreaves on trumpet and flugelhorn. The opening title *Korinthis* features Dillard on tenor saxophone who emphasises the riffy theme opening the door for Salem's solo on upright bass, with versatile finger work before Dillard returns with an energetic solo on tenor and Chestnut lets rip on piano. A good start; the second track *Ephinany* opens with chorded electric keyboard which introduces Dillard on soprano saxophone; this allows Chestnut to solo, but sadly the electronics soon submerge his undoubted personality (which is obvious on his own recordings).

As the listener moves through the recording, it becomes increasingly clear that the musicians are repeating familiar patterns and any prospect of improvisation is stifled by the floating patterns set up by the rhythm. All titles have been composed or jointly composed by Saleem and, it must be said, monotony begins to creep in by the mid-way mark.

## GREG MURPHY

## THE JONATHAN VINTEN TRIO

## LULLABY OF THE LEAVES

www.jonathanvinten.com 73:27

A while back, Jonathan was playing driving four-fisted piano in John Chilton's Footwarmers, supporting (perhaps in more ways than one) the inimitable George Melly. I seem to remember he was studying Art Tatum transcriptions at the time, an influence which is still evident on this CD. But he has clearly extended his researches beyond that pianistic icon so that, on this disc, you will also hear an eclectic mix of chordal passages not unlike Red Garland, bits of Erroll Garner, right-hand tremolos à la Jess Stacy and arpeggio patterns

reminiscent of Teddy Wilson. Add to this flexibility, a nice interaction with his fellow musicians and you have a tasteful programme of standards that might have graced the dining room of a New York hotel or after-hours club.

The excellent bass playing of Steve Thompson and the subtle, unobtrusive drumming of the ubiquitous Bobby Worth contribute greatly to the relaxed atmosphere of the session, leaving you with the feeling that you are in safe hands.

Yet there are some surprises. The unusual chord progression underlying *All The Things You Are* for example and the two-handed piano figure while double bass plays the theme on *Caravan*. On *Sweet And Lovely* the roles are reversed so that the bass plays an interesting figure behind the piano theme, the figure recurring in the solos to give a nice continuity. Chopin's Prelude in C minor is played straight and with great sensitivity by Jonathan before evolving unexpectedly into a bright samba. 15 satisfying standards.

Don't expect pyrotechnics, just sit back, relax and enjoy.

## HUGH LEDIGO

## MALIJA

## THE DAY I HAD EVERYTHING

Edition EDN1064 56:05

Maliija are a drummerless trio comprising saxophonist Mark Lockheart, double-bassist Jasper Høiby, and the pianist Liam Noble. The cohesion to be heard here suggests familiarity with each other's work, (indeed, they have worked together in various ensembles), so easily do they establish a rapport.

Blues follows regular blues harmony for Lockheart to quietly explore, whilst *Squared* is a jaunty, bluegrass jangle; *Almost A Tango* finds bass and keyboard setting a rhythm that suggests free jazz, and *One Of Us* is reminiscent of the classic album *Focus* with a Stan Getz-like sound and the disciplined work of the Ligeti String Quartet; Lockheart



Jonathan Vinten

weaves his improvisations around the string quartet to great effect, to make this highlight of the album.

Høiby and Noble set such emphatic rhythm rolling that the absence of a drummer is barely noticeable and the solo work is terrific; all three musicians compel attention throughout, making this an outstanding release.

## GREG MURPHY

## BILL WATROUS

## CORONARY TROMBOSSA!

Progressive PCD – 7153 48.59

We reviewed an earlier Progressive release by US trombonist Bill Watrous in *Jazz Rag* 137 and here's another from the same recording session with the backing quartet unchanged. This feast of virtuoso trombone playing extends in fact over three separate albums. Originally recorded for producer Harry Lim's Famous Door label in Hollywood in December 1980, they have all been reissued by Progressive, one of the late George Buck's New Orleans-based labels now overseen by Lars Edegran.

His playing informed by the innovations first offered by JJ Johnson, Watrous seldom dips into the trombone's lower register and is not one to smear or rough up a note. Instead, he has the kind of advanced technique that enables him to achieve trumpet-like facility on a fast-moving piece or to present a ballad feature like *Blue and Sentimental* with a velvety tonal smoothness and consistency that

must make other trombonists despair. He performs with similar eloquence on the lovely *Goodbye* by Gordon Jenkins and I liked his *Pig Farm*, a perky blues with pianist Jim Cox changing over to Fender Rhodes where Watrous bubbles along like a simmering pot. His is the principal voice heard here, his accompanists relatively innocuous but always appropriately supportive. A trombone master-class by a superlative technician.

## PETER VACHER

## HUGH LEDIGO

## SWING THING

HCL 005 59.15

Hugh Ledigo, more usually on these pages as a reviewer, is best known currently as a pianist for his work with the Kenny/Keith Ball Band, but *Swing Thing* shows the breadth of his talents. 10 of 11 tracks are his compositions and his poised and thoughtful playing sets the tone for the proceedings, though he never hogs the spotlight: the other members of a top-class quintet get plenty of solo space. I suppose the album's default position is defined by the title, but there is plenty of variety of composition and performance. The title track kicks off in Goodman small group style, the impressively versatile Julian Marc Stringle doing the clarinet honours; *Magnolia* reminds the listener of that foggy day in London and the inspiration for *Honeysuckle Who?* is pretty obvious! On the other hand the excellent *Mambo de los Ledigos* is an attractive melody in quite a

different style, with superb guitar from Dominic Ashworth and the other-worldly sound of Stringle's bass clarinet. Julian's big-toned tenor sax is first heard on *One for the Family* which is as straightforward as *Stringle Theory* is oblique and fragmentary. With an interesting choice of material (including a rather odd choice of sign-off track, a deconstruction of *Strawberry Fair*) and fine soloists supported by a classy rhythm team (Dave Green and Mike Bradley), *Swing Thing* is highly recommendable.

## RON SIMPSON

## BARNES / O'HIGGINS &amp; THE SAX SECTION

## OH GEE!

Woodville WVCD 146 63.04

I'm reviewing this album just days after hearing a virtually identical line up perform live at the Southport Winter festival and a very pleasing noise they made. Happily that rewarding experience is further confirmed by the performances that make up their album.

The co-leaders dreamed up the idea of creating an all saxophone band plus rhythm, looked for the right kind of tunes and set to it. There's a commendable air of briskness evident throughout the session and it is obvious that all concerned took great pleasure in bringing off these often challenging charts so successfully. Barnes on alto, soprano or clarinet and O'Higgins on tenor are prominent obviously but they don't hog things, allowing their section chums, Sammy Mayne on alto, tenorist Judith O'Higgins [Mrs O'Higgins to you] and

Karen Sharp on baritone to take their chances too.

It was a good idea to open with the bright-sounding *Doozy* by Benny Carter and to lift his original arrangement, each player taking turns, the section blend spot-on, pianist Robin Aspland again impressing with his lucidity and swing. Just hearing them strut through *The Chase* in Dave O'Higgins's bracing re-harmonisation of the original Dexter Gordon solo is like an exercise in total exhilaration, the ensemble like a miniature big band, Seb De Krom on drums and bassist Adam King swinging hard. No real need to focus on any one soloist over the others since each rises to every occasion. It's the sense of all for one and one for all that made the live set so enjoyable – the same goes for the album as well. Ten tracks, varied and vital, but all marked by creative zest and fine playing. Get this album now.

## PETER VACHER

## JACKIE PARIS

## THE LYRICS OF IRA GERSHWIN/ THE SONG IS PARIS

Fresh Sound Records FSR-CD 878 69.58

Many years ago I heard a couple of interesting songs by Jackie Paris and remember liking his concept, though I never had an album by him. Time changes things, and now these two sessions from 1960 and 1962 in New York present a bit of a reviewing problem.

It was a bright idea to take a dozen sets of lyrics that Ira Gershwin supplied to music by



Jackie Paris



## Line up Announced!

ArtepHis	Liane Carroll
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composers other than his brother George. I've only encountered four of them before - in better treatments. The other eight have some very busy words to fit into the three-minute slots that were mostly the norm then, though he gives the task his all. He presents a powerful, perhaps theatrical voice, but there's an unavoidably dated feel to it all, and his very earnestness just palls after a while.

The 11 performances of *The Song Is Paris* are in different vein, if not necessarily in a good way. The backgrounds on the first six are more diverse, though the woodwind/strings ambience gets rather irritating. Some increased jazziness is evident, particularly in the ultimate blues/song.

That brings us to five final tracks on which Jackie obviously felt he was really getting down into it - his sole accompanists being Hank Jones on piano, George Duvivier on bass and Roy Haynes on drums. You shouldn't go far wrong with those ace swingers, and he was clearly having fun, indicated by the frequent 'uh-huh's he seemingly needs to

utter. He should have been advised against wasting one track by not singing, but playing distinctly average acoustic guitar. The two I enjoyed are *Cherry* and a good jazzing-up of Bernstein's *Tonight*.

Jackie Paris lived till 2004, but his jazz-singer era was the 'fifties and 'sixties. As the note says: 'He never built up the kind of in-group following other singers did'. I think this CD illustrates why.

LEST TOMKINS

## CARL PERKINS

INTRODUCING CARL PERKINS

Phono 870233 75.11

An alcoholic heroin addict with a deformed left arm which forced him to hold his left hand parallel to the keyboard and, on occasion, use his elbow as well as his fingers! Not a propitious start for an aspiring musician. Carl Perkins nevertheless achieved considerable eminence during his brief career in the 'Fifties. He

was technically the equal of any of his contemporaries and, though not without a certain affinity with Bud Powell, his light, crisp percussiveness often displays, on this disc, a slightly choppy delivery reminiscent of his fellow West coast performer Russ Freeman. Underlying these influences, though, is a very personal understanding of the blues idiom.

The first half of the CD is a re-issue of Perkins' only session under his own leadership *Introducing Carl Perkins*. He is supported by West Coast stalwarts Leroy Vinnegar on bass and drummer Lawrence Marable. Of the eleven tracks, five show the pianist as a quite distinctive composer of jazz themes. Other than Gillespie's *Woody 'n' You*, the remaining numbers are American Song Book standards. Perkins' solo work is forthright, fluent and very much in the contemporary vein, ably propelled by drums and bass, though the latter shows a marked lack of adventurousness in his own solos.

Then there are four unaccompanied ballads both

romantic and rhapsodic and quite remarkable considering his physical disadvantages.

On the final tracks, mostly led by guitarist Oscar Moore, Perkins demonstrates his ability to integrate with another front line instrument, and there are some moments of truly exciting, swinging, blues-infused jazz at its best.

HUGH LEDIGO

## SUE MCCREETH

QUEER BIRD

Tru-Nu TNCD354 53.00

I didn't know Ms McCreeth before but I'm glad that I do now. She has a rather low-pitched vocal stance and sings in what annotator Dave Gelly describes as 'a deceptively simple style'. She's aided by a piano-less group, with just Pat McCarthy on acoustic guitar and bassist Andy Cleynert for company plus a percussionist. While this might seem like a bare-bones accompaniment, trumpeter Martin Shaw is present on a

number of tracks and adds great value whenever he appears, bringing his gift for lyric clarity, this especially evident on his opening solo on the rather sombre setting of *Nuages* by Delius.

McCreeth's range is limited as is her animation but no matter for she has made some interesting song choices and taken care with her settings. That said her version of Alison Rayner's title track is quite perky, from the wordless harmonised vocal line through to the shared solos between Shaw and McCarthy, the percussion pattering along. Thereafter, it's her husky, slightly nasal sound that predominates, the words carefully enunciated, no flights of fancy offered, rather a respect for the melody and the lyrics that compels attention. Interesting music with Shaw taking the honours for me.

PETER VACHER

## SACKVILLE ALL STARS

SATURDAY NIGHT FUNCTION

Sackville Recordings SKCD2-3028 43.25

All Star jam sessions have probably been around as long as jazz itself, an opportunity for like-minded musos to strike sparks off each other. The Sackville All Stars are highly accomplished jazzers, though the fact that four of the musicians shared a residency at the time, probably helped to ensure the uniform quality of these tracks.

Jim Galloway, a versatile reeds man, plays soprano with great command and not a little similarity to Hodges. He also contributes some excellent solos on baritone in a swinging pre-Mulligan style while reserving his tenor for theme statements, matching his tone with the big sound of Buddy Tate, the fifth member of the group. Tate's beefy yet melodic tenor makes a major contribution to the proceedings, recalling his prolonged spell with the Basie Band.

The distinctive, blues-oriented piano of Jay McShann works well with the muscular power of the

horns, and the bass/drums team of Don Thompson and Terry Clarke are equally at home.

Apart from a three-part harmony opening chorus (two horns and bowed bass) on *Russian Lullaby* which sounds more like a New Orleans funeral, there are no elaborate arrangements, the emphasis resting on solo power. Despite a recording date of 1981, the repertoire is drawn mostly from the likes of Ellington, Harry Edison, Hodges, with a sprinkling of standards. Similarly, the stylistic approach derives from an earlier generation but the result is five guys doing what they do best. And a very good best it is.

HUGH LEDIGO

## IVAN MAZUZE

UBUNTU

Losen Records LOS 139-2 53.47

Ivan Mazuze is a native of Mozambique, currently based in Norway; *Ubuntu* is his fourth album and here his flute, alto, tenor and soprano saxophones are complemented by guitarist Jacob Young, pianists Michael Bloch and Siliso Makalisa, bassist Peter Ndala, drummer Frank Paco and, on *Celebration*, Sidiki Camara using the Balafon (a wooden xylophone-like device for percussive effects).

The album opens with the sounds of children laughing before Mazuze's haunting tone on soprano saxophone introduces *Inta Mullhangela*; the gentle phrasing produces a soporific effect of which the faded ending is the only jarring effect. The air of well-being is carried over onto *Dancing with Malata*; the dexterity of Mazuze's saxophone is backed by some fine drumming by Frank Paco and the rhythmic underpinning of bassist Peter Ndala. The title track follows with some intriguing guitar work by Jacob Young, who performs a duet with Mazuze's soprano on *My Two Northern Lights*, perhaps the album's stand-out track.

The quality of the compositions is notable, full of melodic content and each gives ample opportunity for improvisation whilst the bass and drums are outstanding,

making their own statements without becoming overbearing. *Ubuntu* is an outstanding album, recommended without reservation.

GREG MURPHY

## DOLO COKER

CALIFORNIA HARD

Xanadu Master Edition 906081 51.11

Pianist Dolo Coker teamed effectively with alto wizard Art Pepper on *Intensity* in 1960. Sixteen years later they were reunited, along with the same drummer, Frank Butler, plus Leroy Vinnegar on bass and Blue Mitchell on trumpet and flugelhorn for this Xanadu album in Dolo's name. It was, of course, intended to showcase Dolo's keyboard work, but as a declared devotee of Pepper power, I'm disappointed that its hearing is limited here.

The lively Coker opener has Art on tenor, confirming that I prefer him on alto, on which he fully exploits the solo space on three tracks, including his own uppish

blues, *Mr Yohe*. Most of another track is devoted to an incredibly over-long Butler drum demo. The two remaining items are very pleasant pianistics in trio and solo settings.

LES TOMKINS

## COLEMAN HAWKINS AND RAY BRYANT

COMPLETE RECORDINGS

Solar Records 4569966 3 CDs 78:57/76:31/76:18

Hawkins almost singlehandedly dragged the tenor saxophone out of the slap-tongue, ricky-ticky 'twenties to establish it as a major voice in jazz. He created a free-floating, sometimes rhapsodic style, by turns robust and searing, smooth and tender.

Bryant, a consistent and immaculate pianist, is not particularly modern for his time, despite recording with such as Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins but, like Hawkins, he's able to fuse his blues-based, gospel-tinged delivery with cohorts of any persuasion. A strong soloist,

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he is also a highly sympathetic accompanist.

CD1 finds the two principals in company with guitarist Kenny Burrell, one of the most fluent, constructive performers of his period. There's a very satisfying compatibility about this line-up and its programme of standards and originals.

After seven tracks, Tiny Grimes takes the guitar chair. His heavily blues-inclined style makes for a preponderance of originals in a less premeditated, but nonetheless the less exciting session.

On CD2 Charlie Shavers joins the line-up for six tracks, lending a distinct Jazz At The Philharmonic flavour to the proceedings. The remains of CD2 and three tracks of the final disc feature a highly arranged eight-piece aggregate. Strangely, though the line-up includes modernists Pepper Adams, Jerome Richardson and Idrees Sulieman, the orchestrations are distinctly 1940-ish. But the solos are excellent.

The balance of CD3 showcases the work of Roy Eldridge whose crowd-raising exploits are a matter of personal taste.

So, three discs full of great solos, lots of good tunes plus numerous 12-bar blues. A wonderful account of where these major talents were, musically, in the 'fifties.

HUGH LEDIGO

PAUL GONSALVES/  
CLARK TERRY  
QUINTET

COMPLETE RECORDINGS

Phono 870240 2 CDs 148.24

Put together two of the most talented members of the Duke Ellington Orchestra and I'm likely to be ecstatic. It happened with this double album, which generously assembles three whole LPs by quintets and four bonus tracks by a sextet, all from the late fifties. The quintet tracks also include fellow Ellingtonians, bassist Jimmy Woode and drummer Sam Woodyard. The

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undoubted stars are the two leaders, with Gonsalves' smooth tenor contrasting nicely with Terry's more precise and sometimes puckish flugelhorn (the sleeve says trumpet but most tracks seem to use flugel).

The performances mix hearty swingers with tender ballads, with strong hints of the blues in many tracks. The repertoire consists mainly of originals by Paul or Clark, plus a few standards and some Ducal classics. One of the quintets (with French pianist Raymond Fol) sensitively takes on Thelonious Monk's tribute to *Pannonica* (twice). Gonsalves goes to town on *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* (with fewer choruses than in the Newport Festival marathon!). Terry excels in such tracks as *Willow Weep for Me* and *Blues for the Champ of Champs*. Gonsalves and Terry take evident pleasure in one another's company – a pleasure that spreads to this listener.

TONY AUGARDE

LARRY YOUNG

IN PARIS

THE ORTF RECORDINGS

Resonance INA HCD-2022  
107.38

The arc of Larry Young's career somewhat resembled that of a comet—a slow gradual ascent, then a masterpiece in the shape of the *Unity* album, with its bold extension of Coltrane's harmonic concepts, according him almost legendary status, and then a slow descent into semi obscurity. Of course, his death at the

ridiculously early age of 38 has robbed us of possibility of a comeback and his recording output has been criminally sparse consisting only of re-issues. However, Zev Feldman of Resonance has persuaded the Paris radio station ORTF to dig down in its vaults and come up with material for two CDs recorded at the peak of the organist's most creative period, 1964 and '65.

Young's greatest claim is that he freed the Hammond organ from the clutches of the formidable Jimmy Smith who, up to that time, had his name written all over the instrument. Young's influences were Coltrane and McCoy Tyner. His was a modal approach in contrast to Smith's bluesy style.

These tracks feature the organist in group settings mainly with long time colleagues Woody Shaw and Nathan Davis with the odd European added on some of the tracks. Shaw is the most dominant player and the music is uncompromisingly relentless and exciting. This is high energy performance and insistently inventive, often taken at a blistering pace. Nathan Davis, on tenor, is not a familiar name to me but he is unfazed in this stellar company inserting himself into the mix easily and soloing with great confidence. (Many of the tracks were recorded under his name.) Young's organ is a surging presence throughout and his staccato lines leap out of the ensembles sparring with Shaw's declamatory horn.

The tunes draw on the musicians for their source and are

substantial. *La Valse Grise*, a sixteen minute exploration in 6/8 time, is mesmerising and *Larry's Blues* with Young on the unfamiliar piano in a trio format is a darkly, disturbing piece.

The late Jack Bruce, of Cream fame, assessed Young as 'the greatest musician I have ever played with'. Quite a tribute.

JOHN MARTIN

TEDDY EDWARDS

FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS

Avid Jazz AMSC 1179  
76.59/81.11

Veteran Los Angeles-based bopper Edwards (1924-2003) has not been that well served for reissues so this four-album double set from Avid is especially welcome. No longer revitalised by Dave Bennett's expert touch, the sound is nonetheless mostly satisfactory, the four LPs reissued comprising *Teddy's Ready*, recorded in 1960 for Contemporary, *Sunset Eyes* from 1959 and 1960 on Pacific Jazz, Contemporary's 1961 Edwards-Howard McGhee reunion *Together Again and Good Gravy* also from 1961 and again on Lester Koenig's Contemporary label.

The opening album was once named as his favourite recording by Edwards and it's easy to see why. He's fronting a quartet with local associates Joe Castro on piano, bassist Leroy Vinegar and the great drummer Billy Higgins and it's clear from the opening blues that these are Teddy's kind of people, tuned in to what he wanted to do and at one with him. He was in his prime then, able to spin out clever extemporisations, with Higgins and Vinegar laying down perfect time and Castro always lively if not in the premier league for ideas. *Sunset Eyes* is bluesier, the tone deeper, with more emphasis on Teddy's own tunes, most notably the title piece, a song much used by other players and here played over a Latin beat. The Penguin Guiders thought the Edwards & McGhee reunion one of the best mainstream albums of the day and with Phineas Newborn on piano, bassist Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen on drums,

who is to say they were wrong? The co-principals had been associates in LA's first ever bebop band in the 1940s and they clearly relished this get-together; McGhee in more settled form that was to be the case with his later albums. He was a challenging player, always keen to place his hat in the ring. It's here that Bennett might have served the sound better as it lacks depth but no matter, this is valuable music as is *Good Gravy*, again with Newborn and Vinegar and back to the quartet format that Edwards always most enjoyed.

PETER VACHER

MACK AVENUE  
SUPERBAND

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Mack Avenue Records MAC 106  
55.11

Lively free swinging jazz from last year's Detroit Jazz Festival by this six piece with guest Gary Burton. Organised annually by master bassist Christian McBride, it is what you would expect from an assorted group of musicians gathered together for a one-off occasion—an opportunity to let go and enjoy themselves.

Not that the music is scrappy or meretricious but none of these events can ever be totally organised. As it is the group acquits itself well and serves up a very palatable fare of enterprising contemporary jazz.

Apart from Burton and McBride, the players are not well known although Kirk Whalum's brawny tenor has contributed to a few important recording dates. Freddy Hendrix plays a spiky trumpet with a startling range, straying up in the stratosphere much of the time.

Altoist Tia Fuller is a delight. She has a forceful, keening tone on the faster numbers and an assured command on the full range of the instrument which suggests she may have been listening to Johnny Hodges. In contrast, her treatment of her own composition *Decisive Steps* is a thoughtful, controlled reverie.

Most notable is pianist Christian Sands. A calm, reflective soul who refuses to get hysterical on the more flag-waving efforts which like most festival performances seem to be mandatory. He is a musician who dictates his own pace.

McBride keeps a lid on tendencies towards any J.A.T.P. rumpuses and Gary Burton is always a guarantee of sheer quality at any event and his exposition of his own composition *All You Have To Be Is You* is an exemplary exercise in sheer class.

Bravely, the band does not pander to the festival audience with tried and overdone 'reliables' but does its own stuff, which is refreshing.

The only number untypical in an musically solid set, and the most successful with the festival audience, is *Up*, the closing number; a rousing, solo-loaded affair.

JOHN MARTIN

CYRILLE AIMEE

LET'S GET LOST

Mack Avenue MAC 1097  
42.20

As I have hailed Madeleine Peyroux, then Cecile McLorin Salvant, now I hail a third brilliant Franco-American performer - Cyrille Aimee - an equally notable talent. For me, these 13 tracks are unremittingly pleasurable listening. Each constituent part is top-notch.

First the lady herself - Cyrille has a distinctive jazz style and sound, that generates happiness. Her enjoyment of what she does is palpable, and she identifies fully with the aura of each song, embellishing where appropriate with authentic musical scat. Also there is her very evident empathy with her accompaniment. Here it is the second valuable element, pared satisfyingly down just to two guitars, bass and drums. Acoustic guitarists Adrien Moignard and Michael Valeanu evoke a Djangoesque feel, and solo creditably here and there. Bassist Sam Anning and drummer Rajiv Jayaweera enhance all the

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George Mraz

modes, whether swinging or otherwise.

The third and vital ingredient is the choice of material. A Sondheim show tune, *Live Alone And Like It* and such worthy standards as *Three Little Words*, *Lazy Afternoon* and *Let's Get Lost* are vividly brought to life. Just one read-through of *That Old Feeling* is a feelingful gem in itself. Cyrille's four originals display another aspect of her command. *Samois A Moi* is a romantic ballad sung enchantingly in French. Three in English have clever lyrics and tell compelling stories. *Words* is a forceful closer to an outstanding album.

LES TOMKINS

AL COHN/DEXTER GORDON

TRUE BLUE/SILVER BLUE

*Elemental 906080 2 CDs*  
80.02

This double CD contains two LPs recorded on one day in 1976. Producer Don Schlitten wanted to welcome Dexter Gordon back to the US after a 14-year stint in Copenhagen. He planned a jam session featuring Dexter with another tenorist (Al Cohn), trumpeters Blue Mitchell and Sam Noto, and a rhythm section that was prominent in Cannonball Adderley's quintet – Barry Harris, Sam Jones and Louis Hayes. The listing of the leaders' names is strange, as the

real star of the session is supposedly Dexter Gordon, although he combines superbly in an unaccompanied duet with Al Cohn in *On the Trail*.

Each LP comprised three long tracks with long solos, which you may feel outlast your patience, despite noteworthy contributions from Blue Mitchell and Barry Harris. There are some awkward moments, like the cluttered ensemble which opens *Lady Bird*. And Louis Hayes' busy drumming can be intrusive. But ballads like *How Deep Is The Ocean?* (Al Cohn excellent here) show that these musicians can deliver sensitive readings of standards. Basically this is an enjoyable album for anyone who likes jazzmen improvising at length on a variety of material in a relaxed, jam session atmosphere.

TONY AUGARDE

DAVID GORDON TRIO

ALEXANDER SCRIBIN'S RAGTIME BAND

*Mister Sam Records SAMCD*  
004 72.21

I was already familiar with *Alexander Scriabin's Ragtime Band* from an advance copy, but the final commercial release is a more polished affair, both in the disposition of the music and in the liner notes which are most helpful with what is a challenging and sometimes perplexing album.

It is not, however, weighty or gloomy despite the ominous opening track, *Praeludium Mysterium*. The title track, placed second, makes it clear that requirements for the ideal listener include a sense of humour as well as an open mind and a keen ear – and, as optional extra, a knowledge of Scriabin's music. Berlin's classic bounces along with witty new words apropos Scriabin, a raggy rhythm and plenty of chords unknown to Tin Pan Alley.

Of 14 tracks nine are adapted for jazz trio (with Jonty Fisher bass and Paul Cavaciuti drums) by pianist David Gordon from the works of Alexander Scriabin, the controversial Russian composer who died 100 years before this recording was made in 2015. In many cases the non-Scriabin tracks are among the most appealing, Debussy's *Cakewalk* from *Children's Corner*, elusively melodic and jauntily rhythmic. Of three pieces from Central and South America, Romeu's danzon *Tres Lindas Cubanas* is particularly delightful. Gordon's affinity with Latin music – his previous CD on Nimbus was of Latin music – shows in several of the Scriabin adaptations such as the Opus 8 *Famous Etude* re-cast totally successfully as a rumba. On this album Gordon proves himself a fluent improviser with the touch and artistic hinterland of a classical pianist.

RON SIMPSON

GEORGE MRAZ TRIO

PLUCKING AND BOWING

*Progressive PCD 7038 43.57*

George Mraz's double bass is foremost from the start on this 1978 CD, as he introduces *Giant Steps* with some pizzicato. There's a lot of plucking and bowing on this album, and the bass is recorded well up in the mix. You may be convinced of the excellent sound quality when the drums suddenly speed from one speaker to the other.

So this might be a conventional piano-trio album except for the prominence of the bass. But pianist Tom Garvin and drummer Peter Donald fulfil their roles admirably, and are each given

some solo space. Garvin contributes a sparkling solo to the up-tempo *Fifteen*, where Mraz plays the bass with lightning precision. George plucks his way through *I Should Care* and *Easy Living* almost unaided, with just a little help from the piano. And his feature on *I Remember Clifford* is sensitive and poignant. The only problem is that the bass's pitching occasionally tends to waver. This album is an obvious purchase for bassists, but anyone interested in intelligent jazz should enjoy it.

TONY AUGARDE

PETER AND WILL ANDERSON

A SAX SUPREME

*SteepleChase Records SCCD*  
33122. 43.54

There are 'new kids on the block' and they are identical twins. Peter and Will Anderson are two sax-playing brothers from Washington D.C., Peter plays tenor and Will plays alto. They have studied and played with many respected masters including Kenny Burrell, James Moody, Jimmy Heath and Frank Wess, and they have been described by the *New York Times* as 'virtuosos on clarinet and saxophone'.

The Danish label has caught them at a 'live' concert (not named), in a four sax front line-up with the Canadian Grant Stewart and guest Ken Peplowski., both on tenors.

The brothers both have strong, muscular tones, tightly disciplined phrasing and a direct delivery. The saxes are, mainly, featured playing in unison and the effect is clever, direct and energetic. Four saxes in unison are always an exciting sound. Grant Stewart's hard sound lends vigour to the ensembles and Peplowski's savvy is a major asset.

Professionalism is the hallmark of this encounter. The ballad medley of unacknowledged songs, including Ray Noble's *Love Locked Out* and the elegant *Some Other Spring*, are particular standouts., each of the players showing a particular sensitivity in this form. What is especially attractive is the high standard of the

arrangements. These manage to sound both subtle and uncomplicated, leaving a lot of space for the solos.. The final number is Sonny Stitt's *Whoops* and it is a joyous frolic.

To me, this is what jazz is all about; great ensemble playing, intelligent, forthright solos and clever, unfussy arrangements.

Go get it!

JOHN MARTIN

SONNY ROLLINS &amp; THE MJQ/TEDDY EDWARDS

SONNY ROLLINS AT MUSIC INN/TEDDY EDWARDS AT FALCON'S LAIR WITH JOE CASTRO

*Dream Covers 6099 79.29*

Ten of the twelve tracks are from two club sessions recorded at the Music Inn, Lenox, Massachusetts in 1958 reuniting Rollins with the Modern Jazz Quartet. The recording quality leaves something to be desired. Rollins is heard without difficulty but the MJQ deserved better. Originally issued on two separate labels (MetroJazz and Atlantic) this reissue is nevertheless a worthwhile purchase for those eager to hear a relaxed Rollins shortly before establishing his concert hall career.

Original liner notes by Leonard Feather and Gunther Schuller place the sessions in the context of their time referring to Rollins' penchant for humorous, mischievous solos. John Lewis is, of course, more than up to the mark in responding to anything thrown at him. Percy Heath and Connie Kay are as immaculate as one would expect and the MJQ flourish on several tracks without Rollins' participation. *Doxy* hears Rollins in complete command of his instrument, somehow finding something new to say. A medley without the saxophonist hears the MJQ in typically elegant form on *Stardust*, *I Can't Get Started* and *Lover Man*.

Teddy Edwards' contribution is restricted to two tracks recorded in Los Angeles in 1959. It isn't every day a jazz musician gets to record in a mansion yet

this is precisely where *Billie's Bounce* and *A Foggy Day* were committed to tape. This Falcon's Lair session is one for the completist.

RUSSELL CORBETT

DIGBY FAIRWEATHER AND STAN BARKER

THE DEFINITIVE DUETS

*Rose Cottage RCR 006 62.44*

Where would British Jazz be without Digby Fairweather?

Add together the sum total of his endeavours and you begin to understand the scale of his contribution as musician, band-leader, arranger, author, journalist, broadcaster, and founder of both The British Jazz Archive and the Association of British Jazz Musicians.

One of Digby's many long-standing partnerships was with pianist Stan Barker, an excellent pianist who would certainly have been better-known had he moved outside of his native Lancashire. This is an interesting collection of Digby and Stan duets, recorded live at Southport

Arts Centre in spring 1984. It is an intimate and relaxed set of good songs, well played by first class musicians - think Hackett and Hines or Braff and Larkins.

The session kicks off with *Blue Room*, chugging along nicely with Digby's nimble trumpet work underpinned by Stan's rhythmic piano playing and punchy soloing. This leads to a stand-out performance on an extended down home rendition of *Tin Roof Blues*. Several of the tunes are associated with Billie Holiday, including a romp through *Mean to Me*, an expansive *Lover Man* and reputedly Billie's favourite song,

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A TRUE CORNWALL EXPERIENCE

PAGE 10 Website: [www.thejazzguide.co.uk](http://www.thejazzguide.co.uk) FEBRUARY 2016

*Easy Living*. The album winds up with a 16 minute medley of George Gershwin tunes, leaving the listener, as were the audience, wanting more.

Well, as this is Volume One, the guess is that what comes next will be Volume Two.

WILLIAM JAMES

**RONNIE CUBER**

CUBER LIBRE

*Elemental Music Xanadu Master Edition Series 906079 52.03*

Baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber's recording debut as a leader for Xanadu Records in 1976 found him in A-list company. Having occupied the baritone chair in a slew of first rate outfits, including those of Maynard Ferguson and Lionel

Hampton, the New Yorker went into the studio with the trio of pianist Barry Harris, bassist Sam Jones and drummer Albert Heath.

In his liner notes at the time Ira Gitler writes, 'This album is strictly for blowing'. Reading this raised expectations and upon listening to this reissue they weren't dampened one bit. Hard blowing, swinging baritone is an art and Cuber, thirty four years of age at the time, comes out swinging on *Cuber Libre*. Clear articulation on this most unwieldy instrument is evident from the off. Tootie Heath, of Cuber's generation, propels the quartet with the precision and invention that have long since become trade marks. Cuber tears into *Riffide* and the others go with him. *Samba D'Orfeo* switches from samba to swing time and back with great facility and the leader's measured playing on

*Misty* stays true to the melody. A respectful but spirited take on Kenny Dorham's *Prince Albert* closes the set.

The seven tunes on *Cuber Libre* are hardy perennials. By accident or design this provides the listener with familiar reference points making any evaluation of Cuber as band leader a pleasure. *Cuber Libre* offers straight ahead, swinging, bluesy, bop-infused jazz.

RUSSELL CORBETT

**JOE GORDON**

LAST SESSIONS

*Fresh Sound Records FSR-CD 879 63.18*

Joe Gordon was one of several trumpet players who led active but sadly short lives. As per the title, these were his swan songs in 1961, recorded in Los Angeles

mainly with a quintet on eight tracks, on which he was partnered by altoist Jimmy Woods. Though Gordon plays with a full sound and inventive style, I find Woods a drawback because his playing tends to be over-noisy and his tone is often rather sour. He is at his best when uniting with Gordon on ensembles rather than soloing. A welcome respite is *Heleen*, a solo ballad feature for Gordon.

The other five tracks, from a Woods album, seem somewhat superficial. Gordon only appears on two of them, and an additional trumpeter is added. Woods' sound seems as unpalatable on a ballad segment as it is on two up-tempo compositions of his, and a poorly-conceived version of *Circus*, a one-time beguine by Louis Alter.

LES TOMKINS

Muggsy's lead is on the money. Darnell Howard, who served in Earl Hines' Big Band is on fire and Hines is ebullient throughout, clearly heard on the ensemble driving the band that extra mile.

The next CD, also from The Hangover Club (1954) features The Earl Hines Esquire All Stars recorded over 6 weekly broadcasts. This is a good-time, hard riffing, tough soloing swing band, driven by a rowdy Eddie Burns on drums. Hines is in ebullient form throughout, not more so than on his Grand Terrace feature *Piano Man* (very much like Krupa's *Drummin' Man*) where, following the band's group vocal, he gets down to business with six sparkling, gloriously inventive, choruses that take the band out on a high.

The same venue is the setting for Earl Hines Dixieland All Stars the following year. This is loose, swinging Dixieland of the highest order. Trumpet man Marty Marsala, brother of reedman Joe, is authoritative, putting in a strong shift, Jimmy Archey enjoys the romp and Darnell Howard again tears up the house. Once again, it's the Piano Man that shines, Earl Hines doing what he does best- playing piano like Earl Hines.

With CDs 6 and 7 we move on

to 1959 with the Earl Hines Quartet holding sway on a One Night Stand broadcast from London House in Chicago. Hines, fronting a younger band with guitarist Calvin Newborn, Carl Pruitt on bass and drummer Bill English, was clearly feeling very relaxed in this company, dominating proceedings imperiously. Newborn gets in some fine solos, very much in the Wes Montgomery style while the rhythm team swing as they should.

Those good folk at Storyville, not satisfied with a near 7 1/2 hours of obscure Earl Hines recordings, have also included a DVD featuring his solo piano and vocals. It runs for 26 minutes and four of the seven selections are from the pen of the pianist whom Hines always spoke of with affection, Fats Waller.

It's not just the virtuosity of Hines that captivates. It's the two-fisted excitement he can bring along with the unconcealed enthusiasm and his sheer huge appetite for the music. This extremely varied collection featuring so many aggregations across the years, will be of serious interest to any lover of jazz piano.

WILLIAM JAMES



**WHAT HAPPENED MISS SIMONE?**

The question, first asked in a poem by Maya Angelou, is answered memorably in Liz Garbus' new documentary about the famed singer. Produced by Netflix, the bio-pic paints a startling portrait of the talented and tortured Nina Simone, one of the most unique artists ever to gain prominence in the jazz world.

Simone was born in 1933 in the Jim Crow south. Eunice Waymon (her real name) was a child prodigy whose dream was to become a classical pianist and perform Bach at Carnegie Hall. That dream was shattered when the Curtis School of Music refused for racial reasons to accept her as a student. To make a living, Simone had to take a job playing and warbling in an Atlantic City gay bar. Although she went on to achieve success as a chanteuse—'The High Priestess of Soul,' was one of her labels—Simone never truly got over that first rejection. The resentment burned deep inside her, erupting with a ferocity during the Civil Rights era when she became a Black Power leader and sang such militant anthems as *Mississippi Goddamn* and *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*.

That stance came at great personal cost, as the film shows. Her husband and manager, an ex-New York detective named Andy Stroud, was a politically-conservative African-American who wanted her to play it safe, stick to pop music, where the money was. When Simone refused to compromise her principles, Stroud became abusive, beating her up so often

that she eventually ended up in hospital.

Life wounded Simone in many other ways, when heroes and friends like Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and Stokely Carmichael were murdered, along with their dreams of a more just, equitable society. The distraught and disillusioned Simone had a nervous breakdown, the result of which was a decision on her part to abandon the USA.

Taking her young daughter—who later became one of the producers and key talking-heads

of the Netflix documentary—Simone emigrated to Liberia, where she spent some happy years, only to inexplicably pull up those African roots and settle in France. She sang and recorded sporadically during those years of exile, but plagued by mental illness (she was bi-polar and depressive), became more and more reclusive. She died alone in 2003.

Don't think, though, that *What Happened Miss Simone?* is all sturm and drang. There's a lot of bubbly, joyous footage of Simone in her prime, when she came to fame with her fiercely individual

and heart-rending renditions of such songs as *I Loves You Porgy* and *My Baby Just Cares For Me*. The documentary also sheds light on Simone's life via audio tapes, home movies, and archival footage, plus interviews with the likes of Stanley Crouch, George Wein—and even the wife-beating Andy Stroud.

This deeply probing, scrupulously honest, beautifully-made film pays worthy tribute to the jazz titan Nina Simone.

WILLARD MANUS  
mavmanus@aol.com

**EARL HINES**

PIANO GENIUS AT WORK

*Storyville Records 108 8615 7CDs, 68.56/72.49/73.54/71.22/66.21/55.56/55.04 + DVD*

Without doubt, Earl Hines was a monumental figure in jazz, and in the eyes of many, the most influential figure in the development of modern jazz piano. This impressive 7 CD box set comes together with a DVD and a 28 page booklet with splendid photography, liner notes by Dan Morgenstern and focuses on lesser-known, sometimes unknown, recordings of his work in a wide variety of settings over five decades.

The first disc features 24 solo piano recordings from 1928 to 1940. Fascinating stuff, with what was to become familiar as the Hines style clearly there from the outset, though interesting to see a little of Tatum's influence creeping in over the later period. The eight tracks from 1928 are all Hines originals, probably at the behest of the recording company. There's an early appearance of his perennial *A Monday Date*, a play on his surname with *Fifty-Seven Varieties*, two quite different takes of *Rosetta* and three tracks

with an early amplified electric piano (1940!) called a Storytone, a device that failed to catch on, no doubt partly due to it weighing a ton-and-a-half.

The second CD opens with a jump forward to 1974, a year in which he recorded no less than 16 albums, pretty impressive for a man in his 71st year. Here he is on peak form in a solo recital dedicated to the music of Harold Arlen. The set continues by going back to 1948 and a radio broadcast from the Blue Note in Chicago with his musical sparring partner Louis Armstrong and his All Stars. All in all, his time with The All Stars was not a happy one, but there seems to be nothing but joy on this rumbustious memorial concert for writer Damon Runyon. Hines shines throughout, of course, on his party piece *Boogie on St Louis Blues*.

There is a difference of opinion regarding where the 15 tracks on Disc 3 were recorded. Some say an un-named Chicago club in 1954, others, as seems more likely opt for a 1952 radio shot from The Hangover Club in San Francisco. It's probably of little importance, but what is important is the swashbuckling set of 15 Dixieland standard delivered by the Earl Hines/Muggsy Spanier All Stars.



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# RON SIMPSON'S ROUND-UP OF RECENT CDS



Bill Holman

Surprisingly often, on 1950s big band recordings, the musicians and arrangers are still huge names in jazz history, but the leader is all but forgotten. So it is with **THE SOUND OF LARRY SONN** (Fresh Sound FSR CD 877: 2 CDs, 77.19/75.43). Between 1955 and 1959 Sonn led a big band with Al Cohn as a regular and the likes of Nat Pierce, Hal McKusick, Milt Hinton and Osie Johnson appearing with some frequency. Then, despite living into his 90s, he disappeared from the jazz scene, back to Latin music and, finally, relocating to Mexico. With top arrangers supplementing his own scores, this is all good stuff, apart from some dubious vocals, but the fact that two-thirds of the tracks are below three minutes doesn't help, though there is room for some fine tenor sax solos. Much of the music is Basie-lite and the more distinctive tracks include Manny Albam's neat arrangements of some great standards and some compositions and arrangements by Cohn and Bob Brookmeyer, with plenty of solo time for the arranger in each case. Blue Moon has come up with a series of big band/orchestra albums from the 1950s and 1960s, very attractively packaged, interesting historically, but not strong on jazz content despite some promising names in

the personnel. **Warren Barker** was a highly rated composer/conductor/arranger in the television studios. **POP AND TV THEMES GO JAZZ** (BMCD 862: 73.00) puts together three 1959 albums, two of television themes, one a mix of Barker originals and quality standards under the title *Warren Barker is In*. Barker proves a classy arranger, especially distinctive on the *In* album, though corniness breaks in at the end of the CD with *77 Sunset Strip* and an Edd 'Kookie' Byrnes monologue. Jazz content is sporadic, tracks are limited in length (only 5 of 27 above 3 minutes), but there is nice work from the likes of Don Fagerquist and Milt Bernhart. Despite the presence of Milt Hinton and Al Caiola and some pleasing incursions from Phil Bodner on tenor sax and flute, **FLY ME TO THE MOON AND THE BOSSA NOVA POPS** (BMCD 863: 62.54) by **Joe Harnell** has even less currency among jazz listeners. Harnell had a long career as MD for some excellent singers (including Peggy Lee) and in the television studios. Two albums from 1962-63 feature his piano and an orchestra heavy on strings in short (24 tracks in 62 minutes) cocktail bossa versions of some good songs – Stan Getz and Charlie Byrd it ain't! Finally

**WARREN KIME AND HIS BRASS IMPACT ORCHESTRA** (BMCD 865: 79.16) does what it says on the can. Three albums from 1966 to 1968 mass flugelhorns, trumpets, trombones and percussion to attack (sometimes with some subtlety) a highly eclectic set of numbers, 30 in 79 minutes! Oddly enough the solitary saxophone (Phil Bodner again) shines most in his brief solos, but the brass team, with the likes of Bernie Glow and Ernie Royal, has the promised impact. The 'girl singers', so called, are less pleasing to the ear.

Interesting to find many of the key figures from the Sonn album (Brookmeyer, Cohn, Albam) showing up again on a terrific collection from the same period: **FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** (Avid AMSC 1178: 2 CDs, 73.05/81.43) by **Manny Albam**. It's a particular delight to be reminded of *Manny Albam & the Jazz Greats*, two separate albums, East Coast and West Coast, with personnel to live up to the title. Albam's compositions and arrangements of standards for the 10-piece are inventive and original, but leave plenty of space for high-quality solos, and the musicians are clearly relaxed, as on a lovely easy-tempoed *Jive at Five*, with contrasted muted trumpet from Conte Candoli and the composer, Harry Edison. The other two albums are fine, too: *Jazz Workshop*, with some quirky arrangements of unlikely standards alongside the originals, and *The Drum Suite*, written by Albam and Ernie Wilkins for a big

band with four drummers. In the sax section for the Los Angeles branch of *Jazz Greats* was **Bill Holman** and other members of that band (Candoli, Herb Geller, etc.) show up on an excellent double album, **THE ORIGINAL BILL HOLMAN BIG BAND: COMPLETE RECORDINGS** (Phono 870238: 2 CDs, 75.28/74.11), 'original' in this case meaning his first three big band albums from 1957 to 1960, with bonus tracks from his 1954 octet playing a programme of Holman compositions. The big band repertoire is split between originals and a sometimes surprising choice of familiar numbers. Holman as a composer is at his most ambitious on *The Big Street*, 16 minutes long, with a bluesy middle section between two uptempo movements, with Mel Lewis in fine form. Holman the sax soloist is heard at his best on the 1958 album, *Big Band in a Jazz Orbit*, where he and the splendid Jack Sheldon are the prime soloists, despite the presence of Candoli and Richie Kamuca.

This time many reissues of small group jazz have great historic interest and/or originality of approach. The two LPs on **DOLLAR BRAND PLAYS SPHERE JAZZ** (Phono 870235: 78.58), for instance, both recorded in early 1960, take us back to the first recordings by Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) and the very beginnings of recorded jazz in South Africa. The trio album, mostly originals, but with a brisk re-harmonised version of *Just Me, Just You*, has a



Jerome Richardson

typical Abdullah Ibrahim mix of rhapsodic meditation, bebop, subtly dancing rhythms and rolling churchy chords. However, the second album is even more interesting: *Jazz Epistle – Verse 1* by the Jazz Epistles, with the outstanding front line of Hugh Masakela, already a very accomplished player, the fiercely aggressive trombonist Jonas Gwangwa and the totally distinctive alto saxist, Kippie Moeketsi. Sadly, whereas Brand, Masakela and Gwangwa went on to long international careers, Moeketsi, possibly the most talented, subsided into alcohol abuse, poverty and early death. **Jerome Richardson's COMPLETE 1958-1962 RECORDINGS** (Fresh Sound FSR CD 874: 2 CDs, 75.09/55.26) is another highly recommendable reissue, both for rarity and musical quality. Richardson was consistently underrated, partly, I suspect, because his versatility tended to obscure his ability as a tenor saxist. Here are his three albums under his own name from that period. *Midnight Oil* begins with a powerful original, *Minorally*, with trombonist Jimmy Cleveland excelling alongside Richardson's tenor sax. Thereafter it's the flute for Richardson, most evocatively on *Caravan. Roamin' with Richardson* sees him as the only front line instrument – often baritone sax – and *Going to the Movies* is a live session with Les Spann's doubling of flute and guitar enabling all kinds of different sounds, alongside Richardson's three reeds. Also here is a strange session with a sextet in Belgrade, then Yugoslavia, with Julius Watkins' French horn joining him in the front line. Richardson is as direct as ever and the young local vibes player, Bosko Petrovic, impresses. Similarly **Bob Cooper's** restless ability to do so much so well has oddly obscured his status as a jazz great. **FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** (Avid Jazz AMSC 1180: 2 CDs, 60.54/81.43) is a wonderful summary of what he was up to between 1954 and 1957, on four very different albums. Essentially two are straightahead jazz with Coop on saxes and two are experimental with him on unlikely jazz instruments. In 1954 he led a sextet with Bud Shank and guitarist Howard Roberts in a set of originals and standards – instantly accessible, both swinging

and lyrical – then three years later the same three joined up for *Flute 'n Oboe*. Coop's arrangements for a nine-piece including string quartet are more chamber music than jazz, but beautifully done, and there are three uptempo strings-free numbers where he makes the oboe sound almost like a jazz instrument. *Shifting Winds* uses four multi-tasking woodwinds in fine arrangements, mostly of standards, with Coop demonstrating that *Round Midnight* might have been written for cor anglais. And on *Coop!* we can just sit back and enjoy his tenor sax in a superb group with the likes of the Candolis, Frank Rosolino and Victor Feldman. Perhaps **George Wallington** is something of a neglected name, too, owing to his retirement from music at the height of his success in 1960, but **COMPLETE LIVE AT THE CAFE BOHEMIA** (Phono 870237: 2 CDs, 67.30/64.19) is as exhilarating a chunk of 1950s bebop as you'll find. Apart from Wallington's Bud Powell-ish piano Donald Byrd and, especially, Jackie McLean are in explosive form – and Paul Chambers and Art Taylor are no slouches in support. Ironically the first track is *Johnny One Note* as torrents of notes pour from both horns. The 'complete' refers to extra versions of the already generally available six tracks: the band played two sets on the same night in 1955 and the alternative versions are here. The second CD is completed by the bonus album, *George Wallington Showcase*, with a smart septet and Quincy Jones arrangements – nice, but not as exciting as an evening at the Cafe Bohemia! **COMPLETE STUDIO RECORDINGS** (Phono 870244: 2 CDs, 78.25/77.48) by **the Slide Hampton Octet** is well worth investing in, but the billing is slightly misleading. 'Featuring Freddie Hubbard and Booker Little' proclaims the booklet cover and the only album they both play on, *Slide Hampton and his Horn of Plenty* is a fine album, but the two great trumpeters are hardly featured. (Hubbard also plays on *Sister Salvation*.) Hampton's compositions and arrangements suggest a much bigger band with sonorities added by euphonium and tuba, and the main solo voice, apart from Hampton's gruffly melodic trombone, is the

admirable George Coleman on tenor, one of only two loyalists to play on all four albums here covering the years 1959-61. Generous programming throws in a couple of nonet tracks from 1962, with Hubbard back on board. **WARM WOODS** (Phono 870239: 72.17) by **Phil Woods** is well named, a 1957 album of mainly ballads: *Easy Living, Like Someone in Love*, etc. Woods is in fine form, warmer and more lyrical than in many other sessions of the time. The other musicians are pretty much accompanists: though pianist Bob Corwin has reasonably long and reasonably interesting solos, it's very much Woods' album. Bonus tracks are also from 1957, with a septet featuring Eddie Costa and Eddie Bert, and a sextet which may have been originally credited to Nat Pierce. Incidentally the same combination of tracks appeared not too long ago on Lone Hill.

As it happens, only two new recordings made their way into this column's in-tray this issue. **David Arthur Skinner's CUBISTIC BOOGIE** (Losen Records LOS 140-2: 43.36) is an enjoyable album by a very talented pianist, the mild eccentricities of which fit into place after a visit to Wikipedia. Skinner studied at Leeds College of Music before moving to Norway a decade ago. He is predominantly a stride and boogie pianist, but his degrees in Norway cover Classical Composition as well as Jazz

Performance and he has written studies of time signatures, polyrhythms and harmony. That tells you much about his new album. Boogie is his default position, but shifting rhythms, key changes and rhapsodic interludes break things up. This approach is heard at its most delightful on the opening *Ain't Misbehavin'* where he shifts around keys, harmonies and rhythms with great glee. At the other extreme is a delicately soulful *Memories of You*, dedicated to his Composition teacher, the late Morten Eide Pedersen. **TEN** (Prophone PCD 155: 75.02) celebrates 10 years of the **Anna Lundqvist Quintet**, originally a quartet. All the songs are Lundqvist's own compositions, some with co-lyricist Lovisa Taver, and, rather than their melodic qualities, the listener is drawn to the intensity and intelligence of the performance. Anna Lundqvist is regularly referred to as being part of the band, the fifth instrument, and it's perfectly true: the opening two melodies even sound like saxophone improvisations. In return the band complements her perfectly and it's easy to see what attracted her to the coolly muscular tenor sax of Bjorn Almgren who became the quintet's fifth member. This is not the most attractively melodic vocal CD around, but it's a testament to a good hard-working band in live performance in three different jazz clubs.



Slide Hampton



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