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ISSUE 141 SPRING/SUMMER 2016  
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### UPFRONT

#### BACK TO THE FUTURE

A new name has started appearing on the schedules for festivals and clubs: Pete Long's Tribute to Jazz at the Philharmonic. Pete is indefatigable in his re-creation of the jazz of the past: Echoes of Ellington, Benny Goodman at Carnegie Hall, etc. Now – with the two *100 Years of Jazz* shows and JATP – he is taking the repertory system into the world of the swinging small group.

It raises the question of whether there are any small swing bands regularly on the road that aren't deliberate re-interpretations of the past. *Lady Sings the Blues* (see Julian Marc Stringle above) is, like JATP, not tied to one narrow era, but nevertheless takes us back to the 1930s to 1950s.

There is always Digby's Half Dozen (JMS again!): though there is a retro element in some of their music, it doesn't have the precise tie-in of *Lady Sings the Blues* or the Pete Long shows. So that's one! If you know of (or are part of) a small swing group working regularly, not just formed for one festival or one tour, let *Jazz Rag* know and we'll write about you.



Wycliffe Gordon

### GOOD NEWS FROM ALBRIGHTON

A year after Jazz Club 90 was forced to close at the Harp, Albrighton, the club is flourishing at the Albrighton Sports Social Club, though on a more limited basis. Instead of meeting twice a week, Jazz Club 90 now operates only on Sunday lunch-times once a fortnight. A one-off gathering to celebrate 25 years since its foundation was held last October and its success led to monthly, then fortnightly, sessions which continue to be very well attended. Next up is the Three Spires Jazz Band on May 22. Tel.: 01902 756158

### KING PLEASURE GIGS

King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys have several Scandinavian dates in the summer diary: Denmark's Riverboat Festival (June 24-25), Bremanger in Norway (July 1) and Randers Festival, back in Denmark (August 12). Home gigs include Wirksworth Town Hall (May 13), the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough (14), Longfield Suite, Manchester (20), Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis (28), Forest Arts Centre, New Milton (June 4), Greystones, Sheffield (11), Birchover Carnival (July 16), Solihull Arts Complex (20), Sugnall Jazz Festival (22) and the Y Not Festival (31). Tel.: 0121 454 7020 [www.kingpleasureandthebiscuitboys.com](http://www.kingpleasureandthebiscuitboys.com)

### DJM 232

In its 232nd edition the Netherlands' *Doctor Jazz* magazine is as full of energy, erudition and the unexpected as ever. The occasional article in English is a particular treat and in DJM 232 Opal Louis Nations writes in English on the early years of the Soul Stirrers, the successful gospel quintet from Houston, Texas. Despite a concentration on the traditional end of jazz *Doctor Jazz* is a broad-minded publication, with articles on Wycliffe Gordon and Frank Sinatra, together with a note on the first performance of an opera about Charlie Parker. Obituaries and CD reviews are as detailed as ever and it's good to see a lengthy review of *Jazz Rag* writer Peter Vacher's impressive new book, *Swingin' on Central Avenue*. [www.Doctorjazz.nl](http://www.Doctorjazz.nl)

### SUNDAY JAZZ IN MORNING LANE

The Globe in Morning Lane, East London, has regular Sunday lunch-time jazz from 12.30 to 3.30. The New Stompers (May 15/also June 12) are followed by Bob Dwyer's Bix and Pieces (22),

Geoff Cole's Hot Five (29), the Martyn Brothers (June 5), Brian Carrick's Algiers Stompers (19) and the Frog Island Jazz Band (26). Tel.: 020 8985 6455

### USHAW DURHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL

The first Ushaw Durham Jazz Festival will be staged at Ushaw College on the outskirts of Durham on August 26-28. Ushaw College, a former seminary, is being transformed into a key cultural venue in the North East of England. Topping the bill for the first jazz festival are Alan Barnes and Bruce Adams, with the Paul Edis Trio. Other concerts feature the Nigel Price Trio, Zoe Gilby, the New Century Ragtime Orchestra and, leading a late night jam session, the Peter Gilligan Trio. [www.ushaw.org](http://www.ushaw.org)

### MORE FOR LONDON

The EFG London Festival is many months away (November 11-20), but the programme of top names continues to build. Among those recently announced are the Robert Gasper Experiment (15 - KOKO), Norman Winstone - A

Celebration (16 - Cadogan Hall), Bobby McFerrin Sings Gershwin with the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Bill Charlap Trio (16 - Barbican), Bugge Wesseltoft (18 and 19 - Kings Place) and Madeleine Peyroux (20 - Royal Festival Hall). [www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk](http://www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk)

### CONCORDE JAZZ

Though the main jazz night is Wednesday, there is plenty of jazz to enjoy on other nights at the Concorde Club in Eastleigh. A Thursday night special on June 2 brings Courtney Pine and Zoe Rahman with *Song*, while every Friday features the Dave Lewin Trio. Sunday evening is the time for traditional jazz for dancing, with a host of top British bands and the occasional visitor such as the Bratislava Hot Serenaders (July 24). As for Wednesdays a trio of Rossano Sportiello, Dave Green and Steve Brown (May 11) is followed by Tony Jacobs and the Tuxedo Jazz Orchestra (18). Other highlights include Clare Teal and her Mini Big Band (June 1), the Dime Notes (8), the Hippocampus Jazz Gang (22), Pete Long's Jazz at the Philharmonic tribute (July 6), the Craig Milverton Trio with Greg Abate (13) and Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen (27). Tel.: 023 8061 3989 [www.theconcordeclub.com](http://www.theconcordeclub.com)

### BLAYDON JAZZ CLUB

A varied schedule includes the Noel Dennis-Paul Edis Quartet (May 15), the Alice Grace Quintet fronted by the former NYJO vocalist and Guildhall graduate (June 19) and the Reunion Band (July 10) featuring Hong Kong-based ex-pat trumpeter Colin Aitchison and Italian clarinet virtuoso Franco Valussi.

### END OF SEASON SPECIAL AT STAFFORD

Stafford Jazz Society's final concert of the season at the White Eagle Club is a special extended event, starting at the regular Sunday time of 12.30. An international band presents a programme with the self-explanatory title of *Ragtime, Swing, Blues and Beyond*. Americans Jeff and Ann Barnhart are joined by 'Spats' Langham and drummer Graham Smith. Earlier in May the SJS has a change from

its regular small groups with the appearance of the Stafford Grammar School Big Band (15) and they are followed by the legendary Merseyside Jazz Band (22). Tel.: 01785 226950/07974 131797 [www.staffordjazz.org](http://www.staffordjazz.org)

### JAZZ AT THE HOWARD

Opera North's programme at the Howard Assembly Room in Leeds Grand Theatre is nothing if not enterprising. Lovers of world music and folk are well looked after in the current programme, but jazz events are always of



Madeleine Peyroux

good quality, with Cory Henry of Snarky Puppy (May 14) and Hugh Masakela and Larry Willis (28) lined up. On June 8 a programme of the music of Terezin sounds

especially interesting, but unfortunately the Ghetto Swingers are not included! [www.operanorth.co.uk](http://www.operanorth.co.uk)

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Enrico Tomasso

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Hot Club specialists Emma Fisk (violin) and James Birkett (guitar) play a duo gig at the Jazz Cafe on Pink Lane, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on July 8. The Nigel Price Trio appears at the venue on September 16.

Sheffield Jazz rounds off its current season with an appearance by the Allison Neale Quintet at the Millennium Hall at the Polish Catholic Centre on May 20.

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

May and June at the Stables, Wavendon, brings Roy Ayers (May 11), *Swinging at the Cotton Club* with the Jiving Lindy Hoppers and Harry Strutter's Hot Rhythm Orchestra (15), Phronesis (18), Pete Long's Echoes of Ellington (June 17) and the National Youth Jazz Orchestra (26). Sunday morning events include a Live Jazz Matters with Rossano Sportiello (May 15) and Enrico Tomasso in conversation with Brian Peerless (22). Sadly, those of you who were planning to go all 1930s at Hedna's Vintage Nightclub (June 25) can put away the vintage gear – it's cancelled!

Tel.: 01908 280800  
[www.stables.org](http://www.stables.org)



Gilad Atzmon

Next up for Wakefield Jazz is the Lindsay Hannon Plus (May 13), the North East singer with her trio. The Weave follows on May 20, then Ian Shaw (27) accompanied by Jamie Safiruddin and Miguel Gorodi. June 3 brings the first of NorVol Jazz's Arts Council-backed series of overseas artists touring northern jazz clubs, in this case acclaimed Canadian trumpeter Ingrid Jensen. Over the summer Wakefield Jazz is organising two summer big band concerts on Sunday lunch-times, the first SK II, Dave Tyas' Stan Kenton-style band, on July 17.

Tel.: 01977 680542  
[www.wakefieldjazz.org](http://www.wakefieldjazz.org)

the first Thursday of every month at Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club, with guest singers Roy Forbes (June 2) and Loretta Scott (July 7).

Tel.: 01625 528336  
[www.facebook.com/grahambrookjazz](http://www.facebook.com/grahambrookjazz)

Durham's Gala Theatre presents jazz on a regular basis. The Gerry Richardson Quartet plays a lunch-time gig on July 15 and evening concerts include visits from James Pearson and the Ronnie Scott's All Stars (May 12), the Hot 8 Brass Band (July 8) and the Big Chris Barber Band (September 29).

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

The Buxton Festival, mainly opera-based, includes a fair measure of jazz among its late evening concerts: jazz at the Movies with Joanna Eden and Mark Crooks (July 10), the Alex Yellowlees Band (15) and Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen (21).

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

New York retro-jazz group, the Hot Sardines, tour to Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden (June 4 – two shows), New Theatre, Oxford (5), Ageas Salisbury International Arts Festival (6),

Tuesday Jazz and Swing at the Wilmslow Conservative Club features the Tom Kincaid Trio liberally in the coming weeks: on its own (May 24), with Amy Roberts and John Hallam (June 7) and with Gilad Atzmon (14). Among the other attractions are Roy Williams with the Brownfield/Byrne Hot Six (May 31) and Martin Speake with singer/violinist Faith Brackenbury and the Vinnie Parker Trio (June 28). Also promoted by Graham Brook, the Sinatra Swingers play



Emma Fisk

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Ronnie Scott's, London (7 – two shows), National Concert Hall, Dublin (8) and the New Theatre, Cardiff (9).

The recent Breda Jazz Festival was the first of a series of festival bookings for Tipitina. This summer they can also be heard at the first Suggall Jazz Festival (July 24), the Aber Jazz Festival at Fishguard (August 27) and the Great British Blues Festival (28).

Tel: 0121 454 7020

The latest of Saga's jazz-themed holidays takes in four nights in Jersey from October 9, with the music of the JB Jazz and Blues Band under John Beckingham, plus two jazz talks and two excursions.

[www.saga.co.uk/jazz-jersey](http://www.saga.co.uk/jazz-jersey)

Jazz & Swing in the Garden at Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire, on May 27 features Susan Valliant Speer and her group, Digby Fairweather and Julian Marc Stringle.

Tel.: 07570 016805  
[www.palladianevents.co.uk](http://www.palladianevents.co.uk)

The Talbot Hotel in Southport has a series of three night jazz events, the next on June 3-6 with the Jazz Café Society Charleston Band, Keith Nichols and his Back to the 20s Band and the Pasadena Roof Orchestra, to be followed on September 2-5 by the High Society Jazz Band, Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen and Georgina Jackson.

Tel.: 01704 533975



Hot Sardines

Pete Lay's next Jazz Festival for Warner Leisure Hotels comes on September 9-12 at Gunton Hall Coastal Village, Suffolk, with Baby Jools and the Jazzoholics, the Savannah Jazz Band, Brian Carrick's Algiers Stompers, New Orleans Heat, Gambit Jazzmen and John Maddocks' Jazzmen.

Tel.: 01737 822726

The Spice of Life in Cambridge Circus, London, features All Star Lunchtime Jazz on Wednesdays. On May 18 the Jack Honeyborne All Stars are joined by James Davidson and Graham Hughes, the on May 25 Pete Long's Jazz at the Philharmonic Tribute takes over.

Tel.: 0208 647 2114

Nottingham Rhythm Club at the Stadium Leisure Snooker Club presents the Jeff Barnhart/George Huxley Hot Five (May 19), Pedigree Jazz Band (June 9) and the Hot Antic Jazz Band (23).

Tel.: 07973 882235  
[www.nrcjazz.co.uk](http://www.nrcjazz.co.uk)

Friends of the Upton Jazz Festival's next concerts at Hanley Castle High School feature the Howard Alden Quartet (May 13) and the Tim Kliphuis Trio with Tom Kincaid (June 3).

Tel.: 01684 593794  
[www.uptonjazz.co.uk](http://www.uptonjazz.co.uk)



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# CHARTS

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17	RAY BRYANT	PLAYS THE COMPLETE LITTLE SUSIE	Lonehill Jazz
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**JUMBO RECORDS, Leeds** www.jumborecords.co.uk 0113 245 5570 5-6 St Johns Centre, Leeds, LS2 8LQ

**MUSIC INN, Nottingham** www.themusicinn.co.uk 0115 978 4403 38-42 West End Arcade Nottingham NG1 6JZ

**RAYS JAZZ AT FOYLES, London** www.foyles.co.uk/rajs-jazz-classical-music 020 7440 3205 107 Charing Cross Rd, London WC2H 0EB

**HONEST JONS, London** www.honestjons.com 020 8969 9822 278 Portobello Rd, London W10 5TE

## SO WHO WAS GEORGE FRAZIER?

Jimmy Rushing sang *Harvard Blues*, the Basie band played it, Tab Smith wrote the tune, but what about the words? **RON SIMPSON** checks out the writer, George Frazier.

On the recent Solar release of all the extant material from Benny Goodman's concerts in Brussels in 1958, Jimmy Rushing, guesting with the band, is heard twice delivering his masterly take on *Harvard Blues*. 17 years after he recorded it with Count Basie, it was still a corner-stone of his repertoire, yet isn't there a dislocation between the subject-matter and the form?

Writing to the Harvard Magazine in 2002, a self-professed jazz fan (and, of course, Harvard alumnus) claimed that the words 'must have been Greek to him (Rushing)' and that he 'didn't get beyond the third verse.' Do I detect the whiff of intellectual and social snobbery? Jimmy Rushing is thoroughly at home with the quaintly nostalgic satire of *Harvard Blues* and he didn't get beyond the third verse because that's how many verses he, Basie and Tab Smith wanted – got to leave room for Don Byas' tenor solo!

However, it's true that Oklahoma-born, Kansas City-based blues singers are supposed to move to the outskirts of town, not to the ivy-covered halls of Cambridge, Massachusetts. So how did *Harvard Blues* come about?

George Frazier was at Harvard in the early 1930s, trying to play the clarinet and writing for obscure European magazines. A Bostonian, he was, one suspects, among the academic and social elite so cherished in that city at the time: how many undergraduates even know about obscure European magazines? In 1936 he began writing for *Down Beat* as the Boston correspondent. He was one of those outrageous and self-opinionated columnists who gather devotees and enemies in equal numbers: 'Boston Remains as Dull and Stupid as Ever' was one of his more extreme headlines from 1937, as Richard Vacca informs us in his excellent and apparently encyclopaedic book.\* Later he had a daily jazz column in the *Boston Herald* entitled *Sweet and Low-Down*.

First impressions are that Frazier was a discriminating listener. He had a particular love of the playing of Bobby Hackett and was from the earliest days a booster for the always underestimated Frankie Newton. He numbered Pee Wee Russell and Eddie Condon among his friends and wrote a memorable obituary for another friend, Bunny Berigan. His iconoclasm could be akin to arrogance, but his response to one of the new guys of the early 1940s still sparks a nod of recognition and a chuckle at the phrasing, unfair as it is:

'My own reaction to Kenton's music is that it is neither fish nor flesh, but pretty foul. It seems to me pretentious, artistically phony, and without any attributes that might even charitably be called jazz.'

But, when he described Benny Goodman as a 'charlatan, the worst sort of aesthetic phony' and Peggy Lee as 'third-rate', he was surely more in love with his own opinions than anything else: I have problems with anyone who didn't like the Andrews Sisters, too!

So this is the man who showed his satirical blues about a typical Harvard man to Count Basie and Tab Smith around about 1940: I would guess John Hammond, also Ivy League (Yale in his case) and the man who brought the Basie band east, had something to do with the introductions, though whether any friendship between Hammond and Frazier survived the latter's comments on BG is debatable.

The words to *Harvard Blues* have a certain resonance based on mystery as well as being very singable. Perhaps the most famous line is 'Rinehart, Rinehart! I'm a most indifferent guy!' – then echoed in the famous repeated riff. What's that all about? For a start, it is Rinehart, not Reinhardt, with apologies to all who thought it was Rush's secret tribute to a great gypsy guitarist! 'Rinehart!' has been described as 'Harvard's rebel yell' and appears



Jimmy Rushing photographed by William Gottlieb in 1946

to have originated when an undergraduate called up to John Bryce Gordon Rinehart (class of 1900) with such vehemence that it was taken up by others all round the quadrangle. There are many stories (possibly some of them true) about 'Rinehart', from a sob story about its origins told by Frazier to Basie to the tale of a Harvard man captured by Arabs in Africa whose call of 'Rinehart!' brought rescue from another Harvard man who happened to be in the vicinity. And what about that mysterious reference to 'a most indifferent guy'? I guess Frazier was referring to the pressure to conform – whatever else I am, I'm not different!

The Harvard stereotype of the lyric seems pretty keen on staying out of trouble (the prohibition on dogs and women in the room comes from a pamphlet with the solemn title of *Rules Relating to College Studies*) but more concerned with being in the right set and enjoying the social life of the rich and idle. His Brooks clothes and white shoes have always struck me as being the epitome of smart, but, according to the website *Ivy Style* (which should know) the 'white shoe boys' were known for the deliberate scruffiness that only the truly rich can affect: dirty tatty black and white shoes with the toes turned up! His attitude to work and money is neatly summed up:

'Got 3 Cs, a D, and think checks from home sublime!'

And who is his Vincent baby? One perplexed correspondent to the Harvard Magazine opined it

might refer to marijuana or something. No, not to anything more toxic than Vincent's Club in Boston. Frazier (or his student alter ego) was obsessed with what club people belonged to. In the verses Jimmy Rushing didn't sing, he lists his clubs, his father's club and his mother's. Maybe it's as well Rushing stopped at three verses!

As for George Frazier, he stopped writing about jazz regularly soon after *Harvard Blues* was recorded. He became a columnist on the *Boston Globe*, so famous and so highly regarded that, 37 years after his death, the *Globe* ran a celebratory column to mark his 100th birthday. For all that, it is difficult to imagine his 'arch wit' and 'erudite Olympian pronouncements' going down well with all.

Occasionally he would deign to write sleeve notes for a jazz album, including a much praised essay on Miles Davis. But even here he divided opinion. Richard Vacca tells of sleeve notes for Lee Wiley that were called Rabelaisian and tasteless, 'delivered,' said Bill Coss in *Metronome*, 'in a Madison Avenue, check-this-virile-guy manner, more rightly expected from anxious teenagers than from a mature man.' Well, he did call Wiley 'one bitch of a singer'.

But, at least, he didn't keep dogs or women in his room.

\*Richard Vacca, *The Boston Jazz Chronicles: Faces, Places and Nightlife 1937-1962*, Troy Street Publishing, 2012.

# RECORD STORE DAY

**RON SIMPSON** takes a look at the surprisingly thriving world of the independent record shop.

Regular predictions in the music world are of the total disappearance of vinyl and the demise of the independent record store. If this year's Record Store Day on April 16 is anything to go by, both of these are grossly exaggerated. 230 record shops in the UK participated in the event which saw the release of special limited edition vinyl by 250 labels and radio reports told of queues forming at 3 in the morning at some shops – and this is for records, not the latest Harry Potter book!

Facts and figures show a decided upturn in vinyl sales in recent years, though from a low base. Sales broke through 2 million in the UK in 2015 and the January-March figures show the improvement continuing this year, with a rise of over 60 per cent over the three month period. Now official vinyl charts are worth publicising again – the sales charts for the first three months of this year saw David Bowie, unsurprisingly, topping



both singles and albums charts, with a total of 4 singles in the Top Ten and 3 albums.

Undoubtedly Record Store Day, which is now partnered with BBC Music, has played its part in bringing about this sales improvement. Now in its ninth year, it was originally set up in the United States to celebrate the unique culture of some 700

independent record stores – a figure, incidentally, that per head of population is dwarfed by the UK's 200-plus.

I decided to sample Record Store Day at Jumbo Records in Leeds' St. John's Shopping Centre. It seemed wise to leave it till the afternoon as the shop's website gave instructions on where to shelter and get a coffee if you

arrived to queue pre-opening time – clearly an early morning rush was anticipated. Also on the website was an impressively long list of the limited edition records available on the day at Jumbo. Jazz was very much in the minority, but even so three Sun Ra albums were – remarkably – on the list, together with the likes of Billy Cobham, Henri Texier, John Coltrane and Go Go Penguin,

plus assorted compilations. Various local groups – not jazz – were lined up to play sets every hour next to the shop.

By mid-afternoon things had quietened down somewhat, but the long counter was still being manned by five busy sales staff and next door a melodious, rather folksy quartet had filled all the seats and drawn a two-deep standing crowd.

Assistant manager Matthew Bradshaw took time out to talk to me about the growth of Record Store Day, then responded to my question about the apparent popularity of Sun Ra:

'It's been fantastic today. Over the last few years it's just got bigger and bigger, with a really good selection of releases. This year has been a really good year for Sun Ra. A few years ago Gilles Peterson on the radio introduced his listeners to Sun Ra and a lot of young people had never heard anything like it – but they did like it! His compilations of Sun Ra have been really influential.'

Though he is delighted at the benefits of Record Store Day, now fixed as the third Saturday of April each year, Matthew is at pains to point out that, so far as shops like Jumbo are concerned, vinyl never went away and it's always been a part of their year-round sales:

'This shop's been going since 1971 and we're one of the shops that didn't stop selling vinyl. A lot of the chain stores got rid of vinyl not because it wasn't good sound or anything, but because you could fit in more CDs per square unit of space. It's cheaper to manufacture, cheaper to sell. But we maintained vinyl, we always have, so we're in a great position now that everyone's decided vinyl is fantastic again – but we never stopped selling it. HMV have got rid of vinyl maybe eight times and brought it back again, claiming, "HMV – keeping vinyl alive!", but shops like us have always sold it. We always did well with it, but sales are massively up over the last 10 years. Not only have you got young kids who like a tangible thing – they like the sound, they like the look – but you've also got older people who've spent a lot on hi-fi and now realise the

sound of vinyl is really good, so a lot of those guys have come back to it.'

Jumbo has a substantial jazz section, but obviously it's not the central plank of their sales policy. Matthew himself is a jazz fan and his instant survey of the development of his taste from schooldays to now is like a history of jazz, but not always in the right order. From what he calls 'the funky organ stuff' – Grant Green, Jimmy Smith – he moved on to doing his homework to Blue Note records, through John Coltrane and Miles Davis to the avant garde Arts

Ensemble of Chicago, and now names Tubby Hayes as his favourite British jazzman – and even admits to an appreciation of trad jazz. So, I ask him, how important are jazz records – CDs as well as vinyl – to Jumbo's year-round sales?

'We do a lot of jazz sales but it goes in waves, jazz goes round and round in popularity. At the moment a lot of the new British guys – Matthew Halsall, Nat Birchall, Go Go Penguin – have become massive, not only in the jazz world, but they've crossed over into the mainstream. I can put a Matthew Halsall album on

in the shop on a Saturday when it's full of people, people who would never dream of saying they liked jazz, and they say, "What's this?" They buy it and suddenly that door opens.'

A busy Saturday in Leeds is not going to solve the problems of record labels and musicians selling albums in penny numbers, but the sight of a shop full of punters browsing and buying CDs and vinyl was at least a partial antidote to tales of gloom and dire predictions for the record industry.

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## WHISPER NOT

**SIMON SPILLETT previews *Whisper Not: The Autobiography of Benny Golson*, written with Jim Merod, to be released in the UK on June 10th.**

Now in his ninth decade, Benny Golson is one of the last surviving giants of the golden era of jazz, a performer and composer whose 60-plus year career has embraced innovation, reinvention and rebirth in equal measures. As a member of the Dizzy Gillespie big band and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers during the 1950s, he rode the second wave of modern jazz development that came crashing down on America's cultural shores after the emergence of bebop. Then, after co-helming one of the most musicianly of all hard bop bands, The Jazztet, during the early 1960s, he relaunched himself as a Hollywood composer, scoring film and TV productions and eventually winding up on the other side of the lens in Steven Spielberg's *The Terminal*.

A saxophonist whose playing career can be bisected into pre- and post-Hollywood stages, each with its distinct character, he's always been an individual voice as an instrumentalist, channelling the work of old school giants like Don Byas into the realms of post-bop harmony. Above all, he's among the select handful of truly great post-Ellington jazz composers, like his contemporary Horace Silver a bop-based tunesmith whose themes exist as complete musical entities rather than functional blowing vehicles. Think of *I Remember Clifford*, his elegy to a fallen colleague, or *Stablemates*, an early composition so illogical and yet perfectly balanced that all at once it announced to the jazz world that here was talent of rare proportions indeed. One could go on listing Golson's contributions to the jazz standard songbook – *Are You Real?*, *Along Came Betty*, *Killer Joe*, *Blues March*, *Five Spot After Dark* and so on – songs whose appeal has endured through over five decades of jazz change, all of which are checked in this new and fascinating autobiography.

Almost inevitably, Golson's words flow with the same eloquence as his music. Indeed, it is both rare

and refreshing in the extreme to find an autobiography by a musician that for once doesn't read like a list of poorly constructed career highlights. Make no mistake; this is a book of quite a different stripe altogether. Golson's co-author also has a flair for the written word, although in Merod's contributions, loquaciousness sometimes spills exuberantly over into grandiloquent sycophancy.

The biggest hurdle for this reviewer – and I suspect other readers of this book – was getting past the preface, in which Merod serves up what is to all intents and purposes an hagiography, at one point comparing the saxophonist's account of his life to the work of W.B. Yeats, surely a first in jazz literature.

Golson's own introduction treads a similar path of purple prose, referencing Homer's *Odyssey* and declaring earnestly that 'time will bear the truth of what I tell here.' Thankfully, after this things become far more engaging with the author charting his life not chronologically but in chapters devoted to individual musicians (Coltrane, Quincy Jones, Coleman Hawkins) or more frequently with performers grouped in sometimes unlikely lumps (Miles Davis and Geoffrey Keezer, Peggy Lee and Diana Ross and so on). However, rather than jarring the reader's sense of pace, these often bite-sized chunks keep the book fast-moving and prevent it from getting bogged down in conventional sequential narrative.

Throughout, Golson remains modest about his own gifts but proud of his achievements, and never wastes an opportunity to thank those who've guided him, most notably his wife Bobbie, the subject of a chapter of touchingly breathless romance and sentimentality.

But it's Golson's fascinating insider's view of the characters who populated the Golden Age of Jazz that grip the most, with

barely a page going by without a observational vignette springing vividly to life. Along the way, we learn how good a mimic Lee Morgan could be ('his imitation of John Wayne's swagger and drawling speech was hilarious'); how mercurial was Kenny Dorham ('a fabulous musician and a confusing man') and how Harry 'Sweets' Edison's digestive issues could take out an entire band bus. He's also unafraid to tell it like it is where his own relationship to other musicians is concerned. He found Miles Davis (whom he called 'Doctor Davis' on account of the initials MD) 'not, as I knew him, a bad man or an evil person', but someone who 'behaved perversely just to amuse himself.' Others he encountered draw out more mixed feelings, such as Earl Bostic, a showman who alternatively delighted or disenfranchised his young sidemen. Perhaps the most amusing of these revelations comes when Golson reveals how Dinah Washington once mistook his friendliness for something else, with his refusal to play ball earning him the nickname 'Reverend Golson'.

Hand-in-hand with these personal reminiscences, he also provides genuine nuggets of jazz history, some of which this writer had never seen published anywhere before. For example, when McCoy Tyner's car broke down on the day he moved to New York City in 1960, who was the man that the non-driving Golson called to the rescue? None other than Tyner's future boss John Coltrane. And how about the true story behind the theme *Vierd Blues*, a composition of Coltrane's that Miles Davis later hijacked, written for a guitarist who couldn't stay in any given key.

Unsurprisingly, as they were childhood friends in Philadelphia, Coltrane figures heavily throughout the book, emerging as somebody Golson both reveres professionally and loves personally. The account of their first meeting ('like a country

bumpkin...his saxophone case in one hand and biting his thumbnail on the other. He looked like a little shy sheep') reveals the author's gift for literary portraiture. Indeed, there are similarly quick studies of all manner of musical characters; encountering the young Bill Evans, yet to realize his talent, Golson is struck by the image of 'a classic nerd', whose playing sounded 'corny and stiff'. (He also remembers Evans initially complaining that bassist Scott La Faro was 'driving him crazy' by refusing to play walking bass lines, the very thing that was to mark their collaboration as something extraordinary).

Gigs come to life too, never more so than in his jaw-dropping recollection of the night Louis Armstrong sat in with Clifford Brown, an unrecorded summit meeting in which the younger man's bravura performance stimulated Armstrong into 'seriously searching for everything that had ever been available to his horn.'

But it's not all myth-making stuff; there are several first-hand accounts of the kind of bill-paying gigs even jazzmen of Golson's stature once had to go through, such as the night when, marooned in a club in Carnarsie, he and a young Chick Corea find themselves forced at beer-point to jazz up the German National Anthem ('we milked it as if our lives were at stake; maybe they were.').

The author, however, hasn't just assembled an intriguing catalogue of jazz-related incidents. There is also a poignant human element to his story; the endemic racism and poverty of his childhood are explored with remarkable even-handedness, as is his only-child relationship with his mother, and there is never any danger of failure to acknowledge what he sees as his own personal failings. In case of point, if anyone ever doubts that hard times desert a performer when they achieve fame, Golson's tale about attempting to establish himself in

Hollywood during the late 1960s is a model lesson. Now in 'a world of convincing illusions' and having been tagged with a 'jazz-cat' label he is forced to pawn his instruments and wife's clothes in order to get by, waiting what seems like an age to secure work and respect. This achieved, there are inevitably a sprinkling of quick-fire anecdotes about TV and movie names including, among others, Marty Feldman, Mickey Rooney, Alan Alda and James Coburn ('he compared [acting] to playing an instrument'). Even then Golson refuses to get too starry-eyed, especially when recalling the time Orion Pictures used *Killer Joe* without his permission. 'Was Hollywood everything I imagined?' he asks at one point. 'Maybe more and maybe less' comes the ambiguous answer.

For those also seeking to gain an insight into Golson's compositional methods, the book is a must-read. Not only does he discuss the inspirations, influences and ideas that inform his work (Tadd Dameron clearly being the fountain-head), he gives a valuable insight into how and

where his best known creations came to life. Thus we learn all about the careful gestation of *I Remember Clifford*, the expedient birth of *Stablemates* and the novelty of *Blues March*. Golson also shows he's not immune from the rituals and suspicions that often bedevil writers, confessing that he's unable to throw out the bathrobe he wore during an especially purple-patch of creativity.

His summing up, a simple, honest and brief chapter titled *A New Way Of Life*, saves perhaps the greatest revelation of all, that since the late 1960s Golson has been a practising Jehovah's Witness, with his faith sustaining him through a life of 'family values, law, and morality'. It is this fair-mindedness that prevents Golson from making too harsh a judgement on others, and which undoubtedly contributes to his noble decision to write a book free from much of the tawdry reminiscence that often characterises accounts of jazz history. Consequently, Golson emerges as a man of immense dignity, with a work ethic that could serve as a template for any

aspiring musician; a nice guy who finds the best in situations and people wherever he can (even when he's backing Art Blakey into a corner about the future of the Jazz Messengers, he comes across less as a young upstart, more as a concerned admirer). That said, he can be as cutting as a blowtorch when needs be, in one instance delivering the ultimate, impervious, harangue against professional jazz critics ('for any paper or "critic" to simply repeat, even in part, a previous writer's comments about an artist is the lowest form of critical effort').

*Whisper Not* is not, however, a book that sets out to prove Golson's superiority to others; rather it sets down a hugely entertaining, historically priceless, first-hand account of the times through which one of the great jazz survivors has lived and worked. Inevitably, given the length and intense cycle of achievement of the author's career, there are a few memories that are a little askew (Hank Mobley came after Coltrane in the lineage of the Miles Davis quintet, not before, for example,

and the photo captions in my pre-publication copy are sometimes incorrect; the picture of Coltrane backstage surely dates from the early 1960s and the on-stage shot of the Jazztet is from The Five Spot, not Sweet Basil) but these never detract from what is, indisputably, one of the most erudite and carefully considered of all jazz autobiographies. 'What stories will the future tell about Benny Golson?' he muses in the final lines of the book. One certainty is that, along with a folio of memorably personal compositions, future generations will thank Golson for leaving one memorably personal book. Insightful, moving, candid and well thought-out, this is a book that deserves the widest possible appreciation.

***Whisper Not: The Autobiography of Benny Golson*, published by Temple University Press, distributed in the UK by Combined Academic Publishing: hardback, £29.99**

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

## EPISTLES TO THE WORLD

## RON SIMPSON follows some of the stories in the afterlife of a historic album.

For *Jazz Rag 140* I found myself reviewing a highly significant album, yet one that had pretty much disappeared from view in the years since it was recorded in 1960. Even on Phono's 2015 re-release *Jazz Epistle – Verse 1* was relegated to the position of bonus album to *Dollar Brand Plays Sphere Jazz*. Historically *Verse 1* is reputed to be the first jazz LP to be made by black musicians in South Africa. Politically it – and its aftermath – are inextricably tied up with an appalling period in South African life and decades of protest. In terms of the musicians involved three have become notable figures internationally in world music: Dollar Brand is now Abdullah Ibrahim, revered pianist, symbol of his nation and almost idolised on his visits to the UK, Jonas Gwangwa is now as famous for his award-winning film scores as for his robust trombone playing – and celebrated trumpeter Hugh Masakela is feted by the great and good and, as it happens, due this month for a short UK tour with Larry Willis. The fourth star of the *Epistles*, the highly original alto saxist Kippie Moeketsi, was doomed to poverty, alcohol abuse and obscurity. In contrast to his three former colleagues, still active in their 70s and 80s, he died in 1983 at the age of 58, still protesting that he taught Dollar Brand all he knew about jazz. The seeds of his tragedy and of the others' success can be found in aspects of South African political life in the 1950s and 1960s.

On January 22nd 1960 the *Jazz Epistles* went into the studio in

Johannesburg to record their album; on March 21st 1960 the Sharpeville Massacre saw the deaths of 69 black South Africans protesting against the cruelly restrictive pass laws. Though with a long tradition of racial segregation (Moeketsi, Gwangwa and Masakela, for instance, had been born and brought up in black-only townships), South Africa had only formalised apartheid in 1948 and the protests at Sharpeville and elsewhere could hardly have been a surprise after a decade of increasing activity by the African National Congress.

What was much more surprising was the emergence the previous year of *King Kong*, an 'All African jazz opera', composed by jazz pianist Todd Matshikiza, which opened at the traditionally liberal University of the Witwatersrand (Nelson Mandela an alumnus), but was then permitted to tour the country, playing to sell-out mixed race audiences. One of the stars was the jazz-influenced singer, Miriam Makeba ('Mama Africa'), and the 14-piece band included Masakela, Gwangwa and Moeketsi. Then, when the South African government thought it would be good for its image to export this highly successful chunk of black culture at a time of impending trade sanctions and sports boycotts, *King Kong* ended up at the Princes Theatre, London. To my shame I never saw it, barely knew of its existence, certainly didn't know that it was the story of a heavyweight boxer, though maybe I did go so far as to understand it had nothing to

do with gorillas and the Empire State Building!

Between the effect of Sharpeville and the success of *King Kong* that wonderfully talented group of South African jazzmen dispersed. At the time of *Verse 1* Gwangwa was a teenager, Masakela not much older, and the promise was infinite. Masakela reacted to Sharpeville by fleeing the country and, by the time *King Kong* reached London, he was already into music courses at London's Guildhall and the Manhattan School of Music. Gwangwa left South Africa at a similar time and Brand, having joined a European tour of *King Kong*, settled in Europe. Miriam Makeba soon became the first black South African singer to make an impact on Western popular music, then found her passport had been revoked and she was unable to return to South Africa. Only Kippie Moeketsi, having played in the band at the Princes Theatre, went home, his active career virtually over, limited by government restrictions. It's somehow appropriate that the only biography of him, published in 1995 and sub-titled *Sad Man of Jazz*, is 'currently unavailable' on Amazon. He is belatedly commemorated at the Market Theatre of Johannesburg in the name of the theatre's jazz club: Kippie's. The connection between political activism and all the arts was one of the few bright spots of apartheid South Africa. The Market Theatre, for decades a hotbed of multi-racial creativity, is best known for the work of such major figures as Athol Fugard and John Kani and, even as I write this, is staging *Sophiatown*, about the township described on Wikipedia as 'the epicentre of politics, blues and jazz during the 1940s and 1950s' and the site of the *Epistles*' first performances together.

As the exiles carved out highly successful careers in the United States and elsewhere, by no means always within the field of jazz, the activism continued, an activism that was present at the very start of their careers. *King Kong* was a political hot potato and it's difficult to understand

why a repressive regime allowed it to go ahead when one number clearly referenced the notorious Treason Trial of four giants of the ANC: Albert Luthuli, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. In later years Jonas Gwangwa's Academy Award nomination came for *Cry Freedom*, Richard Attenborough's film about Steve Biko, and through the 1980s Gwangwa led Amandla, the ANC's big band. Masakela has always been heavily involved with African musicians and charities and, together with Makeba (to whom he was married for two years in the 1960s), appeared on Paul Simon's *Graceland* tours in the 1980s – the next time, after *King Kong*, that popular culture in the West woke up to South African music. Abdullah Ibrahim's brief return to apartheid South Africa in the 1970s brought the composition of *Mannenbergh*, described as 'a beloved anthem of hope and resistance for many South Africans' – and the recording that made the reputation of saxophonist Basil Coetzee.

Of all of them, the most committed of activists was Miriam Makeba – and not only in support of African causes. In 2008 she died of a heart attack after performing at a concert in Italy in support of Roberto Saviano who had bravely taken on the Mafia-like Camorra. But still, over 50 years on, the music of two of the young jazzmen who were doubly revolutionary in the days of the *Jazz Epistles* and *King Kong* is still to be enjoyed on regular tours of Europe and the UK.

***Jazz Rag* would be delighted to hear from any of our readers who saw *King Kong* at the Princes Theatre (or even the University of the Witwatersrand!).**

**Hugh Masakela and Larry Willis are playing the Howard Assembly Room, Leeds (May 28), the Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden (29), Warwick University Arts Centre (June 6) and the New Theatre, Cardiff (7).**

## WATERMILL JAZZ TO MOVE AGAIN

Watermill Jazz has not actually been at the Watermill since 2001, but now the club has just moved for a second time from its home for the last 15 years, the Aviva Sports and Social Club. Founded in 1994 by pianist Ann Odell and the late Steve Spurling, the club operated at the Watermill in Reigate Road, Dorking, until a fire closed the pub for a year or more. Not sure whether the move would be temporary or permanent and with the prospect of returning from exile, the club still operated as Watermill Jazz, but in fact the Aviva club has proved an outstanding venue as the club has developed and prospered.

This latest move is prompted by the expected closure later this year of the Aviva Social Club. Initially last year the insurance company Aviva announced that they were to vacate the whole Pixham Lane site and, though they have gone back on that decision, a reduction in staff numbers will mean the closure of the club.

So the club has had plenty of warning to find new premises which are at Betchworth Park Golf Club in Reigate Road, not far from the Watermill Inn. The change of venue will mean an end to the Sunday jam sessions and also a shift of the main club night from Thursday to Tuesday. Jacqui Dankworth and Charlie Wood inaugurated the Tuesday regime on May 3. Paul Hobbs, one of a voluntary committee of four, summed up the mixture of regrets and optimism felt at the club:

'Whilst we will be sad to leave our current location, with our strong membership base which numbers close to 340 and an extensive mailing list, we hope that Watermill Jazz will go from strength to strength at the new venue – especially with the strong varied programme of artists, already put together by Kathryn Shackleton for the next few months, also attracting some of the golf club members to attend our concerts.'

*Jazz Rag* also asked Paul to look back at some of the highlights of Watermill Jazz's time at the Aviva Social Club. Several of the events he singles out were the result not only of the quality of performers the club attracts, but also the excellent acoustic at the Aviva club and a key purchase in 2005: a Yamaha C3 grand piano, thankfully moving with the jazz club to the Betchworth Park venue. As a result of these factors the club has been involved in many recordings and broadcasts. In fact the well received CD by John Horler, *The Key to it All*, was recorded for Diving Duck Records shortly after the purchase of the grand piano.

However, the first notable broadcast from the Watermill pre-dates the Yamaha and the Aviva club – in 1999, when it was still at the Watermill, BBC *Jazz Notes* broadcast a performance by the Martin Drew Quartet recorded at the club. More recently concerts from the club have featured on BBC Radio 3's *Jazz Line-up*: celebrating the programme's 10th anniversary in 2011 (with the Neil Cowley Trio and the Finn Peters Quintet) and

the club's 20th anniversary in 2014 (Alan Broadbent and the Mark Nightingale Big Band). In 2001 the original venue also featured in a rather unusual broadcast on BBC television. Under the name *Fragments in Genius* it featured musical savant Derek Paravacini and included filming at the club with Derek performing alongside Matt Wates.

The musicians involved in commercial recordings made at the club, both live and in studio conditions, suggest the quality of jazz associated with the Watermill: Bobby Wellins (Trio Records), Alan Barnes and Ken Peplowski (Woodville), the Harry Allen Quartet (Trio Records), Art Themen and Steve Melling (to be released shortly).

Watermill Jazz has also commissioned suites to be performed at the club, an ambitious undertaking more associated with festivals than a once-a-week jazz club. In 2010 Paul Busby was commissioned to write *The Watermill Jazz Suite* and four years later it was the turn of Derek Nash whose Sax Appeal performed his *Phoenix Suite* for the club's 20th anniversary. And the club has branched out beyond the confines of Dorking, with annual concerts at the Menuhin Hall in Cobham, beginning in 2006 with the Stan Tracey Quartet including Bobby Wellins performing *Under Milk Wood*.

Ironically the move from the Aviva Social Club comes at a time when the Watermill has just been shortlisted as one of three nominees in the Venue of the Year category of the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Awards. A nice tribute to the Watermill and a charming farewell to the Aviva Club came from Derek Nash when Sax Appeal played the club in March, one of the last gigs at the old venue. The band premiered a new composition by Derek marking the club's move and entitled *The End of an Era* – hopefully to be included on the next Sax Appeal CD.

The end of an era, certainly, but also, one trusts, the beginning of one. The club's policy remains unchanged and, just in case the

musicians named in this piece don't make it obvious, here's the official version: 'the finest in jazz from top UK and overseas bands coupled with giving an opportunity to the best younger bands, the music ranging from mainstream to post-bop and contemporary.'

Helping the Watermill to keep swinging at the golf club, the Darius Brubeck Quartet (May 10) follows Jacqui Dankworth and Charlie Wood, before what the Watermill calls a 'Scandi fortnight': the Anglo-Scandinavian trio, Phronesis (17) and, from Norway, the Espen Eriksen Trio (24). The Art Themen Quartet on May 31 includes Steve Melling who recently recorded the aforementioned duo album with Art at the Aviva Club.

The first gig in June (7), Kate Williams Four plus Three, involving the Guastalla String Quartet, unites classical and popular in a way that Kate's father, the guitarist John Williams, would recognise. And the second month in the new home has as varied a programme as one could wish for: Cafe Society Swing (14), the Arun Ghosh Quintet (21) and the Beats and Pieces Big Band (28).

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



The *Jazz Epistles*



Derek Nash and 'the end of an era', by Jon Frost.



John Dankworth, photographed by Brian O'Connor at the original venue in 2001, a few months before the fire.



# THE LEGACY OF THE ORIGINAL DIXIELAND JAZZ BAND

by Scott Yanow

Many in the jazz world will be celebrating 2017 as the 100th anniversary of the very first jazz recording. On February 26, 1917 the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (ODJB) recorded *Livery Stable Blues* and *Dixie Jass Band One Step* (better known as Original Dixieland One Step). But if one wants to celebrate a year early, that is quite acceptable as the ODJB was actually formed in 1916, having their initial success in Chicago.

Despite their name and the later claims of its cornetist Nick LaRocca, the members of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band did not invent jazz nor were they the first jazz group. Unfortunately much of pre-1917 jazz is shrouded in darkness and mystery due to the lack of recordings and contemporary documentation.

What is known is that cornetist Buddy Bolden, who formed his first band in 1895, was the earliest jazz musician to gain fame in New Orleans before mental illness forced him to retire in 1906. One can only speculate what he actually sounded like. Ragtime, which was actually a contemporary of early New Orleans jazz rather than its predecessor, was very popular during 1900-15. Although its top composers and pianists went unrecorded, a few virtuosic banjoists (most notably Vess Ossman and Fred Van Eps) and some brass and military bands

had the opportunity to record rags. During that period in New Orleans, Bolden's place as king cornetist was taken by Freddie Keppard and Joe 'King' Oliver, and such musicians as clarinetists Johnny Dodds, Jimmie Noone and Sidney Bechet, trombonist-bandleader Kid Ory, cornetist Oscar Celestin (who led the Tuxedo Band), and the teenaged Louis Armstrong began to make an impact on the local scene. The yet-unnamed jazz music began to spread across the United States, starting in 1909 when bassist Bill Johnson moved to California. He led the Original Creole Band, a group that included Keppard and toured the U.S. on the black vaudeville circuit during 1914-18, introducing jazz to many cities. Other New Orleans jazz musicians began to leave town in search of work and better conditions. Most notable was pianist-composer Jelly Roll Morton who performed in Chicago in 1914, San Francisco in 1915 and Los Angeles by 1917.

Recordings before 1917 tended to be dominated by sentimental vocalists, straight dance music, military-type bands, vaudeville performers, excerpts of classical pieces and opera, and novelties. It can be both intriguing and frustrating searching for hints of jazz on pre-1917 recordings. The African-American orchestra led by James Reese Europe came close at times. They recorded four selections apiece in 1913 and 1914. Three are classical

numbers while the other five (*Too Much Mustard*, *Down Home Rag*, *You're Here And I'm Here*, *Castle House Rag* and *Castle Walk*) are loose and often quite boisterous versions of ragged melodies. It is not quite jazz but about as uninhibited as any recordings from that era. Other early recordings of interest include Gene 'The Ragtime King' Greene's scat singing on *King of The Bungaloos* in 1911 (15 years before Louis Armstrong's *Heebie Jeebies*), Sophie Tucker's *Some of These Days* (also from 1911), Marion Harris' vocal recordings of 1916 on which she swings in a relaxed fashion and clarinetist Wilbur Sweatman playing *Down Home Rag* in 1916. Most fascinating is *That Funny Jas Band From Dixieland*, the first recorded song to refer to jazz. Cut on November 8, 1916, it features the comedy team of Collins & Harlan singing and joking around. They are joined by a band that could be considered to be playing jazz, particularly the trombonist, although chances are that their two ensemble choruses were worked out in advance.

But it was up to the Original Dixieland Jazz Band to really get jazz on records. Nick LaRocca (1889-1961) led his first group in New Orleans in 1908. He worked regularly around town until March 1, 1916 when he moved to Chicago to join drummer Johnny Stein's band. Stein's *Dixie Jass Band* also included clarinetist Alcide

'Yellow' Nunez, trombonist Eddie Edwards (1891-1963) and pianist Henry Ragas (1891-1919). For three months the band excited audiences at Schiller's Café before a dispute over money resulted in the group breaking up. The sidemen, with Tony Sbarbaro (1897-1969) on drums was renamed The Original Dixieland Jazz Band. A personality conflict with LaRocca resulted in Nunez leaving the group in October and Larry Shields (1893-1953) becoming the ODJB's clarinetist.

After gaining a great deal of attention in Chicago, the ODJB moved to New York in early 1917, having a historic run at Reisenweber's that launched the jazz age. The ODJB played strictly ensembles with the only solos being very brief breaks. LaRocca mostly stated the melody on every chorus, Shields played counter-melodies, and Edwards added percussive runs and harmonies. Ragas' piano could barely be heard due to the primitive recording quality (which in 1917 sometimes made the band sound like they were playing in a wind tunnel) while Sbarbaro added colour and jagged rhythms. Compared to what had been heard on records previously, the ODJB sounded absolutely barbaric to many listeners of the time. On their hit *Livery Stable Blues*, the horns imitated barnyard animals while *Dixie Jass Band One Step* was fast, excitable and happily noisy. Most of the public loved it.

During 1917-18 in their recordings for the Victor, Columbia and Aeolian label, the ODJB introduced such future Dixieland standards as *The Darktown Strutters' Ball*, *Indiana*, *Tiger Rag*, *At The Jazz Band Ball*, *Fidgety Feet*, *Sensation*, and *Clarinet Marmalade*. Among the group's fans were a young Louis Armstrong who always spoke highly of the group, and Bix Beiderbecke. When his older brother brought home the ODJB's recording of *Tiger Rag*, Bix was so inspired that he

taught himself the cornet, practising regularly to the recording, learning how to play jazz.

1919 was the highpoint for the ODJB. They repeated their success in London where they were featured for nine months at the Hammersmith Palais, introducing jazz to Europe. During this time they made their finest recordings, 17 selections for Columbia that found the group very well recorded, playing at more relaxed tempos than they were heard earlier, and harmonizing beautifully, particularly on such numbers as *Mammy O' Mine*, *I've Lost My Heart In Dixieland* and the waltz *I'm Forever Blowin' Bubbles*. By then pianist Harry Ragas had passed away, a victim of the flu epidemic. He was succeeded by J. Russell Robinson (1892-1963), who was better known as a songwriter. Eddie Edwards was serving in the Army so his place was taken by the similar-sounding Emile Christian (1895-1973).

When the ODJB returned to New York, the jazz world was rapidly changing. Three musical trends were working against the ODJB. Their success in 1917 resulted in many similar five-piece groups being formed that were noisier and less musical, all seeking to take advantage of the 'jazz fad'. Among these were pianist Earl Fuller's group (featuring Ted Lewis on clarinet), Ted Lewis' own band, the Louisiana Five (Yellow Nunez's trumpet-less band), the Original New Orleans Jazz Band which had the then-unknown Jimmy Durante on piano plus many groups that never recorded. By 1920, the public was becoming a bit bored by these unsophisticated bands.

A sweeter style of jazz emerged as a very popular dance music that had quieter rhythms, an emphasis on melody and less adventure. Paul Whiteman's orchestra, which sought to mix together aspects of classical music with jazz and dance music, was on its way to becoming the most popular band of the 1920s.

In addition, the evolution of jazz soon overshadowed the ODJB. During 1922-23, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (a white band based in Chicago) was the

next major step in jazz, mixing together some solos with clean ensembles and fresh new melodies. In 1920 Mamie Smith's recording of *Crazy Blues* was such a hit that a blues craze inspired record labels to record every black female blues and vaudeville singer they could find in hopes of duplicating the hit. The blues craze also resulted in labels realizing that there was a large untapped market for black bands and singers. In 1923 King Oliver, Johnny Dodds, Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Jelly Roll Morton and Bessie Smith all made their recording debut. King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band (with Dodds and Armstrong), although mostly ensemble-oriented, contained so much talent that it seemed light years ahead of the ODJB. Sidney Bechet in 1923 was the first major horn soloist to be well showcased on records. And the rise of Louis Armstrong, who became a solo star with Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra in 1924-25 and was soon recording classic gems with his Hot Five, brought jazz to a completely different level.

After returning to the U.S., the ODJB was pressured into adding altoist Bennie Krueger to their record dates as sweetener. They had a minor hit with their version of Robinson's *Margie*, but that would be their last hurrah for quite some time. While they introduced *Royal Garden Blues* and *Jazz Me Blues* in 1921, the ODJB only recorded eight songs that year, two in 1922 and three in 1923. By the time they broke up in 1923, personality conflicts had resulted in turnover and their music was considered out of date. Their time had passed.

LaRocca and Shields retired from music, Edwards worked with the orchestras of Lou Gold and Johnny Sylvester during 1926-27 but then also faded from the scene. Robinson, who accompanied Lucille Hegamin, Lizzie Miles, Annette Hanshaw and Al Bernard on records, mostly worked as a songwriter while Sbarbaro freelanced.

In 1936, with the swing era in full force, there was a growing interest in the beginnings of jazz. Nick LaRocca sensed the opportunity for the Original Dixieland Jazz Band to regain its place in jazz history and he

persuaded Edwards, Shields, Robinson and Sbarbaro (who had changed his name to Tony Spargo) to give it another shot. To hedge his bets, LaRocca also formed a big band but its two record dates are largely forgettable. The original group came together for some radio broadcasts, recorded six of their earlier songs (including *Tiger Rag* and *Livery Stable Blues*), and appeared in a *March of Time* newsreel. Despite the passing of 20 years since their birth, the ODJB played in an unchanged style with the music being all ensembles and not including solos. The new venture, which gained some initial attention, lasted less than a year before the ODJB passed into history.

Eddie Edwards came back a few times to participate on ODJB reunion recordings with either

Wild Bill Davison or Bobby Hackett in LaRocca's place. Larry Shields played with trumpeter Sharkey Bonano as late as 1951. J. Russell Robinson, who recorded eight obscure piano solos in 1947, went back to composing. Tony Spargo stayed active and doubled on kazoo, working with Phil Napoleon and Pee Wee Erwin.

Nick LaRocca, who gave up playing in 1937, made exaggerated claims about the ODJB in his later years. However it was not necessary, for the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's place in jazz history is secure and one can still enjoy their music 99 years later.

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



Nick LaRocca

## JAZZ FESTIVALS

## FESTIVAL LISTINGS JULY

## BURTON AGNES JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL (JULY 1-3)

Burton Agnes is a particularly attractively sited festival: in the grounds of an Elizabethan stately home in the Yorkshire Wolds. Headliners this year include Elaine Delmar, Bugalu Foundation, PP Arnold, Ben Beattie's After Midnight Band and Simon Cunliffe-Lister. [www.burtonagnes.com/Jazz\\_Festival.html](http://www.burtonagnes.com/Jazz_Festival.html)  
See great competition, page 7

## 25TH DOVE INTERNATIONAL BEER AND JAZZ FESTIVAL (JULY 1-3)

Apart from jazz and more than 20 real ales, the festival at Dove Holes, near Buxton, offers excellent camping and two church services. Bands playing the festival include Baby Jools and his Jazzaholics, Martin Bennett's Jazz Friends and Tom Langham's Hot Fingers. [www.dovejazzclub.co.uk](http://www.dovejazzclub.co.uk)

## LOVE SUPREME JAZZ FESTIVAL (JULY 1-3)

A three-day greenfield jazz festival in the beautiful grounds of Glynde Place in the South Downs has an impressive and eclectic line-up of top names: Grace Jones, Burt Bacharach, Liane La Havas, Caro Emerald, Melody Gardot, Kamasi Washington, and more. [www.lovesupremefestival.com](http://www.lovesupremefestival.com)

## FROME FESTIVAL (JULY 1-10)

Nearly 200 events throughout the town will see Frome celebrating 400 years of Shakespeare. Pee Wee Ellis is among the star names featured, along with Billy Bragg, the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain and Bruce Foxton's From the Jam. [www.fromefestival.co.uk](http://www.fromefestival.co.uk)

## WIGAN JAZZ FESTIVAL (JULY 7-10)

Wigan is justly celebrated for the quality of its big band programme and this year keeps up the tradition with Georgie Fame and the Guy Barker Big Band, the Big Chris Barber Band and Eric Marienthal with the Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra. [www.wiganjazzclub.co.uk](http://www.wiganjazzclub.co.uk)

## SWANAGE JAZZ FESTIVAL (JULY 8-10)

One of the great seaside events, Swanage spreads across four stroller venues, two marquees and two indoor venues. A fine blend from all periods and styles of jazz includes Alex Welsh Remembered, Tim Garland, the Kofi-Barnes Aggregation and Pete Long's Jazz at the Philharmonic Tribute. [www.swanagejazz.org](http://www.swanagejazz.org)

## SEASIDE SHUFFLE (JULY 8-10)

The Ramsgate Small Boat Owners Club hosts the music of eight bands including the Big Easy with Trefor Williams, the Sussex Jazz Kings and Annie Hawkins and her Jazz Men. [www.jazzandjazz.com](http://www.jazzandjazz.com)

## LARMER TREE FESTIVAL (JULY 13-17)

The five-day music and arts festival at the Larmer Tree Gardens on the Wiltshire-Dorset border includes appearance by Caro Emerald, Jamie Cullum and Tom Odell. [www.larmertreefestival.co.uk](http://www.larmertreefestival.co.uk)

## MARLBOROUGH JAZZ (JULY 15-17)

Headliners in the festival, spread across 19 venues in the town, include Clare Teal, the Jive Aces and the Art Themen Quartet. [www.marlboroughjazz.com](http://www.marlboroughjazz.com)

## EDINBURGH JAZZ &amp; BLUES FESTIVAL (JULY 15-24)

Jazz's contribution to Edinburgh's regular summer of festivals runs the gamut of styles from Dixieland to cutting edge, with such big names as Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra, the Jan Garbarek Group featuring Trilok Gurtu, and Curtis Stigers. [www.edinburghjazzfestival.com](http://www.edinburghjazzfestival.com)

## BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL (JULY 15-24)

The newly created joint festival will be continuing the traditions of both festivals, with a vast programme of mostly free events throughout the centres of Birmingham and Solihull and at many venues in the surrounding areas. In addition to top British jazzers such as Simon Spillett and Bruce Adams and American blues stars such as the Walter Trout Band, there is, as always, a strong European flavour, both established favourites such as Pepper and the Jellies and newcomers like the Busquitos from Holland. [www.birminghamjazzfestival.com](http://www.birminghamjazzfestival.com)

## SUGNALL JAZZ FESTIVAL (JULY 22-24)

This brand new festival in the intimate surroundings of a 17th century walled garden in Staffordshire features, among others, King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys and Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen. [www.sugnallwalledgarden.co.uk](http://www.sugnallwalledgarden.co.uk)

## THE INTERNATIONAL GYPSY GUITAR FESTIVAL (JULY 29-31)

Set in Dursley, Gloucestershire, the festival features the likes of the Remi Harris Trio, Brady Winterstein, Paulus Schafer and Olli Soikkeli. [www.iggf.co.uk](http://www.iggf.co.uk)

## THE BUDE TRADITION

**Bude Jazz Festival (August 30-September 2)** knows its strengths and, rightly, sees no need to change a formula that has made it one of the UK's most popular jazz festivals for many years. The attractions of town and coast make it a good place to be in August anyway and the programming gives every chance for the punters to explore the town without getting the car out or even walking too far: venues from castle to dance hall to night club are well within range. Some festivals are successful because they embrace change; some such as Bude are successful because they have found the formula that suits them. Bude unashamedly appeals to traditionalists; the website expresses the hope that 'modernists' will find something to enjoy. What is beyond doubt is that lovers of traditional jazz will have a field day (or four field days) listening to the best of British bands. A random sample of an enormous list of names comes up with Kevin Grenfell's Swing Thing, Amy Roberts and Richard Exall, George Huxley's All Star Jazz Band, the Jake Leg Jug Band, Slide by Slide, Roger Marks' Brass Farthings, Sheila Fawkes and the Guys, the Great Western Jazz Company and the Bateman Brothers Jazz Band. [www.jazzfestivalbude.co.uk](http://www.jazzfestivalbude.co.uk)



Amy Roberts

## COURTNEY HEADLINES NEWCASTLE

## Newcastle-under-Lyme Jazz and Blues Festival (May 27-30)

begins with a few events on Friday evening, then continues with three days crammed with town centre jazz and blues over the Bank Holiday weekend, the whole thing preceded by a celebrity concert with Courtney Pine at the New Vic Theatre on May 25. The programme makes full use of Newcastle's abundance of bars and cafes to fill the town with jazz and blues from morning to late night sessions. Saturday's programme, for instance, contains well over 20 performances, with an active Fringe in support. Those appearing (some more than once) include the Whiskey Brothers, Roy Forbes, Tipitina, Jake Leg Jug Band, Little Jo and the Misfits, Bucket of Blues, Alan McKown Band, and many more. [www.newcastlejazzandblues.co.uk](http://www.newcastlejazzandblues.co.uk)



Courtney Pine

## 47 AND COUNTING

**Sevenoaks Summer Festival (June 18-July 3)** has a particularly interesting and varied history, beginning with the inaugural event at Sevenoaks School in 1970 under the grandiose name of Paeon 70. Not surprisingly the name was dropped three years later, possibly because of pronunciation problems! Now, the 47th Sevenoaks Summer Festival draws on a list of venues including three theatres, various pubs and parks - and the bus and railway stations! The programme is similarly varied, from Shakespeare productions to dance classes. Bill-topping in the jazz programme is Martin Taylor (also leading a workshop), with other jazz events including a Miles Davis tribute with Simon Spillett and Henry Lowther, Jazz and Blues with T.J. Johnson, Big Band Swing with the Jon Hamilton Big Band, Dixieland with Don Steele's Dixie Jazz Band and a jazz workshop with Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra - not to mention the Lonnegans' Skiffle Party! [www.sevenoaksfestival.org.uk](http://www.sevenoaksfestival.org.uk)



Martin Taylor

## ORGANISED IN A BREWERY

Jazz fans tempted by the joint delights of good jazz and good beer will be drawn to **Burton Real Ale and Jazz (July 15-16)**. What better venue for such an event than the National Brewery Centre? The beer on offer includes Heritage beers brewed on site and the inner man can also be fortified by such delicacies as beer- and cider-infused sausages with mashed potatoes and onion gravy! Three sessions (Friday evening, Saturday daytime and evening) are full of the liveliest of jazz and jazz-related music from the Rumblestrutters, the Remi Harris Trio, the Busquitos and many others, plus the chance to explore the Brewery Museum. [www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk](http://www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk)



Remi Harris

## JAZZ OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Set between the Quantocks and the sea, St. Audries Bay is a holiday centre in a designated 'area of outstanding natural beauty'. In addition to its own attractions and excellent facilities, St. Audries Holiday Club runs themed holidays: bridge, folk music and the rest. **September 23-26** is the date for the **St. Audries Bay Jazz Weekend**, three night residential with eight sessions of jazz from Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen, John Shillito Band and Select 4, Sunset Café Stompers and Original Rags. [www.staudriesbay.co.uk](http://www.staudriesbay.co.uk)



Digby Fairweather

## JAZZ FESTIVAL FOR WALES

While the future of **Brecon Jazz Festival** has, understandably, attracted widespread notice, the comparatively unheralded, and certainly underfunded, Swansea Jazz Festival (**June 17-19**) goes on its way assembling an outstanding programme in the city's Maritime Quarter. The Dylan Thomas Theatre hosts 10 concerts as the main programme, beginning with the Alan Barnes Octet and ending with 360, a 10-piece jazz funk outfit featuring Average White Band alumni, Hamish Stuart and Malcolm Duncan. In between the concerts range from Pee Wee Ellis' Funk Assembly to the Keith Ball Band to Alec Dankworth's Spanish Accents. And there's a packed fringe programme of free events, including Saturday afternoon's Cottle Brothers, festival director David joined by Richard and Laurence. [www.sjf.co.uk](http://www.sjf.co.uk)



Alec Dankworth

**A THRILLER FROM MANILA!**

In which British jazz festival would you find a tribute to the former conductor of the Manila Symphony Orchestra, also coincidentally the captain of the Philippines shooting team? **Mike Durham's Classic Jazz Party**, the Whitley Bay Jazz Festival, of course! The conductor/sharp shooter was Fred Elizalde whose rich and varied career included a spell in the late 1920s when his London-based jazz-inclined dance band included such



Fred Elizalde

American stars as Adrian Rollini and Fud Livingston. As for the jazz party, named after its late founder, also leader of the West Jesmond Rhythm Kings, that takes place on **November 4-6** at the Village Hotel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, with a line-up of some 30 classic jazz musicians from all over the world: Whitley Bay is clearly firmly of the Remain in Europe party and there is a good American representation, too! An enterprising set of tribute programmes range from the neglected (Elizalde, Jack Hylton) to the celebrated (Duke Ellington, Hot Club of France). [www.whitleybayjazzfest.org](http://www.whitleybayjazzfest.org)



Val Wiseman

**CARRYING THE TORCH**

**Llandudno Jazz Festival**, relocating this year to Bodafon Farm Park on **July 29-31**, is proud of its antecedents: 'still carrying the torch of the great Titley and Appleby Jazz Festivals' in attracting 'true modern jazz lovers from far and wide.' Not that the programme is very restrictive in its use of the word 'modern': the 15 concerts - afternoon till late on all three dates - cover a wide range of music performed by the best of British musicians. Arnie Somogyi's Sounds in the City pays tribute to the music of Charles Mingus before Pete Long's Tribute to Jazz at the Philharmonic offers a very different kind of challenge. A sample of others appearing includes the Steve Fishwick/Osian Roberts Quintet, the Steve Waterman Trio, Alan Barnes/Dave Newton, Val Wiseman/Craig Milverton, the Karen Sharp Quartet and Tina May/Alan Barnes. And, of course, the recent arrival of Llandudno adds yet another to the glorious list of jazz festivals in beautiful seaside locations! [www.llandudnojazzfestival.com](http://www.llandudnojazzfestival.com)

**WIN A WEEKEND TICKET WORTH £132!!**

Jazz Rag has a great prize to offer thanks to the generosity of Llandudno Jazz Festival. Send us a humorous caption for this photograph of Bruce Adams and Alan Barnes, taken by noted jazz photographer William Ellis at Llandudno in 2015, and win a weekend ticket for this year's festival, Entries by email to [admin@bigbearmusic.com](mailto:admin@bigbearmusic.com) or by post to **Caption Competition, Jazz Rag, P.O. Box 944, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8UT**, by June 17th, 2016.



**OSCAR PETTIFORD**

**COMPLETE BIG BAND STUDIO RECORDINGS**

Phono 870242 76:58

This recording comprises the music Pettiford recorded in 1956 and 1957 for the ABC label, being *The Oscar Pettiford Orchestra in Hi-Fi* and *The Oscar Pettiford Orchestra in Hi-Fi Volume 2*. The Orchestra comprises some of the best jazz soloists of the time, including Donald Byrd, Tommy Flanagan, Lucky Thompson and Benny Golson. The original recordings are complemented with three different versions of tracks from the albums that Pettiford recorded live at Birdland in New York. It is interesting to be able to compare the orchestra performing in a live situation with 'the more precise elaboration achieved in the studio'.

Pettiford made his name performing in small groups on cello. The big band context does of necessity mean that we generally have less opportunity to hear the bass as anything

piano jazz, bass and drums right in the pocket, as they say, Parrott's firm, swinging lines a reminder that she was once a pupil of the star bassist Rufus Reid. Duke's quite exquisite *Sunset and the Mockingbird* (from *The Queen's Suite*) is in equally safe hands as is *John Hardy's Wife*, another Ducal rarity, with a neat solo by Parrott, before Rossano sets off at pace. Parrott sings in her engaging *Blossom Dearie* fashion on *What A Difference A Day Made* and does well on *Hallelujah I Love Him So*, Rossano digging in. Sadly, even he cannot redeem *Misty for me*, its high sugar content deserving a government warning. Otherwise, it's fifteen tracks, well fourteen anyway, of joy personified - just listen to the virtuosic stride on *Shoe Shine Boy* or the pitter-patter swing of *Shiny Stockings*, each with some neat footwork from Metz, and expect to be entranced. Great presentation and sound, by the way.

PETER VACHER

**TORD GUSTAVSEN**

**WHAT WAS SAID**

ECM 2465 59:57

Gustavsen is a Norwegian jazz pianist of some repute - a previous satisfying album *The Well* seemed to sum up his almost abstract approach, taking to new extremes the work of Bill Evans. Yet here, in the company of drummer Jarle Vespestad and vocalist Simin Tander (of German/Afghan parentage), the atmosphere is gloomy and somehow forbidding as Tander explores Norwegian folk songs, most of which are translated into Pashto. Tander's gentle, melodic vocals lending considerable charm and haunting beauty.

Nevertheless, Tander's vocals are a long way from jazz, and serve only to subdue the talents of piano and bass. A rare piano/bass feature is *Rull*, where the beautiful lyricism of Gustavsen is to the fore, and simply underlines the incompatibilities of the vocalist versus pianist and drums.

GREG MURPHY

**ROSSANO SPORTIELLO/NICKI PARROTT/ EDDIE METZ**

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

Arbors ARCD 1944 72.22

Sportiello is one of the best things to have happened in mainstream jazz in recent years. Classically trained, he came to jazz piano later than some but has more than made up for it since. Italian-born and now based in New York, he tours internationally and records often, most frequently for the Arbors label, this delightful collaboration with bassist-vocalist Nicki Parrott and drummer Eddie Metz dating from last October.

The album turns out to be an informal tribute to some of the giants of keyboard jazz, opening with a note-perfect, limpid re-examination of Bud Powell's title piece. It's the range of ideas that Rossano offers, their execution and the sheer musicality of their development that explains my initial statement. This is superb

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other than a background instrument. These recordings do, however, place the bass in a more prominent position and there is ample chance to hear his solo contributions.

Highlights for me include *Perdido* and *Speculation*, a Horace Silver theme new to me and arranged by Gigi Grice. Many other tunes grab the attention including *The Gentle Art of Love* which is arranged by Lucky Thompson and uses the bass and a harp together and *Two French Fries* written and arranged by Gigi Grice and featuring two French horns.

The informative liner notes from the original recordings are included. In short this album is an unexpected delight from start to finish.

ALAN MUSSON

### SONNY ROLLINS TRIO

LIVE IN EUROPE 1959 – COMPLETE RECORDINGS

*Essential Jazz Classics – EJC 55693 3 CDs 178.30*

This valuable set is a straight reissue of the Solar Records edition I reviewed in *Jazz Rag* in 2011, identical in content, cover art and booklet notes but now housed in a more practical jewel case rather than the previous cardboard sleeve. As such I see no reason not to quote my own words on the Solar version:

'Rollins fans [have been done] a huge favour in uniting these recordings, made in Europe during March 1959, the very last notes captured before his famed sabbatical and the legend of The Bridge. If this edition isn't quite as complete as it seems (there's a version of *Paul's Pal* missing from the Nalen session) it nevertheless restores much music which has been out of print for some time, as well as adding some previously unreleased material.

'Rollins is in barnstorming mode, taking a core repertoire through a series of dazzling reworkings, with drum partners Pete La Roca, Joe Harris and Kenny Clarke.

'Taken from gigs in Sweden, Germany, Switzerland and France, each of the sets has its merits, but it is perhaps the final session, with Klook as the guest and recorded in an up-close, almost party-like, atmosphere that registers strongest. Indispensable.'

As a 2016 post-script, it should be noted that these recordings have now taken on even greater significance since Rollins' recent health-imposed retirement from live performance. For those unlucky to have never heard him do his thing live, this is as close as you'll get to the real deal.

SIMON SPILLETT

### BUDDY COLLETTE

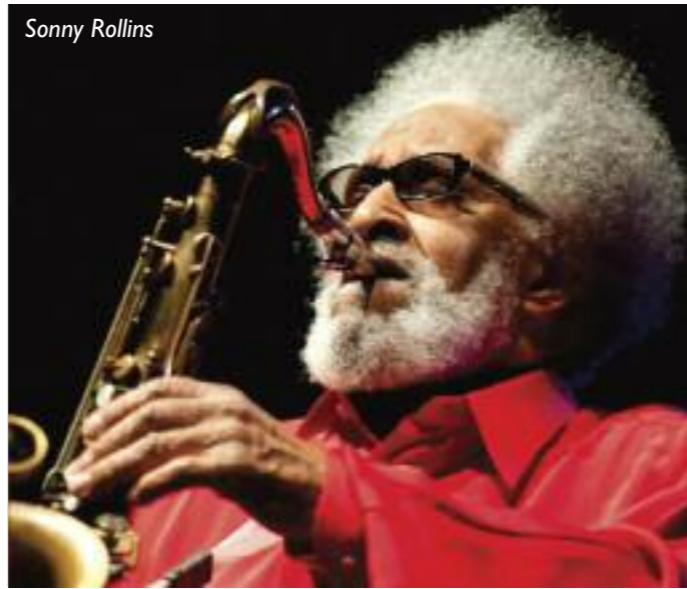
FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS

*Avid AMSC 1186 2 CDs, 79:56/77:35*

I'm grateful to be reminded here of Buddy Collette. I first heard him as a member of the distinctive Chico Hamilton Quintet, which also introduced Jim Hall. In 1956, I enjoyed his debut album, *Man Of Many Parts*, titled because of his uniform excellence on tenor, alto, clarinet and flute, plus his composing/arranging skills. These are four sessions new to me, from 1957, 1958 and 1961. All are further great listening of that time.

On two quartet sets, Buddy divides his time fairly evenly between his four expressive sounds. Selecting highspots is very hard, but clarinet clarity always gets to me, as per *Moten Swing* and other blues, and such appealing originals as *A Nice Day*. On alto, *Undecided* is one of his decidedly swinging standards, and there's more of the grooviest blues. His tenor sparkles specially on two of his own compositions - a tender ballad, *If She Had Stayed* and the full-flowing *Three And One*. The flute is well-featured, but read on.

Seven of ten hot makeovers of show tunes, under the name of a rumbustious pianist, Dick Marx, have the Collette flute at its fleetest and finest, with a particularly strong tone. A favourite for me is a boogie treatment of *All Of You*. Flute is



also to the fore on a final '61 date made in Milan, in which he is joined by some Italian players and the superb Serbian trumpeter Dusko Goykovich (as he says it should be spelt). His alto is heard in three of the eight, notably a wonderfully warm closing blues.

Buddy Collette looked after himself well enough to live to 89 in 2010, continuing to shine in his own albums and as a valued sideman with very many artists.

LESTOMKINS

### LOUIS ARMSTRONG

THE COMPLETE SATCHMO PLAYS KING OLIVER

*Essential Jazz Classics EJC55684 2CDs 140:09*

I venture to suggest that most Armstrong devotees will be familiar with much of the material here. Having said that, however, close to half of the tracks issued here are finding their way to CD for the first time.

*Satchmo plays King Oliver* was recorded in 1959 by way of a tribute to Armstrong's mentor and first employer. Therefore, Louis and his All-Stars had the opportunity to revisit some tunes that he had never recorded before together with others that he had not played in decades. The album was recorded in the then new stereo technology and allows the chance to hear his pure trumpet tone.

All of the material recorded at the time is assembled here

together with all known alternate takes. As a bonus we get seven additional King Oliver or Oliver-related tunes recorded by Louis during the mid-fifties, as well as, in the few cases in which he had previously recorded them, Armstrong's original versions of tunes from the Audio Fidelity album, and his classic 1928 versions of King Oliver's *Weather Bird* and *West End Blues*.

The All-Stars are in fine form throughout and the music is a joy to behold. As we have come to expect from *Essential Jazz Classics*, original notes and photographs are included.

ALAN MUSSON

### DUKE ELLINGTON

THE COMPLETE NEWPORT 1956 CONCERT

*Essential Jazz Classics EJC 55687 2 CDs, 77.45/78.40*

I guess you had to be there. Paul Gonsalves' epic solo of 27 straight choruses, linking *Diminuendo in Blue* with *Crescendo in Blue*, brought the Newport audience to their feet and caused a near riot. It, also, became a pivotal moment in jazz history. Before his exhilarating marathon of creative improvisation, no-one had attempted such a spectacular feat. And creative it was; no honking, no screaming, just pure inspiration.

But the tremendous success of the event was not only to do with Gonsalves' massive feat. The tenorist was the first to praise

the remarkable dynamism of the band which roared and kicked behind him. Honours must go to Cat Anderson's fiery, stratospheric contributions, Willy Cook's expressive trumpet and Sam Woodyard's explosive drumming. Seldom has the band been in better form, re-acting to the crowd's enthusiasm with fervent abandon.

The fact that Gonsalves' massive outpouring was unplanned was even more extraordinary as the big feature of the concert was to be the three part *Festival Suite*, specially written by the Duke for the Newport Festival.

The concert (and the solo) heralded the resurgence of Ellington's career. He had been struggling against the new bop movement which was making big bands redundant.

The record company has boosted the package to contain all 16 Newport tracks, adding seven tracks from the New York studio sessions, three tracks from a Chicago studio date and three tracks from a radio broadcast, all recorded in 1956.

Several of the old favourites are covered, *Black and Tan Fantasy*, *Sophisticated Lady*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Caravan* and a sumptuous rendition of *Jeep's Blues* by Johnny Hodges.

An exceptional record and a monumental occasion.

JOHN MARTIN

### ANDY SCHUMM ENRICO TOMASSO

WHEN LOUIS MET BIX

*Lake Records LACD 345 66:24*

I would have given much to be present at the fabled meeting of jazz history's two seminal horn players. This recording is, I believe, as close as we will ever come to realizing that ambition. The excitement and sheer joy of the occasion fairly leaps off the disc, with an immediacy which is far from mere imitation.

Trumpeter Enrico Tomasso and cornettist Andy Schumm have made it their business to assimilate their respective

mentors' approaches, so it is the intrinsic characteristics rather than the trade-mark licks that inform their performances.

Space does not allow for a proper description of the other musicians. They are all established specialists in the performance practices of the period: Seuffert's clarinet firmly entrenched in New Orleans, though with intriguing hints of Chicago's Pee Wee Russell; Allan's trombone more akin to Bill Rank than Kid Ory; Larsen owing much to Morton although, on the final track, he contributes a creditable Bixian piano accompaniment. The Langham, Sked, Ball rhythm section is superb, the drummer being remarkably inventive without stepping outside the idiom.

The repertoire is very carefully chosen, with jazz standards of the time, including *Milenberg Joys* and *Skit-Dat-De-Dat* alongside contemporary popular songs like *Chloe* and *Whispering*. All stuff Louis and Bix would have played even if not on record.

I heard this for the first time driving home from a gig - I was still smiling when I finally got to bed!

HUGH LEDIGO

### JOHN ABERCROMBIE

THE FIRST QUARTET.

*ECM 2478-80 3 CDs 45:43/39:38/45:47*

This is a significant issue, bringing together as it does three albums from 1978, 1979 and 1980 which have been unavailable for over a decade. John Abercrombie has credited this quartet as the time when he 'found his voice' and by contrasting these three discs with his previous work for ECM, the newly-acquired sense of authority becomes clear. Abercrombie achieved this within the Quartet, which comprised pianist Richie Beirach, bassist George Mraz and drummer Peter Donald.

Abercrombie started his career in fusion but 'I realised that I didn't want to play that. For the rest of my life; I really wanted to play jazz' so, using a variety of

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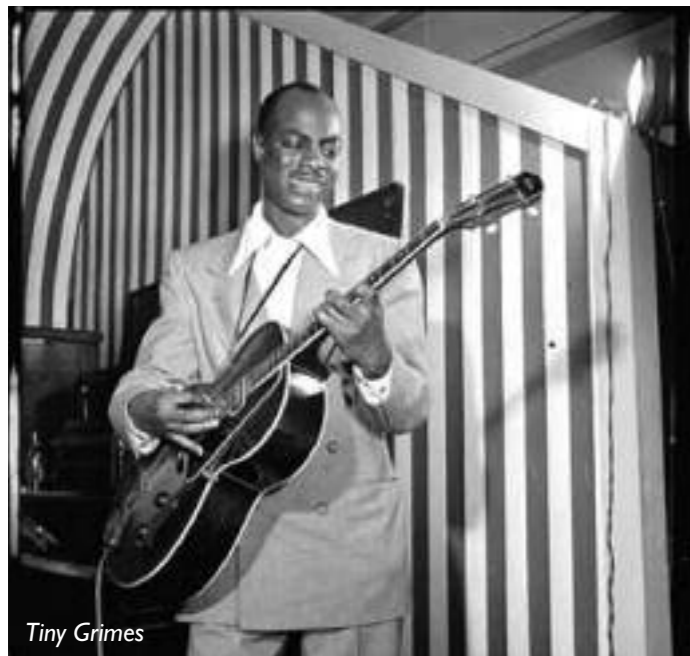
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Tiny Grimes

instruments, including a Fender instrument that is a cross between guitar and mandolin, responsible for the oh-so-gentle tones, along with both steel-strung and nylon strung acoustic guitars, he went on to forge a truly individual voice.

In Beirach, Abercrombie found a kindred spirit; all too often throughout these three recordings, there's an uncanny sense of telepathy as Beirach picks up on Abercrombie's musical ideas and vice versa. A good example of this telepathy can be heard on *Nightlake* where it seems that two minds really do think as one, whilst the improvisation on *Paramour* really is something special. Bassist Mraz is nothing short of magnificent and the now-retired Peter Donald is subtly personified.

The set has a fine essay by John Kelman which adds to our understanding of this fine music.

GREG MURPHY

## BUDDY DE FRANCO

AND THE OSCAR PETERSON QUARTET

Phoenix 131615 67:46

Clarinet player De Franco began his professional career at a time when interest in swing and big band music was starting to decline. Many of these bands had been led by the likes of Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, both clarinetists. De Franco was able

to forge a successful career for himself as one of relatively few be-bop clarinet players.

The music here dates from 1954 and finds De Franco in the company of Herb Ellis, Ray Brown and Louie Bellson alongside Peterson himself. The set starts with a rather 'polite' rendition of *Sweet and Lovely*. However, the pace picks up significantly for *Love for Sale*. The seven tracks are all familiar tunes and there are two lengthy performances of around ten minutes plus and the final track; *Lullaby in Rhythm* is a colossal twenty-three minutes. This is a bonus track not included on the original release and benefits from the addition of Roy Eldridge, Dizzy Gillespie, Bill Harris and Flip Phillips. For me, the up-tempo numbers are outstanding but I found the ballads to be somewhat pedestrian.

The original sleeve-notes and artwork are reproduced in the accompanying eight page booklet.

ALAN MUSSON

## BUTCH MILES SEXTET

MILES AND MILES OF SWING

Progressive PCD-7163 60:17

A cursory glance at the line-up listed in an album's liner notes is usually a reliable guide to the music contained therein. This reissue from 1977 is one such album. Fans of Scott Hamilton

and Al Cohn will need little persuading that this digital offering is an essential purchase. Add John Bunch and Milt Hinton to the mix and you are on the way to a five star recording. *Miles and Miles of Swing* was Butch Miles' first studio date as a leader. A humble Miles confesses 'I was so scared'. A bottle of scotch and a few beers brought into the studio with Miles saying 'Gentlemen, anytime you're thirsty, help yourself!' tells all. A bandleader in awe of his band mates, yet, getting down to business, an equal partner in an excellent recording.

A total of eleven tracks, including three alternate takes and the previously un-released *I Surrender, Dear*, result in a balanced programme of swingers and ballads. The two tenors are joined by the rarely recorded Marky Markowitz (flugelhorn). A studio musician, it is Markowitz who is a revelation. His flugelhorn playing is warm and, when called upon, a match for the swift excursions of Hamilton and Cohn. Miles' playing is never less than a drum master class in tasteful, small group swing. *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You* and a medium tempo *Take the 'A' Train* are just two examples of the choice material on a most welcome release.

RUSSELL CORBETT

## CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ BAND WITH OTTILIE PATTERSON

BARBER BACK IN BERLIN 1960

Lake Records LACD346 2CDs 115:32

My research tells me that Chris Barber's *Barber in Berlin* was one of the most popular recordings in his discography, being recorded in Berlin in 1959 before an audience of 12,000. The following year the band returned. No one can remember the second concert being recorded and it wasn't until 2013 that the tapes surfaced and the result is this 2 CD package. It is clearly something to treasure. It really is amazing what one can find on ebay and it was Chris himself who eventually acquired the tapes.

All the familiar classics are here, including *Bourbon Street Parade*, *Georgia Cakewalk* and *Sweet Georgia Brown* plus some lesser known items. The pleasure to be derived from any Chris Barber recording is in the variety of material. Here we have tunes from the classic jazz period, ragtime, gospel, R 'n' B and more, all making for a varied programme. There is a clear rapport between the musicians as would be expected given that the band had been touring regularly for some time and developing their skills. It's always a pleasure to hear the accomplished trumpet playing of Pat Halcox and Monty Sunshine's playing has a particular edge to it.

This is an enjoyable record of the band's return to Berlin. The booklet is informative and there are photographs from the Barber-Purser Archives included to. If you like Barber's music this is one not to miss.

ALAN MUSSON

## TINY GRIMES

THREE CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS

Avid AMSC 1188 78.15/79.24

Guitarist Grimes is something of a forgotten figure these days. A proponent of the four-string guitar, he enjoyed a lengthy career, working with an array of the greats including Charlie Parker and Art Tatum, before branching out into rhythm and blues, his kilt-clad band known as the Rocking Highlanders. In his later years (he died in 1989) he returned to swing and began to record for Swingville and then for Black and Blue in France. It's his Prestige/Swingville material that is the main fare here, starting with *Blues Groove* with Coleman Hawkins, followed by selections from *Tiny in Swingville* with Jerome Richardson, *Callin' The Blues* with J.C. Higginbotham and Lockjaw Davies, and finishing with *Big Time Guitar* from the United Artist label. So, a mess of blues and a lot of guitar, this the usual Avid value for money package with the original notes intact, and thus a belated chance to remind listeners just how effective an improviser Grimes turned out to be.

The opening track is *Marchin' Along*, a Grimes blues lasting 17.37 minutes, with Grimes impressive as he plays his blues licks for well over eight minutes without repetition, or hesitation or deviation, for that matter, before Hawkins comes in, rough-toned and strong. The presence of flutist Musa Kaleem (aka Orlando Wright) is a drag but otherwise this is solid gold. The Richardson and Higginbotham collaborations all benefit, as does *Blues Groove* from the presence of the mighty Ray Bryant on piano, a man never knowingly short of a bluesy idea. Richardson, another largely overlooked figure nowadays, was a formidable player, burly on baritone or Webster-ishly fluent on tenor, this amply borne out on *Ain't Misbehavin'* where Grimes also solos rewardingly, and at length. Much the same goes for the remaining sessions, with Bryant paramount on *Blue Tiny* as JC comes in ribald and loud. The UA album is less worthy, with organ dominant on a series of popular tunes, the drumming inimical to swing, sounding like an awkward compromise between swing and r&b, but then again that was the mode of the day.

PETER VACHER

## CHARLES MINGUS

THE COMPLETE 1960 NAT HENTOFF SESSIONS

Essential Jazz Classics EJC55694 3 CDs 68:57/74:13/62:46

Bassist, composer and occasional pianist Charles Mingus produced some volcanic music but none more so than when briefly contracted to critic Nat Hentoff's Candid label during October-November 1960. This set combines all the music recorded during the only two sessions held on October 20 1960 and November 1, 1960 on three CDs.

Four selections feature the piano-less quartet led by Mingus, with Dannie Richmond on drums, Ted Curson on trumpet and Eric Dolphy on alto, bass-clarinet and flute-these were originally released on Mingus' first Candid release *Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus*, of which the musical conversation

between Mingus and Dolphy on bass clarinet, *What Love*, became the stuff of legend. And there's more, including *Original Faubus Fables* so called because when originally recorded for Columbia, the record company would not allow the less-than-flattering vocal chants reflecting the racist tendencies of Orville Faubus, the then-Governor of Arkansas.

The second release, *Mingus*, saw Dolphy joined by Jimmy Knepper and Britt Woodman on trombones, Booker Ervin on tenor saxophone, Charles McPherson on alto and trumpeters Ted Curson and Lonnie Hillyer. There are two very different versions of the haunting *Reincarnation Of A Love Bird*, a roaring blowing session on *MDM* notable for trombone dialogue between Woodman and Knepper, followed by the intense *Lock 'Em Up* where Mingus recalls his thankfully brief stay in Bellevue Mental Institution.

The third CD is one of contrasts, notably in the playing of trumpeter Roy Eldridge and Eric Dolphy - the compatibility of the two is amazing, the near ten-minute blowing session *Me And You* is outstanding for Eldridge's muted trumpet. A superb compilation, it should be secured whilst still available.

GREG MURPHY

## CLIFFORD BROWN- MAX ROACH QUINTET

THE COMPLETE STUDY IN BROWN

Essential Jazz Classics 55686 155:06 2 CDs

In his *Down Beat* review of *Study in Brown* Nat Hentoff wrote 'When Brownie comes to learn the value of economy, he'll be even more stimulating than he is now.' Six decades on this observation appears somewhat churlish given the tragic end soon to befall a true giant of the music. This two CD release on Essential Jazz Classics comprises thirty one tracks encompassing all existing music relating to the Brown-Roach Quintet's EmArcy albums *Study in Brown* and *More Study in Brown* including all surviving alternate takes.



Charles Mingus

We've all been to a gig or jam session when someone calls *Cherokee*, *Sandu* or *Take the 'A' Train*. Tired old warhorses they may be, but this 'complete' collection reminds us of a super group of the 1950s, the likes of which we would give anything to have heard live at the time. Harold Land's fluency is more than a match for Brown's proficiency on high tempo numbers and the tenor saxophonist's measured contribution on the alternate take *Lands End* has a restraining effect on his frontline partner.

Sonny Rollins filled the tenor chair following Land's departure and *I'll Remember April*, recorded in February 1956, perhaps led Brown to the conclusion that great tenor players grew on trees! Max Roach's *Mildama* is a showcase for the co-leaders and no fewer than six alternate takes can be found on the second disc. For those coming to the music for the first time this two CD package with 16-page booklet is a more than worthwhile purchase.

RUSSELL CORBETT

## MARIAN BRUCE / JACY PARKER

HALFWAY TO DAWN / SPOTLIGHT ON

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 888 70:55

Well, here's a conundrum - we're presented with one CD, containing 12 tracks apiece by two young female singers, recorded in 1958 and 1962 respectively. Their names are little-known, I believe, and these were seemingly their only recorded public output. But they clearly belong in the jazz field, both sing first-rate established songs, and nothing I can see online suggests they are not still around. So what happened?

From the opening ballad *Lucky To Be Me*, Marian Bruce shows confident jazziness, and clearly enjoys the backings of Jimmy Jones on piano, Everett Barksdale on guitar and Al Hall on bass, plus the fine trumpet of Joe Wilder 'noodling' behind her and soloing here and there. Her emphasis is on soulful slow ones, but she gets nicely off the ground in *Things Are*

Marlene Ver Planck



Looking Up and My One And Only. She is skilled in the use of time and volume changes for atmospheric effect. The only device that she might be said to overdo slightly is the slow-down ending. Her closing *Don't Like Goodbyes*, with piano only, carries great conviction.

Jacy Parker, who may be the younger of the two ladies, has the most all-round background, in that she accompanies herself expertly on piano. The note suggests that trumpeter Ernie Royal is augmenting her trio, but he is actually only audible on three tracks. Anyway, her alignment of a happy or meaningful jazz voice with her piano propulsion is ample in itself. One outstanding effort is her vocal/keyboard storytelling on *Guess Who I Saw Today* - areading quite different to the Vaughan version. Of the upward offerings, I like her deft handling of the tricky lyrics of *I Like The Likes Of You*. So it was all good; why no more?

## LESTOMKINS

## HERLIN RILEY

## NEW DIRECTION

*Mack Avenue MAC1101 63:30*

Herlin Riley, born in New Orleans during 1957, here leads an energetic quintet (Bruce Harris, trumpet, Godwin Louis, saxophone, Emmet Cohen, piano and Russell Hall, bass) with guests guitarist Mark Whitfield on the title track and percussionist

Pedro Martinez on three other titles. The power of this band brings to mind Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, helped no doubt by the sheer disciplined power of Riley's drumming.

Riley's group is strong on melody as well as improvisation, the ensemble voicings being particularly pleasing particularly on *Shake Off The Dust* and the intricate *Herlin's Hurdle*, where following a percussive display by Riley, there are solo contributions from Harris followed by Louis, who both have superb improvisatory talents backed up all the time by what can only be called Riley's powerhouse drumming, which however never descends to showman tactics.

*New Direction* is full of melodic content, improvisational skills and musicianship - who could ask for more?

## GREG MURPHY

## EDDIE THOMPSON TRIO

## THE BOSENDORFER CONCERT 1980 VOL 2

*Hep Records HEPCD2103 62:21*

In 1990 The Palace Theatre, Mansfield, gave Thompson a - for a jazzier - rare chance to perform on that prince of pianos a Bosendorfer Imperial. He was supported by two extremely sensitive and quick-witted

musicians: Pete Martin bass and Pete Staples drums. They had need of their wits, given the pianist's propensity for moving in and out of tempo and from one style to another.

For me, the best track is *Here's That Rainy Day*. It opens with a thinly disguised reference to Chopin before a rhapsodic first chorus takes us into a fantasy episode where both melody and harmonies are explored way beyond the confines of the original 32 bar structure. The music eventually settles into a 4/4 ballad which in turn metamorphoses into emulation of Erroll Garner. Truly masterful improvisation.

The other tracks, if not quite so adventurous, are full of idiosyncratic touches: a bit of baroque, a brief march, unaccompanied stride, unusual chordal passages, Tatumesque runs and always an underlying sense of humour. *Stella By Starlight* creeps into *But Not For Me* while *Isn't She Lovely* benefits from Ponchielli's *Dance Of The Hours*...

I do feel that some numbers are unnecessarily long - time flies when you're enjoying yourself and Thompson's fertile mind has so much to say. For this same reason, there are some untidy moments, with too many fast and not always cleanly executed runs. But, all in all, this is a hugely entertaining session. Thompson is certainly a one-off, which is no bad thing in a world full of virtuoso pianists.

## HUGH LEDIGO

## THAD JONES/MEL LEWIS ORCHESTRA

## ALL MY YESTERDAYS

*Resonance Records HCD-2023 2 CDs, 48.47/77.11*

Sumptuous. That's really the only word fit for purpose in describing this new 2-CD set from the enterprising Resonance Records. Having already unearthed previously unissued gems by John Coltrane, Wes Montgomery and Stan Getz, among others, they now pay overdue homage to the legendary Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, a band which perhaps did more than any other in

successfully mixing the open-ended, capricious imagination of 1960s jazz with the established traditions of the big band genre. Presented in a sturdy, aesthetically fetching, fold-out sleeve and complete with a booklet of no fewer than 89 pages, packed with insightful interviews with several surviving band members, this issue isn't just big on cosmetic impact; it actually presents a rare instance of jazz history being captured on tape. The bands debut night at the Village Vanguard in February 1966 was recorded as a demo, the aim being to secure a record deal (the second disc features a further set from a month later), and right from the impromptu, spirited introduction to the opening *Back Bone*, it's easy to see why they set the jazz world on its head. It's not only co-leader Jones *sui generis* writing that grips, there's a veritable queue of top New York soloists within the ranks too: Bob Brookmeyer, Pepper Adams, Joe Farrell, Eddie Daniels, Hank Jones, Bill Berry... the list goes on.

Atmospheric, candid, spontaneous and shot through with a palpable feeling of musical camaraderie, it's hard not to fall for the charms of this superb release. In fact, I'll wager that it ends up as a record of the year somewhere. Oh, and in case you're wondering if there's a catch, it's *beautifully* recorded too.

## SIMON SPILLET

## MARLENE VER PLANCK

## THE MOOD I'M IN

*Audiophile ACD-348 49.29*

For sixty years Marlene Ver Planck has been gracing us with her superb interpretations of the American Song Book and at the admirable age of 83 her special talent is still undimmed.

Songwriters have, over the years, been queuing up with requests for her to lend her sympathetic and intelligent performances to their works.

She also possesses the singular art of being able to track down many of the lesser-known works of the major composers and this



Lars Gullin

CD is another example of this. She takes on such rarities as Bobby Troup's *Free and Easy*, Sammy Cahn's *Come on Strong* and Mack Gordon's *This Is Always* together with two unfamiliar Ellington songs, *It Shouldn't happen To A Dream* and *All Too Soon*.

A lot of hard work, as well as artistry, has gone into her approach to those songs. To her, the words hold as much value as the melodies. One can't imagine her singing a song with a trite lyric. It is this meticulous attention to detail which puts her in the front rank of jazz singers.

Like many of her previous records this is a masterclass on how to treat a superior song. Just listen to her on *Me and The Blues*; subtle, seductive and glossy, or her inspired scatting on *Come on Strong*.

She ticks all the boxes, superb tone, perfect intonation, marvellous diction. And, if you are expecting the voice to have thinned over the years, then note those joyous, impromptu leaps into her upper register.

The backing quartet are a substantial asset, with John Pearce reminding us what a fine accompanist he is, and Mark Nightingale, on trombone (the only horn on the session) totally in empathy with the singer.

All the tracks have something special to recommend them so I am just going to urge you to buy the album.

Marlene Ver Planck is, often, described as somewhere

between a jazz singer and a cabaret singer. Don't be misled.

She is **the** singer's singer.

Let's hope that she will continue to grace us for many more years.

## JOHN MARTIN

## LARS GULLIN

## COMPLETE 1951-1955 STUDIO RECORDINGS

*Fresh Sound FSR-CD 884/1 and 884/2 4 CDs, 71:30/71:06/70:29/71:24*

During his too-short life, Swedish baritone man Lars Gullin seems to have recorded prolifically - in the 'fifties, anyway. In issue 138, I reviewed a 'complete' set from 1956-57. Now here are four CDs representing a previous period, 1951-55. The first two batches, largely from 78s and restricted timewise are often quartets, mostly uppish and rather run-of-the-mill, though the likes of Rolf Ericson's trumpet and Ake Persson's trombone can be heard. CD3 is similarly constituted, including two sides uniting Gullin with six Americans, who are utilised only in ensembles, other than the briefest flash of Zoot.

My interest enlivens at track 13, when we enter the EP medium in May '54, and escape that three-minute barrier. Here Lars' quartet substitutes the nicely enterprising guitar of Rolf Berg for piano on four worthy originals. Then we cut to a septet foursome that carries us over to CD4. More Gullin ear-catchers

are interpreted by a good grouping that contains the talents of Persson, Putte Wickman's clarinet and Bengt Hallberg's piano.

At track 3, though, things cascade sadly to earth. Someone had the non-bright idea of placing Gullin's baritone in front of a truly terrible 16-piece choir, who sound even worse when lyricising on one track than when hideously ah-ing. It's a great shame, because on these five ballads, three by him, the leader's playing is full of warmth and soul, and it's a complete treat when the choir shuts up.

The remaining six tracks are all good stuff, and allow for more of the brilliant Berg guitar. Two EPs were his tributes to Britain, after he'd played here.

## LESTOMKINS

## GEOFF EALES

## TRANSCIENCE

*Fuzzy Moon FUZ008 61.04*

This is a very personal record inspired by the death of the pianist's mother seven months before. From the start it sets a mood which is meditative and reflective. One might say it is a point of closure.

Geoff Eales has always gone his own way. His style is immediately recognisable and he, usually, offers something thought-provoking in his compositions. He sounds like no other pianist. To say that he is underrated is to under-state his position in jazz in this country. In fact, he deserves to be known further afield. Much of what is contained in this CD bears comparison with the best of Keith Jarrett.

The music here is a lovely meander. There are 12 pieces, none too different from another so the impression is of a tone poem. Only the sprightly *Quirk of Fate* departs from the overall ethereal atmosphere

Don't be misled by that description. This is beautiful music in whichever genre you choose to put it. It is largely Geoff's piano which dominates

the session but Noel Langley's haunting flugelhorn is an essential part of the ambience and, although it is a Chopin nocturne which he dedicates to his late mother as her favourite opus, the mood, to me, is more Debussy-ish. Chris Lawrence on bass and Martin France on drums both effective but unobtrusive, acutely sensitive to the mood, and Brigitte Beraha's folksy-sounding vocals fit perfectly in the ensembles.

All the compositions are by the pianist. Two stand out. *Atonement* is a plaintive cry and the late Kenny Wheeler is given a nine minute tribute in *Remembering Kenny*. The album is, also, a dedication to the late pianist, John Taylor.

This a beautiful, heartfelt concept, brilliantly executed.

A sublimely spiritual experience.

## JOHN MARTIN

## CHARLIE PARKER

## COMPLETE SAVOY SESSIONS

*Essential Jazz Classics EJC 55685 4 CDs 309.25*

From 1944 to 1948, Charlie Parker recorded for Herman Lubinsky's Savoy label - as well as Ross Russell's Dial Company. These recordings are rightly numbered among Parker's finest, and this four-CD set of 137 tracks captures all the Savoy recordings, plus alternate and incomplete cuts as well as some bonuses. Together with the Dial sessions plus Parker with strings and the Massey Hall Concert, these masterpieces show why Parker was so highly regarded as someone who advanced jazz into the bebop era. On the tracks where Miles Davis tried to keep up (despite sometimes stumbling), you recognise that Bird had no equal. Such classics as *Ko-Ko* are good examples of Parker's unprecedented dexterity and speed. A tune like *Billie's Bounce* displays Parker's ability to fly high and lyrically.

Yet neither Bird nor Dizzy Gillespie (nor any other single person) was the sole progenitor of bebop. Drummers like Max

Roach contributed rhythmic habits which were new, and in Bird's playing I can hear traces of influence from his predecessors. These are particularly clear in the bonus fourth CD, which contains some tracks originally recorded for other labels. These prove that Bird was comfortable playing with swing-era musicians like Red Norvo, Slam Stewart and Teddy Wilson. Parker even rubs shoulders with the eccentric Slim Gaillard on a glorious 1945 session which included the hit song *Flat Foot Floogie*. Amid Slim's comical anarchy there are some excellent solos by Parker as well as Dizzy Gillespie and tenorist Jack McVea. In *Slim's Jam*, Gaillard introduces Bird as 'Charlie Yardbird A-roonie'.

## TONY AUGARDE

## GEORGE WALLINGTON

## COMPLETE 1956-1957 QUINTET SESSIONS

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 882  
75.08/75.03 2 CDs

Listening to this riveting music, in my case for the first time, I gave up a silent prayer of thanks to Fresh Sound. They continue to exhume these often forgotten LP sessions, accompanying them with good notes and what finds many of them turn out to be. This latest release, a double CD, reprises four vinyl albums featuring pioneer bopper Wallington's very feisty quintet of the day and is quite wonderful. That this group numbered trumpeter Donald Byrd and altoist Phil Woods in the front-line simply underlines the value of this music for these young men were in their first heyday, full of spirit, drive and adventure, buoyed up by the fine rhythmic support they received.

This is primary hard bop, Wallington nimble and spare at the piano, much in the manner of Bud Powell, Byrd sounding clarion-clear, with superb tonal control, akin to Clifford Brown in the assurance of his playing, while Woods evokes Bird but with attitude, the complexity of his solos sometimes making me think of local hero Alan Barnes. Speaking of Byrd, Grove affirmed, 'after the death of Brown in

1956, Byrd was for a few years arguably the finest hard-bop trumpeter' and this is readily apparent throughout the first three of these albums before Idrees Sulieiman replaces him for the final session. Take a piece like Frank Foster's *Foster Dulles* with its brazen theme, like a call to arms, drummer Art Taylor ruthless in his rhythm push, Byrd triumphant. This is frequently jubilant, always highly creative, often virtuosic music and I for one, am delighted to make its acquaintance albeit belatedly.

## PETER VACHER

## BENNY GOODMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA

## THE COMPLETE BENNY IN BRUSSELS

Solar Records 4569965 3 CDs,  
77.44/77.37/71.43

'Complete' means many different things these days in jazz reissues. In this case it doesn't mean everything that was recorded by the Goodman Orchestra in Brussels in 1958, but 'all of the recordings that have surfaced as of this writing (2015)'. Nevertheless, so far as I can tell, it marks quite an advance in our enjoyment of a top-class Goodman band.

Benny Goodman took a superb orchestra, plus singers Jimmy Rushing and Ethel Ennis, to the Brussels International Fair and played a week at the American Pavilion. The double LP issued of these performances received only moderate reviews and now it's easy to see why. The selection was just too cautious. Now the first 18 tracks of CD1 of this collection, it has some wonderful Goodman clarinet, especially in small group tracks where the young Roland Hanna also shines, but BG features dominate, even in big band numbers, and Rush's two tracks are predictable: one of those generic blues about being glad to be here and then his trademark, *Mr. Five by Five*. What was the point, one wondered, of taking Taft Jordan, Emmett Berry, Zoot Sims, Seldon Powell and the rest as accompanists? Track 17, an exhilarating *One O'Clock Jump*, whetted the appetite for more.



George Wallington

There have been other reissues adding to that original double album, but this is said to be the first bringing together all the available music. The arrangement of CDs 2 and 3 is a mess – with songs recurring and fragments of announcements in places – but there is some great music here. The big band roars into *Bugle Call Rag* (twice) and *Sing Sing Sing*. Goodman clearly has a great time accompanying Rushing who shows he's much more than just a blues shouter on beautifully idiosyncratic versions of standards such as *Sunny Side of the Street* and produces two magisterial versions of *Harvard Blues*. And Ethel Ennis gets a look in: at the start of a long career, her bright versions of such songs as *'Deed I Do* are undemandingly attractive.

## RON SIMPSON

## FEDERICO BERTELLI QUARTET

## LIVING

Viva Veneto Jazz VVJ101 50:05

Federico Bertelli was born in Pisa, Italy, in November 1966, and grew up influenced by the work of Toots Thielmann and Stevie Wonder. Here he leads a quartet which includes Piergiorgio Pirro (piano) Gabriele Evangelista (bass) and Stefano Tamborrino (drums) with a roll-call of guests, notably Nicola Stilo (flute) who contributes on five of the eight titles.

The repertoire has two Bertelli compositions and one each by Hank Mobley (*Funk in Deep Freeze*) Mal Waldron (*Soul Eyes*) and Billy Strayhorn (*Lotus Blossom*). The band and guests acquit themselves well; Pirro is

superb on piano throughout. But there's an underlying problem throughout, which is that this writer has some difficulty in identifying the harmonica as a jazz instrument, that is, one that allows improvisation, that is, one that allows to be rude to Snr Bertelli, who has great facility on the instrument, but its nature seems alien to improvisation, which is the heart and soul of jazz. Perhaps a Star Trek-ism sums this up - 'It's jazz Jim, but not as we know it....'

## GREG MURPHY

## RAY BRYANT TRIO

## PLAYS

Phoenix 131616 50.53

The distinctive sound of Ray Bryant's piano always gets me smiling. There is something seductively effervescent in his sunny playing. His style is undated and this re-release, recorded back in 1959, has him in sparkling form.

Basically, he is considered a bebopper, but at the other end of the spectrum from Bud Powell and his disciples. Bryant's music is always totally accessible and he can reach out to a much wider audience without compromise. He is the classic example of depth in simplicity although that description might deny an astonishing technique. He is, probably, the most undervalued pianist in jazz in the sense that he is comfortable in all areas, blues, boogie-woogie, soul and stride but that is not to say that he is 'a master of all trades and a master of none'. Bryant is as authentic and convincing in all of these styles.

Together with brother Tommy on bass and the dependable Oliver Jackson on drums, Bryant sails through a juicy selection of superior jazz numbers in a salute to modern jazz composers which includes *Doodlin*, *Blue Monk*, *Delauney's Dilemma* and *Whisper Not*.

Like most established pianists he paid his dues working with groups of all kinds although his preferred formats are in trios or in a solo setting in which he is a master..

Also featured here are two versions of his hit single *Little Susie*.

Wonderful, exuberant music.

I'm still smiling.

## JOHN MARTIN

## GIL MELLE

## THE BLUE NOTE YEARS 1952-1956

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 876 2 CDs  
155.53

Gil Melle has been called a 'Renaissance man' because he was a painter, sculptor, film and TV composer, computer geek and airplane pilot. But he was also a multi-instrumentalist, playing tenor and baritone saxes, trombone and tuba. If all this sounds confusing, it is just as bewildering as the music on this album, which is a strange mixture of genres. You might call it a mix of jazz with classical music and various other influences. Parts remind me of Lennie Tristano, although its eccentricities put it several degrees below Tristano.

Gil Melle is not a particularly attractive tenorist, with a rather dull tone. His work on the baritone sax is more interesting. But he can be a rather prosaic, plodding improviser: not very exciting. The album's reputation is retrieved by some of the other soloists, such as trombonists Eddie Bert and Urbie Green, and guitarists Tal Farlow and Lou Mecca. There is a bonus of eight tracks from a 1957 Café Bohemia broadcast.

## TONY AUGARDE

## CHRIS ALLARD

## INVISIBLE LANDSCAPE

Perdido DOR 1601: 64.13

*Invisible Landscape* is very much a guitar album. Having recorded the tracks live with Oli Hayhurst and Nick Smalley, using his Gibson 335 electric guitar, Chris Allard added in extra parts on any number of other guitars: electric, acoustic, classical. The result is an attractively varied guitar soundscape, with bass and drums mostly fairly unobtrusive, though Hayhurst's few solos,

thoughtful and melodic, fit the tone of the album perfectly. Seven of ten tracks are Allard originals, titles such as *Morphic Resonance* and *Extended Mind* suggesting the abstract quality of the music. Both the compositions and Allard's improvisations are consistently melodic, the Spanish-tinted *Critter* one of several tunes deserving a wider currency. Though tempos are always moderate and the heavily dramatic is strictly avoided, there is plenty of variety of rhythm and texture. The non-originals are a meditative reading of Wayne Shorter's *Fall* and two songs

featuring the soulful vocals of Charlie Wood: Loesser and McHugh's *Let's Get Lost* and Mose Allison's *Was*. Here the blues side of Chris Allard's musical personality puts in a brief appearance. Overall, however, the impression of this excellent album is of a distinctive melodic gift. Even on *Distant Stormclouds*, a touch bleaker than most of his compositions, the clouds gather most melodiously!

## RON SIMPSON

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# FESTIVALS IN THE NORTH EAST

## RUSSELL CORBETT reports on the Gateshead and Darlington Jazz Festivals.

The 2016 Gateshead International Jazz Festival staged over three days in April featured musicians from around the globe. Americans Terence Blanchard and Gregory Porter were two of the marquee names to attract the crowds and British and European musicians generated considerable interest. Sage Gateshead works in partnership with Serious in programming the concerts and there is a distinct contemporary flavour to the annual weekend event. The jazz calendar has its fair share of mainstream festivals and from the beginning Gateshead adopted a strategy of broadening the audience base.

For some the Simon Spillett Quartet was the pick of the concerts on offer. A screening of the recently released film *Tubby Hayes – A Man in a Hurry* preceded Spillett's set which was nothing short of sensational. As a tenor player in his own right Spillett is top drawer. *A Pint of Bitter* and *Cherokee* were superb, the latter taken at breakneck pace. Spillett's band was more than up to the mark; Steve Melling, piano and Alec Dankworth, double bass, were in top form and drummer Miles Levin, son of Tubbs' drummer Tony Levin, offered a tangential link to the man in question.

Pianist Alex Webb's Café Society Swing proved to be a hit with a near full house keen to

experience something of the decadence of Barney Josephson's legendary New York club. Vocalists Vimala Rowe and Ciyu Brown shared the spotlight backed by an all star band. In a fast moving revue, the instrumentalists didn't get too many opportunities to show what they could do, yet, when called upon they were up to the mark: Sue Richardson, trumpet, Nat Facey, alto and Denys Baptiste, tenor. The show-stopping finale featured Rowe's impassioned rendition of *Strange Fruit*.

BBC Radio recorded several performances on the *Jazz Line-Up* stage for future broadcast on Radio 3. Graham Hardy's Tyneside based Northern Monkey Brass Band (right) performed to a partisan crowd delivering a supercharged take on New Orleans street bands. Presenter Kevin Le Gendre introduced Yorkshire's Pan Jumby, piano playing singer Ian Shaw and the brilliant Roberto Fonseca Trio. The Cuban pianist, a superb technician, has gone from Buena Vista Social Club sideman to star billing world wide.

Late night concerts proved to be as popular as ever. Liane Carroll sang and played piano 'til gone midnight. Carroll's impressive vocal range rang out across the auditorium on a varied selection of tunes including *All of Me*, some

Leonard Cohen and Joni Mitchell's *Big Yellow Taxi*. The latter number saw Carroll joined by Ian Shaw. They shared several things in common – an excellent voice, a jazz piano sensibility and a winning comedic talent. Young New Yorker Kris Bowers attracted those in the know and the curious. The Monk competition prize winner presented an electronic rap and hip-hop set referencing indie pop tunes. To placate the jazz police he first talked of his love of Thelonious Monk then played a selection of the master's compositions. For the record, Bowers can play!

One of the joys of this annual festival is the sheer amount of music on offer. It is also a source of frustration with the scheduling of some concerts making for tough choices. In Sage One, the largest of the three spaces,



Photo by Ken Drew

The fifth Darlington Jazz Festival followed hard on the heels of its more prosperous high profile festival neighbour forty miles up the road. *Bringing jazz to the town centre* was Darlington's stated aim and a number of concerts and gigs at welcoming venues, all within walking distance of one another, featuring regional and national names proved to be a resounding success.

Trumpeter Matt Roberts grew up in Darlington and discovered jazz as a teenage member of the County Durham Youth Big Band. A graduate of Leeds College of Music, Roberts, now working in London, made his annual pilgrimage to his home town to

play an active part in the festival, first leading an inspirational workshop, then the following evening he led an outstanding sextet playing the music of Nat Adderley. A first floor room above the Voodoo Café on Skinnergate was full to overflowing to hear the engaging Roberts give a performance that will live long in the memory. Flanked by altoist George Grant and tenor man Leo Richardson, this was 52nd Street reborn. Blistering solos and the dream rhythm section of Sam Watts, piano, Simon Read, double bass and drummer Dave Ingamells had the audience cheering each and every incendiary contribution to the echo.

Veteran multi instrumentalist Al Wood joined the Durham County Alumni Big Band at a sold out Central Hall to play classic big band charts in the company of Dennis Rollins. With a resumé boasting NYJO and the Jazz Warriors, the genial trombonist's participation was a major success and the County Durham Youth Big Band's opening set benefitted from his presence out front and in the juniors' trombone section!

The Quakerhouse featured the Ruth Lambert Trio playing the Great American Songbook and a few original compositions, followed by the duo of pianist Dean Stockdale and Noel Dennis (trumpet/flugelhorn) in a relaxed

Courtney Pine and Zoe Rahman were one half of a double bill playing opposite Jazz Messengers' alumnus Terence Blanchard. For some time Pine has been playing exclusively bass clarinet and this was the case at Gateshead. Pianist Rahman was for the most part relegated to the job of accompanist to Pine's long solo excursions. Those hoping to hear Blanchard playing '50s Messengers-style were to be disappointed. This was an uncompromising, Apple Mac-powered, all electric gig.

This 2016 edition of the Gateshead International Jazz Festival catered for most tastes. It would appear audience numbers held up well in these difficult times and for some a late night jam session well into the early hours was just what Dr Jazz ordered.

set ranging from Cole Porter to Tom Harrell. A more contemporary approach heard vocalist Lindsay Hannon and her accomplished band close an enjoyable afternoon of top quality jazz.

This year's four day festival could only be described as an unqualified success. Concerts, workshops and a new venture – jazz in St Cuthbert's Church showcasing the best of the region's youth ensembles working with Sebastiaan de Krom – drew large attendances and next year's Darlington Jazz Festival promises to be bigger and better than ever.

# THE NEXT GENERATION OF JAZZ THE GEORGE GERSHWIN SONGBOOK

## PETER VACHER reviews days 2 and 3 of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra's residency at the Barbican Hall in London in February

Days two and three of the impressively-styled Fourth International Residency by Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra at London's Barbican Hall and as ever, a case of contrasting intentions and outcomes. Given the 'cliffhangingly loose' aspects (in John Fordham's memorable words) of the orchestra's collaboration with Wayne Shorter on its first day, its third and final presentation had a play-safe feel, the ground cleared for a demonstration of their versatility in an all-Gershwin programme.

Wynton filled in the facts, the orchestra did their stuff and the soloists had a heyday – after all, who could go wrong on Don Redman's famous *I Got Rhythm* chart for openers? All clipped trumpet interjections and blissful saxes with an extended solo, zigzagging here and there, from WM himself before the trombones stood and played tag with the tune. In contrast, long-time orchestra member Victor Goines then recalled Sidney Bechet's tempestuous soprano version of *Summertime*, a case of one New Orleans native celebrating another, his final long, keening note prompting an ovation.

Thereafter we moved from a Kentonesque version of *Fascinating Rhythm*, orchestration by Bill Russo, trumpeter Kenny Rampton featured, to Sherman Irby's engaging arrangement of *But Not For Me*, in the manner of Ahmad Jamal, with piccolo lead. In what is now an established routine, Wynton picked out a young local player, tenorist Ruben Fox, who offers a soft-centred but broadly mainstream style, and duetted with him in a quintet look at *Lady Be Good* before *The Man I Love* by the full orchestra revealed trombonist Chris Crenshaw's wa-wa expertise.

So far, so straight-ahead. Round two opened with Vincent Gardner buckling on a

sousaphone for a Crenshaw routine on *Rialto Ripples* from 1917, this unleashing a Monkish stride sequence from pianist Dan Nimmer and a burst of searing trombone from the band's only British member, Elliott Mason that made the tune's early origins irrelevant. As if by magic, the slight figure of dancer Virgil Gadson emerged, stage left, and held us all enthralled with a whirlwind concoction of mime gestures, body contortions and dance callisthenics. Hard to classify, certainly not a hoofer, more likely an eccentric dancer, the band telling me later that they knew him from the Alvin Ailey troupe in New York. Extraordinary. Next to appear was Mark Kavuma, a man with hat and a trumpet, whom Wynton commended for his patience and who then played the slowest version of *Embraceable You* I've ever heard, each note cherished and pristine. Later this graduate from the Dune academy joined Fox for *Nice Work* ahead of a Strayhorn re-write of *Rhapsody in Blue* with more of Nimmer's explosive piano. Cue ovations, standing and heartfelt. But there was more, Wynton leading a sit-down version of Jelly Roll's *Dead Man Blues* with Kavuma setting out his stall in rather more upbeat fashion and that was it.

It's tempting to look at this exceptional outfit and reflect that it must be the best-paid, best-equipped, most proficient repertoire orchestra on the planet. One observer thought the music sanitised and safe and so it was, but cheers to Wynton and his men, many now entering a slightly portly middle age, for continuing to celebrate this music's extraordinary history. And so on to Australia, their next-day destination for a down-under tour. Who said life on the road was cushy?

Given Wynton's crusade for student engagement with jazz and the priceless showcase accorded to Fox and Kavuma, it

was heartening to observe the enthusiasm and vitality offered by the youth orchestras assembled a day earlier under the Next Generation tag. First up was the NYJO Academy Big Band under Seb De Krom, followed by the Young Jazz East Big Band cued and directed by Scott Stroman, the Guildhall Sextet and finally, Mark Armstrong's mighty NYJO. De Krom set his young charges a tough task with a pair of Mingus charts and some Ducal pieces, the ensembles well driven by drummer Luca Caruso, their efforts complemented by the presence of JALCO trombonist Elliot Mason. He traded riffs with his band counterparts on *Haitian Fight Song* and then preached a powerful message on *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat*, the trumpets and rhythm impressive in their commitment. Plenty to encourage Wynton here, as there was with the recently assembled 20-piece Young East ensemble, culled from a variety of East London boroughs, some members barely into their teens. Here again there was onstage encouragement from a JALCO pro, trombonist Vincent Gardner giving *Jumpin' at the Woodside* plenty of vim, with another drummer, Kevan Lynch, handling every aspect of swing with aplomb.

They gave way to the Guildhall six-piece for a couple of numbers, trumpeter Miguel Gorodi and altoist Sam Brayshear the standouts. As ever, the NYJO top cats looked and sounded

good, their sequence galvanised by the presence of trumpeter Marcus Printup. Here was trumpet playing of such startling strength, soaring creativity and sheer class it seemed to make the whole set fly. Duly enthused, altoist Jim Gold scored on *St Louis Blues*, the band very much on song for Mark Nightingale's chart on *He's Just My Bill* (dedicated to NYJO founder Bill Ashton) with trombonist Tom Dunnett prominent followed by two elegant vocals from Clara Serra and Stan Tracey's Genesis, with Printup's decisive interjection. Tenor-saxophonist Walter Blanding Jr chimed in on *What Are You Doing* with Clara's sweet vocal, before tenorists Tom Ridout and Davis Healey sparred engagingly on Chris Smith's bright *Going Dutch* composition and we were done.

Not so, for the super-active Armstrong cued Mason, Printup, Gardener and Blanding to join the band to play an impromptu *Lady Be Good*, Printup duetting memorably with the fine guitarist Nick Fitch, NYJO trombonist Rory Ingham then invited to stand between Mason and Gardner in a trombone to-and-fro that I suspect he'll remember for a very long time to come. Note these youthful players for they represent the future of the music, as do all those I haven't the space to list. The audience loved every minute, rightly, pride mixed with awe at what they unfolded for us. No wonder Wynton stayed on to listen.



Wynton Marsalis



# RON SIMPSON'S ROUND-UP OF RECENT CDS



Lester Young

Recorded in 1959, **ELLA FITZGERALD SINGS THE GEORGE AND IRA GERSHWIN SONG BOOK** (Essential Jazz Classics EJC 55689: 3 CDs, 78.48/77.40/76.20) combines the talents of three geniuses of popular music with two master-facilitators, producer Norman Granz and arranger Nelson Riddle. Jazz content varies (for instance, Ella's celebrated scatting surfaces only on *I Got Rhythm*) but this is glorious music. A few of the unknown songs deserve to be unknown, but the overall quality of the material is superb, with a special joy in hearing the great semi-neglected songs (*Soon, I Was Doing All Right, My One and Only*) and enjoying so many of Ira's wonderful verses via Ella's immaculate diction and phrasing – plus the moment of lift-off when verse turns into soaring chorus on songs such as *Someone to Watch over Me*. Comparison with the 1998 4-CD set on Verve means EJC loses the alternative takes and mixes, but gains a fine album from 1950, with the alertly supportive piano of Ellis Larkins backing Ella on a set of the best of the Gershwins. **CHET BAKER SINGS** (Dream Covers 6100: 79.37) contains the first album to feature Chet as a singer, released in 1954 as a 10 inch LP, then amplified to full 12 inch status with tracks recorded in

1955 and 1956. Taken together with the Ella, it leaves an overwhelming impression of the astonishing quality of the best of American song between the 1920s and 1950s. Of the 14 tracks only one is by the Gershwins (*But Not for Me*), but there are gems by Burke and van Heusen (*Like Someone in Love*), Hoagy Carmichael (*I Get Along Without You Very Well*), Rodgers and Hart (*My Funny Valentine*) and so many others. The album remains a very appealing listen, with Chet's restrained lyricism both vocally and instrumentally well matched by Russ Freeman's accompaniment and his choice of song: the Kern-DeSylva classic, *Look for the Silver Lining*, fits perfectly with Chet's oddly melancholy optimism. Bonus tracks come from the same period, with the Freeman Trio on its own or enlarged by Bud Shank's flute and a string section. **COMPLETE LIVE AT THE ARGYLE 1950** (Solar 4569968: 77.42) finds **Lester Young** still the master despite his traumatic Army experience. Half the numbers are old favourites – *One O'Clock Jump, Lester Leaps in* and the like – and he plays with his customary understated authority, perhaps a little broader in style than on studio recordings and with the merest hint of bebopery, a trend more noticeable in his incisive

trumpeter Jesse Drakes. This rare complete version suffers from familiar problems with live recordings: noisy patrons and sound quality that is pleasingly upfront, but tends to make Jo Jones sound less subtle than usual and Kenny Drew almost disappear. **SWAHILI** (Phono 870236: 76.00) was **Clark Terry's** first album under his own name in 1955 and was originally simply titled *Clark Terry*. An expert six or seven piece plays Quincy Jones' arrangements of originals by him and Terry and the whole thing seems set up, very successfully, to demonstrate the huge range of the trumpeter's work – this was pre-flugelhorn. *Swahili* immediately features Terry in untypically dramatic mood against Art Blakey's thundering drums, but the swinging and the whimsical have their place, culminating in a million miles an hour *Chuckles*, a signature Terry title. Jimmy Cleveland's trombone and Oscar Pettiford's cello (periodically he hands the bass to Wendell Marshall and takes to its little brother) both register strongly. On the bonus tracks Terry guests with a quintet led by Jimmy Hamilton and Barry Galbraith.

It's always interesting to re-discover the early work of musicians whose copious 1950s releases were followed by a long silence. **FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS** (Avid AMSC 1184: 2 CDs, 79.33/74.46) consists of two live (from the Embers) and two studio albums from **Dorothy Donegan's** considerable late 1950s output. After that she managed only one album before 1975. The albums seem to have been for small-scale operations – almost no personnel details for her trio, limited information on recording dates – that seemed to be trying to cash in on 'America's newest entertainment sensation'. In truth Donegan's no-holds-barred, up-and-at-'em piano style, plus her expansive on-stage personality, made her a great 'live' act, but her playing can be a bit unrelenting on disc. However, it's good to re-visit the music of a pianist with a prodigious technique, ebullient style and roots equally in classical and stride and boogie. **Louis Smith**

deliberately turned his back on fame, but Phono's **THE LEGENDARY 1957-59 STUDIO SESSIONS** (870246: 2 CDs, 69.48/68.35) proves the truth of Scott Yanow's description of him as 'criminally obscure'. As a wonderfully talented and already mature young trumpeter, he was one of several hailed as 'the new Clifford Brown'. Blue Note provided all-star quintet line-ups for his two albums as leader, then he decided that the University of Michigan offered better career prospects – when he next recorded 20 years later, his time had gone. But *Here Comes Louis Smith* is a fine debut, joined by a pseudonymous Cannonball Adderley ('Buckshot La Funke') in, mostly, a set of very workable Smith originals. His clean articulation at whatever tempo, his flow of strong melodic ideas, the lyricism he shows in his treatment of *Stardust* – all make as good a claim as any to the Clifford succession. Then *Smithville* is even better, with Charlie Rouse, Sonny Clark and Paul Chambers all making mighty contributions. The 1959 session is less distinguished, but definitely worth a listen: *Down Home Reunion*, by an eight-piece of Memphis jazzmen, including Louis Smith's cousin Booker Little. Another valuable CD, releasing some exciting jazz for the first time, is **LIVE AT CARMELO'S** (Fresh Sound FSR CD 883: 2 CDs, 56.53/60.03) by the **Don Menza Sextet**. Half the tracks have appeared on the album *Hip Pocket*, but the remainder are making their first appearance. The tracks come from a live date in California in 1981, with a collection of mainly upstate New Yorkers playing the compositions of pianist Frank Strazzeri, plus the occasional bebop standard and a ballad each for the front liners, Menza's alto standing out on Alec Wilder's *Winter of My Discontent*. In a 2015 note Menza claims that they were generally regarded as 'cool' players, but, while some of Strazzeri's arrangements have their cerebral moments, the soloing is pretty incendiary, notably from Sal Nistico's tenor and Menza's baritone. For the antidote to cool listen to a 20-minute assault on Sonny Rollins' *Tenor Madness*, with Shelly Manne

at full power. **SATURDAY MORNING** (Elemental Music 906086: 39.21) is excellent late **Sonny Criss**, recorded in 1975, two years before his early death. These attractive reissues of Don Schlitten's Vertigo label preserve the integrity of the original albums, but, with limited bonus tracks (in this case, one extra from the same session), they are short on time by reissue standards. Sonny Criss' direct blues-based alto is heavily influenced by Parker, but also harks back to an older tradition. Barry Harris is the most complementary of pianists, but also takes his share of the spotlight with a fine version of *My Heart Stood Still*, a re-harmonised first chorus giving way to Bud Powell-ish bebopery. The original liner notes re-printed in **COMPLETE LIVE AT THE CAFE MONTMARTRE** (Solar 4569969: 2 CDs, 77.14/76.05) by **Cecil Taylor** make a telling point about first hearing his trio in club action: 'three musicians...each of them in the middle of an unaccompanied solo, it would seem.' Taylor and drummer Sunny Murray, in particular, pursue their own lines, the pianist as percussive as the drummer, while locked in a complete understanding. Alto saxist Jimmy Lyons sometimes takes a rest, sometimes changes the focus of the attack, sometimes introduces an element of melody, especially when given his head on *What's New*, the only track on the Montmartre set not composed by Taylor. This double CD puts together two LPs of the Copenhagen dates in 1962, many numbers recurring in two different versions, plus bonus tracks from Stockholm in the same month. Sometimes, 50 years on, the avant garde sounds mainstream, sometimes it just sounds silly, and sometimes (as here) it still sounds like the avant garde. It's powerful, demanding and (if you stay with it) hypnotic, but not recommended to lovers of melody or coherent improvisation. A final reissue – and once again of great interest both historically and musically – **BASSO VALDAMBRINI QUINTET/SEXTET** (Phono 870243: 2 CDs, 72.30/77.39) is a generous reminder of the music of the best known Italian jazz small group of the late 1950s/early 1960s. **Gianni**

**Basso's** tenor sax is frequently compared to Stan Getz; to me his robust tone, melodic fluency and sense of swing call Zoot Sims to mind. However, both he and **Oscar Valdambri**, a trumpeter of considerable technique and great good taste, are nothing if not versatile. The quintet album, *Walking in the Night*, consists mostly of contemporary Italian numbers and, despite a default position of hard bop, contains a delightful West Coast tribute in saxist Attilio Donadio's *Blues for Gerry*. With trombonist Dino Piana on board, the group has a looser, less elegant, more forceful sound. Of two LPs featuring Piana, *The Best Modern Jazz* in Italy is deservedly famous. A bonus album, *New Sound from Italy*, features an octet, including Lars Gullin who also contributes some ingenious arrangements alongside a couple of swingers from George Gruntz.

Though recorded as recently as 2014, **CHARLIE DEVORE AND HIS NEW ORLEANS FAMILY BAND** (GHB BCD 553: 61.02) feels and sounds like a throwback; indeed the notes refer to 'a style of traditional jazz rarely heard these days.' Pianist/cornetist Jamie Wright assembled a collection of old buddies, New Orleans-based or regular festival visitors, for informal sessions, not originally intended for general release. The music is as relaxed and unsophisticated as that suggests. Personnel varies, with a basic line up of cornet (nearly always Charlie DeVore), trombone, clarinet, piano, bass and drums and the addition of second cornet or clarinet (occasionally) and guitar (frequently). Alongside New Orleans jazz favourites, the choice of tunes takes in nice old-fashioned songs such as *Over the Waves* and *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles*. The jazz world of Dutch bass clarinetist **Joris Roelofs** could not be more different. His current CD on Pirouet, **AMATEUR DENTIST** (PIT 3090: 52.21) is billed not as the Joel Roelofs Trio, but individually as Matt Penman and Ted Poor – appropriately enough because, just like Cecil Taylor 50-odd years ago, both the New Zealand-born bassist and the American drummer often pursue their own lines. The overall effect, though, is much gentler, more accessible, more melodic and, inevitably, less

exciting. Roelofs himself is an assured player who allows himself a fairly generous quota of non-musical effects in between plenty of fluent legato playing. Roelofs' material consists mainly of originals, but he brings a fine solemnity to a funeral piece by Scriabin (clearly popular among jazzers these days) and an extract from a mass by Guillaume de Machaut. Trumpeter **Ralph Alessi's** latest CD, **QUIVER** (ECM 2438: 56.00) was recorded in Oslo in 2014 and it's odd that an album by an American quartet with a German producer (Manfred Eicher) should have such a Nordic feel, in its sense of space and underlying melancholy. All the tracks are Alessi originals and show little variety of mood and tempo. Technically immaculate, but to me rather uninviting. Alessi is supported by a fine rhythm section, notably the subtle and thoughtful pianist Gary Versace. The new release with the most general appeal, **THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE**

(Stunt Records: 52.02) by **Scott Hamilton and Karin Krog** is a delightful, accomplished and occasionally challenging album. Krog, a famously experimental singer, eases back with a coolly cheerful take on the title song and some Billie Holiday numbers where, without being imitative, she is not afraid to echo Lady Day. She sits out several numbers and leaves Hamilton to display his skill with a ballad or have fun on Erroll Garner's *Shake it, but don't break it*. Her versatility surfaces on two chunks of vocalese, including an ambitious attempt to set words to a Slam Stewart solo on *Sometimes I'm Happy* – bassist Hans Backenroth in fine form. Hamilton's fills and solos on such songs as *What a Little Moonlight Can Do* are a delight and pianist Jan Lundgren and drummer Kristian Leth never put a foot wrong.

Dorothy Donegan



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