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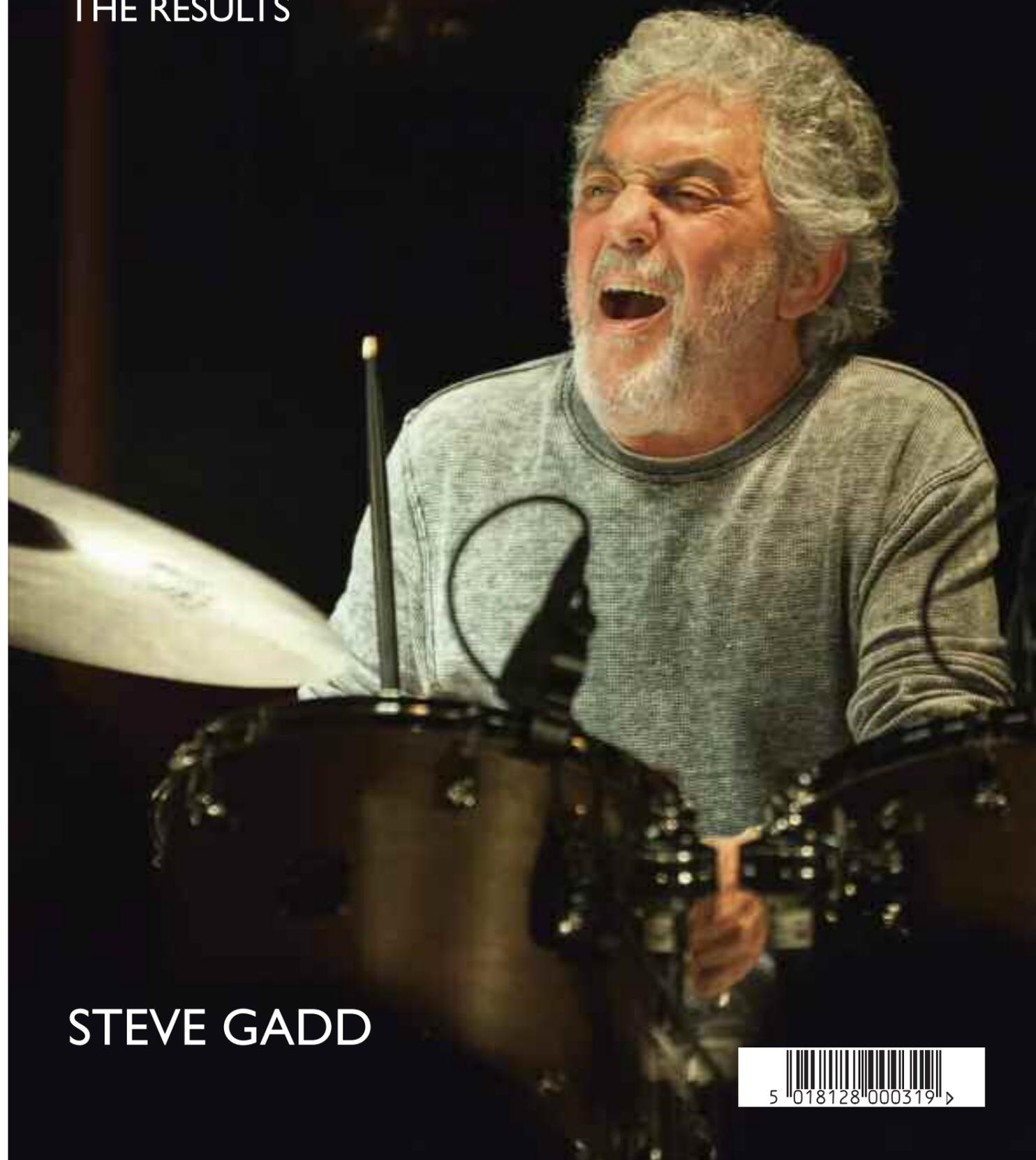
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THE JAZZ RAG

**2016 BRITISH JAZZ AWARDS :
THE RESULTS**

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STEVE GADD

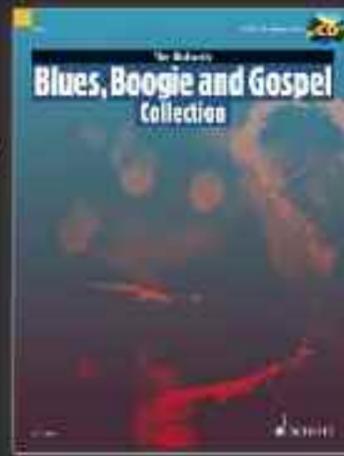


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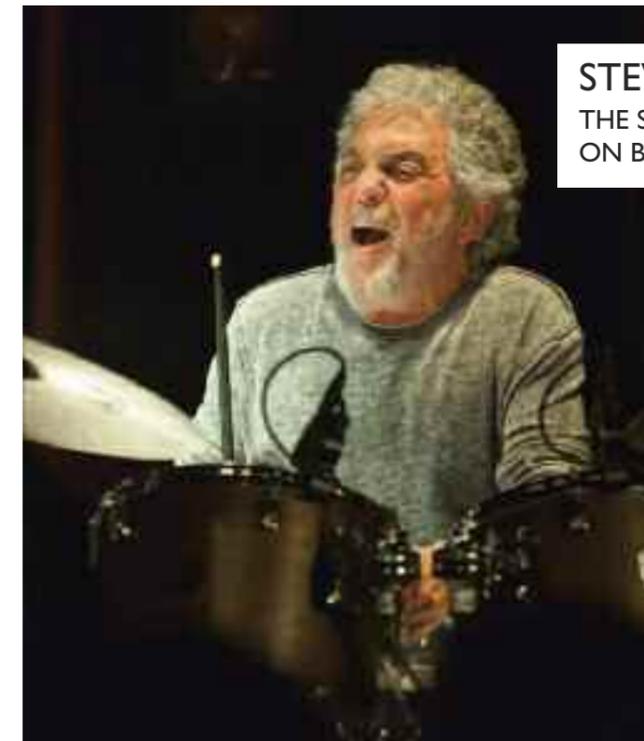
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UPFRONT

In November Digby Fairweather and the Trustees of Jazz Centre UK completed a 10-year agreement with Southend Borough Council to create a jazz centre for the UK covering 4,000 square feet and comprising a heritage museum, an art gallery, a full research centre, a sound archive, a cinema running seasons of jazz films and a replica of the 100 Club, all housed in an atrium at the Beecroft Arts Gallery in Southend-on-Sea.



On December 16 the Jazz Centre website will be launched, together with sites on Facebook, Mixcloud and Soundcloud – and Jazz Rag 145 will carry a full interview with Digby Fairweather about the formation and facilities of this important new resource.

NEW DEALS FOR DISCOVERY

Discovery Records, the UK's prime distributor of jazz CDs, plus of course many other styles of music, has announced an exciting series of distribution deals. Founded in 1978, Devizes-based Discovery initially dealt with imports from France, but over the years has enlarged that to cover CDs from all over Western Europe, plus Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and, of course, the UK. At any one time Discovery has more than 26,000 CDs in stock.

Now that number is enlarged by six new deals. The much-respected Ogun label presents Discovery with more contemporary territory. Formed by Harry and Hazel Miller in 1974, Ogun has been home to such noted avant-garde musicians as Keith Tippett, Lol Coxhill and Harry Beckett, plus South African ex-patriates such as Chris McGregor and Dudu Pukwana. Emanem and PSI started out in the 1960s, also dedicated to the avant-garde and free improvisation with such artists as Evan Parker and Anthony Braxton. M.C. Records and Treasure Island Music take Discovery further into blues and rock, respectively.

Particularly exciting for jazz fans is the distribution agreement with Inner City Records. Another long-established label, founded by Irv Kratka and Eric Kriss in New York City in 1978, Inner City is regarded with near-reverence by its fans, but oddly was previously unavailable on CD in the UK. Now an artist roster including Archie Shepp, Sun Ra, Eddie Jefferson, Abbey Lincoln and Jimmy Smith is available through Discovery. The initial batch of CDs numbers 14, including Chet Baker's *Broken Wing*, Urszula Dudziak's *Future Talk*, Tal Farlow's *Trilogy* and CDs by all the above.

www.discovery-records.com



Alexandra Ridout

RIBBLE VALLEY INNOVATIONS

Ribble Valley Jazz Festival on an extended May Bank Holiday Weekend (April 27-May 1) boasts a whole range of new venues in addition to a street festival, a blues stage and plenty of free gigs. The venues are mostly in Clitheroe town centre, notably the Grand Theatre and the Atrium Café Bar in the Castle, but there are a dozen other venues including a church, a bandstand and any number of licensed premises, plus, of course, the street! The headline acts

show a welcome commitment to youth, as anyone studying the Rising Star category of the British Jazz Awards will soon realise. Jam Experiment with Alexander Bone and Rory Ingham and the Alexandra Ridout Quintet are both featured on the Ribble Valley bill, plus the Lancashire Youth Jazz Orchestra. A strong line-up is topped by Norma Winstone and the Printmakers, plus Jazz Jamaica, Yolanda Brown, Get the Blessing, Soft Machine, Riot Jazz, Gary Boyle, Jay Phelps, Swing Commanders, Jeremy Sassoon's Ray Charles Project and many more. And, just to put the Lancastrian public in the right mood, there's a Pre-Fest Jazz Fringe event on March 31-April 1: Preston Jam with Soweto Kinch and Nerija.

www.rvjazzandblues.co.uk

STABLES JAZZ

December 16 and 17 sees the usual end-of-year spectacular at the Stables, Wavendon, Cleo's Christmas Show. Moving into the New Year, the programme includes Ronnie Scott's All Stars with the Ronnie Scott Story (January 21), the Syd Lawrence Orchestra (27), Charlie Parker on Dial with singer Vimala Rowe (February 5), Trichotomy (7), the Tubby Hayes film, *Man in a Hurry*, introduced by Simon Spillett (18) and the Darius Brubeck Quartet (21). Sunday morning sessions feature Georgina Jackson with *Singin' and Swingin'* (Feb. 12) and Mark Crookes with *Kings of the Clarinet* (March 19).

Tel.: 01908 280800

www.stables.org

BLUE NOTE AT SEA – AND BUCKING THE POUND

Entertainment Cruise Productions, now on their 45th full ship charter featuring jazz,

have entered into partnership with Blue Note Records and Blue Note Jazz Club to re-brand their Contemporary Jazz Cruise *Blue Note at Sea*, with many Blue Note artists on the bill. The five-year partnership takes to the seas for the first time on February 4 to 11, 2017, sailing out of Fort Lauderdale to Nassau, San Juan, Samana and Labadee. Hosting the jazz will be Marcus Miller and a mouth-watering list of musicians includes Pat Metheny, Gregory Porter, Terence Blanchard, Robert Glasper, Dianne Reeves, Chucho Valdes, David Sanborn, Joshua Redman, the Bad Plus, Lalah Hathaway, Ronnie Scott's All Stars, Wycliffe Gordon, Geoffrey Keezer, Greg Hutchinson and Grace Kelly.

ECP have also taken pity on their UK patrons by a most generous gesture in terms of exchange rates. With the pound having fallen drastically against the dollar, ECP make their *Bucking the Pound* offer, their own exchange rate of 1.45 dollars to the pound!

www.bluenoteatsea.com

WATERMILL IN 2017

The Watermill Jazz Club, now based at Betchworth Park Golf Club in Dorking, is closed for December, but has announced a fine programme for January/February next year. Derek Nash's Picante (January 10) is followed by star US trio Larry Goldings-Peter Bernstein-Bill Stewart (17), Back to Basie Big Band (24) and ex-Esbjorn Svensson drummer Magnus Ostrom with his band (31). The February programme features Barry Green's New York Trio (7), Neale Meets Steele (14 – Allison Neale co-leading a quintet with vibes player Nathaniel Steele), the Steve Waterman Quartet (21) and the guitar-vocals duo of John Etheridge and Vimala Rowe (28). Tel.: 07415 815784

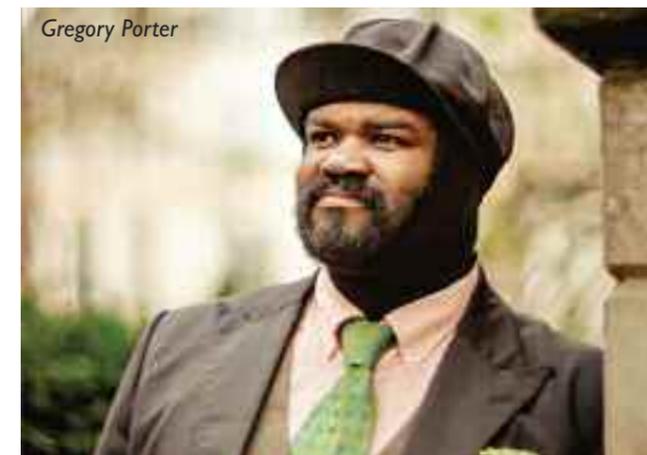
www.watermilljazz.co.uk

LINN RECORDS PARTNERSHIP

Linn Records, the established Scottish independent label with a track record including many key jazz releases and the award of Gramophone's Label of the Year in 2010, has entered into a partnership with Outthere Music, the major Belgium-based musical production and recording group. Outthere already has offices in



Cleo Laine



Gregory Porter

MIKE DURHAM'S CLASSIC JAZZ PARTY 2017



STOMP OFF, LET'S GO ...

The dream continues. Our jazz party takes place Friday 27 to Sunday 29 October 2017 at the Village Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne. World class international and UK musicians, jazz, blues, ragtime and sweet dance music, from that golden vintage era. Uplifting sounds for the soul! Full weekend tickets for all this music are £160 per person. More details to come soon. Check our website www.whitleybayjazzfest.org and our Facebook page. To go on our mailing list, email wbjazzfest@btinternet.com or telephone Patti at 0191 2812935

STAFFORD AT 35

The Stafford Jazz Society was founded in 1981 and this year Publicity Officer Nick Balmforth has been circulating an Unfinished History of the club which provides many insights into the changing jazz scene in the past 35 years. Clubs and festivals trying to persuade financial support from hard-pressed local councils may look back enviously to the early days of Stafford Jazz Society. In 1981 Stafford Borough Hall became the Gatehouse Theatre and the Council's Entertainments Manager, Phil Brewin, actually called an Open Meeting to raise support for its use as a jazz venue. The result was the founding of Stafford Jazz Society, with Roy Williams appearing with a local rhythm section on December 9, 1981. For the next 24 years the Stafford Jazz Society met at the Gatehouse, in the Cabin Studio Theatre and later the Globe Tavern, at some point changing its regular sessions to Sunday lunch-times. One key factor in the happy relationship between the Gatehouse and the society was that the council supplied (free!) the venue, a technician to work the sound-desk and deal with other technical issues, and a piano.

Then, in 2005, the council, needing to optimise its revenue, decided to charge for these services – understandably! Equally understandably the SJS couldn't afford to pay them and moved to Stafford Rangers Social Club. Finally in 2014, as Stafford Rangers slid down the leagues and the club's future looked uncertain, SJS took up a tempting offer from the White Eagle (Polish) Club and moved there. In 2016, in Stafford and everywhere else, the days of a council setting up and financing a jazz club seem far distant!

Equally Nick's history of SJS offers a view on the social world of the local jazz scene. Over the years SJS has been socially responsible, from staging a benefit for the victims of Katrina to organising a Youth Jazz Festival for many years. Awards are made to Band of the Year and Musician of the Year, the latter in the name of Ken Rattenbury, President of the society until his death in 2001. Ken, a distinguished trumpet/composer, was also an authority on Duke Ellington and, as our older readers will remember, one of the wisest and most generous commentators on jazz. SJS' history has also overlapped with one of the legends of British jazz, Nat Gonella, a Life Member of the society who, in his later years, would come up from Gosport to charm the Stafford audience with his singing.

35 years and two days after the initial Roy Williams concert, the JB Jazz and Blues Band plays the White Eagle Club on December 11, with the Stafford Christmas gig the following week with the Firehose 1 Dixieland Jazz Band.

www.staffordjazz.org

NO ISLE OF BUTE IN 2017

Sadly the Board of the Isle of Bute Jazz Festival has announced that the festival which has been running over the May Day holiday every year from 1988, will not take place in 2017. At the moment the phrase is 'taking a year off', but obviously the financial climate will dictate whether there is a festival in 2018. The Board has been very frank about the reasons for this and its Press statement gives a thorough account of its thinking. At the heart of the matter is a three-year Service Lease Agreement with Argyll & Bute Council which had become operative in 2015. This year the SLA was subject to a 20% cut in common with all such agreements in Argyll & Bute. The festival sought an assurance from the council that no further cut would follow, but the Council, 'faced with massive financial challenges of its own', as the Festival Board readily acknowledges, was unable to provide this guarantee.

The Board cites as further reasons for the cancellation year on year falls in ticketing revenue, the increasing age profile of its audience and a projected 15% increase in band accommodation costs.

However, Bute Jazz continues to operate, with Winter concerts including New Year Jazz at the Victoria Hotel, Rothesay, on January 2 and the prospect of re-introducing jazz at the Rothesay Pavilion when it re-opens late in 2018.

www.butejazz.com

Brussels, Paris, Cologne, Milan and, recently, London. For further details check out www.linnrecords.com when it is re-launched early next year.

VENTURING AWAY FOR TRAD JAZZ

Venture Away Music Weekends regularly promote traditional jazz weekends in comfortable hotels in attractive resorts: Scarborough, Torquay and Bournemouth. First up in 2017 is the Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth (March 3-6), hosting the Dart Valley Stompers, the Sussex Jazz Kings, New Orleans Heat, Bill Phelan's Muskrat Ramblers and the Sunset Café Stompers. Christine Tyrrell headlines a weekend at Scarborough's Royal Hotel on March 31-April 3, with the Savannah Jazz Band, John Shillito's Select Six, Matt Palmer's Millennium Eagle Jazz Band, Dave Rae's Levee Ramblers Jazz Band with special guest Ian Wynne, and the Washington Whirligig Jazz Band.

Tel.: 01305 750797

www.ventureawaymusicweekends.co.uk



Steve Waterman

BRISTOL JAZZ BIGGER AND BETTER

Bristol Jazz & Blues Festival next year expands to four days (March 16-20) and offers an eclectic programme in Colston Hall with no fewer than four commissions, with two major film-related projects. The festival opens with a brand new score to the legendary silent film, *Metropolis*, commissioned from Bristolian Andy Sheppard. Later Charles Hazelwood leads Adrian Utley (Portishead) and Will Gregory (Goldfrapp), the Army of Generals string orchestra and an 18-piece big band in *Sounds for Spies & Private Eyes*, a journey through jazz in the cinema. Along with workshops and talks the main festival programme ranges from Laura Jurd's Dinosaur to Alan Barnes/Gilad Atzmon's Lowest Common Denominator, from Mud Morganfield to Remi Harris' new group, the Electric Beat Combo, before Macy Gray brings proceedings to a close.

Tel.: 0844 887 1500

www.bristoljazzandbluesfest.com

TAKE FIVE EDITION XII

The names have now been announced for Take Five Edition XII which is supported by the Jerwood Charitable Foundation, PRS for Music Foundation, Arts Council England, Help Musicians UK and the Serious Trust. Take Five is designed to give talented jazz musicians the chance to take time out to develop their craft and their business. This edition



Andy Sheppard

will run until the summer of 2017 and will include one-to-one mentoring sessions and a residential period. The musicians chosen for 2016-2017 are Olie Brice (bass), Corrie Dick (drums), Duncan Eagles (sax), Paul Edis (piano), Richard Foote (trombone), Kim Macari (trumpet), Rebecca Nash (piano) and Shirley Tetteh (guitar). www.serious.org.uk

CELEBRATING IN EASTLEIGH

The festive season reduces the normally high jazz content at the Concorde Club, Eastleigh, with Wednesdays in December being given over to Christmas Party Nights. The Sunday evening traditional jazz nights operate as usual on December 11 with the Solent City Jazzmen before it's Christmas Jazz Party Night on December 18 with the John Maddocks Jazzmen and guests. Wednesday Jazz gets going again on January 11 with the SYJO Legacy Big Band (ex-members of Southampton Youth Jazz Orchestra), followed by Spats Langham's Hot Fingers (18), Jivin'



Photo by Merlin Daleman

Spats Langham

Miss Daisy, small band swing under the leadership of Simon Thorpe (February 1) and the Chris Ingham Quartet with The Jazz of Dudley Moore (8). January 25 is a jazz-free evening. The John Maddocks Jazzmen, having played the final Sunday gig of 2016, play the first of 2017 on January 8, followed by the Cuff Billett New Europa Jazz Band (15), the Big Bear Stompers (22) and the New Orleans Jazz Bandits (29).

Tel.: 023 8061 3989

www.theconcordeclub.com

FATS AND THE SHAKES AT ST. JAMES

This *Joint is Jumpin'* is due to settle into a two-week engagement at London's St. James Theatre in April. From Harlem comes the band The Shakes, together with three singers and two tap dancers, to celebrate the music of Fats Waller. The show involves Fats' *London Suite*, together with 16 of his best-known songs and a story-line involving Al Capone and the jazz world of the 1920s and 1930s.

STARS LINED UP FOR CHELTENHAM

Early announcements for next year's Cheltenham Jazz Festival (April 26-May 1) include the appearance of the Chick Corea Trio in the Big Top on April 30. Chick is joined by Eddie Gomez and Brian Blade in the only UK date of the trio's European tour. Also lined up for Cheltenham are Snarky Puppy and genre-defying Meshell Ndegeocello.

www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz

DARLINGTON JAZZ

The 2017 Darlington Jazz Festival (Apr 26-29) will retain its winning formula of regional musicians working with high profile national names at several town centre

venues. Artist-in-residence trumpeter Matt Roberts will once again facilitate workshops and feature with his own band in what has become a much anticipated, annual, high octane session.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Royal Albert Hall has announced an all-star line-up for its Big Band Christmas Concert on December 11, with Guy Barker leading his big band and guests Clare Teal, Clarke Peters, Kurt Elling and a cappella group Accent.

The Jazz of Dudley Moore is a timely reminder of what a superb jazz pianist the much loved actor/comedian was. The Chris Ingham Quartet present a programme of his music at the Pizza Express in Dean Street on January 22, 2017.

Tel.: 0207439 4962

New York resident Canadian saxophonist Seamus Blake tours during February with a gig at Newcastle Arts Centre in the company of Ross Stanley and James Maddren (February 7).

Graham Brook's Tuesday Jazz and Swing at Wilmslow Conservative Club continues regardless through the festive season, the official Christmas party being in the company of Lucy Lockwood, Liam Byrne and the Keith McGee Trio on December 20. Liam Byrne is prominent in the 2017 programme, too, appearing with Tony Ormesher, Andrzej Baranek and Frank Grime on January 3, co-leading BBQ with Jamie Brownfield (17) and the Jamie Brownfield/Liam Byrne Hot Six (March 14). The Tom Kincaid Trio also figures largely, appearing as a



Chick Corea

trio (January 24), with Gilad Atzmon (31) and with Alan Barnes and John Hallam (February 7). Rosie's Jazz and Swing at Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club every third Thursday also features BBQ with special guest Rosie Harrison for the December 15 Christmas show. January 19 brings the Sueyo Carmel Quintet with Tony Ormesher and the Great Birmingham Trombone Company with John Patrick on piano follows on February 16. The full programme for both can be found on the new website below.

Tel.: 01625 528336

www.grahambrookjazz.co.uk

The Friends of Upton Jazz Festival continue their excellent series of monthly concerts in 2017 with Robert Fowler's Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz Band on January 20. Dave Moorwood's Big Bear Stompers (February 24) come with the bonus of a fish and chips supper and the Alan Barnes Quartet follows on March 10. All the concerts are in Hanley Castle High School.

Tel.: 01684 593794

The Forge in Camden has a special Saturday lunch-time concert on December 17 under the name National Youth Jazz Orchestra Showcase. Two big bands, NYJO Academy and NYJO Jazz Ensemble, feature along with their Vocal Ensemble and NYJO London.

Tel.: 0207 383 7808

Benslow Music's annual Jazz Fest (February 20-23), run by Joy Ellis and Adam Osmianski with special guest Jeffery Wilson, consists of workshops, masterclasses and demonstrations for all levels of ability.

Tel.: 01462 459446

www.benslowmusic.org

The New Century Ragtime Orchestra's annual mid-winter concert (February 3) at Gateshead's Caedmon Hall features guests Keith Nichols and period percussion specialist Nick Ward.

John Hallam and Friends are providing the music for a weekend at (April 21-23) the Burnside Hotel and Spa, Bowness-on-Windermere. In addition to some fine jazz from John Hallam, Julian Marc Stringle, Kevin Grenfell and the Tom Kincaid Trio, there is the pleasure of two nights dinner, bed and breakfast in the heart of the Lake District.

Tel.: 01942 811522

www.johnhallamjazz.co.uk

Alan Barnes makes a flying visit to County Durham to play two concerts in one day with a lunchtime duo date with pianist Paul Edis at Durham's Gala Theatre (February 10), followed by an evening engagement with Edis' trio at the Traveller's Rest, Darlington. Bassist and vocalist Nicola Farnon can be heard at the Gala Theatre, again with Edis, on April 14.

After seeing 2017 in at Earlsdon Park Village, King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys play such familiar venues as the Artrix, Bromsgrove (January 7), Robin 2, Bilston (26) and the Met, Bury (February 2) before the band's first foreign date of the year: the Salle Andre Waughier in Lille. They return to Northern France on April 1 for the Potatoes Blues Festival in Lunery, Normandy.

Tel.: 0121 454 7020

www.kingpleasureandthebiscuitboys.com

Opera North's programme for the Howard Assembly Room in the Grand Theatre at Leeds is sometimes astonishingly broad-



NOVEMBER RELEASES

URCD258 Jack Teagarden/Earl Hines Manchester 1957



URCD271 Recently Discovered Late Vintage Colyer



NOVEMBER RELEASES

JCCD3002 Kid Sheik and Brother Cornbread in Copenhagen 1974



JCCD3023/3031 Traditional Jazz Around the World Vol 1 & 2



JCCD3040 Jazz Nocturne 3 Bunk and Bechet in Boston



JCCD3075 Rare Cuts Well Done Vol 4 George Guesnon, Kid Thomas, St Cyr's Birthday



JCCD3103 Ken Colyer with The Classic Band in Stockholm Vol 2



JCCD3114 Zutty Singleton Drum Face Vol 1





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For full catalogue please call 0843 658 0856



based, with the New Year attractions including a showing of the classic silent film *Nanook of the North*, with accompaniment by an Inuit throat singer! Jazz is always interestingly represented, with New Sanctuary on January 27 featuring trumpeter Dave Douglas, guitarist Marc Ribot and Susie Ibarra on drums and electronics. March and April will bring performances by Roberto Fonseca and Courtney Pine. Jazz trumpeter Arve Henriksen can be heard on March 8 exploring Norwegian and Icelandic music of the Middle Ages with Trio Mediaeval. Opera North's lunch-time series for Kirklees Council concludes on February 22 with a performance by jazz pianist George King at Batley Town Hall.

Pre-New Year gig at the Comedy Pub in Piccadilly, just three minutes from Piccadilly Underground, features Alan Barnes at lunch-time on December 30.

January gigs for Tipitina include the Broadway Casino, Birmingham (8), Summerseat Garden Centre, Bury (14) and Park Regis, Birmingham (16 – afternoon).
Tel.: 0121 454 7020

Serious has announced a seven-date tour for Snarky Puppy in April and May next year, beginning at Cheltenham Town Hall on April 30. May dates are the O2 ABC, Glasgow (2), the Sage Gateshead (3), the O2 Apollo, Manchester (4), the O2 Academy, Brixton (5), the Tramshed, Cardiff (6) and the Lighthouse, Poole (7).
www.serious.org.uk

The Frank Griffith/Charlie Wood Quartet is at the Bedford Arms, Bedford, with Memphis Soul Swamp on December 19. In contrast Frank Griffith MDs Kevin Fitzsimmons' *Sinatra and Sequins* shows at the Corn Exchange Theatre, Stamford, on February 26.
Tel.: 01234 214656 (Bedford)
01780 766455 (Stamford)
www.stamfordroyalexchange.co.uk

CHOPS – THE STORY BEHIND THE ULTIMATE JAZZ TRIVIA QUIZ

SCOTTYANOW introduces his new quiz, available as a PDF file.

Years ago, I thought of the idea of creating an extensive jazz trivia quiz. Jazz history is filled with colourful figures, humour, and unlikely events. So much of jazz could be considered worthy of being included on a *Believe It Or Not* programme. After all, how many fans know that Miles Davis recorded with Louis Armstrong (as one of many background vocalists on Satch's 1970 recording of *Give Peace A Chance*) or that a 16-year old Dizzy Gillespie sat in with King Oliver's band in 1933?

After being on the backburner for a long time, the jazz trivia quiz has emerged as CHOPS, a set of 50 individual quizzes (20 questions apiece) that total 1,000 questions on jazz, ranging from the significant to the esoteric.

Rather than CHOPS featuring questions of a fill-in-the-blank nature, having multiple-choice and true/false questions increases the potential for humour. For example, In 1969 Benny Goodman recorded *Aquarius*. That bit of odd information can be given several ways, but here is the most humorous question I could come up with:

Benny Goodman did not record this song in 1969:

- A) *Spinning Wheel*
- B) *Aquarius*
- C) *Up Up And Away*
- D) *How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down On The Farm?*

The answer is D since Goodman recorded that tune in 1967. Imagine what these performances sound like!

CHOPS is available as a PDF file for \$25 by sending the money via Pay Pal to scottyannowjazz@yahoo.com. I will email the file out within a day and I guarantee many hours of enjoyment. Among the quizzes are ones on Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Bix Beiderbecke, Art Blakey, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Oscar Peterson, Fats Waller, The Swing Era, Afro-Cuban Jazz, The Blue Note Label and 21st Century Jazz plus 35 others. Obviously this is a gift that is perfect for one's jazz-loving friends, and for Yourself.

As an example, here are ten questions (half as long as each individual quiz) that are not included in CHOPS but are in the format. The answers are included on page 29. Have fun!

1. **The Original Creole Band, a pioneering New Orleans-style band that played in black vaudeville shows during 1914-17, was led by:**
 - A) Freddie Keppard
 - B) Bill Johnson
 - C) Kid Ory
 - D) Buddy Bolden
2. **Never a member of the Paul Whiteman Orchestra:**
 - A) Bunny Berigan
 - B) Jack Teagarden
 - C) Tommy Dorsey
 - D) Benny Goodman
3. **After Gene Krupa left the Benny Goodman big band in 1938, who was the first musician to record on drums with the Goodman orchestra?**
 - A) Dave Tough
 - B) Sid Catlett
 - C) Lionel Hampton
 - D) Buddy Rich
4. **Original pianist with the Louis Armstrong All-Stars in 1947:**
 - A) Dick Cary
 - B) Joe Sullivan
 - C) Earl Hines
 - D) Thelonious Monk
5. **True or False: John Coltrane recorded on alto rather than his usual tenor on a record date with Gene Ammons in 1958.**



John Coltrane

6. **Who played piano on the originally issued Miles Davis version of *Seven Steps To Heaven*?**
 - A) Victor Feldman
 - B) Herbie Hancock
 - C) Wynton Kelly
 - D) Chick Corea
7. **Not a member of Larry Coryell's Eleventh House in the 1970s:**
 - A) Michael Brecker
 - B) Randy Brecker
 - C) Alphonse Mouzon
 - D) Mike Mandel
8. **Wynton Marsalis appears in this film:**
 - A) *Mo' Better Blues*
 - B) *Round Midnight*
 - C) *Tune In Tomorrow*
 - D) *The Exorcist III*
9. **Winner of the 2010 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition:**
 - A) Gretchen Parlato
 - B) Cecile McLorin Salvant
 - C) Roberta Gambarini
 - D) Cyrille Aimee
10. **True or False: The up-and-coming trad trumpeter-singer Bria Skonberg was originally a child prodigy as a classical violinist.**

BBC TOP 50

RON SIMPSON wonders if he will ever be a member of the Jazz Community (capitals essential).

Which of these two lists seems to you to contain albums worth voting onto a list of the 50 Best Jazz Albums?

LIST A

Joseph Jarman: Song For

Kemasi Washington: The Epic

Christian Scott: Yesterday You Said Tomorrow

John Zorn: News for Lulu

Zara McFarlane: Until Tomorrow

Yusef Lateef: Three Faces of Yusef Lateef

Robert Glasper: In My Element

Abbey Lincoln: A Turtle's Dream

Billy Jenkins: True Love Collection

Brian Blades: Season of Change

LIST B

Clifford Brown/Max Roach: At Basin Street

Duke Ellington: Piano in the Background

Count Basie: The Atomic Mr Basie

Quintet of the Year: Jazz at Massey Hall

Billie Holiday: Lady in Satin

Buck Clayton: The Hucklebuck/Robbins Nest

Lester Young: Jazz Greats '56

Lambert/Hendricks/Ross: Sing a Song of Basie

Thelonious Monk: Brilliant Corners

Cannonball Adderley: Somethin' Else

If you chose List B, I'm afraid that you're not a member of the Jazz Community. BBC Music Jazz, the pop-up jazz station celebrating the EDF London Jazz Festival, has published a list of 50, including all those in List A and none of those in List B, after researching 'members of the Jazz Community'. List A is the choice of the Jazz Community, List B is simply a list of albums I think are rather good.

And, faced with Helen Mayhew's power of argument, who can disagree with the choice of Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* as Number 1?

'*Kind of Blue* is the "Greatest Album" because it's the greatest album. It's a landmark album and the best-selling album of all time for a reason. It's the album most people have in their music collection and, if you haven't got it, then you have to get it because it's the best.'

As Charles Mingus would have said, 'Ah Um'.

Dropping this rather laboured ironic tone, I'll get round to what I really think. The fact that there was a well-publicised pop-up jazz station has to be a good thing, even if the commercials on Radio 2 were so *The Fast Show* – 'nice!' The 1-2-3 in the BBC list are not my favourite three, but a totally defensible choice. Nobody is seriously going to object to Davis, Coltrane (*A Love Supreme*) and Mingus (*Ah Um*) on the rostrum.

But then...lower down the list, mixed in with fine and deserving choices are ones that can only mean that the Jazz Community they consulted with consists of so few people that being nominated by your sister-in-law gives you half a chance of success.

And the Press release proudly announcing this is so shoddily done that it's difficult to believe that it went out proudly under the name of the BBC. Here at *Jazz Rag* we make mistakes – too often – with a staff that can be counted on the fingers of one hand, but surely the BBC, even with cutbacks, has someone who can check Press releases!

For a more considered judgement we turned to DIGBY FAIRWEATHER who in his role as musician, broadcaster, writer, and founder of both the National Jazz Archive and Jazz Centre UK is admirably qualified to be a member of the 'jazz community'. Digby shared with *Jazz Rag* his correspondence with James Stirling, Editor, *BBC Music*. Minor cuts have been made to Digby's letters in the interests of saving space, but nothing that concerns his main arguments has been removed.

Dear Mr. Stirling,

As a professional jazz trumpeter of forty years in the UK I was intrigued to view the BBC's listing of the 'Top 50' jazz albums of all time, amid their – very admirable – attempt to heighten the profile of jazz with their pop-up station which has just closed after four days on-air.

I very much hope that this fine initiative to raise the profile of jazz will be repeated, and there have been thoughts from members of 'the jazz community' (however that term is defined!) that this might be a marketing exercise for a fulltime BBC jazz station. If this were to be the case it would be a massive cultural advance for our (most durable!) art form which has

been in the UK since circa 1875 and has survived triumphantly the waves of popular fashion including – most centrally – the rock generations of the past 50 or more years.

I think it is most important to make this point before proceeding on to more specific issues regarding the project. To begin with: jazz initiatives in the

Actually the first failing is one that goes deeper than proofing. What is an album? On my list of albums I've taken it to be something that was conceived as a unit, either as a live session or as a product that deliberately placed the musical tracks in a certain pattern. The absence of such seminal pre-album recordings as, for instance, those of Bix Beiderbecke and Jelly Roll Morton or nearly all 1930s and 1940s jazz led me to think the BBC had adopted the same policy, but Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington compilations, and Benny Goodman at Carnegie Hall, sneak in. It looks very much as though no one has actually decided whether compilations are acceptable.

Typos are forgivable, but, when Miles Davis is your banner name and occurs five times in the listing, it's beyond incompetent to spell it every time in the list as 'Miles Davies' – that will be Davies the Trumpet, I guess! And finally, if you're going to embarrass Jamie Cullum by putting his excellent early album, *Pointless Nostalgic*, at Number 8, do get its title right – as it stands, billing it as *Pointless* seems a rather appropriate comment!



past (including Jazz FM which suffered problems early on in its years) have regularly met with howls of protest from what we

might call 'committed jazz lovers' – a most discouraging response for those who have set up the idea in the first place. Nonetheless, this would no doubt explain why I alone have received a long string of e-mails this morning asking – sometimes in the strongest terms! – why such acknowledged jazz giants as Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Clifford Brown, Lester Young, 'Fats' Waller, Coleman Hawkins, Johnny Hodges, Roy Eldridge, Oscar Peterson, and Sarah Vaughan (for only a handful of classic examples of founding fathers - and mothers - of our art-form) find no place in the listings.

I don't believe that this was simply a matter of what we might call 'numerological limitation'. And it is (in my view) both hard to justify this – and (reaching a little further into the issue) to explain how, for example, the admittedly high-profile Jamie Cullum can find himself listed five places above Louis Armstrong, who is regarded universally as both the inventor of the jazz solo and (by such latter-day masters as Wynton Marsalis) as – in his words – 'The Shakespeare of our music'. Other listings – bearing in mind (say) the omission of Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young in favour of such as latter-day artists as Billy Jenkins or Robert Glasper (however admirable these artists may be) would suggest a notable lack of qualified judgment in the preparation of the lists. Perhaps – like the inadvertent mis-spelling of winner Miles Davis' name (as 'Davies') in the winner- album listings – such questionable judgments might perhaps suggest over-hasty exercise in its preparation. However it is, I think, important to re-emphasize that these are – to a limited degree – 'cosmetic misjudgements' amid what is an extremely promising project - and that very few such initiatives get everything right first time!

I do feel however that the business of consultation with 'the jazz community' brings up the questions of (a) the nature and scope of the 'consultation' (when and where?) and (b) how the 'jazz community' was defined with regard to this project. Such a valuable and high-profile

exercise as this one deserves the highest degree of 'consultation' within what (to be fair) is a quite small – and accessible – community, which certainly includes jazz journals (there are four excellent ones in the UK alone); many of our best and most highly-qualified jazz critics - and of course the representatives of the National Jazz Archive which has been in existence in the UK since 1988.

One other – admittedly small technical detail amid the 'four-day programme' – was its accessibility. I am reasonably computer-literate but could neither locate a 'listen-now' button on the site nor find the station on my DAB Radio under BBC listings. To be fair: other people were able to listen (and enjoyed what they heard) which is good news. But the (possible) limited accessibility of the station could very well lead to the (deeply regrettable) conclusion by the BBC that 'there wasn't much interest in the idea' – and the fact that the station was only available for four days would of course have meant that this admirable project could well have passed many of the jazz community by in any case.

Before I close let me (once again) re-emphasize that this e-mail is sent with the best will; with the (deep) desire to watch the continuing re-acknowledgment of jazz music amongst both the media and new generations of young people continue to grow – and hopefully to help deflect the negative reaction which this project has prompted amongst specialised jazz listeners. I would be delighted to hear back from you, and very much hope to do so.

Well, having operated from within the corridors of power of the BBC, I was well aware that the chance of a response was reasonably minimal. But then I received this from Mr. Stirling:

Dear Mr Fairthweather,(sic!)

Thank you for your email and the time you have taken to relay your thoughts and the encouragement you have given. As you know, BBC Music is committed to jazz programming with around 25 hours of radio content every

week. We have four regular jazz strands on Radio 3, two on Radio 2 and then there's the day-to-day programming on Radio 6 Music, BBC Scotland and our TV services such as BBC Two and BBC Four.

Polls, whilst entertaining, are always subjective and our Top 50 was never intended to be, nor was advertised as, a definitive guide. Instead, the programming was a way to engage different audiences in jazz, to elicit discussion and to bring them to the pop-up station. In constructing the poll we contacted 300 members of the recognised jazz community, presenters, artists, journalists, concert promoters. Polls always create debate and it's heartening to see so many people who care about jazz discussing their favourite albums. I'm sorry you were unable to find a way to listen to the station, we will take that on board. But you can listen to all the programmes again here for up to 30 days.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programme/s/p033dmdy>

You'll be heartened to hear that the station received strong audience appreciation over the weekend and early indicators show it was a successful second year.

Thanks again for your kind words and the constructive spirit of your letter.

Best regards,

James.

Pleasant enough but a little bland perhaps? So I wrote this one back:

Dear Mr Stirling,

Many thanks for responding to my letter. It was nice to hear from you.

As an ex-presenter of jazz programmes on the BBC (*Best of Jazz*, *Jazz Notes* and *Jazz Parade*, 1988-98) I am very aware of the regular demands for more exposure from what we might call 'specialized areas' of music – jazz, folk et al. I am a regular listener to Clare Teal and Jamie on Radio 2 and enjoy the balance of their stylistic output –

although I will own to still missing Humphrey Lyttelton's *Best of Jazz* which (to my mind) has never found an ideal replacement. I also search for – and reasonably regularly tune into - your Radio 3 presentations although I am unaware of the day-to-day programming of jazz on Radio 6 Music. It would be good to know about this and I shall enjoy making enquiries.

No poll, of course, can be a 'definitive guide' (the listening public are far too fickle for that) but I would nonetheless stick to my point that – while 'eliciting discussion' is always a good idea – such discussion should (perhaps) not be prompted by - nor based on – claims (including a 'Top 50') which are questionable or dubious. Perhaps Donald Trump might serve as a worthy example!?

I would also (politely) question your – no doubt light-hearted – suggestion that 'it's heartening to see so many people who care about jazz discussing their favourite albums'. In my view the absence of so very many central figures to the jazz culture in your poll represents something rather more significant than that. The artists I have listed along with many others were (and are) set in stone in jazz's culture and there really can be no discussion (light-hearted or otherwise) about their necessary presence in a properly devised and researched project such as yours. The BBC is a powerful voice in the UK - and a central opinion-former – and its statements should be carefully considered.

Yours cordially,

And of course – after no reply – I'm still hoping. Just as we all are. No-one wants to fall out with the BBC. Nor do we want to grumble about promising initiatives. But we also need to take extra-special care of our precious heritage. 'Tread softly, because you tread on our dreams' comes to mind. And in a world where jazz is regularly subjected to careless re-definition and over-swift adoption of dubious claims we all need to be very much on our guard.

THE GREATEST NON-MUSICIANS IN JAZZ HISTORY

By Scott Yanow

While the finest jazz instrumentalists and singers always deserve our endless compliments for creating and constantly revitalizing jazz, most could not have done it alone. Throughout jazz history, there have been many individuals who, while not professional musicians themselves (pianist George Wein being a major exception), have made major contributions to the music. These include those individuals who had the vision to extensively document the music that they loved (often by starting their own record labels), record producers, club owners, influential jazz journalists, promoters, and the many who operated behind the scenes to help jazz. There are far too many to mention in one article, but certainly all of the ones in this piece deserve our praise and recognition.

One cannot imagine what jazz history would have been like without John Hammond. Record producer, discoverer of Billie Holiday, Charlie Christian and Count Basie (who he heard by accident on the radio broadcasting from Kansas City), not to mention Aretha Franklin and Bob Dylan, fighter against racism, and brother-in-law and adviser to Benny Goodman, Hammond was a dominant force in Swing for decades.

Norman Granz was also a powerhouse throughout his career, fighting against racism and for a large assortment of major



John Hammond

musicians. He originated and ran Jazz At The Philharmonic, paid his musicians some of the best money they ever received, managed Ella Fitzgerald and Oscar Peterson, and founded Norgran, Clef and Verve. In the 1970s he returned with the Pablo label, showing that there was more to jazz of that era than fusion.

There would never have been Blue Note if Alfred Lion along with his business partner and photographer Francis Wolff had not immigrated to the United States. Many other key labels were originally the vision of one jazz fan. Think of Richard Bock who gave us West Coast cool jazz on his Pacific Jazz label, Orrin Keepnews who founded Riverside and Milestone, Lester Koenig who was responsible for both Contemporary and the Dixieland-oriented Good Time Jazz, Bob Weinstock's hundreds of Prestige albums, or Ross Russell who documented Charlie Parker and others of the bebop generation for Dial. In more recent times, Bob Rusch (on Cadence and CIMP) championed creative improvised music in *Cadence Magazine*.

In addition to Koenig's Good Time Jazz, the trad jazz world has been blessed by the work of Matt Dombier who gave us Arbors, Bob Erdos with his extensive Stomp Off label, and Hank O'Neal who ran Chiaroscuro. However it would be difficult to equal the output of George Buck

who on GHB, Jazzology and other companies that he acquired, documented more than a thousand New Orleans jazz, trad and swing sessions for over a half-century.

Innovative avant-garde albums were recorded by Bernard Stollman for E.S.P. in the 1960s and Chuck Nessa for his Nessa label. The 'comeback' of straight ahead acoustic jazz in the 1970s might not have happened on the level that it did were it not for Norman Granz, Carl Jefferson (Concord), Don Schlitten (Xanadu) and Joe Fields (Muse and later on High Note).

One should definitely not overlook the great European impresarios who recorded so much rewarding American and European jazz. The jazz world would have been much poorer without the accomplishments of Giovanni Bonandri (Black Saint and Soul Note), Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer (MPS), Nils Winter (Steeplechase), Gerry Teekins (Criss Cross), Matthias Wincklemann (Enja), Manfred Eicher (ECM), Alastair Robertson (Hep), Karl Emil Knudsen and his successor Mona Grainger (Storyville) and Leo Feigin (Leo). Jordi Pujol compiled a remarkable number of rewarding reissues for Fresh Sound while his Fresh Sound New Talent label has included early and often debut recordings of many of today's greats including Ambrose Akinmusire, Brad Mehldau and the Bad Plus.

Bob Thiele was always a hustler who fought to get great jazz on records. He had his record company (Signature) during 1943-48, ran Coral Records for the Decca label in the 1950s, was the head of Impulse during the 1960s (recording everyone from Coltrane to Ellington), and in his later years headed the Dr. Jazz label. Harry Lim recorded a remarkable number of classic small-group swing sessions for Keynote during 1943-46 and in the 1970s had the Famous Door label. Bob Koester recorded

everything from Dixieland and Chicago blues to groundbreaking free jazz on Delmark. Creed Taylor, who worked with Verve in the 1960s, came up with a perfect mixture of the creative and the accessible on his classic CTI recordings of the 1970s.

In addition to those who founded and ran record companies, the recorded history of jazz was influenced by a few major record producers who frequently made a huge impact with larger labels before departing. Steve Backer was responsible for superb jazz programmes at four major companies. He revived Impulse (1972-74). While with Arista (1974-80), he reissued Savoy sets, recorded new music for Novus, and leased avant-garde music for Arista/Freedom. Backer was responsible for Magenta at Windham Hill (1981-86) and, while with RCA in the 1990s, he released swing packages for Bluebird and revived the Novus name for recordings of new music. But each time he left a label, his projects went out-of-print!

Bruce Lundvall brought back jazz to Columbia in the 1970s, had the Elektra Musician label for two glorious years in the 1980s, and oversaw the comeback of Blue Note after a decade of the once-mighty company being inactive. His good friend Michael Cuscuna, in addition to producing many sessions and helping organize Blue Note, founded the premiere jazz reissue label Mosaic with Charlie Lourie in 1983. John Snyder created the Horizon series for A&M (the only time that A&M has extensively featured jazz) and his own Artists House label. Gene Norman was a very talented promoter for the music he loved. In the 1950s he was a jazz disc jockey, produced concerts, had his own Crescendo night club and recorded many of the same artists for his GNP (Gene Norman Presents) Crescendo label.

When it comes to jazz record producers, Milt Gabler ranks



Norman Granz

near the top. His UHCA (United Hot Clubs of America) label in the mid-1930s was the very first to put out reissues and the first to credit all of the musicians on the actual record. He ran the Commodore Music Shop (a major jazz record store) and his Commodore label during 1938-46 recorded tons of hot jazz and swing. Gabler also produced a wide variety of music for Decca, from Louis Jordan to Bill Haley.

George Avakian was a jazz critic as early as 1937. In the 1950s when he was with Columbia, Avakian (who is still with us at the age of 97) worked on classic new recordings by Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington and Miles Davis.

Nesuhi Ertegun, after producing New Orleans jazz at Jazz Man and Good Time Jazz, ran the jazz department at Atlantic (co-founded by his brother Ahmet Ertegun), producing John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman and many other greats in the 1950s and '60s. Other important jazz record producers and organizers of sessions include Ozzie Cadena (notably with Savoy and Prestige), Teddy Reig (Savoy, Roost and Roulette) and three musicians: Dave Grusin (GRP), Quincy Jones (Mercury, A&M) and Teo Macero (his work with Miles Davis).

No survey of recorded jazz is complete without mentioning the most famous and influential engineer of all, Rudy Van Gelder, who helped define how jazz sounded on records during the LP era.

In 1950, Irv Kratka came up with the idea of *Music Minus One*, releasing play-along recordings for up-and-coming musicians that gave them opportunities to fill in the missing parts. Jamey Aebersold later became famous for releasing hundreds of *Play-A-Long* recordings that have benefitted a countless number of students. Both Kratka (Inner City and Classic Jazz) and Aebersold (Double Time) have also produced many 'complete' recordings too.

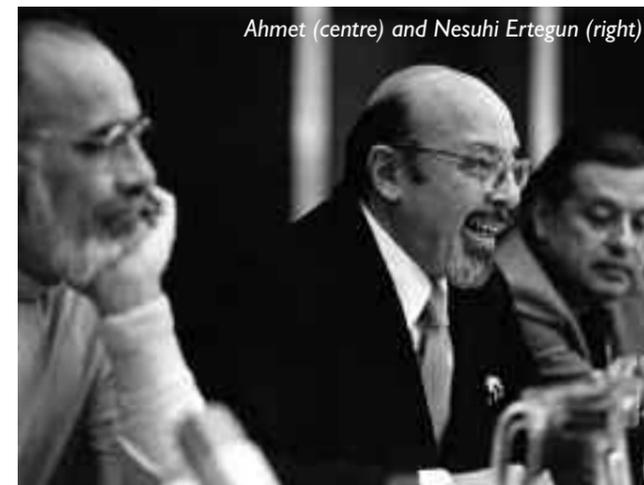
Jazz recordings and performances have since the 1930s been analyzed and criticized by hundreds of jazz journalists, authors, historians and critics of varying quality. Leonard Feather was considered the most important jazz critic by many for a half-century. His *Encyclopedia Of Jazz* from 1960 expertly summed up jazz up to that time and, in addition to his columns and books, he produced important bop-oriented record dates (notably for RCA in the 1940s), persuaded George Shearing to form his famous quintet, and wrote hit songs for Dinah Washington.

Other major jazz critics through the years include Hugues Panassie (a champion of New Orleans jazz), George T. Simon, Ralph Gleason (who produced the *Jazz Casual* TV shows in the 1960s), Whitney Balliett (arguably the finest of all jazz writers), Nat Hentoff (who had the short-lived Candid label in 1961), Stanley Dance, Dan Morgenstern (his historical liner notes are difficult to top), Martin Williams, Ira

Gitler, Gary Giddins and Francis Davis. Rudi Blesh was a major supporter of New Orleans jazz and the host of the important *This Is Jazz* radio series in 1947. His greatest contribution was co-writing 1950's *They All Played Ragtime* with Harriet Janis. Joachim Berendt, the top European jazz critic for decades, produced concerts and recordings and was the author of *The Jazz Book*, one of the great jazz history books. John Chilton's *Who's Who Of Jazz* filled in many gaps for jazz artists born before 1920 as did his biographies on Sidney Bechet, Coleman Hawkins and Billie Holiday. Bill Russell, who helped discover Bunk Johnson in 1942 and had the American Music label, was a major figure in the revival of New Orleans jazz and his research helped to rewrite jazz history.

The art of discography, which lets one know who recorded what when, was pioneered by Charles Delaunay with his *Hot Discography* in 1936. Brian Rust's series of jazz discographies (which are indispensable) brought the science to a very high level. Tom Lord's massive online *The Jazz Discography* is utilized by this writer nearly every day.

There have been a countless number of club owners through the years with Max Gordon (succeeded by his wife Lorraine Gordon) founding and running the most famous and prestigious venue, the Village Vanguard. The first jazz festival was in Paris in 1949 but it was George Wein with the Newport Jazz Festival (starting in 1954) who really made the annual jazz festival a major part of the music. Wein has since been involved with scores



Ahmet (centre) and Nesuhi Ertegun (right)

of other festivals but he will always be best known for Newport. Jimmy Lyons, a disc jockey, thought that Monterey would be the ideal place for a West Coast festival in 1958. The Monterey Jazz Festival, now directed by Tim Jackson, will be celebrating its 60th edition in 2017 at the same location.

This piece concludes by mentioning Willis Conover, the disc jockey who on his Voice of America broadcasts, introduced jazz to millions of listeners behind the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union for decades.

What would jazz have been like without these tireless non-musicians?

Tireless non-musician Scott Yanow is the author of 11 jazz books and countless liner notes and reviews.

www.scottyand.com

Even Scott Yanow cannot call to mind every influential non-musician in jazz. Any further suggestions welcomed at admin@bigbearmusic.com. I would make a case for Barney Josephson, Lew Leslie and Joe Glaser - or is the last named just too notorious with his mobster connections? And, while we're on mobsters, why not Owney Madden of the Cotton Club? Or maybe not.

R.S.

THE MYSTERIES OF GLENN MILLER

Conspiracy theories, friendly fire - and decidedly unfriendly fire from the jazz world....
RON SIMPSON looks at the Glenn Miller phenomenon.

In early November 2016 Tommy Steele completed a two-year stint on the road in *The Glenn Miller Story*. Difficult as it is to imagine Tommy Steele as James Stewart (who, to most of us, was the real Glenn Miller), the show was apparently a great success with audiences. Interviewed on Radio 2, Tommy Steele enthused over the fact that the truth about Glenn Miller's disappearance had been discovered while the tour was running. Somewhat blurred on detail (on the lines of 'These guys have found out...'), his account had to do with the cold weather, pilot unawareness of the aeroplane's tendency to stall, trying unsuccessfully to gain height and engine failure.

The Glenn Miller Orchestra had unprecedented popular success over a comparatively short period of time: 1938 to 1942. Then, after he broke up the band and joined the forces, Glenn Miller led the Army Air Force Band which by December 1944 was based in the UK, playing for the forces and broadcasting widely. With a Paris concert for the liberating Allied troops lined up, Major Miller took off in a single-engined Norseman, with two companions, from Twinwood Airfield near Bedford on December 15th to fly to France - and never arrived. No wreckage was found and controversy and speculation began.

The revelations Tommy Steele was referring to were probably a 2014 programme in the *History Detectives* series which focussed on the Norseman's history with a faulty carburettor which was prone to icing. It's difficult to see how this could be proved at 70 years distance, but at least it sounds much more likely, and much less interesting, than some of the other theories that have been advanced over the years. It utilises the one known fact about the disappearance: the weather. Whatever happened to Glenn Miller, surely fog and ice had something to do with it.

Poor visibility had a role in one of

the more convincing of the theories: death by friendly fire or, rather, jettisoned bombs. At the end of 2001 another television documentary examined aircraft historian Roy Nesbit's theory that a squadron of Lancaster bombers, returning from an aborted mission to Germany, got rid of their bomb-loads over the Channel. One of the navigators apparently saw a small low-flying aircraft, doubtless hugging the Channel because of the fog, which he recognised as a Norseman. Oddly enough, he kept his counsel on this for over a decade, but, as theories go, it was a good one, though apparently exploded by the discovery of a plane-spotter's diary on *The Antiques Roadshow* in 2012 which proved that the Norseman was on a different course.

The 'found dead in a Paris brothel' story was one of the longest running Miller myths, but a story on a website called militarycorruption.com developed that and linked it in with one of the numerous conspiracy theories. A certain Lt. Col. Hunton Downs (surely an invention) told the 'true' story in his book *The Glenn Miller Conspiracy: The Never-Before-Told True Story of his Life and Death*. Major Miller was on a secret mission from General Eisenhower to the German High Command bearing peace terms for an end to the war. A light aircraft stood ready at Versailles to take him to German headquarters at Fichtenheim. A group of hard-line Nazis, committed to fighting to the death, got wind of this, killed him and dropped the battered body in a warehouse frequented by German officers in Paris before the Liberation. Joseph Goebbels then used the discovery for propaganda purposes.

The writer on militarycorruption.com then proved his ability to recognise an unlikely tale when he heard one by being totally unconvinced by another book suggesting Miller

was killed three months previously and his death hushed up!

The other Glenn Miller mystery, of course, is how good his music was/is. Few bandleaders have been dismissed so airily and contemptuously by their peers. Artie Shaw summed it up by saying, 'All I can say is Glenn Miller should have lived and *Chattanooga Choo Choo* died.' Louis Armstrong, he of the famously eclectic taste, enjoyed and admired Miller's music and Buddy de Franco, one of the finest of jazz clarinetists, led the Miller 'ghost band' in the 1960s and 1970s, but that doesn't stop Miller's music attracting jibes from many quarters of the jazz world in a way that most jazz-fringe dance bands don't.

Yet the Miller sound continues to pull the crowds like no other. After Miller's death saxophonist/singer Tex Beneke carried on the band with the backing of the Miller estate until parting company acrimoniously in 1950 after converting it to Tex Beneke's Orchestra. But the Miller sound refused to go away, with orchestras such as Ray Anthony's selling plenty of 78s, so, after the success of the film *The Glenn Miller Story*, the estate asked drummer Ray McKinlay to lead a new 'ghost band'. That formed in 1956 and 60 years later still has a remarkably full date sheet. Two other officially sanctioned Glenn Miller Orchestras operate outside the USA, with Ray McVay in charge of the successful UK version.

With the great jazz big bands (which Miller's was not) we remember the superb soloists, whether Lester Young, Dickie Wells and the rest or Johnny Hodges, Cootie Williams, etc., or Benny Goodman himself with the likes of Gene Krupa and Harry James. Miller himself was a modestly talented trombonist, though in the early 1930s he had been part of two legendary line-ups: The Mound City Blue Blowers' *Hello Lola* session

(Hawkins, Krupa, Pee Wee Russell, etc.) and the hotter pit band ever, assembled by Red Nichols for *Girl Crazy*, with Krupa again and Benny Goodman among others.

So, if Miller was nothing remarkable as a trombonist, what do we remember of his sidemen? The one undeniable jazz great to play with the band, Bobby Hackett, had a strange career with Miller. Joining the band at a time when his own band had collapsed in financial disarray and when dental work made it difficult for him to play trumpet or cornet, he switched to his second instrument, guitar, and took up the trumpet only occasionally, as on the famous solo on *String of Pearls*. Later another major figure in 1930s and 1940s jazz, the fine guitarist Carmen Mastren, one of Muggsy Spanier's Big Four, also played with Miller, but only in the Army band.

However, looking at the line-up for Artie Shaw's least favourite track, *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, you can't help thinking that a band with Billy May and Ray Anthony in the trumpets, Wilber Schwartz, Al Klink and Ernie Caceres on reeds, Trigger Alpert on bass and the under-estimated drummer Maurice Purtill had something going for it.

Appropriately enough, in view of the number of myths around Miller, the musician that many of us most associate with his band was a mediocre pianist given to dragging the tempo whose main recommendation was his loyalty and whose career in music came to a halt with his leader's death. J.C. 'Chummy' McGregor owes his fame to two things: Harry Morgan's winning performance in *The Glenn Miller Story* and the fact that Chummy himself was a script adviser, no doubt helping to develop his role in the film as Miller's long-time musical soul-mate and sympathetic lieutenant.

THE JAZZ RAG TOP 20 UK

UK JAZZ CD SALES CHART

1	TUBBY HAYES	CHANGE OF SETTING	Harkit Records
2	THE COOKERS	THE CALL OF THE WILD AND PEACEFUL HEART	Smoke Sessions Records
3	CHARLIE HADEN & THE LIBERATION ORCHESTRA	TIME/LIFE	Impulse!
4	JOHNNY HODGES/BEN WEBSTER	COMPLETE 1954-1961 SMALL GROUPS	Phono Records
5	VARIOUS ARTISTS	PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM	Ena Records
6	JACK TEAGARDEN & EARL HINES ALL STARS	IN CONCERT, MANCHESTER 1957	Upbeat
7	MARY LOU WILLIAMS	PLAYS IN LONDON	Sony Jazz Connoisseur
8	BRIAN AUGER	BACK TO THE BEGINNING...AGAIN	Freestyle Records
9	ROBERT GLASPER EXPERIMENT	ARTSCIENCE	Blue Note Records
10	HARRY ALLEN'S ALL STAR NEW YORK SAXOPHONE BAND	THE CANDY MEN	Arbors
11	TUBBY HAYES	INVITATION	Acrobat Music
12	SIDNEY BECHET & MARTIAL SOLAL	TOGETHER	Essential Jazz Classics
13	STAN GETZ PRESENTS JIMMY ROWLES	THE PEACOCKS	Koch Jazz
14	ERROLL GARNER	READY TAKE ONE	Sony Music CMG
15	HANK MOBLEY	THREE CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS	Avid Jazz
16	SHABAKA AND THE ANCESTORS	WISDOM OF THE ELDERS	Brownswood Recordings
17	STAN GETZ	IN BOSTON, LIVE AT THE HI-HAT	Fresh Sound
18	COUNT BASIE & LESTER YOUNG	CLASSIC 1936-47 STUDIO SESSIONS	Mosaic Records
19	LAMBERT, HENDRICKS & ROSS	HOTTEST NEW GROUP IN JAZZ	Sony Jazz Connoisseur
20	CHARLIE PARKER	UNHEARD BIRD	Decca

This chart is compiled from sales in the following record stores

CRAZY JAZZ, Northampton www.crazyjazz.co.uk 01604 315287 Mail Order - www.crazyjazz.co.uk/main/orderform.pdf

JUMBO RECORDS, Leeds www.jumborecords.co.uk 0113 245 5570 5-6 St Johns Centre, LS2 8LQ

MUSIC INN, Nottingham www.musicinn.co.uk 0115 9470754 7-11 West End Arcade, NG1 6JP

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

SOUND KNOWLEDGE, Marlborough Facebook: Sound Knowledge 01672 511106 High St, Marlborough SN8 1LT

2016 BRITISH JAZZ AWARDS

Voting for the 2016 British Jazz Awards closed on November 30. After a total of over 38,000 votes had been counted, the final placings were as follows:

Trumpet

1. Enrico Tomasso
2. Jamie Brownfield
3. Laura Jurd
4. Ryan Quigley
5. Bruce Adams

Alto Sax

1. Soweto Kinch
2. Alan Barnes
3. Nigel Hitchcock
4. Derek Nash
5. Alexander Bone

Guitar

1. Nigel Price
2. Mike Walker
3. Jim Mullen
4. Martin Taylor
5. Remi Harris

Vocals

1. Liane Carroll
2. Claire Martin
3. Val Wiseman
4. Tina May
5. Clare Teal

Trombone

1. Mark Nightingale
2. Dennis Rollins
3. Ian Bateman
4. Adrian Fry
5. Rory Ingham

Tenor Sax

1. Alex Garnett
2. Karen Sharp
3. Robert Fowler
4. Art Themen
5. Brandon Allen

Double Bass

1. Alec Dankworth
2. Dave Green
3. Jeremy Brown
4. Simon Thorpe
5. Len Skeat

Miscellaneous Instrument

1. Ross Stanley (Organ)
2. Jim Hart (Vibraphone)
3. Alan Barnes (Baritone Saxophone)
4. Karen Sharp (Baritone Saxophone)
5. Amy Roberts (Flute)

Clarinet

1. Alan Barnes
2. Pete Long
3. Julian Marc Stringle
4. Mark Crooks
5. Iain Dixon

Piano

1. Jason Rebello
2. Dave Newton
3. Zoe Rahman
4. Gareth Williams
5. Craig Milverton

Drums

1. Clark Tracey
2. Winston Clifford
3. Steve Brown
4. Matt Home
5. Ed Richardson

Rising Star

1. Alexander Bone (Saxophones)
2. Alexandra Ridout (Trumpet)
3. Rory Ingham (Trombone)
4. Ed Richardson (Drums)
5. Jack Cotterill (Drums)

Small Group

1. Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen
2. Tipitina
3. Brandon Allen Six
4. Brownfield-Byrne Quintet
5. Nigel Price Organ Trio

Big Band

1. Echoes of Ellington
2. Back to Basie
3. Beats & Pieces
4. Jim Rattigan's Pavillon
5. Gareth Lockrane Big Band

Best New CD

1. Edition Records: 'Held' - Jason Rebello
2. Trio Records: 'A New Start' - Pete Hurt Jazz Orchestra
3. Manushi Records: 'Dreamland' - Zoe Rahman
4. ASC Records: 'Paris' - Mike Westbrook
5. Jazzziti Records: 'You've Got To Dig It To Dig It, You Dig?' - Derek Nash

Best Re-Issue CD

1. Savage Solweig Records: 'Split Kick - Live In Sweden 1972' - Tubby Hayes
2. Lake Records: 'Barber Back In Berlin' - Chris Barber's Jazz Band with Otilie Patterson
3. Lake Records: 'Remembering Pat Halcox' - Chris Barber, Alex Welsh and full supporting cast
4. Gearbox Records: 'Tippin' - The Jazz Couriers Live In Morecambe 1959'
5. Acrobat Records: 'The Tempo Anthology' - Various Artists

Services to British Jazz Simon Spillett

One of the major strengths of the British Jazz Awards is that they reward the consistently excellent rather than the merely fashionable. The nomination panel is made up of people who have a real involvement in the music and the votes cast express enthusiasm for a wide range of jazz styles – all without generational bias in either direction. It's good to find Rory Ingham sharing the Trombone

listings with Mark Nightingale, Laura Jurd placing 3rd behind Enrico Tomasso in the Trumpet ratings and Alexander Bone and Alan Barnes figuring together in the Alto Sax ratings. Now and again a category is dominated by established stars. The Vocals listings could have been the same 10 years ago, but, given the continuing quality of the five singers, that seems fair enough. The real mystery of the Vocals

category is, over the years, how few male singers get nominated or voted for – Jamie Cullum, anyone?

There are some predictable victories. Mark Nightingale seems to have claimed as his the territory that Roy Williams ruled for years and the only problem with Alan Barnes is working out which of three categories he will win and which he will just miss out on. Incidentally, among quite a

few tight contests, the Alto Sax category was the tightest. However, it's a pleasure to welcome some first-time winners such as Ross Stanley (breaking the monopoly of baritone sax and vibes in the Miscellaneous section) and Nigel Price, obviously owing their position to the high profile of Nigel's Organ Trio. And special congratulations to Jason Rebello for his double success in Piano and New CD.

SIMON SPILLETT – SERVICES TO BRITISH JAZZ

In his early 40s Simon might be considered a touch on the young side to receive the award for Services to Jazz, but throughout his professional career of more than 20 years Simon's involvement in jazz has always gone way beyond his own playing. With a father who, as a semi-pro musician, played with the likes of Tony Coe, Jimmy Skidmore and Lol Coxhill, he was exposed to the best of jazz saxophone from an early age. He studied with the great clarinetist/tenor saxist Vic Ash before turning professional and since then has worked with such units as the Ronnie Scott's Big Band and Pete Long's Jazz at the Phil as well as leading his own outstanding quartet, currently made up of John Critchinson, Alec Dankworth and Clark Tracey.

It is perhaps surprising that such an exciting and technically accomplished player didn't figure in this year's Tenor Sax listings, but that can be explained by the quality of the field – Simon is far from the only wonderful saxophonist to miss out! However, Simon has a part in one of the poll winners: the Tubby Hayes CD, *Split Kick*. Simon's playing has often been compared to Tubby's and he has

been at the forefront of the many products and tributes that have followed on what would have been Tubby's 80th birthday last year. Most notably he produced an acclaimed biography, *The Long Shadow of the Little Giant*, the result of meticulous and detailed research and incomparable appreciation of the man and his music. Simon's qualities as a writer, well known to *Jazz Rag* readers, first became apparent in his contribution to his mentor Vic Ash's autobiography, *I Blew it My Way*.

Simon's part in what has seemed to be the Year of Tubby Hayes is limitless, from his key participation in the film documentary, *A Man in a Hurry*, to many live presentations, to innumerable definitive liner notes – including, of course, *Split Kick*. It is no doubt in part because of his role as an authority on the man who is considered by some as the greatest British jazzman that Simon was honoured two months ago by being appointed one of a distinguished list of Patrons of Jazz Centre UK.

Simon Spillett



Photo by Merlin Daleman

Soweto Kinch



NOMINATION PANEL

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Bill Trythall | Beaconville Music |
| Chris Hodgkins | Jazz London Radio |
| Cole Mathieson | The Concorde Club |
| David Nathan | National Jazz Archive |
| Denny Ilett | Bristol International Jazz & Blues Festival |
| Fred Lindop | Swanage Jazz Festival |
| Geoff Matthews | Southport Melodic Jazz |
| John Billett | JBGB Events |
| Mike Gordon | Scarborough Jazz |
| Peter Vacher | Jazz Writer |
| Roger Cotterrell | Jazz Writer |
| Ron Simpson | Jazz Rag |
| Tim Saul | Bute Jazz Festival |
| Tony Augarde | Jazz Writer |

70 PLUS!

RON SIMPSON talks to **STEVE GADD** about *Way Back Home*, the CD/DVD of the concert in Rochester, NY, to celebrate his 70th birthday.

Though the actual title is taken from a tune by Jazz Crusader Wilton Felder, Steve Gadd's live album on BFM Jazz just had to be called *Way Back Home*. A celebration of his 70th birthday some two months previously, the concert at the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival in June 2015 was very much a homecoming. Born just outside Rochester in upstate New York, Gadd returned as a young man after two years at the Manhattan School of Music to study at the city's renowned Eastman School of Music.

As he says, 'Rochester was good to me', the place where his father took him to the local jazz clubs which in the 1950s meant the chance to hear the likes of Dizzy Gillespie and Art Blakey at close range and, even, reputedly, sit in with Dizzy at the age of 11. Though the DVD of the concert concentrates on the onstage performers, the warmth of the audience reception is evident, as is Gadd's emotional response to what he calls 'the best night of my life'. When I spoke with him on November 9th, Steve took a break from worrying about the Presidential election to tell me:

'It was a really special day for me, to go back and play in the Eastman Concert Hall. I went to school there, so I played a lot of different concerts in that hall, maybe once a month when I was a student. Over the years it has a lot of history for me, doing big shows there. It's where Chuck Mangione recorded *Friends in Love and Together* live. I did concerts there with David Sanborn and Bob James and an orchestral thing with James Taylor. But this was the first time I'd ever played there with a band of my own, so it was a very special thing, a very personal thing.'

Bands of his own have, in fact, figured less in the career of Steve Gadd than one might have expected. This is the drummer whose originality and perfectionism prompted Phil Collins' variant on an old gag: 'How many drummers does it take to change a light bulb?' 'Ten. And another ten to talk about how Steve Gadd would have done it.' His CV is full of top jazz names – Paul Desmond, Chet Baker, Chick Corea, Al Jarreau, Michel Petrucciani – as well as everyone else you could think of from Frank Sinatra to Aretha

Franklin, from Joe Cocker to Barbra Streisand. Yet, if you look for recordings under his own name, they're few enough: a handful by the Gadd Gang in the 1980s and now this new band over the last three years. The problem with asking Steve Gadd about it is that he describes everything as 'fun', says he loves doing it – probably the reason why his music still sounds so fresh in his 70s – but it leaves me guessing at his career path:

'Most of my career I've worked as a sideman and I've loved having the opportunity to work with great performers in different styles. I've always liked different kinds of music – they help me grow as a musician. I had a 20-year freelance recording career in New York City and it was great to play with people I had grown up listening to. I would get called in to play with all sorts of people and that was very exciting. I treated everything as being special; whether I knew the guy or it was someone I'd never heard of, I would give it all I had.'

Quite possibly Steve Gadd is one of Nature's diplomats – I rather suspect his enthusiasm is genuine – but ask him about his years

freelancing in the New York studios and he just tells you how great it has been to work with Paul Simon, James Taylor and Eric Clapton. Famously Paul Simon's *50 Ways to Leave Your Lover* contains some of his most distinctive drum work outside the jazz field. Steely Dan's *Aja* is another recording that bears the unmistakable Gadd imprint.

Steve Gadd cites Chick Corea as another musician he loves working with. He has just completed a week with him at the Blue Note in New York, part of a two-month Corea season at the club, featuring different groups and revisiting landmarks in Corea's life in jazz. Steve had joined Chick and Eddie Gomez in a return to their 1980s collaboration.

When he looks back to his early influences, the broad-mindedness of Steve Gadd's approach to music is already apparent. An uncle who was a drummer gave him drum-sticks with which he used to play along to recordings of John Philip Sousa marches. In teenage years, he was highly involved in playing with a drum corps. As he explained to friend and fellow-drummer Rick Marotta in an interview included with *Way Back Home*, they were so serious about drumming that they wrote out their parts themselves, never went anywhere without drum-sticks in their pockets and practised rhythms on the soles of their shoes while watching television. Predictably, Steve's response to my question about the drum corps was to tell me what fun it was! Listeners who savour a kind of military precision in some of Steve's mature drumming (as on *50 Ways* or his solo on the Rochester encore, *Them Changes*) can thank John Philip Sousa and the drum corps for that!

But the main influences on him in his youth were the great jazz drummers. Again his enthusiasm cuts across styles. The big band drummers come first – 'I loved Gene Krupa!' were his first words, followed by Jo Jones and

Buddy Rich. With Rick Marotta he also cited Louie Bellson who had a brief, but spectacular, career with Duke Ellington before becoming a notably subtle member of the Oscar Peterson Trio. Then he lists Max Roach, Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, Elvin Jones, Jimmy Cobb and – clearly a later influence – his contemporary Tony Williams. The Marotta interview came up with another contemporary, Jack DeJohnette. Perhaps 'influence' is the wrong word to use for the effect these drummers had on Steve Gadd's playing. As he explains, he liked – and still likes – to study different drummers to figure out what they're doing! A direct influence is much harder to find.

Having spent much of his career in the recording studio working his magic on other people's recordings, what brings Steve Gadd to playing concerts with his own jazz/funk quintet? His key phrase is, 'There were opportunities, I gradually eased into leading', again suggesting no master plan was in operation. In fact Steve gives the credit for the original idea to his wife and the wife of trumpeter Walt Fowler.

In recent years Steve has been touring with James Taylor who adds horns and percussion as required, plus four backing singers, but the band is anchored by a rhythm section of Larry Goldings (keyboards), Jimmy Johnson (bass), Michael Landau (guitar) and Steve Gadd (drums). Walt Fowler is another regular with James Taylor and his wife got together with Carol Gadd to suggest that the five should do a project on their own. Two CDs followed: *Gadditude* (2013) and *70 Strong* (2015), with the Rochester live CD/DVD using material from both.

Steve clearly values the independent personalities of these four experienced and versatile musicians. The band plays plenty of originals, but not Steve Gadd originals. The 12 tracks on the Rochester DVD include two each by Michael Landau and Larry Goldings, one each by Walt Fowler and Jimmy Johnson, one cooked up by the whole band in the studio on the *Gadditude* session, but none by the leader. In performance, though the drummer clearly sets the tone, all have extended opportunities to express

themselves. It's very much a band where all know and trust each other.

The Steve Gadd Band has now taken to the road with a vengeance. In London for the 2015 EFG London Jazz Festival, they returned to play Ronnie Scott's in October this year, with Kevin Hays taking over from Larry Goldings. It was, says Steve, 'a lot of fun' – we might have guessed! At the end of November they were taking off for a tour of Japan and Australia – 'and some other places', adds Steve insouciantly. He's looking forward to returning to London – he hopes next year – and also has plans for another studio CD, with fresh original material.

It's good to find Steve Gadd headlining and selling out concerts under his own name rather than being the unnamed star of so many recordings, the guy of whom more knowledgeable radio presenters say, with a modicum of awe in their voices, 'That's Steve Gadd!'

STEVE GADD'S DRUMMING 1st XI

Art Blakey

Buddy Rich

Elvin Jones

Gene Krupa

Jack DeJohnette

Jimmy Cobb

Jo Jones

Louie Bellson

Max Roach

Philly Joe Jones

Tony Williams



STEVE GADD 70th COLLECTION
from VIC.

Featuring updated designs created in collaboration with Steve, and for a limited time with the commemorative Steve Gadd 70th birthday logo.

Check out details at www.vicfirth.com/Gad70th.

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STEVE GADD BAND

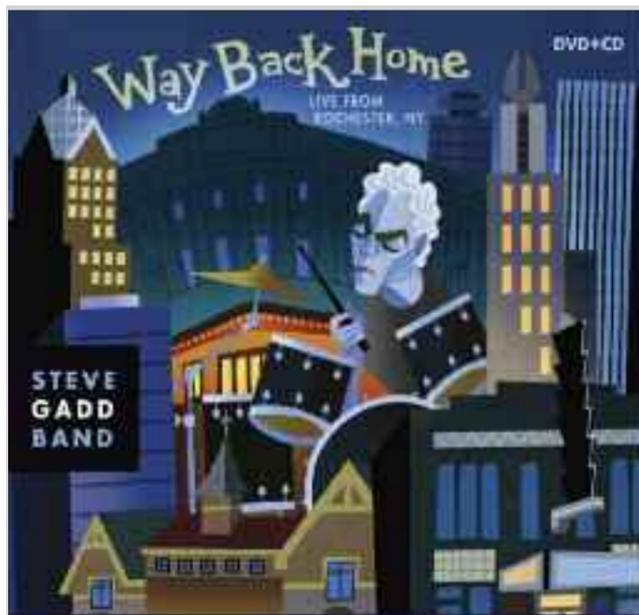
WAY BACK HOME

BFM Jazz 302 062 435 2: 68.00 + 2 DVDs

Way Back Home records the 70th birthday concert of the Steve Gadd Band at the great drummer's alma mater, the Eastman College of Music, during the 2015 Rochester Jazz Festival. Most of the material has already appeared on the band's most recent CDs, *70 Strong* and *Gadditude*, but the warmth of the homecoming inspires the performance and there is a double bonus of two DVDs with the CD. The DVD of the concert runs to four extra tracks, 12 as against eight, and is filmed straightforwardly, concentrating on the stage rather than atmosphere shots, and bringing a range of angles to bear on Gadd's drumming. The other DVD features a relaxed, amiably rambling interview with Gadd by Rick Marotta, plus shorter interviews with friends and family.

Gadd has surrounded himself with seasoned musicians who can turn their hands to most things and the result is full of mature assurance, always accessible, but never predictable. *Green Foam* (an original by the whole band, apparently) settles into a funk groove with Larry Goldings on organ to the fore before suddenly changing gear and tempo with Michael Landau's bluesy guitar. Goldings' own composition *Cavaliero* starts out as a guitar-led ballad, but rises to a powerful climax, Goldings again prominent. The only standard, *Bye Bye Blackbird*, begins with Gadd's brushes and Goldings' wittily sparse hints at the melody before Jimmy Johnson's bass, Landau's guitar and Walt Fowler's muted trumpet take the lead in turn. Gadd's precise, incisive drumming is at the core of the performance, though he doesn't hog the solo spotlight, though the rousing encore, *Them Changes*, culminates in a trademark Gadd solo, all dynamic control and military precision.

RON SIMPSON



STEVE GADD BAND
Way Back Home
Live From Rochester, NY

The Steve Gadd Band, led by the iconic drummer celebrated his 70th birthday in his hometown of Rochester, NY during the 2015 Rochester International Jazz Festival. The concert held at Eastman Theatre, Gadd's alma mater, sold out in a matter of days as the city of Rochester paid tribute to their prodigal son.

'Way Back Home: Live From Rochester, NY' is a CD/2DVD release that captures this very special concert, as well as exclusive interviews with Gadd and of family and friends including musical luminaries such as Chuck Mangione and Tony Levin. The CD includes songs from Steve Gadd Band's previous two albums "Gadditude" and "70 Strong" as well as other great tunes.

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RAY CHARLES

THE ATLANTIC YEARS – IN MONO

Rhino Records: box set of 7 vinyl long playing records

This extremely impressive box set of seven 12 inch vinyl long-players is a reminder, should we need one, of the enigma that was Ray Charles. That he was a formidable jazz piano player, also saxophonist and arranger can so easily slip the mind when faced with the blues-soaked singing style that trade-marked the countless magnificent recordings that propelled him to worldwide fame. But Ray Charles was a jazz piano-player long before he signed to Ahmet Ertegun and Jerry Wexler's Atlantic Records where he recorded classic sides that changed the face of popular music.

The Atlantic Years comes with a 30 page informative art book and each LP has its original sleeve and the appropriate original label. It is worth noting that the 2016 version is pressed on superior vinyl and the sleeves are printed on heavier card.

The first long-player is *The Great Ray Charles*, issued in the summer of 1957. Ray had signed to Atlantic as a 21 year old in 1952, fresh off the Seattle and Los Angeles club circuits where he had been plying his trade as a Charles Brown soundalike. His breakthrough was not immediate, he was to spend the next few years recording a series of 45s in Atlantic's mid-Manhattan somewhat primitive studio, fortunately with a recording engineer genius, Tom Dowd.

This first specific album featured



Ray, piano-player and band leader, performing a set of instrumentals arranged by his close Seattle pal Quincy Jones, Ernie Wilkins and himself. Ray, sightless from the age of 7, used a Braille system of musical notation to compose and arrange. The band was by and large his regular outfit with David 'Fathead' Newman contributing fine solos on alto and tenor in a classic small band swing style, with a nod to Count Basie who was admired by both Ray and Quincy. Also included are both sides of a 45 rpm extended play release featuring Horace Silver's *Doodlin'* and Ray's *Sweet Sixteen Bars*, reminiscent of Henry Glover's *Drown In My Own Tears*.

It's more familiar territory with *Ray Charles* [LP2] which features singles released between 1952 and 1959. Ray was in full Charles Brown mode on *Funny (But I Still Love You)*, there's a tough version of Lowell Fulson's *Sinner's Prayer* and heart-stopping *Drown In My Own Tears*, Ray's first two major crossover hits, *I Got A Woman* and *Hallelujah I Love Her So* as well as *Mess Around*, *Greenbacks* and other tremendous Brother Ray classics.

Yes Indeed [LP3] presents the 45 rpm releases which went a long way to consolidating Ray's reputation as the most soulful, most strikingly original singer of his generation. The 14 tracks feature Ray, his band, The Raylettes and Fathead Newman in a joyous romp through familiar territory that clearly demonstrates that this must have been one of the most exciting live bands of all time. A particular gem is Ray's take on a song usually associated with Jimmy Rushing, *I Want A Little Girl*, which Ray delivers as if it was his own.

The Genius of Ray Charles [LP4], considered by label boss Jerry Wexler as 'unquestionably the most magnificent record he made at Atlantic, finds Ray with a previously unheard-of budget to hire jazz musicians, strings and the best arrangers. Side one was the swinger with sidemen drawn from the bands of Count Basie and Duke Ellington – Clark Terry, Joe Newman, Snooky Young, Al Grey, Paul Gonsalves, Zoot Sims and more – while side two was



devoted to ballads backed by strings. Magnificent stuff.

What'd I Say is LP5. In 1959 Ray's career hit a peak with the single *What'd I Say*, reputedly his career best-seller, though he always claimed that he had thrown it together in 15 minutes to fill out an incomplete live set. The same year, Atlantic recorded and released this album in order to cash in on the success of the single. The repertoire is classic Ray Charles, with everyone clearly having a ball, just about as good as it gets. Raylette Mary Ann Fisher gets an interesting solo vocal outing on Ray's *What Kind of Man Are You* – not a regular occurrence in a Ray Charles show.

The Genius After hours [LP6] was released in 1961 when Ray Charles was enjoying considerable success on ABC Records, having switched allegiance from Atlantic. Keen to keep attention focussed on their Ray Charles catalogue and to exploit earlier unreleased recordings, Atlantic revisited their tape store and came up with some gems. The cuts are taken from the same sessions that produced *The Great Ray Charles* album, making this the second instrumental jazz collection. It's a fine loosely swinging affair defined by the delicious opener *The Genius After Hours* which perfectly captures that midnight mood, again with a distinct nod towards Basie. This was obviously not a difficult session to record, given the presence of such

musicians, and therein lies its charm.

The last LP of this tremendous set, *The Genius Sings The Blues* [LP7], the result of another raid on the Atlantic vaults, is a collection of 12 unreleased blues sides which is just spectacular. Charles Brown, Ray's early guiding light, is seemingly with him every step of the way on these uncluttered, pared down recordings that leave that magnificent voice and piano playing totally exposed. In some ways, this is the most durable long-player of the set. Standouts are *The Right Time* with (probably) Mary Ann Fisher sounding for all the world like Sugar Pie deSanto and Ray's favourite of all the blues he cut for Atlantic, *I Believe to My Soul*. But when the dust has settled, it's Ray on his own, singing and playing a straightforward blues – *Some Day Baby* – that is most memorable.

This is a tremendous production. Every one of these albums deserves a place on the shelf of any serious lover of 20th Century popular music. To be gathered together in such a tremendous and splendidly-presented package makes them well nigh irresistible.

Blues singing, gospel influenced, jazz pianist Ray Charles.

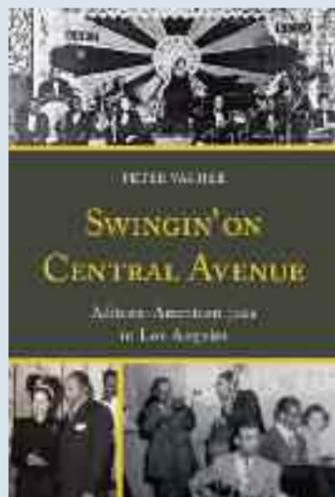
The Genius?

Undoubtedly.

JIM SIMPSON

AWARD FOR PETER VACHER

We are delighted to report that Peter Vacher, whose many contributions to the jazz scene include reviewing for *Jazz Rag*, has been honoured in the USA by the Best History Award in the Historical Research in Recorded Jazz category of the ARSC awards for his book, *Swingin' on Central Avenue*, published by Rowman and Littlefield, and described in *Jazz Rag* as a 'crusade to rescue a generation of West Coast African Americans from obscurity'. Peter's historical study of (often little known) black jazzmen on America's West Coast has received praise from many quarters, the prestigious *Downbeat* magazine describing it as 'as rich in personal experience as it is broad in range.'





Don Rendell

VARIOUS ARTISTS

SOHO SCENE 62: JAZZ GOES MOD

Rhythm and Blues Records
RANDB035 2 CDs 74:20/79:49

Tapping into the Mod/Jazz tryst flagged up in the recent Tubby Hayes documentary, *A Man In A Hurry*, this neat double-CD compilation takes a two-sided look at the kind of records that might have ignited both Dansettes and dance-floors for the hipper jazz fan in the days of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The first disc collates well-known work by many of the leading British jazz stars of the day (Scott, Deuchar, Hayes) with some genuine rarities which haven't seen the light of day since being issued as 45's (among them Bill McGuffie 'doing a Brubeck' and Al Fairweather's take on Mingus). There are also three tracks lifted from broadcasts by the Don Rendell and Joe Harriott quintets, the former showcasing a pre-R&B Graham Bond in incendiary form.

Disc Two offers 20 tracks covering similar stylistic ground taped across the pond. The emphasis is again on what might be called – with no condescension whatsoever – party jazz; music as much for the feet as the ears. Once again, there are rare singles (Kenny Burrell's *Out of The World* and Larry Frazier's Impulse! coupling of *Before Six/After Six* the stand outs) and album tracks lifted from the finest jazz imprints of the day (Riverside, Prestige, Blue Note, Pacific Jazz etc.). One highlight is Lee Morgan's *Raggety Ann*, a track showing the trumpeter's bent for infectious grooves didn't just start with *The Sidewinder*. Indeed, if you want a useful - and truly

playable - sampler showing how modern jazz captured public attention before it embraced the eight-beat then look no further. And hats off to compiler Nick Duckett for his fine track choices. Very recommended.

SIMON SPILLETT

VARIOUS ARTISTS

4 CLASSIC CHRISTMAS ALBUMS PLUS

Avid AMSC 1220 63.48/77.56

I've tended in the past to avoid Christmas albums like the plague but hey, here's a double Avid special with a mess of tracks by Ella, Peggy Lee, Charles Brown, Stan Kenton and Sidney Bechet. Perhaps it's something in the American psyche, the inclination towards overt sentimentality that seems to imbue many of their celebrations or maybe it's just the chance to make a buck, but there's always been plenty of albums like these on the US market.

In fact, if you can distance yourself from the cringe-making aspects of many of the song choices, Ella sings faultlessly. Even if the material is trite, the orchestral settings are often quite lovely, with the cream of Hollywood session men on hand. Much the same goes for Peggy Lee and it's interesting, for instance, to compare their respective approaches to something like *White Christmas*. Blues man Charles Brown takes a slightly more jaundiced view, as on *Christmas With No One To Love*, although an entire album devoted to his mannered style can be wearing even if his backing combo swings nicely. It's fascinating to think of Kenton as the interpreter of popular carols and such old-time favourites as

The Twelve Days of Christmas but they're all here, nicely arranged and impeccably played. Give me Bechet any day, with the ripe-sounding trombonist Claude Gousset and the clumsy-sounding organist Jean-Claude Pelletier alongside on such as his own *Blues Du Papa Noel* and yes, *White Christmas* yet again

PETER VACHER

KEITH JARRETT

A MULTITUDE OF ANGELS

ECM 2500-03 570 2466 4
CDs 70:39/77:13/73:59/75:20

A musician whose CV runs from Miles Davis to Mozart, Art Blakey to Bach and Charles Lloyd to Shostakovich has to have something a bit special. These four discs, recorded live in 1996, attest to Jarrett's exceptional and unique improvisational talent as a pianist. He has a formidable technique, drawing a clear, beautiful tone from his instrument, sometimes gentle and caressing, at others sharp and percussive. His musical approach is difficult to categorize. It is not overtly jazz, although that discipline is ever-present in his phrasing and chord voicings, and at times there's a folksy, down-home feel that reminds me of Guiffre's *The Train And The River*. But there are so many other facets in these performances: passages of near-minimalism are juxtaposed with complex counterpoint, while hints of gospel and blues co-exist with Indian and Oriental textures, and there are shades of Delius, Bartok, even Messiaen.

These performances are pure extemporisation. Each piece lasts in excess of 30 minutes and begins with a motif which metamorphoses into a series of stream-of-consciousness episodes running the gamut of his technical and emotional vocabulary. However, there is no formal shape to the music, which rises and falls as the muse takes him. And, although the delivery is often rhythmical, there is a mesmeric stillness heightened by the pianist's frequent use of pedal notes, producing a drone effect, and all-pervading left-hand ostinatos.

Jarrett has given no titles, merely labelling each performance Part 1 and Part 2. I think *Meditations* would be a suitable appellation.

HUGH LEDIGO

OMAR PUENTE

BEST FOOT FORWARD

OP Records OPCD200553
58:00

Best Foot Forward is Omar Puente's second album and the first since the untimely death of his wife Debbie Purdy. Recorded with some of the best musicians and educators on the Yorkshire jazz scene, with nine tracks, all composed by Puente, the CD is one of optimism and unalloyed joy in the making of the music. Puente refers to the multi-various rhythmic influences – Cuban, Latin, African, Caribbean and the 'modern UK sound'. It can be said that this is a fair summary of the music heard on the recording on Puente's own label, OP Records.

Producer Al MacSween plays piano, keyboards and organ, Dennis Rollins, a high profile graduate of Doncaster's successful jazz education conveyor belt appears, and it comes as no surprise that Puente has called upon several exponents of world rhythms including the percussionists Oscar Martinez, Flavio Correa and Michel Castellanos to ensure the sound is as required. Guest musicians contribute to the uplifting, collective sound, including the trumpeter Byron Wallen and Denys Baptiste playing baritone saxophone on this session.

Puente's electric violin is heard loud and clear amidst the pulsating rhythms. The opening track - *Danza De Los Spiritus* - indicates the direction the CD will take stopping off along the way to witness *Morning in Morocco*, and *Yes Man Why Not* suggests Puente works as a collaborator. Omar Puente has produced a most enjoyable album.

RUSSELL CORBETT

KEN COLYER

PLAYS COLYER'S PLEASURE

Lake Records LACD 350 69:54

New Orleans music was for parades, functions, dances. Yet some musicians achieved high acclaim – even became legends. Now history is repeating itself, if in a more parochial sense. Colyer was not the only, nor the first perpetrator of this early re-creation of an even earlier music but, for the fervent devotee, he has become something of a cult figure – a doyen of the diehards.

The music on this disc is probably as near as you will get to the misty turn-of-the-century sounds of a hundred and fifty years ago. It was the trumpeter's avowed intention to capture 'that functional warmth, that New Orleans bounce' and there is certainly a cosy reassurance to these renditions: no blatant dissonances or complexities to disturb the ear, no dramatic dynamic excursions to trouble the emotions. Just a steady – almost hypnotic – rhythmic pulse underlying the simple contrapuntal textures of an essentially free ensemble style applied to some (to the initiated) time-honoured tunes.

There are rags such as *That Teasin' Rag*, blues (*Highway Blues*), popular songs (*You Always Hurt The One You Love*) and New Orleans standard repertoire including *Mahogany Hall Stomp* and *Gettysburg March*.

There is, of course, no profound originality or message in Colyer's music. How could there be? But it is all delivered with happy predictability and sincerity. Music for dancing, surely. So, wind up the gramophone and push back the furniture.

HUGH LEDIGO

BETTY ST. CLAIRE

COMPLETE JUBILEE & SEECO RECORDINGS

Fresh Sound FSR-CD909 74:39

How many past American lady singers did I not hear on record before? This is another one. The two 12-track LPs presented here

illustrate the difference four years can make to a young would-be jazz performer. In 1955 when she was 28, Betty St. Claire evidently wanted to show how jazzy she was by rephrasing her songs' lyrics, often quite ingeniously, but applying this to every line was overdoing it. Also, apart from this style tending to irritate, I find her vocal tones to be grating on the ear at times. Her six ballads are the most palatable, imbued with feeling as they are, with a lot of out-of-tempo sequences. Her backing septet and quartet contain some outstanding players, such as Hal McKusick on clarinet and alto, Billy Byers on trombone and arranging, and guitarists Jimmy Raney and Barry Galbraith.

By the time she recorded again, at 32 in 1959, she had clearly learned to economise with her too-clever phrasing, and her overall sound had changed for the better, with less intensity on the up tracks, a contrasting softness for the ballads, and individual interpretations of some strong standards. Using a swinging quartet throughout helps things along too. Pianist Stan Free is fine but unknown to me. Guitarist Mundell Lowe, bassist George Duvivier and drummer Ed Shaughnessy, though, have been much-heard, and are well-remembered by me for giving me superb interviews. Likewise the aforementioned Jimmy Raney.

LES TOMKINS

WES MONTGOMERY

MONTGOMERYLAND

Poll Winners Records PWR
27357 76:39

This re-release comes with the addition of six re-edited tracks for horns and strings with overdubbing supervised by Gerald Wilson at a later date. The album therefore has three distinct elements: Montgomery working with tenor saxophonist Harold Land, then with altoist Pony Poindexter, and, as indicated, arrangements for the larger ensemble. It is the two quintet sessions that are of particular interest, in other words, the original release of *Montgomeryland*.

Wes Montgomery's star was in the ascendant at the time of the two recording sessions in April 1958 and October 1959. For those of us not around at the time it must have been a revelatory experience to hear Montgomery working without a pick, playing octaves, and developing a sound of his own. Working with his brothers Buddy, piano and Monk, bass, presumably encouraged Wes to relax in the company of Land and Poindexter. An album for fans of jazz guitar, Land's tenor playing on *Montgomeryland* shouldn't be overlooked nor the fine alto work of Poindexter.

Gerald Wilson's later involvement in dubbing horns and strings will be of interest to the jazz student and this Poll Winners' CD is available for the purpose of academic research, or, quite simply, to be enjoyed.

RUSSELL CORBETT

AUDREY MORRIS

THE VOICE OF BISTRO BALLADS

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 901 64:53

If you walked into any smart Chicago club in the 1950's, ten to one you would have encountered the distinctive tones of Audrey Morris. She was one of that city's favourite chanteuses and her territory was the supper clubs and bistros and cabaret rooms, now, sadly and largely, long gone.

Bistro Ballads was her first introduction to recording in 1955 and for this she elected for an intimate setting with just bass and drums augmenting her own piano. She chose a repertoire of fairly untarnished ballads. She is a singer in love with the lyrics so

she lives the stories and here words are crystal clear. She has a warm, pure and unaffected voice on the right side of longing.

She treats *Good Morning, Heartache*, a song generally acknowledged as owned by Billie Holiday, with such tender attention that it stands as an acceptable alternative to Billie's, and she has fun with Gershwin's forgotten ode, *Blah, Blah, Blah*.

Fresh Sound have added a second album recorded one year later with Marty Paich doing the arranging honours for a six piece group which includes West Coast trumpeter Stu Williamson, again featuring some more lost songs such as Noel Coward's *If Love Were All* and Cole Porter's *You Imitate Me So*.

Audrey Morris represents an era when good songs and good singers were prized. The time when the saloon singers such as Sinatra and Bennett were in the ascendant.

A recent hearing of the singer on YouTube discloses that, after fifty years of consistently excellent work, she is now following in the musical steps of the legendary Mabel Mercer as a teller of stories.

JOHN MARTIN

CLARK TERRY – BOB WILBER

BLOWIN' THE BLUES AWAY – LEGENDARY SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

Phono 870257 74:43

Any session involving Clark Terry is guaranteed to be a delight and this is no exception. The CD notes tell us that this release



Ken Colyer



Clark Terry

brings together the most important among the very few recordings Terry made with reedman Bob Wilber.

I was aware of Wilber's work with Kenny Davern in the 1970's with Soprano Summit but alongside soprano saxophone and clarinet, I was surprised to find that he also played tenor sax. Terry will be familiar to readers but perhaps not so Wilber. During the 1950's and 1960's he worked with Bobby Hackett, Benny Goodman and Sydney Bechet. He was also an original member of the modestly titled World's Greatest Jazz Band. Although an American, Wilber moved to Chipping Campden in the Cotswolds.

Blowin' The Blues Away was originally released under Wilber's name and was recorded in 1960. The frontmen are supported by Dick Wellstood on piano, George Duvivier on bass and Panama Francis behind the drums. Here we are offered nine facets of the blues. *After Midnight* is a relaxed Bob Wilber tune. Terry bursts into life with a solo full of fire. The clarinetist follows in a more urbane fashion, as does Wellstood. Terry sings on *Soulful Serenade*.

A further nine tracks from 1965 focus on the music of Billy Strayhorn and feature him on piano with Wendell Marshall, bass, and Dave Bailey drums. Duke Ellington is featured on one track, Ozzie Bailey sings on one track and Willie Ruff plays French horn on five numbers.

The Strayhorn small group material is wonderful. UMMG features Wilber on his more customary soprano. Along with the Strayhorn favourites we get

the likes of *Smada, Pick Side* and *Oink*.

The original liner notes are included together with additional background notes from Marcel James.

ALAN MUSSON

JOHNNY HODGES/ WILD BILL DAVIS

JOE'S BLUES

Phono 870262 73:11

If you're looking for totally happy jazz, you will find it in the many small group sessions over the years that featured the sumptuous alto of Johnny Hodges, away from his customary Duke Ellington band environment. These are 13 tracks he recorded in 1965, teamed with organ ace Wild Bill Davis. Another distinctive sound heard here is the mellifluous trombone of Hodges' fellow-Ellingtonian Lawrence Brown.

The material given vibrant life by two seven-pieces carries the Hodges name in six instances, two by him only, two with Wild Bill, one with Duke and one with Mercer Ellington. The accent essentially is on the blues, but there are other inspiring items. All are performed with marvellous communal spirit, with the Davis drive enhanced by the presence of the great Grant Green guitar. The group cohesion is matched by the virility and grace of the solos. My pleasure in the joyful swinging is augmented by five examples of that lush ballad playing our man was renowned for. Nobody has rhapsodised as eloquently as Hodges. Lawrence Brown, was also a giant in this department.

Three 'bonus' end tracks seem to suffer slightly from the replacement of Davis with pianist Hank Jones, although a calypso-styled Ellington theme lifts proceedings very well.

LEST TOMKINS

THELONIOUS MONK

LIVE IN PARIS 16 AVRIL 1961

Fremaux & Associates FA 5653
2 CDs 57:28/60:34

There were a couple of Riverside LPs taped on the same 1961 tour as this recording, Monk's first overseas visit since the early 1950s, both of which got themselves dismissed as 'contract fillers' in *The Penguin Guide to Jazz Recordings*. Happily, this beautiful sounding – and artfully packaged – double CD, recorded at the Olympia Theatre, is far more engaging. Monk is captured on the cusp of his period of greatest commercial success (he signed to Columbia the same year), and his quartet with regular sideman Charlie Rouse still sounds fresh and committed. Indeed, there is none of the torpor that occasionally marred the band's later work. Any of the seventeen tracks on this hugely atmospheric set could serve to illustrate this, but to pick just one, listen to *Rhythm-A-Ning* on which Rouse is flung from the starting gate and into a lengthy improvisation that makes nonsense of his low ranking by certain critics! His solo on *Monk's Mood* – a world away from the composers earlier version with Coltrane – may also make some think again.

Monk himself appears to delight in playing with his attentive Parisian crowd, cheekily offering a topical if brief *April in Paris*, and returning to the stage at the end of the second house for a surprisingly hard-swinging *Body and Soul*.

If, as Eric Dolphy once maintained, you had to see Monk to hear him, then I'm certain that those cheers that go up behind Rouse during the opening *Evidence* must be for the famed Thelonious on-stage dance. Whatever prompted them, they confirm that this is far from being 'just another live Monk date'. In fact, I'd argue that this release

outstrips many a better-known T.M. album.

SIMON SPILLETT

THE EARL HINES ALL STARS

'LIVE' AT CLUB
HANGOVER 1957

Acrobat ADDCD3174
70.23/69.51

The critics have often been snuffy about Hines' decision to cut back from his big band and small group swing style and to commit himself to playing Dixieland from the mid-1950s through to the early 1960s, most notably at Club Hangover in San Francisco. Various albums were issued during that time, often with interesting personnel, usually including the New Orleans pioneer Pops Foster on bass and the veteran Morton sideman clarinetist Darnell Howard, as here on these five complete radio broadcasts from April-May 1957.

The club atmosphere is lively, Earl does all the introductions and the band is away with *Who's Sorry Now*, Muggsy Spanier's punchy trumpet lead to the fore, the rhythm handled by Foster and the fine drummer Earl Watkins. Howard solos with verve, his tone verging on the cheesy at times, Spanier and trombonist Jimmy Archey riffing in support. The ensemble push is admirable with Hines steady at the helm, before Archey plays his bouncy variations and Hines then solos with all his customary intelligence and flash. There's nothing too routine or tired here, just great players earning a crust and having a ball while doing it. The crowds obviously loved it, too. Even if the tunes are mostly familiar and the performances short-ish, the tempos sometimes over-fast as on the dreaded *Tiger Rag*, it's their treatment that counts and Hines, the born entertainer, in particular, never lets up, this epitomised by his exciting workout on *Boogie Woogie on St Louis Blues*. Great, as well, to hear Spanier reprising his Ragtimers recording of *Relaxing at the Touro*.

The sound from the original tapes is fine and the music is consistently rewarding. If

Dixieland is your thing, you should hear this. The extensive album notes are by Paul Watts and it should be noted that these broadcasts have not been released anywhere else before, as far as I can tell. Very worthwhile.

PETER VACHER

ALCIDE 'SLOW DRAG' PAVAGEAU

DRAG'S HALF FAST BAND

GHB Records BCD-54 31:15

I always find it difficult to review this kind of record. There is something so disarming about the honesty and enthusiasm of performances like this that it almost seems churlish to apply the usual critiques.

I suppose what one can say is that what you expect, you get. There are no outstanding performances and the mix should certainly have been improved but there is that 'authenticity' that committed New Orleans followers will enjoy. Probably the most voluble player is Albert Burbank, a fierce and strident clarinetist who leads the band through sheer domination.

The performances are mainly ensembles and solos are few and short.

There is an attempt to vary the material with the inclusion of numbers such as Brahms' *Cradle Song* and *Little Brown Jug* but these get the same informal treatment.

Slow Drag shows up again as part of the Kid Thomas-George Lewis band which is an improvement and has a more refined sound. Lewis drives the band well through some old war horses. And his playing sounds better to me than I remember (this is

1961). Thomas is a sprightly lead. In its time, 75 years ago, this music might have been regarded by some as the Holy Grail but now I can only think that it would appeal only to all those doughty old timers who keep the music alive and the beer flowing on Sunday lunchtimes at the local pub.

JOHN MARTIN

RAY CHARLES ORCHESTRA

ZURICH 1961

Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series Vol.
41/TCB 02412 78:43

I've long maintained that Ray Charles' albums actually contain better jazz than a lot of 'pure' jazz sessions. Not everyone agrees; a couple of years ago I ended a record recital with a track from Charles' *Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music* and very nearly got run out of town. This newly issued live date from the year before is less likely to upset purists, simply because alongside the leaders feelingful vocals, the coo-ing of the Raelettes and crowd-pleasing versions of hits like *Georgia On My Mind* and *Hit The Road Jack*, it boasts arrangements by Quincy Jones, Ernie Wilkins and Benny Golson with jazz solos aplenty.

In fact, the opening Jones chart of Sonny Stitt's *Happy Faces* sets the tone for a record that should bring a smile to all but the stone-hearted. For lovers of instrumental big band jazz there is much to savour, including a soulful Marcus Belgrave reading of *I Remember Clifford*, an equally impassioned outing for altoist Hank Crawford on *Misty* and, perhaps best of all, a steaming two-tenor carve-up between

Don Wilkerson and James Clay on the closing Golson theme *Ray Minor Ray*.

Charles himself is in top form, tackling everything from the sardonic *I've Got News For You* to the almost tongue-in-cheek *Margie*. The dead-slow feast he makes of *Come Rain or Come Shine* is nothing less than a vocal masterclass.

With first-rate sound quality and beautifully packaged, this is an album that deserves a place in the collection of anyone who enjoys Charles or the big band genre.

SIMON SPILLETT

JOHNNY HODGES & BEN WEBSTER

COMPLETE 1954-1961
SMALL GROUP STUDIO
SESSIONS

Phono 870255 4 CDs 297.23

The Duke could certainly pick them. Duke Ellington had a knack for choosing musicians with individuality who nevertheless fitted perfectly into his orchestra. Just think of Cootie Williams, Lawrence Brown Ray Nance and Clark Terry. But he seemed cleverest at finding unique, skilful reedmen: think Gonsalves, Carney and Procope. Two of the best were Johnny Hodges and Ben Webster, whose small-group studio sessions are gathered together on this 4-CD set. Hodges and Webster were close friends and their togetherness is clear throughout this collection.

The main LPs which make up this compilation are *Blues-a-Plenty* (with Billy Strayhorn sounding remarkably like Ellington); *The Smooth One* (omitting some of the tracks from the double LP version); *Not So Dukish* (Hodges typically restrained and lyrical on his feature *The Last Time I Saw Paris*); *The Jazz Cellar Session* (as I have said elsewhere, note Wilfred Middlebrooks' sturdy bass-playing); and *Side by Side* (a true classic which should be in everyone's collection). There are also eight 'bonus tracks' from 1952.

How can you review perfection? Putting two of Duke's pre-

eminent saxists together and backing them with such stars as Harry Edison, Emmett Berry, Les Spann, Jimmy Hamilton and Jo Jones ensures top-class playing which doesn't over-reach itself but maintains complete good taste. Buy it.

TONY AUGARDE

KID ORY

THE KID ORY
COLLECTION 1922-28

Acrobat Music FADCD2060
2 CDs 144:00

This two CD package from Acrobat of no fewer than forty seven tracks focuses on the most productive period of Ory's recording career. It reminds the listener that from one recording studio to another, from one day to the next, Ory worked with an array of the finest jazz musicians not only of the era but of all time. King Oliver, Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton are represented here on labels which themselves have become a collector's sought after treasure trove.

The variable quality of the recordings is well documented and of little concern. Indeed, Acrobat's liner notes rightly state: *some imperfections are so inherent in the sound that they cannot be removed*. What matters here is the music as originally recorded, with, or without audible noise, is available to a digital generation.

It is interesting to note that Ory turned down a job offer from the ill-fated Buddy Bolden. Scarcely having entered his teens Ory's family insisted he was too young to join the now legendary figure. Idle speculation it may be, but what if Ory had gone on the road with a feted musician soon to meet with a tragic end? *The Kid Ory Collection* would perhaps be an all together different proposition. What we do have is a collection of Hot Five, Oliver and Red Hot Peppers' sides with the addition of Ruth Lee from 1922 and a Tiny Parham cut from 1927.

RUSSELL CORBETT



Ray Charles

DAVE BRUBECK
QUARTETTIME OUT – THE STEREO
AND MONO VERSION

Green Corner (Limited Edition)
100892 2 CDs 76:23/78:33

Recently, I was discussing plans to reissue a vintage British jazz album with a certain independent record producer. Why didn't we go the whole hog and release both the stereo and mono versions?, I suggested. 'For God's sake, it's not The Beatles, you know,' came back the reply.

Latterly, it's become something of a fashion to maintain that really the only way in which to get to the essence of a classic 1950s jazz album is to hear it in mono. Look at the recent Miles and Coltrane box sets. Whether or not this is all a bit of a purists' put-on, there can be no argument about the merits of this set which lovingly presents Brubeck's barrier-breaking 1959 album in both formats. I say lovingly because, for once, one of those many mysterious Andorran labels have actually come up with a

repackaging that is truly first-rate. No pseudonym, regurgitating booklet notes, no irrelevant bonus tracks, no anachronistic cover photos. Just the original *Time Out*, plus its follow-ups *Time Further Out* and *Countdown – Time in Outer Space* (well, this was 1961!).

The main feature is an album which everyone should own, of course, but listening to its immediate successors with 21st century ears, it's hard to hear why some critics got so worked up about Brubeck's alleged pretence. Tracks like *Bru's Boogie Woogie* and *Eleven Four* should have stopped them in their tracks. And as for the claim that the pianist's music represented a wholly separate stream from the day's jazz fashions, well, at this distance *It's A Raggy Waltz* sounds very much like a reflection of the then current soul-jazz fad rather than a reaction *against* it.

Finally, there's Paul Desmond. He too comes up fresh-minted – incisive and adventurous where critics damned him as effete and over-intellectual. So, even if you have the original Columbia's or you don't 'do' Brubeck, buy this



Dave Brubeck

and marvel at some truly classic music in a beautiful new guise.

SIMON SPILLETT

BILLIE HOLIDAY

BALLADS FOR LOVERS

Lucky Star LS 70035 78:01

I must admit I approached this record with a certain insouciance. Another Billie Holiday disc? Surely there was nothing more to be heard from the singer other than the endless recycling of old material which has been going on for decades?

How wrong can you be? Yes, much of this product has been released before but I have never heard Billie to such advantage as on these brilliantly re-mastered tracks. We owe Lucky Star a huge debt for its superb almost three dimensional sound quality.

Most of the tracks are taken from the Fifties sessions *Lady Sings the Blues* and *All or Nothing at All*, with two 40's tracks with pianist Bobby Tucker added. Also included are the best two tracks salvaged from the heart breaking *Lady in Satin* album of 1959 which marked her final decline.

All the tracks, including the last two, are refreshed sound-wise to the point of near perfection. The tunes are well used standards, *Willow Weep For Me*, *Ill Wind*, *These Foolish Things* but there are also a few I haven't heard from her before, *P.S. I Love You*, and *I Thought About You*.

She has the advantage of having the outstanding talents of Oscar Peterson, Harry Edison, Ben Webster, Benny Carter, Charlie Shavers and Barney Kessel. Edison and Webster are on most

tracks and they are in magnificent form making the album even more attractive.

I would rate these performances as comparable to her legendary 1937-39 sessions.

For anyone coming to her work for the first time, I would, unconditionally, recommend this album. Even for those with a complete Holiday collection, I would urge them to buy this and hear how the great lady really sounded.

JOHN MARTIN

JOHNNY HODGES /
WILD BILL DAVIS

BLUE HODGE

Phono 870264 79.41

Caveat emptor! *Blue Hodge* was one of the four Hodges and Davis albums reissued as a set in 2007 by the Andorra-based Lonehill Jazz label. This Phono version (Volume 4 in the series) is presumably from the same stable and identical in every way to the earlier release: art work, essay text, music, sequencing, so if you have the Lonehill set, look away now. But for those who don't know this music, read on. This final volume collects the complete *Blue Hodge* album recorded in August 1961 for Verve, with add-ons from two further Verve sessions teaming Hodges and Davis. That's six 1964 tracks from *Blue Rabbit* plus four big band sides extracted from the 1966 Blue Notes.

And Then Some opens with Les Spann's flute harmonising with Davis, before Hodges cuts in, incisive and bluesy, over Louis Hayes' imperious drums. The swing is exhilarating and sets the

mood for the entire album, Hodges dreaming up new riff tunes seemingly at will, revisiting old favourites and favoured party pieces like *Hodge Podge* and sounding fluent and relaxed. The affinity between Hodges' alto and WBD's organ playing is evident throughout, Davis less like Jimmy Smith and more the conventional studio player, laying down lush chords to bolster a Hodges solo or interjecting sudden chunky bursts, never over-doing things just allowing the great altoist to flow. And how well he does, offering quick-silver phrasing with that creamy tone on blues things, and sounding elegant and poised on the ballads; playing quite beautifully on *Azure Te* for example. With Spann on the first session and guitarist Mundell Lowe on the second, the solo strength is more than maintained, whereas the final four sides by the augmented orchestra seem like a waste, as they attempt to place Hodges in a more modish setting, complete with rather dreary harmonica accompaniment, Hodges sounding boxed in and bored. Still the initial sixteen tracks are a joy. Don't wait for the next reissue: buy now.

PETER VACHER

RED CALLENDER

SEXTETTE & FOURSETTE

Fresh Sound FSR-CD 907 77.53

Red Callender is best known to me as a bassist playing as a sideman with all kinds of jazz groups, rather than as a leader. But these recordings (from 1951 to 1954) present him as the leader of a sextet or (on four tracks) a quartet. The album is subtitled 'The rhythm and blues years' but there is a wide variety of styles, many of which have little to do with rhythm and blues as we know it now, although plenty of blues numbers are included. They are closer to the 'race' discs aimed at black listeners.

Featured artists include altoist Marshall Royal, guitarist Chuck Norris and pianist Eddie Beal. The CD includes a generous booklet which contains a biography of Red Callender, illustrating the breadth of his playing, which

included recordings on the tuba and an appearance on a pop hit by B. Bumble and the Stingers! Red stays in the background on most tracks, so it is hard to know who this album will appeal to most, but it is a well-filled disc incorporating some fine playing from a variety of musicians.

TONY AUGARDE

ZOOT SIMS QUINTET
FEATURING BOB
BROOKMEYERBURIED GOLD: THE
COMPLETE 1956 QUINTET
RECORDINGS

Acrobat Records ADDCD3 173 2
CDs 2:09:02

These sessions, excavated from three previous sessions, *The Modern Art of Jazz*, *Tonite's Music Today* and *Whoeeee* are, indeed, buried gold. They are, also, accurately described as complete as they are the only records made by the pair. One wonders why?

This is the two masters of the 'middle road' flexing their fledging wings. I prefer the description 'middle road' to 'mainstream' as mainstream always suggests to me a set period in jazz evolution whereas Zoot and Bob's shared conception is more of a 'going forward, looking backward' approach which discards nothing and encompasses all styles. Zoot arrived at his credo by instinct and Bob by awareness of jazz history.

This is honest, uncompromising stuff, uncluttered by fads or fashions: classic tunes with modern harmonies. Hard swinging and cool toned.

Here is all the energy, invention and honest-to-goodness swing which has marked the efforts of these musicians over sixty years since these sessions were recorded.

They are aided by rhythm sections consisting of the elegant Hank Jones and John Williams on piano, Bill Crow, Milt Hinton and Wyatt Ruther on bass and Gus Johnson and Jo Jones on drums.

The 35 tracks are a nice balance of material of which 13 are

commendable originals and the rest, flexible standards.

The empathy between the two horns is telepathic. Sometimes it is difficult to separate the soloists. There are wonderful work-overs of Al Cohn's *Snake Eyes* and *Morning Fun* and glossy explorations of *I Hear a Rhapsody* and *Someone to Watch Over Me* but the entire disc reverberates with sounds which are joyful and direct. *Whoeeee* is an unstoppable caper.

Although the performances are grounded in swing there are, also, plenty of boppish references. In spite of the obvious homogeneity of musical outlook there is, also, a powerful feeling of competition going on like a kind of musical gun fighting which often embodies the most exciting encounters.

I doubt if either of these two stalwarts ever blew a dull note.

JOHN MARTIN

HERB GELLER

FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS

Avid Jazz AMSC 1221 2 CDs
152:17

Born and bred in Los Angeles, Herb Geller worked on the west coast for much of his life. In a few short years from the mid fifties the altoist recorded several albums which were to attain 'classic' status. This Avid package lives up to its billing of *Four Classic Albums. A Down Beat* poll winner, Geller employed several other poll winners during this period of fervent creativity. Three of the albums were recorded in Los Angeles, a fourth on the east coast in New York. *Herb Geller Plays* and *The Herb Geller Sextette* feature Mrs Lorraine Geller. A fine pianist, her career cut short,

Lorraine more than matches Herb's fluent bop influenced playing on these sides from 1954-55.

The rhythm sections are a key aspect of all four albums: Bassists Leroy Vinegar and Red Mitchell work alongside Lorraine Geller and drummer Lawrence Marable on the first two recordings; Lou Levy and Ray Brown come in on *Fire in the West* and the '59 New York session *Herb Geller and His All Stars - Plays Selections from Gypsy* makes use of twenty three years old Scott La Faro, Billy Taylor on piano and the Jones brothers – Thad, Hank and Elvin.

Geller's own compositions have stood the test of time alongside the standards, including an up tempo take on *Rockin' Chair* from the *Sextette* album and Waller's *Jitterbug Waltz* from *Fire in the West*. This Avid release is a must.

RUSSELL CORBETT

MIKE WESTBROOK

PARIS

ASC asccd 166: 67.14

Mike Westbrook's *PARIS* is as personal an album as you can get – and as such will, I imagine, inspire devotion and apathy in equal numbers of the listening public. The second of two CDs to celebrate his 80th birthday this year, *PARIS* could not be more different from *A Bigger Show* for 22-piece orchestra. His first solo album for nearly 40 years, it was recorded in the most intimate circumstances in Helene Aziza's art gallery/studio in Paris and consists of an improvised tour of Westbrook's life and music. The basic mood is meditative, the touch delicate, the pace gently thoughtful. Naturally most of the numbers are Westbrook compositions, many of them



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originally with words by Kate Westbrook and some form of order is imposed by dividing the performance into four parts. *The Front Page* begins with two numbers from *A Bigger Show* before morphing into *Bar-Room Piano*, not, as you might expect, rowdy two-handed stuff, but music in justification of Mike's charmingly odd view that he likes to play behind people's conversations! Here gently re-harmonised versions of Ellington's *Sophisticated Lady* and *Solitude* grace the bar-room. *Love Stories* is at the centre of the performance, notably the 10-minute *View from the Drawbridge*, Westbrook at his most meditative, though unexpected tunes suddenly appear, a delicate *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square*, for example. Part Four *The Blues* is more rhythmic, with Mike's eclectic taste showing in the appearance of Bessie Smith's *Good Old Wagon* among originals which reflect significant stories in Mike Westbrook's life. It is a minor irritation that there are no notes with the CD apart from credits and thanks; to understand the significance of this creative stroll through his life and career you have to visit www.westbrookjazz.co.uk.

RON SIMPSON

BRITISH TRADITIONAL JAZZ AT A TANGENT, VOLUME 8:

THE NEW ORLEANS STYLE BANDS

Lake Records LACD348 78:02

New Orleans jazz, to me these days, tends to mean various vocal/piano entertainers. But, of course, there was the 1950s/1960s Trad Jazz Boom in Britain, that for a while allowed the general public to sample some of that historical style. A series of recordings from that time have been painstakingly assembled by Lake Records' Paul Adams, whose mastering of a number of my Ronnie's archive material CDs I appreciated in the 'nineties. This is his current installment, involving 18 tracks by nine different bands, recorded between 1951 and 1963.

In his informative note, Paul apologises for 'technical deficiencies', and indeed the first five tracks sound as if they're actually from the original 20s/30s era, which might have been partly intentional. These have little appeal to me, as they have the whole line-ups, mainly the standard trumpet, trombone, clarinet, piano, banjo, bass and drums seemingly all playing relentlessly at once, without a solo to be heard.

At track six, three by Mike Peters' band are an improvement, in that solos by clarinet and trombone are included, and the tempos are more varied. The Storyville Jazzmen continue this trend, with nice piano by Pete Gresham. Two live tracks by Ken Colyer's Jazzmen begin to show the kind of 'collective improvisation' by two or three players that I have enjoyed in later, 'modern' jazz.

Three by the Pete Dyer band are for me the liveliest yet. The leader delivers some expressive trombone, and Graham Patterson plays pleasing piano. Keith Smith's couple are notable for his preaching trumpet and Mike Sherbourne's raunchy trombone. A performance by a 12-piece Ken Colyer Brass Band, with two saxes present, wraps things up, in military band vein that evokes those street parades we've seen in films.

LESTOMKINS

MARIA BAPTIST ORCHESTRA

HERE AND NOW

Maria Baptist Music 3031 58:54

Originally an academically trained pianist, German born Ms Baptist suffered a career crisis in her early thirties, turning to meditation and Buddhism for a while. Now she boasts a trio, orchestra and big band. Inevitably, hers is a cross genre approach and, to quote the American composer/pianist Maria Schneider, it is '...infused with creativity, power, emotion, generosity and warmth...'

Here is her current big band in a live performance. It sports a



Mike Westbrook

standard line-up: 5 saxes, 8 brass and 3 rhythm, and is essentially jazz/rock fusion in style. The performance is superb, with precise section work and faultless intonation, and the solos are uniformly good. Baptist's scoring is demanding, with very close voicings, and she makes much use of double bass/piano left-hand unison figures which would certainly expose any inaccuracies. I was reminded particularly of Gil Evans' pioneering work in the 'fifties and, at times, perhaps Kenton.

There are eight tone poems here with evocative titles such as *Red Moon*, *Serenity*, and *B'dazzled Blue*. Each is meticulously crafted, often beautiful, frequently robust and energetic. But here we move into the purely subjective. My personal reaction is that there is little variation in mood between each number. Also, the composer uses chords that do not lead naturally from one to another, frequently holding on to one chord for many bars. For me, this sometimes gives the music a rather static feel. But it all depends on your taste (and maybe your age?).

HUGH LEDIGO

REMEMBERING IAN WHEELER

Lake LACD349 2 CDs 77:78

Ian Wheeler may not be a familiar name to all readers. He was born in Greenwich in 1931 but his family moved to Blackheath when he was four. He formed the River City Jazz Band in 1952 playing clarinet. He later joined the band of Mike Daniels. He was invited to replace Acker Bilk in Ken Colyer's Jazz Men and worked with them from 1954-1960. In 1960 he replaced Monty Sunshine in Chris Barber's band where he stayed until 1968. He ran his own band from 1970-1973 and was then in a band with

Rod Mason. He also worked with Keith Smith's Hefty Jazz, re-joining Barber in 1979. In addition to clarinet, he played alto and soprano saxophone and harmonica. He died on 27th June 2011.

This release constitutes a major retrospective of his career with the groups noted above plus The Sims-Wheeler Vintage Jazz Band, The Ian Wheeler-Sammy Rington Band and The Lake Records Jazz Band. The earliest music dates from 1954 and the most recent from May 2000. All the classics are here including *Beale Street Blues*, *Perdido Street Blues* and the like. Fittingly most time is given over to the Ian Wheeler Band. Sadly, we only get three tracks from the wonderful Chris Barber Jazz and Blues Band. It's good to hear from the somewhat under-rated Ray Foxley on piano in the 1993 edition of the Wheeler Band. The Hefty Jazz tracks feature Dick Wellstood on piano and Peter Lind on bass.

Detailed notes are included in the twelve page booklet together with evocative photographs. All recordings have been remastered and sound quality is good. A valuable document of a man and his music representing great value for money.

ALAN MUSSON

EDDIE HIGGINS

GREAT TRIO SESSIONS

Phono 870269 2 CDs 79:04/79:39

Higgins trained at a University Music School, which explains the evident discipline he brings to his keyboard technique. In the 'fifties, he became friendly with Bill Evans whom he regarded as one of his greatest influences. No doubt he inherited his light, crisply-defined touch and fluent

ANSWERS FOR CHOPS

1. B) Bill Johnson
2. D) Benny Goodman
3. C) Lionel Hampton
4. A) Dick Cary
5. True
6. B) Herbie Hancock although Victor Feldman was the song's composer.
7. A) Michael Brecker
8. C) Tune In Tomorrow
9. B) Cecile McLorin Salvant. Gretchen Parlato won the 2004 competition.
10. False

delivery from this association. Here, I think, the similarity ends – at least as far as these recordings are concerned. He has, to my ears, a greater affinity with Bud Powell and maybe a familiarity with the blues-inflected ornamentation so prevalent in Oscar Peterson's style (although this latter approach has its origin in earlier idioms). Higgins had worked across the board from Dixieland onwards and is quoted as stating that 'Playing Dixie... is part of a jazz education which... is valuable in understanding the basis of all Jazz.' So, on this showing, Higgins is a highly gifted pianist playing within the stylistic mainstream of his era.

His repertoire falls into the same category, although the only reference to the bebop school is *Night in Tunisia*. The majority of the tunes are drawn from the American song book, plus a couple of Ellingtons: *Prelude To A Kiss*, *Satin Doll*, and a smattering of blues. *Tango Africaine* and *Zarac*



Wendell Brunious

The Evil One are intriguing, suggesting a superior compositional talent.

These two discs span from 1957 to 1965. Thereafter, his recording output was not prolific. In his later career, he had great success in Japan and Korea and who knows what goodies may still lurk somewhere in Eastern archives?

Of his era, but good enough to be timeless.

HUGH LEDIGO

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY QUINTET

COMPLETE 1961-62 STUDIO SESSIONS

Phono 870259 2 CDs 66.41/67.08

Phono's collection purports to present all the studio sessions cut by the Adderleys for Capitol and Riverside starting with a fine quintet session from August 1961 and moving on to the collaborations with singer Nancy Wilson and the altoist/vocalist Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson plus a curiosity, a pair of tracks from a Riverside 45 single by the forgettable soul & gospel singer Bessie Watson. Also interspersed are three tracks from a TV show. All in all, a whole lot of Cannonball.

After leaving the Miles Davis group in 1959, Adderley recorded in a number of contexts, these albums representing a high point in his quintet's a discography just as the influential pianist Joe Zawinul replaced Victor Feldman. The first five tracks include an imperious reading of *I Can't Get Started* which fully reveals Cannonball's exceptional fluency, his passion and urgency. Others epitomise great hard bop,

cornetist brother Nat sounding Miles-ian, with Zawinul's quite spare, boppish piano and the wonderfully supple bass playing of Sam Jones as the standouts, alongside Cannon's joyful, expressive alto work. He really was a giant of the music and the band had gelled superbly at this stage. Just to hear them tear through Nat's *Teaneck* is a joy in itself. The Wilson session is something else, as they say: the singer sounding perky and clearly relishing the context, hinting at Dinah Washington in her phrasing. Good to hear.

The collaborations with Cleanhead also impress, dating from the band's Riverside period when Cannonball was encouraged to suggest artists to record, the success of these albums helping Vinson to re-launch his career. Cannonball is there to support Eddie when the altoist sings with that characteristic vocal break; when the piece is all-instrumental he sits out. Vinson more than holds his own as an instrumentalist too, taking the same boppish line as his more illustrious companion. He's exultant on his timeless *Kidney Stew* (with an added alternative take) and solos at length on his originals notably *Connonizing* or the neat *Bernice's Bounce* with Nat fervent and Zawinul similarly incisive.

PETER VACHER

LENNIE NIEHAUS

COMPLETE FIFTIES RECORDINGS

Phono 870253 4 CDs 79:15/69:02/76:13/68:26

Nowadays Lennie Niehaus is known as a film composer, particularly for Clint Eastwood movies, including *Bird*, but back in the mid-'fifties, during five years as lead alto in the Stan Kenton band, he made seven jazz albums under his own name - they're all here, plus a couple where he's a sideman.

Apparently, people do what they call 'binge-watching' with box sets of TV series. I could never do that, nor did I 'binge-listen' to this Niehaus box. The degree of sameness in the stylings, whether for a quintet, sextet or, mainly,

octet here would be a positive deterrent to such a venture - so I took in a bunch of the 80 tracks at a time, which is a pleasant enough experience.

Though he could blow up a reasonable storm when required, I never heard the same fire and drive that uplifted the alto approaches of his contemporaries Art Pepper and Bud Shank. Naturally he solos on all tracks, but there are also entertaining spots of the likes of Bill Perkins on tenor, Hampton Hawes on piano and Stu Williamson on trumpet and valve trombone. It's the usual mix of standards and originals, mostly at upish tempos. The ten ballads featured are proportionately pleasurable.

LESTOMKINS

LOUIS NELSON NEW ORLEANS ALL STARS

APRIL IN NEW ORLEANS

GHB Records BCD 541 76.12

At first glance, this seems to be a CD by two different bands. But in fact they have very similar personnel: both being led by trumpeter Wendell Brunious, who makes a reliable lead trumpet. The rest of the front line consists of clarinetist Sammy Rington and trombonist Louis Nelson. Rington plays superbly, and on the first album he injects some pleasing echoes of Acker Bilk's mellifluous tone into his solos. Louis Nelson sounds rather unsure and sometimes has trouble staying in tune.

The repertoire consists primarily of New Orleans warhorses such as *Bugle Boy March* and *Mahogany Hall Stomp*. Danny Barker supplies a vocal to *Bill Bailey* and Wendell Brunious sings on *My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time*. If you close your eyes, you can imagine yourself in one of those famous New Orleans haunts, where the good-time atmosphere excuses deficiencies in technique. For devotees of the New Orleans style, this is a well-packed disc, with 18 tracks totalling 76 minutes.

TONY AUGARDE

THE COOKERS SAGE GATESHEAD

Flight delays from Cologne into London Heathrow and a connecting shuttle to Newcastle International Airport resulted in the advertised eight o'clock start slipping to half past the hour. The Cookers arrived in Britain to play four concerts; Sage Gateshead the first, with a final date at the London Jazz Festival. A band boasting septuagenarians and a venerable octogenarian could have done without such inconvenience, and the lack of a proper sound check didn't help matters.

The Cookers were making a return visit to Gateshead following a sensational appearance at the 2015 Gateshead International Jazz Festival. Two enforced changes in personnel did not diminish the quality on the stand: pianist Danny Grissett depping for the recuperating George Cables, and altoist Craig Handy making a welcome return to the line-up replacing Jaleel Shaw. Bandleader David Weiss apologised to an expectant but patient audience for the unavoidable delay. The frontline of two trumpets (Weiss

The Cookers
The Sage, Gateshead



Photo by Lance Liddle

and Eddie Henderson), Billy Harper, tenor sax, and Craig Handy playing alto on this tour, hit the ground running. New York has produced many hard bop heroes down the years and this present day septet is on a mission to ensure the flame keeps on burning brightly in the twenty first century.

The Cookers opted to play one long set, looking to make up for lost time. Danny Grissett, the young man of the outfit, clearly knew his stuff and revelled in

playing the Steinway in Sage Two's three-tiered auditorium. To his left, two of the legendary figures of the music – bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Billy Hart – guided him along the way. Cecil McBee these days perching on a high stool, played with the energy of a man fifty years his junior and Billy Hart summoned reserves reminiscent of Art Blakey in delivering a powerhouse display. The set list featured numbers written by members of the band together with hard bop standards: McBee's *Peacemaker*

and *Slippin' and Slidin'* (Weiss describing the latter as 'a kind of a blues'), *Croquet Ballet* elicited cries of delight from sections of the on-side audience, and *The Core* (Freddie Hubbard) could be described as 'cooking!' The Cookers are, perhaps, the last working link with the bop era and this Gateshead concert reaffirmed the belief that the legacy survives as a relevant, vital force in today's multi-faceted world of jazz.

RUSSELL CORBETT

BLUES, BOOGIE AND GOSPEL COLLECTION

TIM RICHARDS

Schott Publishing

Tim Richards' first book, *Improvising Blues Piano*, possibly contains more knowledge of blues piano styles than any other I've encountered. It's about 300 pages long and is very good as both an introduction to, and an encyclopaedia of, the blues piano tradition. If you are a fan of this style and are not sure where to start, you won't get much better than this to point you in the right direction.

This *Blues, Boogie and Gospel Collection*, published by Schott, is aimed at intermediate pianists and is intended to be used alongside his first book. Here, there are fully transcribed solos followed by improvisations by

Richards, increasing in difficulty through 15 pieces, which can also be heard on the accompanying CD. There is not much in the way of theory/tuition, apart from a few co-ordination/rhythm exercises and a short explanation of the general chords and scales used at the end of the book, but there are annotations at the end of each piece referring the reader to the pages of his first book which further explain each style used.

The book is not written chronologically, but the pieces cover early blues practitioners such as Jelly Roll Morton's ragtime style and the barrelhouse boogie of Jimmy Yancey. The basics of the Latin-influenced New Orleans blues piano of Professor Longhair are here too, and the blues/gospel genre is also touched upon. A little more authentic boogie woogie à la Pete Johnson/Albert Ammons would have been nice though, as it is integral to the whole genre. As

the book progresses more contemporary chords, scales, rhythms and arrangements are introduced to show that the blues is not just limited to the three chord, twelve bar format. There's even a piece entitled *Big Bear Blues* and, as the readers will know, Big Bear know all about that!

Reading the blues from a written score is fraught with danger. It's impossible to transcribe great playing and, if played as written, the music will sound wooden, too straight and have little real blues feeling. I guess a lot of the people buying this book will be good sight readers at other styles, perhaps looking to expand their repertoire into blues. The accompanying CD will be very helpful here to aid playing with the good dynamics and expression needed, although it is still a little too 'white' sounding for my personal taste – I would have preferred the playing to be a little bit looser, rhythmically

speaking. I don't think there is any substitute to listening to the past masters and professors of the blues/boogie/gospel piano tradition such as Roosevelt Sykes, Memphis Slim, Otis Spann, Meade Lux Lewis, Dr John, Ray Charles and James Booker, and just trying to use your ear to imitate anything that you like, eventually synthesising your own style. Having said that, for those without good ears, this book used with Richard's first book, can be a very useful aid for getting a grasp on blues concepts and learning the notes of some of the famous licks passed down through the ages. Alongside some studied listening, hopefully this great tradition will then long continue as pianists first read the notes, then use their ears to get between the notes and find the elusive essence of the blues.

JUSTIN RANDALL
(TIPITINA)

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"A wonderful CD, it superbly captures how this incredible band sound au naturelle...phenomenal 10/10" *Blues In Britain*

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To book any of the above artists, please contact Tim Jennings on tim@bigbearmusic.com or 0121 454 7020

RON SIMPSON'S ROUND-UP OF RECENT CDS

WADE LEGGETRIO (FSR CD 894: 78.05) is a fine example of one of the things Fresh Sound Records do best, in terms of rarity, background story and musical quality. In 1952 at the age of 18 Wade Legge joined Dizzy Gillespie's band on piano (or maybe first on bass). Having toured Europe with Diz and stayed with him for some time afterwards, Legge then freelanced in New York City and played on over 50 recordings, many with big names such as Milt Jackson and Charles Mingus, but went into semi-retirement in 1959, dying at the age of 29 in 1963. These, his only recordings under his own name, were made in Europe on Dizzy's tour and some of them have appeared previously only on 78. Legge emerges as a fine mature player, occasionally given to over-elaboration, with a bebop style underpinned by a swing sensibility which shows in attractive versions of standards such as *These Foolish Things*. There are plenty of Legge originals, too, and they work well: the seven bonus tracks – from New York sessions for Joe Roland and Will Bradley, Jr. – are all his tunes, though he was nominally a sideman. The lack of New York sessions under his own name is as much a mystery as his early retirement and death. Perhaps Legge was too good at adapting to others' styles (listen to two excellent tracks with Lars Gullin); maybe he needed to be more distinctive. Also pretty remarkable is **REJOICE!** (FSR CD 908: 2 CDs, 62.49/ 69.12). There's no shortage of chances to hear **Jim Hall's** guitar artistry,

though another is always welcome, but of the three LPs on this double CD only one is familiar: his excellent 1957 debut album, *Jazz Guitar*, standards and swing era classics played with swinging urbanity by Hall, pianist Carl Perkins and bassist **Red Mitchell**. And that is the other rarity factor here. The title album and *Good Friday Blues* both come from 1960 and feature Mitchell in a different role each time. His economically melodic piano graces the Modest Jazz Trio on *Good Friday Blues* and *Rejoice!* is something else again: an informal and slightly messily recorded live session with Hall and Mitchell (on cello!) joining the Frank Butler Trio at The Renaissance. This has a much more bluesy feel than the other albums, with Mitchell's cello – always plucked – developing the sort of solo lines you look for from a horn. On more familiar ground **STAN GETZ QUARTET 1960** (FSR CD 897: 79.05) finds the great tenor saxist in supreme form on three dates (mostly Amsterdam, two tracks each from Dusseldorf and Zurich) on a Jazz at the Phil tour, accompanied by Jan Johansson and two loanees from Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen. Shortly before his bossa revolution, Getz tends to favour standards, showing all his famed technical fluency on such tracks as *Lover Come Back to Me* – headlong tempo, perfect logic – and savouring such challenging ballad choices as *Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most*.

Three CDs from Essential Jazz Classics feature well-known

albums, interestingly programmed. The 1959 **Oscar Peterson Trio** Jerome Kern collection is, rightly, highly rated, but **THE COMPLETE JEROME KERN SONGBOOKS** (EJC 55701: 79.01) pairs it with the 1953 recording of exactly the same material, both albums Norman Granz projects. Famously Kern hated jazzed up versions of his songs, but then he shouldn't have written such wonderfully inviting material. Here he might have taken issue with the rapid flow of *Ol' Man River*, but Peterson's respect for songs such as *Long Ago and Far Away* is beyond reproach. His dazzling technique is heard to best advantage on such tracks as the 1959 *Pick Yourself Up*, breakneck speed, precise articulation. There's plenty of contrast between the two albums, not least the interplay with Barney Kessel's guitar in 1953. In 1959 Ed Thigpen's drums took over; master-bassist Ray Brown is there throughout, also on two bonus duo tracks. **COMPLETE 1957-62 STUDIO RECORDINGS** (EJC 55704: 2CDs, 76.22/78.18) by the **Sonny Rollins Trio** (note it's only complete Trio recordings) combines two classic early Rollins albums, *Way Out West* (plus copious alternative takes) and *Freedom Suite/Shadow Waltz* with a half dozen trio tracks from different dates. Rollins, all muscular authority and melodic invention, seems liberated by the absence of a chordal instrument, improvising freely, in particular (appropriately enough) on the 20-minute continuous *Freedom Suite*. He does take the precaution of hiring top-class bass and drums – Ray Brown and Shelly Manne on *Way Out West*, Oscar Pettiford and Max Roach on *Freedom Suite* – and giving them plenty of solo space. His taste for unusual material is also unerring, from Shelly Manne clapping along the trail on *I'm an Old Cow Hand* to following *Freedom Suite* with a touch of Noel Coward – *Someday I'll Find You*. **John Coltrane and Don Cherry's THE AVANT-GARDE** (EJC 55700: 61.49) is more controversial. Recorded in 1960 with an Ornette Coleman-

style piano-less quartet made up of Coleman sidemen, it even contained three Coleman tunes out of five tracks. Whatever Nesuhi Ertegun's thinking, he thought better of it by not issuing the album for six years! In fact, it may not be Trane at his most assured, but there are many compensations such as Don Cherry's distinctive trumpet and fine work by the alternating bassists, Percy Heath and Charlie Haden, plus Trane's first recorded soprano solo on *The Blessing*. And EJC's bonus tracks are brilliantly chosen – the original Ornette Coleman versions of the same songs, all with Cherry on board, though ironically most of them include a piano in a format Coltrane would have found more familiar.

Phono's big project at the moment is the four CD collection of all the 1960s recordings (previously available on Lone Hill) of **JOHNNY HODGES/WILD BILL DAVIS**, minus some tracks of a Claus Ogerman album, dismissed as 'pop'. The combination of the great alto saxist, he of the singing tone and the unique blend of urbanity and the blues, and the organist, stabbing, smearing, probing, but always in touch with the melody, is a constant pleasure. The arrangement of the CDs is a trifle odd, but **Volume 1** (870265: 2 CDs, 70.22/73.53) is a sure-fire winner. The only double album in the series has three full LPs, plus parts of two more, a Davis-less Hodges session and that Ogerman album. *Con-Soul and Jazz* and *In Atlantic City* show the duo at their best in a heavily Ellingtonian programme, with Hodges reprising two of his swinging 1940s gems, *Good Queen Bess* and *The Jeep is Jumpin'*. The Atlantic City album is a live recording, with Hodges and the mellifluous Lawrence Brown joining Davis' quartet. *Blue Pyramid*, the third LP, lacks some of the *joie de vivre* of the others in its Jimmy Jones arrangements of, mostly, ballads. **Volume 3** (870263: 74.26) is more problematic. Supposedly bringing together all the tracks with Hodges, Davis and guitarist Kenny Burrell, it includes a Hodges-Earl Hines album, *Stride Right*, and Davis is absent on

Sonny Rollins



other tracks, so we're left with one album, *Mess of Blues*. Admittedly Burrell combines perfectly with Hodges and Davis and it's a delight to hear Hines revisiting classic numbers such as *Rosetta* in the company of Hodges. So it's full of fine jazz, but not too much of a contribution to the complete Johnny Hodges and Wild Bill Davis. **Jimmy Smith Trio with Kenny Burrell's COMPLETE 1957-59 SESSIONS** (870267: 2 CDs, 71.43/72.33) has to be organ trio jazz of high quality – and it is, a series of Blue Note albums with very few alternative takes, the classy organ-guitar pairing supported by one of a superb trio of drummers, Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones or Donald Bailey. The only drawback of an excellent double-album is that the programming is rather lopsided, with several tracks being the only trio numbers on albums with horns. Two takes of *Motorin' Along* show what Smith and Burrell can make of the blues, but the balance is very much towards standards and ballads – very nice, too, but the excitement level is a little lower than I expected. Two very different versions of Buddy Johnson's great blues ballad *Since I Fell For You* give us the best of both worlds. **SAM 'THE MAN'**

TAYLOR PLAYS THE BAD AND THE BEAUTIFUL (870260: 78.09) has not previously been available on CD, but I can't imagine a rush to buy it. The tenor saxist leads a quintet through some attractive film ballads concerning leading ladies, David Raskin's *Laura* the best known – perfectly pleasant, but a bit bland. The slightly earlier bonus LP, *Jazz for Commuters/Salute to the Saxes*, has much more impact – Taylor heading up various 7-9 piece bands with the likes of Charlie Shavers, Budd Johnson and Georgie Auld – but the Fresh Sound CD backing that with assorted bonus tracks might be a better bet. Incidentally the Phono booklet gets into some confusion about who plays on which tracks. Also from the Spanish arm of the reissue industry **ELLA FITZGERALD SINGS BALLADS FOR LOVERS** (Lucky Stars LS 70037: 76/27) contains some superb vocal performances (no surprise there) and is full of fine accompanying musicians, but in a way it's difficult to recommend it generally. It all depends on how you like your Ella performances packaged: chromatically, thematically, by accompanists, by composers, comprehensively, bittily. These all come from a

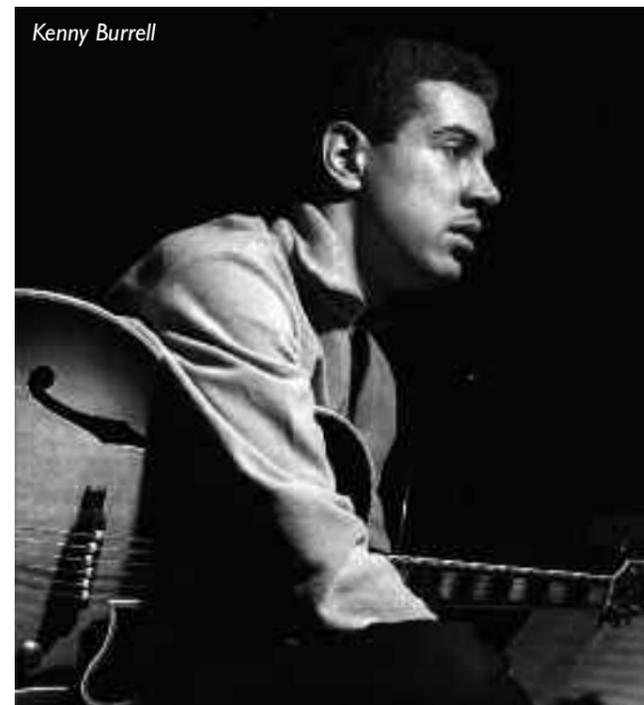
prime period for Ella, 1956-60, include some extracts from Songbooks (Porter, Ellington, Rodgers and Hart), accompanied by orchestras, great soloists (Getz, Ben Webster, Stuff Smith) and piano both solo and in a quartet – Peterson and the excellent, now rather neglected Paul Smith. Most of the material is very familiar, though there are a few nice cases of more obscure songs, such as Ellington's charming *I Didn't Know about You*, accompanied rather stodgily by Duke's orchestra, with a fine solo from Johnny Hodges.

Progressive Records have reissued two fine albums from 1978. **CHOICE N.Y.C. BONE** (PCD 7176: 45.41) headlines trombonist **George Masso** in his recording debut as leader with a compatible group of four seasoned professionals: ex-Glenn Miller saxist Al Klink and a stylish rhythm section of John Bunch, Milt Hinton and Butch Miles. Most of the tracks are standards (a couple of them recurring as alternative takes) and the default position is a sort of laid-back swing heard at its best on *I'm Beginning to See the Light*. Masso is assured and relaxed and it's particularly interesting to hear Klink's warm melodic tenor at length; in a long and successful career he was so often in the section and/or the studio. Much of **Billy Hart's THE TRIO** (PCD 7044: 54.33) is fuelled by a sense of excitement and an

underlying tension. Great ballads such as *Everytime We Say Goodbye* and *For All We Know* get sympathetic treatment, but, with producer Gus Statiras favouring the propulsive bass of George Mraz and Hart himself always a powerful presence on drums, the percussive post-bop piano of Walter Bishop Jr. tops off some cogent trio performances. Again the original album is pushed towards normal CD length by two alternative takes, plus, in this case, an unissued title from the session, Antonio Carlos Jobim's *Once I Loved*. A very different release from the Jazzology group is **CLASSIC RAGS NEW ORLEANS STYLE** (Solo Art SACD 171: 54.54) by New Jersey-raised, New Orleans-based **Kris Tokarski**. At the prompting of producer Hal Smith, also the drummer in Tokarski's trio, he reinterprets 14 classic rags (8 by Scott Joplin, with a few gems by the likes of James Scott and Joseph Lamb) in the style of Jelly Roll Morton. It's kind of turning the tables on Jelly who, in the Library of Congress sessions, played *Maple Leaf Rag* in varied styles. *Maple Leaf* isn't here, but plenty of Joplin favourites are: *The Easy Winners*, *Heliotrope Bouquet*, *Elite Syncopations*. Tokarski's easy-paced treatments bring out the sweetness of many of melodies and the balance of the various strains, and fully justify the title of Michael Steinman's liner notes: 'Soft, Sweet, Plenty Rhythm'.



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