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COVER: CHARLIE WATTS photographed in the ATV canteen by JIM SIMPSON. A personal tribute to the Rolling Stones drummer by his lifelong friend, bassist DAVE GREEN (seen here with Charlie), is on pages 18-19.

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UPFRONT

This is probably the first time that a jazz magazine has turned its cover over to the drummer of one of the world's premier rock bands. But Charlie Watts is no ordinary drummer with a rock band. His early enthusiasm for jazz never died and periodically surfaced, in those periods when the Stones stopped rolling for a while, in all sorts of excellent jazz groups, most famously that wonderful quintet with Gerard Presencer, Peter King, Brian Lemon and Dave Green, Charlie's boyhood friend who contributes a personal memoir to this edition.

These days anniversaries in the jazz world are commemorated with ever greater frequency and, in this edition, we recall two of the great figures in jazz on both sides of the Atlantic. 2021 is the 50th anniversary of the death of Louis Armstrong and Scott Yanow looks back at the ways his reputation has changed over the years. The trumpeter who once crowned Louis with a home-made crown as 'The King of Jazz', Humphrey Lyttelton was born 100 years ago – and who better to celebrate his centenary than Alan Barnes?

A final retrospective comes with our profile of Jim Douglas, 60 years a jazz guitarist and now emigrating to the Philippines, looking back to the glory days of the 1960s with the Alex Welsh Band.

AUTUMN IN LONDON

JBGB Events are hosting three top-class series of jazz concerts at different London venues: The Crazy Coqs in Soho, The Pheasantry in Chelsea and Piano Smithfield near the Barbican.

Already under way is Jazz Divas 2021 at The Pheasantry which began with Liane Carroll. Early October brings two successive evenings, with Louise Clare Marshall and an accompanying quintet (2) and Georgia Mancio and the Kate Williams Trio (3). November and December bring

two concerts by the same stellar singer: Norma Winstone with Nikki Iles, Stan Sulzmann and Dave Green and The Music of Bill Evans (Nov. 13-14) and Claire Martin with Dave Newton (Dec. 10-11).

Claire and Dave are part of the programme for the Crazy Coqs, too. On October 19 they form the first part of two concerts on one evening, Dave returning later in duo format with Alan Barnes. Also at the Crazy Coqs Joanna Eden celebrates 50

Years of the classic Joni Mitchell album, *Blue*, on October 13 and a fine October programme is completed by the Darius Brubeck Quartet with Dave O'Higgins (22) and Elaine Delmar with a tribute to Lena Horne (28).

A new venue for JBGB's Jazz Cabaret is Piano Smithfield, a stylish 75-seater venue equipped with a first-class Yamaha piano. JBGB take over for five successive Wednesdays. James Hudson is accompanied by Nick Finch and Rob Barron on The

JAZZ AT THE ALBERT HALL

The Late Night Jazz series in the Elgar Room at The Royal Albert Hall has an excellent and varied programme leading up to Christmas. October 7 sees an appearance from Empirical, one of the most stimulating of British small groups since their formation in 2007. Further October concerts features two fascinating vocal talents. Desta Haile (21) is a multi-lingual storyteller in song who represented Eritrea in the Universal Music Earth Orchestra Project, while Dele Dube (28) won the Sarah Vaughan Vocal Competition in 2016, the only British singer to do so. In December the ever-entertaining Earl Okin (2) is followed by a Christmas double-header: the outstanding young trumpeter Alexandra Ridout, with BBC Young Jazz Musician and British Jazz Awards Rising Star awards behind her, brings her quintet to the Elgar Room on December 22, followed by a Vintage Christmas Show the

following night with The Shirt Tail Stompers. In the main auditorium an annual highlight is Guy Barker's Big Band Christmas, with an outstanding roster of guest stars. This year the date for your diary is December 10.

CLASSIC JAZZ AT LA GRANDE MOTTE

Jean-Pierre Dubois, best known in the UK as the banjo player with the Hot Antic Jazz Band, writes to tell us of a new jazz festival on the Mediterranean coast of France. The first classic jazz festival at La Grande Motte, near Montpellier, is scheduled for July 1-3 next year. The festival covers jazz of the 1920s and 1930s, from ragtime to swing and manouche, and the model is the Whitley Bay Festival, with added Mediterranean features such as open air stages and jazz boats.

TUBBY HAYES: A CELEBRATION

60 years ago British jazz legend Tubby Hayes debuted in New York, playing Manhattan's Half Note Club to an audience that included Miles Davis. Not

Jean-Pierre is helping to recruit suitable bands for the inaugural festival and invites bands with a suitable repertoire to

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STABLES BACK IN FULL ACTION

The Autumn programme at the Stables, Wavendon, is as busy and varied as ever, with many postponed events re-scheduled. As it happens, there are fewer evening jazz events than usual: Fergus McCreadie Trio (Stage 2, October 8), Swinging at the

Cotton Club (November 5) and Christian Garrick's Budapest Café Orchestra (December 8) before Alec and Jacqui Dankworth continue a tradition of more than 50 years with The Dankworth Christmas Show (10-11), the last three shows all in the Jim Marshall Auditorium.

However, the jazz content of the Stables programme is much more than evening concerts. The educational side to the Stables' work recurs constantly, notably in two six-session courses on Sunday mornings/afternoons, both beginning on October 10: Jazz Experience for Beginners and Young Players Jazz Exploration. Furthermore the Sunday day-time sessions in the Mancini Forum continue with the Clark Tracey Sextet on November 21.

JAZZ AT THE CONCORDE

Jazz is clearly back on the agenda at Eastleigh's Concorde Club, though the regular Wednesday Jazz Night/Sunday Traditional Jazz for dancing routine has not resumed. The traditional jazz sessions are more irregular, but there are several extra Thursday sessions. October 6/7 is one of the two-jazz weeks, Louise Revolta's Celebration of Ella Fitzgerald on Wednesday followed by King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys on Thursday.

Another double is Martin Taylor and Ulf Wakenius (Oct. 20) and Snake Davis: Classic Sax Solos (21). Other Wednesday dates are the TJ Johnson Band (Oct. 13), Clare Teal and her Sextet (27) and Peter White and his Band (November 10). The Savannah Jazz Band are booked for a Sunday gig on October 17.

RONNIE'S PROGRAMME

The stream of Americans to Ronnie Scott's may flow less freely in these Covid-stressed days, but the club still has a fine programme for October and November. October 9 is an early highlight, with Nigel Price launching his album, *Wes Reimagined*. Later October gigs include the Billy Hart Quartet featuring Ethan Iverson (12), Pee Wee Ellis celebrating his 80th birthday (15-16), the Espen Eriksen Trio (20), the Callum Au Big Band with special guest Ian Mackenzie (24) and Linda May Han Oh with Fabian Almazon, Greg Ward and Ziv Ravitz (25). November includes an album launch with Orlando Le Fleming (4), 11 nights of the EFG London Jazz Festival with such names as the Richard Bona and Alfredo Rodriguez Band (11-12), Christian Sands (13)

and the Kathrine Winfeld Sextet (15), then after the Festival the Marius Neset Quintet (23) and three nights of Kenny Garrett (24-26). There are also a couple of nice Sunday lunch sessions in November: Digby Fairweather and Friends (7) and the Simon Spillett Quartet with the music of Tubby Hayes (14).

www.ronniescotts.co.uk

KING PLEASURE ON HOME SOIL

With so many cancellations and re-schedulings of European festival dates, King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys are confined to UK dates for the foreseeable future. Among them are Aberystwyth Arts Centre (October 6), Eastleigh's Concorde Club (7), the Pizza Express in Soho (23), the Regal Theatre, Tenbury Wells (29), the Pizza Express, Birmingham (30), Lichfield Guildhall (November 13) and The Place, Telford (24). Tel.: 0121 454 7020

www.bigbearmusic.com

JAZZ WEEKENDS FLOURISHING AGAIN

Two ever-reliable sources of traditional jazz weekends have swung into action for the Autumn. Both Pete Lay's Jazz Festivals for Warner Leisure Hotels and Venture Away Jazz Weekends work to the admirable principle of attractive seaside settings and five or six good jazz bands. Venture Away follow up a September weekend in Blackpool with their 7th Devon Jazz Weekend at the Grand Hotel, Torquay, on November 5-8. Bands lined up are Baby Jools and the Jazzaholics, the Dart Valley Stompers, the Eagle Jazz Band, John Shillito's Riviera Ramblers and New Orleans Heat. The Jazzaholics are also on the list for Warner's festival at Sinah Warren, Hayling Island, on October 15-18, in company with John Maddocks Jazzmen, The Tenement Jazz Band, the Gambit Jazzmen, the Southern Revival New Orleans Jazzmen and the Savannah Jazz Band.

www.ventureawaymusicweekends.co.uk

(Torquay)

email petegambit@gmail.com

(Sinah Warren)

SALUTE TO HUMPH TOUR

Chris Hodgkins has assembled an Anglo-American 10-piece band to celebrate Humphrey Lyttelton's centenary with a



tour from November 18 to December 5, Chris sharing trumpet duties with Henry Lowther. In addition to the band's performance, there is a travelling exhibition, including a multi-media presentation. Among confirmed dates are Newcastle Arts Centre (Nov. 20), Pizza Express, London, as part of the EFG London Jazz Festival (21), Wemsfest (23), Subscription Rooms, Stroud (25), Calstock Arts (26), Pizza Express, Birmingham (27), Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis (Dec. 3) and Connaught Theatre, Worthing (4). www.chrishodgkins.co.uk

ABERDEEN HONOURS BILL KEMP

The Aberdeen Jazz Festival devoted one evening to saluting one of the greatest Aberdonian jazz musicians, drummer Bill Kemp, who was a mainstay of every leading Aberdeen jazz group from the 1960s to the 2020s and played regularly with many national and international stars. Bill died in April and *We Love You, Bill* on October 1 commemorated his work.

The Festival itself continues, with the second weekend highlights including trumpeter Colin Steele leading an all-star quintet at the Blue Lamp on October 7 and

JAZZ IN THE NORTH EAST

Of all the areas in the country, the North East seems to have revived its jazz scene most comprehensively post-Covid, though the much-loved Mike Durham Classic Jazz Party has fallen victim to pandemic restrictions. For example, no fewer than the area has no fewer than eight weekly lunch-time residencies for jazz and swing bands, the Vieux Carre Jazzmen responsible for three of them: Cullercoats Crescent Club (Wednesday), The Holystone (Thursday) and Spanish City, Whitley Bay (Sunday). www.clarktracey.com

Major evening venues include the Sage Gateshead, with attractions including the Nikki Iles Jazz Orchestra (October 9), Michael Feinstein (22) and Madeleine Peyroux (November 10). The Mick Shoulder Quartet (October 22), the Matt Forster Quartet (November 19) and Paul Edis and Matt Anderson (December 17) play the Lit & Phil in Newcastle and the Newcastle Jazz Co-op at The Globe has the most crowded programme of all. A brief sample comes up with the Dean Stockdale Trio (October 10), Vula Viel (17), the Washboard Resonators (November 3), Emma Johnson's Gravy Boat (28)

Fergus McCreadie



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ENTERTAINMENT

Madeleine Peyroux



singer Irini Arabatz and pianist Fergus McCreadie playing the same venue two days later. www.aberdeenzjazzfestival.com

CLARK TRACEY SEXTET ON THE ROAD

Once the exertions of the Herts Jazz Festival is over, Clark Tracey takes his latest sextet on the road on a 60th birthday tour of England: Kenilworth Rugby Club (November 1), Wakefield Jazz (5), 606, London (6), Watermill Jazz, Dorking (9), The Musician, Leicester (11), 1000 Trades, Birmingham (12), Peggy's Skylight, Nottingham (13), Herts Jazz (14), Seven Arts, Leeds (18), The Stables, Wavendon (21 – lunch-time), The Tin, Coventry (25), Progress Theatre, Reading (26) and Crookes, Sheffield (December 3). www.clarktracey.com

WES REIMAGINED AT RONNIE'S

The Nigel Price Trio gig at Ronnie Scott's on October 9 features the full guest line-up from his Wes Reimagined album. Other upcoming dates on the tour, some featuring guest saxophonists Vasilis Xenopoulos and Tony Kofi, take the trio to Stratford Jazz (October 13), Hen and Chickens, Bristol (14), Oxford Jazz Society (19), Scarborough Jazz Club (20), Seven Arts, Leeds (21), Peggy's Skylight, Nottingham (23), Jazz Experience, Marlow (November 4) and Herts Jazz (7). www.nigelprice.biz

AROUND THE CLUBS

Many jazz clubs have still to re-open their doors after Covid restrictions, but we are delighted that a sizeable proportion are back in action, among them....

Plymouth Jazz Club

Twice monthly Sunday evening jazz at The Royal British Legion Club with The Pete Canter Quartet (October 3), John Shillito's Riviera Ramblers (17), Greg Abate and the Craig Milverton Quartet (November 7) and The Carlton Big Band (21). www.plymouth-jazz-club.org.uk



Photo by Merlin Daleman

Hassocks Jazz Club

October 12 and every second Tuesday in the Hassocks Hotel – Muskrat Ramblers. 01444 241603

Dove Holes Jazz Club

Doctor Butler's Hatstand Medicine Band at the Community Centre on October 16. www.dovejazzclub.co.uk

Pump House Jazz Club, Watford

Weekly Thursday night jazz with Washington Whirligig (October 7), the T.J. Johnson Band (14), John Maddocks' Jazzmen (21) and Gambit Jazzmen (28). Enquiries: pumphouse.jazz@virginmedia.com

Scarborough Jazz

Jazz every Wednesday at the Cask, including the Nigel Price Trio (October 20) and the Nishla Smith Quartet (27). www.scarboroughjazz.co.uk

Nottingham Rhythm Club

Thursday night jazz with Ken Godrey's Central Jazz Band (October 14), Richard Leach's Street Band (November 4) and the Eagle Jazz Band (25). www.nrcjazz.co.uk

Colchester Jazz Club

Sunday evening jazz every week at Marks Tey Parish Hall with Mike Barry's New Uptown Gang (October 3), Sarah Spencer's Transatlantic Band (10), the Pedigree Jazz Band (17), Kevin Scott's Jazz Band (24) and New Orleans Heat (31). www.colchesterjazzclub.co.uk

Old Barn Hall, Great Bookham

Weekly Sunday lunch-time jazz with the Tenement Jazz Band (October 10), the Golden Eagle Jazz Band (24) and New Orleans Heat (31). No jazz on October 3

and 17 – otherwise every week in 2021 except December 26. Email mickywelstead@gmail.com

Amersham Jazz Club

Traditional jazz every Wednesday evening at the Beaconsfield Football Club. www.amershamjazzclub.co.uk

The Irby Club, Wirral

1st and 3rd Wednesday nights with The Original Panama Jazz Band. www.irbyclub.co.uk

Watermill Jazz, Dorking

Tuesday night jazz at Betchworth Park Golf Club, resuming on October 5 with the Alan Barnes/ Mark Nightingale Quintet, followed, among others by the American quintet of Linda May Han Oh (26) and Chris Hodgkins' Salute to Humphrey Lyttelton (November 30). www.watermilljazz.co.uk

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LONDON CELEBRATES JAZZ

RON SIMPSON previews the EFG London Jazz Festival.

Where would you expect to hear a large jazz ensemble of multi-instrumentalists, containing within it a saxophone quartet, a string group and a choir? Where else but the EFG London Jazz Festival? The band is Jason Yarde's modestly named ACOUTASTIC BOMBASTIC and they are playing the Purcell Room on November 19.

The scale of the festival makes previewing a perplexing operation. Do you start with the astonishing array of great venues available? Or the return of Festival favourites, such as Guy Barker's *Jazz Voice* concert which regularly opens the Festival (Royal Festival Hall, Nov. 12) with Guy leading the Festival Big Band and a (still to be announced) selection of star singers? Or simply list the numbers of award-winning artists, from Brad Mehldau to Cecile McLorin Salvant?

Or find themes and threads that run through the Festival? Like, for instance, the number of highly original duo performances. Clashing with the *Jazz Voice* concert (the London Festival forces difficult choices) is *Let My People Go at The Barbican*, an exploration of the African American cultural tradition, inspired by such diverse jazz icons as Duke Ellington, Fats Waller and Thelonious Monk.

The musicians concerned are Archie Shepp and Jason Moran, two visionary musicians and educators from different generations. 84-year-old Shepp, a major figure in free jazz from

the 1960s, played with such jazz legends as John Coltrane (including the *Love Supreme* session) and the Sun Ra Arkestra and first recorded under his own name in 1962 – nearly 60 years later the duo album with Jason Moran was his most recent.

If Archie Shepp is also known as a civil rights activist and student of the African heritage, pianist Jason Moran, nearly 40 years his junior, is equally known for multimedia installations. His musical range stretches from classical to hip hop and takes in most forms of jazz, from Harlem stride to the avant garde. Should be an interesting combination!

On November 14 at Kings Place it's the turn of Cleveland Watkiss and Django Bates. Unlike Shepp and Moran they are of an age and came to prominence in the 1980s with two very different, and highly influential, jazz collectives, Jazz Warriors and Loose Tubes respectively. Each of them has pursued a career that has branched out in unconventional ways. Watkiss encompasses a huge range of vocal styles, from taking the lead in two jazz operas by Julian Joseph to a current programme highlighting The Great Jamaican Songbook. Bates has a huge reputation in Europe, where he picked up the prestigious Jazzpar Prize, and is as well known as a composer as he is as a pianist – and even adds the tenor horn as a quirky second instrument.

At Kings Place they unite in a programme with the refreshingly cosy title of *Arts and Crafts*, taking

advantage of their different musical heritage to explore Afro-Caribbean, American and English folk traditions in song and improvisation.

On the same night at Cadogan Hall another duo gig reunites two ex-Miles Davis sidemen, bassist Dave Holland and guitarist John Scofield whose distinguished solo careers have overlapped before, for instance, on a 2003 recording by a group with the ungainly name of ScoLoHoFo – add in saxist Joe Lovano and drummer Al Foster and you get the picture!

Scrolling through the Festival programme – and noting in passing an outbreak of outstanding pianists, Vijay Iyer, Shai Maestro and the rest – I lighted on some more than interesting programmes with a literary or historical source. *The Westbrook Blake* is a good example of the ease with which major work can be neglected. The album of Mike Westbrook's settings of Blake poems was released in 1980 to a torrent of praise: The *Independent on Sunday*'s 'perhaps the greatest work in all British jazz' was only the tip of an iceberg of acclaim. Now it is unavailable on CD.

It can, however, be heard at Cadogan Hall on November 19 with the original singers Kate Westbrook and Phil Minton. The London Festival is celebrating Mike Westbrook's 85th birthday, with two additional events at the Pizza Express: solo piano on Nov. 14 (lunch-time) and appearing with Kate Westbrook and the Granite Band on Nov. 17.

The Black Pearl (also Nov. 19 – Barbican) is a re-working of Soweto Kinch's suite which premiered at the London Festival two years ago, now presented in a full orchestral version with The London Symphony Orchestra and a jazz group. Based on social and racial unrest in the years following the 1918 Armistice, it draws on ragtime, proto-jazz and classical music by black composers from the 1920s right through to contemporary styles such as hip hop.

All that in 10 days and I never got round to mentioning Dianne Reeves... or Avishai Cohen... or Charles Lloyd...

Never mind! It's all on the website.

www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk



Archie Shepp

PETER IND [1928-2021]

An appreciation by PETER VACHER

Like most jazz festivals, London is increasingly aware of anniversaries, tributes and retrospective. Partly this is due to what is now a long history of the music, partly to a growing wish to commemorate great musicians or sessions, partly to festivals becoming more inclusive of other musics. I can't help being tempted by Piazzolla x 100, celebrating the centenary of Astor Piazzolla, the great tango composer and bandoneon player. Piazzolla's music has haunted the fringes of jazz for some time, notably with Richard Galliano; and this concert (Wigmore Hall, Nov. 17) is in the capable hands of a quartet led by Piazzolla's grandson Daniel and featuring bandoneon player Claudio Constantini.

Also drawing on music outside the jazz sphere, the 24-piece Nu Civilisation commemorates the 50th anniversary of Marvin Gaye's album, *What's Going On*, with a contemporary response at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on November 18.

A couple of more personal tributes commemorate towering figures who have left us in the last couple of years. A retrospective of the outstanding Afrobeat drummer, Tony Allen, who died last year (Nov. 13 – Royal Festival Hall) has been curated by no fewer than four people (writer Ben Okri and producer Remi Kabaka in addition to musicians Damon Albarn and Femi Koleoso) which suggests comprehensive coverage of the many aspects of Allen's work. Finally on November 15 Kings Place hosts a re-creation of one of the most successful albums of Chick Corea who died this year. Tim Garland played on the original album, *Vigil*, which reached Number 4 on the Billboard jazz charts and received a Latin Jazz Grammy. Garland is back in action at Kings Place, with Jason Rebello in the piano chair.

'The one thing I would hope never to lose is my love of playing. One simple note just laid down with that real joy is worth a hundred fast licks,' he told *Crescendo* writer Les Tomkins in 1980.

That love of playing was first kindled in suburban Middlesex, where Peter was born on 20 July 1928, his parents encouraging him to tackle violin at first and then piano, at which he was adept enough to be playing local gigs for servicemen as a 14-year old. He went on to take evening

classes in music and harmony at Trinity College, doubling on piano and double bass, and forsook the piano for the bass two years later. Having been taught by Tim Bell, who had devised his own approach to bass technique, he next studied with the classical bassist James Merrett and learnt his way around the classical repertoire. Set on becoming a professional musician, he played in palais bands and then with pianist Joe Saye's trio in 1949 and was briefly with the somewhat uproarious Tommy Sampson band later the same year.

His breakthrough in jazz terms came when he turned down a symphony orchestra job offer also in 1949 to join Geraldo's Navy aboard the liner *Queen Mary*, living a life of luxury and making regular return trips to New York over a three-year period. Arguably it was the presence of open-minded fellow members of the ship's band like pianist Ronnie Ball or tenorist Gray Allard and later, Dill Jones and Bruce Turner that opened his eyes to improvised music.

In his later years, after a stroke had rearranged his facial muscles and he had grown his whitened hair to biblical lengths, he must have appeared like some ancient Methuselah to those who knew little of his achievements. Put him on a bandstand and the years seemed to drop away. Happy to play into his nineties, even if he did sometimes need a 'breather', he could still hold his own with younger musicians, and was open-minded enough to appreciate newer forms of the music, provided that they evinced the necessary 'energy' and avoided any kind of easy search for success.

Back briefly in the UK, he worked with Kenny Baker before emigrating to the USA in April 1951, keen to cement his association with Tristano and achieved a level of success as both a performer and teacher that seems in retrospect like a jazzman's dream come true. He toured with Konitz, played with Coleman Hawkins and Roy Eldridge whenever they had a gig, appeared with Red Allen at the Metropole and travelled with the ever-strenuous Buddy Rich, and set up his own recording studio, the impromptu tapes he recorded there later appearing as Wave releases, this his own label. He also engineered sessions for

other jazz labels and began to teach fellow bassists (including Charles Mingus) the secrets of his classical technique. Once the New York scene became less rewarding artistically, he and his family moved to Big Sur in California, Ind taking his easel and canvases out into the countryside and painting, while teaching music and taking the occasional solo recital gig.

Having returned to Britain in 1966, Ind was active as a freelance, the ideal foil for the likes of Marsh and Konitz when they visited and again organised his own recording studio, adding impressively to his Wave catalogue. He built a new studio in Hoxton, later adapting the premises to become the Bass Clef Club, which majored in Latin and Afro-Caribbean music before opening a smaller room upstairs as the Tenor Clef, where he brought in key US jazz soloists. I recall seeing superb players like trumpeter Benny Bailey and saxophonists Jerome Richardson and Sal Nisticò there while spotting politician Ken Clarke in the late-night crowd. This halcyon period lasted some ten years from 1984 until a series of financial disasters overtook the club and it crashed and Ind with it. With Ind like a benign headmaster, it had offered 'affordable food and beer' and bravura music, he sometimes sitting in, the atmosphere redolent of the 52nd Street clubs that had first entranced Ind in New York and giving Hoxton its initial kickstart into gentrification.



Thereafter although much scarred by the club's demise, Ind continued to paint, taking a house in France, wrote his memoir/study of Tristano, espoused the teaching of Wilhelm Reich and became a patriarchal figure in British jazz, still keen to participate, playing in a variety of styles, and only faltering when his health declined. He died on the 20 August 2021, survived by his second wife, the academic Sue Jones.

The great US bassist Rufus Reid, who knew Peter well and recorded a lively duo album with him, captured his special qualities beautifully: 'Peter Ind had an amazing life that was multi-layered. Peter was the epitome of a renaissance man. He is, I think, mostly known as a bassist, but he was an excellent visual artist and a published author, as well. I was always impressed at his energy once he set his mind to complete his various projects.'

'He and his wife, Sue, spent time with us in our home, so we became close during that period. Peter Ind was a very humorous individual, loved life and lived a full life, on top of being a great bassist. I will always remember his vast spirit of life. May he rest in peace.'

'You can cram a lot into in to 77 years if you don't sleep much,' Ind said in 2005. Same goes for 93 years too.'

STARTING A NEW LIFE

After a professional career of more than 60 years, guitarist JIM DOUGLAS is retiring, but not to a pipe-and-slippers lifestyle in the Home Counties. As RON SIMPSON found, he's off halfway round the world – to the Philippines!

Actually Jim's relocation is less a step into the unknown than might appear at first – his son is settled in the Philippines and running his own IT company – but it brings to an end a career in Britain, Europe and the States that began with pipe bands and skiffle in the 1950s and took in playing with many of the true greats of the jazz world.

Jim is best remembered for his 18 years with the Alex Welsh Band, still named as their favourite British band of the period by many fans and musicians, but, when I suggest he was very young when he joined Alex, Jim pulls me up short:

'There was a lot before Alex. When I was 15 ½ the skiffle thing started. I pestered my mother to get me a guitar which I've still got. It cost 4 pounds, 9 shillings and sixpence – it was imported from Italy and it was a terrible guitar, but I learned to play and joined a skiffle group. I was at school and Pete Kerr and I were in a pipe band – I played drums and he played the pipes – and he played clarinet and we were both keen on jazz, so we started a jazz band called The Hidden Town Dixielanders (named for home-town Haddington) which turned into The Capital Jazz Band, based in Edinburgh. I was very fortunate in the early days because the trumpeter had been with the Forces in Germany and he came

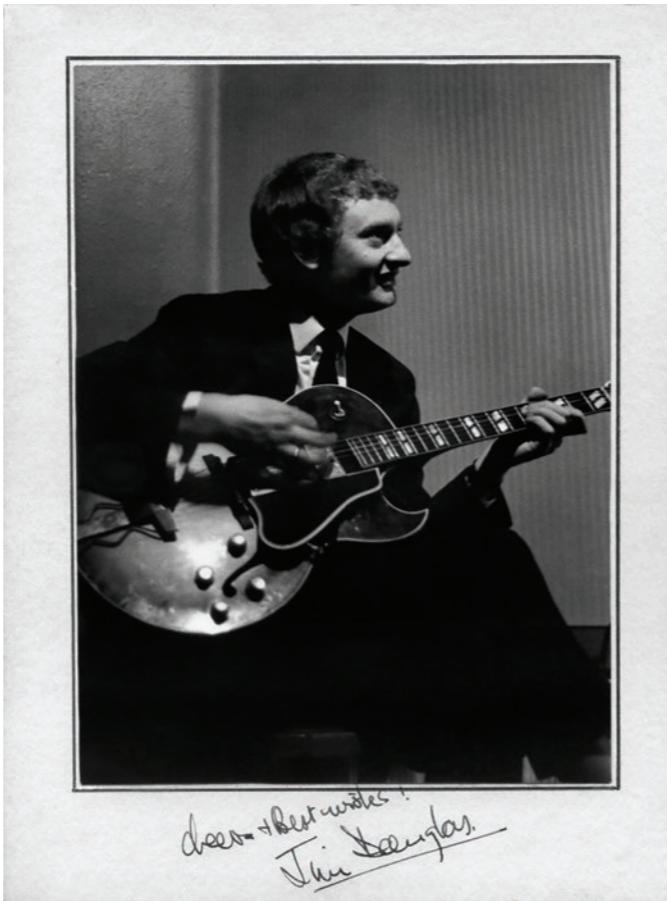
Ask Jim his original inspirations as a guitarist and the first name up is a fine player rather forgotten these days, Teddy Bunn, followed by more predictable influences, Django, Charlie Christian and, inevitably, Barney Kessel – I only met him once and it was very flattering. He was on a tour here and playing Hatfield. I went to see him in the interval and said, "Good evening, Mr. Kessel. My name's Jim Douglas." And he said,



Clyde Valley Stompers: full line-up Pete Kerr (clarinet), Joe McIntosh (trumpet), John McGuff (trombone), Bert Murray (piano), Jim (banjo and guitar), Bill Bain (bass), Robbie Winters (drums)

back with a very good chord book, all the jazz standards with chord sequences, and that helped me immensely.

'I turned professional when I was 17 ½ to go to Germany with Pete and The Capital Jazz Band. We played a couple of months in Germany, then, when we got back, the Trad Boom had started, with Acker Bilk and the rest, and the Clyde Valley Stompers had come to London by invitation of Lonnie Donegan. Some of the band got homesick and went back to Glasgow and that left vacancies for a clarinet and banjo player and Pete and I got the jobs. We had the semi-hit with *Peter and the Wolf* in 1964 and we were on the Beatles' first television show, *Thank Your Lucky Stars*, which starred Billy Fury. At first I was playing banjo with the Clydes, but their sound started to change somewhat: we brought Bert Murray in on piano and I began to play more guitar.'



"Yes, I know." He was a colossal player, did things on the guitar no one else ever did.'

Jim had always been ambitious to make music his career and had always planned to move to London from his home near Edinburgh. Eventually he hitched a lift in a British Road Service lorry, headed south and made straight for the Blue Posts pub:

'The first person I ran into was Diz Disley who was a bit of a hero to me. I got a beer and introduced myself to him. When I said I was a fan of his, he said, "Ah, dear boy! Lend me three pounds and we'll talk about work." I had seven pounds on me and I lent it to him and never got it back – but I got it back in kind because I started doing broadcasts with him and played with Stephane Grappelli through him. In the Blue Posts that evening Cyril Preston, who played trombone with Dick Charlesworth, heard me and said, "Where are you staying tonight?"



'I think the difference between the Alex Welsh Band and others at the time lay in Alex himself and Lennie Hastings. Alex was a good strong lead and a very good judge of talent. He had a great band with Archie, Roy Crimmins and Fred Hunt, then he came back again with John Barnes, Roy Williams, Al Gay, myself and Fred Hunt again, eventually Brian Lemon. As a soloist Fred was a bit too busy for me, but he could control the rhythm section – he was a very fine pianist in the rhythm section. The other thing that made the band so popular

was that we started doing all these tours with the Americans.'

Jim went on to list a remarkable collection of great jazzmen who toured with the Alex Welsh Band, mostly stars of the 1930s who were still going strong in the 1960s: Henry 'Red' Allen, Earl Hines, Wild Bill Davison, Bud Freeman, Pee Wee Russell, Ruby Braff, Vic Dickenson, Ben Webster, Eddie Miller, Rex Stewart, Peanuts Hucko, Dickie Wells.

'All their different styles brought something new to our band.'



We had to show we were equal to them. The one who made the biggest impression on me was Red Allen. He replaced Jack Teagarden who was too ill to come – he died soon afterwards. I didn't know what to expect with Henry – I was quite ignorant about him – and he took me by storm, just blew me away. And suddenly I was soloing – I'd never been much of a soloist, more of a rhythm guitarist, but Henry would turn round to me and call a solo or he'd stop a number and make me play a cadenza – it was a whole new world and I started

to get noticed. He was the most influential and he came for four tours, though on the last he was very ill with pancreatic cancer.

'I liked Eddie Miller a lot – he was a lovely player – and Bud was very extrovert, very full of himself, and did some wonderful things. Ruby was very influential for me, started using me in some numbers, just the two of us. Ruby was always very good to me despite his reputation. Of course he fell out spectacularly with (guitarist) George Barnes, but he was just as cranky as Ruby. Ruby

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RETROSPECTIVE

introduced me to him at Ronnie Scott's, but he just grunted – yet he and Ruby made such beautiful music together. Ruby was always a nice man to us, but he wouldn't stand for musical fools. One time in Bath broke the ice between me and Ruby. You never knew what he was going to play, sometimes he just started playing and you had to follow him, and this time he said, "Just Jim", which meant it was just the two of us, and he called *There's a Small Hotel*. He knew I didn't know the middle eight, so he came over to me and played the arpeggios of the chords – and I got it. At the end of the number he gave me a special hand.

'As a reward for all these tours we were booked to play at the 1968 Newport Jazz Festival accompanying Ruby Braff, Pee Wee Russell, Bud Freeman and Joe Venuti. We were on for an hour and a half, we opened the Saturday night and, when we started, there were 1,000 people there, when we finished there were 18,000. All these great writers such as Dan Morgenstern were there and at the end of our set the next band on was the Ellington Band. They were setting up behind us and, as we were finishing with *Royal Garden Blues*, they joined in – it was a fantastic sound! When Lennie Hastings was doing his "Oo-yah! Oo-yah!" I thought Johnny Hodges would have a fit, he was laughing so much.'

Jim spent 18 years with Alex Welsh, one of several stalwarts who are remembered for extended stints with the band. One thing that has long puzzled me is the fact that no bass player seems to have stayed long. We all remember the late Ron Matthewson, but his time with Alex was actually very short. Jim offers a reason for the rapid turnover of bassists:

'The reason was Lennie Hastings was heavy on his bass drum pedal. In those days basses weren't amplified, so the bassists couldn't hear themselves and got fed up. Ron Matthewson only lasted a year, then Ronnie Rae came in, but he went back to Edinburgh and Ron came back, but he soon left to join Tubby Hayes. He wasn't with the band long, but the mark he left was incredible – he was a colossal bass player. Ronnie

did a second spell, then it was Harvey Weston. He was the first to have an amplifier, so he stayed a bit longer.'

As Alex's health declined, he was unable to maintain his band and Jim started to find work with different bands. With Keith Smith's Hefty Jazz he was involved in two major touring shows: *Let's Do It* with Elaine Delmar and Paul Jones and a Louis Armstrong tribute with George Chisholm. He did a tour of East Germany with the Dave Shepherd Sextet: Roger Nobes, Brian Lemon, Len Skeat and Stan Bourke – Jim remembers 'a hell of a CD' the band recorded in Leipzig. The 1980s were proving productive for Jim, with a British Jazz Award, joining the original handpicked line-up of the Billie Holiday tribute, *Lady Sings the Blues*, and figuring in such high-profile gigs as the original Mitchells & Butlers Jam Session in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, alongside the likes of Humphrey Lyttelton, Dick Morrissey and Roy Williams. Then came The Great British Jazz Band with Pete Strange and Digby Fairweather.

Jim Douglas is a man of varied abilities. Twice in his career (once as a breathing space after 18 years on the road, once when Jim reached official retirement age, not a milestone generally observed by jazz musicians!) he has tried to change tack to become a chef – successfully, too – before the offers of gigs lured him back. After leaving the kitchen of the Rose and Crown, Woburn, Jim has freelanced with a variety of bands and recently co-led Shades of Jazz – described by Jim as 'a pot-pourri of styles' – with drummer Graham Smith until the pandemic intervened.

He is also a published author, having written two books and being part way through a third. *Tunes, Tours and Travelitis*, based on a diary Jim kept with the Alex Welsh Band, sold well enough to encourage Jim to embark on a follow-up, *Teenage to Travelitis*, going a bit further back in time, starting with skiffle and the Clydes. With both still selling well on Amazon, Jim has embarked on an account of his life from the 1980s. Only half-finished, the third part of Jim's trilogy will be one of his projects in the Philippines, together with building

a recording studio and playing gigs at local jazz cafes.

Once a final gig at a pub a couple of hundred yards from his house fell through thanks to Covid restrictions it looks likely that Jim's time as a jazz guitarist had come to an end by the time we talked. 'I've had a wonderful time, wouldn't change a thing', is his verdict on 60-plus years, playing with many of the great names in jazz and seeing the world, including nine visits to East Germany with three different bands – 'we were treated very well, concerts were packed, but the difficulty was finding anything to spend your money on – we gave a lot of it away.'

Jim can look back on such highlights as a six-week tour with Stephane Grappelli ('he could be a bit crotchety, but he was fine if you did what he wanted') and recording sessions with such big names as the Vache Brothers and Bob Haggart, plus quartering the map of Europe with various bands, going back to the days of visas before the joy of free access that we have just lost.

Finally, with some trepidation, I asked about the volatile combination of Lennie Hastings and Germany. For younger readers it should be explained that Lennie was the great showman drummer of the British jazz scene of the 1950s onwards. He was known not only for his dynamic drumming, but for an attitude to life that resolutely rejected the 'Don't mention the war!' philosophy. Apart from his 'Oo-yah! Oo-yah!' vocal breaks, he was known for his cod German accent and impressions of Adolf Hitler and the great Austrian tenor Richard Tauber (complete with half-crown in

his eye as a monocle). Did the Germans get the joke?

The "Oo-yah!" thing started in Germany. It wasn't really Lennie who started it. It was Chris Staunton (one of the many bassists to play with Alex). In the New Orleans Bierbar in Dusseldorf there was a door on stage that led to stairs down to the bar. Chris was leaning against the door and it opened. He fell backwards and, as he went, he gave a strangled cry of "Oooohyaah!". So, in his drum break, Lennie went "Oooohyaah! Oooohyaah!" and that's where it all started.

'On tour Lennie would take two Grundig tape recorders and sometimes a record player and he would set up the two tape recorders, one with Hitler ranting and raving, one with Churchill saying, "We will fight them on the beaches", and then the record player would have Richard Tauber singing *You Are My Heart's Delight* – all at the same time while he was dressed up like Hitler.'

'One time we were in Dusseldorf and it was *Fasching*, carnival time. I was looking out of my hotel window into the market square where there was a German oompah band and I spotted John and Roy and they were clutching themselves laughing. Roy caught my eye and I looked round and spotted Hastings completely dressed as Hitler marching up and down his balcony in time to the band. He could have been locked up!'

The Filipinos may not know it yet, but they have some tasty jazz guitar to look forward to – and a host of stories!



In the beginning...
The Hidden Town
Dixielanders

BIRMINGHAM IN JULY (AND AUGUST)

After last year's scaled down Autumn festival, The Birmingham Sandwell and Westside Jazz Festival returned to something approaching normal this year. Back in its normal July dates, the Festival staged 135 events, a natural reduction owing to the number of venues unable to function because of the pandemic, but a sizeable festival in anyone's book.

Similarly the Festival's Photography Project, always generously sponsored by Calthorpe Estates, was deprived of regular photographer-at-large Merlin Daleman from the Netherlands. Once again home-grown talent stepped up to the plate, with KARL NEWTON producing some striking Festival images.



Simon Spillett Quartet



Alan Barnes



Florence Joelle



Roy Forbes and
Chickenbone John



Art Themen with Shufflepack



Digby Fairweather



Tipitina

THE LYTTELTON LEGACY

ALAN BARNES celebrates HUMPHREY LYTTELTON's centenary

Humphrey Lyttelton was a trumpeter, bandleader, calligrapher, cartoonist, writer, critic, journalist, broadcaster; and, in his own words, 'a clarinetist in Bb'.

His talents in any of the above fields, except perhaps for the last, would have served anyone else through a successful career; but the fact that he excelled in all of them placed him in a unique position in the hearts of jazz audiences in the UK and further afield.

There was a time when jazz groups were part of popular culture: Kenny Ball could be seen regularly on the Morecambe and Wise Show, Chris Barber launched the British skiffle boom with Lonnie Donegan, Acker Bilk's *Stranger on the Shore* became a hit single and even as dedicated a modernist as Tubby Hayes hosted his own television show.

Lyttelton's *Bad Penny Blues* did make it to number 19 before 'falling back exhausted'. He always put this success down to Joe Meek mixing the track in the trumpeter's absence and making the drums louder than normal.

'Humph', as he was affectionately known, led bands for around 60 years, drawing substantial audiences of not only jazz fans, but people from a wider base who knew him through his background, his newspaper and magazine columns and his broadcasts.

To his irritation much was made in certain quarters of his origins, being born and educated at Eton where his father George was a well-known housemaster. We are all still aware of Old Etonian leadership in this country, but Humph always had an empathy, understanding, sensitivity and interest in others not always associated with such beginnings. No real fan of jazz but with a ready sense of the ridiculous, George loved to have his son read the personnel to him from discographies of early jazz, names such as 'Limon Vunc' reducing him to tears of laughter. Towards the end of his life George was advised by his doctor to lose a few pounds in weight to which he asked, 'Have I not all eternity to diet?'

Over many centuries, the Lyttelton family distinguished themselves in many fields including politics, the church and the military, but noticeably not music. Another of the many Humphreys in the family managed to get himself hanged, drawn and quartered for his part in the gunpowder plot. It would have been nice if clarinetist

Wally Fawkes, a mainstay of the trumpeter's early bands, had turned out to be a descendant of Guy Fawkes, but sadly there is no such evidence.

Humph would divide the 'Hooray Henry' members of his audience (a phrase that originated with Damon Runyon) into the 'Barkers' with their staccato woofs of 'Humph, Humph!' and 'Laughers' with their low chuckles 'Ha, ha, Humph, ha, ha!', something which we saw enacted on many occasions.

Initially, and unpromisingly, playing mouth organ in his own jazz band at school, at the age of 15 he saw the light, skipped off from the Eton and Harrow cricket match and purchased a trumpet in the Charing Cross Road. He soon managed to pick out the notes of the second strain of *Basin Street Blues* as played by his idol Louis Armstrong.

He had real skills in dealing with the different personalities and eccentricities in his ensembles, once notably saying, 'I do know I'm not dealing with angels.'

He also liked to debunk the idea beloved of many listeners that great jazz soloists have to also be loveable characters, stating, 'Jazz men, particularly those who have fought their way to the top, are about as cuddly as man-eating tigers.'

Perhaps the most eccentric of his sidemen was Bruce Turner who joined the band in 1955 and inspired the 'Go Home Dirty Bopper' banner at a Birmingham concert, an event which decided Lyttelton to move on forever from 'Trad' jazz. Bruce once said in the jazz press that he never had a chance to talk to Humph and could only communicate with him by letter. On the next gig Humph solemnly and silently presented him with a letter which, when opened read, 'Hello, Bruce.'

I observed another amusing trait he employed to avoid direct

and refreshing alternative to the occasional hot choruses taken in dance bands. Humph never learnt to sight-read, something he could have done with ease, possibly because it's an essential skill in the dance band. He stated: 'In jazz, I have never found the inability to read music at sight more than an occasional inconvenience.'

A fair point, although he went on to say: 'I have no sympathy with the proposition that music is an exclusive club open only to those who pass difficult initiation tests' which is perhaps a little harsh as the same could be said of 'ear' playing.

However, he did develop an excellent memory for charts, often remembering the trumpet part to a complicated arrangement he hadn't played for years.

Leaving the Webb band and taking brilliant clarinetist and perfect foil Wally Fawkes with him, Humph found his true calling as a band leader - his most important legacy.

Cannonball Adderley, another great bandleader, described a set as 'two for them, two for me and two for them'. Humph's approach was very similar and a well-received set could include an obscure piece of Ellington, a beautifully arranged ballad and a couple of originals as well as the well-known war horses. He was always generous in making sure each member of the band was shown off and could play to his or her strengths. It made me realise you can play anything on a gig as long as you inform and include the audience in on it. We were all encouraged to write for the band.

Once you were in the family of musicians, you stayed there. Humph was very loyal to all players who had been through his band and you were likely to be invited back to deputise or play in a special presentation.

Humph knew exactly how to pace a set and how to address an audience, skills that he used in his brilliant deadpan presentation as the chairman of *I'm sorry I haven't a Clue*. His part was scripted, but the lines came alive in his delivery,

very much as notes of a theme are played by an experienced jazz musician. Many listeners came along to his concerts as a result of hearing these broadcasts and were not disappointed.

His knowledge of the whole history of jazz was phenomenal. I once sat next to him on a plane as he planned the Best of Jazz programme that he was to present on the radio that evening. It took him just a few minutes to come up with a wide-ranging but very coherent set of recordings with entertaining links between the tracks. As a teenager, I would lie on my bed every Monday night listening to this programme and wrote down the names of musicians and albums that he mentioned. Names like Irving Fazola, Teddy Bunn, Thelonious Monk, Prince Lasha or the Dutch Swing College band seemed very exotic to me. I remember hearing the Stan Getz album *Sweet Rain* for the first time. I put it on the list for my parents to buy me for my 18th birthday. It all seemed like a real voyage of discovery.

This programme has never truly been replaced on the BBC. It was informative, beautifully presented and opened doors of listening to so many people. It complemented and contrasted with the programmes hosted by Charles Fox and Peter Clayton. They all presented jazz in an erudite, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and unpatronising way.

I remember a punter asking Humph, 'Why do you never play Ben Webster and Lester Young on your programme?' (This was patently untrue). He replied

'Being at the end of the alphabet, they are at the very bottom of the BBC shelves and I'm just too old to reach them.' The man suggested they got a younger man and went away, happy that this had been sorted.

Let's not forget that he wrote superb books on jazz and on his own experiences. His abilities as a cartoonist were brilliant.

I remember one hilarious afternoon when he drew the band as women. Pete Strange was a bosomy bar-maid, Stan Greig a haughty dowager and the one of myself with small chin and hair raked back in a tight bun, resembled Mrs Thatcher.

Humph had a very close relationship with many American greats, often touring with them and becoming close friends. This included a well-received tour of the United States in 1959 with Thelonious Monk and Anita O'Day on the bill.

In 1949 he broke the reciprocal embargo between the British and American Musicians Union when he invited Sidney Bechet, who just happened to be in the audience at the Winter Gardens Theatre London, to join his band for several numbers, an action that resulted in him being

questioned by Scotland Yard, closely avoiding being charged as an accessory. Bechet was a larger than life character who confessed, 'When I do get mean, I get awful mean', and, in fact, one of the tunes he recorded with Humph's band, *I Told You Once, I Told You Twice*, is named after Sidney's fractious response to a question about the chord sequence. On this track, Humph

plays a beautifully solid, perfectly poised and unfazed lead which is in perfect accord with the soprano interjections of the intimidating guest.

Buck Clayton first toured with the Lyttelton band in the early 'sixties. Humph was often convinced that Buck played 'wrestler's tricks' on the stand, asking that the other soloists go easy as his chops were tired. After the restrained solos of the locals, Buck would let rip with some blistering phrases, annihilating all opposition. This led Humph to the realisation that

'The Briton maintains a stiff upper lip and says, "Never kick a man when he's down." The American juts his jaw and says, "Always kick a man when he's down – it may be the last chance you get!"'

Eddie Condon and his band toured with the Lyttelton band. Even the gargantuan drinking on the plane hadn't prepared them for Beryl Bryden greeting them at the airport, playing her washboard. Several surreal press interviews ensued, during one

of which Condon admitted that he didn't want to 'verdicalize any pronouns'. The puritanical British public found the band's inebriated appearances slightly bewildering as well as shocking, perhaps forgetting Condon's life work of championing jazz, playing the four string guitar very well and being 'a nice little guy'.

Big Joe Turner, described by Humph due to his increase in size as a result of his colossal over-eating as 'Vast Joe Turner', toured with the band and Buck Clayton in 1965. He sang sexually assertive and cynical blues lyrics with great power, but had an insecure temperament, often clinging to Buck for company, a situation that didn't always tie in with the trumpeter's plans for nocturnal activities. He had an endearing naivety about him, buying an English radio to take home because he liked the programmes he'd heard. His claim that he wanted to take home a lawn mower with an English accent sounds like a put-on to me. Nevertheless, Humph was always fascinated by 'How to reconcile two often irreconcilable halves of a musician, his music and his own overt personality.'

This quandary was especially true in his friendship with Louis Armstrong. Could it really be true that the favourite band of this undisputed musical genius was actually Guy Lombardo? He came to the conclusion that 'behind the public facade was a character of great strength' who led his bands with real authority as well as outstanding professionalism. He also displayed unshakeable loyalty to those he considered friends. At the end of a concert at the Empress Hall London, Humph crowned Louis 'The undisputed King of Jazz', placing a home-made crown on his head. To his surprise, Louis shipped this crown home and made affectionate references to Humph on his *Musical Autobiography* album.

His interest in the present rather than the past was key to Humph's success as a bandleader and his ability to move with the times. Interviewers would be given five minutes on the old days and then it was on to what is happening now. As he proved, it's not a bad rule of thumb for a long and illustrious career.



Photo by Jim Simpson

THRILLS AND SPILLS

DIGBY FAIRWEATHER writes in praise of SIMON SPILLETT on the tenor saxist's 25th anniversary as a professional musician

Well, I know that at one time it might have seemed an unlikely relationship, a cornettist who hovers stylistically between Dixieland and Swing and (using the simple phrase that Allan Ganley once used about Ronnie Scott) 'a great modern sax player', but jazz stylistic barriers – if in reality they exist at all any more – are far easier to traverse than they were when mouldy figs battled the dirty boppers after 1945 in the 'Trad-Modern' wars, and – much more importantly – after Rock music progressively laid waste to everything that had happened in jazz between 1917 and 1963. So – amongst a list of other reasons – that's how Simon Spillet and I have come dangerously close to what I might call a couple of 'best buddies'.

I first met him in the unlikely setting of 'Dickens World', a pseudo-Bleak House of a theme park in Chatham where we had been booked separately to play as part of a jazz festival. Knowing already of his *penchant* for super-fast tempi and championship of the late Tubby Hayes, I was far from sure that I could keep up. But in the event our musical meeting on-stage was highly amicable (I had yet to discover that my new acquaintance could also talk with unqualified enthusiasm about Eddie Miller or Bud Freeman). And, as I recall, we ambled happily enough through something like a mid-tempo / can't give you anything but love without injury to either party and even striking a spark or two here and there.

Since then I've got to know Simon a lot better and to realize that, although, in terms of years, there are one and a half generations between us – unfortunately in his favour! – we have a lot in common. First and foremost of course there's the unwavering unceasing passion for the music which, like all jazz musicians, we share. Second; the inbuilt need to share our passions with others in (as well as out of) print. And equally important, the wish to serve and celebrate, as best we can,

the music's figures which mean a lot to us; my long-held passion for Nat Gonella (expressed in the 2005 biography *A Life in Jazz* published by Northway Books) precedes – albeit less comprehensively – Simon's championship of Hayes in both his definitive and microscopically-detailed biography *The Long Shadow of the Little Giant* and follow-up DVD *A Man in a Hurry*.

What's even more remarkable to me about Simon is the depth of his knowledge about the music. Should he ever appear on TV's *Mastermind* and choose jazz – particularly British Jazz – as his specialist subject, there's absolutely no doubt that every question would be correctly answered slam-dunk, with never a pass nor error to slow up the interrogation. In (what to me is) a comparatively short life he has somehow amassed both a formidable mental encyclopaedia of jazz facts and figures, and – just as important – a faultless aesthetic judgment of the music which easily matches the reverend first-generation jazz critic-commentators in Britain which once included the likes of Charles Fox, Peter Clayton, Peter Gammond, Kitty Grime, Alun Morgan, Val Wilmer (still very much with us of course) or Humphrey Lyttelton. And bearing in mind that Simon was born about ten years after the Beatles and at the dawn of punk-rock, that represents a post-university degree of back-study.

But just like Humph, it stands to reason that Simon's 25 years in the daily company of musicians has tuned him into the instant telegraphy of jazz in which the most diminutive of '12 o'clock tales' travel through the jazz wires at the speed of light. Perhaps an example might help here. During one of the dozens of animated telephone conversations which have regularly blocked our phones to would-be callers for an hour or more, I happened to mention the name of an amateur tenor-player (unrecorded and sadly uncelebrated in the main) who

worked on the South Coast years ago, and with whom I had had a conclusive falling-out in the late 1970s. The player in question had booked me for a guest-spot and in his follow-up confirmation letter added the menacing postscript that 'there are a whole group of trumpet-players down here waiting to have a go at you'. Unreasonably perhaps (I was a sensitive soul back then!) I wrote back suggesting to my newly-met employer what he might do with his booking; the kind of *minutiae* that certainly doesn't belong in any kind of written-down UK jazz history. 'But I can't remember his name,' I said. 'That was Tim Colwell,' said Simon. So how did he know? You tell me.

I can't remember which performer it was who once pointed out that for some musicians (not all) the worst part of a three-hour gig is the twenty-one hours beforehand. But I also know about Simon that he can be – like me again – an unquiet spirit whose creative journey, over the past 25 years of his professional career, has (like all of us) bumped up against the inevitable frustrations of the jazz performance and its life. And in the past these have occasionally

produced e-mails from him which, to me, have suggested a soul in temporary torment. For one example I remember (several years ago now) some kind of communication – it might have been a phone call actually; I can't remember – appearing to suggest that his main ambition, at least for the next time being, was to stash his tenor under the bed and join what Bruce Adams calls 'the civilians' in the world of 9-to-5. Most people in the professional jazz world suffer such 'black dog' moments from time to time, but, in my view, Simon has a different way of dealing with them. Older hands (like Humphrey Lyttelton, for example) determinedly barricaded themselves behind what theatrical people call 'the fourth wall'; in short the scenery, costume and dialogue behind which actors hide, and which conceals from the audience the kind of inner turmoil that has most likely assailed the unfortunate thespians during those haunted 21 hours before they hit the stage. Simon, on the other hand, sometimes chooses to wear his performer's private heart openly on his sleeve, an approach which still sometimes finds expression in his Facebook contributions and which, I



Photo by
Merlin Daleman

suppose, could be viewed by some people as risky. But, in my view again, such occasional public admissions – that, for example, he hasn't played at his best on some job or other – endear Simon to his readers. And I admire him for the fact that he is occasionally prepared to share his artistic journey's ups and downs in detail with more than his closest friends. There have been times in my own career when a similar degree of honesty would have saved the feelings of my perplexed fellow musicians; helped me to arrive at artistic conclusions more quickly and honestly, or – simply – made it more easy to make real friends with the people who come to hear me play.

This kind of urge to communicate of course traverses to Simon Spillet *qua* author/journalist. As an in-print/on-screen commentator on jazz he has produced countless thousands of words with the kind of stylish ease in which a split infinitive would be as unthinkable as a clinker on his tenor. And personally, as a writer who had to work very hard over the years to reach a reasonable degree of skill in journalistic commentary I must confess I'm envious. Very few people write well without a good deal of training and Simon's (apparently natural) skills are matched by both his prolificacy and productive speed (during lockdown he wrote an entire book on the music in the space of three weeks; surely some kind of a record?). This combination has been long recognized by major record companies who know that fifty thousand words from him on an important subject (one example would be his superb liner-notes to the handsome Fontana reissue of the Tubby Hayes album *Grits, Beans and Greens* in 2019) will do a great deal to produce an artefact that, rather than a simple (possibly budget label) CD reissue, is quite arguably a beautiful piece of art on its own. Another quality of his writing that I like is its element of personal commitment and sometimes even (justifiable) romanticism, a quality that was shared by another of my favourite writers and kindred spirits, the late Richard M. Sudhalter who produced the first great biography of Bix Beiderbecke in

1974. Sometimes I would buy an old album I'd had for years, simply because Richard (or Dick as he was known when he was playing his lyrical cornet) had written its liner. Similarly Simon's writings invite you in; to share the love of his subject and join him in its personal musical appreciation. And such a quality separates him from – admittedly superb but more dry-toned – authorities-in-print like Charles Fox or even the great Alun Morgan.

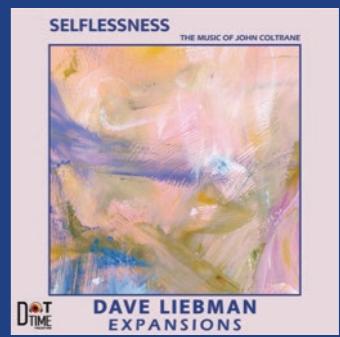
When we agreed that a 25th anniversary piece for *Jazz Rag* would be a good idea I suggested an interview, but Simon (although he obligingly responded in detail to my typed questions) felt – for reasons which I hope he doesn't now regret! – that something more like a personal tribute from me might be a nice idea. Which in turn brought out a problem shared by us both; the vexed question of writer versus musician. For musicians as diverse as Sudhalter, the late trumpeter Ian Carr (and others too, including our own Benny Green) this was a long-time quandary. But knowing that the same issue has kept us both awake for many a night I included a query on the subject in my questionnaire and I think for once a quote might fit. 'It's easy to be haunted,' Simon wrote, 'by the notion that an articulate wordsmith who writes about music must surely be a failed musician'. Like him I don't really know why (suggestions welcome in *Jazz Rag*'s letters column please!). But I think his follow-up comment, 'In writing you can shape and retool as you see fit; playing is in the moment' is very true indeed. Such a point of view would have received an approving nod from the legendary – and possibly incomparable – Artie Shaw. But unlike Shaw (who famously gave up playing for authorship) Simon added, 'I suppose I can't live without either.' And by the way – for as long as I can hold a horn – that goes for me too.

Leaving aside such agonies and ecstasies however, it's no doubt time to get back to Simon Spillet, musician. But hold hard: that doesn't necessarily apply just to the notes he plays. My great friend is in full command of the intellectual mind-sets of the professional jazz musician at every level. Amongst these come

the ability to talk of the music with the kind of passion that's seldom heard on the ground-floor of general humanity, and – conversely – the occupational defence weapon of self-deflation, regularly used by Ronnie Scott and prompted (at least to some degree) by a society that in general doesn't like or choose to support jazz. Humour, as Ronnie knew all too well is another defensive means to an end for survival in the jazz world. And Simon has the on-stage ability to be funny in – uncannily – same way that Ronnie Scott was (or Alan Barnes is now). But, like Ronnie again, he can – at the flip of a switch – cut down hypocrisy, incompetence, insensitivity or just plain old musical stupidity with the kind of profanity that (as someone once said) 'would make a sailor blush'.

But – at last perhaps – let's get to the music. I'm old enough to have heard Tubby Hayes live on many occasions. And in my view Simon has incorporated everything of benefit to him from Hayes' style and used them (as I tried to do with my principal

cornet-hero the late Ruby Braff) to create something of his own. Quite recently I listened to one of his last recordings with pianist Ted Beament's Quartet and was immediately aware that I was listening to an original tenor-voice rather than any kind of Hayes-clone. Future recordings (Simon, like me, is far more suspicious of recording studios than he needs to be) will no doubt confirm what the wonderful Babs Gonzales would have called his musical 'expubidence'. But meantime, by the time this small tribute comes out, he will be back on tour as a soloist, as well as bringing back to the live stage Hayes' great big band; once again featuring most of Britain's finest jazz musicians and debuting an extensive library of its one time leader's unheard arrangements. Record companies please note! And herein, after 25 years, lies 100% proof of Simon Spillet's vision, extraordinary musical gifts and arrival as (something very rare in these days of jazz in Britain); a gold-standard authentic new star.



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Artist: Dave Liebman Expansions
Label: DOT TIME RECORDS DT9104
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CHARLIE AND ME

DAVE GREEN's memories of the Rolling Stones drummer, CHARLIE WATTS, also a lifelong jazz devotee.

Charlie and I were next door neighbours from the age of five. In 1947 my Mum and Dad, and me and my little sister Evelyn, moved into number 22 Pilgrims Way in the brand new Wembley Park prefabs. Charlie and his Mum and Dad and little sister Linda moved into number 23. Our Mums hit it off straight away and soon became great friends. Over the next few years both families became very close. To Charlie and me we were always 'family'.

We both grew up in tandem, discovering music together. I remember as a kid – I'd be about ten or eleven - listening to repeats of Glenn Miller's Chesterfield Shows which were broadcast on Radio Luxembourg every Sunday night at 7.15pm. I loved that band – and still do. A bit later on Charlie and I started going to local record shops to browse



Dave and Charlie at Massey Hall

through the 78s. In those days there were record booths in the record shops so you could listen before you bought anything with your precious pocket money. In 1955/56 it was all happening for us teenagers. Bill Haley's Comets, Fats Domino and Little Richard were the favourites. The first Jazz record that I bought was a Parlophone 78 called *Barrelhouse* by the Jess Stacy Trio with Israel Crosby on bass and Gene Krupa on drums. One of the first ones that Charlie got was *Walkin' Shoes* by the Gerry Mulligan Quartet with Chico Hamilton on drums. After that the record collecting came thick and fast. There was a small café in Kingsbury where we listened to 45rpm singles on the jukebox. I played Humph's *Bad Penny Blues* over and over, also *Rock Island Line* by Lonnie Donegan with Chris Barber on bass.

While I collected Benny Goodman and Duke Ellington 78s Charlie – who must have been given more pocket money than me – started to build up a collection of 10 and 12 inch LPs. I vividly remember hearing the famous 1953 Massey Hall concert featuring Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Charlie Mingus and Max Roach for the first time in Charlie's bedroom. Compared to what I had been listening to, it sounded like music from outer space. I had no idea what they were doing but I loved the live atmosphere of the recording and Max Roach's drum solo on *Salt Peanuts*. I also heard for the first time in Charlie's bedroom Art Blakey, Thelonious Monk, Jelly Roll Morton, and Johnny Griffin.

Charlie and I were both self-taught. We learnt by listening to records and playing along with them. I remember copying Israel

Crosby's bass solo on *Barrelhouse* and Charlie playing along with his brushes on *Walkin' Shoes*. In 1958 we heard that a band was doing auditions for a bass player and drummer at The Welsh Harp pub in West Hendon. We decided to go for it. The leader of the band was trumpeter Brian 'Joe' Jones. The band's repertoire was made up of Dixieland and Ellington numbers most of which were familiar to us from the records that we had been listening to. Somehow we passed the audition and started doing weekly sessions on Thursday nights at the Mason's Arms pub in Edgware – and so we joined the Joe Jones Seven. The experience of playing regularly with the band was invaluable for Charlie and me. We learnt on the job and happily Brian was very patient with us and nurtured us along. The band broke up after about a year and after that Charlie and I went our different ways. I got involved with local jazz groups over the next three years before going pro in July 1963. What Charlie did of course is well documented from his playing with Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated in 1961/62 which then led to him joining the Rolling Stones in January 1963.

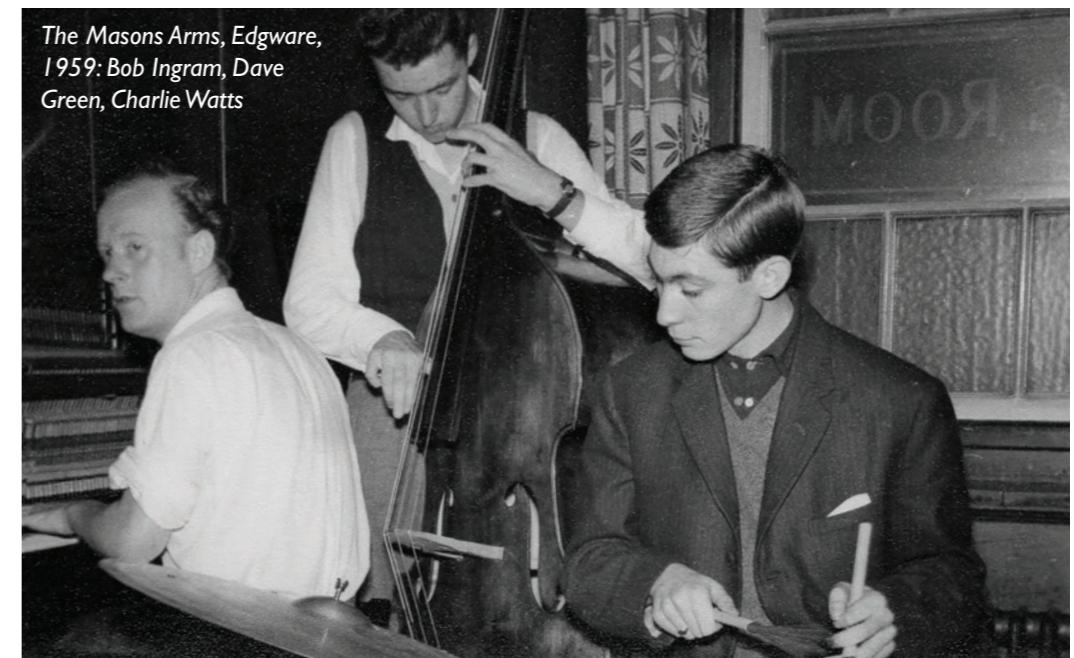
Our paths didn't cross much over the next few years until Charlie called me one day out of the blue in 1985 to tell me about his idea for a 32 piece Big Band which he wanted to take into Ronnie Scott's Club for a week. It was a bit daunting to say the least. Apart from the line up of the trumpet and saxophone sections whose names included most of the British jazz scene, the rhythm section consisted of three drummers - Charlie, John Stevens and Bill Eyden, two bass players- myself and Ron Mathewson, Stan Tracey on piano plus two vibraphonists – Bill Le Sage and Jim Lawless. Charlie's idea was to do a week at Ronnie's with the band as a gift to the club as a thank you to Ronnie and manager Pete King for all the wonderful music that they had presented at the club over the years. This was so typical of Charlie. The band didn't cost

the club a penny. Charlie paid the band handsomely and at the end of the week threw a party which went through to 8 am on the Sunday morning.

At the end of November 1986 Charlie took the band to America for a week of dates including three nights at the Ritz Ballroom in New York and two concerts at Massey Hall in Toronto. Playing on stage at Massey Hall was a surreal experience. This was where Bird and Diz played their famous concert in 1953 and, as I previously mentioned, I'd listened to the LP of the concert in Charlie's bedroom when we were young teenagers. I remember the look on Charlie's face when he smiled at me as we were setting up on stage – as if to say, 'We made it.' In June 1987 Charlie took the band back to the States for a two week coast to coast tour. It was a massive undertaking taking a band of that size to America. With all the costs of flights, internal transportation and hotels, not to mention the band's fees, I can't think of anyone else who could have done it except Charlie. He just loved being with the guys and he wanted to give something back for all the pleasure he had received from listening to jazz over the years.

Following on from the Big Band Charlie put together two projects which reflected his love of Charlie Parker. *From One Charlie* was a tribute to Charlie Parker with a Quintet including Peter King, Gerard Presencer, Brian Lemon and myself. Then came *A Tribute To Charlie Parker With Strings*. I'll never forget when we played the Blue Note in New York with the group. Here we were in a club in New York playing the original *Bird with Strings* arrangements with Peter King playing the part of Bird magnificently. I'm convinced nobody in the world could have done it better. The place was packed with musicians. Chico Hamilton was there and I met the son of Teddy Kotick the bassist who had toured and recorded with Charlie Parker in the fifties. He had brought along his father's photo album and he showed me the photos that his father had collected of himself playing with Charlie Parker and the string section. It was a very emotional night for him and

The Masons Arms, Edgware, 1959: Bob Ingram, Dave Green, Charlie Watts



very moving for me to meet the son of one of Charlie Parker's favourite bass players.

The next project that Charlie put together involved vocalist Bernard Fowler, one of the Rolling Stones' backing singers. *Warm & Tender* (1993) and *Long Ago & Far Away* (1996) were albums of songs from the American Songbook featuring Fowler's vocals with the strings of the London Metropolitan Orchestra arranged by Brian Lemon, Peter King and Gerard Presencer. I loved doing these albums and Bernard Fowler did a great job singing the songs some of which he had never heard before we got into the studio.

In June 2001 Charlie took a Tentet into Ronnie's, playing arrangements written by band members Gerard Presencer, Henry Lowther, Peter King, Alan Barnes and Brian Lemon. The rest of the band's personnel included Evan Parker, Julian Arguelles, Mark Nightingale, percussionist Luis Jardim and myself. I loved that band. The arrangements were great and the diversity of the solos was fantastic. It was a joy to play every night. Later in the year in October/November we played a week at the Blue Note in Tokyo followed by another week at the Blue Note in New York. In 2004 Charlie reconvened the band, with the addition of Iain Dixon on reeds, for a couple of weeks at Ronnie's in April.

In 1986 Charlie and I were invited to play on *The South Bank Show* with the German

boogie woogie pianist Axel Zwingenberger. The programme was called *A Left Hand Like God* and explored the history of boogie woogie. A young lad by the name of Ben Waters watched the show at home in Somerset and there and then decided that's what he wanted to do. Scroll forward to 2009 and I had a call from Ben asking me if I was free to come down to the Tivoli Theatre in Wimborne, Dorset the following week to play with him, Axel and Charlie. I readily agreed, mainly because I hadn't seen Charlie for a long time and it was a good opportunity for us to get together again. The outcome of this one gig was the formation of the ABC & D of Boogie Woogie which toured Europe and the States over the next two to three years.

I remember when we played at Le Duc des Lombards club in Paris Steve Gadd coming into the band room to see Charlie and then when we played at The Iridium Jazz Club in New York Roy Haynes came by to see Charlie and stayed for the entire gig.

Such was the nature of the man. He was a jazz fan first and foremost. He loved Jazz and jazz musicians and endeared himself to great drummers around the world. He was completely unassuming with no ego. Despite all the fame he achieved our relationship never changed. He would call me up and ask where I was playing. He would frequently come down to the Pizza Express in London's Soho to see Scott Hamilton's Quartet with John

Pearce piano, Steve Brown drums and myself – he loved the band and particularly Steve's drumming. He also came to The Pheasantry in Chelsea to see Steve and me playing with Barry Harris.

The last time that Charlie and I played together was fittingly at the Pizza Express with Scott Hamilton. Producer Jez Nelson was planning a TV programme celebrating the *Jazz 625* series that was originally broadcast on BBC 2 in the sixties. I had appeared in a couple of early editions of the programme. It just so happened that at the time Jez was putting the programme together Scott's Quartet was playing our usual January New Year's week gig at the Pizza. It was arranged with Charlie – after a bit of coaxing from me – that he would come and sit in for one number with the band to be filmed during the day at the club before the evening gig. It was a happy day and we did two or three takes of Duke's *Happy Go Lucky Local*. That was in January 2019; I didn't see him again after that.

The last time Charlie and I spoke on the phone was on his 80th birthday on 2nd June.

He was my oldest and dearest friend and the memories of what we did together will stay with me for the rest of my life.

He always called me David...and sometimes I called him Charles.

SOME THOUGHTS ON LOUIS ARMSTRONG

SCOTT YANOW reflects on changing perceptions of the great jazzman.

Ever since his death on July 6, 1971, Louis Armstrong has been universally praised as one of the most significant (if not the most important) jazz musician of all time. Even 50 years after his passing, he is still a household name and a symbol for the music.

Louis Armstrong's remarkable accomplishments fall into three areas. As a trumpeter, his tone was beautiful and personal, his swinging phrasing both caressed and built off of melodies, and he was a master at using silence and timing for dramatic effect. Armstrong's melodic renditions of dozens of songs (particularly in the 1930s) became the accepted way to play those standards. As a singer, his hornlike phrasing had a similar impact, uplifting songs from sounding predictable and square, giving them life and making many of the melodies immortal. And as a good-humoured entertainer, he had few equals. No matter who was on stage with him, one ended up looking at Armstrong's smiling face. His lovable personality (which was consistent both on and off stage) literally won millions of fans for jazz.

Even though his legacy is quite huge, there have been some exaggerations and false statements during the past half-century. Some say that Louis Armstrong invented jazz, but they forget that he was preceded by 30 years of inventive musicians including the unrecorded Buddy Bolden, Jelly Roll Morton, Freddie Keppard, King Oliver, Kid Ory and other long lost greats from New Orleans.

Armstrong was not the first important jazz soloist to record. The great soprano-saxophonist Sidney Bechet, and pianists Jelly Roll Morton and James P. Johnson were there before him. Satch was also not the first jazz musician to swing. One would have to include Bechet, Morton, trombonist Charlie Green, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, and Phil Napoleon with the Original Memphis Five. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band also swung in their own way during their 1919 London recordings which are much more

relaxed than their earlier groundbreaking records.

Despite many statements to the contrary, Satch did not invent scat singing. It has long been a legend that in 1926 when recording *Heebies Jeebies* with his Hot Five, he dropped the music after singing a chorus and was forced to spontaneously make up nonsense syllables. The released recording finds Armstrong sounding quite relaxed and natural while segueing from the words to the scatting. I think it is possible that he actually dropped the music during a first attempt at the song, his scatting cracked up the musicians and the engineers, and it was decided to record a second cleaner version in a similar fashion. In any case, while he was a major force in popularizing scat-singing, he was not the first. On record Satch is preceded by Don Redman (who scatted with Fletcher Henderson in 1924 on *My Papa Doesn't Two-Time No Time*), Cliff Edwards ('Ukulele Ike') starting in 1923 and, most notably, Gene 'The Ragtime King' Greene who scatted on his recording of *King Of The Bungaloos* in 1911!

Louis Armstrong's accomplishments as a trumpeter, singer, entertainer, and jazz ambassador are so vast that they do not need to be exaggerated. In contrast, during his lifetime he was not always praised so highly. It is particularly intriguing to note the ways he and his music were perceived during different periods by the general audience, the African-American press, the white press, and jazz critics.

Prior to Armstrong arriving in Chicago in 1922, he was mostly known to New Orleans musicians and listeners as a top up-and coming musician. He began to make an impact playing second cornet with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band during 1922-23 in Chicago. Satch's playing made a strong impression on the young musicians in the audience (including members of the Austin High School Gang) even though he was mostly in a supportive role. His period in New York as a member of the Fletcher



Henderson Orchestra (1924-25) found Armstrong amazing the other Henderson sidemen who had thought that their flashy effects and double time phrases were so sophisticated. They learned from his swinging approach, ability to tell stories in his solos, and his dramatic improvisations.

Back in Chicago during 1925-28, Louis Armstrong's recordings with his Hot Five, Hot Seven and Savoy Ballroom Five revolutionized jazz. He was one of the main factors in jazz quickly evolving from an ensemble-oriented music to one that showcased virtuosic soloists. But while he gained his initial fame with his small-group recordings, Armstrong actually appeared nightly during that period with big bands where his showmanship, singing, and exciting trumpet solos were well featured.

While he had a growing reputation among black audiences, it was not until Louis Armstrong moved to New York in 1929 and started performing regularly with big bands that he became nationally famous. And pretty soon, everyone had an opinion about him.

The black American press loved Armstrong throughout the 1930s and '40s. He was seen as a hero, one of the very few African-Americans who could attract an adoring white audience while being himself. He appeared occasionally in mainstream movies (even if his parts were

small), consistently broke box office records, and made dozens of songs into standards. He was seen as a crusader for civil rights, not through his words but through the excellence of his music and his mass appeal.

The white mainstream press has always been more concerned about a performer's commercial success than their artistic achievements. Much of the writing about Armstrong during this era had racist undertones, including in Europe during his tours where the criticisms were far from subtle. Some of the reporters, particularly during the first half of the 1930s, portrayed Armstrong as a barbaric and intuitive performer (having the false impression that he did not read music), one who frequently went overboard onstage and barely had control of his emotions. But even those detractors could not deny the brilliance of his trumpet playing.

Many of the jazz journalists, particularly by the second half of the 1930s, looked back with nostalgia at Louis Armstrong's Hot Five recordings and wondered what went wrong. Rather than emphasizing New Orleans favourites, he was performing pop songs, his trumpet solos were often exhibitionistic and repetitive, and he was playing to the crowd instead of creating new innovative music. With the rise of swing and many newer trumpet heroes including Bunny Berigan, Harry James and Roy Eldridge, Armstrong was being written off as a has-been even though he was only in his mid-thirties.

As has often been the case, the jazz writers missed the point altogether. Most of the 'pop songs' that Armstrong was performing (*Stardust, I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Pennies From Heaven*) were of superior quality and soon became jazz standards. While his live performances, where he would sometimes challenge himself by hitting 100 straight high C's, were a bit excessive, he was always able to make beautiful and lyrical statements as both a trumpeter and a singer. And Berigan, James and Eldridge were among the scores of trumpeters who were filled with praise towards Armstrong, considering him one

of their main influences and inspirations.

To the general audience, Louis Armstrong was already a legendary and charismatic figure, one who could be relied upon to put on exciting and colourful shows. But with the rise of the swing era and the formation of many other big bands, Satch was thought of by some as being passé despite his constant activity.

However, after he broke up his big band in 1947 and formed the Louis Armstrong All-Stars, he became the most popular jazz musician in history, traveling the world and working relentlessly.

Audiences in general loved him during the 1950s. His shows were well-paced, humorous, filled with variety, and always contained some hot trumpet playing along with vocal versions of such hits as *Blueberry Hill* and *Mack The Knife*. Although the mainstream press had finally given up on him reinventing himself as a modernist and they either ignored the performer or fell in love with him, Armstrong was always difficult to resist. The black press treated him like a nostalgia show biz act, they were impressed by the size of his audiences, his world travels, and his record sales.

The jazz press generally had a different opinion. While the formation of the All-Stars was originally welcomed, many of the writers complained constantly during the 1950s that Armstrong's live shows were predictable, contained the same jokes and routines, and that his playing was on the decline. While it is true that the concerts by the All-Stars did not differ from night to night (although they evolved), most audience members, who might get to see Armstrong at the most once a year, were thoroughly entertained by the shows. Armstrong loved to perform and his joy won most listeners over, even if they were not necessarily interested in jazz.

As for his playing, while some of Louis Armstrong's solos were set (such as *Indiana*), they were still magnificent. And when he was faced with a special project such as playing *St. Louis Blues* with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic (look for that on YouTube) or recording full sets of the music of W.C. Handy and Fats Waller, he showed that he had not lost a thing.

The black press had a different type of problem with Armstrong

in the 1950s. Some felt that he went so far out of his way to entertain white audiences with his jokes and mugging that he was an Uncle Tom. They were looking for powerful verbal statements and seemed not to realize that Armstrong endearing himself with white crowds was an act of subversion, a way of achieving civil rights without whites realizing it. He did speak out against President Eisenhower's slow reactions to the Little Rock crisis (resulting in a tour of the Soviet Union being cancelled) and fought for equality throughout his life, but in his own way. Satch was subservient to no one.

Louis Armstrong's health gradually declined in the 1960s although his singing and his general spirit remained at its usual high level. By then the jazz press had finally given up on him reinventing himself as a modernist and they either ignored the performer or fell in love with him; Armstrong was always difficult to resist. The black press treated him as a legend although they were mostly concerned with other artists. The mainstream media was impressed that he appeared regularly on the Ed Sullivan Show, toured the world, and had a big hit with *Hello Dolly!*

The general audience had mixed feelings. To many, he was an old-fashioned figure of the past



and, while he always put a smile on one's face, there was quite a bit of competition in the music world during the 1960s. But with *Hello Dolly!*, regular appearances on television, and constant tours (including headlining at jazz festivals), Satch remained an important part of the music scene.

With his death in 1971, an era ended, but Louis Armstrong never left the scene. His image is everywhere and his playing and singing are still a major influence on a countless number of performers. His 1967 recording of *What A Wonderful World!* had been a hit in England but was largely unknown in the U.S. until its use in the 1988 movie *Good Morning, Vietnam*. It ironically became Armstrong's most famous recording and it is still played and recorded way too often by others.

Louis Armstrong may not have invented jazz, and the music would have survived if he had never been born, but it would not have been half as much fun.

Scott Yanow has written 11 books on jazz, mostly recently *The Jazz Singers* and *The Great Jazz Guitarists*, plus innumerable reviews and liner notes. He can be reached for interesting assignments on scottyanowjazz@yahoo.com

WHITLEY BAY RETROSPECTIVE

In 1991 the first Whitley Bay Jazz Festival consisted of two days of open-air jazz, followed by evening sessions in the Station Hotel. Sadly, in 2021, for the second successive year, the Festival had to cancel because of the effects of coronavirus restrictions. In between the Festival morphed from a festival of mainly traditional jazz bands into its present unique form, a jazz party in the Village Hotel involving 30-odd international top-flight musicians, playing jazz from the classic years. Now named after its late founder, The Mike Durham Classic Jazz Party will no doubt return at full power in 2022. In the meantime here are some reminders of the past 30 years and tributes and memories from some of the musicians who have taken part.

MATTHIAS SEUFFERT

It is impossible to sum up the richness of great musical and personal moments and experiences over the years in Whitley Bay. In the late 1990s the wonderful Keith Nichols took me under his wing and introduced me to Mike and Patti Durham. Mike was a great lover of any sort of good classic jazz with a slight weakness for obscure and nearly forgotten tunes and styles. Hence we were on the same wavelength instantly and became close friends. Together with his wife Patti and a select team he organised the festival with great ability. While being very aware of the economic and technical side of such an endeavour, the team spread humour and warmth and made you feel like being at a family meeting in no time.

MARTIN WHEATLEY

I suppose I have now been playing at the Festival and the Party longer than most – I played back in the late 1990s when it was in the Park Hotel. The second year I played there was with my band The Hula Bluebirds performing hot Hawaiian music. No other festival at that time showed any interest. That, I think, sums up Mike's approach. He allowed people to get on and play the music they knew about without interference. That policy has continued at the Party where one can hear music not to be found anywhere else. Interestingly I can't recall a set that didn't work. Some achievement!

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Martin Wheadie, Spats Langham, Jacob Ullberger, Henry Lemaire
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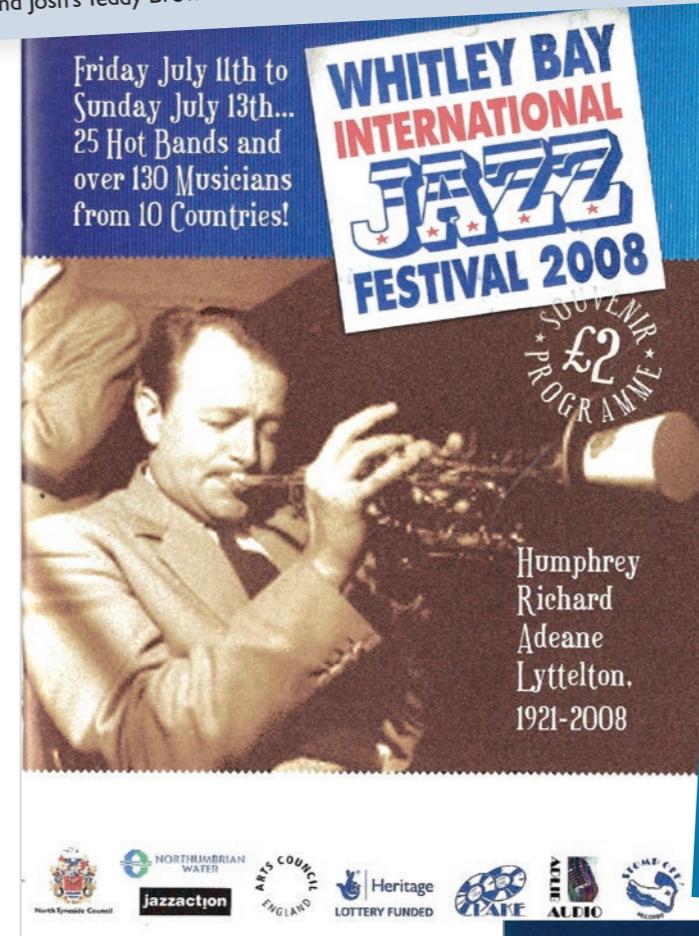
MAURO PORRO

It has always been a great pleasure and sheer joy to be in Whitley Bay even before it was the Classic Jazz Party. I've had the honour to be introduced to a fabulous gathering of early jazz musicians and bands by the great Mike Durham who was a loyal friend and the enlightened creator of what became, through the years, the dream of all old-time jazz players: Whitley Bay Jazz Festival and Classic Jazz Party are really to be considered a receptacle of the best living hot jazz music in the world...Long life to the Classic Jazz Party!

MATTHIAS SEUFFERT

MATTHIAS SEUTTER

During the early days around 2000 there were mainly British bands and combinations. I have fond memories of playing my first sets with Keith Nichols, Paul Munnery, Norman Field, Spats Langham and Mike's West Jesmond Rhythm Kings. Where else would you find a tribute to Ted Lewis with dignified clarinet playing by Norman Field and appropriate vocalising by Mike and Spats Langham? Later on the festival became an international jazz party with themed sets of an hour or sometimes half an hour. The themes were suggested by the approximately 35 invited musicians and carefully selected by the musical directors (Mike, Keith, Frans Sjostrom, later Claus Jacobi and Michael McQuaid). Two concerts you'd find hardly anywhere else which I especially enjoyed taking part in were a simulation of a live radio show with live audience directed by Keith Nichols and Josh Duffee and Josh's Teddy Brown set.



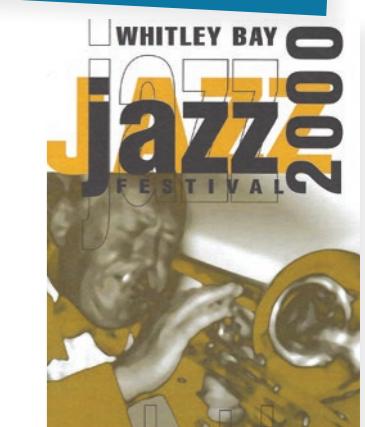
JEAN-PIERRE DUBOIS

Really great stuff, definitely the best festival in Europe for lovers of 20s and 30s jazz! As a banjoist with the Hot Antic Jazz Band I first experienced this festival in its early days when established orchestras and a few guest stars were invited and it was already an exciting festival. In recent years the format has changed. Dozens of big names from all over the world are invited and from noon to midnight (with a two-hour break for dinner) 50-minute sets with often less well known repertoire follow each other with these musicians in everything from quintets to big bands. There is a fraternal atmosphere between musicians who give their best in order to bring remarkable quality and originality to this festival – a real must for musicians, for collectors and for connoisseurs of 20s and 30s jazz! The founder of this gem, the much-missed Mike Durham, deserves a statue in Whitley Bay for sure!



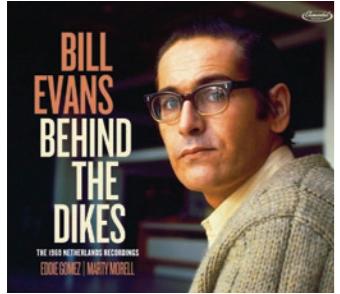
MATTHIAS SEUFFERT

An incredible frenzy of transcribing, arranging, emailing, printing and practising of charts goes on in the months before the party. One full rehearsal day and additional rehearsal hours in the mornings allow for one run-through and the occasional repetition of difficult passages, then you rush back to your hotel room to run over the most difficult bits again on your own. I have suffered nightmares about forgetting my music for a set or a passage coming up for alto when I only have the tenor on the stand. These nightmares are all but without reason. On one occasion a French musician and good friend, whose anonymity I shall keep, only brought two left shoes to the Festival weekend. If you find a video on Youtube and identify the musician, I will get you a drink next time we meet. Despite the nightmares all the musicians feel it's an incredible privilege to be part of this gathering.



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CD REVIEWS



BILL EVANS

BEHIND THE DIKES: THE 1969 NETHERLANDS RECORDINGS

Elemental Music 5990441
2CDs, 59.38/57.47

The preeminent position that pianist and composer Bill Evans holds in the history of jazz cannot be disputed and his influence has spread far and wide over the years.

His discography is immense, especially when one considers that he died in 1980 at the age of just 51. His early years as a professional musician were spent in the company of band leader, composer, and fellow pianist George Russell. Evans was already working on theories of harmony not that dissimilar to Russell's. Their concepts were to become an influence on the modal music of trumpeter Miles Davis, particularly on his 1959 album *Kind of Blue* on which Bill Evans played.

Evans began leading his own groups, largely trios, in late 1959. Ten years later and his use of harmonic and inventive, impressionistic interpretation of what has become a familiar jazz repertoire is clearly to the fore.

The trio comprises Eddie Gomez on bass and Marty Morell at the drums and the repertoire will be familiar to Evans' devotees. Thus, the listener is treated to versions of *Emily, Turn Out the Stars*, *Waltz for Debby* and *Turn Out the Stars*. All selections are impeccably performed and two pieces *Granadas* and *Pavane* have accompaniment from the Metropole Orkest.

As other recent Evans releases on Elemental and Resonance Records, the album comes beautifully

produced with a booklet containing a wealth of information, interviews, and photographs from the period. The recorded sound is superb, especially as these are live recordings.

ALAN MUSSON



CARMEN MCRAE

THE SINGLES AND ALBUMS COLLECTION 1946—58

Acrobat ACQCD 7157: 4 CDs, 4 hours

In the ten years from 1946 to 1956 three record companies, Musicraft, Stardust and Decca, all tried to turn Carmen McRae into a pop singer with little success. She did have two chart entries, *Next Time it Happens* and *Skyliner*, although those were aberrations rather than hits, and only crept in the lowly positions in the Top 100. To be fair to those companies, they spared no money or effort in trying issuing single after single in their attempts. 97 of those A and B sides are re-issued here, together with tracks from five of her albums, *A Foggy Day*, *Carmen McRae, Torch*, *By Special Request*, *Blue Moon* and *After Glow* on this epic 4 C D set. The companies even threw in Sammy Davis Jr to add ballast on a couple of sides.

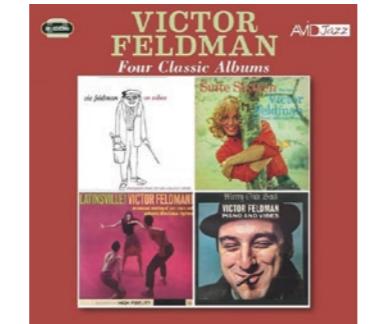
Carmen, too, tried hard to get a hit record. Obviously, the rewards for such were substantial and real, but it just didn't happen. She seemed to have everything required for such an objective. She was a strikingly attractive woman and she had a voice which was as instantly recognisable and distinctive as those of Ella and Sarah Vaughan. It just seems, she couldn't level down. The problem was that Carmen's artistry and musicality kept getting in the way. Carmen was completely and determinately a jazz singer, a bebopper even.

I remember, on the one occasion I was privileged to meet her, how she enthused about a 'funky little joint called Minton's, the cradle of bebop, where she played regularly as the intermission pianist and established a lifelong friendship with Thelonious Monk and later paid tribute to him in the 1993 album *Carmen sings Monk*.

The other problem was that the material given to her to work with was pretty puerile at that time and even her unique treatment and subtle way with lyrics, could not turn those songs into Top 10 material. But, if some of the songs weren't up to it, the musicians and arrangers put at her disposal were: Ralph Burns, Ray Bryant, Tadd Dameron together with the orchestras of Les Elgart and Jack Pleis, amongst others, were there to help.

A course, there is gold to be found amongst the glitter and great performances, too. The better songs included are *You Don't know Me*, *The Party's Over*, *Something to live For*, *But Beautiful*, *Midnight Sun* and *Star Eyes*, the song that first alerted me to the prodigious talent of Carmen McRae. Good lyrics were crucial to her and her renderings of *Last Year When We Were Young*, *Good Morning*, *Heartache*, *But Beautiful* and *Midnight Sun* will make you forget all other versions. If the list of great female jazz vocalists was ever to be extended from the present three (Ella, Billie and Sarah) I would unhesitatingly add Carmen McRae as number 4.

JOHN MARTIN



VICTOR FELDMAN

FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS

AVID Jazz AMSC1395: 2 CDs, 72.23 / 79.51

In 1955 at the age of 21 Victor Feldman had achieved everything

that could be achieved in the British jazz scene. A drumming prodigy at seven, he was playing drums with Glenn Miller's Army Air Force band at the precocious age of ten while fronting his own groups. So in 1955 when his friend, Ronnie Scott, urged him to emigrate to The States to further his career, he didn't take too much persuading and was on a plane within months.

In these superb CDs Avid has cherrypicked the best tracks from four previously issued and justly named classics, *Victor Feldman on Vibes*, *Suite Sixteen*, *Latinville* and *Merry Olde Soul*, a total of 37 tracks re-affirming the claim that Vic Feldman was the best all round musician ever to leave these shores.

A tasty group support him on *The Vibes* album from 1959 with the shockingly underused Harold Land on tenor and the irrepressible Frank Rosolino on trombone. Carl Perkins (the jazz one) leads a solid rhythm section with Leroy Vinegar on bass and Stan Levy on drums in seven tracks which include four Feldman originals. By this time the vibist/pianist/drummer was well on the way to making his name as an arranger and composer and these performances fairly flow with invention, confident and unfussy.

The *Suite Sixteen* set, recorded in September 1955, also, contains four Feldman originals and is by the way of being a farewell to his British mates. It has a line-up of the very best of home talent of that time, Ronnie Scott, Tubby Hayes, Derek Humble, Jimmy Deuchar, Dizzy Reece, Harry Klein, Tommy Pollard and Lennie Bush with Phil Seamen and Tony Crombie (who wrote the very attractive and ambitious title theme) alternating on drums. Here, Feldman is everywhere writing, arranging and darting between vibraphone, piano and drums..

Latinville! is the odd one out. Although the rhythms and the treatment is undeniably Latin, it has a soft touch, and the repertoire avoids the old Latin and Cuban warhorses, opting for tunes not immediately associated with the Latin style even though they bear Latin and Cuban titles. Five of Tito Puente's star percussionists keep the tempos on track with brisk and chattering rhythms and Conte

Candoli and Frank Rosolino show their Latin credentials to great effect with screeching dissonances. But, all in all, the ambience is laid back, though it still produces an energising set.

The fourth classic, *Merry Olde Soul*, is another faultless outing for which Feldman recruited the eminent Hank Jones on piano and Louis Hayes and Sam Jones, from the Cannonball Adderley group, which guaranteed the highest standards, although, perhaps, this is a more conventional set.

JOHN MARTIN



DEXTER GORDON QUARTET

WILLISAU 1978

TCB 02452 70.51

It's all too tempting to trot out the 'no second acts in American lives' line when dealing with Dexter Gordon's late 1970s 'homecoming' period. While the saxophonist's return to the US, after a decade-plus self-exile in Europe, was indeed a success in all sorts of ways, cocking a relaxed snook at F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous maxim, it was hardly a new beginning, certainly not style-wise. Nor did Long Tall Dexter surrender his continental connections once back on his own turf. This previously unreleased Swiss concert from 1978 has the best of both worlds – a top-flight US rhythm section in George Cables, Rufus Reid and Eddie Gladden and the pin-sharp audio quality we've come to expect from European radio recordings. The programme is typical for this period of Gordon; standards like *On Green Dolphin Street* nudge alongside jazz compositions like *Hi Fly* and *Strollin'*. Dex and his men make light work of them all, so much so that it's almost impossible to single out a 'best' performance.

KENNY GARRETT

SOUNDS FROM THE ANCESTORS

Mack Avenue MAC1180: 67.40

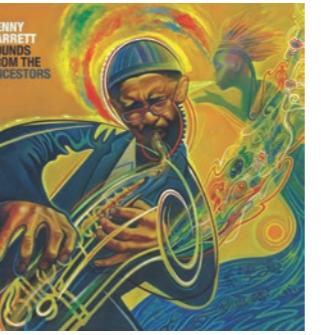
You could call this record one of many parts, but then again look at the man who created it. Garrett is a veteran of the bands of Miles Davis, Art Blakey and Mercer Ellington, which steeps him deep in the jazz tradition. These apprenticeships also placed him in close proximity to musicians who knew how to make their message both pluralist and authentic. Thus it is on this album that Garrett gives us both the post-Coltrane burnout of *Soldiers of the Field* and the radio-play friendly fusion of *When Days Were Different*, the saxophonist 'seamlessly connect(ing) the past, the present and the future', as the sleeve note has it. The title track encapsulates this perfectly, sounding as if, miraculously, the sound worlds of Michel Legrand and Pharoah Sanders have somehow collided head-on.

While this makes for a hugely entertaining album full of

For sheer swing (as well as confirmation of Gordon's place in the lineage between Lester Young and later tenors) try *The Jumpin' Blues*; for an example of the leader's heavy-toned, sentiment-oozing, balladry there's *Old Folks*, the serenity of which is blown apart by a stunning unaccompanied piano interlude.

Maybe not as good as the contemporary Columbia sessions, nor as 'classic' as those 1960s Blue Notes, this is still fabulous jazz. Gordon completists will snap it up, but it's just as entertaining for those who may know of the big man only through *Round Midnight* and that famous Herman Leonard portrait. Worth checking out.

SIMON SPILLETT



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A JAZZ RECORD COMPANY TODAY

PAUL ADAMS reflects on the position

We at LAKE Records (Fellside Recordings Ltd) decided to go into semi-retirement in 2018. After 42 years and 600 album releases over two labels it was time for a rest. We decided not to sell the company or close it, but let it trundle along. Direct mail order was passed to Upbeat Records and the warehousing and website sales to our distributor Proper Music.

I joked that I thought we had had the best years and for the styles of jazz we specialised in – British Traditional and Mainstream. The demographic was ageing, plus fewer regular working bands and few young people coming into our jazz genres. Sales were slipping away: we used to sell 1,000 copies of albums by Humph, Acker, Colyer, Welsh, we were now struggling to sell 200. For ‘unknown’ bands – bands we on the Jazz scene know, but the wider public doesn’t – sales are dependent on gigs and then along came Covid.

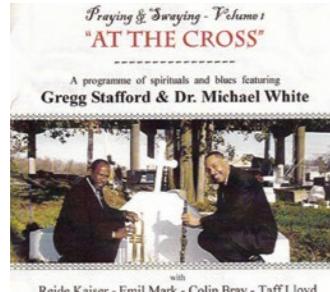
Covid forced a period of reflection and, although I am out of the main flow I am still in contact with many musicians. Gig sales dried up, there was a little splurge at the start of the first lockdown where people bought CDs online, but that ended up being temporary. In the same way that jazzers were slow to latch on to CDs they have been slow to latch on to downloads – many seem to prefer to find things on YouTube – a lot of which is pirated with little or no money going to the artists – put up with the often dreadful sound and not have to pay anything.

I think the days of a specialist record company based on our model are numbered. It is easier for artists to make their own CDs, it is easier to record and you can fund it by crowd funding. Distribution is not a big deal any more: artists can sell via their own websites and, with very few shops, the biggest player is Amazon which you can sell through via Amazon Marketplace.

Covid has not brought these things about, but it seems to have brought them into focus and caused a period of reflection. With gig sales: how many venues might not re-open; how many former festivals will not take place? There will be a lot of effort and determination to get things going, but uncertainty is rife.

contrasts and committed performances (Garrett proves his stature in every solo), certain listeners may emerge wondering what the leader sees as his own strongest suit. In this regard, you could cite this recording as the perfect example of ‘2021’ jazz – tipping its hat to so many influences and inspirations that it rarely settles on one thing for very long. Some may prefer to hear the saxophonist in the unadulterated straightahead form familiar from his earlier albums, but that’s not to suggest that *Sounds From The Ancestors* is too diffuse to be compelling; every track has its own story to tell. Yet like all such compendiums, some entries convince more than others. A fascinating release, frustrating in parts, elevating in others. Always keeping the listener guessing, it’s an album for our present age.

SIMON SPILLETT



GREGG STAFFORD AND MICHAEL WHITE

PRAYING & SWAYING AT THE CROSS

Upbeat URCD317: 68:41

This is a welcome re-release by Upbeat of a Jazz Crusade album predominantly of spirituals which appeared at the beginning of the new millennium when the traditional music of the Crescent City was being, perhaps, less commonly heard. The declared aim of the label, owned by Big

Bill Bissonnette who produced this record, was ‘to preserve the musical heritage of New Orleans’.

The front two of the unnamed sextet, trumpeter Gregg Stafford and clarinettist Michael White, originally came together in the early 1970s, playing just such music with The Fairfield Baptist Church Marching Band. Until being closed down by musicians’ union regulations in 1974, this band was a highly popular part of the city’s music scene and those who played for it at various times included such as Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Herlin Riley, Joe Torregano, Tuba Fats, Lucien Barbarin and many others, now at the veteran stage, who had grown up influenced by Preservation Hall originals.

These two hugely respected revivalists are joined by musicians from farther afield, but nevertheless steeped in the music: Reide Kaiser on piano, Emil Mark, banjo, and Colin Bray, string bass, long-time members of Sweet Mary Cat, one of the hottest jazz bands in France. Our own Taff Lloyd is his usual lively self at the traps.

Gospel music is well represented in a varied programme which includes such standards of the genre as *Flee as a Bird to the Mountain*, *At the Cross*, *Lead Me Saviour* and one of the marching band’s traditional anthems, *When the Saints Go Marching In*. One of traditional jazz’s most stirring stem-winders, *Bugle Call Rag*, is given a rare blast and a patina of sophistication added with the Duke’s *Saturday Night Function*.

RUSSELL CORBETT



THE LONDON SWING ORCHESTRA

JAZZ AND SWING ON SCREEN

Upbeat Jazz URCD316: 63:53

Vocalist Graham Dalby founded the London Swing Orchestra in

1985. Now into its fourth decade, the band’s mission remains the same as it did upon its inception, to recreate something of the swing era. Previous recordings include *The Roaring Twenties*, *The Swinging Thirties* and *The Rise of the Crooner*. Now we have an album devoted to ‘jazz and swing on screen’. The LSO’s line-up on this new Upbeat album boasts some familiar names – Richard Exall and Peter Whyman, reeds. Mike Henry, Paul Jayasinha and Mike Lovatt, trumpets. Their participation suggests the LSO is able to call upon some of the finest musicians working in the capital and further afield. Now we have an album devoted to ‘jazz and swing on screen’.

Cinema buffs will have little difficulty in associating the CD’s 20 tracks with the film and television soundtracks from which they’re drawn: *The Great Gatsby* (Nelson Riddle’s arrangement of *It Had to Be You*); *The Cotton Club* (Richard Gere played his own cornet solo on Ellington’s *The Mooche*); *Ziegfeld Follies* (a feature for Mike Lovatt on *I Can’t Get Started*). The LSO’s concert performances are likely to attract theatre-goers as much as hard core jazz fans, perhaps more so. It appears gala occasions, grand balls and prestigious engagements (e.g. Monaco, not exactly a run-of-the-mill jazz club date!) help keep the band on the road. This Upbeat album will appeal to the cinema-going jazz buff.

ANDREW LIDDLE

Deeply moving and of the moment are Lloyd and Kindred

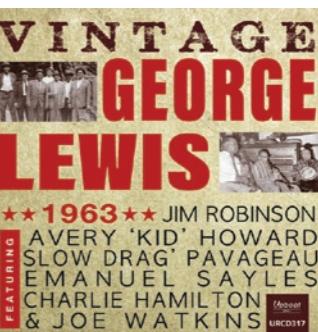
intriguingly eclectic collection of previously unreleased live or studio material, crossing divides from stride to post-bop, progressive to fusion. commendably, it is for the benefit of the Jazz Foundation of America’s Musicians’ Emergency Fund, never more needed than in these Covid-stricken times – whilst offering the power of Black American music to lift universal spirits.

The album, available in all formats – digital, CD and LP – features some of the brightest stars in the contemporary firmament, each track reflecting the particular individual genius of such as bassist Christian McBride, tenors Joshua Redman and Charles Lloyd, vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant, the duo of vocalists Esperanza Spalding and pianist Leo Genovese, calling themselves Irma and Leo, and Japanese pianist (and composer) Hiromi Uehara, seen recently performing at the opening ceremony of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

ANDREW LIDDLE

Spirits raising the roof on *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, the song that has come to be known as the Black National Anthem. *Brother Malcolm*, inspired obviously by Malcolm X, is a gem from McBride’s recent suite, *The Movement*, dedicated to African-Americans cultural icons, and features Josh Evans on trumpet and saxophonist Marcus Strickland, both expressing with stony-faced sonority a never-ending struggle.

As a bonus we have a live quintet performance from the JFA’s 2014 Benefit, featuring the timeless great, Herbie Hancock, on piano, bassist Buster Williams, drummer ‘Tootie’ Heath, and two musicians who have since gone on ahead, tenor Jimmy Heath and trumpeter Wallace Roney. *Gingerbread Boy* is a particularly poignant piece to take us out, which Hancock famously played on the 1967 Miles Davis’ recording. It’s Jimmy Heath’s own composition – and Roney tragically succumbed to Covid.



GEORGE LEWIS RAGTIME BAND

LIVE IN THE USA 1963

Upbeat URCD 317: 55:26

Conventional wisdom suggests that by the 1960s Kid Howard’s alcoholism had severely impaired his playing, but there’s no sign of it here as his fierce lead trumpet rips into *Panama* alongside the King of Tailgate Trombone, Jim Robinson, in a gloriously raucous brass pairing. In fact this is as hot a George Lewis Band as I can remember, with Joe Watkins’ exuberant drumming another prime factor.

This session, recorded live in Boston in 1963, has pretty

much the classic George Lewis line-up of ten years previously, but with accomplished veteran Emanuel Sayles replacing Lawrence Marrero on banjo and Charlie Hamilton coming in for Alton Purnell on piano. I know nothing about Hamilton, but he is a most interesting player, bringing tremendous drive to up-tempo numbers (along with the irrepressible Watkins and the rock-solid bass of Slow Drag Pavageau) and soloing with something of a flourish in the style of Earl Hines.

It’s very much a ‘live’ recording, with more solos than you might normally expect and a sense of spontaneity. Balance can be uneven, though never disturbingly so, and the recorded sound is bright and upfront. Song selection is predictable and none the worse for that. Lewis gets his usual gently melodic showcase, *Burgundy Street Blues*, Joe Watkins takes the vocal on *Just a Closer Walk with Thee* and Lewis and Howard (muted) have fine lyrical solos on *Careless Love*, but it’s the barnburners that stick in the memory. The second half of *Just a Closer Walk, Ice Cream*

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and Chinatown My Chinatown get wilder as they proceed, with Watkins' explosive drumming and Howard's exciting, if rather erratic, trumpet setting the tone.

RON SIMPSON

**JUNE CHRISTY**FIVE CLASSIC ALBUMS:
SECOND SETAvid AMSC1392 2CDs
79.45/82.02

This compilation of five albums follows an earlier four album set released by Avid featuring such classics as *Something Cool* and *The Misty Miss Christy*. Well worth the additional investment for Christy fans.

The singer's profile throughout the 1950s was certainly elevated by her eloquent reading of *I'll Remember April*. Produced the same year *The Song Is June* presents a rich selection of songs by popular composers. Christy's rendition of *Spring Can Really Hang You Up* *The Most* really leaves a lasting impression.

There's a change of dynamic on the final two albums. *Those Kenton Days* features a wealth of jazz classics with imaginative arrangements and fine interpretations from Christy and on the album *June's Got Rhythm* does what it says on the tin and Christy's readings of *My One And Only Love* accompanied by Bud Shank on flute and the classic *Easy Living* with input from Russ Freeman on celeste, are stunning.

I was more familiar with the second album *This Is June* Christy having bought the LP released by The World Record Club many years ago! Clearly aimed at the commercial market with reverb and volume added to the voice, there's much to appreciate: Christy's crisp delivery on Rugolo's

VAL WISEMAN

**PAUL EDIS**

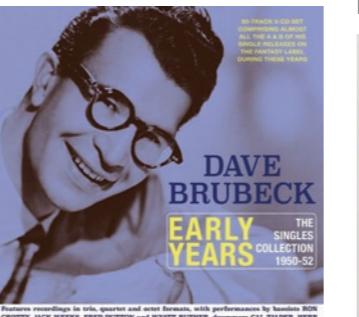
THE STILL POINT OF THE TURNING WORLD

Laterlize LR012CD: 41.09

North-East based pianist Edis has previously released a series of albums with groups of his own, none of which has crossed my path before, I'm sorry to say. This time he has recorded solo, and praises Laterlize for their support in backing him and, given the quality of what is on offer here, I'm glad they have. He says he spent most of 2020 playing solo piano and the majority of the nine pieces presented here are his own compositions, reflecting his reaction to 'a world

turned upside down' and very inventive they are. From the sonorous repeated figure of *Dig Deep* to his lively reading of Jerome Kern's *Nobody Else But Me*, there's evidence here of a distinctive creative approach in all that Edis does. Nothing is hurried or rushed, each extemporisation emerging with zest but without bombast. The recorded sound is perfect, allowing each nuance in his playing to be properly heard for Edis likes to find recurring figures and to give them added weight as he unfurls each piece. As to who he sounds like, well, he may have ingested the playing of Bill Evans or Brad Mehldau to help him formulate his own approach and that's fine. Rather than a random collection of songs, this feels like a recital, and one that I'm delighted to have come across. Piano jazz of this calibre is rare enough: make sure you hear it.

PETER VACHER

**DAVE BRUBECK**

EARLY YEARS – THE SINGLES COLLECTION 1950-52

Acrobat ADDCD3389, 2 CDs, 72.04 / 73.07

This new Acrobat compilation re-visits a lost era, one where jazz singles were de rigueur, this 50-track double CD set comprising nearly all the A and B sides released by the Fantasy label as 78s or 45s in the early 1950s. Many re-appeared on later album releases and one must assume their multiplicity suggests a sustained public interest. Those were the days!

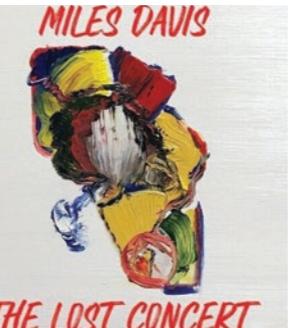
Davis was never keen to revisit past accomplishments, always pushing forward to the next challenge. However, for this concert, simply billed as *Miles and Friends* reportedly neither the audience nor his band knew what to expect. Assembled for the night were colleagues from Davis' past stretching back to the 1950s and covering the subsequent decades up to the 1980s: Chick Corea, Joe Zawinul, Steve

The recordings collected here range from the trio sides that make up the greater part of CD1, before the Octet series and then the more familiar Quartet format with Paul Desmond on alto surfaces on CD2. At this initial stage of things,

the Quartet had yet to assume its classic shape – there's no Joe Morello here or bassist Gene Wright, more a shifting series of bass and drums teams.

The trio, with bassist Ron Crotty and vibist-drummer Cal Tjader, evince a Shearing influence at first, locked hands chords voiced with vibes on standards, further sessions are more MJQ aligned, the introductions increasingly complex, Brubeck's own playing sometimes Bachian, at others boppish and occasionally heavy-handed. Tjader on vibes is a definite plus. The octets were experimental, much coloured by polytonality and clever interplay, Desmond on board. Then comes the quartet with that plaintive alto sound to the fore and a sense of greater things in the offing. By 1954, Columbia had signed Brubeck and the rest is history. A rewarding insight into early Brubeck.

PETER VACHER

**MILES DAVIS**

THE LOST CONCERT

Sleepy Night Records 2 CDs

These recordings represent to some extent a career retrospective. Here we have a recording of a concert from 1991 at La Grande Halle, La Villette, Paris. The album is released to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Davis' death.

Davis was never keen to revisit past accomplishments, always pushing forward to the next challenge. However, for this concert, simply billed as *Miles and Friends* reportedly neither the audience nor his band knew what to expect. Assembled for the night were colleagues from Davis' past stretching back to the 1950s and covering the subsequent decades up to the 1980s: Chick Corea, Joe Zawinul, Steve

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Grossman, Herbie Hancock, Dave Holland, John McLaughlin and Jackie McLean.

The night comprised 13 tunes, opening with three from Davis's current band. Then we have the guests performing in various combinations with the current band. The set list includes *In a Silent Way*, *All Blues*, *Watermelon Man*, *Footprints* and with everyone on stage for the final piece: *Jean Pierre*. In addition, we are treated to the twin guitars of McLaughlin and John Scofield performing on *Katia* written by Prince.

The CD booklet contains concert reminiscences from Sleepy Night Records' Gary Gillies together appropriate photographic memorabilia. This is, of course, a live recording which certainly captures the atmosphere of the concert and includes some commentary from Davis himself. Sound quality is not the best and those familiar with Davis' playing from this period will know what to expect from him personally.

ALAN MUSSON

**RENDELL/CARR QUINTET**

BBC JAZZ CLUB 1965/66 II

Rhythm and Blues Records RANDB075: 79:27

Three BBC Jazz Club dates from the mid-sixties capture the Don Rendell-Ian Carr Quintet at, or near, its best. A short lived outfit (the principals would soon take divergent paths), the 17 tracks on this second volume of BBC Jazz Club recordings embrace hard bop and the influence of John Coltrane with an ear to newer developments which would lead trumpeter Carr into the world of jazz fusion. Miles Davis' influence on Ian Carr is well known, the revelation here is Carr's assimilation of the bop

trumpeters who came before him. The other revelation is Michael Garrick. Pianist Colin Purbrook had recently left the quintet, Garrick stepped in, making his debut with the band on a BBC Jazz Club session at the Playhouse Theatre, London on 19 April 1965.

Seven of Garrick's compositions and a joint composition with Carr feature across the three broadcast sessions (April 65, October 65, January 66). *I Could Write a Book* (Rodgers and Hart) and *Interplay* (Bill Evans) represent the jazz canon, Jeff Hedley contributes *Nimjam* (the composer and the Carr brothers, Ian and Mike, were familiar figures on Tyneside's modern jazz scene), otherwise all compositions come from within the band. Carr's *Big City Strut* provides an uplifting opening. Garrick's *Trane's Mood* salutes John Coltrane, similarly Rendell's *Garrison '65* hears Dave Green extending a hand across the Atlantic to Jimmy Garrison. On the October 65 session Mike Carr playing vibes joins the quintet on three of six all original tracks. The January 66 session, aired the day before Garrick went into the studio to record *Black Marigolds*, signals a determined, independent approach, acknowledging the music's historical (American) roots while simultaneously seeking to forge a new (British) sound.

RUSSELL CORBETT

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recordings by legendary artists.' Their catalogue already includes concert material from Bill Evans, Monk, Brubeck, Blakey, Gillespie, Ella and Sarah, each apparently given an audio MOT, this typified by the perfect sound on this superb Getz/Gilberto Berlin Festival release from November 1966.

Then at the height of his post-bossa nova fame, Getz is in magisterial form, clearly loving having Gary Burton on vibes with him plus the still-active Roy Haynes on drums and Chuck Israels (substituting for Steve Swallow) on bass. Given the quality of what is on offer here, Getz specialist have bemoaned the lack of recordings by this quartet; well, that's remedied now. Something of a Getzian protégé, Burton is heard here at the outset of what became a glittering career and Haynes is in the zestiest of form, his breaks and support figures clearly energising his boss. But above all, it's that perfect tenor sound, light and vibrato-less, that makes Getz 'the supremely melodious

improviser' according to Grove. Take *On Green Dolphin Street*, the audience applauding from its opening notes, Haynes 'exploding delightfully in all directions' according to Dave Gelly, and Getz taking risks, twisting and turning, nothing predictable, Burton's vibes chiming alongside. Then consider *The Shadow of Your Smile*, sublime melody, sublime treatment. Plus various bossas too. Fabulous music.

Given the world-wide prominence of *The Girl from Ipanema*, Gilberto was momentarily the most famous singer in jazz and much of the second CD is hers. It's a small voice, lacking real animation but engaging nonetheless, wistful and cool, the crowd loving these Brazilian songs but with Getz (and Burton) very much the icing on this particular cake. Its quality is further emphasised by the album's presentation; this is a prestige package in every way.

PETER VACHER



NIGEL PRICE ORGAN TRIO

WES REIMAGINED

Ubuntu Music UBU 0080: 59.58

This album is billed as by the Nigel Price Organ Trio, but it's a great deal more than that. Saxophonists Vasilis Xenopoulos and Tony Kofi make significant contributions, Snowboy adds additional percussion to the many varied rhythmical patterns on five tracks and Callum Au contributes arrangements for string quartet (Phonograph Effect Strings) to three tracks.

Still you can understand the billing. Over its time as one of the hardest working jazz groups in the country the Nigel Price Trio has built a remarkable level of togetherness (Vasilis, too, a frequent collaborator) which is central to the impact of the album, with Joel Barford's dynamic drumming and Ross Stanley's urgent Hammond meshing perfectly with Price's guitar.

With quality solos and ingeniously unpredictable arrangements the album is an obvious winner and the nicest surprise comes at the end. 'I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face' (not by Wes, but recorded by him) is a total contrast to what has gone before, Price and Stanley in touch with their lyrical side and delicate strings backing.

RON SIMPSON



LEE MORGAN

THE COMPLETE LIVE AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

Blue Note 0883935, 8 CDs: 47.06/42.46/45.42/57.30/50.06/70.54/70.17/57.03

There's as much paperwork as performance in this stunning 8-CD collection, which collates everything tragic trumpet firebrand Morgan taped at the famed California night-spot in July 1970. Morgan's penultimate Blue Note release, a double album, featured just four of the pieces recorded over three nights, while a 1995 triple-CD release added further material. This new issue, however, is the motherlode; every note played, every word spoken, by Morgan and his band on these heady nights, pulled together in the high-class definitive way that we've come to expect from producers Zev Feldman and Don Was. A sumptuous 62-page booklet contains reminiscences from those who were there – saxist Benny Maupin and bassist Jymie Merritt – observations from the trumpeter's family, contemporaries and present-day admirers, alongside rare photographs. As impressive as this documentation is, this is merely a prelude to around nine hours of post-bop magnificence. This isn't Morgan of *The Sidewinder* (which gets a distinctly 1970 dusting down on CD 3) but a musician outward bound from hard bop. Harmonic and

rhythmic structure is toyed with, modes are explored, composition treated as more an episodic art, Morgan's fire fed by a band of fellow players with open-ears, his trumpet soloing stronger than a few years earlier, his ideas frequently breathtaking. The historic significance of this material cannot be overplayed, not only as it gives the clearest picture yet of what Morgan was capable of towards the end of his short life (he was to die in 1972) but because it refutes the jazz-story rewrite that the early 1970s were a dead spot for acoustic-based innovation. *Bitches Brew* this music most certainly isn't; it's another way of moving jazz forward and it shouldn't be ignored. An outstanding release in every way, I shouldn't be at all surprised if this tops the reissue of the year polls. Simply fabulous, it's unhesitatingly recommended.

SIMON SPILLETT



SINNE EEG & THOMAS FONNESBAEK

STAYING IN TOUCH

Stunt Records STUCD 21072: 49.57

Sinne Eeg is nothing if not versatile. When I interviewed her last year, she had just released an album with big band. Now this superb album is her second duo collaboration with bassist Thomas Fonnesbaek. Eeg's spot-on intonation comes with a coolly expressive style, precision of phrasing that serves her well in scat and vocalese and the ability to get inside the nature of very different songs. Fonnesbaek is one of those wonderful Scandinavian bass players with a rich tone combined with melodic agility. Here he is the harmonic and rhythmic pulse as well as exploring his own lines, often in a musical conversation with Eeg.

Both of them are good songwriters, too. There aren't many originals here, but what there are have instant appeal. The album opens with Fonnesbaek and Helle Hansen's *Spring Waltz*, a charming and serene introduction to the perfect balance of the partnership. *Orphans* (Fonnesbaek/Hansen) and *The Streets of Berlin* (Eeg) are more sombre, given added intensity by the presence of a string quartet – it's a peculiarly satisfying to hear bowed strings backing a highly articulate plucked jazz bass solo. Elsewhere on the album Eeg gives us a delightfully meditative *Long and Winding Road*, highlighting her effortless vocal range; an extended bass solo introduces a vocal and instrumental tour de force on *Round Midnight*; Eeg frolics through Iola Brubeck's words to *Take Five* before breaking into scat; and the album finishes on the wilder fringes of vocalese with *The Dry Cleaner from Des Moines*, Joni Mitchell's collaboration with Charles Mingus.

RON SIMPSON



TONY COE & JOHN HORLER

DANCING IN THE DARK

Gearbox GB1567CD: 52.58

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HENRY'S BLUESLETTER

BOXSTOCK IS BACK

For the first time since 2018 Boxstock, the UK Cigar Box Guitar Festival, returns to the Slade Room in Wolverhampton, on October 15-16. The previous event brought unprecedented public attention to the cigar box guitar, with television coverage on BBC1 and BBC4 in the film *Cigar Box Blues – The Makers of a Revolution*.

Boxstock has operated on an irregular basis since 2009 when Chickenbone John, the Godfather of the Cigar Box Guitar, was running a weekly blues club in Birmingham, The Crossroads Blues Club, at The Tower of Song, a small music bar. Since 2005 John had been making guitars from cigar boxes with remarkable success and selling them, initially on Ebay. During his set with his band Chickenbone Blues, he regularly featured cigar box guitar and somewhat to his surprise he found himself organising the first UK Cigar Box Guitar Festival at The Tower of Song. He put together an all day event with a meet and greet, demos, stalls and talks, followed by an evening gig. Featuring on the first festival were Hollowbelly (whose first cigar box guitar had been made by Chickenbone John), Bluesbeaten Redshaw and,

supposedly, Tinqui8 from France's Basque country. Unfortunately Tinqui8, having made his way through France from the Basque Country, was left stranded at Calais when his lift let him down. That apart, the Festival was a great success and, under the name Boxstock, has grown, with international performers, television coverage, etc.

Boxstock 2021 now spreads over two days, with a Friday night gig with one of the stars of that first festival, Hollowbelly, joined by Philbilly One Man Band, plus an open mic session. Saturday's free-admission daytime session includes workshops, trade stalls, jam sessions and a film, a unique opportunity for a rather esoteric section of the blues community to get together and newcomers to

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HENRY'S BLUES PROFILES

ROOSEVELT SYKES: THE HONEYDripper

I was lucky enough to be regularly on the road during the 1970s with Cousin Joe from New Orleans, and there was rarely a dull moment. Among the highlights were the many occasions Joe's tours crossed paths with those of Roosevelt Sykes who Joe always addressed as "Dobby". Sykes had settled in New Orleans in the mid-1950s and unsurprisingly got to know the larger-than-life Cousin Joe, even in the mid-60s going into a near-two-year residency together in the Court of Two Sisters in New Orleans where, for reasons that are now lost in time, Joe was billed as Pleasant Joe.

Roosevelt was one of the most important of all blues piano players, with Otis Spann, Fats Domino, Willie Mabon, Pinetop Perkins, Smiley Lewis and Memphis Slim all acknowledging his influence on their playing.

Sykes was born in Elmar, Arkansas, in 1906. His father was a musician, his mother's surname was Bragg which he was to put to use in 1930 when he recorded for four record labels that year under four different names, Dobby Bragg, Willy Kelly, Easy Papa Johnson and The Honeydripper, the last denoting his reputation as a ladies' man.

The family moved to St. Louis in 1909, with Dobby regularly visiting his preacher grandfather's farm near West Helena where from the age of 10 he taught himself to play the blues on the church organ. By the time he was 12 he was playing piano to accompany his singing and at the age of 15 he ran away from home to entertain in the gambling clubs and barrelhouses of West Helena where in 1925 he picked up with the piano

Guitarist Henry Townsend remembers Sykes playing at The Royal Candy Kitchen on Market Street in St. Louis. It was a candy shop up front with "other activities" going on in the back. Sykes wasn't averse to illegal speakeasies, investing his income from recording into several over the years, selling fried fish and alcohol.

In the company of Henry Townsend and singer St. Louis Jimmy, Sykes started working clubs and bars in

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other cities, including Chicago, Detroit and Memphis. Around 1941, a brush with the law obliged Sykes and St. Louis Jimmy to get out of St. Louis, so they moved to Chicago where Sykes became a house musician for the Victor Bluebird label. Bluebird saw him filling the boots of Fats Waller, also a Bluebird artist who died in 1943, but Roosevelt resisted and carried on doing his own thing.

He formed a 12-piece band which he named The Honeydippers. He toured the South with the band while back in Chicago he worked the clubs with Memphis Minnie, Little Son Joe, Jump Jackson and Lonnie Johnson.

In 1954 Roosevelt Sykes made his move to New Orleans, playing the Gulf Coast resorts before briefly returning to St. Louis, then Chicago where he recorded for Delmark. About this time there developed in Europe a significant interest in the blues, fostered by the annual American Folk Blues Festival tours and supported by the work of British musicians Chris Barber and Julian Piper who brought important bluesmen to these shores.

Dobby was the right man in the right place at the right time to take advantage of this burgeoning interest in his work,

first touring the UK and Europe in 1961 and then appearing in the Belgian film, "Roosevelt Sykes: The Honey Dripper".

Back in the U.S. he decided to make New Orleans his permanent home, appearing in The Jazz and Heritage Festival, buddying up with Cousin Joe and seeing his career flourish with festival appearances throughout the States, and regular European tours. He made appearances in the French film "Blues Under The Skin" in 1972, the BBC series "The Devil's Music – A History of The Blues" (episode "Nothing But Trouble") in 1976 and a UK television programme with Sister Rosetta Tharpe, recording an album for Columbia while in London.

Roosevelt Sykes continued to tour in Europe until the late 1970s and performed pretty much up to his death, of a heart attack, in New Orleans in 1983.

The man described by Delmark boss Bob Koester as "one of the most important bluesmen of all time – he bridged the gap between Southern rural blues and Chicago electric blues" is buried in an unmarked grave in Providence Memorial Park in his adopted home of New Orleans.

JIM SIMPSON



LIVE REVIEW**NEWCASTLE JAZZ FESTIVAL 2021**

The 2020 edition of the recently revived Newcastle Jazz Festival fell victim to the pandemic. Musicians contracted to last year's festival readily agreed to appear this year and many punters indicated that they didn't want a refund on their advance ticket purchases, they were content to wait twelve long months. It is to the credit of everyone involved - festival directors, musicians and festival-goers - that this year's event would prove to be a resounding success. Capacity audiences across three venues demonstrated a real commitment to live jazz. The musicians revelled in performing to a live audience, festival-goers couldn't get enough of the real thing (the streamed gig is one thing, being there, up close, is another thing altogether), and participating venues were grateful for a timely boost to business.

Newcastle Civic Centre hosted Friday evening's gala concert. The impressive Banqueting Suite proved to be the ideal location in which to present Alice Grace singing numbers associated with the great Ella Fitzgerald. Ms Grace and the Strictly Smokin' Big Band held the audience spellbound. It was all about Alice - and Ella! - supported by a fine, swinging big band. Later this year Michael Lamb's

outstanding big band will release an album devoted to some of Ella's timeless recordings with Alice reprising her starring role. Earlier in the day two duos opened proceedings at Flat Caps Coffee in Carliol Square. It's likely that many of those on the premises were unaware of the area's jazz history. A mere stone's throw from the coffee shop stood the legendary Downbeat Club. Long since demolished, the building played host to the EmCee 5 (the Carr brothers, Mike and Ian), the River City Jazzmen, Eric Burdon and many others. The 21st century Carliol Square cafe played host to the scratch pairing of American trumpeter Pete Tanton and guitarist Lloyd Wright. Their set of standards and original compositions impressed the Americano-drinking jazz diehards and cafe regulars alike. The other half of the double bill - vocalist Ruth Lambert and bassist Ian Paterson - made a similarly big impression. Ruth, a supreme interpreter of the Great American Songbook, picked up where she left off, all of 18 months ago! It had been an excellent start to day one; days two and three held much promise.

A socially distanced full house enjoyed two days of first-rate performances at Tyne Bank Brewery. Saturday's running order embraced the art of intimate jazz singing, small group modern jazz, the ever popular Manouche idiom, a set of original material from Leeds

based Jasmine Whalley's quintet and a bill-topping powerhouse trombone-Hammond organ-drums trio. Recent Birmingham Conservatoire graduate Francis Tulip stepped in at short notice, pulling together a scratch four piece band to play material ranging from Joe Henderson to Charlie Parker. Guitarist Francis, from rural County Durham, earned extra brownie points, arriving at the Walker Road venue with his right leg in plaster! Swing Manouche unveiled its new line-up featuring new recruits, clarinetist Martin Winning, recently relocated to Rowlands Gill, and Yorkshire-based guitarist Danny Lowndes Smith. On the evidence of the reception the band received from the audience, Mick Shoulder's outfit can expect many more bookings. The day's headline act - Dennis Rollins' Velocity Trio - almost blew the roof off the place. Trombonist Rollins develop his craft in his home town of Doncaster, since when he has gone on to achieve wide recognition. His trio featured Hammond organ maestro Ross Stanley and virtuoso drummer Pedro Segundo. Stanley arrived with his Hammond and two Leslie speakers. It took an army of willing helpers to do the heavy lifting. It was worth the effort, the trio's performance won a standing ovation.

Abbie Finn got Sunday's action got under way at 1.30. Material from drummer Abbie's recently released *Northern Perspective*

trio album featured in the set list, as did tunes by Victor Feldman and Charles Mingus. Harry Keeble impressed with his assured tenor saxophone playing and bassist Paul Grainger, who could lay claim to being the busiest musician over the weekend playing in several different line-ups, dropped anchor from the downbeat.

Gerry Richardson, former band mate and life-long friend of Sting, delivered a soul-drenched set of classic Hammond organ numbers with alto saxophonist Garry Linsley and all-action trombonist David Gray firing on all cylinders. Sue Ferris arrived from her Weardale base to play a Gerry Mulligan baritone sax programme. Multi-reeds player Sue never fails to impress and this festival date simply reaffirmed her standing as a 'first call' musician.

Three marvellous days of jazz drew to a close with the appearance of London resident, expat Canadian trumpeter Jay Phelps. Working with an A-list rhythm section of Dean Stockdale, piano, Andy Champion, bass and drummer Dave McKeague, Phelps produced a remarkable performance reminiscent of trumpet legends Dizzy Gillespie, Fats Navarro and Lee Morgan. This was high octane, dazzling trumpet playing, Phelps' performance will live long in the memory.

Promoting a gig can be fraught with difficulties, promoting a festival can only multiply them! Michael Lamb, Jamie Toms and countless others worked tirelessly to ensure things ran smoothly and, if there was a hitch, it went unnoticed. Special mention of Liam Gaughan, sound engineer extraordinaire. Liam worked unobtrusively from an iPad - from one set to the next, venue to venue - and the sound balance was never less than excellent. Given what all of us have experienced over the last 18 months or so, Newcastle Jazz Festival 2021 couldn't have been more timely. We look forward to next year!

RUSSELL CORBETT



*Photo by
Malcolm Sinclair*

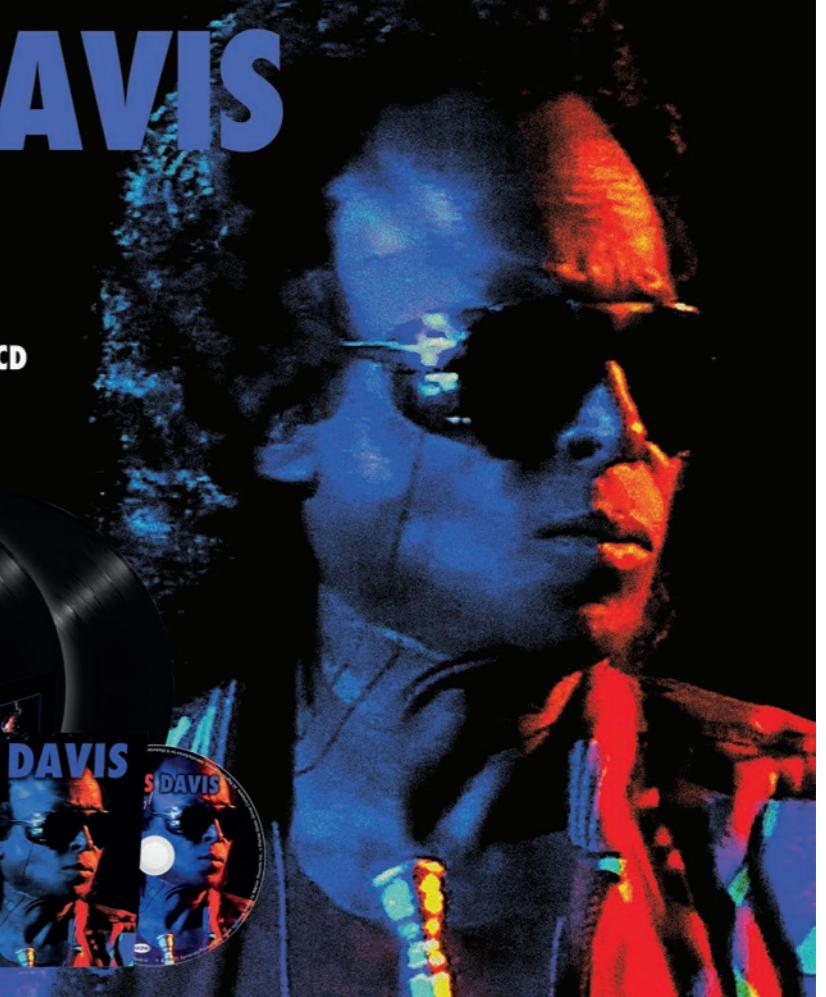
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