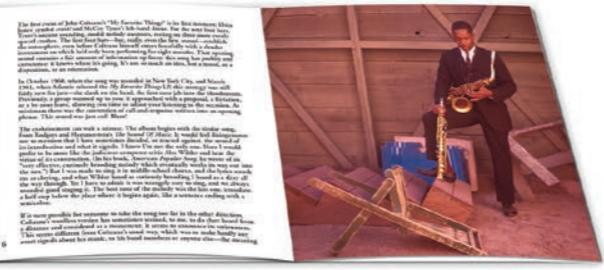


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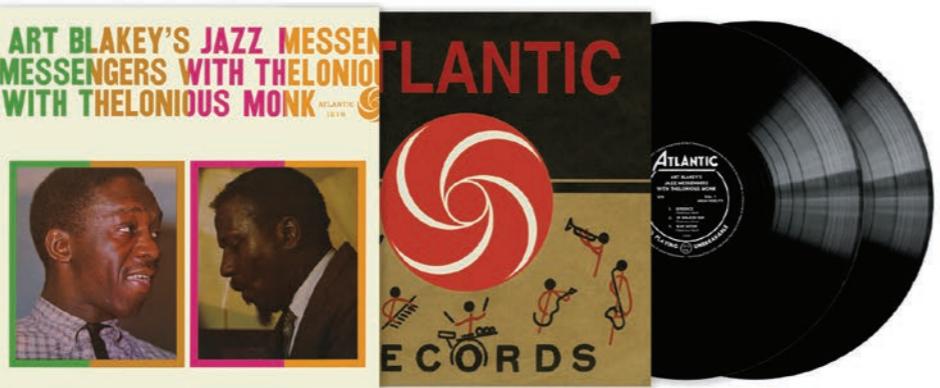
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ANNIE ROSS, died two years ago just before her 90th birthday. One of the great jazz singers, born in Scotland, domiciled in the States, she will always be remembered for Twisted and the great Count Basie tribute by Lambert, Hendricks and Ross.

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UPFRONT

The Festival season is upon us! And the good news is it's looking a good deal healthier than in the last two years. With such favourites as Bude back in strength, Brecon returning to normal and Birmingham keeping up its proud 'We never closed' record and now back to pre-covid proportions, there is even the novelty of a large-scale new Festival at Buxton, an ingenious mix of a self-contained jazz festival and occasional events in a general arts festival.

Sadly at least two of the disappearing festivals put it down to unavailability of venues: Teignmouth and the Southport Jazz on a Winter's Weekend. One wonders how many other festivals have struggled with venues as proprietors look for safer income streams post-covid.

A final thought: covid is often accused of taking the blame for changes that would have happened in the wake of Brexit. Touring European bands is bound to be more difficult now. Whitley Bay, bringing in individuals, is back with a vengeance; Birmingham had to cope with a hole in its scheduling.



HIGH SUMMER AT RONNIE'S

London's Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club has certainly recovered in style from the narrowing of its boundaries during Covid: the July/August programme is full of international goodies. A sample for July includes Lee Ritenour and Dave Grusin (1-3), David Sanborn (6-7), Arturo Sandoval (8-10), Cecile McLorin Salvant (12-13) and Marcus Miller (20-22). August brings, among others, Fred Wesley and the New JBs (5-6), Ruby Turner (8-10), Avishai Cohen (12-13), Mingus Dynasty (16-18) and Curtis Stigers (21-24). www.ronniescotts.co.uk

50 YEARS AT PUMP HOUSE

The Pump House Jazz Club in Watford celebrates 50 years since its foundation this year. July gigs feature Pete Rudforth (7), Andy Woon's All Stars (14), Alan Haughton (21) and the Pedigree Traditional Jazz Band (28). www.pumphouse.info

COPPERFIELD ON TOUR

Alan Barnes' latest Dickensian epic, *Copperfield*, can be heard at Swanage Jazz Festival (July 9), Fleet Jazz Club (19), the Concorde Club, Sandwell and Westside Jazz



Keith Nichols

Eastleigh (September 14), Jazz Coventry (November 10) and the Watermill, Dorking (29), with more dates in the Christmas season. www.alanbarnesjazz.com

CONCORDE IN JULY

The Concorde Club in Eastleigh has a full programme of Wednesday night jazz in July with Art Themen's organ trio, Thane and the Villeins (6), followed by the Ben Holder Quartet (13), Swing Unlimited Big Band (20) and Alan Barnes and Dave Newton (27). Then matters resume in September with a special event, The Midnite Follies Orchestra with Jungle Nights in Harlem in tribute to Keith Nichols (7). Sunday nights in July bring the best in traditional jazz, with Bob Dwyer's Bix and Pieces (3), Solent City Jazzmen with Cuff Billett (10) and the John Maddocks Jazzmen (17). www.theconcordeclub.com

HITMAN ON TOUR

The Hitman Blues Band from New York City featuring The New York City Horns is on tour in the UK during July. Recently a finalist in the UK Blues Awards International Blues Artist of the Year, the band plays Farnham Maltings (14), Birmingham, Sandwell and Westside Jazz

Festival (15, 21, 22), Bear Club, Luton (16), Blues at the Tropic, Ruislip (17), Tuesday Night Music Club, Coulsdon (19), Livestock, Forty Hall Farm, Enfield (23), Hope Tavern Festival, Lincs. (24), Red Arrow Music Club, Ramsgate (26), Half Moon, Putney (27), Blues Bar, Tring (28), The Factory Live, Worthing (29) and the Concorde Club, Eastleigh (31).

KAYPEES IN FESTIVAL MOOD

Just returned from the Riverboat Jazz Festival in Denmark, King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys are off to Umbria Jazz Festival July 8-17. More local festivals include WOMAD (July 29), the YNOT Festival near Matlock (31), the Riverside Festival, Nottingham (August 7) and the Newbury

Retro Festival (13). Non-Festival gigs include the East Riding Theatre, Beverley (July 22), the Ashcroft Arts Centre, Fareham (23), the Night Owl, Birmingham (August 20), the Pizza Express, Soho (27) and the Muni Theatre, Colne (28). Then it's Europe again, with Hamar in Norway. www.kingpleasureandthebiscuitboys.com

CHANGE OF VENUE

Graham Brook's Tuesday Jazz and Swing has moved home, though still within Wilmslow. With the proud slogan, 'Plenty of Parking, No Stairs to Climb', the monthly sessions have adjourned to Morley Green Club. Following the Phil Shotton Quartet (June 28) are Greg Abate and Dave Newton (July 26), the Jake Leg Jug Band (August 23) and the Julie



Hitman Blues Band

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Jake Leg Jug Band

Edwards/Kevin Dearden Quintet (September 27). www.grahambrookjazz.co.uk

MADELEINE PEYROUX TOUR ON

Following the postponement of Madeleine Peyroux's *Careless Love Forever* tour last year comes the good news that it has been re-scheduled for this Autumn. Dates are the Sage Gateshead (September 21), Usher Hall, Edinburgh (22), Bridgewater Hall, Manchester (26), Birmingham Town Hall (27), London Palladium (29), De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea (October 1) and Corn Exchange, Cambridge (3). www.jazzleeds.org.uk

SUMMER IN LEEDS

Jazz Leeds at Sevenarts concentrates its Summer efforts on Sunday lunch-time events.

The Emily Brown Quintet (July 3) is followed by July Jazz Café and Jam Session (10), B.D. Lenz (17) and the Trish Heenan Quartet (24). Then the next month brings August Courtyard Jazz: North Leeds Jazz Orchestra (7), Rhythm de Luxe (14), Manouche North (21) and Jam in the Courtyard (28). www.jazzleeds.org.uk



FESTIVALS IN THE NORTH EAST

The North East is busy with festivals at the moment: Blues Jazz and Swing Festival at the Exchange, North Shields (July 1-3, with Abbie Finn Trio on final day), Mouth of the Tyne Festival at Tynemouth (July 9-10), Durham Brass (July 10-17 at the Gala Theatre and on the street) and The Globe Summer Festival (all day July 31, Dean Stockdale Trio, etc.). And late September will bring the Newcastle Festival of Jazz and Improvised Music. www.606club.co.uk



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Newcastle Jazz Co-op at the Globe presents the Jeffrey Hewer Quartet (July3), Jazzframe (10), Milne-Glendinning Band (17), Yaatri (21), Wild Women of Wylam (24) and Paul Edis and James Brady (August 6).

Jazz at the Stables goes through a somewhat fallow spell following Stacey Kent's appearance on July 21 before the Penguin Café (September 20) and Ruby Turner (29), but as ever short courses in saxophone, guitar, ukulele and harmonica keep the music going.

The Watermill at Dorking, meeting at Betchworth Park Golf Club, can look forward to Liane Carroll (July 5), the Jonny Mansfield Quintet (19) and John Etheridge's Blue Spirits Trio with Art Themen (26).

Amersham Jazz Club meets every Wednesday in Wycombe Marsh Royal British Legion. Bands lined up for July are the Vitality Five (6), Sussex Jazz Kings (13), Louisiana Rhythm Kings (20) and the New Orleans Jazz Bandits (27). Among the August bands is the intriguingly named Jazz Re-visited (24).

www.amershamjazzclub.co.uk

Simon Spillett's Big Band, playing the music of Tubby Hayes, can be encountered at Wigan Jazz Festival (July 8), Swanage Jazz Festival (10), Scarborough Jazz Festival (September 24), Southend Jazz Festival (October 2) and EFG London Jazz Festival (November 13).
www.simonspillett.com

Totsy Gang (July 5), Graham Smith's Jazz Allsorts (19), Graham Hughes and the Sunshine Kings (August 2) and Pete Lay's Gambit Jazzmen (16).
www.pid-gen.uk

The Lit and Phil in Newcastle has monthly sessions at Friday lunchtime: Dean Stockdale Quartet celebrating Oscar Peterson (July

www.millionspages.com 00:00:00.000000000 Sat, 15 Oct 2011 00:00:00

Jeff Barnhart



Colchester Jazz Club, moving towards its 70th year, welcomes the Gambit Jazzmen (July 3) to Marks Tey Parish Hall, then the Savoy Super Six Jazz Band (10), Alan Gresty's French Quarter (17), Jazz Incorporated (24) and the Sussex Jazz Kings (31).



15), Jo Harrop/Jamie McCredie (August 19) and Jeff Barnhart (September 16).

Nottingham Rhythm Club at the Stadium Leisure Centre in Basford has Graham Smith's Shades of Jazz on July 7 and the Eagle Jazz Band on July 28.
www.nrcjazz.co.uk

With the disappearance of the Jazz Festival, it's pleasing that Teignmouth Jazz and Blues Club continues successfully. On June 29 there is a special session with American guitarist B.D. Lenz at the Old Commercial Inn, Bishopsteignton, and on July 14 there is the next regular session at the Teign Corinthian Yacht Club, with George Cooper's Jazz Defenders, followed by Adam Sweet's Blues Band (28) and Louise Parker's Lateral Flow (August 25).

www.teignmouthjazz.org

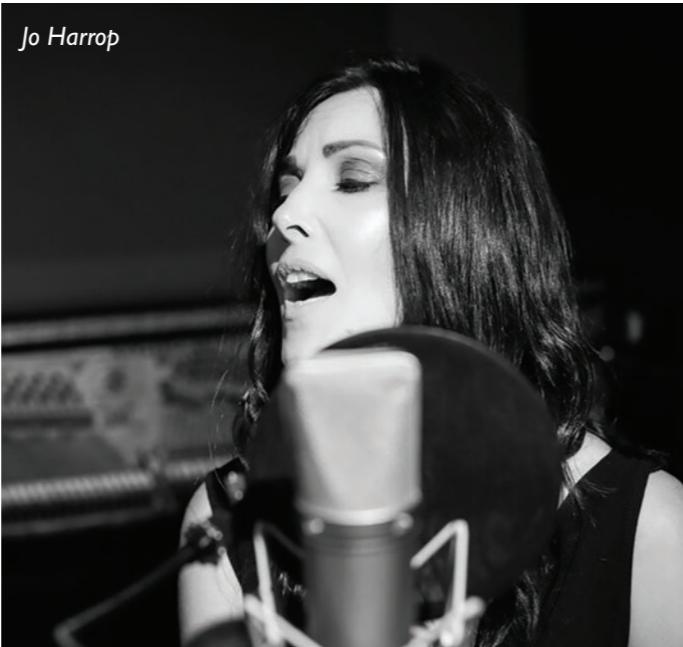
joins Digby Fairweather and the resident rhythm team on June 30.
www.digbyfairweather.com

Edinburgh's Jazz & Jive Club presents Joys of Swing (July 1), Bechet Nouveau (8), Savannah Jazz Band (22) and Mike Daly's Rhythm Kings (29).
www.edinburghjazz.com

Darlington New Orleans Jazz Club meet once or twice a month, with Spats Langham's Hot Fingers with Emily Campbell next up on July 2, followed by the Savannah Jazz Band (August 6), River City Hot Six (September 3) and Jeff Barnhart and his Barrel House Boys (September 17).

Friday lunch-times monthly Jazz at the Tattershall Castle brings two guests in on July 1 to join Brian Rudland's Band. Regular tenor sax star Al Nicholls is missing this month, so, to compensate, Alan Barnes and Mick Foster join the regulars.

Jo Harrop



JOHN BARNES 1932-2022

John Barnes first rose to prominence at the clarinetist with the Manchester band The Zenith Six and went on to enjoy a prolific career with Alex Welsh and Humphrey Lyttelton and as a freelance, becoming acknowledged as one of the finest of baritone sax players. He died on April 19th. Here former colleagues and band members reminisce.

DIGBY FAIRWEATHER

'My favourite instrument is the baritone!'. John Barnes' quick-as-a-flash answer to jazz presenter Walter Love on Radio Ulster in 2008. 'No doubt. I played the clarinet first; then alto and I bought a baritone in 1962. A friend of mine was living in Ipswich; we called in to see him on the way home. He had this case, and I said, "What's that - a bass guitar?". And he said. "No – it's an old baritone and I don't play it." So I bought it for forty quid! And as soon as I started playing it, it almost said, "From now on I'm going to be your main instrument." It just took me over. I mean I like playing the alto too – but I still don't feel comfortable on tenor, though I've got one and I used it quite a bit when I was with Humph.'

For me – over almost fifty years – playing with the late John was a privilege every time. But, if I'm pressed for my favourite-ever moments, they may have been when he played on his first two preferences, both of them pitched in E-flat concert. There's no doubt in my mind that my great friend John Barnes, was, in his soul, an E-flat cat. That's not to say that his clarinet-playing wasn't entirely exceptional (one example is on my tribute album to Sandy Brown called Songs for Sandy for Alistair Robertson's Hep label). And his tenor-playing – where, occasionally, with tenor held straight ahead and right foot patting, he would slyly pay visual tribute to Bud Freeman – was every bit good enough to join Spike Robinson, Bobby Wellins and Alan Barnes in Robinson's 'Tenor Madness' ensemble.

On whatever instrument he chose John was a jazz musician to his soul, improvising always from inspiration, never from device. But on alto – with everyone from Alex Welsh on – his playing had the spiralling acrobatic heat of an on-form Willie Smith. And on baritone (with The Great



British Jazz Band from 1994-2005) one feature, arranged by Pete Strange, was *Idaho* where his nightly solo launched from instant take-off into jazz space using every area of his instrument from its rich root-tones to flailing harmonics in the instrument's super-register, leaving me both astounded and sure that here was (truly) one of the world's greatest baritone-saxophonists. Another feature – a vocal one this time (John loved to sing) – was Ozzie Nelson's *I'm looking for a guy who plays alto and baritone and doubles on clarinet and wears a size thirty seven suit*. Where he found this obscurity is anybody's guess. But as I write this two things occur to me. First that it must be rare that just two titles could so accurately reflect the glorious diversity of this multifarious musician and man. And – with more sad irony – that, as of April 19th 2022, we're looking too.

VAL WISEMAN

I first encountered John Barnes on a BBC Radio Jazz Club live broadcast back in 1962. I had been invited by Alex Welsh to make a guest appearance with his band that night and I recall John, who became a formidable member of the Welsh band, being announced in the line-up. Our paths crossed on numerous occasions over the years, usually on shared gigs or at the British Jazz Awards. Highly regarded for his exceptional skills on baritone saxophone, he regularly picked up an award for this in the Miscellaneous category. I know it amused him and his droll sense of fun was regularly witnessed when he recited his monologues on stage or performed old music-hall songs delivered in his own inimitable style, often with alternative lyrics! Such was the esteem and affection held for him by his colleagues, John and his wife Pat were never short

of visitors to their home in Isleworth following his stroke in 2011. There was always a warm welcome, a large glass of wine and much banter. With the local sewage works in close proximity to both our homes, John and I used to boast that we shared the same smell! The pong is ended, but the malady lingers on. Here's to you, John. One of the good fellows.

DAVE GREEN

I first met John Barnes when I did some gigs with the Alex Welsh Band in the late sixties deputising for the band's regular bassist Harvey Weston. After that our paths didn't cross much musically until he joined Humphrey Lyttelton's band for a three week tour of the Middle East in November 1979. Humph's line-up at that time was Bruce Turner alto and clarinet, Roy Williams trombone, Mick Pyne piano, Alan Jackson drums

and myself on bass. This tour and a further one with the same band in 1982 (except that Mike Paxton replaced Alan Jackson on drums) are well documented from Humph's diaries in his book *Why No Beethoven?* (published by Robson Books in 1984). Being on the road with John was a joyful and hilarious experience. His wild humour was always lurking underneath his kindly and calming persona. He loved comedy monologues and would do a brilliant Impersonation of Robb Wilton's 'Back Answers' - this could happen at any time of the day or night, but usually it was back at one of our rooms at the band hotel at 2am after a few beers.

As Humph noted in one of his diary entries, JB (as we all called him) was an asset to the band. He was a consummate musician who was principally known for playing the baritone but he also played fine clarinet and soprano. I've got a tape of John playing a blues on soprano with the Alan Elsdon Band at the Philip Larkin Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey in February 1986. He is the

only soloist and his five choruses are one of the most moving blues solos that I've ever heard.

I find it very hard to put into words my feelings for yet another dear friend who has passed away, there have been too many over the last two years. My happy memories of being in the company of John and his dear wife Pat are many. Not least the wonderful hours spent at Lord's, the home of cricket where John was a member of the MCC. On my very first visit to the hallowed ground John gave me a guided tour of the famous Long Room - I'll never forget that day.

Thanks for all the laughs and the fun John, thanks for your kindness and thoughtfulness and thanks for the great music. Never to be forgotten.

ALAN BARNES

Starting out as a George Lewis inspired clarinettist, John Barnes went on to play swinging, Zoot-ish tenor saxophone, Tab and Willie Smith-inspired alto, Bechet-ish soprano, booting Rollini-styled bass sax and

a fruity-toned bass clarinet. However, it was on baritone sax that he became a world contender and a unique stylist.

A superb ensemble player as well as an inspired soloist, he had an infallible ear for counterpoint, a skill he shared with fellow Mancunian trombonist Roy Williams. They always struck sparks off each other. Have a listen to their quintet album *Gruesome Twosome* to hear both at their swinging and inventive best.

His generosity knew no bounds. When I first met him, he was delighted to find we had the same surname and straight away took me under his wing, giving me deps with the Midnight Follies Orchestra and Humph's band. I even lived with John and his wife Pat for nearly a year, joining a long list of many others, including Buck Clayton, who had benefitted from the superb hospitality.

John began to spin a yarn to anyone who would listen that I was actually his son. Humph used to say, 'They are related, but not to each other.' And he did become something of a musical father

figure to me, patiently teaching me many tunes and letting me loose on his LP collection.

He was always pursuing 'Wizard japes and wheezes', as Kathy Stobart aptly put it. Time with him always involved much laughing and falling about. One time we were flying to Switzerland with saxophonist Benny Waters, then aged 92. John had prepared for this by cutting a tennis ball in half. When it was turned inside out, it took a couple of minutes before it sprang back into shape. He surreptitiously placed this under his cloth cap at the airport and, when Benny asked how he was, complained of a severe headache. 'I feel like my head might explode,' he explained. Right on cue, the tennis ball pinged back into shape shooting the cap off his head, high in the air and across the concourse accompanied by JB giving it the full gurning, music hall ham facial expression and shriek of horror. Benny was still chuckling as we checked into the hotel hours later.

A wonderful musician and a kind and humorous man. Thanks for everything, John.

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CLASSIC JAZZ IN THE NORTH EAST

After a two-year hiatus the Mike Durham International Classic Jazz Party (aka the Whitley Bay Jazz Festival) returns to Newcastle in November. Jazz Rag asked three regulars at the Festival – MICHAEL McQUAID, EMMA FISK, JOSH DUFFEE and MAURO PORRO – for their impressions of working at the Festival.

Each of them came from a very different background. Emma, from the North East of England, recalling early influences, says, 'We had a very eclectic record collection with some of my dad's choices including Louis Armstrong, Glenn Miller, Ella Fitzgerald and Chris Barber, along with some Scott Joplin and everything else from ABBA to Handel's *Messiah*. I loved the big band sound and, when we used to go to watch my brother playing euphonium in his brass band, I really liked the look of the trombone. Perhaps that would have been the instrument I would have chosen, but with the county music service you were given an instrument – no choice! – and I was given a violin. From early on I played all kinds of music with my older brother who was also a self-taught guitarist. We played Beatles songs, folk tunes, original compositions and some jazz standards. When he went to Sixth Form College to study Music, I would go along to the performances and join in for some jazz numbers.'

As for Mauro, 'From the age of 6 I was trained in classical music. When I was nine or ten years old, my professor assigned me a ragtime tune as homework, as well as my usual programme of classical



Mauro Porro

studies. It was *Maple Leaf Rag*...and all began from that moment!'

Michael grew up in Canberra where he joined a professional jazz band at the age of 15. He had become interested in the jazz of the 1920s and 1930s two years previously:

'My clarinet teacher was very encouraging and I really enjoyed our lessons playing classical music. However, he was smart enough to realise I wasn't motivated to practise at home and he tried playing some jazz for me. I can still remember hearing my first jazz record – *Royal Garden Blues* by the Dutch Swing College Band. It was like a light-bulb had been switched on! I can remember feeling like they were playing all these extra notes that I hadn't learned yet. That week I was in the school library, borrowing jazz books and CDs, trying to learn as much as I could. I'm still learning! And I quickly added saxophone to my clarinet practice!'

Drummer/percussionist Josh Duffee from Davenport, Iowa (Bix's home town) also began young:

'I came across classic jazz when I was in high school. I had been sitting in with a local jazz group called The Riverboaters which performed each Friday night at a club called The Hunters Club. This group performed classic jazz in a Dixieland-revival style and I had a fun time learning the songs with them. As I started to collect 78 rpm records, I would want to emulate the same sound I was hearing on the recording. When I decided to have my big band perform authentic 1920s music in 2001, that was a first step to performing in a true 1920s-style, something only a few other big bands were doing at the time.'

Back to Michael...

'I moved to Melbourne around the age of 21 where I continued playing jazz as much as possible. I also became an English Literature teacher in high schools there.'



Josh Duffee

rest of Europe, even Germany. It never recovered from that time on. But honestly Italy is fairly big. I'm in the very north, we have a strong Mitteleuropean mentality and are much in contact with other countries. Personally I live just 20 km from the Swiss border, so we're lucky enough to breathe better cultural atmospheres... People from the South of Italy even think we're not Italian!'

In the case of Emma, her instrument gives a certain flavour to her music:

'My two main projects are Hot Club du Nord which, as the name suggests, is inspired by Django and Stephane's QHCF, and my duo with guitarist James Birkett paying tribute to Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang. When playing at festivals with Keith Nichols he would often ask me to play a Venuti party piece such as *Raggin' the Scale* or *The Wild Dog*. This left me wanting a more regular outlet for this amazing and underplayed repertoire. James had previously transcribed Eddie Lang's guitar pieces for publication, so he made the perfect partner for this musical venture.'

'Classic jazz in Italy is absolutely absent. Most of the connoisseurs over Europe know I'm practically the only one trying to keep the flame alive together with a bunch of friends. This is sad. I think it comes from a dark period in our history (Fascism) when jazz was totally suppressed – unlike the

The route to Whitley Bay took different forms. For Emma Fisk it began with an affinity with the 1920s, doing her own version of

the Charleston and at 15 'sporting a Louise Brooks-style bob amongst a seas of 1980s perms.' The music was part of the era:

'I still have an old LP that I found in a second-hand record shop, *The Golden Age of the Charleston*, featuring bands such as the Savoy Havana Band and Bert Firman and his Orchestra. When I bought it about 30 years ago, I was playing in a rock band and would not have known where to find anyone else to play this kind of music with.'

'I started playing Gypsy Jazz on a regular basis with the quartet Djangology about 2000, but the first opportunity to play earlier jazz styles came in the shape of the New Century Ragtime Orchestra. A couple of years later, in 2010, Mike Durham invited me to play on Keith Nichols' *Midnight in Mayfair* concert at Sage Gateshead – a celebration of the Paul Whiteman Orchestra with musicians spilling off the stage and into the audience, as well as practising the dots in their respective garden sheds in the weeks leading up! One particularly memorable performance was Keith Nichols' epic re-creation of *From Ragtime to Raggin' the Scale*, a tribute to Al Bowlly and Andy Kirk and his Twelve Clouds of Joy.'

Josh began a few years earlier in 2007:

'Mike and Patti Durham loved to come to the States to attend two Bix events, Phil Posphycala's Tribute to Bix in Racine, Wisconsin, and the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival in Davenport, Iowa. I had met Mike with Spats Langham and His Rhythm Boys when they came to Davenport. Mike and Patti were always nice to me when I was starting to perform at the Festival at a young age and I had the opportunity to perform with Mike at Racine where we had a fun time as his Pods of Pepper. Afterwards Mike invited me to come to England to perform at his Festival which I immediately said yes to.'

Ask what is unique about Whitley Bay and you get a flood of superlatives. This is multi-instrumentalist Mauro Porro:

'At Whitley Bay I'll play mostly reeds, then a little piano and possibly I'll have my cornet there. There's no place in the world like Whitley Bay: once a year you have

the best performers of early jazz stuck into a single hotel – you can't get more uniqueness than that! I'm very honoured to be part of this special world project.'

Emma takes up the story...

'Anyone who has been to Whitley Bay as a musician or audience member knows that it is a truly unique experience! I need only drive 20 miles up the road to get there, but other folks travel from all over the globe to visit this mecca of early jazz. We have a series of very specific 30 and 60 minute programmes performed by 30-plus musicians who get together once a year and rehearse like crazy when they arrive as well as practising the dots in their respective garden sheds in the weeks leading up! One particularly memorable performance was Keith Nichols' epic re-creation of British dance bands. Playing that music with an all-star collection of classic jazz musicians felt like a dream come true! Then my first year at Whitley Bay was 2012, with sets including *From Ragtime to Raggin' the Scale*, a tribute to Al Bowlly and Andy Kirk and his Twelve Clouds of Joy.'

Josh agrees:

'There is no other festival like Whitley Bay in the world – period! The musicians are hand selected and invited to perform and are some of the best musicians in the world. We get together to rehearse some of the programmed events on Thursday, the day before the Festival kicks off, and it's always incredible to hear how



Emma Fisk

solid and tight the bands sound after such a short time. What makes the Festival extra-special is the audience – it truly feels like a big family reunion when we're all together at the Village Hotel.'

'I remember the Teddy Brown programme I was able to lead a few years ago. There's no way I could have done that in the States, so it was very memorable performing his music to a live audience in the country where his career flourished. I remember when Keith Nichols would lead a set because he'd have audience and musicians laughing every time he was on the microphone. He was such a talented musician, but also one of the sweetest and most generous gentlemen I have ever met. His transcriptions were always spot on and he loved having the opportunity to perform the music of the 1920s, 30s and 40s whenever he could. He will be missed this year, but being around all the musicians at Whitley Bay will make it feel like

'It's special to be at an event where jazz history and painstaking transcriptions and rehearsals sit so easily alongside a warm and entertaining atmosphere. Musicians, organisers and audience members really feel like part of one big happy family – you don't need to know a lot about jazz to have a great time, but you'll probably walk out knowing a bit more than you did! And, as with so many families over the past two years, we've not been able to see each other – it will be so special to walk into the Jazz Party for 2022, our first since 2019, and see those familiar faces. The musicians from the US and all over Europe really relish playing together in combinations we'd normally only dream of.'



Michael McQuaid

'One familiar face we won't be seeing in 2022 is that of Keith Nichols. Like the late Mike Durham, whose energy and expertise got this jazz party going in the first place, Keith will be so dearly missed. Every set at Whitley Bay is enjoyable, but Keith's were special – sometimes they verged on the anarchic! Keith's hilarious set attempting to re-create the unrecorded Buddy Bolden band was a highlight, though you wouldn't necessarily realise from watching it just how much research went into preparing it.

'The sets I have led myself loom large in my memory, because of the time and energy I spent planning them. My 2012 programme revisiting the music of the New Orleans band, the Halfway House Orchestra, was really special to me – at that time I was still living in Australia, so coming across from the other side of the world to play this rare jazz with a red-hot line-up seemed an absolute dream.'

'Each bandleaders approaches their sets in their own way. Claus Jacobi is hilarious, while Josh Duffee is polished, Andy Schumm understated and Enrico Tomasso

inspiring. What everyone has in common is a real respect and palpable love for the music. I think the audience loves feeling that and, when we're not on stage, the musicians are usually sitting there in the audience, too.'

When you ask the question about the future of classic/traditional jazz, three of the musicians respond with what we might term 'cautious optimism'. Emma makes a great case for the music, even while the use of the word 'hope' suggests the possibility of doubt!

'I would hope that the powerful appeal of the music would keep classic jazz alive and kicking for as long as any other style of music from an earlier era. There are many young musicians on the scene today who have had the benefit of working with, and learning from, the previous generation and they will no doubt carry forward that knowledge and dedication to the distinctive stylistic nuances of the music. I would hope that venues and festivals will programme the music, not just as a niche jazz interest, but as an accessible, joyous form of music that anyone can enjoy!'

Mauro takes a similar line:

'I trust very much in the European movement of young musicians trying to keep the flame alive with strong energy, but I think we have to create more and more connections. A lot of things are happening now. I'm actually working on a special net with the great Francois Perdriau (of the Syncopation Society Orchestra) from Berlin. Germany is becoming a nerve centre for 1920s and 1930s hot and sweet music.'

Michael takes a more philosophical viewpoint:

'Playing older jazz music is like walking a tightrope – you go into it because you love those old sounds, but you also want to express your own ideas. Fortunately I think there are plenty of musicians in the UK (and more widely) doing just this at the moment. We love playing the music and always striving to do it better. We could definitely always do with more gigs, better pay and greater recognition from the media, but, if we do our best to present inspiring music in an

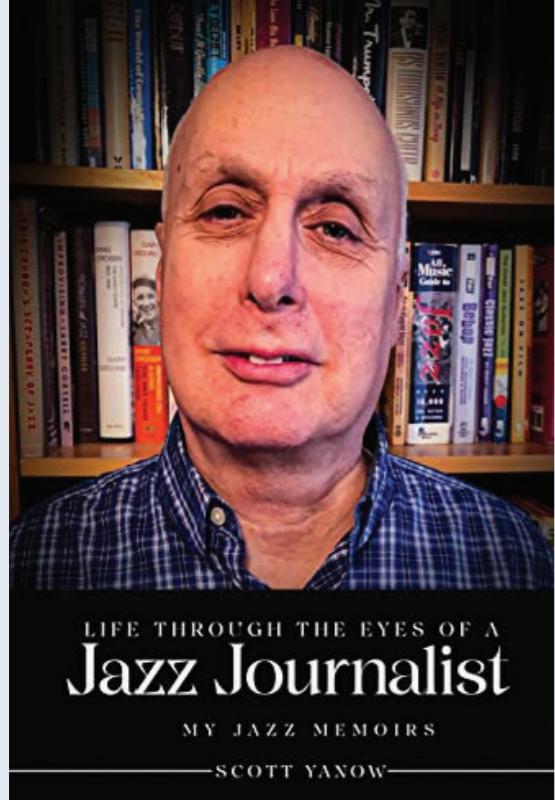
entertaining fashion, maybe these will come. In the meantime there are worse ways to spend your time and make a living.'

It's left to Josh Duffee to strike a more inspiring note:

'I believe the future of classic jazz, in the States and the UK, is strong. There seem to be new jazz groups popping up every time I'm on a social media platform. Young musicians are finding this music through an online music source or by collecting 78 rpm records. This style of music also has a strong support system with the musicians who have been performing it for years. If a young musician has a question about it, the experienced musician will take time to answer it. We're the torch-bearers for this music and we'll continue to keep the flame lit for many years to come!'

The Mike Durham International Classic Jazz Party is on November 4-6.

www.whitleybayjazzfest.com



LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF A JAZZ JOURNALIST, Scott Yanow's 12th book, is available worldwide from Amazon.co.uk at £20.

Subtitled "My Jazz Memoirs," the entertaining and informative book discusses the veteran jazz journalist/historian's life in jazz along with snapshots of many of the performances he has seen and written about during the past 50 years.

Life Through The Eyes Of A Jazz Journalist traces Scott Yanow's life in an often-humorous fashion through his discovery of jazz, college days, his period as jazz editor of Record Review, the story behind his involvement with the All Music Guide, and his adventures as an amateur musician. Included are vintage interviews with Freddie Hubbard, Chick Corea, and Maynard Ferguson, encounters with Clint Eastwood, summaries of the Monterey and Playboy Jazz Festivals (including his full-length review of the 1985 Playboy Festival), memories of other events and brief snapshots of many memorable club and concert performances. There is also background information about his other books, evaluations of the jazz critics who inspired him early on, his thoughts on jazz criticism which includes advice to up-and-coming jazz journalists and a chapter on how the jazz writing business has changed over the past 50 years.

DILL JONES

PETER VACHER adds a postscript to his article for *Jazz Rag* 170.

Ella Fitzgerald & Oscar Peterson



This was followed by two solo appearances at Pizza on the Park opposite Ruby Braff and Eddie Thompson. In May 1979 he made for home turf once again to appear at the Welsh Jazz Festival with fellow-expatriate, the soprano saxophonist Jim Galloway, and three days later was at Merlin's Cave in London. It was 1982 before he returned again, this time for six London dates including five at Pizza on The Park.

Sadly his last homecoming was in mid-January 1983 to undergo throat cancer surgery at London's Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital. The London jazz community rallied round to raise funds for him at a 'very crowded' benefit held at the 100 Club on the following 27 February, with vocalist Adelaide Hall (backed by Alan Clare, Lennie Bush and Allan Ganley), as well as Slim Gaillard with Willie Garnett, Pete Skivington and Johnny Richardson, and faithful friend Jim Galloway, all on hand to help.

Apparently recovered, Dill headed back eventually to the US only to

As is the way of these things, no sooner does one close the file on a biographical study, than new information emerges. Sometimes from unexpected quarters. And this is exactly what happened after my round-up of facts and opinions on the merits and career of the Welsh pianist Dill Jones appeared in our Spring 2022 edition.

First off, searching among some ancient cuttings, I came across several pages from the French magazine *Jazz Hot*'s September 1956 edition, their No 113, in fact. These not only confirmed the accuracy of drummer Eddie Taylor's recall of Tommy Whittle's Paris engagement but fleshed out the details. Yes, the Whittle Sextet, with Taylor, Deuchar, Christie, Fallon and Dill was the official exchange group for Sidney Bechet and the André Reweliotti Orchestra who were making their first-ever British tour and yes, they were set to play 'pendant quinze jours' at Le Caméléon (note the spelling) on the aptly-titled 57 Rue-Saint-André-des-Arts 'pour sa réouverture - Le 15 Septembre 1956. Tous les soirs à partir de 21 H. 30.' So there you have it.

Although firmly settled in the States from October 1961, Dill returned fairly often to familiar haunts and locations. Here are some almost certainly incomplete details of his UK appearances. He was in Gloucester on 27 October 1976 to give a recital at the Cambridge Theatre there, and was with Clyde Bernhardt's touring Harlem Blues and Jazz Band at Pizza Express in London for two nights in May 1977 (see our photo in *Jazz Rag* 170) and was back the following year but this time to participate in a Welsh TV documentary filmed in Wales about his career, which he narrated in the Welsh language.

Later in my article, I made a fleeting mention of Dill's involvement with a group calling itself Jazz at The Philharmonic, thinking this a contrived name.

succumb to the cancer on 22 June 1984, aged just 60.

The memorial service for Dill held at New York's jazz church, St Peter's Lutheran Church in Manhattan, took place on June 29, just one week later. The eulogy was given by fellow-expatriate Joe Temperley and Bob Wilber while pianist Dick Wellstood performed Dill's *No Flowers For My Lady*, this one of a number of compositions on which he had worked with Tim Wills, then of the BBC Library in London.

It was announced that a Dill Jones Memorial Jazz Fund was to be set up by Fort Washington Public Library in his memory. Dill lived nearby and had played often at the Library. It would be pleasing to think that the Fund had helped promising youngsters to pursue their jazz interests. My attempts to find out came to nothing as the library is presently closed for 'renovations' and its web-site makes no mention of the Fund. Oh well!

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FESTIVALS (AUGUST ONWARDS)

VENTURING AWAY FOR JAZZ

Venture Away Music Weekends have a simple, but ever-popular formula: offer a weekend at a decidedly upmarket hotel at a reasonable price and fill the days with jazz. Next up is a visit to the Savoy in Blackpool, with the added bonus of the Illuminations, on **September 16-19**, music courtesy of Baby Jools and the Jazzaholics, Savannah Jazz Band, Chicago Teddy Bears Society Jazz Band, Sarah Spencer's Transatlantic Band and the Sussex Jazz Kings. On **November 4-7** it's the turn of the Grand Hotel at Torquay in the company of the first two bands named, plus Richard Leach's Street Jazz Band, Zoe Lambeth's Vintage Jazz Collection and John Maddocks' Jazz Band.
www.ventureawaymusicweekends.co.uk

Chicago Teddy Bears



PLENTY OF JAZZ YET!

The Sevenoaks Summer Festival (June 18-July 3) is already upon us, but many of the jazz events occur late in the Festival. After Josh Kemp, Nigel Price and Ross Stanley take over 3 Horseshoes Jazz on June 28, there is Some Kinda Wonderful, Derek Nash and Noel McCalla paying tribute to Stevie Wonder. Then, on July 2, there is the fascinatingly named If Peter Cook had played the Bass, an exploration of the world of Pete and Dud with Mike Hatchard and Roger Carey, before the festival comes to an end with Swinging at the Cotton Club on the final night.
www.sevenoaksfestival.org.uk

19TH FISHGUARD JAZZ 'N' BLUES FESTIVAL

AUGUST 25-29
 With four venues, including Theatr Gwaun, Fishguard mounts a varied festival, taking in such names as Ma Bessie and her Blues Troupe, Billy Thompson, Andy Fairweather-Low and the Low Riders, the Washboard Resonators, Dale Storr and Remi Harris and Tom Moore.
www.aberjazz.com



Nigel Price

IN BETWEEN THE OPERAS

Buxton International Festival (July 7-20) has always been better known for opera productions, recitals and concerts, and its literature programme than for jazz. This year sees a big change come over the programme. The first weekend will be a Jazz Weekend, kicking off with Jay Phelps on the Thursday evening and following on with such popular acts as, among others, Ian Shaw and Guy Barker, the Impossible Gentlemen, Xhosa Cole and Clare Teal. But – here's the cunning part – that is not the end of jazz at the Festival. Seven more concerts at the remaining weekends feature such names as NYJO and the Nigel Price Trio with Vasilis Xenopoulos.
www.buxtonfestival.co.uk



Clare Teal

RYE INTERNATIONAL JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL

AUGUST 25-29
 Rye International Jazz and Blues Festival changes format this year, with a programme of free events supporting a series of concerts in St. Mary's Church, including Curtis Stigers, Stanley Jordan, Mud Morganfield and Roberto Fonseca.
www.ryejazz.com

33RD BUDE JAZZ FESTIVAL

AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 2
 One of the longest established of British jazz festivals, and one of the most revered, the delayed 33rd Bude Festival returns, with its customary emphasis on the beauty of the area to go with the robustness of the music.
www.budejazzfestival.org



Norma Winstone

WARNER LEISURE WEEKEND BREAKS

SEPTEMBER 9-12
 The latest of Pete Lay's Warner breaks takes you to Gunton Hall Coastal Village in Norfolk for three nights accommodation and jazz from Pete's own Gambit Jazzmen, plus the Eagle Jazz Band, the Golden Eagle, the Savannah, the Jazzaholics and Pete Rudeforth's Jazz Band.
www.warnerleisurehotels.co.uk

BIRMINGHAM BOUNCE

Where would you find Jazz on a Tram? Or learn to play the ukulele or learn how to make a cigar box guitar? That has to be the **Birmingham, Sandwell and Westside Jazz Festival (July 15-24)**. The only UK jazz festival to carry on (not quite regardless) through both years of the pandemic is back operating at full throttle, with nearly 200 shows, nearly all free. Headliners include the Hitman Blues Band from America, together with a cluster of the best of British: Alan Barnes, Art Themen, Bruce Adams, Alex Clarke, Vasilis Xenopoulos, Dave Newton, Roy Forbes, Tipitina, the Cinelli Brothers, the Shufflepack and many others, including the Festival Patron, Digby Fairweather.
www.birminghamjazzfestival.com

Roy Forbes



Photo by Merlin Daleman

PARTY TIME!

The charms of the **Mike Durham International Classic Jazz Party** (aka the Whitley Bay Jazz Festival) at the Village Hotel in Newcastle are sung elsewhere in this edition. Safe to say that, if you happen to be free on **November 4-6**, there is no better place to be after two years of Covid-related closure.
www.whitleybajazzfest.com

Enrico Tomasso



A KILIMANJARO PRESENTATION

CALLANDER JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 2
 This year the town of Callander plays host to 60 concerts, involving such bands as the Jive Aces, the Revolutionaires, Fergus McCreadie Trio and the Tenement Jazz Band.
www.callanderjazz.com

MASDEN JAZZ FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 7-9
 Once again jazz will take over this small town in the hills above Huddersfield, with widespread free events as well as concerts in Marsden Mechanics.
www.masdenjazzfestival.com

BEER R&B FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 14-16
 Bands lined up for Beer's blues festival include the Robin Bibi Band, The Pickups and Bad Influence.
www.beerblues.co.uk

RETURN TO LIVE!

After a depleted festival last year, **Brecon Jazz Festival** springs back into full-scale live action on **August 12-14**. Not only that, but the weekends before and after have special events: Family Jazz and Dance on August 7, big bands and livestreams on August 20-21. Among the acts getting one of the UK's oldest festivals back on the road are Joan Chamorro's Sant Andreu Sextet, Simon Spillett Quartet, Juan Gallardo Trio, Charlotte Glasson and Huw Warren's Hemeto+ Quartet.
www.breconjazz.org

Joan Chamorro



Those readers looking forward to the second part of John Martin's memoirs of his career in the music business will have to wait until *Jazz Rag 172*. Sadly, because of pressure on space, we have had to hold the second instalment over.

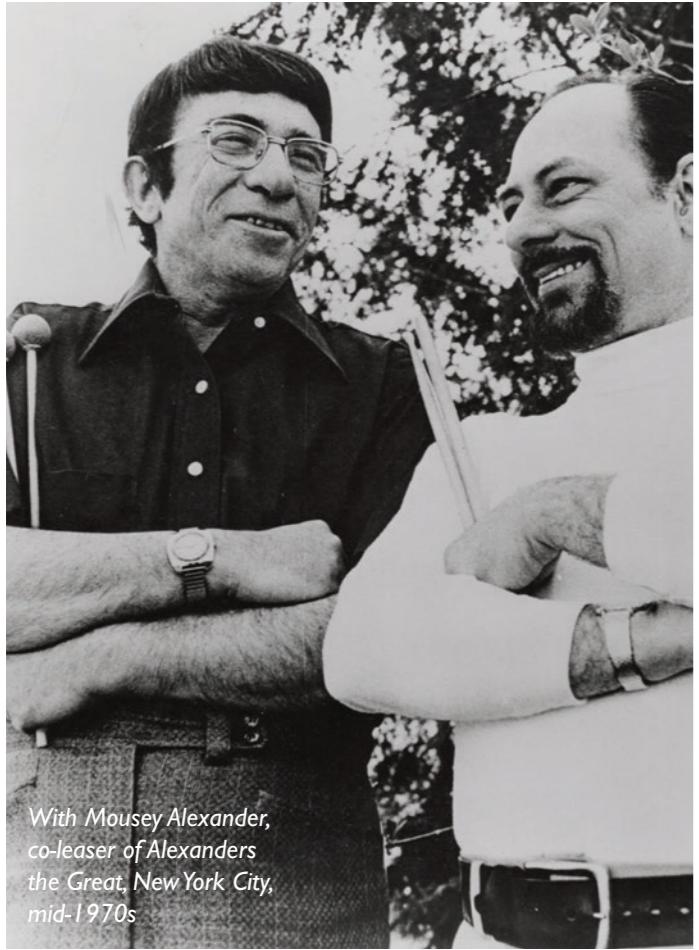
TENBY BLUES FESTIVAL

NOVEMBER 18-20
 A full programme at Tenby has such names as the Washboard Resonators, Sister Cookie, Gary Jablonksi and the Electric Band and the Low Down Dirty Dog Duo.
www.tenbyblues.co.uk



RAY ALEXANDER

By Peter Vacher



With Mousey Alexander,
co-leader of Alexanders
the Great, New York City,
mid-1970s

It was reading Russell 'Hitman' Alexander's affectionate tribute to his father, the late US vibraphonist Ray Alexander in our last issue, and seeing the photos of them together, that prompted me to dig out my own file on Ray.

I had come to know Ray quite well during the years he toured here and indeed, was flattered when he asked me to write the sleeve note for his album *Rain in June* on his own Nerus Records imprint. One measure of the respect in which Ray was held by the New York jazz fraternity is shown when considering its personnel, starting with Ray himself on vibes, of course, plus the great Kenny Barron, piano, Warren Vache on cornet, Bob Kindred on tenor, bassist Harvie S. and the wonderful drummer Oliver Jackson. I remember Warren's reaction when I asked him about playing on the album, 'Ray's a good player and he had some nice arrangements. The date was fun and I spent a day working with Kenny Barron!',

he said, still in awe. Happily, the quality of the music they made together in February 1992 withstands the closest of examination, suggesting that the album with its neat arrangements by Rich Lacona and Ray's own 'burnished creativity' is overdue for re-release. Why not try Fresh Sound Records, Russell?

Ray Alexander was born in Lynbrook on Long Island on 7



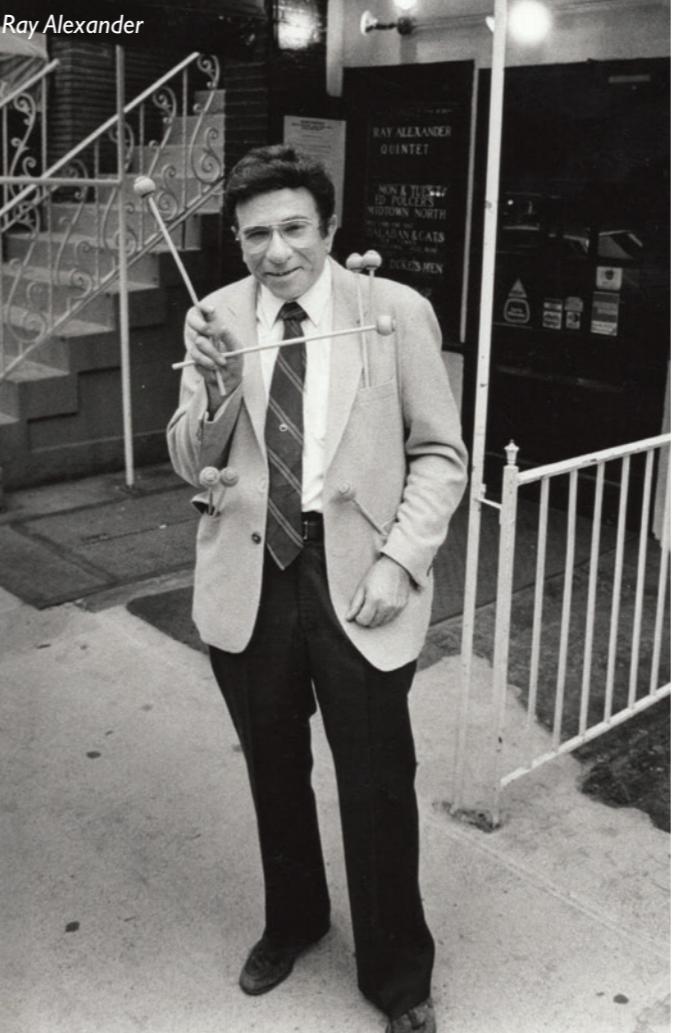
George Shearing Quintet,
Milwaukee, 1959

travel more but set aside time for a lengthy interview with writer Vincent Moore which appeared in *Jazz Journal* in 1993 and from which I have quoted in this profile.

I also interviewed Ray in Gants Hill in 1987, covered his appearances at the Barbican and Pizza Express for The Stage and wrote a 1992 feature in *Jazz*, the short-lived magazine published by *The Observer*. My reviews of his records appeared here and in *Jazz Journal* and *Jazzwise*. I think he valued this level of attention and certainly relished the appreciation of British audiences, like those who thronged the Birmingham Jazz Festival and came to know his penchant for driving swing, pleasurable ballad playing, dodgy jokes, and unstinting energy. Yes, he was out-going, on-stage and off. Always busy. Hard-working. Self-managed and assiduous at keeping in contact and chasing up a possible review or recommendation. And why not? I described him in 1992 as, 'Everybody's idea of a typical New Yorker – loquacious, energetic, noisily enthusiastic. He hustles for gigs, "sells" every set and exhausts himself when he plays. Vibes is his main thing, but he'll usually join his accompanying pianist for some two-finger piano in Lionel Hampton mode and then often take a turn at the drums.' No wonder audiences liked him.

In an oh-to-have-been-there moment, Alexander recalled drummer Big Sid Catlett as a key influence, especially for his

February 1925 and told Vincent Moore that his mother was a concert pianist 'until she married, but still continued to play with a local group on Long Island. She had this Steinway grand piano in the living room. My mother told me that I was able to pick out tunes on it when I was only two years old.' Ray also mentioned his grandmother who came from Russia but made a name for herself in New York theatre, 'so there was a show-biz element in the family.' Having had fun with a harmonica band, he turned to the drums when his father offered him the gift of a set. 'At 16, I started lessons because I always believed in study. Now I'd seen Gene Krupa because I'd played hooky from school to see him at the Paramount Theatre in New York and I thought he was so great that I had to play drums for myself.' This led to little local gigs and the formation of his 15-piece big band while still in High School. 'We'd rehearse at my house and people passing would stand out there listening and even dancing in the street. We'd play at the school proms and some clubs in the area so I was often a very tired 16-year old going to class in the mornings. But I never would say no to a gig because I knew that was what I wanted to do,' he told Moore, describing a work ethic that prevailed throughout his career.



Ray Alexander

prowess with brushes, 'I'd go along to the Three Deuces on 52nd Street and he got to like me and he'd say, "Come on, kid, sit beside me while I play", so you can imagine what a great thrill that was for me. Right alongside would be Art Tatum, Slam Stewart, Tiny Grimes, and in front Billie Holiday, so what a terrific education I was getting.' Ray heard Charlie Parker too and recalled that in the summer the 52nd Street clubs would have their doors and windows wide open and 'you could just be outside and hear the greatest music being played by wonderful artists like Dizzy Gillespie, Tommy Potter and Max Roach. Towards the end of the 52nd Street days, I did get to sit in and play at the Onyx Club with Stuff Smith, the great fiddle player and I'll always be glad I had that opportunity,' he said.

A quick study on both drums and vibes, Ray took to hanging out at every local club he could, sitting in and 'getting a good education.' Aged 18 he went on the road with a society band, before getting his first jazz break with the fine tenorist Dave Mathews' combo. 'He was playing a lot like Ben Webster then and arranging for Hal McIntyre,' Ray remembered. 'Doc Severinsen was on trumpet and the pianist was Danny Heard who later did play with McIntyre. Another pianist who played with Dave Mathews was Marjorie Hyams who became the

first vibraphonist with George Shearing, but she was a very good pianist too,' he said. He then had his chance to work for a few nights with Stuff Smith and later was with the other legendary jazz violinist Joe Venuti at the Embers in New York. 'Boy, when he played he really swung that thing clear off the ground!'

During the late 1940s and on into the early 1950s, Ray played drums with the touring Bobby Byrne band, staying for three years and realising a childhood dream by playing New York's prestigious Paramount Theatre. 'We were working there with the Mills Brothers and that's when I met my wife Joan who was from England. She had gone over to Canada after the war and then to New York.' There was also a three-week Byrne band tour with Mel Tormé as the featured attraction, playing army camps and stints with other territory bands, even a Hawaiian band, and brief sorties with bands led by Chubby Jackson, and the Dorsey Brothers. By the mid-1950s, Ray was effectively leading a double life, telling Moore that he would be 'out playing jobs on both drums and vibes, like in the 1950s, I was playing drums with Claude Thornhill's orchestra while doing gigs on vibes at Birdland in New York on Monday nights and then going on the road with Claude during the week,' he explained. 'Claude was the originator in the style of the two French horns and that beautiful sound that Elliott Lawrence later copied. Claude would start to play the piano and the rhythm section would start and the band

played – it was so relaxed and gave me such a wonderful feeling.'

There had been an initial approach from George Shearing in the early 1950s to join the Quintet on vibes but Ray felt he wasn't ready and Cal Tjader took the job. But when the call came a second time some years later, Ray did join Shearing and counted his period with the British pianist as a career highlight, touring and playing the nation's top clubs with his all-star Quintet. He was proud that it was his vibes playing you heard on Peggy Lee's wonderful 1959 Capitol collaboration with the Quintet released as *Beauty and the Beat*, marketed as having been recorded at a disc jockey convention, but actually made in a studio.

Thereafter, Ray seems to have settled for the wandering jazz life, and was proud that he had never had to take 'a day job' while confessing that some of the gigs he played were strictly commercial and well away from jazz. He did tell Moore that he had the chance to play drums at the Metropole in New York with Tony Parenti and remembered Coleman Hawkins paying him a compliment on his 'time' proficiency and recalled another occasion when playing drums at Tony Scott's loft that Bird sat in for 'a couple of tunes and I'll never forget that.' There was a short period with Charlie Barnet in 1961 and time with Anita O'Day's group in 1970. He was a regular at Birdland too: 'Oscar Goodstein gave me 51 Mondays a year and of course I was thrilled

Ray with Lionel Hampton, c. 1991





because it was such a great place to play. I had such people as Eddie Costa, Paul Motian, Teddy Kotick with me, and on one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, a new piano player in town called Bill Evans.

In a kind of parallel to the opening of Ronnie Scott's in London, Ray and a bassist friend opened a jazz restaurant in Mamaroneck, Westchester County, where they leased 'a place called the Green Haven Inn. Anyway our place went great and all the guys would come in; we all made such great music together. Sadly we sold the place after a year and a half because the business of running it became too much, but it sure was a beautiful place.'

In the early 1970s, he and drummer Mousey Alexander (no relation) formed a quartet and played clubs like New York's Half Note successfully as 'Alexanders the Great', this continuing until Mousey became ill. Dipping into his catalogue of one-off jobs and club dates, it's clear that owners and audiences loved him for his tireless application and his ability to attract the best sidemen to play with him, calling him back time after time. Looking briefly at the kind of engagements covered in the local press, you'll see the finest US musicians queuing up to work with him. Much the same went for his British performances, usually with the top rhythm trio of Brian Dee,

Len Skeat and Bobby Worth as his bandstand companions. He was also able to fit in part time teaching at Five Towns College on Long Island for 25 years and was awarded their Honorary Degree in Music in 1994.

Here's a random look at Ray's engagements as covered in the US press in the 1970s and beyond. He was at Sonny's Place in Seaford in 1979, with Al Harewood on drums, then at The Cornerstone in Metuchen (with pianist Mike LeDonne), and at Brown's Café on 84th Street with Curtis Boyd on drums in 1981, before the WPBX Festival with pianist Marty Napoleon in 1989 and 1990. Gary Giddins wrote in the *Village Voice* of Ray at the Half Note when his quartet played opposite Freddie Hubbard as 'creating ingenious, pulsating patterns on the vibes'.



patchwork of jazz gigs and mini-tours continuing until very nearly the very end, and augmented by his annual British visits which kicked off in the late 1980s and continued up to 2001.

'I love jazz, this is my main thing,' Ray told me in 1992. 'You can't buy the satisfaction you get out of playing something you love. When I play, I feel like I'm 20 years old – I'm still going like a bat out of hell. Joe E. Lewis said, "You only live once and if you do it right, that's enough." Happily, Ray did do it right for both his US audiences and those over here. While he failed to gain recognition in either Grove or Feather's *Encyclopaedia* and might have hoped for more recording opportunities, audiences knew his worth and invariably rallied to his cause. He seemed satisfied enough, secure in the appreciation of his peers and the cordial support of his family and friends. Ray died in the Long Island Jewish Hospital on 8 June 2002, after routine surgery went badly wrong. When I wrote to Ray's wife Joan to express my sadness at this, it was the aforementioned Hitman who e-mailed back, enclosing Ray's obituary from the NYC Musicians Union paper *Allegro* and writing of his father's packed memorial gathering at Five Towns College. And so ended a life devoted to music, performed with heart and soul, and the sad loss of a friend.

Acknowledgements

Ray's words are taken principally from Ray Alexander by Vincent Moore [*Jazz Journal*, June 1993] or from personal correspondence.

All photos courtesy Peter Vacher/
The Ray Alexander Collection

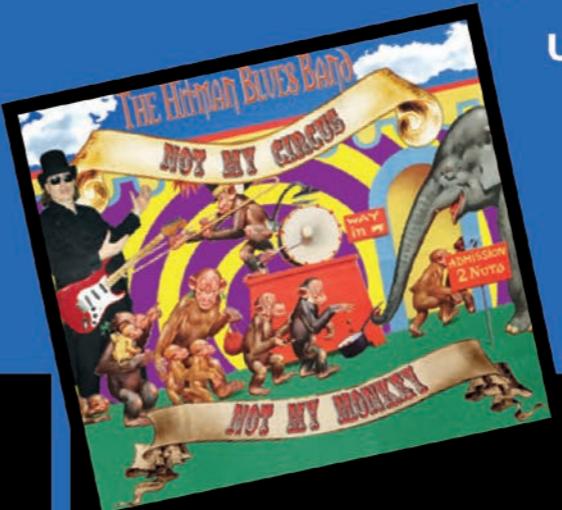
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- 14 July Farnham Maltings, Surrey
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- 17 July Blues At The Tropic, Ruislip
- 19 July Tuesday Night Music Club, Coulsdon
- 22 July Birmingham Jazz Festival
- 23 July Livestock, Forty Hall Farm, Enfield
- 24 July Hope Tavern Festival, Lincs
- 26 July Red Arrow Music Club, Ramsgate
- 27 July Half Moon, Putney, London
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22 JAZZ GREATS OF THE FUTURE



It is very easy to be gloomy about the future of jazz, particularly if one loves jazz of the 1940s, '50s and '60s. With the inevitable passing of time, there are fewer and fewer greats left from that so-called golden age and even the fusion survivors and some of the former 'Young Lions' of the 1980s are becoming senior citizens.

But that does not mean that there are not a large number of younger jazz artists who are performing today with their own brand of excitement. Listeners have to keep their ears and eyes open for during the past decade a new generation of creative musicians has been taking its place at the top of the scene. They are invigorating the music with their own fresh ideas, built upon but not merely recreating the glories of the past.

Among the hundreds of promising younger players (all under 40 as of July 1, 2022) are these 22. If they are fortunate enough to live to a decent age, it is easy for me to predict that each one will still be making significant contributions to jazz 30 years from now. Of course the list can easily be made several times longer but these are the artists that come to my mind quickly. Each has unlimited potential at this point. Some are already well known while others are just beginning to gain international attention but all of them, with luck, have their best musical years ahead of them and will be famous to jazz fans in 2050.

Emmet Cohen

Emmet Cohen – piano

(32) – A very versatile swing and bop-based pianist, Cohen has shown on his weekly Live Stream concerts that he can play joyfully with any jazz artist. In addition to leading his regular trio, he has uplifted the music of Christian McBride, Veronica Swift, Benny Golson, George Coleman, Houston Person, Kurt Elling, and Brian Lynch among many others.

Jacob Collier – keyboards, many instruments (27)

– A master at using electronics to create unique one-man band audio-visual live performances (during which he 'conducts' himself playing multiple instruments and overdubbed vocals), Collier utilizes jazz improvisation while stretching beyond jazz. In recent times he has collaborated with large ensembles to create colourful music that is quite difficult to classify.

Theon Cross – tuba (29)

– A virtuoso on the tuba, Theon Cross has been a major part of the adventurous British jazz group Sons Of Kemet (a quartet comprised of tenor, two drummers and Cross) and of the London jazz scene in general. He has largely reinvented his instrument while also paying tribute to its roots.

Melissa Aldana - tenor sax (33)

– From Chile, Aldana played alto until being inspired to switch to tenor after hearing Sonny Rollins. Aldana's early work with a pianoless trio recalled Rollins, but her recent playing with her quartet (which features guitarist Lage Lund) finds her displaying an original sound and an increasingly explorative style.

Joey Alexander – piano (19)

– Born in Indonesia, Alexander started playing piano when he was six, guested with the Jazz At Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra at ten, made his first album when he was 11, and has long been jazz's favourite child prodigy. Having mastered playing jazz standards in his own modern style, Alexander has been performing more originals lately and sounds as mature and creative as any top-notch 30-year old.

**Graham Dechter – guitar (35)**

– Straight-ahead bop-oriented jazz guitar can always use a younger practitioner and the Los Angeles-based Dechter fits the bill. He works with the Clayton-Hamilton Big Band and has been heard in a countless number of small swinging combos during the past decade. Dechter is always in demand when a major jazz artist comes to Southern California.

Nubya Garcia – tenor (31)

– Born in London and part of a musical family, Garcia briefly played violin (performing on viola with the London Schools Symphony Orchestra), switching to tenor when she was ten. She has developed an original voice on her instrument since getting out of school, performing at a variety of jazz festivals, and in 2020 releasing her debut album, *Source*. She considers Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane to be her main influences.

Dayimir Gonzalez – piano (38)

– A protégé of Chucho Valdes, Gonzalez began his musical career at the age of 16 in his native Cuba. Considered a major representative of his generation of Cuban jazz players, he has paid tribute to the influential Cuban salsa band Los Van Van while also looking forward to newer innovations.

Jazzmeia Horn – vocals (31)

– Born in Dallas and the winner of the 2015 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition, Horn has gained a lot of attention since then. In 2017 she recorded her debut album *A Social Call* and she has also recorded with pianist Lafayette Harris, the late drummer Ralph Peterson, and clarinetist Harry Skoler. Horn is a powerful scat singer who is inspired by Sarah Vaughan and Betty Carter.

Anais Reno – vocals (18)

– *Lonesome Thing*, an album that features 16-year old Anais Reno in 2020 singing Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn songs, would be considered a very impressive start to the young jazz vocalist's career except that she had already been singing for ten years. In 2018 she won second place in Michael Feinstein's Great American Song Book Academy competition and has been gaining deserved attention ever since, displaying an attractive voice and a real feeling for the lyrics that she interprets.

Alfredo Rodriguez – piano (36)

– Any vocalist who begins her first album with a warm, relaxed and beautifully rendered version of *Stardust* is someone well worth discovering. Joy, who grew up in New York and started out hearing gospel and r&b (her grandparents and father were gospel singers), did not really get into jazz until she attended college. She won the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, recorded her self-titled debut for the Whirlwind label, and has since picked up a lot of experience touring the U.S. Her luscious voice and mature style (being an expert at using space) makes her into an obvious future poll winner.

Joel Ross – vibes (27)

– With the retirement of Gary Burton and Terry Gibbs and the passing of Bobby Hutcherson, a new generation of jazz vibraphonists has been filling their huge shoes. Originally interested in playing drums, Joel Ross switched to xylophone and then vibes while a pre-teenager, studying later on with the slightly older Stefon Harris. Among the youngest and most inventive of the current vibraphonists, Ross has been in great demand, recording with Walter Smith III, Marquis Hill, Gerald Clayton, Joshua Redman, and Mimi Jones among others in addition to leading his own bands and recordings.

Julian Lage – guitar (34)

– Originally a child prodigy, Lage was profiled in the documentary *Jules At Eight* back in 1996 and worked with Gary Burton during 2004-05 when he was 16. After extensive classical training and studying at the Berklee College Of Music, in 2009 he released his first album *Sounding Point*. He has since led 11 other albums and recorded with John Zorn, Terri Lyne Carrington, Nels Cline, and Kris Davis.

Cécile McLorin Salvant – vocals (32) – It seems a little unfair to include Ms. Salvant in this list because she is already a perennial poll winner, making her mark as a highly original singer whether performing very

Michael Mayo – vocals (28)

– The son of a saxophonist and a back-up vocalist, Mayo recorded his debut album, *Bones*, just before the pandemic. He had studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and the Thelonious Monk Institute and his mentor was Herbie Hancock with whom he toured in 2018. Mayo is a modern singer with roots in jazz's past.



Samara Joy

credible renditions of songs from the repertoire of 1920s classic blues singers, new twists on jazz standards, or her original material. But with luck, 30 years from now she will still be at the top of her field.

Immanuel Wilkins - alto sax (24)

– A passionate improviser who says that he is equally inspired by John Coltrane and the church, Wilkins was mentored by trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire and toured with Jason Moran. His latest Blue Note album, *The Seventh Hand*, has some of his concise pieces before concluding with 26-minutes of powerful yet perfect coherent free improvising.

Brandee Younger – harp (39)

– Major jazz harpists can be counted on two hands with a few fingers left over. Younger, who is inspired most by Dorothy Ashby and Alice Coltrane but has her own approach, is revitalizing the instrument, often in duets with bassist Dezron Douglas.

The future of jazz is bright!

Scott Yanow, who despite his enthusiasm is not under 40, recently published his 12th book, *Life Through The Eyes Of A Jazz Journalist*. He can be reached for liner notes, bios, press releases and other interesting assignments at scottyanowjazz@yahoo.com.

PETER KING

The latest in our series on great British jazzmen of the recent past focuses on PETER KING, one great saxist recalled by another, ART THEMEN.



Peter
King

So much has been written about the internationally acclaimed saxophonist Peter King, that I find trying to do him justice on paper as intimidating as sitting next to him in a saxophone section or attempting to trade fours with him at the Bull's Head Barnes.

It's well known that Peter played at the opening night of the old Ronnie Scott's club in Gerrard Street at the age of 19. The owner's self-deprecating sense of humour marked the event as 'a young alto saxophonist, Peter King and an old tenor saxophonist, Ronnie Scott.' Some years later, saxophonist and critic Benny Green wrote, 'Had Ronnie's died overnight and been heard of no more, they could still have justified its existence by pointing to a discovery like Peter King.' A fitting observation perhaps as, within weeks of his debut, Peter had won the Melody Maker's New Star Award and thereafter remained the UK's undisputed heavyweight champion of the alto saxophone for the rest of his life.

That Peter's precocious talent could have developed so quickly to have impressed a seasoned professional like Ronnie is extraordinary. There's a commonly held belief that

jazz musicians intuitively create intricate harmonic patterns out of thin air, having spent little or no previous attention to gaining theoretical knowledge of their chosen sphere. The truth is rather different. Dominic Green (Benny's son incidentally), writing in *The Critic*, puts it rather amusingly: 'Jazz musicians do it for the love. They dedicate themselves to the music like monks; Thelonious not Benedictine.' In Peter's case his musical inspiration came of course not from the pianist but from another giant of bebop, Charlie Parker.

Given the circumstances of his upbringing, which were far from ideal, the speed at which Peter acquired such mastery of his instrument at an early age, is nothing short of phenomenal. At least he came from a musical family as both his parents played the piano, so, at an early age he learned the rudiments of the keyboard and violin. By his own admission, however, Peter thinks that his birth in 1940 was something of a family planning accident as his two siblings were already in their teens. The situation was not helped by the fact that his older brother, who was multilingual, became an intelligence officer in the Second World War, leading to a deep and persistent sense of teenage inferiority. More importantly though was the trauma associated with being a war baby. An Ack-Ack battery was situated very close to his home near Kingston, and the sound of the anti-aircraft gunfire plus the terrifying visual effects of seeing his family wearing gas masks in their Anderson air-raid shelter led to anxiety, night terrors and introspection. This eventually caused a nervous breakdown in his teens which put an end to his school career. Post-traumatic stress disorder was only really recognised in the 70s following the Vietnam War, and there seems little doubt that Peter's sufferings during the London Blitz, which he describes vividly in his autobiography, had profound and lasting psychological effects.

From an early age Peter became interested in aeroplanes, the stimulus being his sister Brenda who hoped to work in aircraft maintenance. As a result, she had several books containing intricate diagrams of the inner workings of aeroplanes and their engines which fascinated him. Like most boys his age, including me, his ambition was to become a Spitfire pilot, so soon he began to construct miniature models.

Having had to leave school early, a career as a cartographer beckoned but, happily for the rest of us, Peter was soon bitten by the music bug. Curiously it all started as a result of watching the rather cheesy biopic *The Benny Goodman Story* which gave an over romanticised view of a musician's life on the road. Soon afterwards he began listening to Willis Conover's *Voice of America* radio programme and was captivated by Louis Armstrong's clarinet player Edmund Hall.

After an abortive attempt to construct his own clarinet, his parents were persuaded to buy him a simple system model and shortly afterwards he graduated to the alto. A brief flirtation with traditional jazz gave way to his immersion in the bebop idiom and in particular that of Charlie Parker.

Pete had an innate ability to transcribe and learn solos in his head even without an instrument so very soon he assimilated the mercurial technique of his idol. It was therefore not long before he was playing alongside the other up-and-coming London saxophonists Tubby Hayes and Dick Morrissey.

Having been catapulted into prominence by his appearance at Ronnie's, prestigious work soon followed including stints with the John Dankworth, Stan Tracey and Tubby Hayes big bands, and even for a short while with Ray Charles. Sitting in with Bud Powell in Paris left a lasting impression. Knowing him, as I did both musically and medically for many years, it grieves me to say that Pete was deluding himself as his health had suffered

want to play, Pete?' and then without prior warning launch into a tune of his own choosing; a disconcerting encounter for a terrified 21-year-old. Nevertheless Pete gave a good account of himself and Bud was suitably impressed.

The list of musicians Peter played and recorded with encompasses a veritable Who's Who of jazz including Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, Philly Joe Jones, Elvin Jones, and significantly, other Charlie Parker alumni Al Haig and Red Rodney. Inevitably there were musical encounters with vocalists including Anita O'Day, Annie Ross, Jon Hendricks and Jimmy Witherspoon, and a brief flirtation with the popular music duo Everything But The Girl.

He was a founder member of Bill Le Sage's Bebop Preservation Society and some years after Pete left, I had the honour of joining the band - a wholly inadequate substitute though Bill was very kind to me.

After years of appearing as a side man Pete finally assembled what was one of his all-time favourite bands, composed of Dave Green, John Horler, Henry Lowther and Spike Wells.

Pete's musical engagements were initially rich and varied, but by the 70s jazz had become less popular and, like so many other musicians, he had to compromise and do commercial work in palais bands and recording studios. Life became hard and was not helped by his drug habit which he describes frankly and in harrowing detail in his autobiography *Flying High*. Thanks to Pete's second wife Linda, a Bluebell dancer to whom he was devoted, he was finally able to break the habit. In his book Peter writes, 'When I finally made it, miraculously, my health was still intact.' At this time, I have to write with my medical hat on. Knowing him, as I did both musically and medically for many years, it grieves me to say that Pete was deluding himself as his health had suffered

irreparable damage. It's all the more remarkable that despite the self-imposed physical attrition, his insatiable thirst for progress continued to lead him into a variety of intellectual avenues.

Musically he moved from bebop to modal jazz forming a quartet with the gifted pianist Steve Melling and, as his style matured, assimilated the techniques of Béla Bartók, his favourite classical composer. His early innate ability to transcribe and knowledge of violin technique led to an amalgam of jazz and classical music in the composition and performance of *Janus* with the Lyric String Quartet. This was commissioned by Neil Ferber who ran the much-lamented Appleby Festival and was broadcast by the BBC in 1997.

An absorbing interest in the German scientist Fritz Haber who was instrumental in the production of poison gas, led to the opera *Zyklon*, composed with the lyricist Julian Barry and with the encouragement of the theatre director Peter Hall. Never having written for voices before, this proved to be a monumental task and took Peter three years to write. It was finally performed at the City University of New York in 2004 on East 34th Street. By a curious coincidence, Peter had recorded a quartet album for Spotlite Records in 1983 with Dave Green, John Horler and Spike Wells entitled *East 34th Street*.

The album cover depicted the very spot where three decades later *Zyklon* was premiered. Peter wryly observed that, having spent 45 years hoping to work in The Big Apple under his own name as a jazz musician, his debut in New York was as an opera composer.

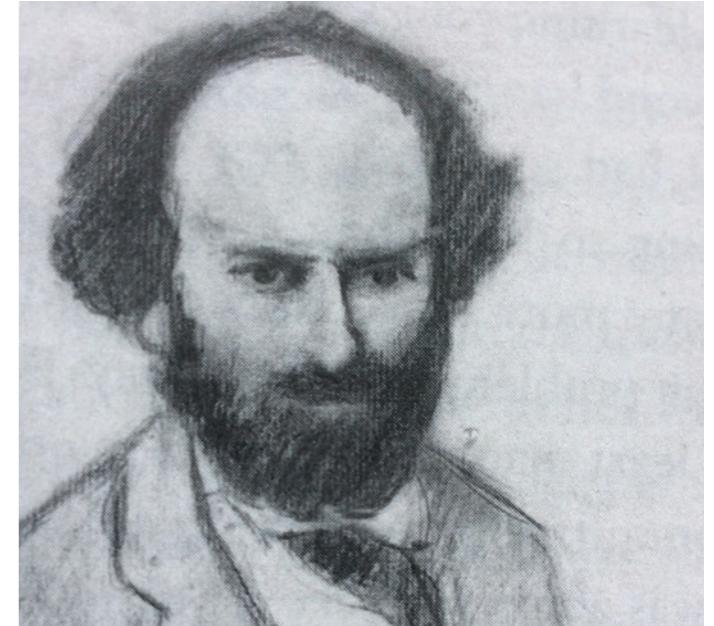
His interest in Formula One motor racing led to one of his significant recordings, *Tamburello*, written in honour of his hero Ayrton Senna in which Peter, innovative as ever, incorporated the sound of high revving racing engines into the mix. This came out under the Miles Music label run by his friend John Miles, a former Formula One racing driver. In addition to reviews in the Jazz Press, the album was reviewed in Autocar magazine, where the writer confused Peter with his namesake Pete King, Ronnie Scott's business partner

who was also a successful racing driver. On hearing this, the club owner told Peter to keep quiet about the mistake as he felt the cachet of being known as a track ace might increase the album's sales. He was careful to add though to let him know should Peter get a call from Ferrari!

In addition to the recordings already mentioned, Pete's contributions included *Speed Trap* with trumpeter Gerard Presencer and *Footprints*, recorded live at the Pizza Express Jazz Club. I did a couple of recordings with him on Tony Williams' Spotlite label and have fond memories of Stan Tracey's 1982 album *Spectrum* where Pete delivers a typically blistering rendition of Monk's *In Walked Bud*.

I can't fail to mention his act of kindness to me when someone stole my beloved Selmer Mark 6 tenor. In the 60s, Peter had switched to tenor for a while, partly to avoid being typecast as a mere Parker copyist, and while playing lead alto in the Dankworth band, would often switch to the larger horn to play the jazz solos. Unsurprisingly, being a consummate master of both instruments, this created jealousy from his immediate neighbour in the saxophone section, Danny Moss, who considered himself to be top banana on the bigger horn! Despite being a first-class tenor player, Pete was of course better known for his alto work and, as no one was asking him to play tenor anymore, he felt he had no further use for it. He was keen for it to go to a good home however, so Peter sold it to me for its market value which, given its provenance, was an act of extreme generosity.

I have rather passed over Peter's ability as a writer but his book *Flying High*, published by Northway in 2011, received widespread critical acclaim. The foreword was written by his friend Benny Golson who wrote tellingly: 'Peter's talent does not end with explorations of his saxophone. His pen readily obeys him also.' In addition to Peter's writings on saxophone technique, his contributions also included technical articles on aeronautics which even today are highly regarded not only in the world of aeromodelling but in the wider field of aviation.

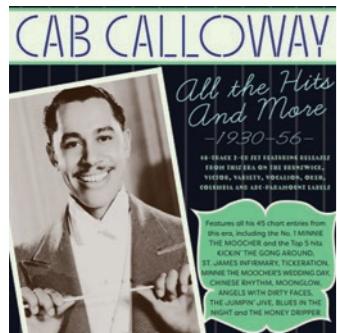


Amid all this multi-tasking Peter still had time to flex his acting muscles. His credits included *The Borstal Boy*, a play directed by Joan Littlewood based on the life of the bibulous Irish playwright Brendan Behan, and an appearance on stage in the West End play *Lenny* about the comedian Lenny Bruce. He also made a cameo appearance in Anthony Minghella's film, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*.

Pete's wide-ranging travels brought into contact with a number of celebrities in the world of entertainment including, Marlene Dietrich, Lauren Bacall, Eartha Kitt, Sasha Distel and even Liberace!

Most articles in this series are peppered with jokes and hilarious anecdotes of derring-do on and off the bandstand, but I make no apologies for this omission. Peter was a different kind of animal; classical composer, teacher, writer, painter, champion aeromodeller, even an actor - a Renaissance Man in every sense. What's more, in the view of many, he was one of the finest saxophone players in the world.

My final memory is of attending Ronnie Scott's memorial service at St Martin in the Fields in 1997 when Pete and Stan Tracey played Duke Ellington's *Come Sunday*. Pete's bravura cadenza was followed by an impassioned interpretation of the theme; perhaps his 'Thank you' for having been given his big, and totally justified, break at Ronnie's all those years ago.

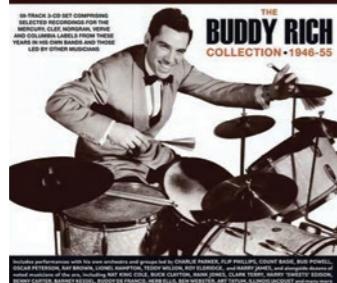
**CAB CALLOWAY**ALL THE HITS AND MORE
1930-1956Acrobat ADDCD 3422: 2 CDs,
70.48/73.20

Cab Calloway must have loved trumpeters. Between 1930 and 1942 he employed (among others) Lammar Wright, Reuben Reeves, Doc Cheatham, Shad Collins, Irving Randolph, Mario Bauza, Dizzy Gillespie, Jonah Jones and Russell Smith, most of them for a stretch of a few years. It's a reminder that Cab was not only a great singer and a wonderful entertainer, but a top bandleader whose 1940 band was bursting with stars in every section.

At the age of 23, in 1930, Calloway had his first big hit, *Minnie the Moocher* with his trademark mix of straight singing, scat, Hi-de-Hi, operatic emotionalism and call-and-response, all so hip you could cut it with a knife! By the end of the year he had clocked up his druggie hit, *Kickin' the Gong Around*, and for a few years variations on these two were guaranteed hits: *Minnie the Moocher's Wedding Day*, *Keep that Hi-de-Hi in Your Soul*, the terrific *The Jumpin' Jive* and the rest. But that's far from all Cab's hits. *I Got a Right to Sing the Blues and Blues in the Night* put him right in the Harold Arlen mainstream and there are plenty of slower sentimental songs, most unexpectedly *Angels with Dirty Faces*, with June Richmond taking the vocal.

Then there are the instrumentals: *Congo*, with Ben Webster to the fore, Chu Berry's *At the Clam-Bake Carnival*, *Bye Bye Blues*, with Tyree Glenn's vibes getting an outing. It's a wonderful collection, though as time passes Cab cuts down the excesses: the rather lovely *Ogeechee River Lullaby*, for instance. That's from 1942 and, though the collection goes on to 1956, there are only four more

tracks after this, including a wild *The Honeydripper*. In fact Cab broke up his band in 1948, initially going on to the Broadway stage, and the only track after this is a strange duet with his eight-year-old daughter Lael and the Don Costa Orchestra – a bizarre finish to a wonderful double album, graced with full and detailed notes from Paul Watts.

RON SIMPSON**MR. DRUMS****BUDDY RICH**

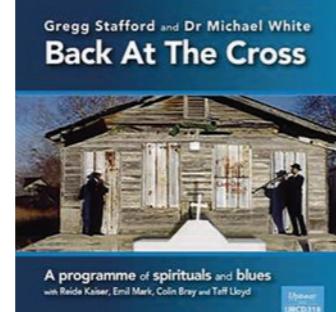
MR. DRUMS THE BUDDY RICH COLLECTION 1946-55

Acrobat ACTRCD9120 211:25

At a shade just over three and a half hours, there is a lot of listening to be done on this three CD Acrobat release. Focusing upon the mid-forties through to 1955, the first disc works its way chronologically through twenty one of the Buddy Rich Orchestra's Mercury recordings with several V-Discs thrown in for good measure. From January 1946 to October 1948 it's all about Rich and his big band. Frequently in and out of the studio during this period, Rich somehow found time to fit in other work including radio broadcasts and participating in Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts. The tracks range from the not so quiet *Quiet Riot* (a second studio cut, recorded three months later, invites comparison) to Rich's reworking of Woody Herman's *Four Brothers*, titled *Four Rich Brothers*. Rich the vocalist is present on some tracks, alongside singers Linda Larkin and Dorothy Reid.

Discs two and three offer a markedly different take on Buddy Rich, drummer, as opposed to Buddy Rich, big band drummer. Thirty eight tracks, covering the late forties through to a September 1955 Norgan session, remind the listener of the quality and quantity of Rich's other, non-

big band, output. As a resume, it doesn't get much better than this: Charlie Parker Quartet (1950), Count Basie Octet ('50), Bud Powell Trio ('50), Count Basie Sextet ('52), Teddy Wilson Trio ('52), Lionel Hampton Quartet ('53), Buddy Rich All Stars ('54), Buddy Rich Quintet ('55). Buddy Rich the powerhouse technician is the drummer known to jazz fans around the world, this Acrobat package makes it abundantly clear that Buddy Rich with brushes in hand was a master of his craft, whether playing a ballad or at tempo. Recommended.

RUSSELL CORBETT**GREGG STAFFORD AND DR MICHAEL WHITE**

BACK AT THE CROSS

Upbeat URCD318 61:07

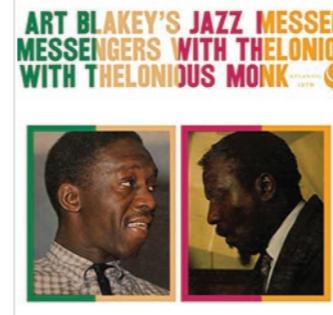
New Orleans' stalwarts, Gregg Stafford, the hot cornettist and trumpeter who for three decades was the driving force behind the Young Tuxedo Brass Band, and long-time friend, the clarinetist Dr. Michael White, of the Original Liberty Jazz Band, grew up influenced by the veterans of Preservation Hall. They have frequently collaborated on projects to keep the music alive and this album features the type of traditional jazz and spirituals they played when first coming together in the 1970s with the Fairview Baptist Church Marching Band. It is part of sessions recorded and produced by Bill Bissonnette for his Jazz Crusade label - in the Crescent City and Canada at the turn of the Millennium, some of which have already appeared on *Praying and Swaying at the Cross*.

Behind the two-man front line are Canadian Reide Kaiser, sounding pretty much like Jelly Roll Morton on piano, Emil Mark on banjo, Colin Bray, bass and our own Taff Announced by Blakey's drums

Lloyd on drums. It's a formidable line-up ideal for the relaxed ensemble playing a mixture of blues and spirituals.

Bebet's *Blue Horizon*, surely one of the finest instrumental blues ever recorded, allows White to demonstrate his bravura skill. On Decatur Street Reide rolls out the boogie Kansas City style. Stafford sings with feeling the poignant lyrics of *Farewell To Storyville*, forever associated with Billie Holiday and Louis Armstrong leading the exodus out of the district in the 1947 film *New Orleans*, a clip of which is happily available on YouTube. He plays with a sincere vigour, never more so than on *Mahogany Hall Stomp*.

It is fortunate for younger record buyers that Upbeat continue to reissue the back catalogue of Jazz Crusade.

ANDREW LIDDLE**ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ MESSENGERS WITH THELONIOUS MONK**Atlantic 603497842384: 2 CDs,
44.11/42.49

In May 1957 Thelonious Monk joined with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers to record a one-off album. Received at the time with mixed reviews, it's now recognised as essential listening. Atlantic's luxury reissue throws light on the recording process by including a second CD of outtakes, one per track, with no major differences in time, but the fact that *Blue Monk* is Take 9 indicating that things didn't just fall into place!

Listening to the original album might suggest otherwise, Blakey driving the Messengers on with his infectious rhythm and Monk playing beautifully. The music chosen was five Monk classics and one Johnny Griffin blues original. Announced by Blakey's drums



Art Blakey

Evidence begins as it means to go on with a blazing trumpet solo from Bill Hardman, followed up by Johnny Griffin. On *In Walked Bud* and *Blue Monk*, in particular, Monk's solos deconstructing the melody are striking, his comping behind soloists unexpected, but somehow right. Each of the six tracks which all come in at very similar 6 or 7-minute length gives copious room for solos, Griffin a flood of notes, Blakey alternating power and subtlety, Hardman and bassist Spanky DeBrest holding their own in such high-powered company.

Purple Shades, the final track, is a tad different – dare I say more conventional, despite Hardman's somewhat eccentric solo and the leader's conversational fills. The energy, originality and drive of the whole thing more than justifies its reissue, but Atlantic has more to offer in a copiously illustrated booklet that contains a lengthy essay from Ashley Kahn, plus Martin Williams' original sleeve note.

RON SIMPSON**DAVE GREEN TRIO + EVAN PARKER**

RAISE FOUR

Trio Records TR605 43.41

'The essence of the music is improvisation and trying to be fresh every time you play, so that's the kind of criteria I bring to it.'

So says bassist Dave Green in the brief interview heard at the beginning of this quite remarkable recording. Indeed, remarkable might even be selling its virtues short. In uniting arch-free-former Evan Parker with his already flexible pianoless trio featuring multi-reed specialist Iain Dixon and drummer Gene Calderazzo, this session, originally broadcast on BBC radio's *Jazz on 3* back in 2004, promises much and delivers even more.

Formed in the late 1990s Green's trio was a kick in the teeth for those who believed his 'cosy' mainstream CV defined him. One critic even lashed out at how its first album release failed to present 'the Dave Green we know and love.' Fortunately, the bassist has always remained unmoved by attempts to pigeon-hole his gift, and those who know him recognise the catholic nature of his tastes, with enthusiasms running from Davey Tough through Eric Dolphy and beyond.

This session is from the 'beyond' end of things, but my, how it works! And while there are echoes of earlier mavericks – Parker's soprano hints at Steve Lacy as well as Coltrane while Dixon's pastoral clarinet fitfully brings to mind another most subtle improviser, Jimmy Giuffre – what springs forth is a dialogue between four masterly creatives in their own right. Three Thelonious Monk themes make a great launching pad for their combined explorations, and anyone expecting Parker to fall foul in a harmonic setting will need to recalibrate their assessment forthwith. That said, when things do explode into full-on two tenor freedom, as on the stirring *Raise Four*, musicality is never sacrificed to abstraction. Green swings as intelligently and powerfully as always on this one with Calderazzo the very model of post-Elvin

The Perfect Blend

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Meyer Bros. New York and Mike Smith, lead alto player for Frank Sinatra Sr. and Jr. for over four decades, create the perfect blend of flexible, warm, dark alto sax sound along with plenty of power behind it. Now, jj Babbitt is once again offering this legendary mouthpiece.

If you're looking for your own artistic match, check out Meyer Bros. New York.

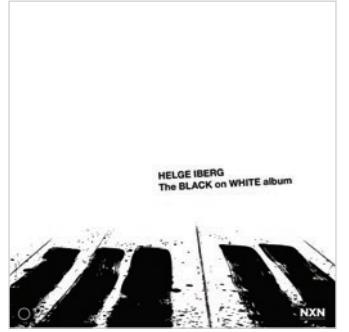
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NEW WEBSITE

jj Babbitt.com
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invention, while Parker and Dixon's duetting is so notably synergistic and unfettered that it's hard to say which is the leading 'avant garde' player and which once spent their working hours in the saxophone section of the BBC Big Band. The totally improvised *Ex-Changes* goes one better, delivering a 'blindfold test' treat few might identify on first hearing.

All in all a remarkable record – that word again! – one which swings, stumps, swirls and insinuates to stunning effect. Forget categories and remember music: this is what jazz is all about.

SIMON SPILLETT



HELGE IBERG

THE BLACK ON WHITE ALBUM

NXN Recordings NXN1006
57:22

The melodies are timeless, the composers enjoy legendary status. The Beatles' principal songwriting partnership continues to exert a hold over musicians and listeners alike. The Lennon and McCartney songbook can be heard in concert halls, clubs, pubs and on street corners performed by generation after generation of buskers. The *BLACK on WHITE* album by Norwegian pianist Helge Iberg is a collection of twelve songs recorded in 2021 over two days in Sofienberg Church, Oslo. The album's liner notes make reference to the provision of a Steinway concert grand piano courtesy of the Steinway Piano Gallery, Oslo, indicating high fidelity was a major consideration in the making of this NXN Recordings' album.

From *Blackbird* to *Nowhere Man*, Iberg takes an explorative path through eleven Lennon and McCartney numbers alongside George Harrison's *Here Comes the Sun*. Imagine not being familiar

with the songs (highly unlikely), would Iberg's interpretations make a favourable impression? *Lady Madonna* and *Come Together*, two of the Fab Four's punchier numbers, are given a more mellow treatment despite the addition of programmed percussion by Bendik Hofseth. Indeed, the percussive element is unobtrusive to the extent that it could be considered superfluous. As a pianist the Norwegian is most impressive, working as he does, in both jazz and classical spheres. The location, the instrument at Iberg's disposal, and the engineering and production contribute to a fine recording. The Beatles' fan club boasts many members, it's safe to assume Helge Iberg is among their number.

RUSSELL CORBETT



EMMA SMITH

MESHUGA BABY

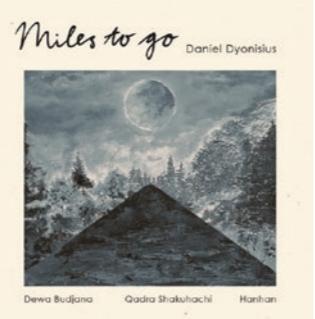
Windsor Castle Records 58:20

Meshuga, Emma Smith informs the reader of the liner notes to her latest album, is Yiddish slang for 'crazy', 'senseless' and 'to be mad'. One doubts vocalist Smith is any of these things, more likely a free spirit with a penchant for taking risks. To write songs is one thing, to include them on an album of otherwise instantly recognisable material is another thing altogether. Four of thirteen tracks on *Meshuga Baby* were written by Smith and pianist Jamie Safir. It's quite an achievement that their compositions are more than a match for the GASbook numbers and standards on an album running to just shy of the hour. Tracks seven, eight and nine are Smith-Safir compositions and their placement at the heart of the recording suggest all concerned were quietly confident they would stand up to scrutiny. And stand up they do! The writing and the arrangements are, quite simply, superb.

The album consists of one standard, six originals by Dyonisius and one by drummer Qadra Shakuhachi, a more subtle presence on the album than *Freedom* suggests. Apparently many of the

Smith and Safir were joined in the studio by bassist Conor Chaplin and drummer Luke Tomlinson and all four musicians are heard on top form. Smith's singing is a joy to listen to, embracing as it does myriad influences without losing its own identity. From *I Don't Care to But Not for Me*, Smith's assured vocals give free rein to invention, phrasing and, when required, considerable power. Safir as accompanist to Paul Ryan on *Love Look Away* (Bell Note Records) opened ears, and hearing him working in small group format with Smith will win him many more admirers. Chaplin and Tomlinson are more than up to the job and it is to be hoped Smith takes the quartet on the road.

RUSSELL CORBETT



DANIEL DYONISIUS

MILES TO GO

Lotus Tower Studio no number:
48.19

What a great standard can do! Never having heard of Daniel Dyonisius, I was pretty unimpressed by the rock-styled opener, *Freedom*, with guest Dewa Budjana, heard enough in the title track that follows to carry on listening, and was rewarded by the soaring guitar sounds on *Stella by Starlight*. Clearly David Dyonisius was worth finding out about.

There can't be many other guitarists from Jakarta who have gained an award from Berklee! Lee Ritenour said of this album that he was glad that Dyonisius had found 'his own unique style' which strikes me as odd given that he shifts from one style to another, some more pleasing than others, throughout.

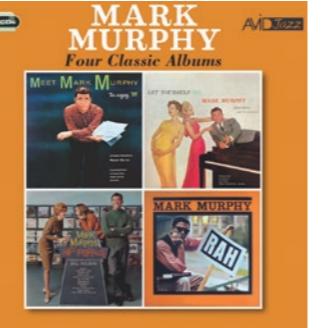
The debut album consists largely of familiar standards interspersed with lesser-known songs such as *You Mustn't Kick It Around* from the Rodgers and Hart musical *Pal Joey*. The vocalist is accompanied throughout by Ralph Burns and his Orchestra.

Burns was on hand for the second release where the mixture is much the same.

tracks are tributes to Indonesian composers, but that goes over my head. What is obvious is that he has a flair for exploiting the range of the guitar and a gift for melody that shows in the simple tunes of ballads. He also gives Shakuhachi and the excellent bassist Hanhan space to develop their own lines. Listen to the chorale-like *Ikhtiar* for all three at their best.

I must admit to mixed feelings about *Miles to Go*, but Daniel Dyonisius is certainly a young musician of real promise and worth listening out for.

RON SIMPSON



MARK MURPHY

FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS

Avid Jazz AMSCI411

Vocalist Mark Murphy left a recorded legacy of some 51 albums under his own name. He won four *Down Beat* magazine readers' jazz polls for Best Male Vocalist and received five Grammy nominations for Best Vocal Performance.

Any reader unfamiliar with Murphy's work should start their voyage of discovery with the four albums gathered together here. Taking the listener back to the start of his recording career with *Meet Mark Murphy...The Singing "M"* (1956) followed by *Let Yourself Go* (1957), then jumping to *Hip Parade* (1960) and culminating with *Rah* (1961).

The debut album consists largely of familiar standards interspersed with lesser-known songs such as *You Mustn't Kick It Around* from the Rodgers and Hart musical *Pal Joey*. The vocalist is accompanied throughout by Ralph Burns and his Orchestra.

Burns was on hand for the second release where the mixture is much the same.

The third release holds perhaps more interest for the jazz aficionado with six songs accompanied by Bill Holman and a pared down orchestra together with the Jud Conlon Singers. There are also six performances accompanied by an unnamed trio. Here we have short, swinging performances and can hear the individuality in Murphy's voice.

The final release sees arranging duties passing to Ernie Wilkins with an orchestra including Bill Evans, Clark Terry and Urbie Green. The repertoire here is much more appealing including many jazz standards including *Doodlin'*, *Twisted* and *Green Dolphin Street* which are all great fun.

ALAN MUSSON



JOHNNY HARTMAN

FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS PLUS

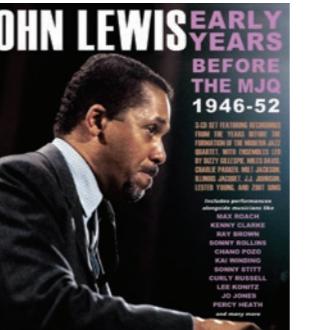
Avid AMSCI409 81.16 / 82.25

Chicago-born Hartman (1923-1983) first earned his spurs as vocalist with the big bands of Earl Hines and Dizzy Gillespie in the post-war 1940s. That said, popular mainstream labels chose to cast him as a ballad singer and it's that side of Hartman's oeuvre that Avid have pursued here, first with *Just You, Just Me*, a Regent & Savoy compilation album from 1947. This was mostly made while Hartman was nominally still with DG and showcases his languid, not to say lugubrious, deep-toned ballad style on standards, with small group accompaniments, often cushioned with strings.

All of Me with orchestrations by Ernie Wilkins is from Hartman's Bethlehem contract, *Blue Skies* markedly livelier, Hartman echoing Billy Eckstine at this up tempo, tenorist Lucky Thompson and trumpeter Howard McGhee soloing, the band pushing hard. Thereafter, the accompaniments

revert to lushness and the tempos dip, the strings re-appearing until *The Birth of the Blues* hots up a bit. 1955's *Songs From the Heart*, also from Bethlehem, teams the singer with Ralph Sharon's elegant trio and McGhee again, the tempos still mid-range, McGhee a lively companion, Hartman calmly measured in his approach. Viz *Ain't Misbehavin'* with McGhee's reliable trumpet fills. The final album from the four is *And I Thought About You*, from Roost and again concentrates on Hartman the romantic balladeer. The four bonus tracks with pianist Andrew Hill from a club gig show he could swing if the situation allowed.

PETER VACHER



JOHN LEWIS

THE EARLY YEARS BEFORE THE MJQ 1946-52

Acrobat ACTRCD9119 71.01 / 70.31 / 73.07

I've lost count of Acrobat's many variations on themes such as this – public domain tracks from bebop's heyday re-assembled under a marquee name, here that of pianist John Lewis. However compiled or how often for that matter, this is timeless material and certainly bears repetition. Given that the leaders with whom Lewis recorded in the period under review were Miles Davis, Milt Jackson, Charlie Parker, Illinois Jacquet, Jay Johnson, Lester Young and Zoot Sims, he clearly kept the finest of company or, more to the point, his skills and talent attracted the support of the commanding giants of the idiom.

The opening Savoy sides are by the Davis All-Stars, with Bird playing fluent tenor and sounding a lot like Wardell Gray, Davis pursuing his own boppish lines, the tone off-centre and fragile, Lewis's first appearance emphasising his nimble update of Basie's piano style. Compiler Paul Watts explains in his well-researched

booklet note that his 75-track compilation doesn't purport to be totally comprehensive, rather it's a selection designed to concentrate on Lewis' pianisms prior to the formation of the MJQ.

Lewis's association with Milt Jackson, his eventual co-partner in the MJQ, was formed in the Gillespie big band, represented here by *One Bass Hit*, and cemented in three jangly Sensation tracks under Milt's name, with the manically energetic Chano Pozo on congas and fellow MJQ founder, Kenny Clarke on drums. Then come eight tracks with Bird back on alto and at his most startling, these like the Hot Fives of bebop, Lewis holding his own. Note: the booklet personnel listing for *Barbados*, etc. omits Davis's name but he was there!

Given that a full evaluation of these 75 tracks might well take up our total review space, let me urge readers with even the most tangential interest in bebop to wallow in its abundant glories. The Penguin Guide described Lewis's approach as 'swing and bebop lyrically distilled', the touch always precise, apposite and crisp. That these qualities were to serve the MJQ well is indicated by CD3 with its try-out versions of the eventual group under Jackson's leadership, bassist Percy Heath and Clarke alongside and future glories ahead.

PETER VACHER



JOHN COLTRANE

MY FAVORITE THINGS

Atlantic R2 666923 / 603497842803 81:38

Recorded over six days in October 1960 and released in March the following year, *My Favorite Things* would, over time, go on to sell more than half a million copies worldwide. What's more, the title track from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Vortex* and the Spice of Life.

Sound of Music produced a hit single for John Coltrane. Sixty years after Coltrane, McCoy Tyner, Steve Davis and Elvin Jones went into Atlantic Records' New York studios to lay down four tracks (all of them standards) it would seem there is sufficient interest in the album to market it to a new audience. Fans who bought the album first time round

will be able to recommend it to their grandchildren (a generation discovering the delights of vinyl, if you're under the age of thirty it's 'vinyls' plural). CD or LP, it's the same four tracks - the title track plus *Everytime We Say Goodbye*, *Summertime* and *But Not for Me*. The recent discovery of the mono recording (for many years thought to be lost) presents an opportunity to package together both the stereo and mono versions. The music is marvellous, Coltrane playing soprano saxophone on the first two numbers, his more familiar tenor saxophone on the latter two. Will your grandchildren be interested in the recording? Hopefully, they will be! However, there is another angle to consider in the marketing of the album and that's the likely interest of both the serious audiophile and the Coltrane completist.

RUSSELL CORBETT



ISOBEL GATHERCOLE

DAY DREAM

Acrobat TRFCD1001 45:26

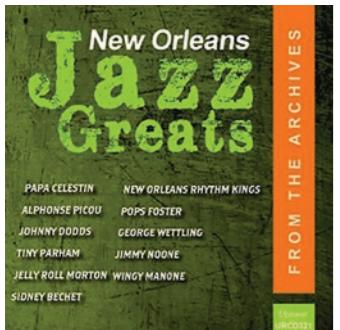
Isobel Gathercole is the name of a bright young talent we are going to hear very much more of. Trained in jazz vocals at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, she cut her teeth with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra before forming her own quartet and performing at many top jazz venues in London, including Ronnie Scott's, the Vortex and the Spice of Life.

Beautifully produced and issued by the ever-enterprising Acrobat, her début album *Day Dream*, made in collaboration with arranger and composer Colin Skinner, is advertised as 'a love letter to the legendary albums of Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra'. Backed by a baker's dozen of fine musicians, including her father, Andy Gathercole, a featured soloist on trumpet and flugel horn, she has mostly gone for middle of the road material, though there are a few up- and down-tempo surprises among the 12 tracks.

Her creamy tones add a pleasing delicacy to ballads. She has an intuitive sense of rhythm on the swing material and the assuredness of a singer at the peak of her powers, amazing in one so young. Her interpretive powers, indeed, allow her to invest her own emotions into everything she sings. Often in her vocal fluency we catch the contemporary singer's drift away from the old jazz phrases to something newer, which will appeal to modern audiences familiar with them.

The album, recorded at London's RAK Studio and mastered at the legendary Abbey Road Studios, will no doubt be the first of many. This is a most auspicious début.

ANDREW LIDDLE



NEW ORLEANS JAZZ GREATS

FROM THE ARCHIVES

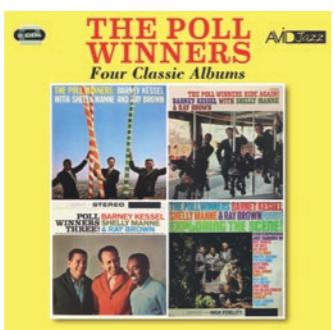
Upbeat URCD321 65.30

Described as 'a musical potpourri of New Orleans Jazz', this eclectic compilation opens with Papa Celestin's rugged 1947 band, back into vogue in the Crescent City with the traditional revival underway. Strongly powered by Black Happy Goldston's drums, theirs was an ensemble approach with limited improvisation but plenty of vim. Two decades earlier

in Chicago, Johnny Dodds recorded his three Paramount tracks in duo with pianist Tiny Parham. Heartfelt and impassioned clarinet and good to hear again. Jelly Roll Morton appeared on NBC's The Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street programme in 1940 guesting with Henry Levine's band, playing his celebrated *Winin' Boy* and *King Porter Stomp* numbers, the latter taken at quite a lick, firm left hand, filigree right, the band staying out of the way.

Sidney Bechet's quality quartet from 1945 follows, Joe Sullivan delightfully inventive on piano, George Wettling at the drums. Hot stuff. Another local hero, pure-toned clarinettist Jimmy Noone, Chicago-based in 1940, is with his regular trio pianist, the Hines-like Gideon Honoré, their three rarely heard tracks marred by one Ed Thompson's harsh-sounding vocals. The 1934 New Orleans Rhythm Kings, led by Wingy Manone round out this varied assemblage with eight short-ish Decca tracks, trombonist George Brunis the only holdover from their distinguished 1920s predecessors. It's *Bluin' The Blues* first, trumpeter Wingy Manone's punchy attack uppermost. His *San Antonio Shout* goes well, the interplay nicely free, clarinettist Sidney Arodin impressive.

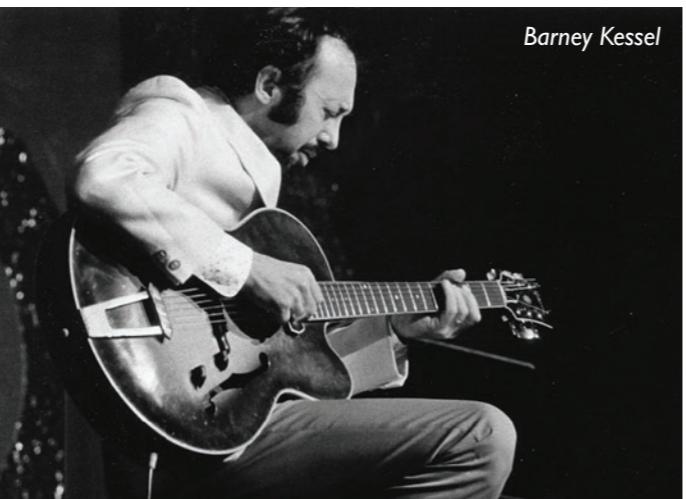
PETER VACHER



THE POLL WINNERS: FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS - BARNEY KESSEL WITH SHELLY MANNE & RAY BROWN

AVID:AMSC1412 78:16; 80:31

The Poll Winners brought together the extraordinary talents of one of the greatest names in jazz guitar history, Barney Kessel, drummer Shelly Manne and bass player Ray Brown. They released 5 albums



Barney Kessel

between 1957 and 1960 and the good news is four of them are on this double CD from the ever-generous Avid label.

All three, revered by their peers, exhibited more than virtuosity throughout their long careers but an astonishing versatility. It's easy to see that as a teenager Kessel's main influence was Charlie Christian, also from Oklahoma. He began at the top, playing in the bands of Charlie Barnet and Artie Shaw in the 1940s and soared even higher as a solo artist or in small groups. Billie Holiday, Anita O'Day and Julie London are but three of the many jazz vocalists he accompanied.

Manne cut his teeth with Woody Herman and Stan Kenton in the late 1940s and, though often remembered for his West Coast prominence in the 1950s, he was equally at home in all jazz styles from Dixieland and swing to bebop and fusion. Brown, perhaps best known for his extensive work with Oscar Peterson and Ella Fitzgerald, was a founding member of the group later to develop into the Modern Jazz Quartet.

These four albums fairly swing along with Kessel on peak form, full of invention and sophistication, mixing bebop lines with swing riffs and blues licks. His phenomenal technique allows him to use chordal runs to create a rich sound yet somehow pick single note melodic improvisations here and there just for the fun of it. No one else could play such as *Green Dolphin Street*, *Misty* or *Satin Doll* and manage to make so much elegant virtuosity and breathtaking intricacy sound so effortless.

The album opens with *Play On* by Gwyneth Herbert introduced by a lovely little bass guitar figure from Cottle. Along the way there are backing vocals from Colman, Martin and Herbert and a nice piano feature. *Body Language* is next with Claire Martin in a restrained bluesy outing with nice guitar accompaniment and solo feature from Walker. This is reminiscent of the work of Fran Landesman. Liane Carroll puts in a powerfully soulful performance on *The Waiting Game*. It is especially good to hear Sara Colman in such august company with a fabulous appearance on the ballad *Pull You Back*. Luca Manning is a revelation. The duet by Martin and Ian Shaw is exquisite. There is much to enjoy here. Is it jazz? Does it really matter? Check this one out for sure.

ALAN MUSSON



ROGER MARKS' BRASS FARTHINGS: JUST GENUINE JAZZ

Upbeat URCD319 63:14

The title proclaims something hardly ever in doubt when Roger Marks' adventurous trombone and Pete Allen's thrilling reed are in company. Marks leads one of the finest outfits on the trad jazz circuit, the Armada Jazz Band, and occasionally performs and records with Allen in a quartet, the Brass Farthings, along with two other West Countrymen, Pete Sumner, on banjo, and Tony Mann, sousaphone.

Maybe the title reflects the extreme variety, if not novelty, in the chosen material which ranges in date from 1580, *Greensleeves*, to 2020 and Sumner's own attractive composition, *Waiting for the Sun*. Elsewhere we find a rousing anthem of the Civil War, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, amongst show tunes, jazz standards, C&W, an operatic jujube and early Elvis. As if to emphasise

the diversity, the sleeve notes inform us that *Delia's Gone*, well known to Trad fans, not least from Acker's repeated playing of it, is actually a Bahamian folk song.

The two frontmen share the melody, playing off each other with a sense of goodtime jocularity. Marks' flowing lyricism makes the want of a trumpet no great loss. Allen alternates between exhilarating clarinet and exuberant alto.

Mann knows when to come on strong and when to soft and split pedal, when to play short staccato passages of melody and when to merely underpin the rhythm – and when it might be time to switch to bass! The banjo comes into its own in a quartet, Sumner a lively personality rather than support act.

Yes, this is genuine jazz. But we expect nothing less from four such stout-hearted Cornishmen of consummate skill.

ANDREW LIDDLE



SUSIE BLUE & THE LONESOME FELLAS

BLUE TRAIN

Seraphic 8644-361; 52:45

Susie Blue is the alter-ego of Chicago-based jazz vocalist Solitaire Miles, one-time associate of saxman Von Freeman and trumpeter Doc Cheatham, among others, whilst her band, The Lonesome Fellas, comprises jazz, blues and rockabilly musicians – try harmonica ace Howard Levy and veteran Windy City saxophonist Eric Schneider for starters. Her preceding album was a western swing set!

Early on in this set, Susie turns in a couple of fine covers of materials by 50s R&B songstress Ruth Brown, and she turns jazz singer Connee Boswell's (of The Boswell Sisters) *Humming To Myself* from 1932 into a convincing piece of

early 50s rhythm and blues too. Elsewhere she tackles material as wide-ranging as New Orleans' soulman Aaron Neville's *How Could I Help But Love You* and Kay Starr's *Oh How I Miss You Tonight* – Kay is an obvious influence on Susie/Solitaire.

Morning Mist is pleasingly atmospheric, with Zum Vohrde's alto to the fore, and *Summer Breeze*, at a brisk medium tempo, is fun. This is partly down to the appearance of guest percussionist, conga player Eiel Lazo, who returns for two tracks later in the album, together with trombonist Lis Wessberg. *Simple Things* thrives on Lazo's infectious rhythm, but *South African Sunrise* is an example of leaving the best till last. Inspired by the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, Matthiessen's piano, Ole Streenberg's drums and Lazo's percussion set up an infectious rhythm over which Bolberg and Wessberg alternate brief snatches of melody.

Throughout this extremely enjoyable album, Susie's voice is sultry, teasing, just plain good-timing, and very much to the fore, whilst the backing is both rootsy and wonderfully accomplished.

This release neatly captures a time when jazz, blues and pop were sometimes very, very close.

NORMAN DARWEN



OLE MATTHIESSEN

SOCIAL DISTANCING BLUES

Stunt Records STUCD 21112: 67.41

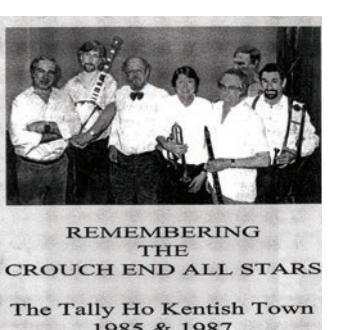
Ole Matthiessen is a highly respected Danish pianist, but on this latest album figures much more as a composer. With soloists such as alto saxophonist Jan Zum Vohrde, tenor saxophonist Bob Rockwell and the very impressive Henrik Bolberg on trumpet, he is for the most part content with an accompanying role.

On the other hand all 13 tracks are Matthiessen originals, several of them composed during the pandemic, including the surprisingly

bright title track which opens proceedings. Elsewhere the compositions can be repetitive. Though there is plenty to enjoy on the album, I was again left wondering at jazz musicians' pursuit of an all-originals policy.

For the record, the one member of the group I haven't mentioned is Rune Fog-Nielsen who maintains the Danish tradition of melodic bass players with the occasional excellent solo!

RON SIMPSON



THE CROUCH END ALL STARS

THE TALLY HO KENTISH TOWN

Own label: 76.54

Trumpeter John Keen writes with disarming modesty of the Crouch End All Stars that their sessions 'became THE place to go to for North London's young middle-aged who were nostalgic about the jazz they had heard in their youth.' Quite possibly – if you were looking for a word to describe their music, free-wheeling, with plenty of solos, you'd settle on 'revivalist'.

The Crouch End All Stars were formed in 1973 by Graham Tayar, radio producer and pianist, and steadily gained in competence until the day when Wally Fawkes walked up and asked to sit in. He became a regular band-member and, in his wake, assorted other Lyttelton alumni put in occasional appearances – Johnny Parker, Bruce Turner, Pete Strange and Kathy Stobart – and Ian Christie joined full-time in 1980. Aside from him only Stan Greig and Alan Barnes make fleeting appearances here.

The CD consists of 12 tracks recorded at the Tally Ho, Kentish Town, in 1987 and one at the Pizza Express in 1985. Recorded quality isn't bad, unsurprisingly a bit messy, with a tendency to favour Ken Blakemore's vigorous tailgating on trombone. One or both of Wally Fawkes and Ian Christie are present on all tracks and young Barnes (I think) registers well on *Runnin' Wild*. Wally Fawkes is as fluent and assured as ever, with a solo feature on *Autumn in Tufnell Park* showing beautiful control. John Keen, though, as he says, he wasn't Hump despite the company he kept, is pretty good, though, a strong lead and neat soloist.

Ray Charles



Stan Greig's one appearance is memorable, in fine form in ensembles no less than solo, in *When You and I Were Young, Maggie* – clearly Graham Tayar couldn't make the Pizza Express gig.

RON SIMPSON

**RAY CHARLES**

THE SINGLES COLLECTION
1949 – 1962

Acrobat ACFCDF7516 73:16/
72:47/ 73:36/ 69:07/ 71:03

There aren't many 125 track, five CD sets I can listen to straight-through but this is certainly one. It contains nearly all the A and B sides of Brother Ray's singles. The Raelets become an integral part of Ray's sound.

Chart successes also form a major part of CD4, with numbers mostly from the late fifties and 1960. It also includes some of Ray's straight jazz sides, and significantly a couple of titles contain the word 'soul', as Ray presages the sound of the new decade. It takes us up to Ray's switch to ABC Records, and his increasing appeal to a wider pop audience – the penultimate track is his renowned, string-laden version of *Georgia On My Mind*.

CD2 moves towards Ray's creation of gospel-based rhythm and blues (much to Big Bill Broonzy's disapproval!), with his band getting bigger, particularly when he signed with Atlantic Records. It culminates in 1954's R'n'B chart-topper *I've Got A Woman*, and there's even a little rock and roll. The following disc has the big hits – among them *Hallelujah I Love Her So*, *Lonely Avenue*, and of course the immortal closing track, *What'd I Say* – which saw backing vocalists The Raelets become an integral part of Ray's sound.

A formidable journey by a truly gifted singer and musician. They called him 'The Genius' – listen and understand why.

NORMAN DARWEN

BOOK REVIEWS**JAZZ SINGING
A GUIDE TO
PEDAGOGY AND
PERFORMANCE**

TISH ONEY

Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, paperback, 978 1538128459 £29.76

There were no mentors on hand when I embarked on a singing career back in the 1960s. No vocal coaches or the now famous BRIT School to guide me through the basics. It was all a bit hit and miss back then. If you possessed a sense of rhythm and could sing in tune you were in with a chance! I listened to recordings of all the great jazz singers of course, but

no-one taught me about breath control or how to acquire an effective microphone technique. More often than not, I would sing myself hoarse through inadequate sound systems in a vain attempt to be heard above the band.

How times have changed! Tish Oney, a much respected singer, composer, author and educator with a doctorate in jazz studies and a master's degree in voice performance, has produced a scholarly and comprehensive guide for both student and teacher – and she pulls no punches! There are no short cuts. Her mantra throughout is for the singer to understand and value her instrument and protect it at all costs. The functions of different components of the singing mechanism are

discussed in great detail and the importance of vocal health, posture and breath control clearly emphasised. Alongside the discipline of daily warm ups and practice, emphasis is placed on determining one's natural baseline, akin to the singer's natural speaking voice and vital in establishing a pure neutral tone.

Oney urges the student to 'listen to the greats' as a crucial part of developing individual skills, whilst admitting that not all were role models for her mantra of healthy living! She acknowledges Peggy Lee and Nat King Cole, both heavy smokers, for their distinctive qualities of tone and articulation and Billie Holiday's musicianship, phrasing and masterful expression, though sadly compromised by

her addictions. She cites Ella Fitzgerald as an excellent role model for jazz singers and many more come under the radar throughout the book.

Other chapters cover vocal improvisation, phrasing and expression, microphone technique and vowel shaping, ensemble singing, jazz theory and instrumental approaches. Self-sufficiency is the name of the game. The ability to read music is considered essential, with advice on bandleading, self-promotion and a section on mindfulness and mental toughness as part of the process. In today's highly competitive arena, Oney outlines the goals. All that's required is total commitment.

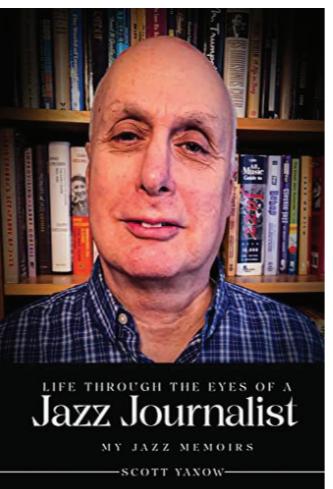
VAL WISEMAN

no means always 'I CD review' a day – how about 11 film reviews in two days? To a man as obsessive about jazz as he is, his goal – to listen to every jazz recording ever made – seems almost achievable.

In a chapter on jazz writers, Scott remains cheerful in the face of the industry's sometimes wilful carelessness. In a chapter on the All Music Guides he explains how he came to write over 5,000 short reviews – no wonder, when I look up a reissued album, the All Music entry always seems to be by Scott Yanow! After the publishers got in a legal tangle over using existing reviews, he stepped in and, for the second edition, filled the gap. Rather wryly, he comments that his editorial skills were not required and the possibility of a review by Billy Taylor at CBS disappeared when he realised that the editors had confused the pianist with the earlier bass player and killed him off in 1986. After Scott cleaned up the third edition, All Music never contacted him for the fourth and the errors came flooding back.

Scott explains that he was especially lucky in coming to jazz from Dixieland and a radio show fronted by Benson Curtis and then working his way forward. This all-encompassing love of the music is the most striking feature of this book.

RON SIMPSON

**LIFE THROUGH THE
EYES OF A JAZZ
JOURNALIST: MY
JAZZ MEMOIRS**

SCOTT YANOW

Amazon, paperback, 978 1958 324028, £20.00

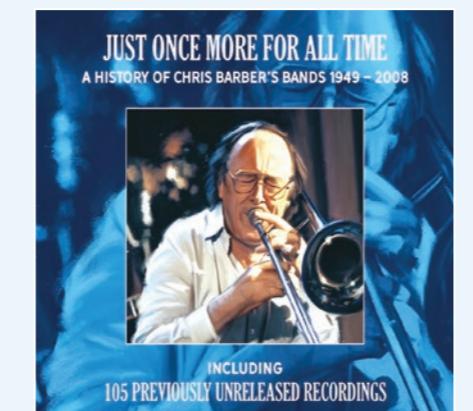
Jazz Rag being one of the seven publications Scott Yanow currently writes for, our readers will be familiar with his quirks and qualities (such as an apparently encyclopaedic knowledge of jazz). One of his quirks is a love of numbers so it comes as no surprise to find this book ends with six appendices: 112 Major Jazz Artists of the Past, 86 Jazz Giants of Today, 60 Jazz Books that Everyone

Should Own (nice to find his taste and mine overlapping), 40 Recommended Jazz DVDs, A Dozen Enjoyable Hollywood Jazz Films and 21 Jazz Greats to Look For in the Future (I was only familiar with five of the names).

Perhaps it should have been less of a surprise to find he spent 25 years as an accountant, though Scott seems to have had little enthusiasm for his work, explaining his philosophy as never letting on there was nothing to do. He proudly affirms, 'I was the last one there', about one job where a company was winding down its activities.

The point about Scott Yanow is that he sticks to his designated task. These are 'My Jazz Memoirs' – and that's exactly what they are: a fairly brief summary of his early years and college days and we're onto the jazz. Record Review kept him busy for seven years, then we have three excellent interviews from those days (Freddie Hubbard, Chick Corea, Maynard Ferguson – surely one of the happiest of interviewees), summaries of festivals and conventions attended, thoughts on jazz critics and jazz criticism, gently humorous accounts of his saxophone and melodica playing, and so on.

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HENRY'S BLUESLETTER

MR. BLUES IS COMING TO TOWN!

The most important thing to happen in Birmingham every July hereabouts is the annual jazz festival.

Jazz, I hear you say, what's that to do with us blues guys?

Well, admittedly, most jazz festivals deliver what it says on the tin, but The Birmingham, Sandwell and Westside Jazz Festival is really like no other. This, the 38th consecutive year of the festival, just like the earlier editions, features swing, Dixie, gypsy and big band jazz, some ska, barber-shop quartets – and The Blues. Lots of it. Some 60 performances over the 10 days of July 15 to 24 – and almost all of it is free admission.

Blues bill-toppers are what might well be the hottest

blues outfit on this, or any other, planet – The Hitman Blues Band from New York City, a rocking nine-piece fronted by singer and guitar man Russell Alexander. Hitman will play five shows during the festival as part of a UK tour. There's a nice historical note here. Russell is the son of Ray Alexander, the vibraphone player and drummer of note who played on that seminal album, "Beauty and the Beat" with Peggy Lee and George Shearing. Ray became a good friend of the festival, a regular first-in-the-diary for many years.

The Shufflepack are firm favourites at Henry's Blueshouse, guaranteed crowd-pleasers, fronted by singer/harmonica player Stuart Maxwell who is also

stars from deep in the Lower Gornal delta, Big Jim and the Alabama Boogie Boys – superb stuff!

James Oliver is a big man in several ways – stature, personality, and presence – a guitar hero. Never forgetting to remind his audience of his roots in the Welsh Valleys, James has taken the UK blues scene by storm and is impossible to ignore. He's worked with Albert Lee, Bill Kirchen and Greg Koch, but is firmly at home with his own dynamic band. The late and great Deke Leonard of Man and Iceberg summed it up nicely, "Speaking as a guitarist, James Oliver scares the hell out of me."

Ricky Cool is a long-established leading figure in the UK world of rhythm and blues. Harmonica player, singer, saxophonist and bandleader Ricky's bands The Texas Turkeys, The Big Town Playboys, The Icebergs and his current outfit, The In Crowd, who deliver 1960s style rhythm and blues, Jamaican ska and blue beat, have always been right up there with the very best.

The Catfish Kings are from Brighton, though bandleader Harry Lang originally hailed from Birmingham where he achieved a degree of national notoriety with his song, "Girl on Page 3" by Bullets on Big Bear Records, a not totally favourable comment on the Sun newspaper's Page 3 girl feature which attracted the attention of that publication's legal department. The Catfish Kings' signature rock and roll, boogie and rhythm and blues has built them a formidable reputation across the UK and particularly in Birmingham where they are regular visitors.

The down home blues of the Birmingham-based Whiskey Brothers comes straight out of the 1940s/1950s Mississippi juke joints, as can be heard on their Big Bear Records album, "Bottle Up and Go".

Another big attraction hereabouts are those specialists in the bar-room boogie and blues of New Orleans, the Lancashire-based hotshots, Tipitina. Always a

significant attraction across the UK, their two Big Bear albums, "I Wish I Was in New Orleans" and "Taking Care of Business", contributed to their burgeoning international reputation.

Chickenbone John, The King of The Cigar Box Guitar, is something of a legend across the blues world. He was the main feature of the BBC documentary, "Cigar Box Blues", and delivers a rocking and riveting onstage performance, playing his own cigar box guitar and singing, often in the company of a harmonica player, sometimes Ricky Cool – who enjoys going back to the roots of

Extremely interesting, very talented and unusual blues performers are Black

Country-based Sunjay and Londoner Ajay. Sunjay is a regular and always welcome attraction at Henry's Blueshouse and has been awarded the Young Performers Award at the Wath Folk Festival and nominated for the New Roots Award at St Albans and the British Blues Young Artist Award. Ajay Srivastav is a critically acclaimed blues musician who reflects the lessons learned as a British-born artist of Indian heritage.

There will also be a full programme throughout the day at Henry's Blueshouse at Velvet Music Rooms on Bluesday 19th July, with workshops, talks and live performances.

For those bluesers still on their feet and in need of yet more blues by the final day of the festival, Sunday 24th July, here's an unusual date for your diary. Saxophonist Art Themen, who enjoyed a career as a leading orthopaedic surgeon, is a legend in the jazz world. His fierce swinging bebop playing earned him a formidable reputation back in the 1960s which he has continued to enhance ever since. However,

JIM SIMPSON

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Cinelli Brothers



Honeyboy Hickling,
Roy Forbes, Bob Wilson

Photo by
Merlin Daleman



The Shufflepack

LIVE REVIEWS**ROBERTO FONSECA**HOWARD ASSEMBLY ROOM,
LEEDS, APRIL 19, 2022

The appearance of Cuban piano star Roberto Fonseca at the Howard Assembly Room was yet another example of the eclectic planning of Opera North who own the facility, recently reopened with a new entrance area and atrium. Sandwiched between Tuvan throat singing and Spanish music of the Golden Age, Fonseca made an instant impact.

First off we had a short warm-up set from two unannounced players: piano and trumpet. Both assured and confident, they provided an object lesson in the importance of material. Three

of the first four numbers were compositions by the pianist and struck me as over-elaborate, the pianist technically capable, the trumpeter showing moments of real power. Then the last were compositions by the trumpeter – and the mood changed. Direct and straightahead, they offered the opportunity (taken with relish) for some on-the-button trumpet.

The 90-plus minutes of the Roberto Fonseca Trio was brilliant stuff, not only from the leader, but from bassist Yandy Martinez-Rodriguez and drummer Raul Herrera. For the most part, sunny and infectious in mood, with injunctions to sing and dance from Fonseca (the dancing never amounted to much in the close-packed seating arrangements), the music switched from time to time to spare introspective piano

and even to a political statement. Fonseca himself was set up with two keyboards to go with his grand piano, frequently playing two of them simultaneously.

Fonseca's first notes on appearing were a run down the entire keyboard and he never avoided the flamboyant, suddenly picking up the rhythm of a Cuban dance – I am no expert in identifying which! In truth, enormously enjoyable though his set was, it's not the easiest to review, in part because of the shortage of announcements, in part because most of the numbers were unfamiliar, in part because many of the numbers moved through different stages.

For instance, a number that began with a superb arco solo from Martinez-Rodriguez

changed gear when he switched to plucking and the other two instruments returned. This was a familiar tune (almost the only one of the night), but gradually it was transformed until the number ended in a violent assault on the piano keyboard. Or the number that began with a wordless vocal from Fonseca which was almost forgotten by the end of the piece in a spectacular drum solo from Herrera.

Eventually he encored with a nice straightforward mambo, with another stunning bass solo and Herrera keeping time with his drumsticks – an exhilarating end to a fine concert.

RON SIMPSON

HEXHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL

In pre-pandemic times a group of jazz fans hatched a plan to revive the Hexham Jazz Festival. Covid put paid to all that until last weekend when hundreds of festival goers descended upon the town to enjoy a series of concerts featuring an array of musicians from the Tyne Valley, Tyneside, County Durham and as far afield as Edinburgh and London. In the splendid setting of Hexham Abbey the opening event on Friday evening featured the hugely popular Hot Cub du Nord. Violinist Emma Fisk's Hot Club-inspired quartet received a rapturous reception from a capacity audience. The evening's programme concluded with a pipe organ-tenor saxophone duo

featuring pianist Paul Edis and saxophonist Graeme Wilson. As Edis climbed into the organ loft Wilson wandered down the aisles making full use of the historic building's unique acoustics. The duo's improvisations reverberated around the cavernous space holding the audience spellbound.

Vocalist Jo Harrop is touring her recently released album *The Heart Wants* and Hexham was on the itinerary. For this festival engagement Harrop and her outstanding band were joined by a string quartet. There was a sense of occasion about the evening and County Durham raised, London resident Harrop more than met expectations. A late evening solo piano set by Dean Stockdale closed proceedings on what had been a full day of top quality jazz. Earlier

in the day, as the sun shone, Core Music's outdoor stage presented a scratch quartet featuring Ferg Kilsby (trumpet), Joe Steels (guitar), Paul Susans (bass) and drummer John Hirst. Hopefully we'll hear more from them in the near future, they're too good not to do it again! Dave Hignett's Tyne Valley Big Band entertained as only it can. Boundless enthusiasm and no little talent, the TVBB is Hexham's pride and joy. Catch the band during the summer months at a festival near you (Haydon Bridge Festival, Tynedale Beer Festival).

Sunday's programme featured pianist Bruno Heinen and guitarist James Kitchman in intimate duo format. Kitchman, originally from Hexham, and Heinen arrived from London to perform a series of original compositions. Their

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