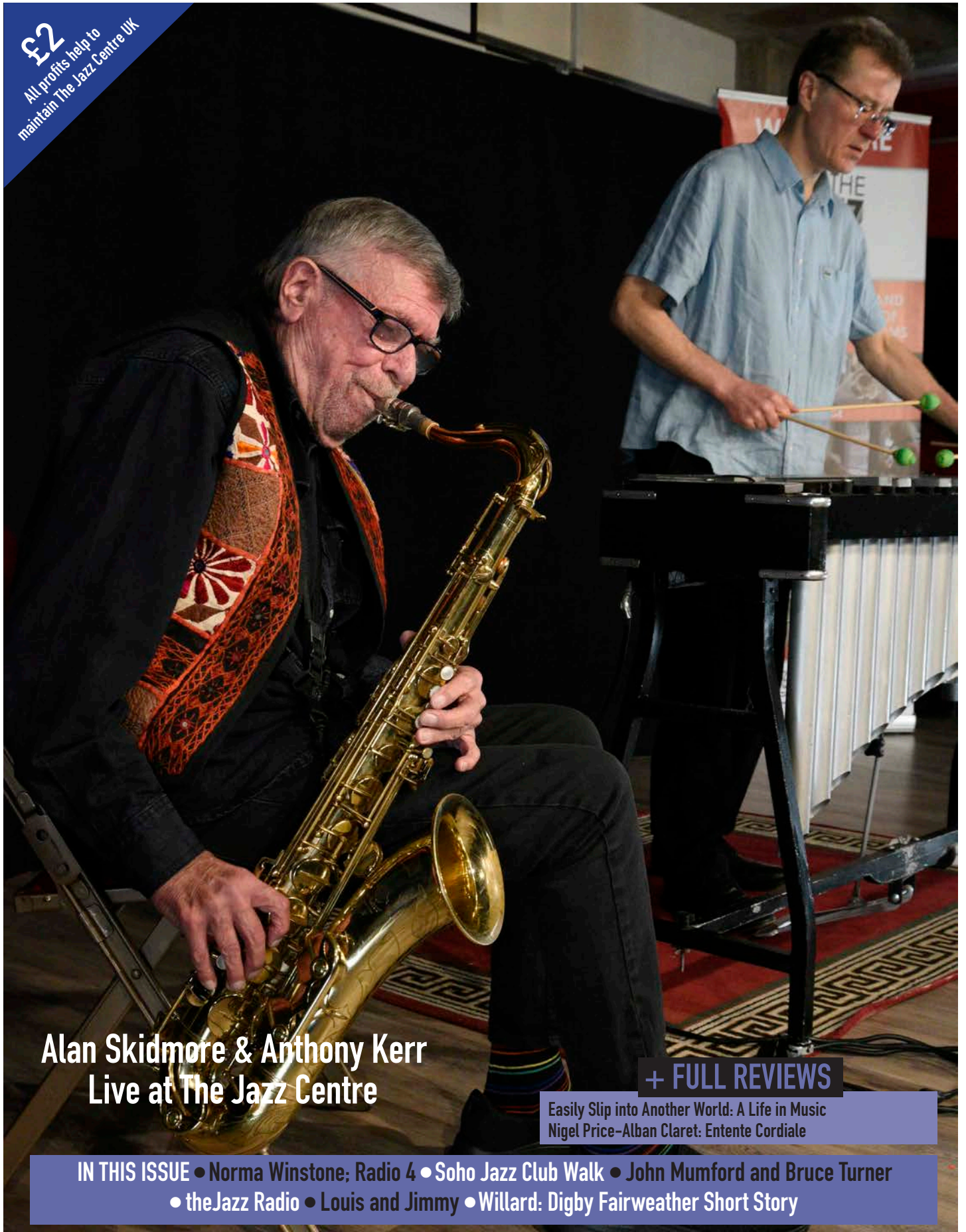


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Alan Skidmore & Anthony Kerr
Live at The Jazz Centre

+ FULL REVIEWS

Easily Slip into Another World: A Life in Music
Nigel Price-Alban Claret: Entente Cordiale

IN THIS ISSUE • Norma Winstone; Radio 4 • Soho Jazz Club Walk • John Mumford and Bruce Turner
• theJazz Radio • Louis and Jimmy • Willard: Digby Fairweather Short Story

Centrepiece



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The Jazz Centre UK is open from Wednesday to Sunday 11am - 5pm.
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OUR MISSION — TO PROMOTE, PRESERVE AND CELEBRATE THE CULTURE OF JAZZ MUSIC IN ALL ITS FORMS

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A happy new jazz year

THE JAZZ CENTRE UK ENTERS 2024 enjoying its brightest prospects for a long time. The dark shadows of covid 19, and possible eviction from our home at the Beecroft gallery have been cast off. The New Year at last offers the Centre the opportunity to more effectively fulfil its mission to promote, preserve and celebrate jazz music; and begin implementing the detailed aspects of its *Five Year Vision*. That includes, among its many ambitions, providing a positive long-lasting and memorable experience for everyone engaging with The Jazz Centre UK (TJCUK).

While looking forward to a settled future, the Jazz Centre is still negotiating with Southend City Council over some elements of its future tenure at the Beecroft Gallery location. However, these discussions have proved constructive and are making good progress. We hope to report the outcome to our supporters soon. In the meantime, an exciting programme of live music events is almost complete for the months ahead. Support for the Centre's Saturday afternoon gigs is proving stronger than ever, which is helping to underpin its finances.

Among the proposals under consideration is a membership scheme aimed at helping to build up a broad and engaged community of jazz enthusiasts, active volunteers and musicians, all contributing to the development of the music and making Southend a national hub for it.

Another ambition is to develop our newsletter, *Centrepiece*, so that it becomes an essential source of information about the local jazz scene, the gigs, the venues, the performers and latest developments, as well as the Centre's exhibitions, activities and collections.

This edition of *Centrepiece* —the first issue of 2024— contains a broad mix of articles that range from the contemporary scene to the nostalgic, along with the usual book and CD reviews, and a photo gallery of recent Jazz Centre performers. Pianist Nick Tomalin takes readers down memory lane in his Soho Walk, encompassing the seminal venues of jazz clubs past and present (page 6).

The occasional series of jazz museums around the world focuses on the Centre for Danish Jazz History (CDJ) based on the waterfront of the ancient city and port of Aalborg in northern Jutland. This museum turns out to be an unexpectedly vital and active cultural centre (page 4). Contacts made with administrators of other jazz museums during the preparation of these occasional articles also fulfils another purpose – and TJCUK ambition: to forge links with jazz organisations internationally.

For those readers with a hankering for the instantly-recognisable old-time sound of the jug band, the Jazz Centre will be welcoming The Jake Leg Jug Band in June, following their US tour. And to set the mood, there is an interview in *Centrepiece* with the JLJB. This is not the name of a person, it turns out, but an ailment going back to prohibition times in the US when they couldn't legally buy alcohol. For readers anxious to know more about this band and its style of music, look no further than page 15 of this issue.

A very different sound was to be heard at the Centre in early November. This was a unique solo performance by vibraphonist Anthony Kerr. As well as a beautiful musical performance, Kerr gave the audience a potted history of the vibraphone, an explanation of different techniques of playing, and the names and brief biographies of its greatest exponents. A review of this performance appears on page 18.

We wish our readers and supporters a happy New Year

Board of Trustees



Some acts to look forward to in 2024.
Above: In June The Jake Leg Jug Band.
Top centre: In May, Allison Neale.
Bottom centre: In July, from Cameroon, West Africa, Coco Mbassi.

Above: In February a Jazz Centre favourite, The Mick Foster Quartet, with guest Jonny Ford.

2nd in our occasional series of jazz museums around the world

Jazz Mecca flourishes in North Jutland

A relatively small city in northern Jutland with a strong claim to hosting “one of Europe’s largest and finest jazz collections” and styled as the “true Mecca for all jazz enthusiasts” might, at first blush, seem rather improbable. But there are few jazz museums in Europe that can, today, more justifiably make such claims than the Centre for Danish Jazz History (CDJ), an expanding and highly active cultural institution based on the waterfront of the ancient city and port of Aalborg on the south side of the Limfjorden.

Known simply as the Jazz Centre, it has many similarities with Southend City’s own Jazz Centre UK, including starting —in its present form— in 2016. It was then that it became an independent organisation. Previously, it had been a jazz research centre under the auspices of Aalborg University, originated in 2006 by a group of lecturers and music students. This followed the purchase of two large collections of records, CDs, radio programmes, manuscripts, books and periodicals, by the Music and Music Therapy Department.

Musikkens Hus

But the CDJ’s collections grew by leaps and bounds in the years that followed its change in status, with the acquisition of other important collections, supported by the university and private foundations. The Jazz Centre was forced to move from its original cramped location, to the futuristic Musikkens Hus (Music House). But even this, seemingly optimal, location proved inadequate, prompting another move, to its current harbour-front home, in a two-storey brick warehouse. By this time, the CDJ had lost its primary connection with the university. And, with independence came responsibility for its own finances, as well as its own board, advisory panel and association of friends. From being a research centre, the Jazz Centre had become an “open cultural institution.”

This has taken place against a cultural revitalisation of Aalborg, itself. A prosperous trading centre in the Middle Ages and later a large industrial centre, the city’s fortunes subsequently faded. But more recently, it has become an increasingly important cultural hub, with its theatres, symphony orchestra, opera company, performance venues, art galleries and museums. Add, too, the revamped waterfront and pretty old town. It’s a trendy combination that is putting the Aalborg back on the tourist map.

Jazz Special

Indeed, a couple of years ago, an article in the widely-read Danish magazine *Jazz Special* made quite a stir with an article on the “new jazz scene in Aalborg.” Written by Copenhagen-based journalist Birger Thøgersen, the article painted a picture of a provincial town whose jazz life is developing rapidly, with many new musicians on the scene, new venues, new audiences, and with ambitions to put Aalborg on the world map as a jazz city.

Certainly, it is providing a favourable environment for



The Centre for Danish Jazz History, Denmark.

the CDJ. Since becoming an independent foundation in 2016, its activities have intensified and broadened. While the work of arranging, registering and digitalising new incoming archives is carried out by its many volunteer assistants, the Jazz Centre has also become, in its own words, a “gathering place for many public activities” —concerts, lectures, film screenings, workshops and suchlike. As well as its own gigs, which have increased markedly, Aalborg’s other music institutions are also using the CDJ’s small intimate stage for their events.

In addition to these public events, the Jazz Centre sees itself as the Danes’ national jazz archive: the only institution which is active in the collection, registration, preservation of source material for Danish jazz, and thus a knowledge and information centre for jazz history. As its website says, in summary, “a living, national jazz archive and knowledge centre.”

One measure of its success is evident from the size of its archive, which boasts an impressive 90,000 LPs and CDs; 2,500 78s; 2,200 cassette tapes; numerous VHS tapes, laser discs, 16 mm films; and 19,000 books and magazines.



Part of the CDJ music collection.

Centre for Danish Jazz

However, the Centre for Danish Jazz does have a couple of huge advantages over many other, similar organisations: it has a great deal of space; and the space is largely free.

The ground floor of the Centre's warehouse-home accommodates the main archive material, and provides the working area for its volunteers, as well as space for a small stage, with grand piano and drums, PA-system and lights, with room for a further 60-80 people. The CDJ puts on some 60-70 concerts each year, together with talks and perhaps 30-40 films, music/jazz films or (non-jazz) gems for film buffs. On the first floor there is extra storage space plus a small art cinema, which holds 45 people.

Aalborg University

And, better still, "we have a lease on the building, but don't pay any rent, thanks to a rich sponsor who lets us use the space for free. We only have to pay for heat, electricity," explains associate professor emeritus Tore Mortensen, the



Tore Mortensen, CDJ manager and curator.

manager, curator and a founding member of the Jazz Centre. Together with a group of lecturers and music students, he launched the original jazz research centre at Aalborg University in the Spring of 2006. Another of the Centre's stalwarts is former librarian/archivist, Else



Else Egeberg.

Egeberg, known as "Jazz-Else." She has been "professionally responsible for one of Europe's largest and most well-stocked jazz collections," says Mortensen. Egeberg has now been succeeded as librarian by Berna Engelbrecht Kristensen.

Organisationally, the CDJ is supported by a board of directors that includes representatives of local jazz organisation, local municipality and the Aalborg University; an advisory panel that assists with fund-raising and contact with public authorities; and the "Board of Friends Association." The latter functions as a membership and support group for the Jazz Centre. It contributes to the CDJ finances, arranges some concerts and other events, collaborates with other musical organisations, and undertakes much of the practical work for gatherings and public events.

There are currently 200 members of this "Friends" association. Individual annual membership costs around

£40 (350 DKR) and offers reduced prices on all concerts and events, free access to selected concerts and to all collections, with the possibility to borrow some archive material, and monthly newsletters.

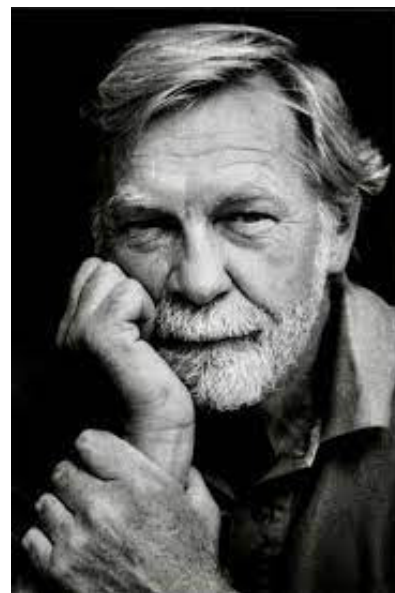
Income from members provides one of the main sources of income for the Jazz Centre. Other sources are income from concerts (tickets and bar takings) and donations, which seem to have weakened in recent time. However, the CDJ does have a number of corporate sponsors and partners, some of whom sponsor individual concerts.

Unlike the experience of some other jazz museums around the world, the Danish Jazz Centre has managed to attract some younger volunteers, says Mortensen. They "enjoy the casual and intimate atmosphere" of the CDJ. "Many young musicians from the local Music Conservatory join in as well. And, we have a fine international student corps that play many concerts, and also attracts the younger generation," he adds.

Nordic Jazz

A casual perusal of the Jazz Centre's website might leave an observer with the impression of a mostly parochial focus on a Danish —or, at least, Nordic— jazz genus. That would hardly be surprising given the particular qualities of Nordic jazz and its influence on the music's development more widely. But the impression would not be fair. "A great part of our archive is about American and European jazz (recordings, books an extensive jazz magazine collection, clippings, photos, etc)," notes Tore Mortensen.

He is especially proud of the CDJ's collection of Jan Persson photos. The late Persson, who died in 2018, was an internationally famous Danish photographer who captured the images of many jazz and rock stars, including American "greats" such as Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis, and rock icons like Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix. Persson's pictures appeared in jazz magazines in the US, the UK and elsewhere, as well as in Denmark. The Centre's collection of his photographs has now been given a dedicated website (janperssoncollection.dk).



Jan Persson.

The CDJ's outward looking approach is apparent, too, in its contacts with other, similar jazz bodies. There is, of course, good and long-standing cooperation with other Nordic archives. But outreach is not limited to that region. Good contacts have also been developed recently with similar organisations in Spain and New York, adds Mortensen. To which, it might be hoped, he can now add The Jazz Centre UK.

Soho Jazz Club Walk

Pianist Nick Tomalin has kindly permitted Centrepiece to publish his *Soho Jazz Club Walk* from the writings on his website (<https://www.nicktomalin.co.uk>). The site has contemporary photos to orient the walker along the route. Nick has also written articles about George Shearing, Sonny Clark, Thelonious Monk, Donald Fagen, Jazz and Chess . . . and many more. This article invites the reader to walk around Soho visiting the locations of famous jazz clubs, some which closed many years ago, but some which are still thriving today. The walk follows a circular route starting and finishing at Oxford Circus tube station which intersects with the Central, Victoria and Bakerloo lines. It lasts about an hour at a moderate pace.



After arriving at Oxford Circus station you should take Exit 2 (Oxford Street East, Regent Street South). This will bring you out on the south side of Oxford Street, you should then continue east along Oxford Street.

The Original Marquee Club



After a few hundred yards you will pass a big Marks and Spencer's store on your right, and just after this, a new building at the junction with Poland Street at 165 Oxford Street. This used to be the Academy Cinema and in the basement was the Marquee Ballroom which on 19th April

1958 hosted the first Jazz at the Marquee night. It was initiated by Harold Pendleton, a jazz loving accountant who was secretary of the National Jazz Federation.

The first night saw a performance by the Michael Garrick Quartet and Kenny Baker, and early resident acts included Johnny Dankworth, Chris Barber and Alexis Korner. Tubby Hayes and Joe Harriott were also regular performers. In 1962 the club began a regular R&B night and by 1963 had become more associated with that style of music, featuring artists such as Manfred Mann, Brian Auger and visiting Americans such as Muddy Waters. In 1964 the club moved to Wardour Street and went on to become one of the most important venues in British rock history.

Continue east along the south side of Oxford Street. Eventually you come to a junction with Wardour Street.



Before crossing Wardour Street use the pedestrian crossing to cross to the other side of Oxford Street. Continue east long the north side of Oxford Street and you'll come to a red and white sign on the left saying 100 Club.

The 100 Club

In this 1942 venue was a restaurant called Mack's, but was hired out by

Robert Feldman to host a jazz club. The initial line-up included Frank Weir, Kenny Baker and Jimmy Skidmore, with guest artists the Feldman trio made up of Feldman's own children, including an eight year old Victor Feldman on drums. The club was popular with American GIs who introduced the jitterbug dance to the club (which was banned at many other venues). The club started out featuring Swing bands, but also booked bebop musicians such as Ronnie Scott and Johnny Dankworth, and featured visiting American artists such as Art Pepper and Benny Goodman. It also became a base for black musicians who'd moved to London from other parts of the British Empire, including Frank Holder, Coleridge Goode and Ray Ellington.

From the 1960's onwards the club became more associated with the rock scene, and in the 1970's became one of the most important venues in the development of Punk rock. In 2010 the venue was threatened with closure; however a campaign was launched to save the club which was supported by many high profile musicians including Sir Paul McCartney, and a partnership with Nike subsidiary Converse enabled the club to stay open. In 2020 Westminster Council offered the club 100% Business Rates Relief, securing its future as a viable operation. It continues to present a varied program of music (although not much jazz these days!).

Continue past the club until you get to a junction with Newman Street. Here use the pedestrian crossing to cross back to the south side of Oxford Street. Continue east. The next street on the right is Dean Street and after that there is a block of buildings. In a basement here, at 79 Oxford Street was the studios of the London Dance Institute and from 1955 it was used as the location of the Johnny Dankworth Club.

Johnny Dankworth Club

Dankworth was born in Woodford Essex in 1927 and went to school at the St George Monoux Grammar School in Walthamstow. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music and played alto sax and clarinet in the Royal Air Force band during the war. He worked on the Queen Mary liner in 1947 which took him to New York and he even played with Charlie Parker at the Paris Jazz Festival in 1949. He was one of the small group of British musicians who were keen to experiment with the new bebop style of jazz they were hearing on records and on visits to New York. In 1950 he formed a small group, the Dankworth Seven as a vehicle for his writing, and later his big band which used to perform at his club.

Continue east and take the next street on the right into Soho Street. At the end of the street turn right into Soho Square. Continue anti-clockwise around the square passing Carlisle Street on your right. At the corner of the square head straight on into Frith Street. Continue down the street until you see the famous sign of Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club ahead.



Ronnie Scott's (New Place)

The club moved here in 1965 from smaller premises on Gerrard Street although the smaller venue continued until 1967 when the lease ran out. The club played host to both UK musicians and visiting American and European musicians, and Ronnie

and his business partner Peter King (who was also a saxophonist) regularly booked some of the biggest names in the jazz world to play at the club, including Sonny Rollins, Stan Getz, Jimmy Griffin, Roland Kirk, Lee Konitz and Sonny Stitt amongst many others. There was usually a house band who would perform with guest artists and over the years included musicians such as Phil Seaman and Alan Ganley on drums and Stan Tracey on piano. The club continues to host live jazz every night of the week.

Continue down Frith Street until you come to the junction with Shaftesbury Avenue. Turn right here and continue down Shaftesbury Avenue. Use the zebra crossing just after the junction with Dean Street to cross to the other side of the road. A bit further on turn left into Wardour Street. A little way down Wardour Street on your right you'll see an O'Neill's pub, this was the location of the Flamingo Club and a blue plaque on the wall gives some more information.



The Flamingo Club

The club first opened in 1952 under the ownership of Jeffrey Kruger in Coventry Street, but in 1957 moved to the basement of a former grocery store at 33-37 Wardour Street. 37 Wardour Street had also formerly been the location of the Shim Sham Club which opened in 1935. The Flamingo began as a jazz venue with Ronnie Scott and Tubby Hayes members of the resident band and became known for its all nighters when it stayed open on

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Friday and Saturday nights until 6.00am.

The club was bought by ex-boxer Rik Gunnell in 1959 and the music policy gradually changed to include more R&B and blues bands, although jazz was still featured at the club. It became an important venue in the development of sixties rock and R&B music, and famous patrons included The Rolling Stones, members of the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. Guitarist John McLaughlin said "The Flamingo was the real meeting place, more than the 100 Club and the Marquee. Everybody came down there and we had some really good jam sessions."

From 1962 to 1965 the resident band was Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames. The club also sometimes featured visiting American artists including Stevie Wonder and Jerry Lee Lewis. Dizzy Gillespie, Otis Redding and Carmen McRae also appeared there in the sixties. The club was later renamed the Pink Flamingo, but closed in May 1969. It briefly became The Temple which featured prog rock bands such as Genesis and Queen but closed for good in 1972.

Continue on down Wardour Street and turn left into Gerrard Street. Towards the end of the short street on the right is a small Taiwanese Restaurant with a wrought iron fence and steps leading down into a basement. This is was the location of the original Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club.

Ronnie Scott's (The Old Place)

Ronnie Scott's first club opened on 30th October 1959 in this basement. It was set up and managed by Scott and his business partner Peter King.

Scott was born Ronald Schatt on the 28th January 1927 in Aldgate, London and began playing

in small jazz clubs at the age of sixteen. He went on to tour with many of the significant big bands of the day including those run by Johnny Claes and Ted Heath. He was one of a small group of musicians who worked on the Queen Mary Cunard liner which would sail to New York, and it was here that he first heard bebop played, and was inspired to recreate the music with like-minded musicians back in London.

In 1965 the club moved to the larger premises on Frith street, but Scott continued putting on music at the Old Place until the lease ran out, and he used this opportunity to book young up and coming British musicians such as Michael Garrick and Chris McGregor.

In October 2019 Ronnie Scott's celebrated its sixtieth birthday and to mark the occasion a blue plaque was put up by English Heritage to commemorate the original location of the club.

Retrace your steps back down Gerrard Street and right into Wardour Street until you reach Shaftesbury Avenue again. Turn left down Shaftesbury Avenue. Just before

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the junction with Rupert Street cross to the other side of the road, and continue until you come to Great Windmill Street. Turn right here. A little way up on the right you'll see a doorway with the numbers 41 - 44 on the wall next to it. This was the original location of the Club Eleven.



Live at the Club Eleven, 1949.

Club Eleven

This was a nightclub which ran between 1948 and 1950 and played a significant role in the emergence of the bebop jazz movement in the UK.

It was called Club Eleven because it had eleven founders—business manager Harry Morris along with ten musicians, among them Ronnie Scott, Johnny Dankworth, Tony Crombie and Lennie Bush. The club grew out of informal jam sessions held at a place called Mac's Rehearsal Room which occupied a basement on this site previously. The club was near to Archer Street where musicians would congregate to find work and get paid for jobs, so the location was perfect.

Many of the musicians involved had worked on the Queen Mary liner which used to sail between Southampton and New York, and had heard the young bebop musicians who were revolutionising the music.

John Dankworth said: "Club 11 was an indirect result of Ronnie and me and all the rest of us coming off the 'boats' full of this music and wanting to try it out."

Drummer Tony Crombie remembers: "There was music going on all day from two in the afternoon, guys would start showing up...it was all rehearsal even the sessions."

Ronnie Scott: "Odd faces used to come down to Mac's to listen or jam . . . so we thought we'd do it one night a week and charge people to come in . . . it ended up six nights a week."

In 1950 the club moved to 50 Carnaby Street.

Archer Street



Archer Street, 1950s.

Continue up Great Windmill Street and you'll come to a junction with Archer Street to the right and Ham Yard to the left. Archer Street used to

be the location of the Musicians Union, however in those days the Union only catered for classical musicians so jazz and dance band musicians would congregate in the cafes and bars in the surrounding streets. Archer Street became a kind of unofficial labour exchange where people would go if they wanted to hire a band or individual musicians. Musicians would also sometimes be paid for work completed there. It also provided a space for musicians to socialise and network. The location was important because it ran behind a number of theatres, and was in the heart of the West End theatre scene where many musicians worked.

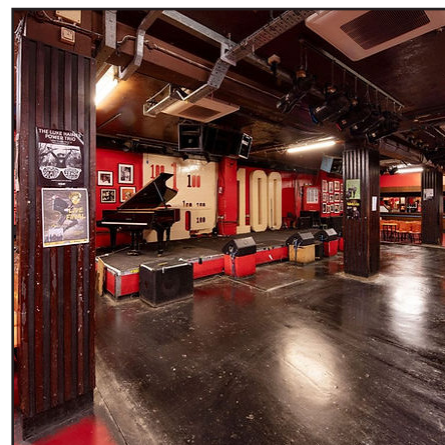
In the bottom left photo, on the left, you can see a sign for the Harmony Inn which was a big greasy spoon cafe in the middle of Archer Street frequented mostly by musicians and which was open all night to cater for those finishing work late in the bars and theatres of the West End.

Continue on up Great Windmill Street and when you come to a crossroads, continue on into Lexington Street. A little way up Lexington Street turn left into Beak Street. Continue down Beak Street, past a turning to Marshall Street on your right and continue until you come to Carnaby Street and turn right there.

50 Carnaby Street

A little way up on the left you'll see the small entrance into Kingly Court. The basement of the building just before this used to house a number of important London clubs.

In 1950 Club Eleven moved here from its original location in Great Windmill Street. However, on the 15th April that year police raided the premises and arrested a number



Ain't Nothin' But... blues bar, 20 Kingly St, Kingly Court.

of people for possession of drugs. Amongst them were a number of musicians including Ronnie Scott himself. The resulting trial was given quite a lot of press coverage as a number of those arrested were white, demonstrating that illegal drug use was not just confined to the black community (which was the popular belief at the time). The club folded soon after although the venue later became the Sunset Club, one of the most famous calypso clubs in London and from 1961 the Roaring Twenties nightclub. Today the basement premises are the location of the Carnaby Street branch of the Nightjar cocktail bars, which still feature regular live music!

Obviously Carnaby Street itself became an important street in the Swinging London fashion and music scene of the 1960's.

Continue to the end of Carnaby Street and turn left into Great Marlborough Street by the famous Liberty's Department Store. Turn almost immediately right into Argyll Street which will take you back to Oxford Street and Oxford Circus station.

Willard

a short story by Digby Fairweather

Willard was Willard Robison, an early pianist and bandleader who led his Deep River Orchestra in the 1920s and also a superb songwriter who wrote A Cottage for Sale, and the story is about his inspiration for doing so. The song's theme is about two lovers whose affair began in a country cottage and the lyric reflects the subject—and its failure—and contains, therefore, the line: 'I hope she married well'. Willard also wrote a lot of other great songs—almost all of them with rural inspirations—including Round my Old Deserted Farm, Country Boy Blues, Don't Tell a Man about his Woman, T'aint So Honey, T'aint So, Don't Smoke in Bed, (which Peggy Lee recorded) and the delightful Think Well of Me which Jack Teagarden used as the title for his second album around 1962 featuring Robison songs, (see p. for link). In my story there are references to his lyrics, including Deep Rut—a song he wrote at one point in his career. How rural can you get? In (much) later years he ran a fast-food unit over the road from Eddie Condon's club in the Village, New York.

The boy-turned-man, Willard, left his warm-beam womb of a sitting room, all chintz, glowing orange coals and conversation, and closing his front door, felt his feet grip the ashen pathway into the dark beyond as he walked ahead.

The night silence broken only by his padded footsteps on the old familiar country farm track ahead was enfolding. Walking in the dark he knew the moment his soft whistle would echo back from the barn wall; the second later that the grey owl would swoop from her corner perch into the warm cover of tactile night; the moment when his footfall scraping into the patch of shingle that Farmer Handy laid in the cattle-toiled mud would set three hundred pigeons, startled from sleep, cracking from the feather-whisper trees like window shutters raked by a twister wind.

Below the aggravated pigeons he walked steadily forward, recognizing now the sleepy call of a drake awake in the reeds of Willow Creek across the meadows; now the three wide steps required to cross Deep Rut where the carts bogged down after winter rains, and suddenly the untoward intimacy of a bat flying close to his cheek. Despite himself in this first unpredicted second, his practised tread hastened, hands tightened in baggy corduroy pockets. And it was then that summer lightning threw a wave of luminous white light around him and very near, just as he knew it to be, was the old cottage, his destination.

Five more steps led him to a garden gate, and exploring its topmost damp wood rail his right hand moved fast from the snake bite of barbed wire, then with recovered slowness onto familiar wooden contours, mossed and rutted with age before, at their end, the cold metal of a forbidding padlock. Slowly the cottage contours emerged from the dark into his view; friendly irregular outlines that he could retrace for himself as his vision cleared. When he had come twelve months ago, a 'For Sale' sign had leant unsteadily posted in an overgrown flowerbed by the mailbox. Now even that had gone, it seemed, and from the gate he could make out timbers in the moonlight nailed across the front door.

Though his way was barred Willard let his mind walk ahead. Down the garden path, through the front door to an old wooden hallstand, with oval looking glass, and beyond it a brown staircase with dim silver carpet rods reflected from the glow of a misty oil lamp. In the hall, a soft voice; gentle fingers on the nape of his neck, and an embrace; then the oil lamp extinguished and an impassioned ascent low-laughing at the folly of trying to leave each other's arms, up the seventeen stairs to the big oaken bed. There, for a first and last night, the feverish tendresses, callings mouth to mouth, crying cataclysms, and open-eyed promises. Then as dawn broke a parting, and colder questions in next day's unfeeling light.

In the warm-breathed night Willard spoke his familiar litany to the past.

"Not for you, the songwriter. Not for you the weaver of dreams. For you, the lawyer, the doctor, the daytime world of raccoon-coated college boys with all the world's dollars to win. In your simple words I felt, unspoken, the foretelling of different roads to mine; Whitsun weddings, homes and highchairs, graduations, evenings rocking on sun-go-down porches and bed at ten. Not for you the furrowed brows of aspiration and rejection, refusal letters on a welcome mat denying the dream of a song. My letter in the cottage mailbox was the only way."

His voice fell into the stillness; heard the answer which came as always, unbidden, unlooked for, inevitable: "you could have asked." The ground said it, under his feet. Willard stared down to the hot marshy fecundity as summer lightning lit the landscape again, and as it did so a musical theme illuminated in his mind as if in response. For once though he made no move to the scrap of manuscript paper he kept in the right-hand pocket of his jacket, nor to the silver fountain pen with its engraved message which he kept always in its left breast pocket near his heart.

Instead, soundlessly at first, he began to cry. The mossy wood of the old wide gate as it supported the weight of him shook with deep spasms of breath first caught back then uttered; received the uncaring saliva that mingled with salt then dropped from its damp brown bars to the earth. Above the songwriter the stars blended and swam; the landscape heard, quiet as a priest, and the world turned soundlessly in time until at last silence wrapped around him again.

Then pausing only to scribble notes where he guessed they belonged on the manuscript, he turned quickly, walked the mile back towards his chintzed orange-coal sitting room; opened the latched front door, and stepped back in.



Mumford and Turner



John Mumford, in photo with Digby Fairweather, was a jazz trombonist, prominent on the scene from the 1950s. To a well-attended and appreciative audience in The Jazz Centre Media Room, he gave a talk on his years learning his musical trade, in particular with the Bruce Turner Jump Band.

He started out with the Phoenix Jazz Band in the mid-fifties, and "as an absolute beginner," he said, "I found a way to bluff my way through the repertoire . . . and to gradually learn the trombone's role in a New Orleans band." Jazz became his life, living in Mornington Crescent, one room in a house, "a shabby Victorian end-of-terrace relic." Other musicians resided there, the ground floor often used as a practice area, one of whom, Bruce Turner, was to play a central part in John's future career.



A young John Mumford on trombone.

John spent an enjoyable year with the Phoenix Jazz Band "before I had become aware that there were other tunes and songs that offered interesting possibilities for improvisations.

I was badly in need of brushing up on some musical matters, as soon as possible."

The Nucleus Coffee Bar in Monmouth Street was the go-to place to polish jazz skills. "Once you'd negotiated the dodgy wooden stairs to the basement you were in for a rather interesting all-nighter. Let's say an average of six front-line instruments, at least five in the rhythm section, everyone taking perhaps six solo choruses each, including drums, followed by 'eights', spread across the players, then 'fours', with eventually a quadruple repeat ending. John honed his craft "To a mixed audience of people who had missed the last train, bewildered foreign students and familiar Soho layabouts, everybody a bit humid, kippered in a comforting fog of Old Holborn and Woodbines."

In 1959, after a couple of years scuffling the scene, guitarist Diz Disley put together a band to accompany Sister Rosetta Tharpe for a tour of Sweden. John was recruited as the trombonist. (The drummer was a youthful Ginger Baker). For John "The tour itself was a life changing experience, and I was fortunate to have had, with the Phoenix band, some working knowledge of the traditional New Orleans repertoire, as some of the sequences were close to those of Gospel music."

Back in the UK regular life resumed, every Monday visiting Archer Street in Soho, "an open-air Labour Exchange for musicians, with awe-inspiring professionals discussing gigs, personnel and deputies, debating gig-fees and location details, together with much laughter and general socialising." For John the Star restaurant in Old Compton Street was the place for "his scruffy lot" to meet.

"One afternoon Jim Bray came into the restaurant, and coming to our table, enquired "Mumford?" "Yes." Care to do a try-out for Bruce?" I think my ears must have gone flat back against my head, "Er, yes, I managed to reply."

"OK, tomorrow, behind the 100 club," said Jim. "Opposite the Blue Posts, about mid-day." The next morning, wearing the nearest thing I'd got to a clean shirt, I was on time.

The Bruce mentioned was Bruce Turner, leader of the

formidable Jump Band, formed in 1957 after he had left Humphrey Lyttelton's group. He wanted a different sound, one that reflected the tight-knit, highly organised sounds of the John Kirby, Benny Carter and Johnny Hodges small groups.

"I remember little of that nerve-wracking rehearsal audition experience", John said, "only 'coming to' back at the Star where, after a calming cup of tea, I went to the cinema round the corner for an hour of Sylvester, Tweetie Pie and Tex Avery cartoons."

John played with the Jump Band from 1959-1961, two successful years of touring and recording. In 1961 the band became the subject of the documentary film *Living Jazz* directed by Jack Gold, financed and produced by Doug Dobell. It was a ground-breaking study of life as a jazz musician in that period. In the opening scene the band is seen packing up their instruments at the end of the evening, with Bruce handing out their pay for the gig; £4 each! The film was screened following John's presentation; it is still one of the finest jazz documentaries ever made.

As to be expected there was many an anecdote of life on the road to be recounted, travelling in an old, hired Bedford Dormobile. Playing the Boston Gliderdome on a wet and windy evening, to a small audience populated by hostile Teddy Boys was no fun. Likewise a residency gig in Weymouth at the Pier Pavilion playing tea-dances as interval band for the Cyril Stapleton Orchestra.

John explained the problem: "We were quite pleased with the whole arrangement, except that, as we soon discovered, the tea dances turned out to be a noisy Bedlam. Holiday-making parents would deposit their younger offspring, leaving them in the care of a bored teenager, and go off for a much-needed break."

By the early 60s the scene began to change. "Bookings became increasingly hard to find, with venues often at astonishing distances. Bruce, I think partly for family reasons, didn't fancy being 'On the Road' like this. And neither did we, I suspect. As Bruce was starting to work with Humph again, the rest of us began, rather sadly, to look for employment elsewhere."



John Mumford and his 4 Jazz Artists display.

But as John emphasised, "I'd had, though, time to reflect on what I'd learnt by being onstage twice a day with a rather special artist."

Following the screening of *Living Jazz*, the audience decamped to the main Jazz Centre performance area, joined by those waiting to hear the Karen Sharp Quartet perform that afternoon, to see John cut the ribbon to open his *Four Jazz Musician-Artists* exhibition.

Radio 4: Norma and More

Lying in bed Tuesday one morning half-listening to Radio 4 news around quarter to eight, presenter Amol Rajan's introduction to an interesting news item caught my attention. A rather remarkable story about an 83-year-old cockney jazz singer, born into poverty in Bow, East London, now living in Deal in Kent having one of her songs sampled by someone called Drake.

As a Plymothian my imagination immediately conjured up an image of Drake in his hammock, 'and a thousand miles away . . . dreaming all the time of Plymouth Hoe'. But no, this Drake is the multi-million selling Canadian rap artist. His sample was taken from *The Tunnel*, from the eponymous 1977 Azimuth album for the track *IDGAF*. *The Tunnel* is a beautiful, ethereal improvised piece written and sung by Norma Winstone. Drake plonks in front of his semi-intelligible rap; *IDGAF* stands for I Don't Give a you know what, as Amol Rajan discreetly put it.

The Radio 4 introduction made it sound like the 83-year-old jazz singer was some old biddy living out her retirement in obscurity. Amol Rajan conducted the interview in his usual affable, friendly style, and Norma Winstone was effortlessly brilliant. *The Tunnel* sample was played on air and Norma described how it was composed, her lyric with an improvised melody backed by John Taylor on piano and synthesiser, and Kenny Wheeler on trumpet. As for Drake's rap, he was "protesting, I don't give a 'monkeys'" said Norma, "the same as when we recorded our music. Hardly what people were waiting for at the time, they were not ready for it". Rap is "not really my area of listening", she continued "I can't understand what they are saying."

Norma went on to say she actually had never heard of Drake, that her son had to explain who he was and how popular. But she was pleased Drake did not mess too much with the sample, and she was grateful for him bringing us to the attention of a wider public." Asked by Amol Rajan if it would make her rich . . . "that would be nice" she replied.

My guess is that Radio 4 morning news got the information from a much fuller Guardian article that morning written by music journalist Jude Rogers.

The article is well worth a read (link here <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/nov/14/my-son-was-like-what-mum-norma-winstone-the-british-jazz-singer-being-sampled-by-drake>).



The screenshot shows the top of a Guardian article. The headline reads: "My son was like: what?! Mum! Norma Winstone, the British jazz singer being sampled by Drake". Below the headline is a sub-headline: "Jude Rogers". The article text begins with: "After growing up poor in east London, Winstone became one of the UK's most adventurous jazz performers - and is now unexpectedly on a huge rap hit". There is a small portrait of Norma Winstone. The article text continues: "This sample from Azimuth's 1977 album track 'The Tunnel' is followed by Drake's 'I'm on the radio' on *IDGAF*, the second most played track from Drake's *UK's No 1* album. For all the dogs 'Puck the bitch, I make her sweat', is the beginning of their less ethereal intrusion). 'I'd heard of Drake, but his wasn't ever the kind of music I'd listen to,' says jazz vocalist and lyricist Norma Winstone, now 83, in her spare room in Deal, Kent, reflecting on her old group's inclusion on one of 2023's biggest rap LPs one autumn afternoon. An email sent via her website, followed by a Zoom call with Drake's management, made her aware of the interest, she explains. 'I was quite naive,' she laughs. 'I asked, 'Can't this rapper just send the track to me as an attachment?' I wasn't thinking about how big he might be.' Then she told her oldest son, Leo Taylor, about it; he drums live for Hot Chip, and the Mercury-nominated trio the Invisible. 'And he was like, what? Mum?' She grins. 'So that was that.'"

Just one sentence better appreciates Norma Winstone than the news item: "Winstone isn't an artist plucked by Drake

from obscurity, but a British jazz stalwart who has released more than 30 albums, holds honorary fellowships from the Trinity Laban Conservatoire and Royal Academy of Music, and an MBE."

As for making her wealthy. The album *Azimuth* is on Spotify; six songs listened to a few thousand times each . . . except *The Tunnel*, which racks up 523,430 hits. I've no idea what the artist gets per listen, so maybe half a million is worth a few bob.

To digress somewhat. Amol Rajan is the latest presenter of University Challenge, testing the knowledge of the country's brightest young things. It is noticeable that questions on music have very different responses. The contestants generally know their Brahms from their Liszt; or at least can make a guess from a long list of possibles. On contemporary pop or rock music, there is not a problem, and it's just a bit trickier on earlier decades for these two genres. When it comes to a (rare) question on jazz, they hazard, almost invariably, only two 'answers' —Louis Armstrong or Miles Davis. I've once heard Dave Brubeck and Duke Ellington guessed as a stab in the dark. But that seems to be the limit of their knowledge. The current series had a music question, to identify the tenor sax players. No-one knew John Coltrane, about as identifiable a sound as any jazz musician; and an equal baffled silence for Peter Brötzmann. I do sympathise with them for the latter though, not exactly a jazz household name.

To digress further, but referencing John Coltrane. Radio 3 composer of the week commencing Monday 13th November was John and Alice Coltrane.

(Still available on the BBC i-player introduced by Kate Molleson and Kevin Le Gendre; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001s64k#:~:text=Kate%20Molleson%20is%20joined%20by,in%20John%20Coltrane%27s%20early%20career>).

Radio 3 Jazz Composers of the Week are pretty rare, and the five one-hour John and Alice Coltrane episodes are well worth a listen. Past episodes have featured only around a dozen jazz artists, including Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, Charles Mingus, Carla Bley, pianists Bill Evans, James P. Johnson and Thelonious Monk, and some wider sampling of The Harlem Renaissance and Be Bop, but none of them sadly are available today.

Our old jazz fan refrain of being badly represented on the radio, and TV, is yet valid, but we are a thankful lot for the least coverage. If more jazz were broadcast on radio and TV then perhaps University Challenge students might realise just what they are missing and answer jazz questions correctly.

Phil W



Live at The Jazz Centre



Saturday 14th October: Roger Curphey Trio, Roger on bass.



Saturday 14th October: Roger Curphey Trio. Ted Beament (piano), Roger (bass), Alan Clarke (drums), John Elder (vibraphone/sax).



Saturday 25th November: Karen Sharp on tenor sax.



Saturday 128th October: Greg Abate Quartet.



Saturday 21st October: Nick Tomalin Trio. Nick on piano, Dave Mannington (bass), Marek Dorcik (drums).



Saturday 16th December: Nat Steele Trio; Nat on vibraphone, Simon Read on bass.



Saturday 4th November: Anthony Kerr on vibraphone.



Saturday 11th November: The Ugetsu Project. Dave Jago (trombone), Graham Hunter (trumpet), Zak Barrett (tenor sax), Geoff Harris (bass).



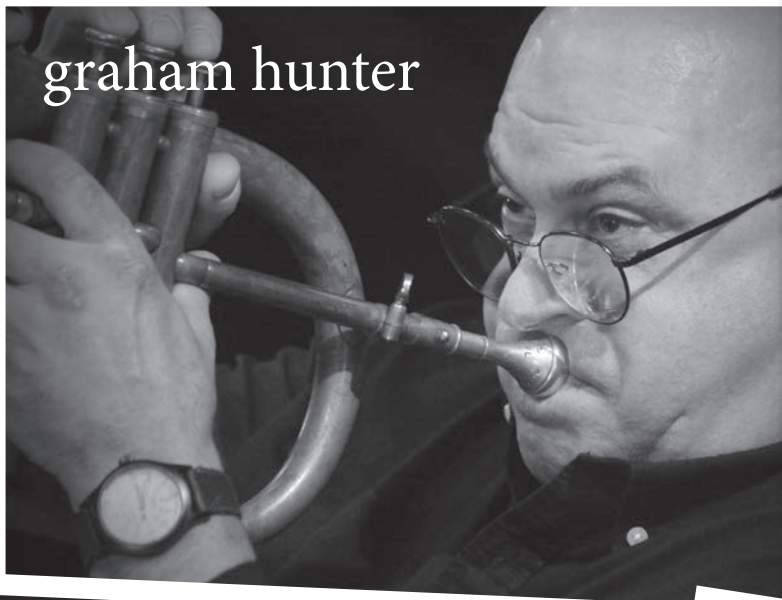
Photos by Fred Morris.



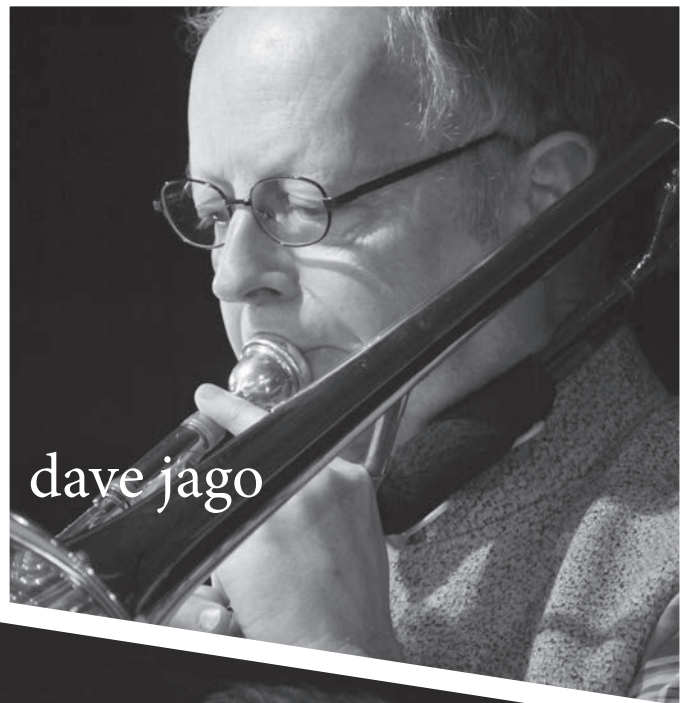
Saturday 2nd December: Adam Green Quartet. Ollie Davie (bass), Wesley Frankel (tenor sax), Gwilym Jones (drums), Adam (guitar).



Saturday 9th December: Tom Ridout with Aero. Tom on saxophones, Trevor Taylor on drums.



graham hunter



dave jago



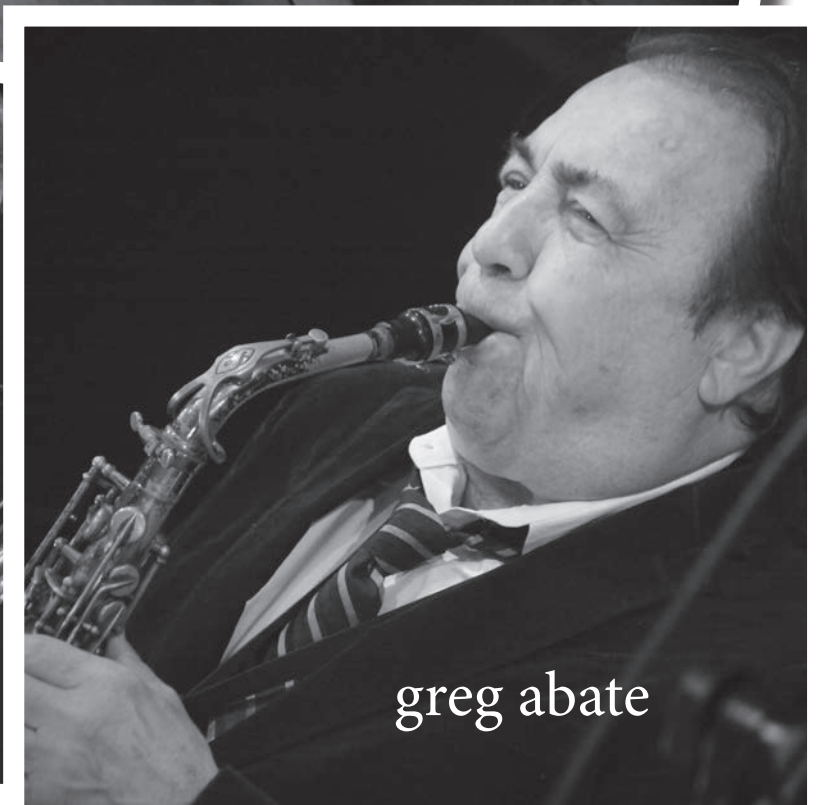
tj johnson



geof harris



alan skidmore



greg abate

Jazz' Jug Band Roots

The Jazz Centre aims to promote our music not just in all its glorious myriad forms, but to explore its deep roots in blues, gospel, Ragtime and the enduring African influences. Sometimes overlooked in that musical gumbo is the Old Time Roots music of the 1920s and early 1930s generally known as Jug Band Music. The list of jazz musicians who played in jug, or novelty, bands is both long and illustrious: Louis Armstrong and Johnny Dodds just for starters. Clarence Williams' Jug Band, (Clarence on vocals and jug), featured at various times Willie 'The Lion' Smith, King Oliver, Lonnie Johnson and Albert Nicholas.



There was a 1950s Jug Band revival in the USA which paralleled the British Skiffle boom which grew out of the Chris Barber and Ken Colyer bands. Today there are more jug bands performing than ever and not just in the UK and USA. In June next year The JCUK welcomes The Jake Leg Jug Band, playing in Britain following their US tour. Centrepiece interviewed them for this issue of our journal.

CENTREPIECE. *For starter's; what is the origin of the band's name?*

JAKE LEG JUG BAND. Jake Leg isn't a person's name, and is actually an ailment going back to prohibition times when they couldn't legally buy alcohol.

Obviously, lots of people were buying moonshine or other illicit variants of alcohol available from the bootleggers but there were those who didn't want to risk prosecution too who were buying something over the counters in the drugstores —Jamaican Ginger Extract, or Jake as it was nicknamed. This was sold for medicinal purposes but just happened to be 80% proof too! As you can imagine, the sales of this soared and the manufacturers decided they could make more money, by diluting it, which they did with things like paint thinner! The results left the regular drinkers with a paralysis of the lower limbs and a rather distinct gait which they called the Jake Leg or the Jake Walk.

C. *What is your take on the origins of Jug Band music? I've seen it written, and heard in a YouTube talk, that the state of Kentucky seems to be the starting place. The Eastern Kentucky Appalachian Mountains are sometimes cited. The town of Louisville is mostly mentioned, with the jug band style developing along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. But also New Orleans gets a nod as an origin source; and it has even been claimed African slaves brought jug blowing with them.*

JLJB. These things can always be contentious when determining the true origins, but it's generally regarded that Louisville, Kentucky was the birthplace of this style of music and then it spread all over the southern states. The music was hugely popular during hard times —making feelgood music to get over their blues. However, as the economy improved, the fad of jug band music was gone as quickly as it arrived

C. *An alternative name for Jug Band I've seen is a Spasm Band. Both feature similar home-made instruments, but is there a difference?*

JLJB. Not really, they both held the same principles but essentially a Spasm Band was a jug band without a jug.

C. *I've listened to quite a few jug bands online, old and contemporary, and there seems to be a mix (in different proportions) of folk music, country and western, some bluegrass, blues, ragtime and jazz. I've seen the bands described as playing Old Time Music, or Americana. How would you say the Jake Leg Jug Band fits into that musical mixture?*

JLJB. Much the same. We bill ourselves as a 20s and 30s band. We play jazz, blues, ragtime, gospel, vaudeville, and old-time music. Old time music was the country music of its day —bluegrass wasn't invented until the 40s (by Bill Monroe) but has a very similar sound.

C. *The Skiffle phenomenon in the UK which exploded in the mid 1950s had similarities with Jug Band music, especially insofar as it used home-made instruments. It was often inspired by American folk traditions, but do you think there was any conscious link back to the Jug Bands? That style seems to have disappeared in the USA by the 1940s.*

JLJB. It was an exact link. The skiffle movement was basically the British interpretation of the earlier American jug band movement, just like the trad jazz movement was a reinterpretation of the earlier New Orleans Dixieland jazz, and the British Blues invasion of the 60s mirrored the Chicago electric blues of the 50s.

C. *Jug Bands have revived both here, and in the USA, and become very popular. There are many you can access on YouTube, with a range of styles using the same original mix of influences. Can you put that down to any particular reason? Other than the fact that it is infectious and great fun music.*

JLJB. I think exactly that. It's feel-good music and there's a lack of that in the mainstream these days. But the music scene tends to go in circles so everything has its day then tends to come back as a revival stronger than ever with added nostalgia.

Jazz Station that Blossomed and Died

A recent donation to The Jazz Centre UK enhances one of our earliest and most prized exhibits, that of the John Dankworth-Cleo Laine collection. The gift is a unique, white DAB radio, signed by John Dankworth, Cleo Laine, and their daughter Jacqui Dankworth. It was donated by Jazz Centre supporter Jon Gamble. As well as being aesthetically pleasing, the radio serves to shine a light on a little remembered, and perhaps best so, period of broadcasting jazz history.

Jon had won the radio in a raffle organised to support *theJazz* DAB digital radio station. It is bespoke, tuned so as to receive only that station. *theJazz* existed for a mere two years, from December 2005 to March 2008; on air between two versions of Jazz FM 102.2. The original *Jazz FM* station was launched in March 1990, but after being purchased by the Guardian Media Group (GMG) was rebranded as *Smooth FM*. It was re-launched in June 2008, partly because of the demise of *theJazz*.

This raises the question as to what happened to *theJazz*? It was owned by the British commercial radio company GCap Media, formed from a merger of The Capital Radio Group and the British radio company GWR

Group, whose assets included *Classic FM*. Its launch date, Christmas day 2006, must have seemed seasonably favourable. It broadcast on Digital One, DAB ensemble, Sky Digital, Virgin Media and the internet, with a roster of classy presenters; including Jamie Cullum, David Jensen, Digby Fairweather, Jacqui Dankworth, Campbell Burnap, and Courtney Pine. First on air was Helen Mayhew with the listeners' top five hundred chart. By April 2007 it was announced that *theJazz* would start its own record label. Managing Director, Darren Henley proudly proclaimed: "We're filling a gaping chasm in the British radio landscape, delivering Britain's first truly national jazz radio station. Musically, we will cherish jazz's heritage while at the same time championing jazz's future." With the station's slogan proclaiming "Come into the cool and feel good with *theJazz*", the auguries for jazz radio looked auspicious.

And then . . . not thirteen months later, in February 2008, without warning, GCap Media announced that unless a buyer could be found, *theJazz* would close in March of that year. No buyer took up the offer and at midnight on 31st March the final song aired; ironically

theJazz
DAB DIGITAL RADIO



Jon Gamble with radio in front of John Dankworth's piano.

Bobby McFerrin's *Don't Worry, Be Happy*. GCap 'generously' offered as compensation a midnight to 2am jazz programme on *Classic FM*.

Digby Fairweather shares his experience

Here's the full story. *theJazz* radio signed by Sir John, Dame Cleo and Jacqui Dankworth was a souvenir of the celebration of the opening of *theJazz* station which began broadcasting on Christmas Day morning 2007. The first record played was Ray Charles' *Oh What a Beautiful Mornin'* from *Oklahoma* and I remember tuning in to hear it while everybody else was opening their presents!

The (awkwardly-named) *theJazz* was run by Darren Henley, then the boss at *Classic FM*—and now the CEO of Arts Council England—and was part of the consortium known as GCap Media, really just a radio company. I remember it well because Tim Lihoreau, who still presents the morning show on *Classic FM* (and who had previously worked with me at *Jazz FM*) had called me up in Autumn 2007 and told me about the exciting prospect of a new all-jazz station. Quite a relief after all the traumas that *Jazz FM* had been through!

The policy was to be based around 'real jazz' (not soul, smooth or whatever) and I remember Tim saying that the 'core sound' would be in the style of musicians like the great tenorist Scott Hamilton—what I suppose you'd probably call 'mainstream'. Like *Classic FM* there was also to be a top 500 Chart. The only problem was that they only had a fraction of the records to make up their chart, so Tim sent a lorry and a list down to Westcliff and took away a large selection of my own CDs and vinyl albums to put on the station's computer to complete the list.

I was given a presenter's job (following Jacqui Dankworth on Sunday afternoons for a couple of hours) and for a while everything seemed to be fine. In less than a year we had over 450,000 listeners of which



Digby Fairweather.



Jacqui Dankworth.

—amazingly back then— 150,000 were under fifteen years old!

There was a lot of wonderful publicity and I was convinced that within a very few years jazz would have the same listenership as *Classic FM* which —putting it simply— had triumphantly revived interest in classical music amongst the general public. Their formula was (and is!) much more like a pop station in presenter terms; they tend to play the 'popular classics' and had already built up a huge following among general listeners who, up to then, had avoided the BBC's Radio 3 classical programming as being far too specialist and highbrow.

But then, out of the blue, the blow fell. There had been a drop in share prices for the second time at the GCap Media company and a radio doctor called Fru Hazlett was called in and told to put a red line through all the stations not already in profit. In an appalling misjudgement this was allowed to happen for *theJazz* and I, (as well as all the other presenters), got a call from Darren Henley to say: "sorry, you're off the air as of now!" And that was the ungracious end of it. Jazz on radio in Britain, frankly, has had a horrifying history of difficulty, mismanagement ever since *Jazz FM* opened in 1990 and this was probably its worst moment of all.

But at least we have the radio!

A Tribute to Malcolm Perry



Karina Edgeway, Malcolm's partner, with the gift of his paintings.

In the Summer of 2019 artist and musician Malcolm Perry held an exhibition of his numerous colourful jazz portraits, and performed on alto sax and flute at several of The Jazz Centre regular Saturday jam sessions with the Glyn Morgan Trio. On Saturday 4th May 2019 he was the first artist to paint a performing band live; the Jazz825 group Torus.

A selection of Malcolm's jazz portraits has recently been donated to The Jazz Centre by Karina Edgeway.

With this wonderful gift, following Malcolm's recent demise, The Jazz Centre now has a permanent collection of his vibrant art, with many of the portraits currently on display.



Malcolm Perry (alto sax), Dave Jago (trombone), at The Jazz Centre with the Glyn Morgan Trio.



Jazz825 band Torus play Jazz from the Eighties, band portrait by Malcolm Perry.



"Pharaoh Sanders is from a black and white photograph to which I added colour."



"Clark Terry shows him at a recording session with his flugal horn and his trumpet. He is very well dressed in colourful attire."

@thejazzcentreuk



"John Coltrane shows Coltrane playing his soprano with his tenor around his neck. Coltrane was an innovator using modal scales as an expressive straight ahead style."

#thejazzcentreuk



Malcolm Perry in his Leigh-on-Sea studio.

Anthony and the Vibraphone



Saturday 4th November at The Jazz Centre saw a unique performance, a solo concert by Anthony Kerr on vibraphone. Actually, it is something of an understatement to describe it as just a solo performance; as well he managed to give the audience a potted history of the vibraphone, an explanation of its construction and mechanism, different techniques of playing, and the names and brief biographies of its greatest exponents. All in two forty-five minute sessions.

As to the vibraphone origins. It was invented around 1916 by the instrument maker Herman Winterhoff (for the Leedy Manufacturing Company), modifying a steel marimba with resonators to create a vibrato effect; marketing it in 1924. A rival company, J C Deakin Inc, made qualitative improvements, using aluminium (aluminum?) bars instead of steel, and introduced a foot-controlled damper bar. On the market in 1927, this became the standard design for all subsequent vibraphones. It was this technical innovation which made the vibraphone a viable jazz instrument, lifting it out of the novelty vaudeville role for which it initially seemed destined.

How it became a soloing jazz instrument was explained by Anthony. NBC radio broadcasts had a 3-note chime signature, played on the vibraphone. The (true) story goes that Louis Armstrong was recording in a studio with Lionel Hampton where the NBC vibraphone was sat in a corner. Louis asked Lionel if he could play it. Hampton had played a xylophone in his youth, took up the challenge, and so in 1930 *Memories of You*, became the first jazz vibraphone solo.

Alongside Lionel Hampton, it was Red Norvo who helped ensure the enduring place of the vibes as a specialist front-line jazz instrument. He recorded two successful sessions for Brunswick in 1933 as leader. But, as Anthony informed us, it was a second session which went down in vibraphone legend. Norvo sneaked back into the studio and secretly recorded two more tunes, Bix Beiderbecke's *In a Mist*, and his own composition, *Dance of the Octopus*, with bass clarinet (Benny Goodman), guitar and bass accompaniment. Brunswick were suitably outraged, tore up his contract, and threw him out. His career, however, continued to flourish.

Talking about Hampton's discovery and subsequent popularisation of the vibes, Anthony speculated that there would have been much less interest in the instrument, and its continuing existence would have been in jeopardy during the Great Depression, a time when businesses were going bust all over the place. "The Museum of Percussive Arts Society (US) contains some interesting extinct mallet instruments" he said, "The vibes could easily have joined them without Hamp."

At first the vibes were played with just the two mallets; Lionel Hampton's recordings with Benny Goodman for example. Later, the inevitable need to play chords led to the standard use of four mallets, and even occasionally six and eight mallet techniques. Anthony played his sets with four mallets. As to what he played; the variety was astonishing. There were examples aplenty from the Great American songbook; Gershwin, and Cole Porter, some Ellington-Strayhorn (*Isfahan*, and *Upper Manhattan Medical Group*), a composition by Charles Mingus (*Nostalgia in Times Square*), by Brad Mehldau (*Unrequited*), by Antonio Carlos Jobim, by Thelonious Monk (or The Loneliest Monk as mistakenly overheard reported by a New York journalist), and a mesmerising reading of John Coltrane's *Crescent* from his eponymous album. He even gave us a taste of how Bach fits perfectly with the vibes.

Often Anthony linked each tune with an individual vibes player; Vic Feldman who learned to play the vibraphone at age 14 (he was already a considerable pianist and drummer); Red Norvo, Bobby Hutcherson, Gary Burton, George Shearing, and Marjorie Hyams. Special mention was made of Milt Jackson, whose influence has been pervasive; his 1952 12-bar blues composition *Bag's Groove*, was one highlight of the day.

A vibes player, sometimes underappreciated, got a special mention. Cal Tjader is best known for his Latin Jazz recordings, in particular during the 1950s mambo craze fronting his Modern Mambo Quintet. Anthony commented that the vibes could well have played a more prominent role in Latin bands, replicating the standard piano role.

One reference to a Bobby Hutcherson recording, *Solo-Quartet*, led this listener to immediately get it downloaded. On it Hutcherson plays vibes, marimba, xylophone, bells, chimes and something called a boo-bam, variously overdubbed, a perfect complement to Saturday's gig.

For the final three numbers Anthony was joined by tenor sax veteran Alan Skidmore, a rousing blues, exchanging eights and fours, ended the days entertainment at what Alan dubbed "the UK Jazz HQ".



Alan Skidmore and Anthony Kerr.



Red Norvo.



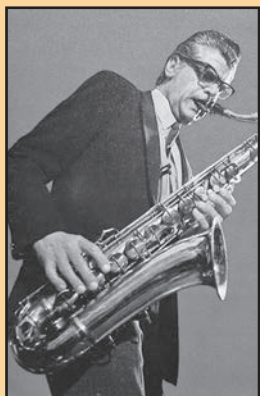
Lionel Hampton.



Milt Jackson.

Phil W.

Alan, Jimmy, and Louis



Jimmy Skidmore.



Volunteer Sue Coello and photo.

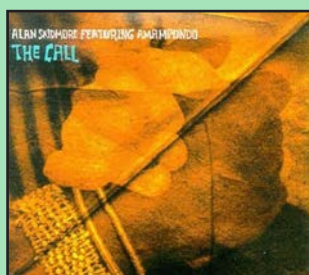
Longtime supporter Alan Skidmore has already graced The Jazz Centre with the tenor saxophone of his father Jimmy. On 4th November last year he visited not only to perform with vibraphonist Anthony Kerr, but came bearing another, precious, gift; a signed photo of Louis presented to his father. Digby Fairweather takes up the story. . .



When Louis Armstrong's All Stars came back to Britain for the first time in 1956 Humphrey Lyttelton's band shared ten nights with them at London's Empress Hall. When Louis arrived at the Hall for the first time Humph had his band lined up in the dressing room to greet the visitor with due respect. As he moved along the row, Armstrong arrived at Skidmore, and Jimmy leaned forward and whispered something in Louis' ear. Louis jumped back for a minute then burst into roars of laughter breaking the reverential silence. Jimmy had favoured the honoured guest with his standard affectionate greeting to any new friend: "Kiss yer bum later!"

Humph, in his pen-portrait of Jimmy (*Second Chorus*, 1958), used the old-fashioned term 'a card' to describe his friend, but also rated him at the period as "the finest tenor-saxophonist in Britain today". Jimmy, like Lyttelton, had unbounded respect for Armstrong. "Good old Louis' he once said to me, no-one better is there!" I have no doubt that he prized this superb photograph of Armstrong (certainly not a standard publicity shot) and personally inscribed "To Jimmy Skidmore from Louis Armstrong."

Alan Skidmore on CD



1. **Jazz in Britain '68-'69: Featuring Poll Winners**
John Surman, Alan Skidmore, Tony Oxley
2. **The Call**
Alan Skidmore featuring Amampondo
3. **After the Rain: A Collection of Ballads**
*Alan Skidmore with the Radio-Philharmonie Hannover Des NDR
Colin Towns Mask Symphonic*
4. **Starting Fires: Live at the 100 Club 1970**
Mike Osborne and Alan Skidmore
5. **S.O.H. Live in London**
Alan Skidmore, Tony Oxley, Ali Haurand

**All CDs
available from
The Jazz Centre UK
retail shop
£5 each**

Easily Slip into Another World

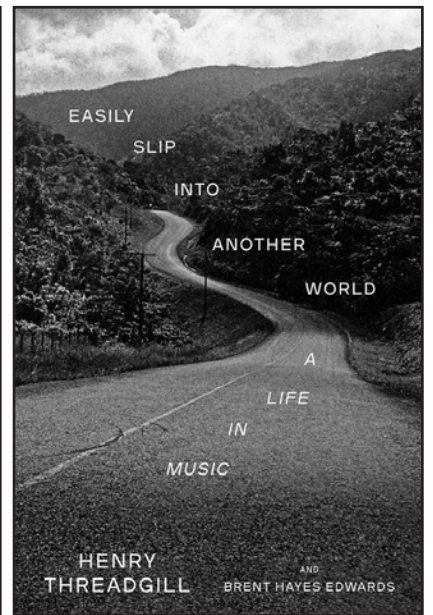
Alfred A. Knopf 368 pages £27 hardback

The alto saxophonist, composer and group leader Henry Threadgill must be considered a major figure in contemporary jazz: now 79, he has accrued in later life the kind of accolades that suggest a substantial and definitive life's work: a Pulitzer prize, Jazz Master status as awarded by the (US) National Endowment for the Arts. Yet he is less well known than similarly garlanded contemporaries like Wynton Marsalis, for Threadgill operates in the further reaches of jazz and improvisation, and this fascinating autobiography documents his restless, unrelenting commitment to musical variety, change and experiment.

Born (in 1944) and raised in Chicago, he demonstrated an innate musical talent from an early age, finding it easy to reproduce tunes he heard around him on the family piano. He learnt his music in the Chicago public school system, seeking (but rejected by) the high school with the best reputation for its musical director and bands. Shrugging off a brief period of delinquency, he progressed in his studies towards college level, but learnt as much from his immersion in the vast variety of ethnic and vernacular musical styles in the Chicago of his early years, supporting himself in function bands, marching bands, soul and R'n'B backing groups, and hearing blues on Maxwell Street, ecstatic gospel performers at local churches, and visiting jazz stars from Duke Ellington to Sun Ra. Having settled on the saxophone as his instrument, his hero was Sonny Rollins, though he never saw himself as a gun-slinging soloist in that mould, but rather as a composer. The unpredictable and visionary qualities of figures such as Varèse and Debussy appealed more than 'old bebop licks'.

Partly this book is a powerful tribute to the Black Arts Movement in Chicago which produced the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, into which circle he was drawn, to find himself in the same orbit as the members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Leroy Jenkins, Muhal Richard Abrams etc. At the same time though, even while continuing college level musical theory and composition, he was working extensively in the touring gospel revue of one Horace Sheppard, often accompanying this charismatic preacher in 'wordless arias' based on gospel classics like *How I Got Over*.

By the mid-60's, Vietnam loomed over the lives of Threadgill and his contemporaries. He decided to volunteer for the draft: he would serve a slightly longer term, but would join as a musician, with a very good chance of going nowhere near Vietnam. . . The plan went well, initially: stationed in Kansas, the Army even supported his attendance at the State University to



continue his musical studies. It wasn't to last, though. He was tasked with arranging a medley of patriotic tunes for a big public occasion. In rehearsal, the band were impressed with Threadgill's adventurous approach: but at the performance, a Catholic Archbishop brought it to a premature halt, declaring it 'blasphemous' and demanding to know who was responsible. Thirty days later he was heading for the Central Highlands of Vietnam —still technically a musician, but assigned to the infantry and expected to drop his horn and grab his M-16 whenever it was necessary. . .

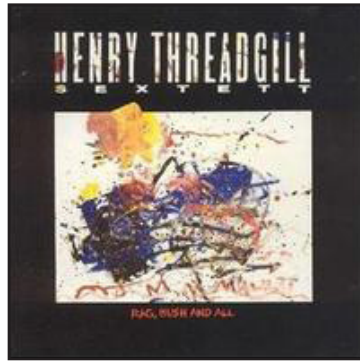
Vietnam occupies a substantial section of the book: suffice it to say that Threadgill's many adventures make extraordinary reading, and confirm the madness of that conflict as portrayed in other memoirs of the war. It's a formative experience for him, personally and politically, and 'back in the world' he suffered the sense of alienation and national denial common to many veterans.

Resuming his independent musical life, he worked frequently with dance and theatre groups; a trio formed for one such occasion, with bassist Fred Hopkins and drummer Steve McCall, became a central activity, leading to international recognition. First known as Reflections, then as Air, they were recorded by Japanese producers; later joining the mass migration of artists to New York, they became part of the 'loft jazz' scene, and attracted festival and tour booking in the States and internationally.

In the 80's, Threadgill moved on from the trio format to perhaps his most successful band, the Sextett (the spelling a nod to the fact that it's actually a seven-piece, but with six instrumental 'sections', as there were two drummers). At one point he declares that he does not wish this book to be 'a primer for his music' but fortunately he does explain very thoughtfully his intentions in moving from Air to the Sextett: other such



Henry Threadgill and Zooid.



shifts were to follow, characterised as stepping from one 'sound world' to another. To make such a move becomes a deeply felt compulsion, a recognition that there is a new avenue to be explored and that it's time to put aside what has become familiar.

The Sextett's recordings, including *Rag, Bush and All*, *Easily Slip Into Another World* and *You Know The Number* seem to be the Threadgill albums that form the foundation of his reputation, nominated as they often are as examples of late 20th century jazz that can speak to a wider audience.

More radically, in later years, the Sextett gave way to *Very, Very Circus* with its fresh and unexpected instrumental combinations, and then *Zooid*, formed to explore a new intervallic system of group playing, developed by Threadgill after a period of reflection and study at his new home in Goa around the turn of the century.

But these clearly identified groups are only a part of Threadgill's music, as there are countless other collaborations and projects mentioned in passing, or

occasionally discussed in more detail, such as his brief but intense membership of Cecil Taylor's group for a short NY residency, giving unexpected insight into that extraordinary musician's working methods.

Threadgill and his collaborator, Brent Hayes Edwards, are able to blend the picture of his developing musical personality with a richly anecdotal sense of the working musician's life, from the patronage of the Mafia in Sicily, to 'luxurious imprisonment' in Venezuela, to tornado avoidance on the road in the USA. . .

Threadgill's life encompasses and embodies the Black American experience of the second half of the 20th century in so many ways, and he has sharp insight into racial realities in the music world and beyond. He emerges as not only a man of extraordinary energy and creativity, but a generous and collaborative individual open to all forms of music: he has lived by the credo that 'it's wrong-headed to (maintain) some narrow definition of received 'tradition'... Black music in America is young. It's still just the beginning.'

A.S.C.

Nat and Louis: 1934



On occasions the main office at The Jazz Centre looks a little, shall we say, dishevelled. The weight of donations received often overwhelms our ability to sort through everything, resulting in the occasional hurried clear-up. Serendipitous discoveries may ensue. The last one turned up a real jazz history gem.

The telegram reproduced here is from Louis Armstrong to Nat Gonella, dispatched in June 1934 wishing him luck on his concert at the Holborn Empire that evening. "Congratulations old Pal knock them cold. Louis Armstrong" is the message.

Earlier that year Nat had left the Lew Stone Orchestra intent on forming his own band. His first date at the Grafton Rooms in Liverpool drew only an audience of sixteen people. Nonetheless he carried on as a recording artist for Decca, making promotional appearances. On one date he was backed by Brian Lawrence and his Quaglino Quartette. The combination clicked so they auditioned for impresario George Black, who immediately booked them for a tour. The first date was at the Holbon Empire, London's legendary Variety Theatre. Topping the bill, Nat was "England's reply to America's hottest", and the subsequent tour was a great success.

Louis was in the UK at the time, just completing his own tour that year at the Grand Theatre, Derby. In November of that year Nat made recordings with his new band, The Georgians.



Entente Cordiale: On CD and at The Jazz Centre



The first thing that strikes the listener about this recording, released in May 2023, is the relatively uncommon twin guitar pairing of Nigel Price and Alban Claret, being a significant departure from the organ trio with whom Price has appeared on recent outings, both live and on record; the organ connection having perhaps been inspired by Price's earlier work with the James Taylor Quartet.

Whilst Nigel Price has already carved a reputation as one of the most prolific and hard-working jazz guitarists in the UK, (having collaborated with many other notable jazz performers as well as leading his own groups), conservatoire trained French guitarist, Alban Claret, has also been making a name for himself since settling in London in 2017. Following a number of impromptu duets at Claret's regular gigs, the two guitarists have obviously found a mutual empathy in each other's playing, which is clear from the outset on this recording.

On first listening, the two guitars mesh so seamlessly that they appear to be of one mind, whereas a similar combination of, say, tenor saxes would most likely each be vying for the listeners attention, if not actually 'facing off' against each other. However, on closer inspection (particularly listening on headphones), one is able to discern the subtle differences in playing styles and tone. That said, it is the seamless interplay between the two musicians and their selfless, yet imaginative comping behind each other's solos which is at the core of the music here.

The two guitarists' playing styles complement each other perfectly throughout, so the title of the album, *Entente Cordiale*, is a fitting description of this British/French collaboration. The sympathetic support

of the rhythm section cannot be overstated either; Mikele Montoli and Matt Fishwick on bass and drums respectively, providing robust support and just the right amount of swing and propulsion, without metaphorically ever treading on the toes of the two guitarists, while they explore their common musical ground in a seemingly intuitive manner. There is also space for brief solo breaks on bass and drums, with occasional punctuations from the guitarists.



Without getting into a detailed track-by-track analysis, it is worth noting the breadth of the selections here, by a variety of composers (some familiar; others not so) adapted for guitar with great success. One tune that was originally written for guitar is Emily Remler's *Blues for Herb*, which is a fitting tribute to the late guitarist, who died tragically young.

The album kicks off with four strong, hard swinging tunes that set the tone for the whole collection. These are followed by three more reflective offerings, including Mingus' *Self Portrait in Three Colours* and the aforementioned Remler composition, before turning up the heat once more and concluding with the (Douglas) Clare Fisher Bossa Nova standard, *Pensativa*. The mellifluous playing on this album is a sheer delight to anyone who enjoys jazz guitar, or wishes to explore the oeuvre by listening to playing of the highest standard.

Nigel Price and Alban Claret will be playing at the Jazz Centre UK on Saturday 27th January 2024. The rhythm section is scheduled to be the same as is recorded here, so look forward to something akin to the material and playing represented here on the day.

Review by Ian Gibson



Personnel:

Nigel Price - guitar
Alban Claret - guitar
Mikele Montoli - double bass
Matt Fishwick - drums

Spikes Place at The Jazz Centre UK Presents The Nigel Price - Alban Claret Quartet Saturday 27th January 2pm -4pm

Ace guitarist Nigel Price makes a welcome return to The JCUK, accompanied on this visit by fellow guitarist, French-born, London-based Alban Claret, plus bass and drums.

Nigel Price has graced the British jazz scene for more than twenty-five years, probably the most dynamic and gifted guitarist on the British jazz scene today. He cites early influences as Wes Montgomery, Joe Pass and John McLaughlin. He has since developed his own style; a blend of flowing, fiery bebop lines, deep-blues feeling and an ability to swing hard. Alban Claret is a French jazz guitarist and composer who was born in Perpignan in 1987, now settled in full-time on the British jazz scene. He is known for his powerful delivery, confident improvisation and deep swing, a perfect complement to Nigel Price.



Desert Island Jazz Discs

Jazz Centre UK volunteer Jeff Wickham picks his favourites.

Choosing just eight tracks is difficult, so I have based this selection upon those that mark milestones (no pun intended) in my jazz education. The golden years of the 1950s predominate, with some classic Blue Note albums and a few more recent offerings. I believe jazz reached a peak from the mid '50s to the '60s, and very little since has come close.

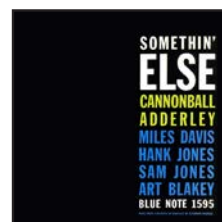


***Blue in Green* — Miles Davis (Kind of Blue 1959)**

This was truly ground breaking. The songs you hear have never been played before by any of the musicians, and are improvised around a few chord outlines and modes. *Blue in Green* is the most poignantly beautiful wistful melody that just takes you to another place. I first heard this when one of my teachers played it at school in 1972 and I bought my copy in 1973. Composition credits go to Bill Evans on this track.

***Autumn Leaves* — Cannonball Adderley (Somethin' Else 1958)**

Another Blue Note classic. The whole album is sublime, but this is my favourite track. It starts with a brooding piano vamp in G minor, before sliding effortlessly into the melody played by Miles and then Cannonball. Wonderful improvisation proving less is more. Art in its purest form.

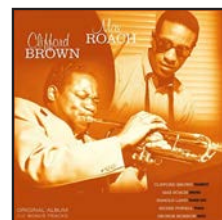


***My Little Brown Book* — Duke Ellington and John Coltrane 1962**

This is another album I have owned since the 1970s after hearing it on Humphrey Lyttleton's radio show. It is an intriguing collaboration between musicians of different eras demonstrating, how good Ellington's playing is and how modern he can sound, and also showcasing Coltrane's sensitive ballad playing. This beautiful ballad by Billy Strayhorn stands out.

***Dahoud* — Clifford Brown and Max Roach 1954**

My mum loved jazz and introduced me to this around 1970. She certainly knew her stuff. Brown was the greatest jazz trumpeter of them all, a view endorsed by none other than Miles Davis, but sadly he died just two years after this recording at the age of just 25. His accuracy and intonation are unique and he has a classical pure tone with great warmth.

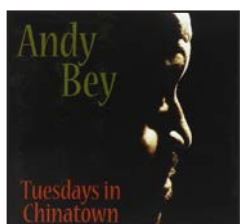


***I've Got You Under my Skin* — Dinah Washington (Dinah Jams 1954)**

Dinah could sing Jazz, Blues and Pop with equal facility and this is a real tour de force. The album was recorded live and is a total joy, but what elevates this track into the stratosphere is the remarkable trumpet line up of Clifford Brown, Clarke Terry and Maynard Ferguson. If at the ending you do not jump for joy and shout "Yeah", get checked by a doctor.

***Blues after midnight* — Earl Hines (Tea for Two 1971)**

One evening in 1971 I came home from school and my mum said: "Earl Hines is playing at the Basildon Arts Centre tonight". "Who is Earl Hines?" "A great pianist, grab your coat, you'll love him." I certainly did and had a long chat with him in his dressing room after the gig and still have his autograph. I bought this shortly after, probably the first jazz album I bought.

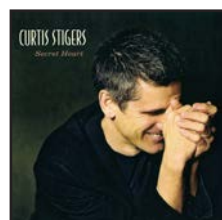


***Tuesdays in Chinatown* — Andy Bey (Tuesdays in Chinatown 2001)**

Into the present century with this one! Andy Bey is a great pianist with an incredibly rich and dark voice and this is another one I heard on *The best of Jazz* with Jamie Cullum. A very atmospheric track, which just cries out to be used in a Philip Marlowe story, with some lovely bass playing by Ron Carter.

***My Foolish Heart* — Curtis Stigers (Secret Heart 2002)**

Stigers has a wonderful voice and is far more than a pop crooner. He delivers a beautiful interpretation of this standard written in 1949 and the whole album is a delightful mix of swing and ballads with tasteful arrangements. Give it a try, you won't be disappointed.





YouTube Jazz on Film and CD

Continuing our selection of jazz on YouTube. This issue we range widely, from a documentary on the origins and history of Jug Band music, with recorded examples, to the swing style of Lew Stone and Nat Gonella, Jack Teagarden performing the music of Willard Robison, the Bruce Turner Jump Band, jazz on the vibraphone to the contemporary avant-garde of Henry Threadgill.

CONTEMPORARY AVANT-GARDE

Henry Threadgill Zooid – Beneath the Bottom (2021)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TheCxbgc5Dk>

From the album *POOF*. Pi Recordings 2021. Henry Threadgill – alto sax, flute, bass flute. Liberty Ellman – acoustic guitar. Jose Davila – tuba, trombone. Christopher Hoffman – cello. Elliott Humberto – drums.

Rag Bush and All · Henry Threadgill Sextett

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0Lsioz0Wtg&list=OLAK5uy_ ndvvzKHEjIFLdKJ_046DgiA0-rJwHyfdk

Arranger, Composer, Lyricist: Henry Threadgill.

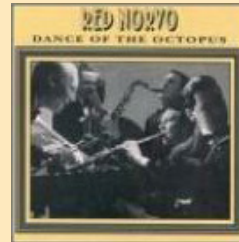


JAZZ ON THE VIBRAPHONE FROM 1933 AND TODAY

Red Norvo Dance of the Octopus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6xtI9TWWfw>

Red Norvo's eerie composition, from the second jazz recording on the vibraphone.



Anthony Kerr: Satin Doll

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boaczN5Fsbs>

Satin Doll · Anthony Kerr · Jim Watson · Steve Brown

Anthony Kerr : Isfahan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdi-VnmXalo>

Solo Vibraphone arrangement of Billy Strayhorn's *Isfahan* from Duke Ellington's *Far East Suite*.



1930S SWING FROM LEW AND NAT

Lew Stone Orch. Nat Gonella - The Continental - 1934

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUW24gzWcKY>

The Continental is a song written by Con Conrad with lyrics by Herb Magidson, and was introduced by Ginger Rogers in the 1934 film, *The Gay Divorcee*. *The Continental* was the first Academy Award for Best Original Song to be awarded.

Nat Gonella and His Georgians - Georgia On My Mind 1934

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEn4Ym5ORr0>

Nat Gonella, trumpet and vocal, playing his theme song, *Georgia On My Mind*. London. May 15, 1934. Accompanying Nat are Brian Lawrence, violin; Monia Liter, piano & accordion; Eddie Carroll, piano; Harry Wilson, bass; Bob Dryden, drums.



Nat Gonella and his Georgians, 1930's footage.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FqxPVXU8Cw>

JAZZ ANTECEDENT; JUG BAND MUSIC

Jug Bands of Louisville: A Narrative History with Michael L. Jones

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgv6qZoVHp4>

Mound City Blue Blowers "St. Louis Blues" 1929

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5QFR4whDdo>

One of the almost forgotten antecedents of jazz, many prominent jazz musicians played in Jug Bands in their youth. It had a central influence on the development of jazz.



JACK TEAGARDEN AND WILLARD ROBISON

Harlem Blues -Willard Robison Deep River Orchestra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqHG6hjjZng>

Harlem Blues -Willard Robison Deep River Orchestra. NYC, April 20-1927.

Willard Robison Deep River Orchestra - The Japanese Sandman - 1928.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cdd61XGENbM>

BRUCE TURNER JUMP BAND

Bruce Turner Band Antibes 1965 Christopher Columbus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omiLC6lxwDA>

6th Festival de jazz d'Antibes Juan-les-Pins, Bruce Turner (as) & Jump Band, Ray Crane (t) Ronnie Gleaves (vib) Brian Lemon (p) Malcolm Rees (b) Johnny Armitage (d).

