

THE
JAZZ
CENTRE

Centrepiece

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Khosa Cole
at The Jazz Centre UK

+ FULL REVIEWS:

JOHN TCHICAI: MARGRIET NABER

IN THIS ISSUE • SNOWBOY INTERVIEW PT 2 • MARTE RÖLING • HANS DULFER & THE BIMHUIS
• JOE ALBANY • JOSH ISON • JOHN TCHICAI BIOGRAPHY

Centrepiece



Cover photo: Fred Morris

Cover photo:
Xhosa Cole by Fred Morris
Editor:
Philip Waterhouse
Design:
Azzurro Marketing
How to contact us:
E-mail:
enquiries@thejazzcentreak.co.uk
Telephone:
01702 215169
Beecroft Direct Line:
01702 212511
Web:
www.thejazzcentreak.co.uk
Facebook:
facebook.com/thejazzcentreak/
Twitter:
twitter.com/thejazzcentreak
Spotify:
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The Jazz Centre UK is open from Wednesday to Sunday 11am - 5pm.
You can find us at The Beecroft Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea SS2 6EX. Tel: 01702 215169.

OUR MISSION —

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The Year of Living Dangerously?

Post-pandemic 2021 could easily have been a “go with the flow” end to a crazy era in the life of The Jazz Centre. Doing what we used to do felt the most comfortable approach; a few quick-win options and tweak here and there and boom! ... an easy life for all of us volunteers. But that just wouldn't have been true to the “jazz” way things happen.

Bravely, we re-opened with a fresh look and feel, a new and diverse music programme and an absolute focus on building on the UK part of our name and solidifying our ethos of being THE UK's cultural centre for jazz. As we move into '22, we enter yet another phase of uncertainty and fingers crossed, we all come out unscathed and yet more determined to put the Centre on the UK jazz map.

Complementing the aural side of things, the visual “Art” of jazz is really what sets the tone for this music we all seem to love. The iconic album artwork, photography and film noire-esque imagery everyone recognises, ooze anything from cool to improv to abstract. As our home is in the very enticing Beecroft Art Gallery, we love this side of jazz culture. Our superb cover picture and the photo gallery from Mick Gawthorp in this edition of Centrepiece capture some of this iconography in a really distinct way. Highlighting our multi-genre past live music programme and looking at the faces on the musicians Mick's captured and later on written about, you can see the sheer intensity and the enjoyment our performers give playing at our unique jazz venue and to our fast-growing audiences from across the UK.

With YouTube fast becoming THE source of some incredible, rare and just plain ol' fascinating jazz on film, we've highlighted some “ones-to-watch” at your leisure. Jazz film boffins Phil Waterhouse and Mike Deakin



write on our exciting new soon-to-launch Jazz Film Club, and the second part of my interview with local Afro-Cuban jazz hero Snowboy is best read with the film they recommend playing in the background.

Digby's brilliantly penned piece on the age-old “what do I call this type of jazz?” question puts into perspective the crazy circular-argument attempts we all still go through to define “jazz” and his take on dixie v swing v classical is to be read alongside Adrian Cartwright's intelligent reviews of works on two exponents of the ever popular and often misunderstood free-form and Avant-Garde jazz styles.

Adrian's reviews are a great scene-setter to our kick-off live jazz gig of 2022, the quite literally breath-taking Evan Parker's Trancemap, and we've booked a programme right up to Easter, including our first Blues gig to coincide with London Blues Week, a very exciting celebration of International Women's Month with our newest Patron, Zoe Rahman and her all female trio, and the first of our New Beginnings programme where we're working with some new stars of the future, the uber-talented students of jazz from the Royal Academy of Music.

I'm determined we'll look back in years' time to see 2022 as the DEFINING YEAR FOR THE JAZZ CENTRE UK, one where —to a degree!— we throw caution to the wind, move outside our comfort zones, go against the flow and amongst countless other clichés, put the “UK” in The Jazz Centre UK, reflecting everything that's great about jazz in the UK, past, present and of course the future.

Enjoy this edition and let's all have a happy, healthy and of course a safe and superbly jazz-filled new year!

Mark Kass CEO
January 2022

IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT DIXIE?

No. That's it. Thanks very much.

But hold on; it's my beloved Editor Philip Waterhouse on the phone. "Digby, it is nearing that time for the next issue of *Centrepiece*, and we need your article. In the immortal words of Joe Williams and Count Basie 'get off your rusty dusty' and start typing." Well, OK.

The title of this old song came to me when I was thinking about the music I (probably) love best of all, which is Dixieland jazz. And that, very often, has branded me as a non-intellectual; happy to tap my toes (and, for fifty years, very largely to play) music which, by regular consent, has no real intellectual substance. It also, so it would appear, separates me from the furrow-browed intellectuals of our music or the angry young men or women who sometimes look out from the cover of *Jazzwise* magazine as if to ask: "can you dig this?". Or shall we leave you (as Billy Strayhorn bravely wrote) "to rot" in the shallows of pop music, the easily-digested fare of Classic FM or at best the musical genre called Dinner Jazz; a category once mercilessly dismissed by one of British jazz's best Traditional (yes 'Traditional') drummers, John Richardson, as "soup-slurp stomp".

It's for this reason that when I set up The Jazz Centre UK back in 2016 I was extra —and perhaps over —careful to avoid the kind of music with which, for better or worse I have generally been broadly associated for the past fifty years. Critic Peter Vacher sets the matter out in his (otherwise admirable) review of my new album *Notes from a Jazz Life Volume 2* in the latest issue of *Jazzwise*. To (my good friend) Peter I am "a cornetist who hovers stylistically between Dixie and Swing". And that's it. But unfortunately neither of those terms —'Dixie' or 'Swing' — strike an over-intellectual note. And amid our tiny art form (still, extraordinarily, dominated by the antichrist 'F-word' called 'fashion') both of them tend to be dismissed with an airy wave of the hand; a pre-decision that any such music can't be seriously worth attention, and the assumption that such music (often equally offensively dismissed as 'Trad') is only played in pubs by bearded men in sandals who drink pints, wear ill-fitting baggy sweaters and insist on a banjo in the rhythm section (NB: ask me about banjos sometime!).

However much I deeply disagree with such views I can understand how they exist. The generic term 'Dixieland' has unfortunate and inappropriate light-hearted connotations (as well, apparently in these PC times, as racial ones!) which tend to sprawl over the definitive work of many of jazz music's greatest players. Unbelievably (as soon as you think about it) this starts with Louis Armstrong, the accredited 'Shakespeare of jazz', and after him generations of musicians whose monumental artistic oeuvres, these days, are most usually blocked off from public consumption in the media as anti-intellectual and therefore irrelevant. Indeed many of its most central historic contributors —for two examples, guitarist Eddie Condon and cornettist Wild Bill Davison— hated the word 'Dixieland' but found themselves stumbling to find a replacement. "I suppose" said Bill reluctantly "—you could call it Swing if you want". But it was Condon who got the plain and simple answer. "We called it music" he said, naming his autobiography (one of jazz's best reads) with the phrase and also a record on which Jack Teagarden adds the sly addendum: "—but what would you suggest?" No-one yet seems to have come up with anything better.



Despite the fact that classic jazz (not a bad idea, maybe?) has come up with hundreds of records of unanswerable profundity, passion and sincerity, only a limited society of informed people who are still prepared to go back to them. And part of the blame for this (however regrettably) must be laid at the door of formalized jazz education, offered in colleges all over the UK, which, very largely, has trained students to start with the post-war developments of modern jazz. As someone who, over the years, has been involved in the process I know why this is too. In order to teach any art form it must present you with a methodology —in other words something tangible to teach!—

and jazz only began to do this for itself with the post-war melodic revolutions of Parker, Monk and Gillespie (which could be written down) and later in the 1950s the scalic innovations of John Coltrane (which could be written down too). Such methods are actually easy to teach, whereas their predecessors come from a strictly aural stylistic background; a far more troublesome matter and acknowledged by one hip teacher at Leeds College whose pupil was the young Alan Barnes. "For several lessons" Alan told me "we just listened to records. And one day I said 'shouldn't we get the saxophone out?' And the answer was 'if we have to. .!'" For players of my generation, when formalized jazz education didn't exist, this was it; we listened to the masters on record, took what we wanted and took it from there.

But you can't listen to records all the time of course, and this is why jazz education has gone down the technical route. There's nothing wrong with this; any fully equipped young player must, by definition, know the music's theory and how to play his instrument. But that's not the whole answer. Some time in his long career in 'progressive jazz' bandleader Stan Kenton was unwise enough to downgrade Louis Armstrong as an artist who, in his words, "has taken uneducated creativity as far as it can go"; a rough equivalent to suggesting that you couldn't write poetry without an IBM machine. Kenton was talking nonsense of course. But an echo of his view explains why young graduates from big colleges (at least until very recently) sometimes emerge onto the

professional arena while hardly knowing the names, let alone the music, of trombonist Jack Teagarden (once definitively —and most unusually— defined by ‘modern’ arranger Bill Russo as simply ‘the best jazz trombonist’); the incomparable alto-saxophonist Johnny Hodges or the beautiful and totally separate approaches of tenor-saxophonists Coleman Hawkins or Bud Freeman.



The fact that such artists have, in the past, presented definitive artistic theses of their own is very seldom recognised by other than a diminishing coterie of aficionados (Simon Spillett is one shining example) who have bothered to look back beyond contemporary innovations to the ones that led up to (and regularly inspired) them. Another premier artist, cornetist Ruby Braff, had cogent points to make about this to critic Steve Voce. “Look”, he said, “you take a classical pianist who arrives on stage to play Chopin, Beethoven or Pachelbel. This guy has spent years studying and absorbing the artistic output of many centuries. And yet today’s jazz musicians seem to be unaware of this less-than-a century period of delicious artistic food on which to dine. Which is idiotic! “. While I’m more than aware of the old argument about whether new artists in any genre are actually obliged to absorb the philosophies of their predecessors (did the Fauve movement of artists ‘dine’ on the work of the impressionists? —very doubtful) I can’t help feeling that Ruby had a point, and that many younger players have (hopefully) a lot of inspirational catching-up to do. One prime example at The Jazz Centre UK is my friend, guitarist Harrison Dolphin. When I first met him four years ago he was studying two very different but equally important guitarists Jim Hall and Freddy Green (both integral to our music’s history) and when we last spoke was playing with a Fletcher Henderson Reunion band. Way to go, Hal!

Away from their college education I think a lot of other young musicians are working their way back into the music’s history these days. A few years ago I took my horn down to a small but thriving jazz club, Oliver’s, where students from Trinity College of Music over the road were strutting their stuff. One was an impressive bebop pianist and I was surprised when from nowhere he produced an immaculate washboard and thimbles and began happily and expertly strumming along. I asked “how come?”, and he told me that a group of friends were rehearsing a King Oliver recreation band

somewhere in some London cellar. Perhaps now they’re part of the thriving Dixieland scene which lives, moves and grooves in the flourishing Revivalist centre of activity in London’s Hackney area, headed up by Italian clarinettist-saxophonist Giacomo ‘Kansas City Smitty’ Smith who unexpectedly blew me away four years ago at Birmingham’s International Jazz Festival.

Over my years as a performer I’ve not only been regularly aware of the very highly defined artistic parameters of classic jazz but also (sometimes painfully and bluntly) been tutored in the requisite artistic demands that go with many of its genres. Early on I played with a local New Orleans band (led by clarinettist Dave Claridge) and was forcibly made aware not only of the precise and highly demanding disciplines of the style but also the divisions within it. How many people these days, I wonder, would like to explain the differing,

relevant (and regularly glorious) artistic differences between trumpeters Mutt Carey, ‘Kid’ Thomas Valentine or the great Henry ‘Red’ Allen. But they’re there! Later I was also schooled by highly qualified musicians in the sophisticated (OK: ‘Dixieland’; I’ll have to call it that) genre, including the great drummer Lennie Hastings who told me, sharply but correctly, that I played too many notes in a Traditional collective ensemble leaving no musical space for my fellow front liners. Pianist Keith Ingham (whose successful American career began in 1978 when he joined Benny Goodman) also schooled me on the matter of superior repertorial choices, and there were others who pointed me in other artistic directions. Which means that in 2021 I can tell you about the basic elements of artists as eminent as cornetist Bobby Hackett (who found a way through melodic lines which



were unrelated to bebop and unique to him); trumpeter Billy Butterfield, (whose extraordinary flair for bringing out melodic originalities from old chord sequences resembled mining diamonds from carbon), or why Ruby Braff (who idolized Louis Armstrong) brought elements to the trumpeter’s craft which even Armstrong hadn’t thought of and could not equal.

This is why, for me, the neglect experienced by the world of classic jazz ... is a matter for regret. There’s gold in them there junkyards. So why not dig a little?

Digby Fairweather

JOSH ISON.....

.... takes the Trane to Southend

Words and pictures: Mick Gawthorp

The programme of events at the Jazz Centre during the last couple of months has been extremely varied: Xhosa Cole played a version of *Blue Monk* that reminded us how it's OK to smile and laugh when listening to jazz; the throaty tenor of Al Nichols contrasted with the pure vocals of Joe Harrop in their rendition of the Great American Songbook; Greg Abate blew new life into a tenor sax which for the past couple of years has been an historical artefact in a museum display case at The Jazz Centre; we've had tributes to Miles and Brubeck; and at least once a month The Jazz Centre benefits immensely from a Trevor Taylor project, often with Dan Banks and most recently with tenor-player Robin Porter and new bassist Sam Hollis. And that's just some of the acts.

So, what with Covid, Omicron and Christmas shopping, some of us at The Jazz Centre were a bit worried about ticket-sales for the Josh Ison gig. However, it turned out that there was no need to worry as it soon became clear that a number of people weren't going to miss this, the rapturous crowd response following the session suggesting that not one person left disappointed. Quite simply, this was the most thrilling and electrifying performance at The Jazz Centre for some time.

A Trane-inspired gig came at a good time too as it coincided with what appears to be another wave of interest in Coltrane's work. Trane's 'humble offering to the Divine', the spiritual masterpiece that is *A Love Supreme* has been certified platinum by the RIAA for sales of 1 million albums in the US. Fifty eight years after it was recorded, this Grammy nominated album remains one of the greatest albums ever recorded. Much of Trane's catalogue for Prestige, Atlantic and Impulse has been re-mastered and repackaged, the most recent discovery to hit the shelves being *A Love Supreme: Live in Seattle*. In 2002 I remember being very excited about the first ever release of *A Love Supreme: The Deluxe Edition* because it included the version made with Archie Shepp in the line-up who Trane referred to in his original liner-notes but who never made the original release. Since then we've had box-sets of Atlantic's Heavyweight Champion and Prestige's 1958 Complete Prestige



photo: mickgawthorp

Recordings and more recently 'found' albums like *Both Directions at Once* and *Blue World*. And it's clear that it's not just record company hype or Trane completists who are buying it all.

John Coltrane was a hugely influential figure but Josh Ison is no tribute-act. As we've come to expect from Dan Banks on piano, Trevor Taylor on drums and Sam Hollis on double-bass, the band played with empathy and enterprise; how they are able to sound this together without a rehearsal continues to fill me with awe.

There was real sense of purpose to the sequencing of the set which began with some of Trane's 1950s recordings including *Blue Trane*, the only album Coltrane recorded for Blue Note, but it was clear from the set-list that the session was not only covering the years up to 1964, the year that *Crescent* and *A Love Supreme* were recorded, but also material from 1966 and 1967, the year Trane died. Before the set, Josh and I agreed that *Crescent* was not just our favourite Trane album but rather our favourite jazz album. I thought I knew Trane's recordings but Josh's reworking of them — particularly the later material — showed us how there's a legacy of work still to be discovered and reconsidered. Although The Jazz Centre's pre-gig publicity suggested that the set would comprise Trane's pre-1964 material like *Blue Trane*, *My Favourite Things* and *Mr PC* etc the band tackled

some of the very late work like *Venus* from the album *Interstellar Space* (1966) and *Peace on Earth* from *Live in Japan* (1967). Trane's version of *Venus* is actually a duet done with the drummer Rashied Ali, the drummer Trane brought in to augment the line-up, a decision which turned out to be the tipping point for Elvin Jones who promptly left the quartet. I'm not suggesting that Rashied Ali was to the quartet what Yoko Ono was to The Beatles, but I'd obviously developed a prejudice for the later material which I'm only just overcoming.

Lewis Porter's book *John Coltrane: His Life and Music* includes a detailed discussion of *Interstellar Space*, and he refers specifically to *Venus* suggesting that *Interstellar Space* is "an ideal starting place for the listener who wants to understand Coltrane's last music —it's so easy to hear what he's doing. . . Each [piece] begins with a theme, moves away from it, and returns to it at the end. . . all of the pieces encompass some kind of working up to a climax followed by a calming down, which leads to a recapitulation.'

Seeing and hearing Josh perform this material demonstrated the three techniques Porter suggests Trane uses in his recording: 1) "very fast descending scales, repeated over and over" in an attempt "to create an orchestral effect. . . He wants to give the listener an impression that the top notes are the melody, and the scales are the accompaniment; "2) "rapid and extreme changes in register," an "attempt to suggest two lines of activity at once; "3) "'right-side up and upside-down' —creating variations of a motif by changing its shape, going up instead of down, using the same rhythm or the same number of notes in different ways. (Lewis Porter: *John Coltrane: his Life and Music*).

Dan Banks acted as spokes-person for the session declaring that although it was a terrible thing to admit at a Jazz Centre he didn't actually know very much about John Coltrane. Yeah, sure Dan! Dr Banks could have gone into the sort of technical musical detail concerning how *Giant Steps* was based on Trane's working of the circle of fifths and how it continues to be an extremely challenging piece of music to play even if the player has serious jazz chops. But he didn't, opting instead for an accessible expository approach delivered with characteristic charm and humour.

I'm no expert on these things but before the gig I asked Josh about the reeds and mouthpieces

he uses. I learned that he uses a Berg Larsen steel mouthpiece and a red plastic reed. I suspect that he's in a minority here, most players opting for the more traditional cane variety. Trane used a hard 4 or 5 which would be challenging for most others to even get a sound from. Included in the photographs taken at the session are a couple in which Josh plays without reed or mouthpiece. I've seen many saxophonists playing two horns at once but never one without a mouthpiece. Explore all possibilities!

Seeing and hearing Trane's material played by Josh has made a difference to how I can hear it now. His playing showed an incredible control of dynamics, sometimes a whisper and sometimes a scream. What may seem —to some— an

undisciplined proliferation of notes is actually a variation or elaboration of melodic patterns. So not only will I be checking out Josh's recordings I'll be going back to more of Trane's. And there'll be many others like me looking forward to a return-engagement. Next time I'll bring a crash-helmet!

Seeing and hearing Trane's material played by Josh has made a difference to how I can hear it now . . . incredible control of dynamics, sometimes a whisper and sometimes a scream.



Storyville Re-Visited: From the 1950s

One of the joys of volunteering at The Jazz Centre UK is dealing with records and CDs that have been donated to add to our collection for future reference, or exhibition, or for sale to support our future activities. We get all sorts —rare gems, standards we've all got in our collections and, of course, those unauthorised copies and 'bootlegs'! I guess we've all done it at some time —taped tunes from radio broadcasts, copied CDs for use in the car, or shared favourite album copies with friends. We can't sell these unauthorised copies, but occasionally, very occasionally, we get something really interesting which merits further consideration.

Sorting through a collection one day, I spotted a tidily printed CD cover labelled *Storyville Re-Visited* by Bob Wallis which immediately intrigued me. I knew a series of recordings had been made in 1957 and issued on Doug Dobell's 77 Records label, but I had never heard them and was fairly sure they hadn't been re-issued on CD. A bootleg then, but a look at the track listing revealed some interesting names and the sound quality was surprisingly good.

So time for a bit of research. Doug Dobell started importing and selling records after taking over his father's bookshop at 77 Charing Cross Road. He started issuing vinyl pressings on his own record label, 77 Records, featuring some of the jazz, blues and folk musicians playing in the London area at the time. Over the years these included Bob Wallis, Ken Colyer, Dick Heckstall-Smith, Alexis Korner, Tubby Hayes, Dick Morrissey and a young Bob Dylan playing under the pseudonym Blind Joe Grunt. In the early days, 77 Records were only pressed in limited numbers, something to do with purchase tax on what were considered luxury items, so they are not easy to get hold of today.

One of the names on the sessions recorded in 1957 was the drummer, Ginger Baker. Could this be the one who later found fame (or notoriety) as the drummer with Cream? A look at the discography on his website (<https://www.gingerbaker.com/gingerbakermusic.htm>) indeed shows that his first recorded band was The Storyville Jazzmen and The Hugh Rainey Allstars with *Storyville Re-Visited* in 1958 (when the 1957 recordings were issued).

An EP (77/EP/10) New Orleans Jam Session (vol 1) was issued in 1957. A 10" LP (77/LP/3) *The Storyville Jazzmen* and later another 10" LP (77/LP/12) *Storyville Re-Visited* completed the initial 77 Records issues, though some tracks were later re-issued on *Acker's Early Days* (77/LEU 21/1) in 1960, and by ARC (Associated Recordings Company) in 1963 on *Mister Acker Bilk Plays "My Early Days"* (SOC 908).

Several of the personnel on these sessions are no longer with us, but thankfully Hugh Rainey is. He was the banjo player on all these recordings and is a good friend of The Jazz Centre UK, having been present at some of the meetings in the early days when we were setting up. When I alerted Digby Fairweather to the existence of this

CD, he immediately said "We've got to talk to Hugh about this!" and reached for the phone to tell him about these recordings.

A couple of weeks later I received a call from Hugh, who by now had had chance to listen to the CD and wanted to fill in some of the gaps in my information and recount a few anecdotes from his time with the bands in what he referred to as "those happy early days!"

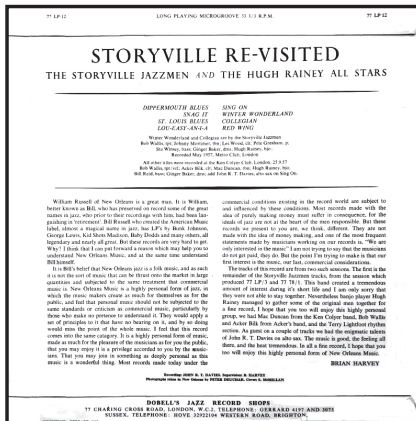
There were 3 recording sessions in 1957: Metro Club – May 1957:

The first was at the Metro Club in May and included Bob Wallis (tpt), John Mortimer (tbn), Les Wood (cl), Pete Gresham (p), Hugh Rainey (bjo), Ginger Baker (dms) and Stu Winsey (sbs). The entire session, in the order recorded, included *Milenburg Joys / Weary Blues / Thriller Rag / Old Kentucky Home / Eh La Bas / Breeze Dr Jazz / Tin Roof Blues / Walking with the King / Collegiate / Winter Wonderland*.

Metro Club - 13 July 1957:

Three tracks from this session were issued on the original EP (77/EP/10); *Do What Ory Say, In Gloryland* (Take 2) and *Running Wild*. However, Brian Harvey's notes on the record cover refer to problems with the tape machine used on the session, saying "if the tape machine had not broken down you might have been hearing more of it." However, the CD we had acquired contained 4 additional tracks from this session which Hugh had not heard since recording them; *Dauphine St Blues, Corinne Corinna, Gloryland* (presumably take 1) and *Trouble in Mind*. This suggests that whoever recorded the CD in our possession had access to some unissued masters from the session.

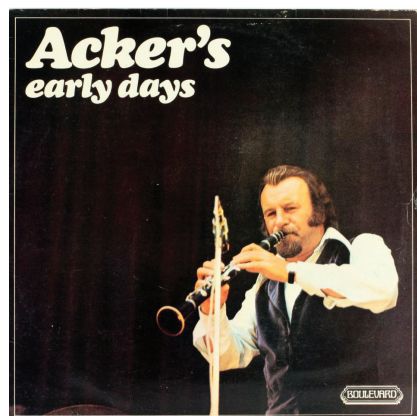
The personnel on this session included Bob Wallis (tpt), John R.T. Davies (tbn), Les Wood (cl), Pete Gresham (p),



Hugh Rainey (bjo), Ginger Baker (dms) and Johnny Macey (sbs), though on Gloryland John R.T. Davies switched to alto sax, Acker Bilk joined Les Wood on clarinet and Peter Crumpton played baritone sax.

Ken Colyer Club, Studio 51 – 25 September 1957:

The tracks recorded at this session under the title of The Hugh Rainey All Stars, together with 2 tracks from the May session by The Storyville Jazzmen (Winter Wonderland and Collegian) were issued on the 10" 77/LP12 Storyville Re-Visited, which included *Dippermouth Blues / Snag It / St. Louis Blues / Lou-easy-en-i-a / Sing On / *Winter Wonderland / *Collegian / Red Wing*. Two other tracks, *High Society*



and *Tartan Socks* (actually *Baby Doll Blues*) were recorded at this session but not included on the original 77 Records LP.

Musicians on this session were Bob Wallis (tpt), Acker Bilk (cl), Mac Duncan (tb), Hugh Rainey (bjo), Bill Reid (bass), Ginger Baker (d), with

the addition of John R.T. Davies (alt) on *Sing On* and Dick Heckstall-Smith (sop) on *High Society* and *Tartan Socks*.

Six of the tracks from this session were later re-issued on *Acker's Early Days* from ARC's Society label as Bob Wallis & The Storyville Jazzmen, though as Brian Harvey points out on the sleeve notes, The Storyville Jazzmen were originally known as Hugh Rainey's All-Stars. The frequent

personnel changes at the time seem to cause jazz historians some difficulty, but they should be understood in the context of interruptions caused by musicians being called up for national service.

Hugh Rainey, who completed his degree with London University in 1957, explains: He formed the Storyville Jazzmen in 1956 together with John Mortimer (a former school friend) and Pete Gresham (whom he had met when he joined Steve Lane's Southern Stompers). This first Storyville band broke up in summer 1957 —Ginger Baker and Hugh joined Terry Lightfoot, Pete Gresham and John Mortimer were drafted into National Service. Hugh was called up for National Service later in 1957. Bob teamed up with Acker, who had moved to London with a contingent of his Somerset band, and Bob persuaded old friend Avo Avison to move to London from Bridlington. Avison became a mainstay of the Storyville Jazzmen when they re-formed in 1958 under Bob's named leadership. On release from national service in September 1959, Hugh turned professional in a re-formed Storyville Jazzmen under the leadership of Bob Wallis. The rest, as they say, is history.

The CD in our possession? We can't sell it —and wouldn't want to! But it has opened a window on a small, but important, part of our UK musical history at the start of the trad boom which influenced popular music and film soundtracks over the following decade. It also highlighted the importance of a small record label in the development of several careers. You can be sure that in future we'll be looking carefully at any recordings that come into our care.

Adrian Green



Jazz Centre UK Film Club 2022

The Jazz Centre UK has been screening films since its inception in 2016. This has been done on a weekly Saturday basis, first of all in the Beecroft Centre Theatre and latterly in our own dedicated Media Centre. From 2022 we have decided to professionalise our movie operation and organise a properly incorporated Jazz Centre UK Jazz Film Club. This will include a membership scheme at £15 a year —maintaining the current £3 entrance for individual screenings. Each film screening will include an information sheet, pertinent introductory remarks and a Q&A / discussion to conclude.

We currently possess over 700 jazz DVDs and several hundred VHS videos, and a Media Centre with seating for an audience of up to forty people, a unique facility in Britain. The collection includes jazz-themed movies, jazz documentaries and jazz performances, many of which are not available anywhere else.

Several renowned film directors have made jazz movies; the list includes Clint Eastwood, Martin Scorsese, Robert Altman, Spike Lee and Woody Allen. As well we have offerings from Sweden, Japan, France, Belgium, Russia, Italy, Australia, and of course the UK. Independent 'Art House' jazz films by John Cassavetes, Shirley Clarke and Herbert Danska are part of our repertoire, as are multiple award-winning jazz documentaries. The core of our collection is a multitude of jazz performances captured on film, in night clubs, concert halls, TV, and jazz festivals. We are also including the more popular Hollywood productions such as *New Orleans*, *High Society* and *Some Like it Hot*, with stars such as Bing Crosby, Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis and Marilyn Monroe.

Our aim is to attract jazz fans, general lovers of film, movie buffs and even those intrigued by some of the more obscure productions; for example, *The Gig*, *The Rat Race*, *Giant Steps*, or *All Night Long*, the latter a British jazz movie loosely based on Shakespeare's *Othello*.

So do come to our first screening of 2022 (covid pandemic permitting) at mid-day on Saturday 8th January. In 2022 we promise you a year of both entertainment and education.



Live at The Jazz Centre UK



Greg Abate Quartet: 30 October.



Darryl Sherman and Digby Fairweather: 6 November.



E17 Jazz Collective present The Dave Brubeck Story, Alison Neale (alto sax): 18 December.



Xhosa Cole Quartet, with Liberty Styles (tap dancer), and Gina Southgate (artist): 20 November.



Photo by Phil Waterhouse.



Photos by Fred Morris.



Al Nicholls and Jo Harrup: 27 November.



Amalgam: 23 October.



Greg Abate Quartet: 30 October.

A Spike's Place gig. Greg Abate and the band; note some Halloween decorations in background which Susan May donated.
A great Paul Higgs set comprising Miles Davis tunes up to but not including the electric period which was made all the more entertaining and instructive by way of Paul's commentary. Paul does actually play a green trumpet but in real life he is not monochrome.
The Xhosa Cole Quartet featured two recipients of the BBC's Young Jazz Musicians of the Year award. An extremely active performer, the low lighting in the lecture theatre made keeping up with Xhosa somewhat challenging!
Fantastic performance by Jo Harrup who sounded like she'd been singing with this band forever. Suave and dapper as always, Al Nicholls takes five between barnstorming sets.



Xhosa Cole Quartet: 20 November.



Paul Higgs presents 'Shades of Miles': 13 November.



Al Nicholls and Jo Harrup: 27 November.



Josh Ison Quartet presents 'Coltrane and Out': 11 December.

Photos and text by Mick Gawthrop.

An Improvised Life

It's not every man who would wish his biography to be written by his ex-wife. John Tchicai, the free improvising saxophonist, made the suggestion, though, and his reputation survives in this respectful and intriguing account of a lesser-known jazz life.

Tchicai (cheek-eye) was born in Denmark in 1936, the child of a Congolese father and Danish mother. After training as a cook, he entered Aarhus conservatory to pursue the study of music, but soon abandoned the academic approach to immerse himself in the bop derived world of Danish jazz, where he quickly rose to prominence on saxophone (alto at this stage, tenor more commonly in later life). He might have been happy to remain a reasonably sized fish in a small pond, a European reflection of the new voices in jazz across the Atlantic—a Joe Harriott type figure, perhaps. But encounters with visiting Americans like Archie Shepp, Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler fired his imagination and inspired him to seek out the new music at source; he arrived in New York in 1962. His partners in the New York Art Quartet included Shepp and Roswell Rudd, and a high point, in terms of his connection with the giants of the music, was his participation in John Coltrane's *Ascension* sessions. This is enough to tell you that he had moved well beyond bop, becoming a committed exponent of free group improvisation. He was a founder member of the Jazz Composers Guild, and recorded under his own name for the new ESP label. This was not enough, though, to sustain an independent career, and he returned to Denmark when his first wife's tour of duty at the Danish embassy came to an end.

Forming a significant new ensemble, Cadentia Nova Danica, he pursued his musical life in Europe, finding new young listeners as rock became more adventurous and open to improvisation; the group supported Frank Zappa,

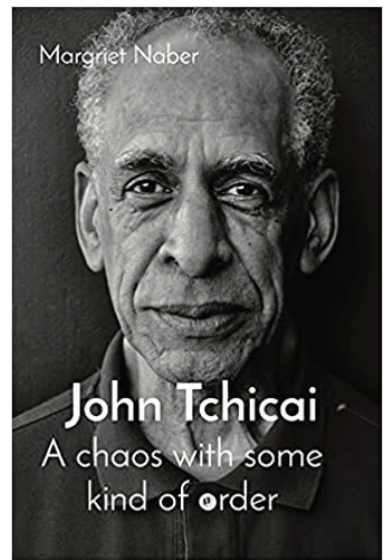


Tchicai with the New York Art Quartet, 1965.

for example, and Tchicai became, somewhat bizarrely, the only musician to have recorded with both John Coltrane and John Lennon.

In the early 70s, Tchicai withdrew from performance for fully five years, in a period of introspection, teaching and reflecting on his spiritual values. An invitation to the Willisau festival brought him back to the stage in

1975; he formed strong partnerships with other Danish performers, while travelling extensively to the farthest corners of the world in pursuit of projects in music, dance, and education, acquainting himself with many musical styles beyond jazz. His connections to the British scene included performances with John Stevens, the Brotherhood of Breath and Johnny Dyani's *Witchdoctor's Son*.



This itinerant life style does not fit easily with marriage, though, and three wives had come and gone in Tchicai's life when, in 1989, the author of this book, Margriet Naber, met him. From this point on, the account of his life comes not only from someone personally central to it, but musically, too: Naber is a pianist who collaborated in composition and played in groups with her husband. Early in their relationship, Tchicai began a second sojourn in the USA, though he headed this time for California, settling in a small town called Davis, and starting over in terms of musical career, by forming a band of much younger, inexperienced musicians from various cultural and musical backgrounds. John Tchicai and the Archetypes built from performing at local elementary schools, to engagements in New York and two tours of Europe. A CD was recorded, though Tchicai—in his wife's own account—somewhat disrupted the group's performance on it by insisting on unfamiliar approaches to material they had become comfortable with on the road; an improviser's instinct, perhaps, but not one which went down well with the band. It's not the only example of an occasional bluntness and tactlessness on Tchicai's part, in handling musicians. For the most part, though, his collaborators speak of an inspiring leader who encouraged their own efforts and shared his vision unselfishly.

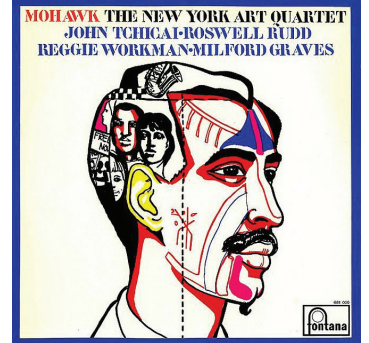
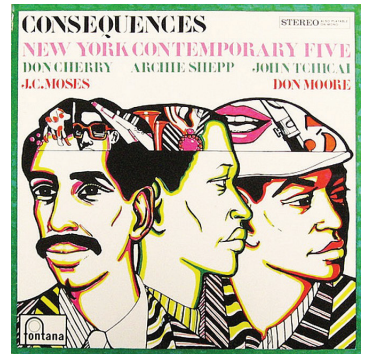
A personal tragedy at around the time of 9/11 saw the family return to Europe, to settle finally in a small French village near Perpignan. Tchicai resumed his itinerant musical life, leading to the failure of his marriage to Naber, though they continued to live a couple of streets apart, and she was at his side as he deteriorated and passed away after a stroke in 2012.

Naber's closeness to her subject allows her to give a strong sense of a life dedicated to making music wherever the chance arose; and she is a witness to his approaches to composition which allowed the greatest freedom for improvisation—ranging from scores in conventional notation to highly personal graphical representations of musical form. Tchicai seems never to have wavered in his dedication to the art of improvisation, though he spread his wings into the orchestral and electronic spheres. He developed his ideas about free playing in myriad workshops and masterclasses, and ultimately in a book, *Advice to Improvisers* (1987).

continued on p.13



Marte Røling John Tchicai and the Jazz Avant-Garde



Reading the John Tchicai biography, reviewed elsewhere in *Centrepiece*, an illustration in Chapter II, *Cooking in New York*, rang a memory bell. It was the cover design for the New York Art Quartet's 1965 album *Mohawk*. It was part of a series of iconic LP covers from the 1960s avant-garde jazz. Many of the major figures of the 60s avant-garde featured; Archie Shepp, Cecil Taylor, Paul Bley, Carla Bley, Marion Brown, Don Cherry, Roswell Rudd, Milford Graves, Reggie Workman, the list was comprehensive. However, and somewhat shamefully, the name of the artist designer was new to me: Marte Røling. Shamefully because the Newsletter/*Centrepiece* had reviewed the album cover design of a good dozen artists in previous issues of *The Jazz Centre Newsletter*. Marte Røling had been overlooked. So a necessary rectification is in order.

Marte Røling is a Dutch artist, daughter of artist parents; a painter, sculptor, and lithographer. Dutch record label, Fontana Records, knew of her lithographs, and gave her a commission to design album covers for a series of free jazz recordings in the 1960s. They not only recorded the jazz avant-garde, but organised concerts for them in the Netherlands. For the record sleeve covers Røling had worked from photographs, and only met the musicians when they played the concerts. In an interview she commented; "American jazz musicians enjoyed themselves so much. That had a kind of freedom about it which I loved."

Whilst working on the designs she listened to the music constantly. Of the design she said; "I took a stand in the lithographs I made about the colour barrier. It was a way of taking down the colour barrier between the races and fill it in with my own colours."

This is how John Tchicai famously ended up with a yellow ear. From his biography she says; "I met John twice and I remember apologising to him about giving him a yellow ear. He laughed and said he didn't mind." He subsequently appeared on stage with his face painted as he appeared on the *Mohawk* record cover. (Face painting for performance was later popularised by the Art Ensemble of Chicago.)

Aside from the neutral skin colour, and the painted faces, what is also striking about Røling's design is the multiple images sketched inside the musician's heads. She explained; "In general I wanted associations more than just portraits, I tried to picture somebody's thoughts." 1960s USA was a hothouse of radical politics —the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power movement, the rise of the Black Panther Party, the Women's Liberation Movement, and protests against the Vietnam War. This political atmosphere inevitably resonated with many artists; most immediately with the Free Jazz movement. In the Netherlands Marte Røling's radical lithographs were part of this trend; in the head of John Tchicai on the *Mohawk* album cover you can see a protester with a Freedom Now placard.

Today the covers are renowned worldwide, and are collector's items in their own right. The music, naturally, also endures.



In recounting her husband's life before the late eighties, the author can be forgiven for failing to capture very vividly, for example, life in the cauldron of New York in the early 60s: but she is not particularly revealing about the California of the 80s either. The prose can be rather flat, and the writing often fails to catch character and moments with the impact that a better writer could achieve. But John Tchicai's is a jazz life that needed to be on the record, and she has done her work well in that respect. While Tchicai's discography is considerable —150 plus albums!— and would be hard to hunt down in physical form, Apple music has some 40 albums available to stream, and YouTube has some fine examples of him in action; check out this imposing player, who played his way around the world for half a century.



ASC

Nederlandse Jazz

During the long painful months of lockdown two of life's great pleasures —live music and travel abroad— were severely restricted, if not downright banned. So it was with huge pleasure that the Centrepiece editor was able to finagle his way into the Netherlands in September this year. Travel around that unique country was not problematic, but gaining access to music events was stymied by the non-acceptance of the NHS vaccine proof. This did not stop our intrepid traveller from trying, eventually with success. The Muziekgebouw complex in Amsterdam waved him and his companion through, and at the door of his final destination, the Bimhuis jazz theatre, no-one checked.

So a few words about the Bimhuis, Amsterdam's most prestigious jazz venue. First of all the setting must be one of the most beautiful in the jazz club world. Situated in the eastern docklands, it stretches out over the IJ body of water. Its amphitheatre seats 200 with the stage set against a backdrop of two large windows opening out over the water. It overlooks Centraal Station with a view of trains leaving for Germany, Belgium, France and Britain.

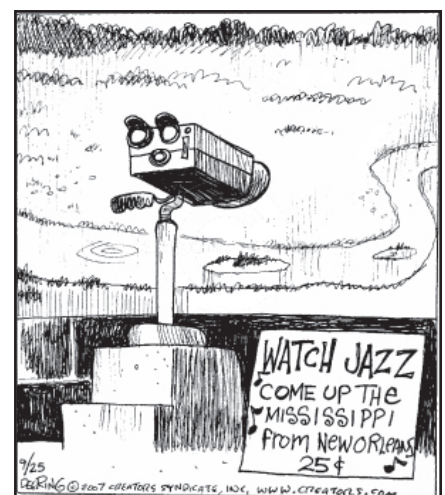
There is a restaurant, likewise looking over the IJ, with exhibitions of art decorating all walls; for our visit the photographs of Ton Mijs. (One splendid portrait was of the great South African percussionist Louis Moholo Moholo).

The name derives from an organisation of Dutch professional improvising musicians (they rejected the 'jazz' moniker), the Beroepsvereniging van Improviserende Musici" (BIM), the "Association of Improvising Musicians." It was part of a 1960s trend rejecting conventional mainstream styles. As a liner note to a contemporary Willem Breuker album expressed it; "This liberation is closely connected to parallel developments in other forms of art and social life." A group of like-minded musicians formed companies to produce, and distribute their own recordings. They rejected capitalist and centralized models of cultural production, as exemplified by record companies, booking agencies and concert halls.

In 1974 they opened the first Bimhuis in the Oude Schans, in central Amsterdam. Paradoxically they received government funding for years, and in 2004 moved to their present location. In recognition of his pioneering role and importance to Dutch jazz, the bridge crossing the water to the Muziekgebouw complex is named for Willem Breuker.

The musical occasion for this visit was to celebrate the 80th birthday of Hans Dulfer. Known in jazz circles as Big Boy he has been a mainstay of jazz in the Netherlands for over 60 years. Best known for a jazz funk fusion style (though he has recorded with American avant-gardist Frank Wright), he has a straightforward broad, meaty sax sound that would not be out of place in any Chicago blues bar. For his 80th he appeared with a new, young fusion band and proceeded to blow the house down, with an exuberant mix of jazz-funk, rock, African and Caribbean styles. The final Calypso brought the audience to its feet, dancing round their seats and in the aisles, as the two saxophonists paraded round the hall. You want to get a small taste of the band try YouTube; Hans Dulfer - Morning after the Third | Live in TivoliVredenburg (2021) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pnh9fb6cvMg>.

All in all a fabulous evening and recommended for post-covid travel visits. A Jazz Centre UK gig would not go amiss, though undoubtedly beyond our current budgetary limits.





YouTube Jazz on Film

Continuing our selection of jazz on YouTube. This time we have highlighted some clips to augment the Centrepiece contents. Our selection for this issue of Centrepiece includes everything jazz from Traditional / New Orleans, to the Avant-Garde, via African Township, to a discussion on the African roots of Latin and Tango styles.

Kansas Smitty's: Things Happened Here Album Launch Concert

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qm5KMz8IM0&t=893s>

Filmed and broadcasted live from Memrise HQ in East London on June 26th 2020, Kansas Smitty's performed their new record *Things Happened Here*, out now on Ever Records, in full. This is how it went down. *Things Happened Here* is the feeling you get when you walk into an old house, an abandoned factory, or an ancient temple. It is that feeling that some combination of great and terrible things have occurred on the ground on which you now stand. It is rare, profound, and humbling. And most of all, it brings our significance or lack thereof into perspective. Because, where things happened, things will happen again.



Hugh Rainey Jazz Band # 19-4- 2007

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cifvmM5MWaE>

Electric Palace Cinema, Harwich. Filmed on a Sony Hi8 digital tape camcorder. Band members: Hugh Rainey (trumpet); Jack Clifford (reeds); Brian Hart (reeds); Derek Pring (bass); Les Handscombe (trombone); Dave Browning (piano); Roy James (banjo/guitar); Johnny Baker (drums).



Hugh Rainey Jazz Band - Creole Belles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJ0MGBK05gg>

Just two of many clips of the Hugh Rainey band on YouTube. Most, if not, all of them are amateur films which nonetheless capture the band in full traditional swing.

John Tchicai, Tony Marsh, Evan Parker, Louis Moholo - Vortex Jazz Bar, Dalston, UK - 2011-10-14

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PdARfTNkf4>

Filmed in hi-8 video format in fairly low light. John Tchicai (flute, prose, tenor saxophone); Tony Marsh (drums); Evan Parker (baritone saxophone); Louis Moholo (drums).



Abdullah Ibrahim Band 1968 NDR (G) - Jabolani (=Joy)

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

1968 NDR-Hamburg. Abdullah Ibrahim (p) John Tchicai, Gato Barbieri (reeds) Barre Phillips (b) Makaya Ntshoko (d): *Jabolani / Joy*. I guess there is no other known earlier TV-clip from Abdullah Ibrahim than this 1968 clip. From Michael Naura's German Jazz-TV series in the early 1980s. A wonderful blend of Township jazz with the avant-garde saxes of Tchicai and Argentinian Gato Barbieri.



Joe Albany: A Jazz Life now available on dvd and vod

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZxHgSg0x2M&t=49s>

An excerpt from *Joe Albany: A Jazz Life*, the critically acclaimed original documentary feature film made in 1980, winner of a London Film Festival Blue Ribbon and Certificate of Merit at the 1980 Chicago International Film Festival. Now available for the first time on demand at Vimeo, directly and exclusively from the filmmaker (Carole Langer).

Robert Farris Thompson - Mambologist

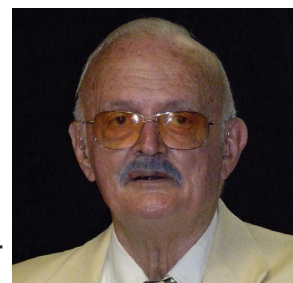
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htvD0XRwO-g&t=40s>

The Afro-Argentine Legacy of Tango

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuUMssU2Sg4&t=10s>

The Afro-Argentine Legacy of Tango with Facundo Posadas.

Robert Farris Thompson (December 30, 1932 – November 29, 2021) was an American art historian and writer specializing in Africa and the Afro-Atlantic world. Beginning with an article on Afro-Cuban dance and music (published in 1958). Other published works include *African Art in Motion*, *Flash of the Spirit*, *Face of the Gods*, and *Tango: The Art History of Love*. Thompson dedicated his life to the study of art history of the Afro-Atlantic world.





Jazz Centre UK interview with Snowboy part 2

Mark Kass: People put the badge on Latin music as anything with lots of percussion and lots of dancing involved and a bit of Spanish, but there are so many styles under that badge aren't there?

Snowboy: I specialise in Cuban music, Afro-Cuban music. There is some Puerto Rican influence in there as well but predominantly Afro-Cuban. Afro-Cuban jazz is what I play. In actual fact, I have that in my contract that goes to various promoters because sometimes they say Acid Jazz Legend or funk or funky Latin from Snowboy. But no, we play Afro-Cuban jazz, end of. Because Acid Jazz anyway was a scene, not a style of music. There is no such music as Acid Jazz, that's the thing.

MK: Then it became a commercial brand as well didn't it?

Snowboy: Then it became a commercial brand, yes. So, I always remember that once it really exploded amongst the students about three years later in the early '90s, someone came up to me at a gig and saying "what are you to do with Acid Jazz then?" and I said, "I was the third artist on Acid Jazz Records so if I'm not acid jazz, what is it?" But he couldn't compute that, because to him what I would make is Latin Jazz. Well that's fine because the first album was very trippy stuff, then the second one was a furious kind of absolutely powerful fast fusion thing called 'Kitty Bay'. I can't remember who it was by, I'm having a senior moment. So Afro-Cuban music is what I specialise in.

MK: Do you think you managed to influence some of the DJs and people like Froggy and Bob Jones and Pete Tong, names that people actually recognise? Do you think that you influenced some of them by bringing in that Afro-Cuban style?

Snowboy: No, because they influenced me. That music was already there. I'm glad you mentioned Bob Jones from Chelmsford. Doctor Bob Jones. Between him and Chris Hill —they were the two really pushing the boundaries of jazz in the early days. Pete Tong used to play a vicious set of jazz in the early days, you know, before he went off into more contemporary club music, but there's no flies on Pete. Froggy was never a jazz man but obviously he was part of that whole crew of DJs that they called the Funk Mafia in those days.

MK: It was an interesting scene, the whole of East London and right the way out to Southend. It has just been so influential and is just really great to know that jazz has formed a huge part and parcel of some of that influence over the years, it is really, really cool. Would you record a pure sort of jazz focused, jazz funk kind of thing? Would you take a Coltrane album and Snowboy it?



Snowboy: Yeah, I would. But I consider my music jazz anyway; Afro-Cuban jazz is what we play, jazz with Afro-Cuban rhythms. But it is funny you mention it as I did have a project in mind just doing maybe a smaller band Afro-Cuban Coltrane album, but just when I was thinking about it, it was done in America.

MK: Do you think that there will ever be the days again where crews will start travelling round the country, or is it still going on do you think? We used to get them coming up from South London coming into Essex. I remember meeting these guys pretty much every week in Ilford, they were travelling up from Peckham and South London, once you got this common theme of jazz and dance going on it was pretty cool. Do you reckon that will ever happen again?

Snowboy: It depends because the thing is dance music and club music are all in tandem, there isn't any kind of club music at the moment, unless perhaps house music which would perhaps have jazz elements to it. There are dance crews that follow house music around but it's not the same. Another reason why Professor Robert Farris Thompson was interested, and also a great jazz dance specialist, the late Terry Monahan. He was from London but he was

very, very famous in America as a historian of Afro-American jazz dance. So, he was overawed to see that there was this thing going on in London, well, in actual fact all over the UK. He saw it in London initially, and it was nothing to do with the kind of swing, Lindy Hop kind of thing, and yet there were all these people dancing to Art Blakey and Coltrane and fusion and it kind of blew his mind.

I became very good friends with Terry Monahan as well as Professor Farris Thompson because of this whole scene. It is a funny one Mark because, if you like the legitimate dance world in the UK, they don't recognise our jazz dance style. It is very odd and yet we are really the torch bearers of what happened in America, even though these guys initially were dancing to jazz in the discotheques. In the 70s they got into jazz the same way that I did, which is why, really, I did the book because I have got friends who go out there teaching it in classes. But as a whole scene it wasn't just about the music because the dancers influenced the DJs, because you are playing something adventurous and the dancers are going mad to it.

Then you are going to go searching for something even more adventurous aren't you? And that is between the dancers and the DJs, and that kept on pushing the ante. My music, although it is very authentic Afro-Cuban jazz, when we play some salsa tunes in the set, the reason the salsa world doesn't really understand us, and the American Latin scene didn't understand us for many years, was because we were much faster. If you listen to one of my biggest influences, Poncho Sanchez on the West Coast, he does a few fast things but generally it is all mid-tempo and it's amazing. He is one of my biggest influences, my music is kind of like Poncho, but at a rapid speed, and because when I make my music, and when I decide to put the music together for an album, I'm always thinking of the jazz dancers, not the salsa dancers.

But unfortunately, the youngest jazz dancers now are in their fifties, we are all going into our sixties now, and there hasn't been a whole new generation coming through, because there is no kind of music being played in the clubs where you would dance that style to. So unless that comes back on the floor —because in a way that was of its time— because we were playing jazz funk, and then jazz fusion next to jazz funk, which was a natural thing, and then from the fusion onto other types of jazz. So unless there is something like that being played in the clubs it is not going to happen.

MK: I am sure you are aware that one of the projects we have done down here at the Jazz Centre is a big focus on the 100 Club in Oxford Street, which started off as a jazz club about 70 or 80 years ago, and it was the host to the London Jazz Society. One of the features we have in the exhibition is to really focus on local dance talent, and one of our films we produced is all around dance. Interestingly, it is probably the most successful part of our exhibition. The interest we got in doing these dance workshops, especially during lockdown and especially being able to do it via Zoom and using the technology available, everybody just went "You know what? This dance stuff is amazing", and the feedback that the dance teachers got from that is "We want more and more of this". Across the spectrum, not just Lindy Hop. We have this wonderful new book on the 100 Club, and it touches on the way that people would just get up and dance, where traditionally now people just sit there and watch. Back then you would get people dancing all over the place, so it is such an important part of the music.

Snowboy: It always has been. If you think about it, jazz in its original form was to dance to, you know, people forget that. Not to sit there scratching their chin.

Talking about the 100 Club, one of the biggest ambassadors for the 100 Club is Tommy Chase. Now he is very much from the same mould as me. I remember booking Tommy once for a project and he asked, "Are the dancers there?" I said "yeah", and he said "Yeah, I'll do it". Because Tommy was very much into Blakey, he sounds very much classic Art Blakey, he had that drive. Dancers inspired him in the same way that they inspired, and still do inspire, me.

MK: Maybe that is something we can do here as well. We should try a load of stuff. We are starting to do some work with the conservatoires and the music colleges, and try to increase our outreach outside of Southend, because we are really keen to promote ourselves as the national cultural centre for jazz and it is desperately needed. There is one for rock and roll, there is one for

country, there is one for every genre now, so we would love, over the course of time, to develop so that in five years' time this was an international hub. We touched on the educational side of things when we were talking about Robert Farris Thompson before. What we have noticed is that the music colleges and the conservatoires are starting to teach more about jazz heritage and about the culture of jazz as well as the music theory of it. If there was an opportunity to have the Snowboy module on a syllabus in there what would you like the students to come away with, having learnt about Snowboy?

Snowboy: Well, I would hope that, and I know this does happen sometimes as well, that I am someone's first reference to Afro-Cuban music. They come and see me live, and then they buy my music, and through that they go and discover my influences. They will discover Tito Puente, and Machito, and Poncho Sanchez, all of that great stuff. It is nice to know that what we do has influenced people to go and discover for themselves. I have had bandleaders say to me "The first Latin record I ever bought was yours and through that I got into all the other stuff."

You are right about the colleges at the moment, because the amount of young players out there, and I'm not just talking about the young jazz scene that is happening at the moment anyway, which is incredible, but just the fact that they are coming out of college now with this knowledge about the music of the twenties, the thirties, the forties, and playing it so authentically. It is just beyond belief.

I have seen all the French hot jazz stuff, like Django Reinhardt, and you have 19-year olds, 20-year olds playing that very authentically, or playing British dance band music from the thirties or forties. In fact, there is one college down on the South coast, I'm not sure which one it is now, but they have got all the charts of one of the great British dance band leaders of the thirties, Jack Payne. They have a 20-piece orchestra there, and what they are doing is constantly going through these charts, and getting a chance to play them. They probably haven't even been played since the thirties or forties, so this is an amazing education. They will see how stuff was arranged then, and stylistically how to solo, because, obviously, be-bop hadn't been invented at that point, and certainly Coltrane wasn't around, so you have got to really think about soloing in a very different kind of way.

MK: What is really good, I laid on through my own organisation, the London East Jazz Network, two years ago I think it was, we did a festival and we managed to secure Xhosa Cole, who was Young Jazz Musician of the Year, a 21-year old black kid from Birmingham, and I invited him down thinking he would do this pretty modern, contemporary stuff but he said: "No, I am absolutely married to be-bop and post be-bop in such a way that I don't want to damage it. I could easily stick a Latin beat underneath it or do what everybody else is doing now which is putting a sort of Afro-beat underneath it but I really love what I am doing". And he had Jay Phelps, the trumpeter with him as well with same mindset, absolutely passionate about re-visiting, reinterpreting and maintaining that heritage, which is pretty much what we are all about here at the Jazz Centre UK.

A last couple of quick questions, who would you like to have worked with over the last few years, and who would you like to work with today, in particular with in the jazz world?

Snowboy: That is a hard question you know because I don't really know the answer. Obviously, I would have loved to have worked with the late, great Tito Puente really, one of the greatest bandleaders, arrangers, writers of Afro-Cuban mambo music. Who would I like to play with now? I don't know. You see, in my life as a musician

get a gig off you. You're playing in the Southend Jazz Festival in a few weeks' time aren't you?

Snowboy: Yeah, we're headlining, that was beautiful you know, and I just cannot wait to do it, because the last time I played at The Palace Theatre —four years ago— it doesn't matter whether it was my band, or whoever else



generally I get the chance to play with so many people, and I have had so many great experiences, and continue to, that I meet a lot of and play with some of my great idols, like Deodato for instance, I have played with him three or four times now at Ronnie Scott's the great blues organist, Big John Patten. Just so many.

MK: So when you put your collection together for the Jazz Centre, which is very kind of you and thanks for donating it to us, it has attracted such a lot of interest, it has been phenomenal. Was there anything as you were going through your archive, was there a lightbulb moment where you thought "Oh my god, I had forgotten all about that"? Did anything new or exciting come to mind, realisations when you were going through that archive where you just thought "Wow, I can do that again or I can re-shape that and take it to the next level?"

Snowboy: Not really, no. I mean from an artifact point of view you have got what I would consider very important to me, artifacts that represent me, and it is nice knowing that the Jazz Centre has got them forever, and that they are safe. To see them in a display like that is one of the biggest honours in my life really, to know that such an important place as this which, with all the incredible artifacts that you have there, to be there in this display is —well, I just wish my parents were still around to have seen that.

MK: That's really nice of you to say and, as I say Mark, we are really, really pleased to have it there. What it has also done is opened up our eyes about the connections that exist in jazz, so next to your display we have got an electric bass and some ephemera from Ronnie Scott's bassist, Ron Matthewson who was quite heavily influencing bands like Paz in the seventies, eighties and the nineties. And we found out that he was involved with dancer Will Gaines, who was also a Southend boy. We have started to create all these connections around Southend around jazz just from these voyages of discovery in putting together our museum, so I am sure we will come up with some more connections to Mark Cotgrove and Snowboy.

More importantly, when are we going to see you play live next? Not necessarily in the Jazz Centre because I will work on you on that one because I am sure we will

I have played with in my career, and all the experiences I have had around the world, that was the best gig of my life! The most important gig to me, the loveliest. And what a beautiful venue, the Palace Theatre. So to be able to headline at the Southend Jazz Festival, do that Sunday night there on October 17, I just cannot wait, and I am sure that's going to surpass the last time that we played there.

It has been a great year really, funnily enough, because we have just headlined the Writtle Jazz Festival last weekend; I am doing Rye Jazz Festival in two weekend's time, and Rochester Castle —on the bill with Courtney Pine and Soul to Soul— and we have already played at Ronnie Scott's twice this year. We've got Boisdale, the Pizza Express in Dean Street in December, so we have kind of played most of the major jazz clubs here already. Straight out of lockdown into this has been amazing, and to be headlining all these festivals, but none more important than the Southend Jazz Festival, let me tell you.

I've got to say, Mark, I think what you and your staff have done there is just absolutely beyond belief, and it is so important and it is just incredible down there, and where you go from here I do not know, because it is just so immense and everything and more that you could hope for so just a personal thanks from me to you.

MK: It is a pleasure on a personal level for me as my first commission effectively as the new CEO here at the Jazz Centre, it has been an honour working with you and a real pleasure to be able to make these connections as I said before. I think where it goes from here is onwards and upwards. When you do your world tour and you want to take a cultural event with you, we are very representative of British jazz so don't forget us. The Jazz Centre UK translates nicely into Japanese, Russian, Italian, so don't forget us!

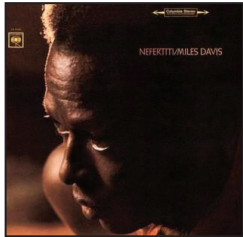
Snowboy: Before I do go, definitely, obviously of massive importance to Southend; with what you are doing, and the other great stuff that everyone is doing in the area, with Mick and Ian and Sue. And, of course, Darren with the incredible Southend Jazz Festival, this area next year for jazz is just going to be on another level.

MK: I appreciate your time on this, thank you very much for doing this. Great to talk to you.

Snowboy: Great. Take care.

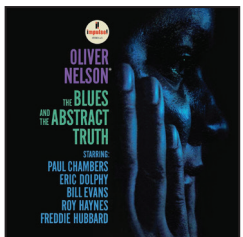
Desert Island Jazz Discs

Jazz Centre UK volunteer Ian Gibson chooses his Desert Island Jazz Discs. Third in a regular feature.



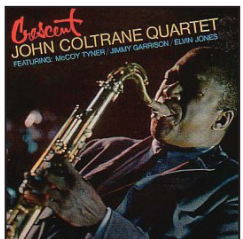
Miles Davis: Nefertiti (from the album Nefertiti)

Whilst many cite *Miles Smiles* as the Second Great Quintet's crowning achievement, my favourite album by this line up is *Nefertiti*, which I feel captures the band at the peak of its development, before the trumpeter changed direction once more. As the last fully acoustic recording by this quintet, and featuring no Davis compositions, the entire album has a holistic feeling, along with three more Wayne Shorter compositions recorded at the same sessions, and eventually released as the first vinyl side of the *Water Babies* album, during Miles' hiatus in the mid-seventies. However, this Shorter composition sets the overall tone, with the two horns repeatedly playing the slow, sinuous theme, whilst the rest of the band improvises underneath, especially Tony Williams' delicate cymbal work eventually erupting into what amounts to a full drum solo behind the shifting melody.



Oliver Nelson: Stolen Moments (from the album Blues and the Abstract Truth)

Although not generally regarded as an A-list soloist himself, this opening number from his best-known album demonstrates Oliver Nelson's composing and arranging skills, not to mention a talent for picking some of the finest musicians around, including Freddie Hubbard, Eric Dolphy and Bill Evans; who are all featured soloists here, with Dolphy on flute.



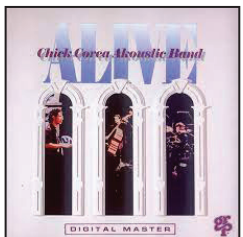
John Coltrane: Crescent (from the album Crescent)

Whilst this album and its successor, *A Love Supreme* share some of the same meditative qualities and seem to me to be somewhat companion pieces, my preference is generally with this earlier release from 1964, as there is a greater sense of calm and order in Coltrane's approach, as well as more space for the rest of the quartet to shine. Indeed, Coltrane doesn't solo at all on the last two tracks on the album, although his tenor is the main featured solo instrument on this title cut.



Herbie Hancock: Good Question (from the album Sunlight)

This final track on Hancock's *Sunlight* album and is nothing like the preceding tracks, which heavily feature the vocoder and belong firmly in Herbie's more commercial soul-funk output. In contrast, this tune features a rhythm section of Jaco Pastorius and Tony Williams, who really get into a deep, heavy groove, with Hancock on acoustic piano played over very deftly arranged brass, reminiscent of some of McCoy Tyner's seventies output.



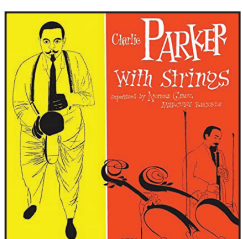
Chick Corea: On Green Dolphin Street (from the album Akoustic Band Alive)

This was one of my most difficult choices, given the quantity and diversity of material recorded by one of my all-time favourite artists. However, this version of a great jazz standard by the Chick Corea Akoustic Band deserves particular attention, given the energy and interplay between the three musicians, where bass and drums are more or less equal partners to the piano, rather than just a rhythm section. The live setting gives some insight into the trio's performance dynamics.



Pat Metheny: Lonely Woman (from the album Rejoicing)

Returning to the guitar trio format of his debut album as a leader, *Bright Size Life*, Pat Metheny here enlists former Ornette Coleman sidemen Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins, who supply the subtle backing to Pat's acoustic guitar rendition of Horace Silver's classic number. There is a fragile beauty to the composition itself, rendered all the more so by the sensitive treatment from this trio.



McCoy Tyner: Festival in Bahia (from the album Inner Voices)

The juxtaposition of a brass section, choral singers and the delicate acoustic guitar of Earl Klugh might initially seem unlikely bed fellows, alongside the powerful rhythm section of Ron Carter and Jack DeJohnette, supporting Tyner's attacking style and broad harmonic palette. However, largely due to Tyner's own intelligent arrangements, the combination really comes together in a coherent statement, although I'm sure opinions would be divided on this. A rubato introduction by Klugh and Tyner is followed by a Latin infused main section, subsequently re-recorded with the Latin Allstars.

Charlie Parker: Just Friends (from the album Charlie Parker with Strings)

Again, I appreciate that there is divided opinion about Charlie Parker's forays into the world of strings and other extended arrangements. However, to this listener, the strings are arranged to allow Parker's solos to be as clear, concise and inventive as ever. Indeed, these are apparently some of the altoist's favourite recordings and, as there are no other horns or soloists for Parker to 'bounce off', the depth of creativity in his playing is totally realised by a Charlie Parker on top form.

The Forgotten Ones

1. Joe Albany

Brian Robinson remembers a talented pianist, first in a regular series.

Joe Albany was born on the 24th January 1924 in Atlantic City, New Jersey. As a child he was given an accordion, but he was not impressed with the unwieldy instrument, and switched to piano in high school. Aged seventeen he moved to the West Coast and found work in the Los Angeles Central Avenue jazz scene where he met and played with Lester Young.

In 1943 he played in the Benny Carter Orchestra. 1944 found him working and living (for a while) with Charlie Parker where they indulged their drug addictions together. In the late 'fifties he wrote songs for the very hip singer Anita O'Day. 1963 found him at the legendary Village Gate club in New York as part of the Charlie Mingus aggregation. Following this he lived and worked in Europe for some years, which he said were the happiest times of his life. He returned to New York in the late 1970s where his talent began to be really appreciated.

Over the years his career was interrupted at various times by incarceration for narcotics offences, a problem for many musicians in those days. Albany was a tall man and adopted a hunched position at the keyboard. He named his first influence as Teddy Wilson; others were Count Basie, Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell.

Joe Albany sadly passed away in 1988 aged just 63. He is remembered for his fluent left-hand technique and his respectful rendition of ballads.

His recorded output was not very extensive but included work with Georgie Auld in 1945; Charlie Parker and Lester Young in 1946. In 1957 he made his first album entitled *The Right Combination* with Warne Marsh on tenor sax and Bob Whitlock on bass.¹ It was nine years before his second visit to the studios cutting *Portrait of a Legend*, a trio with Leroy Vinnegar on bass and Frank Capp on drums. Another five years passed before he cut a solo album, *Joe Albany at Home*.

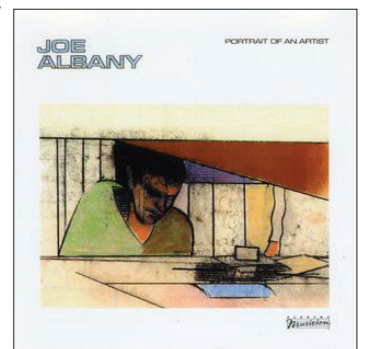
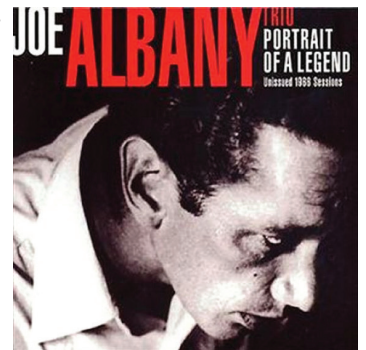
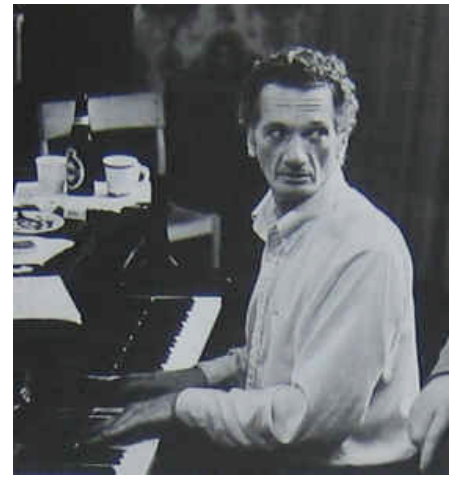
His output increased in the 1970s recording with Joe Venuti (violin), and with the great Art Pepper on the latter's *A Tribute to Charlie Parker* album. In 1977 he recorded *The Legendary Joe Albany Live in Paris*, where he plays solo on the first six tracks. It commences with a Jerome Kern number opening with an almost classical flourish. His vocal efforts can be heard on *Lush Life* and *Christmas Song*.

His final recording, *Portrait of an Artist*, backed by George Duvivier (bass), Charlie Persip (drums) and Al Gafa (guitar), was made in New York in 1982. In all he made fourteen records under his own name between 1957 and 1982.

Several years ago BBC 2 broadcast Carol Langer's documentary film *A Life in Jazz* as part of its Late Shift series where Albany talked about his life and philosophy and played some impressive piano. It also featured an excellent quality rare clip of Charlie Parker playing. Also in existence is a DVD of a film *Lowdown*, a dramatised story of part of Albany's chaotic life. It is directed by Jeff Preiss, and stars John Hawkes, Elle Fanning and Glen Close. The music is fine but the dialogue under-recorded, and not the most uplifting film you'll ever see.² Finally there is the book *Lowdown*, written by his daughter A. J. Albany, a sad story of a talented musician bent on self-destruction.

More information on the life and music of Joe Albany can be found on Youtube or by googling his name.

In the next issue of Centrepiece Brian will look back at the career of versatile saxophonist Sahib Shihab.



1. The Allmusic review states: "From the historical standpoint, this release is essential". The Penguin Guide to Jazz described it as "a jam at engineer Ralph Garretson's home, but for all its technical failings it does reveal a remarkable stylist".

2. The Jazz Centre has a copy of the film and will screen it as part of its forthcoming Film Club season. It won the Cinematography Award: US Dramatic at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival.