

THE JAZZ CENTRE UK  
**NEWSLETTER**

**In this Issue**

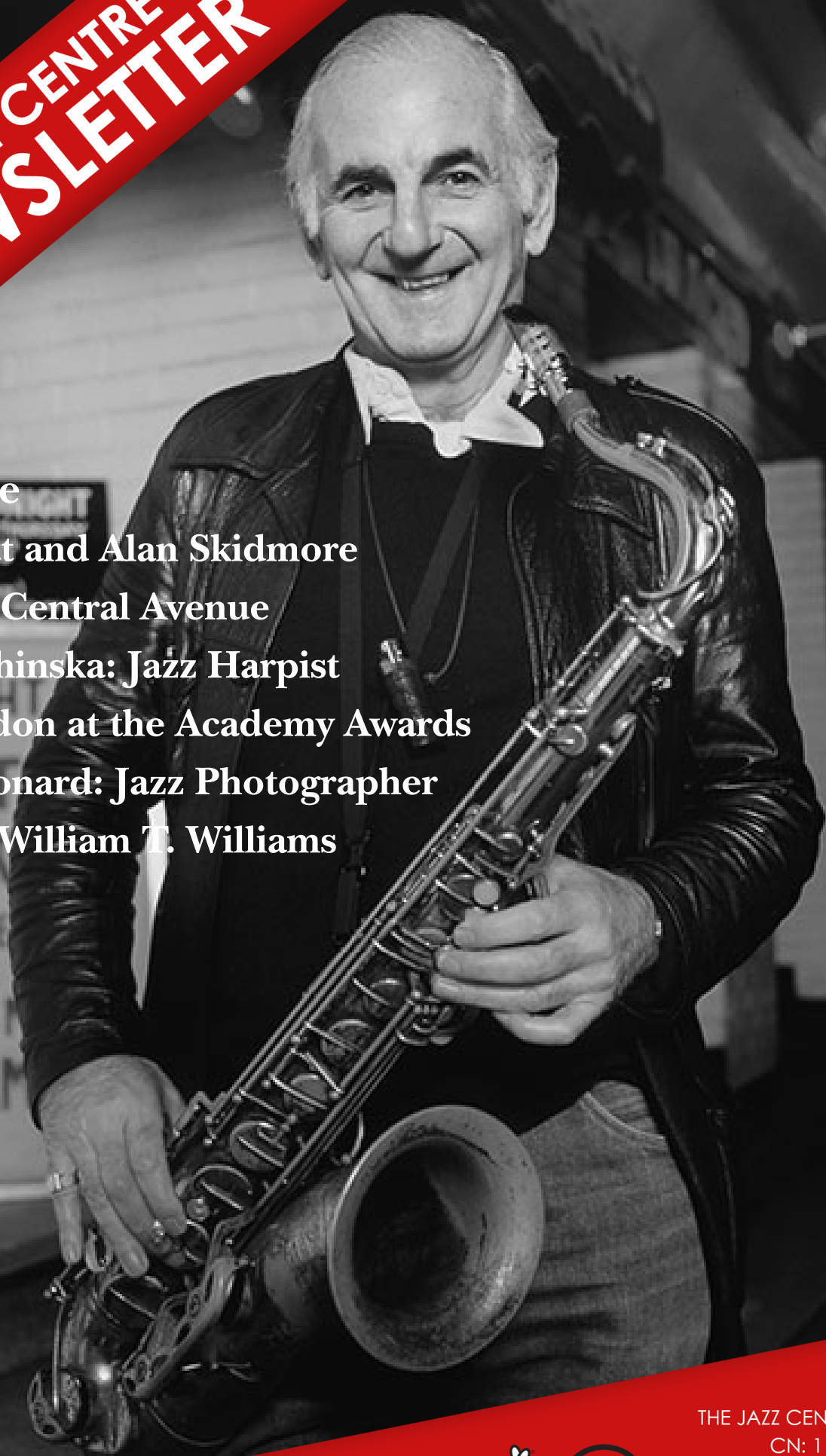
**Ronnie Scott and Alan Skidmore  
Swingin' on Central Avenue**

**Alina Bzhezhinska: Jazz Harpist**

**Dexter Gordon at the Academy Awards**

**Herman Leonard: Jazz Photographer**

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**OUR MISSION: TO PROMOTE, PRESERVE AND CELEBRATE  
THE CULTURE OF JAZZ MUSIC IN ALL ITS FORMS**

**The Jazz Centre UK is open from  
Tuesday to Saturday 10am - 4.30pm.**

**You can find us at The Beecroft Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea SS2 6EX.  
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## The Jazz Centre UK Patrons



Dame Cleo Laine



Sir Michael Parkinson



Alan Barnes



Sir Van Morrison



Simon Spillett



Jools Holland



Dan Morgenstern



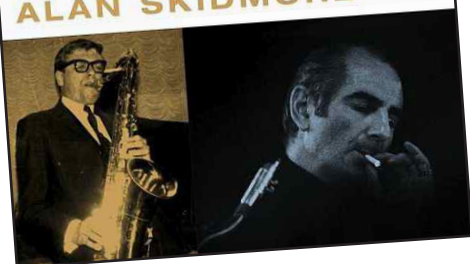
Paul Jones



Susan da Costa

# All about Ronnie – and Skid!

THE RONNIE SCOTT  
QUINTET  
FEATURING  
ALAN SKIDMORE



I NEVER GOT TO KNOW RONNIE SCOTT WELL and (for me sometimes) it's tempting to query how many people really did. Of course we worked in different musical circles anyhow, but nonetheless our paths crossed from time to time; first at a meeting in his club back in 1969 to talk about the postwar modern jazz scene in Britain for which I was preparing a book which subsequently never got written. But that's another story. Later we met for interviews on Jazz FM and the BBC and also quite regularly on the Radio 2 panel game '*Jazz Score*' which ran for nineteen years and where Ronnie, along with Acker Bilk and Humphrey Lyttelton were always the funniest men.

Ronnie's deflatory humour —defined by his anarchic announcements at his club— remain, for those who can remember, the stuff of legends ('our club food is untouched by human hand . . . the chef's a gorilla'). But I'm certain that his gags were (if not direct loans) at least the accumulation of years of attention to the craft of American comedy. On our first 1969 encounter I asked him where I might still find the pianist and multi-instrumentalist Denis Rose, who, for many British proto-beboppers, including John Dankworth and Ronnie, was their first guru, and Ronnie told me that I could find this near-legend playing piano in a gay club called 'The Affair' in Denman Street, Soho. When I met Denis there for the first time he was carrying a bagful of cassettes. 'These are for Ronnie' he said 'I make up tapes of funny shows for him', and the bag was duly delivered to the club office when we arrived. So gags were a fundamental ingredient in Ronnie's lifestyle even back then, and, as someone once said, laughter can sometimes be the last defensive outpost before death.

In our odd brief conversations at his club or wherever, Ronnie was always kindly and relatively forthcoming. But later, on an open-air concert in Wales, I would see him scream from the stand in uncontrollable fury at an incompetent sound-man who was destroying his on-stage sound; the destructive (and sometimes self-destructive) demon that lives and thrives within very many jazz performers was in him too. Over the years too I would note that he possessed (to say the least) a strong crap-detector, plus the built-in ability to deflate himself and his achievements; potentially a dangerous quality for any creative artist, and one that, in these more analytical days, might be identified as 'low self-esteem'. This came across in one Jazz FM interview which we shared in 1992 and where we talked about his beloved nine-piece band of the 1950s. During the on-air conversation I described the *Melody Maker's* front-page news of its activities as one of the things that had turned him into 'a star'. Ronnie was quick to puncture the term.



'Star?' he scoffed, 'star? you must be joking!' and followed up by dismissing the *Melody Maker* as 'our weekly jazz comic'. After forty-plus years in the jazz world I know what he meant too. There is, of course, no such thing any longer as a jazz 'star' in Britain. And even if there were, very few of the real nuts and bolts of the jazz life would find their way into the columns of the press; the intimate chemistries of jazz performance are deep secrets.

Later on Radio 2's '*Jazz Score*' I thought I caught a glimpse of Ronnie's private thought processes again. For those who don't remember, the idea of the show (which lasted for nineteen years before its host Benny Green died in 1998) was to identify a jazz musician from one of his recordings and then tell a story about him or her. Most of the stories were encouraged to be light-hearted or (hopefully) funny. And during the recordings Ronnie would sit dejectedly, leaning forward with head down, alongside his three fellow-panellists until it was time for his turn. Then he would straighten up, tell his story with a comedian's unerring timing; then relapse into his former position, looking to me rather like a disconsolate and lanky



Continued on p.12

# October 20: A Great Day in Southend

October 20th 2018 was a glorious relaunch day for The Jazz Centre UK as we expanded into the Beecroft Centre's Lower Atrium.

The **Southend Echo** marked the occasion with a two page centrespread (see below). **The Jazz Rag** journal dedicated a full page review to the day (see below). And we even managed to feature in the House of Commons during Prime Ministers question time, courtesy of local MP Sir David Amess. I'm sure the nation was thankful for at least a brief relief from Brexit blanket coverage.

Jazz journalist Peter Vacher (see page 5 for a review of his book), wrote a piece for **Jazzwise** magazine.

The day was not only a great cultural success, but it helped replenish the coffers of The Jazz Centre. Visitors on the day munched their way through eighteen boxes of sandwiches, drank fifty bottles of wine, innumerable glasses of fruit juice, cups of tea and coffee and almost ten litres of milk.

Donations on the day, sales of CDs, vinyl records, books and the raffle tickets raised a grand total of £1,016.

## IN FOCUS Jazz centre is opened by Sir Michael Parkinson at relaunch event



## Sir Michael Parkinson.

"We are here today because of the music. Jazz is as special as any on the planet, the beginning of all popular music. It is important why we have this project, to advocate for all I hold most dear. I've been interested in jazz all my life, it's the greatest form of music ever invented. What people, even if they say they don't like jazz, very often don't understand about it, is that it's the foundation of modern music, rock 'n' roll, blues, all of it comes from jazz so we should be interested in it and we should do everything we can to preserve it"

The Southend Echo photo centre spread on October 20th re-launch.

## JAZZ CENTRE LAUNCH

### JAZZ CENTRE LAUNCH

It seems that, month by month, the Jazz Centre UK enlarges its scope and embarks on new projects and developments. October 20 was a seminal day in the history of the Jazz Centre when it officially extended over the whole of the Lower Atrium of the Beecroft Art Gallery in Southend. However, there is more to come. In January an equally important development will take place when the expansion of space will be matched by a similar expansion of time – five days a week instead of two. Due for February are a much extended and improved website and a Friends scheme. Already the website includes a superb and varied Newsletter: Number 4, dated October, contains articles on subjects as diverse as Jazz Art and Introducing Children to Jazz, plus a splendid piece by Digby Fairweather on Humphrey Lyttelton 10 years on and a nice obit of Dave Newbould many of whose jazz portraits are on display at the Centre. Of course, it also mentions upcoming events at the Centre: anyone in the vicinity at 2.00 on December 29 might like to take in Simon Spilars appearing at Spilars' Place with Ted Beament, Alec Dankworth and Winston Clifford.

But back to October 20. At 1.00 pm Sir Michael Parkinson cut a red ribbon and officially declared the Lower Atrium of the Beecroft open as Britain's first Jazz Heritage Centre. Local MP Sir David Amess, Southend Mayor Derek Jarvis and several hundred jazz fans then filled the Centre and enjoyed the displays of jazz memorabilia, artworks, literature, music and DVDs. Special guests included Paul Jones, George Fame and Humph's long-time manager Susan de Costa. With a pleasing symmetry the day began with the youthful Harrison Dolphin Trio and ended with a performance by the Humphrey Lyttelton Band.

Launch Day at the Beecroft Art Gallery - spot the celebrities...



THE JAZZ RAG 9



## Sir David Amess MP.

"If music be the food of love, we could certainly do with a lot of music just now. In that regard, will the Prime Minister join me in welcoming Sir Michael Parkinson who has opened the expanded premises of the United Kingdom's first jazz centre in Southend on Saturday, inspired by Digby Fairweather and displaying wonderful jazz memorabilia and music —and is that not yet another reason why Southend should be declared a city?"

And the last word from The Jazz Centre UK founder and CEO, **Digby Fairweather**

"This is just the first of many, many meetings — not happening because of me— but the dedication and commitment of The JCUK trustees. The first ever jazz cultural centre in the UK. This is not the culmination of the project but the start. The start of a shining new era."



Full page article from The Jazz Rag.

# 'Swingin' on Central Avenue'

**The Jazz Centre UK** is pleased to announce that acclaimed writer and journalist **Peter Vacher** has accepted our invitation to visit us on Saturday, 16th March, 2019.

Peter will be giving a talk, illustrated by a selection of pertinent recordings, on his book '*Swingin' on Central Avenue: African American Jazz in Los Angeles*'.

Just as New York had 42nd Street as the most important address if you wanted to play or hear first-rate jazz in the 1930's, Los Angeles had Central Avenue. There, shortly before WWII, the African American community significantly expanded due to the arrival of many musicians from Chicago and the southwest. Over a period of seven years, Peter interviewed, researched and revisited the band personnel on the western coast. The result is a work which consists of interviews with sixteen black musicians who worked in Southern California, mostly as solid instrumental backing musicians, from the 1920's through the 1980's.

And the stories are amazing. Andy Blakeney was in Chicago when Louis joined King Oliver:

"I remember when Louis first came to Chicago to join Joe. Joe had come in 1918 and Louis came in 1922. I wasn't really playing much then myself but soon after Louis arrived, I went down to the Lincoln Gardens to listen. Louis was a genius then, he just played second to Joe and Joe was playing the lead. Well, I enjoyed it. Joe and Louis gave me the inspiration to pick up the trumpet because at first I didn't know what I wanted to play."

Billy Hadnott recalls working with the young Charlie Parker:

"He was about seventeen years old. We couldn't do nothing with Charlie Parker. He wasn't on hard stuff then—he just smoked pot—but Charlie always did have a head of his own.



He didn't care about nothing but that horn. If he wanted to go someplace, he'd call a taxi and go, and when he do, if he's going to this house, he'd stop at another house and say "Wait a minute" and he'd go in the front door and out the back door. He got beat up more times by those taxi drivers. He never did finish high school, and after he quit, he just picked up saxophone and he learned.

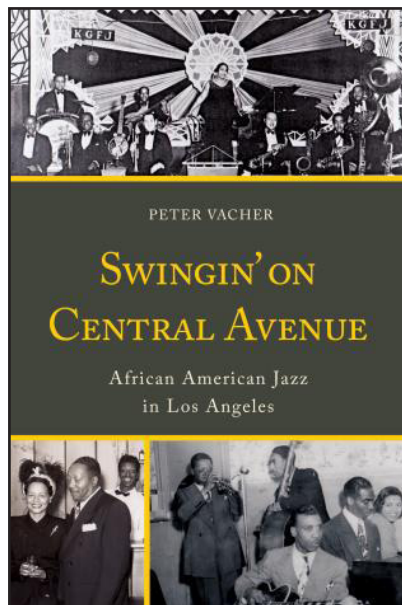
When Basie started recording, Charlie bought all of Basie's records and he'd learn all of Lester's things, all his solos on the sax, all of Coleman Hawkins's. Every solo that he could learn, he was learning. You never seen a man want to know more chord changes."

In 2016 '*Swingin' on Central Avenue*' was declared Winner of Best History in Jazz Music by the Association of Recorded Sound Collections. And on Radio 2, Paul Jones (one of The JCUK Patrons) said:

"This book is one that, as soon as you've finished, you want to go back to the beginning and start again. Absolutely fascinating."

So, make a date in your diary —Saturday, 16th March. One not to miss!

**John Wilson**



**The Jazz Centre UK Presents:**

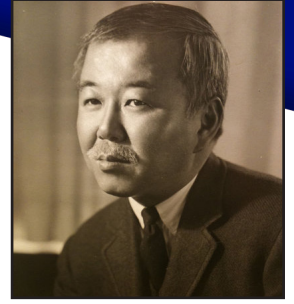
**"Swingin' on Central Avenue: African-American Jazz in Los Angeles"**  
*a musically illustrated talk by Peter Vacher*

**Saturday 16th March 1pm Entrance £5**

# Great Jazz Album Designs

If one group should welcome the phoenix revival of the vinyl record it will be graphic artists. In the 1940s and '50s, facing the challenge of the new 10" and 12" record

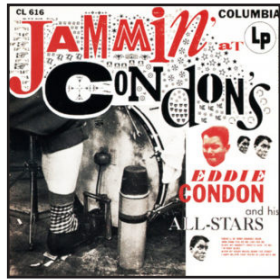
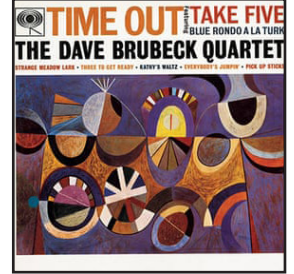
cover, they responded with superb modernist designs reflecting modern jazz. Our Newsletter will feature some of the best of these pioneering artists.



## 6. Neil Fujita (1921-2010)

Neil Fujita was born in 1921 in Waimea, Hawaii. He studied painting, design, illustration and colour theory at art school in Los Angeles. In the mid 1950s he became the art director for CBS records, where his designs became synonymous with a jazz-inspired modernism; revealing his early influences, Picasso, Paul Klee and Georges Braque. In an interview he explained, "When I first got to Columbia, there was the beginning of some idea of album cover art, but it was still just type and maybe a photo of the artist and some shapes arranged in an interesting way. That was the first concept of album cover art. . . . I was the first to use painters, photographers and illustrators to do artwork on album covers.

We thought about how we could use images or pictures in a more creative way. We thought about what the picture was saying about the music and how we could use that to sell the record. And abstract art was getting popular so we used a lot more abstraction in the designs —with jazz records especially. Jazz called for abstraction, a certain kind of stylization, using modern painters."



## 7. Mati Klarwein (1932-2002)

Mati Klarwein was born in Hamburg, Germany, the son of an architect. He studied in Paris from 1949 to 1951 with Fernand Léger, and attended the art school École des Beaux-Arts.

Much of his most famous work was inspired by surrealism and pop culture, but also reflected his interest in deities and symbolism.

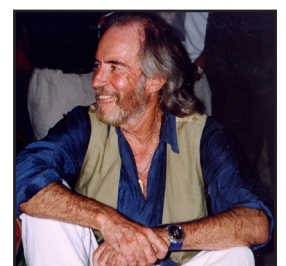
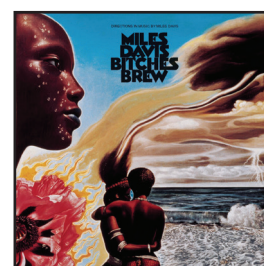
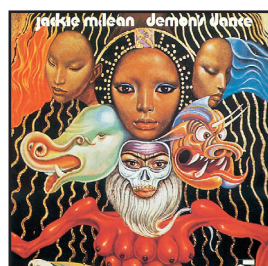
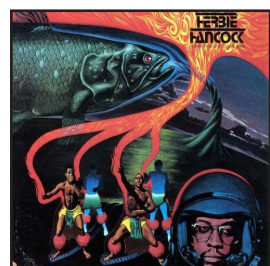
His influences and interests are clear in his album art of the 1960s and 1970s, with its bold psychedelic imagery, ethnic and exotic themes, erotic, and religious art from a number of different traditions.

His style is readily recognisable in the artwork for Miles Davis albums of that period, the double album

'*Bitches Brew*' a classic example.

The culture magazine *Juxtapoz* wrote of Klarwein that he was "considered the man literally responsible for every great legendary record cover you've ever seen —if he didn't do it, he inspired it." Overlooking the hyperbole his designs are instantly recognisable and his influence was massive.

As well as Miles' '*Bitches Brew*' and '*Live-Evil*', often cited is the covers for rock band Santana ('*Abraxas*') and The Last Poets' ('*Holy Terror*'). He designed gloriously exotic album covers for jazz stars such as Herbie Hancock, Jackie Mclean, Jon Hassell and Eric Dolphy.



# 'The Gig' reviewed by Bob Michalski

A couple of years ago I was at the Pizza Express in London to hear and meet, in my view, one of the greatest cornet players ever, Warren Vaché Jr. Before the first set I walked up to him and complimented him on his performance in 'The Gig'. "So, you're the guy who bought it", he said. That was the beginning of a pleasant conversation and ultimately an opportunity to visit Warren at his home in Rahway, NJ for some help with my embouchure. However, I digress, I'm here to talk about 'The Gig' and why I think it's worth a visit to The Jazz Centre UK when it appears in our weekly film showing.



Andrew Duncan, Warren Vaché, Daniel Nalbach, Wayne Rogers, Jerry Matz.

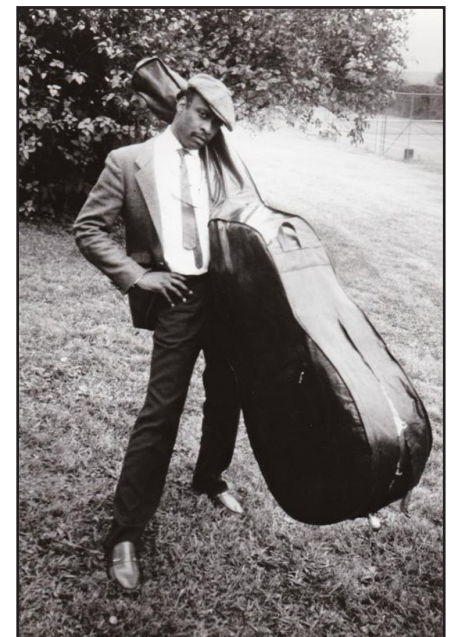
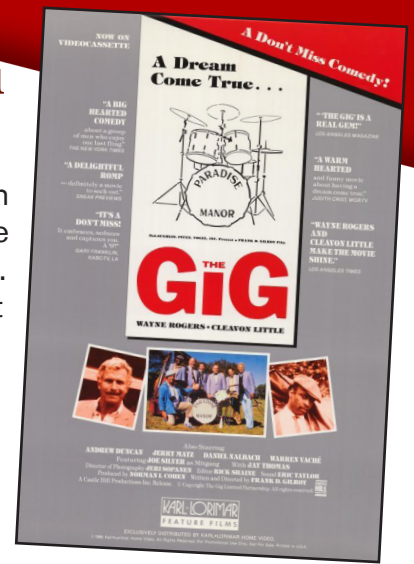
Marshall are resolved, the band arrives at Paradise Manor and meets proprietor Abe Mitgang, played by veteran actor Joe Silver who introduces the band to certain facility restrictions and accommodations not much better than a large garden shed with bunk beds. To make matters worse, Abe is not exactly smitten with Dixieland jazz and the band needs some help to negotiate better terms.

In addition to the main plot of the band having a successful gig, there are a few sub plots going that add to the texture: a hen pecked piano player, afraid to tell his wife that he's not really on a business trip, a clarinet player self-absorbed with achieving greatness, and a drummer home sick for his aging Mum. Gil gets to sweet talk one of the waitresses in his bunk during his spare time and Marty Flynn, the trombone player, played by Wayne Rogers, tries to resolve all issues and keep the group together.

Once things seem to be going smoothly, the band is fired when a sudden 'has been' singer is booked unexpectedly, and top-notch musicians are required. In the turmoil, Marty gets his trombone 'adjusted' by a mob enforcer during a row. The enforcer is played by Chuck Wepner, who, for you boxing fans was a professional boxer from Bayonne NJ (my home town) and who gave Muhammad Ali a respectable challenge during their 15-round bout in 1975.

The gig ends prematurely, and the band hits the road only to learn that their regular bass player has passed away. As they wait for road service to repair a flat, they play a mournful farewell blues on the motorway. This is a little-known gem of a movie and quite hard to find. I found the plot and characters more than believable and the music as good as it gets. I can well relate to this movie since I also had an amateur Dixieland band in the States which practised weekly and had a few jobs or 'gigs' during the year. As a cornet player, I found one of the closing lines by Marshall Wilson somewhat painful when he tries to explain to the clarinet player (Aaron Wohl, played by Jerry Matz), why he didn't recommend him for a top professional job, "It's not a religion", he says. "What does that mean" asks Aaron. "Devotion is not enough" replies Marshall. I remember those words every time I practice.

P.S.- I didn't have the heart to tell Warren that I didn't buy 'The Gig', —I taped it from pay TV!



Cleavon Little.

# Live at The Jazz Centre UK



**The lyrical baritone (and alto) saxophone of Mick Foster at The Jazz Centre UK, Saturday 24 November. Dominic Ashworth on guitar, Julian Bury on bass, and Tristan Mailliot on drums.**





# Alina Bzhezhska: In the Spirit of Alice and John

Recently your intrepid Newsletter editor, in the company of ace reporter Big Ears, spouse-accompanied, ventured out into the Thorpe Bay evening. Our destination; Annie's Jazz Club. Our aim; a gig by Ukrainian jazz harpist Alina Bzhezhska. Below is Big Ears' review of the evening, and of Alina's latest CD, *'Inspiration'*.

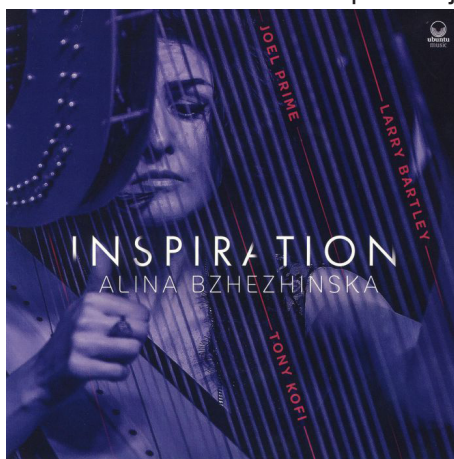


Alina is a fine classically trained harpist inspired by the legendary Alice Coltrane who with her husband John influenced the course of jazz for each and every generation to come. Indeed it might be said that the 'spiritual jazz'\* genre, only recently coming of age, owes much to Alice and her followers.

Certainly Alina's appearance at Annie's Jazz at Thorpe Bay Golf Club in October last year provided an attentive audience with the best of this beautiful music. Sharing the stage with top British saxist Tony Kofi, bassist Larry Bartley and Australian percussionist Joel Prime, Alina delivered two sets of majestic, uplifting music. The musicianship was top drawer with Tony Kofi giving it his all on the final number *'Journey in Satchidananda'*. Some feel good factor!

If you're not familiar with this group or indeed the venue I would recommend the band's current CD, *'Inspiration'* as a good start. It mirrors the playlist performed on the night including such 'spiritual jazz' anthems as *'Blue Nile'* and *'After the Rain'*. Alina's original compositions are there too often inspired by her Ukrainian roots. In particular look out for the track *'Winter Moods'*.

As for the venue, its got to be one of the most comfortable and inviting jazz clubs in the South East. Open every Tuesday night you can even enjoy



a meal before the music starts. We did! Highly recommended. For future gigs click on this link <https://www.anniesjazz.co.uk/>

\* The term 'spiritual jazz' means different things to different people. A broad church indeed! Whilst 'chamber jazz' (think MJQ) has been around long enough to be of some use when describing the music, the term spiritual jazz is relatively new. It has taken off in

the last decade or so thanks mostly to the Jazzman label in Japan who have put out a series of albums —8 volumes so far— called *'Spiritual Jazz'*! Indeed the term crops up regularly now on the radio courtesy of Jamie Cullum on his eclectic BBC Radio 2 show broadcast every Tuesday night at 8pm. As for the origins think Coltrane and the '60's with albums like *'A Love Supreme'* and later *'Universal Consciousness'* by Alice and co. And if that proves a tad pretentious try

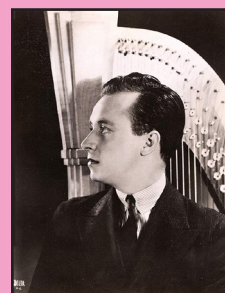
Albert Aylers *'Spiritual Unity'*. All are well placed in the top 100 jazz records of all time. Anyway, whatever the mix I would definitely include Alina Bzhezhska as a major exponent of the genre along with Mancunian tenor man Nat Birchall and the London based new generation band Maisha. Of course there's always Arvo Pärt and /or a good dose of Gregorian Chant to tickle the old cerebellum! Spoilt for choice? Dive in! Find out what you're missing.

Stimulated by the truly spellbinding jazz harp of Alina Bzhezhska, our thoughts turned to the question; who else has played harp in jazz history? Alice Coltrane was an obvious first name, but no others immediately sprang to mind.

Since that evening at Annie's some research into the subject has revealed an interesting history of jazz harping. Casper Rearden, Adele Girard and Dorothy Ashby may not be instantly recognisable jazz names, but will be the subject of an article in the next issue of the Newsletter.



Dorothy Ashby.



Casper Rearden.



Adele Girard.

# The Jazz Photography of Herman Leonard

*"My whole principle was to capture the mood and atmosphere of the moment. I wanted to make people see the way the music sounded".*

In 1988 the Special Photographers Gallery, based in Notting Hill, London, put on a solo exhibition of jazz portraits by relatively unknown photographer, 65 year old Herman Leonard. In only one month an unprecedented 10,000 people were attracted to the gallery. Since then he has had multiple exhibitions every year globally, from the UK to New Zealand, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and Japan, throughout Europe and across north America. He has become the most respected and renowned jazz photographer in the world.

Herman Leonard was born in 1923, in Allentown, Pennsylvania to Romanian immigrants. Fascinated with photography from an early age, he learned his trade at Ohio University, and as an apprentice in Canada with portraiture photographer, Yousuf Karsh.

Always passionate about jazz, in 1948 Leonard moved to New York's Greenwich Village, where he established his own studio. He gained entry to all the jazz clubs in the city offering to shoot publicity stills in exchange for free entrance.

His portfolio soon included jazz greats, including Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday, and Louis Armstrong. His photos appeared in *Downbeat* and *Metronome* magazines, as well as on many jazz album covers.

In the mid-fifties, following an offer from the newly formed Barclay Records, he moved to Paris, France. There he photographed visiting and emigrant American jazz musicians, and French recording artists. Resident for 25 years in France, to make a living he also worked on

—Herman Leonard  
fashion shoots and for *Time*, *Life* and *Playboy* magazines.

He published his first book of photographs, *'The Eye of Jazz'*, in 1980. It then took another eight years, and a move to London before the 1988 exhibition propelled him to international acclaim.

In 1989 his first exhibition in the USA toured nation-wide. In 1992 he moved to New Orleans following another successful show. Numerous worldwide solo shows followed. In 1995 his second book was published; *'Jazz Memories'*.

The Brooks Institute of Photography, in 1995, awarded him an Honorary Master of Science in Photography, and in subsequent years many more honours followed, including a 'Lifetime Achievement Award' from *Downbeat* magazine. His photos are now part of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC. 2006 saw the publication of his third book; *'Jazz Giants and Journeys: The Photography of Herman Leonard'*. Quincy Jones from the introduction wrote: "When people think of jazz their mental image is most likely one of Herman's photos".

The last UK exhibition was back in 1994 at the Special Photographers Company, London. The Jazz Centre UK cannot hope to emulate the comprehensive nature of these shows, but we have kindly been offered the chance to exhibit four of Herman Leonard's original silver gelatin prints. These will be on display in our Jazz Heritage Centre from Saturday January 5th to Saturday March 30th 2019.



Oscar Pettiford, NYC, 1949.



The Metronome All Stars, NYC, 1949.

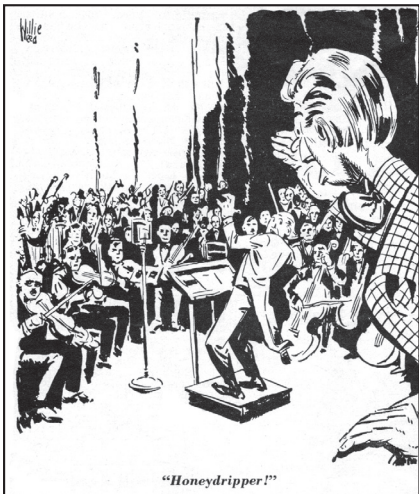
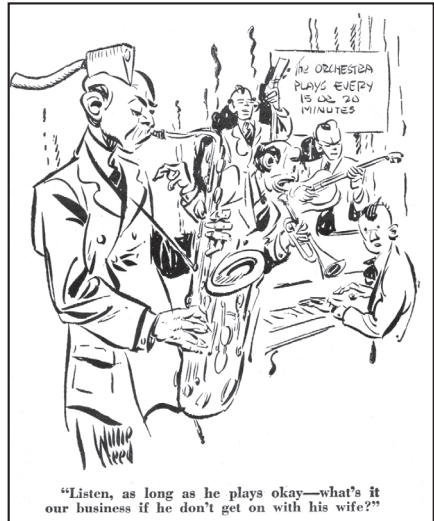
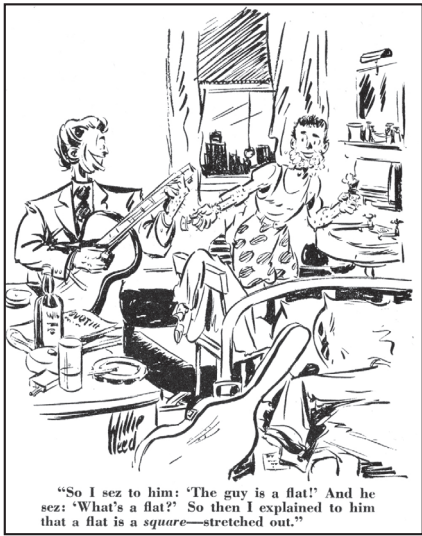


Charlie Parker and the Metronome All Stars, NYC, 1949.



James Moody, NYC, 1951. Signed copy.

In its early years US jazz journal Down Beat regularly featured cartoons. This issue of The JCUK Newsletter has reproduced some from 1946.



continued from page 3

heron disinclined to raise its wings and haul itself off terra ferma. That the image could conceivably (and, I hope, forgivably) extend itself into 'dying swan' after Ronnie died in 1996 from what would appear to have been suicide shocked the jazz world immeasurably. "I had no idea," my dear friend Allan Ganley said on the morning the news broke. "I just thought he was a terrific sax player". The simplicity of such a tribute from a man who would qualify anywhere as one of the world's greatest jazz drummers moved me deeply.

Knowing of his late traumas – cheap dental work which left him unable to play as he wanted and once had; the constantly shifting ramifications of his love life; the untimely visit, on the night, of a daughter which caused a row (after which Ronnie went out into the club to score): all these things, plus an accumulation of self-doubt and deprecation undoubtedly – whether by deliberate decision or an accumulation of self-inflicted accidents – brought Ronnie's life to an end. And how many people really bothered to take account of him by then is not for me to say.

One person who certainly did – as well as any – is The Jazz Centre UK's deeply-valued friend and supporter, the great tenor saxophonist Alan Skidmore. And it was Alan who came down to see us again on October 20th 2018; the day of our Grand Relaunch. All day, with wife Kay, he waited patiently for the celebrations to slow up; talking to fans, meeting with Georgie Fame who had, at his instigation, dropped in to see what we were doing, and occasionally finding an open space for a much-needed cigarette. But finally we had time to sit down together and Alan looked at me seriously. "I wanted to talk to you, Dig" he said "because I have something enormously precious to give to the Centre". He reached behind him and produced a weath-

ered Samsonite tote bag. "This", said Skid "belonged to Ronnie. See? These are the things he carried with him to every gig; boxes of Rico reeds, ligatures, spare mouthpieces and caps, a cleaning brush and even tuning-forks, a Korg chromatic tuner and a reed-cutter, all his working tools which went everywhere with him; right down to his last gig. Even some lead-sheets and copies of changes of the tunes he liked to play. The most private and professionally intimate of his personal possessions. After Ronnie died Pete King gave them to me!"



Ronnie Scott-Alan Skidmore display.

Alan looked thoughtful for a moment. "The fact is," he said, "that The Jazz Centre hasn't yet done anything specific to honour Ronnie. And – whether he believed it or not – he was one of Britain's greatest ever musicians and a huge influence on me!". He reached behind him again and produced a spotless vinyl 12" LP. "This is one of my proudest achievements," he said. "An album with Ronnie and me. Recorded for a BBC Jazz Club broadcast at the Paris Theatre, Lower Regent Street back in 1966, shortly before my twenty-fourth birthday. Gearbox Records discovered the tapes five years ago at the British Library and put it out

with a fine liner-note by Simon Spillett. See that rhythm section: Gordon Beck, piano, Jeff Clyne, bass and Johnny Butts drums. What a line-up! I was twenty-three at the time and Ronnie was one of my absolute heroes. We did quite a few gigs around the UK including the Royal Festival Hall opposite the Thelonious Monk Quartet. The quintet only lasted a few months but this album – and this music – means the world to me. So might we make an exhibit of the two things at The Jazz Centre UK?"

Of course we would, I said. We have done. And next time you come to The Jazz Centre UK you can see it too.

Digby F.

Continued from page 16

CANA agency booking bands into West End venues like the corner house on Coventry Street. The poster shown here illustrates this to a 'tea'!

However by the late 40's times they were a-changing. With the advent of be-bop the corner house in Piccadilly was no longer quite the hip place for musicians to hang. It was more likely to be Carlo Krahrmer's flat in Bedford Court Mansions or Club Eleven just round the corner opposite the Windmill. A natural progression given the radical new sounds catching the ear of a new generation of jazzers forced to find their own venues to explore this new music bursting out of Mintons on 52nd Street, New York.

A new age, a new tale . . . watch this space!

Thanks to David Chilver and all the original story tellers!

Big Ears



# Moments in Jazz History

## 4. Jazz at the Academy Awards

Even a cursory search through David Meeker's definitive "Jazz in the Movies" will reveal a large number of jazz musicians who have appeared on the silver screen. The overwhelming majority of these have been as musicians in a nightclub scene, in the background, generally as a scene-setting device. Occasionally one will have a line or two of dialogue; Charles Mingus in "All Night Long" or Gerry Mulligan in "The Rat Race".

Less frequently there will be a cameo role; Miles Davis in the Australian movie "Dingo", or Louis Armstrong in "Paris Blues"<sup>1</sup>.

Larger, or even starring, roles are even more scarce. Notable in this category; Warren Vaché in "The Gig"<sup>2</sup>, Nat King Cole as W. C. Handy in

"St Louis Blues", and the Dorsey brothers in "The Fabulous Dorseys". And I guess we should include Frank Sinatra in "The Man with the Golden Arm" playing junkie drummer Frankie Machine.

Here a special mention must go to Peggy Lee as a fading, alcoholic singer in "Pete Kelly's Blues", nominated in 1955 as Best Supporting Actress in the Academy Awards.

All of which leads us inexorably to the outstanding performance on film of a jazz musician; Dexter Gordon in Bertrand Tavernier's 1987 masterpiece "Round Midnight". A lover of jazz<sup>3</sup>, Tavernier wanted to make a movie truthful to the music, with jazz musicians rather than actors in the starring role. Inspired by the friendship between Francis Paudras and Bud Powell<sup>4</sup>, he recreated the 1950s Paris jazz scene where the bulk of "Round Midnight" takes place. His choice of Gordon to play world-weary, émigré tenor saxophonist Dale

Turner, turned out to be inspired. Gordon's performance deservedly earned him a nomination for Best Actor in the 1986 Academy Awards<sup>5</sup>.

His contribution to the movie, however, was much more than just hitting his marks and reciting his lines. He collaborated closely with Tavernier in re-writing dialogue to make it realistic, the way musicians would actually communicate. He persuaded Tavernier to bring in



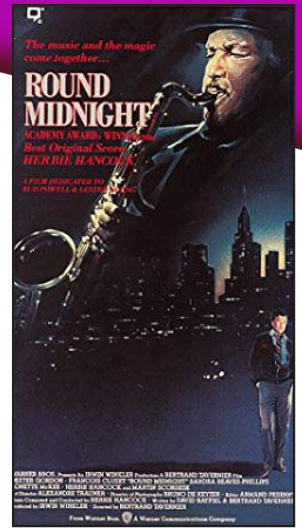
other jazz musicians he knew and worked with; Bobby Hutcherson<sup>6</sup>, Billy Higgins and Cedar Walton. The club scenes, where the music was recorded live, and tunes played right through, contributed immeasurably to the film's authenticity as a result.<sup>7</sup> Over thirty years since its première, 'Round Midnight' is generally regarded as the greatest movie depiction of the jazz life.

Interestingly this was not Dexter Gordon's first screen appearance, and not his last. In 1968 he had appeared in the Swedish film "Jag älskar, du älskar" ("I Love, You Love") as Johnny, an American jazz musician. In the 1955 prison drama, "Unchained" set in the medium security correctional facility Chino, California, he had a small, uncredited role in the prison jazz band<sup>8</sup>. At the time Gordon was in that gaol on drug charges. The film is best remembered today through the theme tune "Unchained Melody".

Gordon never asked to follow up his Tavernier success, and made only one further film appearance. In 1990's "Awakenings", based on the book by Oliver Sacks, he had a minor role as the musician Rolando, one of the catatonic patients treated by Sacks. He died eight months before the film's release. Perhaps the last word should go to Tavernier himself: "I still believe very much for me that film is very, very close to music, and it should have the same construction, with counterpoint, with a melody which has counterpoint behind, or a variation. Like a fugue." Dexter Gordon's contribution to his "Round Midnight" was certainly crucial.

### Notes.

1. Louis Armstrong appeared in more than a dozen Hollywood pictures, usually as a bandleader or musician. Famously, he plays the bandleader and narrator of "High Society" (1956), has a cameo in "Hello Dolly!" (1969), and appeared as himself in "New Orleans" (1947).
2. Reviewed on page 7.
3. Tavernier, together with Robert Parrish, in 1983 made "Mississippi Blues", documenting the music, customs, and religion of America's deep south.
4. In his book "Dance of the Infidels". Paudras is played in the film by Francois Cluzet.
5. The other nominees that year were Paul Newman, Bob Hoskins, William Hurt and James Woods. Paul Newman won for his role in "The Color of Money".
6. Bobby Hutcherson appeared in the movie "They Shoot Horses, Don't They?", as a bandleader.
7. Tavernier recruited the audience in the club scenes from jazz fans, musicians, and jazz critics to ensure an authentic reaction to the live music. Included were Charlie Parker's wife and daughter and the son of Kenny Clarke.
8. A short clip on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAHAKW7dIp8>



# Spike's Place at The Jazz Centre UK



## Saturday 26th January

### Anita Wardell with the Robin Aspland Trio

Anita Wardell is an English jazz singer, born in England and raised in Australia. Best known as an outstanding scat singer, Anita is also a skilled writer and performer of vocalese, and a sensitive interpreter of standards and jazz originals. She's collected several awards, including a recent prize for Best Jazz Vocalist from the British Jazz Awards, and her artistry has inspired accolades from fellow singers. Robin Aspland, known as a gifted pianist and a sensitive accompanist of vocalists, backs Anita with his regular trio.



## Saturday 23rd February

### Osian Roberts with the Simon Woolf Trio

Welshman Osian has performed with many great British jazz musicians including Sir John Dankworth, Iain Ballamy, Peter King, Jim Mullen and Peter Ind among others, as well as international stars such as Cedar Walton, George Mraz, and Peter Washington. Throughout his career he has been active in a diverse range of musical settings in addition to his small group jazz work. His big band credits include the Glenn Miller Memorial Orchestra, the Ronnie Scott Big Band, and the National Youth Jazz Orchestra (NYJO).



## Saturday 30th March Admission £12

### 'Isn't it a Lovely Day' with Sara Dowling, Atila, Gabriel Latchin, Dario DiLecce and Steve Brown

Atila is an established Jazz singer from the UK. Sartorially stylish and musically classy, his interpretations of the American Songbook are internationally renowned. After a joint 2006 US tour Buddy Greco said "I was knocked out by Atila. He has the voice and the class to show the world what great music is all about". Sara Dowling is one of Britain's world class female vocalists, of whom it has been said "Something really special happens when Sara is on stage".

## Saturday 27th April

### Derek Nash Quartet

One of Britain's busiest and best tenor saxophonists, Derek Nash is also leader of award winning band Sax Appeal, fusion band Protect the Beat, and a member of the Jools Holland Rhythm and Blues Orchestra since 2004. He has performed with top names from Humphrey Lyttelton, to John Dankworth, to David Sanborn, to Madeleine Peyroux, to Dave Green, Clark Tracey, Alec Dankworth . . . too many to enumerate.



## Saturday 25th May

### Mark Crooks Quartet: Remembers the music of Stan Getz

Winner of the 1991 Young Jazz Player of the Year, Mark has worked in a wide range of musical settings including classical work and shows but is most at home in the jazz world. He has played in all of London's top jazz venues and jazz festivals.

A recent highlight was a week's engagement at Ronnie Scott's.



## Saturday 29th June

### Matt Wates Quartet

"A truly remarkable young British alto saxophonist" —Dave Gelly, Observer.

"A performer of boundless ability" —Ken Rattenbury, Crescendo.

"The most swinging alto player on both sides of the Atlantic"—Duncan Lamont.

"An incredibly talented musician and composer" —John Dankworth.



Beecroft Art Gallery

Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea SS2 6EX.

Start 2pm Admission £10 students £5

e-mail: [susan\\_may@btinternet.com](mailto:susan_may@btinternet.com)

phone: 01245 420475

# Joe Lyons and the Jazz Makers strike again . . . . part 2



**WELCOME TO ROUND TWO** of this amazing story profiling the flagship Lyons Corner Houses and their part in the development of jazz in Britain.

**T**his time round we focus on the 1940's from the swing bands to the start of the bebop era, from war-torn London to post-war recovery. One can only imagine the wealth of musical talent that must have performed at the four great Corners Houses. Records are few and far between but we do know that the fabulous Ivy Benson All Female Orchestra once played the grand corner house in Marble Arch for 6 months!

**I**ndeed London never stopped digging the beat even during the war years, a surprise for some of us no doubt but given the influx of service men and women from all over the world the city was jumping and well able to meet the demand for nonstop entertainment. The Coventry Street Corner House was no exception and certainly played its part.

**I**n fact when war broke out the all night Lyons Corner House at Piccadilly became the musicians new refuge where London based artists could meet with band members from all over the world fulfilling the then popular household phrase 'meet me at the Corner House'! A similar life affirming moment that further illustrates such cultural exchanges throughout the war period in London is the one about the GI who, dating a local girl, decided one night to share his swinging 78's with her. Arriving at the family home in the East End not just with the 'shellac' but with a state of the art record player to boot, the couple danced the night away beneath the stars, the searchlights and the exploding shells watched by, among others, the girls younger brother who, it is said, went on to become a giant of jazz himself. Maybe you know who?



Jack Fallon.



Pete Chilver.



Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson.

**M**eanwhile back in Coventry Street the grand building somehow managed to survive the bombings. Not so the Cafe de Paris just a few doors down which received a direct hit one night in 1941 killing 39 people including 26-year-old bandleader, Ken "Snakehips" Johnson and his saxophonist Dave "Baba" Williams. Despite such tragic events 40's London continued to welcome just about every swing band there was, including Glen Miller, the 71st AAF, the Sam Donahue Navy Band —a real cracker by all accounts— the Canadian Air Force band and the King of Swing himself, Benny Goodman. Mix and match with Londons own home grown stars such as Ray Ellington, George Shearing and Vic Lewis and you get the picture. Indeed 'open all hours' the legendary Corner House on Coventry Street was the place for musicians to meet and talk up the scene-sharing experiences, exchanging records and even nailing the next gig or recording session.

**O**ne such session can be heard on London's Esquire label. Recorded in the late 40's it featured visiting **U**S players Jimmy McPartland, Sam Donahue and trumpeter Johnny Best playing with John Dankworth, Marion McPartland, Coleridge Goode, and percussionist Carlo Krahmer. Another gem from that era has Benny Goodman leading an international quintet on the BBC Hi Gang variety show broadcast in 1949. Just listen to Benny and UK guitarist Pete Chilver tear through an uptempo version of 'Blues in Thirds' with pianist Buddy Greco, bassist Charlie Short and Flash Winston on drums! Hear this for yourself on the Proper Box CD set 'Jazz in Britain'

**N**ot all the visiting musicians returned home of course. Bassist Jack Fallon decided to stay in London when his air force band left for Canada in 1946 after getting the call from Ted Heath to join his big band. Jack not only went on to play with London's best jazz outfits, including Joe Harriott, he also started his

Continued on page12

# JAZZ POETRY

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## Hearing Straight, No Chaser in an Essex Pub

Phrasing the line  
like a Ginsberg rant,  
pretending cool,  
and in the rests  
walking away.

But this is not a visceral muse,  
his sound is learned  
as surely as a classic score,  
the gestures, too, a studied  
imitation of historic moves,  
so here we feel their presence  
through the heirs of vinyl mastery.

We might recall the sound  
as 'trane or Miles,  
but this cat has an Essex name,  
his horn was made in China  
and the chorus learned in Barkingside.

## Simon Spillett plays Coltrane

Across the bars  
between the concert hall and club,  
the riffs and harmonies  
are somewhere close to jazz  
and somewhere  
close to formal composition,  
but a distance from them both.

There is a ghost of Mahler  
and an echo of Coltrane,  
percussive subtleties and  
thundering crescendos  
building to

a phantom climax  
and a lull  
before another densely chorded  
efflorescence of exploding sound

and then a rest  
a never-ending coda  
and round again  
through pause and introspection,  
the racing bass's frantic scales  
and wailing sax harmonics,  
honking squeaks and runs.

A legacy of bop revived  
and kicking through the Essex  
night.

*'All That Jazz and Other Poems'*  
published by Littoral Press, is  
available at The Jazz Centre UK.  
Price £9.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adrian Green is a Southend resident, a former editor of SOL magazine, a reviews editor of Littoral and is associated with the Southend Poetry Group and the Essex Poetry Festival. A jazz enthusiast, he runs his own jazz club, and is a Trustee of The Jazz Centre UK.

In this, his fourth poetry publication, his love of jazz is evident in the 30 plus poems in the first part of the book. He joins a long and rich tradition of poets inspired by their love of jazz to write about their musical heroes; Monk, and Miles, and 'Trane . . .





# Visual Jazz: 4: William T. Williams

THE JAZZ CENTRE UK has a large collection of framed jazz-themed posters and artworks which will be displayed now we have expanded into the Beecroft Centre Lower Atrium. They include original art, caricatures, photographs, advertising posters for gigs and festivals, and reproductions of original jazz-inspired paintings.



Trane. 1969

His work was included in the exhibition *'Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power'* at the Tate Modern in 2017.

## WILLIAM T. WILLIAMS

(born July 17, 1942, in Cross Creek, North Carolina, United States) is an American painter. He is Professor of Art at Brooklyn College, City University of New York, whose faculty he joined in 1971.

In 1968 he received a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree from Yale University School of Art and Architecture. He has since exhibited in over 100 museums and art centers in the United States, France, Germany, Russia, Venezuela, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, People's Republic of China and Japan.

In 1977, Williams participated in the second World Festival of Black Arts and African Culture in Lagos, Nigeria (FESTAC). This festival brought together more than 17,000 artists of African descent from 59 countries. It was the largest cultural event ever held on the African continent. In 1987 he was a member of a show that took place in Tokyo, Japan entitled *'The Art of Black America'*.

***"One of the things I remember most is . . . people asking me . . . 'Why are you making abstraction? It's not African American art.' And I would always say, "Well . . . you tell me what it should look like. Jazz is the most abstract of all music. Music is totally abstract. How can you not say there's a tradition of abstraction?' I would talk about quilts, point out that the geometry of quilts is certainly coming out of abstraction. There is this rich tradition; all you have to do is see it and to use it."***

In 1994 Williams participated in a Jazz at Lincoln Center program titled *'Swing Landscapes: Jazz Visualized'*. The intent of the Jazz Talk program was to explore what it is about jazz that makes its colours, rhythms and characters so attractive to the painter's eye. His 1969 composition *'Trane'* is a great example of this engagement with jazz. Williams and author, Alfred Appel, Jr. discussed the influence of jazz on modern art. This program was part of a New York Citywide celebration honouring the artist Romare Bearden.

# ‘Sonny Boy Blue! That hokey-doke tune!’

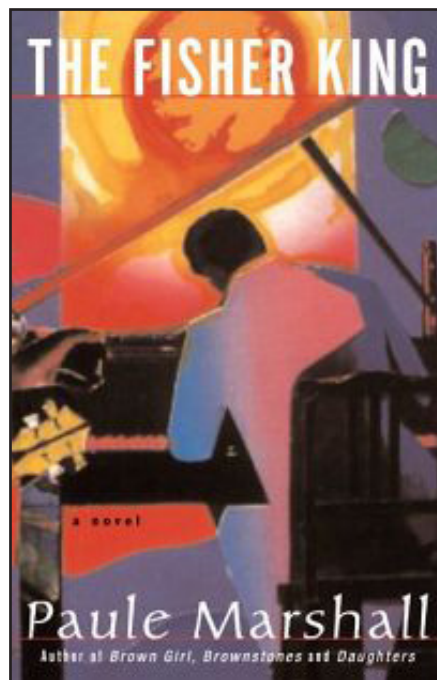
## Review of Paule Marshall’s *The Fisher King*

**SONNY-RETT PAYNE**, a black American jazz pianist, is the central figure in this intriguing novel from The JCUK fiction shelves. He is seen at a distance, largely from the viewpoints of his 8 year old grandson, Sonny, and his lifelong companion/manager/lover Hattie; 15 years after his death, they are invited by the pianist’s brother to travel from Paris, where Payne lived during the fifties and sixties, to his home in Brooklyn, where a concert is being organised to celebrate and commemorate his achievement.

The arc of Sonny-Rett’s life is complete, then, as this novel begins, but it unfolds for us in Hattie’s memories, prompted by her encounters in Brooklyn with Sonny-Rett’s relatives, as well as other local figures who played a part in their early lives. Sonny-Rett’s exile in Europe, escaping American racism and finding a tolerant and enthusiastic audience abroad, is a familiar jazz trope. Is there anything individual about him? Can an invented musician ever convince us without the opportunity to hear the very thing that would define them most powerfully —their music? Paule Marshall builds a sense of his originality and musical impact largely on Hattie’s lucid recall of his first performance back in Brooklyn after a spell in the military: an impassioned and transformative version of Sonny Boy Blue, which christens Everett Payne afresh as Sonny-Rett and launches a career that leads ultimately to his European exile. Nevertheless, Payne remains a somewhat incomplete figure, for Marshall’s interests lie in the

wider picture she builds of conflicts within the Brooklyn families and community.

Young Sonny, the grandson, is a delightfully drawn figure; he is loyal to Hattie, who has brought him up in France, and to his grandfather, whom he protects by imagining him within the castles he obsessively draws, with himself as guardian knight; but he also grows to trust his newly



discovered American uncle, and is fascinated by American affluence, which contrasts with his and Hattie’s life in France. Marshall captures a child’s eye view of the world with great skill.

The novel’s title bears little obvious reference to this story, but points to a deeper archetype or myth, one familiar to students of literature as an important element in T. S. Eliot’s modernist classic, *The Wasteland*; the Wounded/Fisher King is a figure from the Grail legend, and young Sonny’s castles and his self-

image as a knight is a clear reference in this direction. That said, it is not easy to precisely identify the parallels between this twentieth century story and a myth which exists in various forms. Sonny-Rett’s later years in exile were unhappy, as musical fashions changed, and his grandson lives in poverty in France, which is suggestive of the infertility of the mythical figure’s kingdom. I see Sonny as the Fisher King who by (re)discovering America brings new life to his dead grandfather’s reputation, while discovering new opportunity for himself in an America which now seems to offer more to his race than in the past.

A powerful last chapter reveals a deeper motive for the invitation to America, as Hattie and Sonny-Rett’s brother find themselves in conflict over Sonny’s future. Paule Marshall’s fine command of dialogue and confidence in the reader allows her to leave Sonny poised on the brink of alternative futures, the likeliest of which would permit a kind of redemption: young Sonny has already found himself drawn to the very piano at which his grandfather took his first steps into musical creativity...

Paule Marshall has created a fine novel with an intriguing sense of jazz history, family relationships and values, and social and racial division, underpinned by a loose framework of mythical reference to which different readers will pay more or less attention. Call it a jazz novel if you like, but you’ll find a great deal more, for which jazzman Sonny-Rett is just the catalyst.

A.S.C.

The JCUK Newsletter welcomes feedback from our readers. Following the successful re-launch and expansion of our Heritage Museum on Saturday October 20 we were pleased to receive a letter, reproduced below, from Carole Singleton.

Dear reader we want to hear from you; what you like, or dislike about our Newsletter. What you would like us to cover in the world of jazz. Write something for us. Send us some photos. Help make the Newsletter interesting, informative, stimulating, attractive, educational . . .

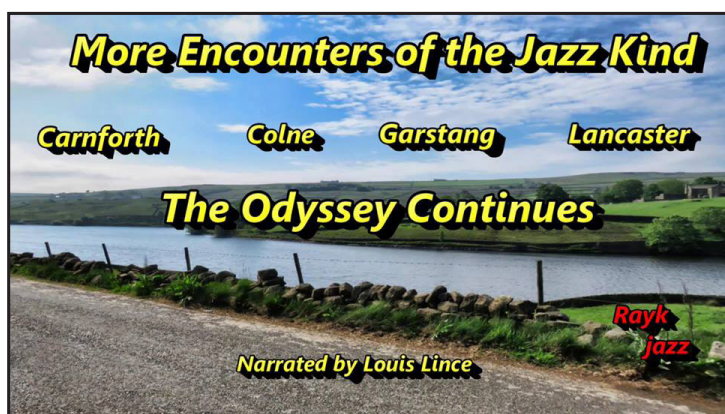
# Letters Page



Carole Singleton  
 64 Anson Chase  
 Shoeburyness  
 SS3 9RG.  
 Essex.  
 24.10.18.

What a great event the 'Spectacular Opening at the Beechcroft Jazz Centre' turned out to be. Jazz lovers and those who came to see & hear what it was all about filled the rooms, and enjoy what was a well organised event. I especially enjoyed browsing through the exhibits in the Jazz Heritage room. It was a real treat to view musical instruments of past & present Jazz stars. The volunteers were helpful and all in all it was a great event. a lovely way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Well done, More please.

With Thanks  
 Carole Singleton -



August 4, 2018 in The JCUK Media Centre a full house was entertained by Louis Lince, Ray and Jenny Knight's presentation and film about the traditional jazz scene in the North West: 'From the Dee to the Mersey: The Jazz Odyssey Continues'. This was the second in their long term project to record the living jazz scene the length and breadth of Britain. They promised a third jazz adventure on DVD to be presented to The Jazz Centre when completed. And sure enough it has been and we have a copy for our film collection. This will be one Saturday movie date filled for 2019. Watch this space, as they say.

Ray and Jenny Knight  
 7 Saxon Bank Braintree Essex CM7 1XZ  
 Telephone: 01376 348546  
 email: jennyknight7@btinternet.com  
 email: rayk84@btinternet.com

4th December 2018.

Dear Phillip,  
 Rayk jazz have completed the 3rd in a series of occasional documentaries on jazz.  
 Ray & Jenny Knight and Louis Lince visited Carnforth, Colne, Garstang & Lancaster to film "More Encounters of the Jazz kind - The Odyssey Continues" in May & September.  
 We are pleased to enclose a copy for your archive and viewing. It is currently available on youtube. We hope that you enjoy it and would welcome any comments or feedback.

Yours sincerely  
 Ray & Jenny Knight

www.harveydoesjazz.com Harvey Duck is on Facebook Youtube channel: Rayk jazz