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NEWS • GIGS • REVIEWS

INTERVIEW

JOE LOVANO THE SAX BOSS COMES TO BRECON

**PLUS
GORDON BECK**

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**NEW COMPACT
ON-THE-ROAD
FORMAT**





Cheltenham

SWEDISH ELECTRONICA DUO Koop were surely the surprise of the 2007 Cheltenham Jazz Festival. Their set with the BBC Big Band horns proved to be a warm and charming entertainment. Echoing Ellington and Cotton Club days, but just the right side of post-modern, Koop suggested the radical potential of '40s-era swing, even if the subversive possibilities weren't fully exploited. The talents of trom-

bonist Karl Frid and vibraphonist Mattias Stahl, BBC Big Band trumpeters John Barclay and Gerard Presencer, trombonist Pat Hartley and saxophonist Martin Williams all stood out. So did the voices of Earl Zinger from Galliano and Yukimi Nagano, with Nagano's waif-like presence and unusual phrasing suggesting the dangers of the exotic quite beautifully.

Other Cheltenham highlights were 79 year-old American trombonist Bob Brookmeyer's late-night

Sunday set with pianist Hans Koller and trumpeter Kenny Wheeler. New York percussionist John Hollenbeck's unique Claudia Quintet mixed free-jazz, accordion-melancholia, swing, noise, and precise yet audaciously liberated drumming, and Gwilym Simcock's superb big band extended his already lengthy credentials to a precocious grasp of complex (sometimes a little overcrowded) ensemble writing. (DH/JF)

Bath

STAN TRACEY treated the elegant Guildhall recital room and the classy ambiance of the 2007 Bath Festival as just another gig, of course - and delivered a typically thumping selection of unaccompanied standards and originals. 'We love him madly, don't we?' promoter Nod Knowles asked the cheering audience. A packed house also loved the Mingus Big Band, that most unclipped of repertory ensembles, and its visits to some of Mingus' least-known gems. Italian piano virtuoso Stefano Bollani played a stunning duet with accordionist Stian Carstensen, passion, irony and surrealism sublimely mingled, or mangled. (JF)

Robert Glasper

JAZZ AND HIP-HOP are always supposed to be hand-in-glove now - but American jazz pianist Robert Glasper, who plays with star hip-hoppers a lot, really understands the relationship. His one-off trip to the Soho Pizza Express showed how intriguingly drums (Chris Dave) and piano have almost reversed roles in the 21st century piano trio, and the music touched on funk, gospel, hip-hop and more. (JF)

Reviews by Rob Adams, John Fordham, Duncan Heining, Peter Vacher

News

REPORTERS: ROB ADAMS, BRIAN BLAIN

SIEGEL/SPILLETT



Big stars, local heroes for BBC

DAVE BRUBECK, at 86, might have stunned witnesses by playing live with the BBC Big Band across a Transatlantic satellite link in response to his Lifetime Achievement Award, and a quietly lyrical Madeleine Peyroux might have been a classy International winner. But it was the Services To Jazz in the UK Award for bassist, bandleader and educator Gary Crosby that brought the crowd to its feet at London's Mermaid Theatre for the BBC Jazz Awards on July 12. Another popular choice was saxophonist Julian Siegel for Best Instrumentalist ('blimus', he said, 'to quote Frankie Howerd') and the boppish Simon Spillett as Rising Star - they jammed together with a Guy Barker-led BBC Big Band on a fast 'Sonnymoon for Two'. Some felt the downside was a low profile for unorthodox jazz. But *Jazz on 3* Innovation winner Tom Bancroft created engaging mayhem with some audience participation, and the other winners were: Finn Peters' Finntet (*Jazz Line-Up* Best Band); Neil Cowley Trio's *Displaced* (Album of the Year); Curtis Stigers (Radio 2 Jazz Artist of the Year); Ian Shaw (Best Vocalist); Martin Taylor (Radio 2 Heart of Jazz Award)

Photo© David Sinclair



Wake-up Call

THE NATIONAL CENTRE For Early Music in York might not sound much like a jazz venue, but in recent years it's been proving itself a good one.

Now, as part of North Yorkshire's Aimhigher programme, trombonist Dennis Rollins (above) is leading a series of innovative 'Funky Grooves, Jazzy Beats' workshops on behalf of the NCEM - one of several partners in the region seeking to turn young people on to the possibilities of higher education. Rollins says: 'it's incredible how they all came from being humbly quiet to blossoming into young improvisers in such a short space of time.' Check out www.ncem.co.uk.

Smith protege scoops Scottish award

Eighteen year old pianist Alan Benzie became the first BBC Radio Scotland Young Jazz Musician of the Year at the final held at the Old Fruitmarket, Glasgow on June 25.

Benzie, who has already played with the Tommy Smith Youth Jazz Orchestra and former Jazz Messengers trumpeter Valery Ponomarev, emerged from a short-list of six whose high quality made the judges' decision extremely tough. Before announcing the

result, Dave Batchelor, chair of the competition's initiators, the Scottish Jazz Federation, spoke of the awe he'd felt, and his belief in a bright future for Scottish jazz.

Glasgow-born, Berklee-bound Benzie impressed particularly with his superbly delicate reading of 'Here's That Rainy Day' and his thoughtful solo-building and inter-action. He collected prizes including a cheque for £500 and a gig at next year's Glasgow Jazz Festival.

Photo© William Ellis

raps

MARVELLOUS SURPRISE 75th birthday party for jazz-singing legend Mark Murphy at the beginning of June. Organised by Gill Manly at her regular Tuesday night spot at the Royal Vauxhall Tavern it seemed like half the jazz singers in London were present to pay their respects.

OUR MAN IN PARIS, trumpeter Damon Brown, reports that the scene there is mainly divided between boppers and funksters. So what's all this about unclassifiable Eurojazz?

'A DAY IN THE LIFE Of a Young Jazz Musician' is the title of an open seminar and performance at Leeds College of Music, Quarry Hill, from 4.00pm to 8.00pm on August 4. Five groups from the National Youth Jazz Summer School will play with the course's ten tutors, including Tim Garland, Liam Noble and Issie Barrett, and the seminar will deal with practical advice on practice, rehearsal and performance.

WE HEAR that Tony Kofi has become a member of the World Saxophone Quartet.

KILLER SHRIMP, with Ed Jones and Damon Brown, was back in the studios in July preparing for a second album and autumn dates.

ECM's Manfred Eicher is reported to be showing strong interest in live sessions by guitarist John Etheridge, bassist Arild Andersen and drummer John Marshall recorded at Dean Street Pizza Express earlier this year.

Minifests for Mitchell, Etheridge



Robert Mitchell

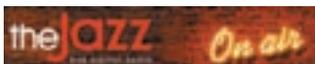
LONDON'S PIZZA EXPRESS Jazz Club in Dean Street runs invaluable occasional showcase weeks for British jazz artists - Alan Barnes was a recent beneficiary. Now two extended programmes for guitarist John Etheridge and pianist Robert Mitchell follow.

Etheridge holds court from August 20-26, starting with a solo spot to launch his new DVD. Violinist Chris Garrick, the Zappatistas (with virtuosos Arild Andersen and John Marshall on bass and drums) and the Soft Machine Legacy appear.

Robert Mitchell's week, supported by the F-ire Collective and Yamaha, goes by the title of *Lifting the Lid*. Mitchell feels the Pizza Express room is perfect for this intimate activity. September 13 sees Bheki Mseleku and John Escreet; followed by John Taylor and Zoe Rahman (14), and Django Bates and Robert himself (15).

theJazz gets gigging

TWENTY-THREE NATIONALITIES of musicians helped Marlborough's International Jazz Festival live up to its name in July. Regulars like Scott Hamilton, Acker Bilk and Marlborough favourite Gwyneth Herbert (celebrating her new Blue Note deal) were there, but so were bands from Cuba, Argentina, Africa, Israel, Holland and beyond. 'It's thanks to our new sponsor, Classic FM's *theJazz* that we've been able to expand the festival in this way,' organiser Nick Fogg told us. 'Because of them, we've secured a higher national profile.' It may be early days, but *theJazz* seems to be doing quite a few things right so far.



Jazz takes root at Glastonbury

LET'S HEAR IT for journalist Tony Benjamin (of Bristol events magazine *Venue*) and Glastonbury owner Michael Eavis's trusty lieutenant, for programming a four-day jazz event at this year's mud-soaked Glastonbury megafest in The Jazz Lounge. PeeWee Ellis, John Tchicai, John Law, Badbone and south-west funksters Groove-a-Licious (an Eaves fave) offered the festival crowd the broadest spread of the music. Jez Nelson and Radio 3's *Jazz on 3* ran shows from the Lounge, with Japan's Soil and Pimp Sessions reinventing the *Jo3* theme-tune, and appearances by Courtney Pine proteges Empirical, the irrepressible Liane Carroll, and US free-jazz legend John Tchicai with Spring Heel Jack.

raps...

SINGER VICTORIA NEWTON heads back to her native Oz to spend more time with her parents in the autumn. She'll be back, she says. The profile of fellow Australian singers Anita Wardell and Trudy Kerr has eluded her, but a recent date at Lauderdale House knocked out a near-capacity crowd.

GRAHAM COLLIER, the celebrated British jazz composer now living in Spain, is busy with *Memories Arrested In Space*, (six sax-quartet pieces inspired by Jackson Pollock), to be premiered in Switzerland in November - and he looks to be bringing bands to both the London and Granada Jazz Festivals in the autumn. Meanwhile, global rave reviews are greeting Collier's recently-released 1983 concert recording of *Hoarded Dreams*, and downloads from 1969's *Down Another Road* are available on the new *All About Jazz* MP3 store. Not a bad working year for a man 70 years young.

NORMA WINSTONE has always been a class act, but now the Queen has made her even classier - she's the recipient of an MBE in the latest Birthday Honours List. Keyboardist and composer Errollyn Wallen also received an MBE.



What's up at Ronnie's?

LACK OF PRESS coverage for jazz is a constant gripe, but a spin-battle seems to have broken out over Ronnie Scott's Club's image lately. The *Evening Standard's* Jack Massarik ran a critical piece on June 26 about the changes in the club's ambiance since its £2.38m refit. Then Sholto Byrne in *The Independent* hit back on July 11 with a more positive picture, arguing that change was inevitable,

Faulkner still firing

RETIREMENT HASN'T meant relaxing for Tony Faulkner. Having finally parted company with Leeds College of Music, where he began lecturing in Jazz Studies in 1973 and continued part-time after his official retirement in 2001, he's been busy writing, arranging and recording.

At the end of last year the Tony Faulkner Jazz Orchestra's long-planned CD was released, *Thad Jones and the Ellington Effect*. More recently, he wrote all the arrangements and played drums on the debut album by young Newcastle upon Tyne singer Zoe Gilby, *Now That I'm Real*.

British artists have many other places to play, and the place uniquely attracts some of the biggest names in jazz. It's a mischievous thought, but could Ronnie's PR company, the enthusiastic AIR (run by astute Jamie Cullum PR Mark Connor) just be doing an excellent job in both providing the war and then covering it?

Annual Jed tribute

FOUR YEARS after his passing, the memory of JazzUK creator and Brecon Jazz Festival director **Jed Williams** is to be annually celebrated in a four-day jazz event in Wales, with proceeds going to the assistance of young musicians. **Jed's widow Carolyn** and others are currently formulating plans, but the 2007 dates are **November 8-11**, and American guitarist **Wayne Krantz** (a close friend of Jed's) is one of the first to agree to participate. **More details next issue.**



A second CD by Tony's orchestra is due around Christmas, by which time he'll be putting the finishing touches to a set of arrangements for Alan Barnes's next album. Due to be recorded in January, the album features Barnes' octet paying tribute to Duke Ellington on some of the less familiar tunes from the Ellington/Strayhorn book. (RA)

John and Cleo hit 160



Photo© David Sinclair

A BBC PROMS CONCERT, *Bards to Blues*, will celebrate a lifetime in jazz for Cleo Laine and John Dankworth at the Royal Albert Hall on August 8.

Tommy Smith, Soweto Kinch, Guy Barker and JD's own quintet plus the BBC Big Band, will all be there. There will be 1500 £5 standing tickets, seats are £6-£25. Call the box office on 020 7589 8212. Salvo Records is also releasing a John and Cleo four-disc box-set in October. Highlights of the work of both artists, and their collaboration with their bassist son Alec and singer daughter Jacqui will all be included.

North West gets Real

Manchester-based jazz development agency NWJazzworks is hoping that compositions by musicians and composers in the north west will soon be joining jazz standards in the repertoires of gigging players.

The *Real Book North West* presents one hundred compositions by writers including Steve Berry, Richard Iles, and Kathy Dyson in an anthology along the lines of the *Real Book* and other American pub-

lications that have become indispensable to bands looking for easy to use arrangements of well known jazz pieces.

The new project, a first for the region, was launched at a special concert at Manchester Jazz Festival in July with a quintet of the North-West's top musicians, including contributor-composers saxophonist Andy Schofield and guitarist Mike Walker, playing selections from the book. *The Real Book North West* is available from your local shop or direct from www.astute-music.com (RA)

Richards shares the keys

TIM RICHARDS, the acclaimed pianist, composer and jazz-piano educator, is following up his intensive Goldsmiths College piano course in July with the 11th year of his popular all-levels workshops over five days (August 25-29) at Premises Studios in Hackney, London E2.

All levels except for absolute beginners are welcome, and the tutors include Nikki Yeoh (modal

jazz) and John Crawford (Latin jazz) as well as Richards himself. Students can record a tune of their choice in the Premises Studio with a professional bassist and drummer on the last day.

Topics also include blues, swing, bebop, improvisation, chord voicings, playing with a rhythm section. The cost is £175, get an application form from Julia Craik at Premises Studios, 209 Hackney Road, London E2 8JL (www.premisesstudios.com) - or call 020 7729 7593, or email info@premisestudios.com

McMullan for Montreux



MAUREEN MCMULLAN was preparing for the semi-final of the Shure Vocal Competition at the Montreux Jazz Festival as we went to press, with judges including Al Jarreau and George Benson. The 27 year-old singer from Coatbridge in Lanarkshire, is the UK's only representative in the last eight - she joins competitors from the US, Australia, Germany, Austria and France. Maureen has worked with a wide range of musicians including Edwin Starr and Level 42, and follows saxophonist Paul Townsend in reaching the last stages of a Montreux competition.

If you want to catch up with Joe Lovano, you need to take your time. The Cleveland-born saxophone colossus is often on the road - his second home for over 40 years - and he isn't a big fan of the kind of modern communications that strip away every vestige of privacy. But, when he does surface, Lovano gives you an undivided attention - and enthusiastic consideration of any kind of music-related discussion - that you might expect from someone with a lot more time on his hands.

This month's Brecon Jazz Festival will be a big beneficiary of that generous engagement. Lovano is the 2007 event's Artist In Residence - performing, running workshops, and delivering masterclasses. Considering that the fine American tenorist Joshua Redman once wryly told a Barbican audience that he loved playing gigs

with Lovano 'because it's a free saxophone lesson', the availability of this gifted and vastly-experienced performer throughout the Brecon weekend is a serious jazz luxury.

Lovano is 55 now, and his career has divided between a long apprenticeship in the '70s and '80s in which he was a powerful Rollins and Coltrane-inspired sideman (for leaders from Tom Jones to Woody Herman and Mel Lewis), and an independent originality that seems to have been on a permanent roll for the past two decades.

Lovano took up saxophone when he was five, and drums when he was 15, and worked as a teenager in the Cleveland bands led by his saxophonist father Tony 'Big T' Lovano, a local jazz hero. He met pianist Kenny Werner and guitarists John Scofield and Bill Frisell at the Berklee School of Music in

1971, and those associations have remained active to this day. Lovano Senior's close connection with swing and early bebop (and with many of the celebrated stars of those styles) grounded the young Joe in a way of improvising that was lyrical, song-based, and voice-like.

That traditional eloquence is very audible in his playing still, but he wove into it the vocabularies of Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane, and also developed an erudite interest in classical music of all eras, as well as opera and dance.

It's a breadth of view that has helped to make Joe Lovano an astonishingly complete saxophonist, and an enduringly open-minded one too. He recently played on an American festival celebrating the UK's Evan Parker (an artist with a very different background to his own), and calls the experience 'beautiful'. Earlier this year at the Barbican, Lovano invited Tim Garland into his *Streams Of Expression* band as a last-minute dep, and happily let Garland grab hold of the music and run with it.

'Things like that are still the most fun for me,' Lovano says. 'I'd known Tim from before, but the band had never heard him. I knew he would do something special, and it would catch them by surprise. It's a balance of freedom and organisation. I featured him at moments where I thought he could tell his story, it's what I've always wanted to do as a bandleader.'

Streams Of Expression, an album folding some classic themes from the Miles Davis *Birth Of The*



Tommy Smith with Lovano at the Barbican in 2003

Nowhere worth going but up

There can hardly be a saxophonist on the planet who doesn't feel that a lesson from Joe Lovano wouldn't be a privilege. As the master instrumentalist comes to Brecon, JOHN FORDHAM reports.

Joe



Lovano



“
Being
creative on
your
instrument -
that’s what
jazz is to me

”

Cool sessions into Lovano’s own themes, was one of the most acclaimed recordings of 2006, and its successor - *Kids*, with 89 year-old piano legend Hank Jones - is already a 2007 highlight. Classics like ‘Budo’ and ‘Soultrane’ showcase the indestructible Jones’ pearly elegance, and the ease with which Lovano releases a free-jazzy uninhibitedness from the confines of bebop chords.

‘It was a thrill to play with Hank and be around him,’ Lovano says. ‘I’d heard him on all those records, with Charlie Parker, Milt Jackson, John Coltrane. Then in my own history, there was link through his brother with the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, which I played in. In the late ‘90s he asked me to work with his trio, and I went out to his farm in upstate New York. We just played in duo for hours at his home, it was like we’d known each other for years. That’s where the duo project with Hank began.’

Yet Hank Jones is a jazz artist whose sense of melody is deeply rooted in the harmonies of the

American Songbook. Doesn’t this present a post-Ornette improviser with a problem?

‘Not at all,’ Lovano says. ‘Harmonically, I’m trying to play *freely* within the chords, but the joy of playing with Hank is that he’s also a lot looser than many players of his generation. He has a very deep groove, which is flexible. It means I’m not just playing on top of where he’s coming from, but somewhere deeper down.’

Joe Lovano worked very closely with another jazz legend for the making of *Streams Of Expression* - composer and arranger Gunther Schuller, who had played french horn on the original *Birth Of The Cool* recording. ‘Well, that’s what I mean about freedom and organisation. Gunther created a feeling in those orchestrations and in our rehearsals that allowed us to go to different places. He knows every little nuance, everything about vibrato and tonality, how to breathe at a whisper. The way he got all of us to feel each phrase as one, it’s an experience I’ve been able to

translate into other situations.’

Lovano believes ‘improvisation is the truth’ if the preparation, the situation and the company are right. He has learned from many legends to become one himself, but mimicry doesn’t interest him at all.

‘You either live in someone else’s shoes, or you don’t,’ he says simply. ‘If you try to be Miles, you’ll only ever be Miles on a bad day. Just being creative on your instrument the way you hear it, that’s what jazz is to me.’

‘I feed off each setting. I could play with Hank, then go downtown and play with Rashied Ali. Or Evan Parker, as we did on a week of his music staged in New York. It’s all in my background. Albert Ayler and Tadd Dameron were from Cleveland. I grew up with jazz and funk and the Beatles. I embrace all of it. We play in Asia, the Middle East, South America, the UK. We learn from them, they learn from us. That’s the fantastic fun of it.’

Joe Lovano plays the Brecon Jazz Festival, August 10-12. See listings

Turning it all around



Tubby Hayes, John McLaughlin, Bill Evans - pianist Gordon Beck has been close to them all. But he doesn't live in the past, as DUNCAN HEINING found.

SOMETIMES IT'S JUST TOO EASY to forget the virtues of musicians who've been making the music sing and swing for a decade or four. Gordon Beck has been one of our finest pianists since arriving on the scene in the early '60s, and like too many players of character, he's had his fat times and his lean. Now, with a solid deal with America's Art of Life label and the new *Appleby Blues* just released, Gordon's recording career seems set fair for the future.

Art of Life just called Gordon up out of the blue. 'The guy said, "my name's Paul Kohler and I have a company in America called Art of Life records,"' Beck remembers. 'It's been lovely ever since.'

Recorded at the Appleby Festival in 2005, *Appleby Blues* is a master-class in subtle piano-trio playing. Featuring Tony Levin on drums and Jeremy Brown on bass,

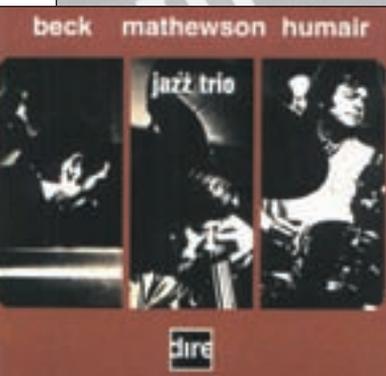
the music has a wonderful vitality. It doesn't just swing, it's like watching Gene Kelly or Astaire and Rogers. Like the finest Jazz, it never stays still and constantly finds new twists, capers and turns to keep you guessing. Levin is typically marvellous, powerful and resourceful - but Jeremy Brown's bass-playing is just as fine and his work on the album's version of 'Gone With The Wind' is remarkable.

Appleby Blues includes Miles' 'Solar' and Nat Adderley's 'The Old Country', as well as a couple of show tunes and three Beck originals. Apart from the title track and the witty 'With A Heart In My Song', the group do a lovely version of Beck's 'For P.J.'. Written for fellow pianist Pete Jacobson, Gordon describes it as 'a tribute to a wonderful pianist who died in tragic circumstances.' It's less a funeral elegy than an gospel-like celebra-

tion of Jacobson's talents, and is the finest performance on a fine album.

Gordon Beck has always loved making jazz out of the most unlikely materials, as anyone who heard his first record *Dr Doolittle Loves Jazz* and the follow-up *Experiments With Pops* will recall. He didn't just make these records to cash in on the popularity of the tunes.

'In that period I was interested in turning almost any form of rhythmic music around a bit,' Beck says. As well as his remarkable trio of the time with drummer Tony Oxley and bassist Jeff Clyne, *Experiments* featured a very young 'Johnny' McLaughlin. Producer Ray Horricks, who oversaw a sequence of Beck recordings for Major Minor, had received a last minute call from the pianist. 'Gordon phoned to say that he's been listening to a new guitarist of world class



I learned from Tubby - learned from all of them what I needed



called Johnny McLaughlin,' Horricks recalls. 'He thought if we added him to the sessions, we would get a more interesting ensemble without having to change our basic approach to the music.'

Did Beck and McLaughlin play regularly together? 'On and off really back then. I've no idea what he's done since,' Gordon jokes. 'Went to the States I heard.'

The Art Of Life deal includes all his new recordings, but also all the back catalogue Beck still owns. He had previously recorded for French label JMS, which released the classic *For Evans' Sake* in 1992, with Didier Lockwood, Jack DeJohnette and Dave Holland. Paul Kohler's and Art of Life's willingness to take both new and early product from the pianist set the seal on the relationship. 'The bottom line,' Becks says, 'is that compared with England he's so professional. He doesn't miss anything.'

Beck has often worked with French musicians. His previous album from Appleby, *Not The Last Waltz* (2003), featured Bruno Rousselet on bass and Philippe Soirat on drums, while *Seven Steps To Heaven* was recorded in Paris in 2005 and added altoist Pierrick Pedron to the trio. And Gordon also had long playing associations with violinist Didier Lockwood and

drummer Daniel Humair. But Beck never lived there. 'As a jazz musician, you go where the work is,' he says. 'It's not like they've given me the *Legion D'Honneur* or anything. And Jacques Chirac never calls.'

Asked about his long friendship with Bill Evans, Gordon Beck unhesitatingly says: 'He was one of the greatest piano players in the world. He showed everybody the way to go and he was a very, very nice guy. I think his knowledge was better even than his ability to play. He sorted me out once. He said to me: "You're playing the wrong chord. The structure there. That chord is not correct." I'm like a bloody idiot, going "oh!" He says, "yes, it's not that, it's this one." It was his knowledge. But these geniuses don't seem to last very long. He copped it at 46 years old.'

'We called Bill The Mozart of Jazz,' says Beck's sister Judy, who's sitting in on our interview. But when you hear a piece Gordon composed for Phil Woods called 'Philology', that's when you realise that Gordon is no longer in the shadow of Bill. It's so remarkable to hear this wonderful burst. He's become his own person. It's so amazing. The fact this country doesn't honour my brother is a scandal.'

Beck began his career playing

with saxist Peter King and later spent several years with American altoist Phil Woods' Rhythm Machine. He was also in the Ronnie Scott band alongside players like John Surman, Kenny Wheeler and Tony Oxley. 'If you're sensible you learn from them,' Beck says of such opportunities. He also played with the great Tubby Hayes and Art Of Life have issued *Commonwealth Blues* from Tubby's 1965 quartet.

There wasn't really a saxophone player to touch him. But he was difficult to work with. The way he would stop the band on stage and say, 'What's the matter? Can't you get this effing tune off the floor?' He had a go at me a couple of times but you learn. That's the thing that you want to come out it. It's like any profession. It's been an up and down sort of thing. But on balance, I ain't done too bad.'

Art of Life has also recorded essential British jazz records like the wonderful *Gyroscope*, with Oxley and Jeff Clyne, and *Jazz Trio*, (with bassist Ron Mathewson and Daniel Humair) to become available once again. But it's the overarching quality rather than particular associations that marks Beck out as a national treasure. That quality prompted Peter King to renew their partnership and invite Gordon to play on *Janus*, the saxophonist's most ambitious project to date. King says he and Beck 'lost touch for many years. I'm glad to say that now we play together whenever we get the chance.'

Beck says his career has been a lifetime of learning. 'I learnt from Tubby. I learnt from all of them what I needed. But who wants a short life like Tubby and Bill? I'd rather have a dull one but a long one.'

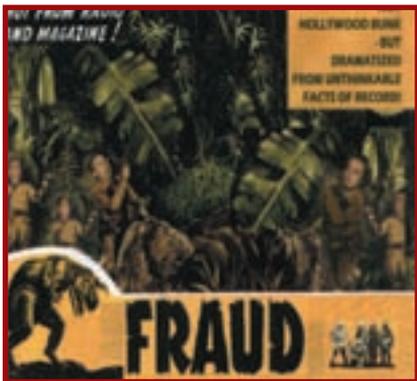
Check out Art of Life's new Gordon Beck catalogue. Dull it definitely isn't.

Tracks

Fraud

Babel CD BDV2766)

Fraud is Royal Academy reeds graduate James Allsopp's cutting-edge multi-national group - an outfit that was being eagerly speculated about long before this debut album emerged. Eclecticism is no news these days, but this set is more of a kaleidoscopic vision of contemporary music than most - with echoes of Coltrane, Joe Zawinul, Frank Zappa, Django Bates, Acoustic Ladyland, thrash-metal, impressionistic movie-music, free-jazz and a lot more. But for all the raw and urgent feel, Allsopp (like John Zorn) is a sweepingly erudite as well as virtuosic artist who also has a composer's sense



of pacing and organisation - so it's likely that very little here happened accidentally. It might be trying too many things at once right now, but Fraud is a powerful new force on the scene. (JF)

Claire Martin

He Never Mentioned Love -

Remembering Shirley Horn

Linn AKD 295

The late Shirley Horn never hurried, so Claire Martin's swinging agility isn't much required in this largely meditative set - but her sumptuous low tones and subtle timing are the highly eloquent alternatives. Gareth Williams, Jim Mullen and Guy Barker make restrained but telling contributions (a loose dialogue with Barker at the end of 'All Night Long' could have been prolonged), with Mullen and Martin sublime on the soulful 'LA

Breakdown'. It might be a bit plush and torchy for Martin's jazz fans, but it's as beautifully done as you might expect from such a class act. (JF)

Abbey Lincoln

Abbey Sings Abbey

Verve 0602498470305

Dee Dee Bridgewater

Red Earth

Emarcy 0602517228306

Abbey Lincoln's unclassifiable career has gone from sultry cabaret wannabe to civil rights activist to folksy philosopher, and each incarnation has its fans. Abbey Sings Abbey remakes original successes including 'Throw It Away' and 'The World Is Falling Down'. The earlier jazzy accompaniments are now replaced by the distinctly country sound of Larry



Campbell's guitar, however - and, in the absence of horns, we have to make do with Gil Goldstein's discreet accordion and occasional cello.

Despite my initial reservations, Lincoln carries the project confidently, and her voice definitely doesn't sound its age. Dee Dee Bridgewater also confounds expectations on the unusual *Red Earth*. There's an artful blend of jazz trio (led by pianist Edsel Gomez) and, often simultaneously, a Malian group. While they often perform simultaneously, the repertoire alternates between standards ('Afro-Blue', 'Compared To What') and indigenous material, both old and contemporary. You might think this could never work, but Bridgewater holds it all together in exemplary manner. (BP)

John Etheridge Trio

North

Stitched Up

Jazz Cat JCCD 111/ www.jazz-cat.com

Guitarist John Etheridge has so often been an interpreter of other people's music, that it's good to have a set that puts him firmly centre-stage - there are six originals here out of eleven tracks. The unaccompanied 'Simbel' and the melancholy 'St Mary's Loch' are among the highlights, and Etheridge's improvisational fluency and imagination are well captured on straightahead pieces such as 'Turnaround' and 'Softly as in a Morning Sunrise'. His range also extends to unfamiliar vehicles for jazz, like James Taylor's 'Fire and Rain'. Bassist Ben Crosland and drummer Dave Tyas are excellent in the accompanying roles, and the set adds up to a revealing portrait of John Etheridge, much as you would hear him in a club. (PM)

DeJohnette) likewise, and Metheny in unequivocally in jazz mode. The themes are Brecker's, as melodically zig-zaggy and percussively punchy as ever, though the saxophonist displays his frequently-camouflaged balladeering intensity on the haunting 'Five Months From Midnight' - which is exactly what he was. Worth the set, however, is the long spontaneous collective jam on the catchy 'Tumbleweed', an episode of shared inspiration that the surviving participants look back on as close to magical. (JF)

Whackabas *Live At Zeffirellis*

BBW Records CD001/www.whackabas.co.uk
Whackabas is the collective name of three up-and-coming musicians on the northern scene - pianist Dan

Whieldon, bassist Gavin Barras and drummer Jonas

Backman. This CD offers highlights from two spontaneous and animated sessions recorded by Stuart Green at Zeffirellis in Ambleside last year. The format (piano trio) and much of the material is familiar, but the freshness of this set is very engaging.

Whieldon is particularly imaginative, and Barras and Backman follow him at every twist and turn - but above all it's the sense of collective purpose that comes across. Check out the group performance on a haunting version of Horace Silver's 'Peace', and Dan Whieldon's dazzling contribution to 'Autumn Leaves'. (PM)

Alan Barnes/Harry Allen *Barnstorming*

Woodville WVCD115
Barnes and Allen may sound like a vintage music-hall turn but there's nothing old-hat here. Rather a pair of broad-minded saxophonists at one in a quintet setting, ballads and swingers nicely mixed, with drummer Bobby Worth and bassist Dave Chamberlain in the driving seat. Apparently the session was shoe-horned into a few spare hours during a Harry Allen gig at Ronnie's, which might explain the general aura of sleeves-rolled-up endeavour, typified by the vigour of the exchanges on Barnes's original 'Twins'. Allen sounds a tad grittier than usual, looking for swing, and he's also Webster-like on the lovely 'This Is Always'. Pianist John Pierce contributes to the class the whole thing exudes. (PV).

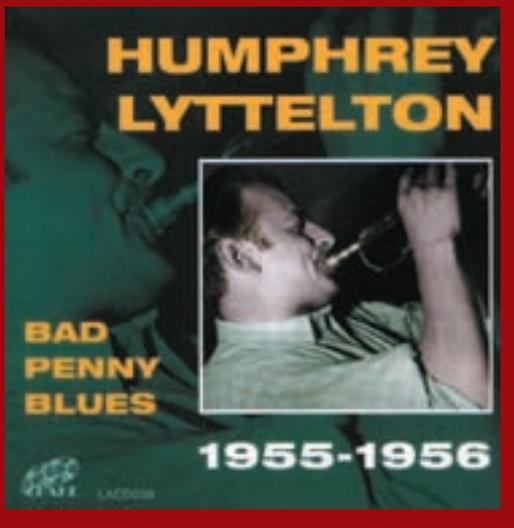
Humphrey Lyttelton *Cornucopia*

Calligraph CLG CD 044

Bad Penny Blues

Lake LACD238

Two Humph releases bridging half a century, from the resolutely traditional *Bad Penny Blues* from his old eight-piece, through to the sleek ensemble of today, with its solo firepower and varied material. Saxophonists Karen Sharp and newcomer Jo Fooks egg each other on, notably on Sharp's stirring 'Wicker Woman', and Jimmy Hastings' lithe alto is in fine form. Acker Bilk guests on 'Blues In Thirds' and duets with Humph on 'You Must Have Been.', while 'Snow Time' is a nippy feature for the flutes of Hastings and Fooks. It's easily the most rewarding of Lyttelton's recent albums. Lake's twofer is a neat retrospective, with 40-plus tracks (some previously unissued), mostly of rousing quality, with Humph himself on peerless form. (PV).



Michael Brecker *Pilgrimage*

Emercy 2007

The last recording by Michael Brecker, intended as an epitaph in the company of Pat Metheny, Brad Mehldau, Herbie Hancock and other stars. The two pianists are in scalding form, the rhythm section (John Patitucci and Jack



Tim Laphorn *Seventh Sense*

Basho SRCD19-2

Laphorn turns up in any number of playing situations and consistently reveals what a resourceful and technically gifted pianist he is. This trio date confirms his emerging status. His keyboard stance may be intense but it's joyful too, the improvisations often startlingly original. He's Monkian, reasonably enough on the opening 'Bright Mississippi', while offering his own harmonic take on the piece. There's variety here, in the Evans-like calm of 'Seventh Sense', the nimble bop-pishness of 'Come Rain' (bassist Arnie Somogyi digging in) and the more rumbustious and fast-moving 'The Bark And The Bite'. Brilliant music. (PV)

Julie Edwards/Kevin Dearden

Rhyme or Reason

EPUK 884/www.julieedwards.com

Rhyme or Reason will certainly appeal to many who heard the highly compatible pair of singer Edwards and instrumentalist/producer Dearden on their recent national tour, not least because the duo's highly varied material is extensively influenced by the tastes of its regular listeners. The versatile Dearden plays saxophones and debuts on guitar here - and Edward Barnwell on piano, Frank Grime on

bass, with Rob Turner and Chris Sykes on drums and percussion are right on top of the music. But the spotlight is mostly on Julie Edwards - her jazz expressiveness is very moving on 'In a Sentimental Mood' and the poignant original title track. 'Love Me or Leave Me', on the other hand, shows how well she can groove. (PM)

Rita Marcotulli/Andy Sheppard *On The Edge Of A Perfect Moment*

Le Chant Du Monde 274 1410

Scandinavian, American and southern European music influence much-travelled, somewhat Jarrett-like Italian pianist Marcotulli, and Sheppard's sensitive sax-meditations find a creative path through almost any setting. Not that he's only ruminative here - there are plenty of fervent Coltranesque harmonics and tumbling tenor runs as well as probing, Steve Lacy-like figures on soprano. There are idiosyncratic takes on tangos, townships music and Pink Floyd, and the improvising and the material match each other for quality. (JF)

John Surman *The Spaces In Between*

(ECM 172.3586)

Coruscating, Part Two - Surman with long-time bass partner Chris Laurence revisiting jazz/classical

chamber music territory, this time with the Trans4mation String Quartet. Violinist Rita Manning's solo on the title track shows how spontaneous such cross-idiom partnerships have become, and there are materials drawn from Surman's many adventures over the years - like the north African-tinged 'Mimosa' from his work with oud player Anouar Brahem, and the 1970 'Where Fortune Smiles', originally made with John McLaughlin. 'Wayfarers All' represents the saxophonist's folksy side, 'Winter Wish' his astonishingly inventive tenderness on slow soprano sax pieces. It may well be an advance on *Coruscating*, and that's saying something. (JF)

Zena James *Tell Me More*

Jazizit JITCD 0643/ www.zenajames.com

Another excellent Derek Nash/Clowns Pocket production - perhaps not quite capturing the sparkle of Zena James's live, but close. She's happy outside or inside the comfort zone of standards, so material by Smokey Robinson and Abbey Lincoln sits alongside a gently grooving version of Billie Holiday's 'Fine and Mellow', with Lady Day favourites ('Tell Me More' and 'You've Changed') also getting unhackneyed treatments.

Arrangements by bassist Geoff Gascoyne and pianist Geoff Castle are very sharp. The bassist's cheeky reference to 'In Walked Bud' on a scat paraphrase of 'Blue Skies' reveals the master craftsman. Zena's and saxophonist Simon Allen's version of Abbey Lincoln's 'Throw it Away' should by rights have 'hit' written all over it. (BB)

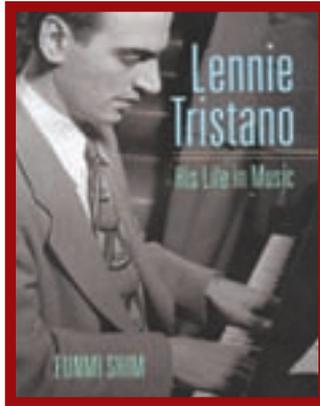
Reviews by Brian Blain, John Fordham, Pete Martin, Brian Priestley, Peter Vacher.

Books

John Chilton's spotlight on himself, Lennie Tristano's secrets, Henry Grimes' and William Parker's poetry and prose, reviewed by BRIAN PRIESTLEY

A JOHN CHILTON biography has always been a byword for clear, direct prose and meticulous research. The research for his latest, however, must have been rather different, since *Hot Jazz, Warm Feet* (Northway) is his first autobiography. Published just in time for his 75th birthday last month, its title celebrates the Feetwarmers band-name he used with George Melly for 30 years (and, both before and since then, with clarinettist Wally Fawkes). John's own trumpet work often seemed to take a lower place in the pecking order than his bandleading and songwriting, and none of them share the international reputation of his literary self. This time the bal-

adept enough as a player to become Melly's musical director when opportunity knocked. His writing is as matter-of-fact as ever, the better to highlight the many anecdotes, and his reserved but enthusiastic personality comes through well.

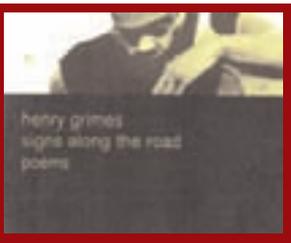


It's a compliment to compare a biography to Chilton's, well deserved in the case of **Lennie Tristano: His Life In Music** by Eunmi Shim (U. of Michigan Press). Unlike Peter Ind's book on Tristano, based on personal acquaintance with the controversial pianist and teacher, this is a classic job of locating everything published in articles or broadcasts about Lennie plus comments from nearly 100 interviews, mostly of Tristano's students, conducted by the author. Her detailed account of the career and life of an unconventional and influential thinker is enhanced by



28 pages of analytic discussion and no fewer than 42 pages of continuous transcriptions, including part of 'C Minor Complex' and the entirety of 'Line Up' and 'Wow'.

Someone who played with Tristano for a moment is the legendary bassist Henry Grimes, who dropped out of music in the late 1960s and didn't reappear until 2002. A selection of the poetry he wrote during that long period has now been published with an introduction by guitarist Marc Ribot and, more than the occasional specific musical references, it's the word-plays and word-rhythms that are captivating. Grimes's **Signs Along The Road**, from the Cologne-based Buddy's Knife imprint, came out alongside a volume by bassist William Parker (who played a key role in Grimes's rehabilitation). His **Who Owns Music?** has more prose than poetry and is more specifically about the musical life, and both paperbacks are beautifully produced. (BP)



ance shifts in favour of the war evacuee who, at the age of 12, accidentally discovered jazz via a Jelly Roll Morton/Sidney Bechet record on the radio. Quickly becoming a collector of music and information, he began a scrapbook that 25 years later was the basis of his first publication. In between day jobs, National Service and running a secondhand bookshop, John was

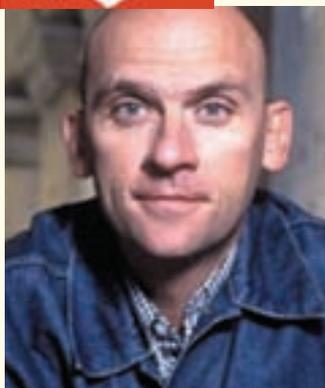
Airwaves/online

Radio

JAZZ ON 3

FRIDAY NIGHTS 23.30-01.00, RADIO 3.

www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/jazzon3/
Presenter Jez Nelson.



Aug 3: Medeski, Martin, Scofield and Wood

The Barbican Jazz series concert by the funky M, M and W trio augmented - ever more fruitfully by star jazz and funk guitarist Scofield.

Aug 10: Wayne Shorter Quartet

Still one of the most collectively creative contemporary jazz groups on the planet, saxophonist Shorter's ensemble treats every gig as an adventure.

Aug 17: Trio Beyond

More Scofield, this time in the free-jazzy version of a Hammond organ trio he operates in with Jack DeJohnette and organist Larry Goldings.

Aug 24: Tribute to Andrew Hill

Celebration of the music of one of

modern jazz's most original composer-players, featuring material from the *Jo3* vaults.

Aug 31: Chris Potter

Saxist Potter remains at the forefront of postbop, and since the sad departure of Michael Brecker, he may be the natural heir.

Sept 7: Chick Corea/Gary Burton

Another Barbican Jazz special from this summer, the occasional duo meeting of pianist Corea and vibist Burton produced music of consistent inventiveness and surprising punch.

Sept 14: Vision Festival Special

New York's celebration of left-field music, caught on a *Jo3* flying visit.

Sept 21: Jeff 'Tain' Watts Quartet

The formidable postbop band led by brilliant drummer Watts, featuring former M-Base guitarist Dave Gilmore.



JAZZ LINEUP

SATURDAYS, 16.00-17.00 RADIO 3

Presented by Claire Martin
Jazz Line-Up focuses on the established generation, playing mainstream, straightahead jazz, as well as the new generation of young players.

JAZZ RECORD REQUESTS

SATURDAYS, 17.00 RADIO 3

Presented by Geoffrey Smith
Usually on Saturdays 17:30 - 18:30
Jazz Record Requests offers a cross-section of genres and eras, often in unexpected sequences, to illustrate the wonders and continuities that mark every stage of jazz history. All records are requested by the listeners and presented by Geoffrey Smith.

JAZZ LIBRARY

FRIDAYS 22:30-23:30 RADIO 3

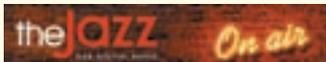
New series fronted by the expert and elegant Alyn Shipton devoted to choosing essential records from the canon of a particular artist - some of them huge stars, some of them overlooked class acts. Musicians with special favourites frequently join Alyn to discuss the week's chosen



BIG BAND SPECIAL

Mondays, 22.00-23.30

Clare Teal introduces a selection of the very best in big band music, ranging from the 1930s up to the present day, featuring the BBC Big Band. Frequently the show fronts the band with a variety of guest soloists and leaders.



theJazz

Check out the new Classic FM-run digital station, on DAB digital radio, Sky Channel 0113, Virgin Media Channel 961 or at www.thejazz.com/

On the web

This issue's personal favourites - chosen by *Jazz on 3*. Send us yours!



www.thebadplus.typepad.com/dot_hemath/

www.pointofdeparture.org/

DoTheMath is Bad Plus pianist Ethan Iverson's very personal outlet, spanning his interests from Alfred Schnittke to crime novels. *Point of Departure* is a fascinating cross-genre music journal, with contributors including Art Lange and the UK's Brian Morton.



www.destination-out.com/

www.allaboutjazz.com

Destination Out features 'requests, rants' and much more, but its big attraction is its links to all kinds of connections, from Gary Giddins *Village Voice* pieces to obscure US radio stations. *All About Jazz* is a huge jazz resource and effectively an online jazz newspaper, with reviews, articles, MP3s, profiles, upcoming releases and much more.

In the saxophonist's chair

Emerging at 14 in the mid '80s and playing with the award-winning *Itchy Fingers*, Nigel Hitchcock seemed a life force on alto sax. He still is, but now he lives on the Isle of Skye with a bearded collie called Sally. DR IAIN took soundings.



Photo© Mark Karasick

Patient 0029: Nigel Hitchcock

60-piece symphony orchestra!

Dr Iain: As it's too far for a home visit I'll use this videophone conferencing thingy. Could you turn the sea noise down please? Does music or jazz in particular seem a very urban culture from your perspective living on a remote island?

Patient 0029: *Actually, music is a family tradition here and there are a lot of great musicians playing Celtic stuff. Folk 'n' Roll' they call it. I moved to Skye to live, not work - I left to rediscover music for the joyous thing it is. I still travel but I also have broadband and a Neumann U87 mic to send solos over the net. I love doing that!*

Dr Iain: How did you come so far so fast? Did you peak too soon?

Patient 0029: *I started very young, and nobody told me I wasn't supposed to be able to do it! As you grow up, you become more aware of difficulties, it can stop some people's progress. I've just composed and recorded a commissioned work at Abbey Road with a*

Dr Iain: I wrote a song called 'Lavender Eyes', about the look of unconditional love you can only get from a dog. I imagine your dog is more than a guard dog?

Patient 0029: *My Sally is my pride and joy. The only dependable bitch on the planet! I'd be lost without her. She's very sociable (I'm not always) and I find myself talking to passers-by who admire her. And she keeps me fit! But awesome mountains surround me and wildlife abounds. Nature is by far the biggest inspiration.*

Dr Iain: Is it true you were arrested in the middle of a recording session with a full orchestra?

Patient 0029: *Hmm.... yes. I got frog-marched into the control room by the cops, and told the Yank producer I had to go. He loved it. "I thought I'd heard everything," he said. That was a long time ago. I've grown up a lot since then...ahem...*

Dr Iain: Any plans for an album or performance on the mainland?

Patient 0029: My orchestral album 'Memory of the Heart' will be out on Sony BMG Masterworks in the autumn. I hope to do a remake of the Parker-with-string album. I'm gigging with the 'Peatbog Faeries' from Skye. They're a mega-band with a mix of Celtic, rock, and jazz.



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Letters

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

Dear JazzUK,
Wembley Stadium has cost up to £800 million, and the Olympic Games will be £7 billion and counting. Somewhere between £800 million and £7 billion there is a budget for jazz and classical music. Let the good times roll.

I lectured in Complementary and Contrasting Studies at Leeds College of Music in the 1980s; the first 'centre of excellence' to bring together jazz and classical music before the rock/pop brands hogged it.

Instead of fighting each other, should not the music world look to new levels of arts funding; more than this, to a festival to celebrate combined arts and cultural diversity across Britain. The National Theatre on the South Bank, which says it has no bookings for 2012, might be just the place.

Peter Galpin, Oxford

HOW DARE YOU?

Dear JazzUK,
Thanks for your letter of June 2 regarding prospective changes to *JazzUK*.

It should be entitled *Mod JazzUK!* I have subscribed for some time to your mag but have yet to see an article regarding TRAD jazz in the UK!

The size of any future issues is of little importance to me as I shall not be renewing my subscription due to the lack of cover given the above mentioned music - how dare you ignore this, this is the original jazz!

J Devonshire, by email

HEARING IT FOR HUTCH

Dear JazzUK,
I read with interest Peter Vacher's interview with Frank Holder

(*JazzUK 75*) and noted his comments on Leslie 'Jiver' Hutchinson. Leslie was a man with immense sympathy for others. It was my privilege to be his close personal and family friend from early 1943 until his tragic death in 1959, and I much respected him and all he did. During the mid-'40s, I was an architectural student pursuing a rather expensive course of study. Leslie was 20 years my senior, and he frequently helped me. I came to know him as well, if not better than my own father.

Like Frank Holder and myself, there must be many others that remember Leslie with great affection.

Peter Powell, Hemel Hempstead

UNDER THE HAT

Dear JazzUK,
Opinions certainly vary about George Melly as a jazz singer, but I believe that his observations about postwar culture of all kinds, not just music, in this country will be read in decades to come as a unique perception of life on the margins. He made connections other people didn't, and he was an inspired social commentator.

He was also a man with a profound love of jazz and a big heart, which could sometimes be obscured by his gangster hats, loud suits, innuendo and stage antics. On the night Ronnie Scott had died at Christmas 1996, George was playing the in club and broke the news to the shocked audience with real empathy. He was a really special figure on the British cultural scene, and maybe we don't yet realise how much we'll miss him.

Andrew Carragher, Brighton



Three cheers for the BBC's Services to UK Jazz award-winner Gary Crosby. Hip...hip...hipper