

## **JAZZ SERVICES' ANNUAL REVIEW 2007/8**

In its mission-statement, Jazz Services makes its work sound straightforward enough. This 23 year-old charity's job, it declares, is simply to 'provide a voice and support for UK jazz'.

There is another way of looking at one particularly significant aspect of Jazz Services' role, by recording the following equally straightforward statement. Over the past 17 years, the organisation has distributed no less than £569,613 in grants to players, resulting in 5750 gigs. If evidence were needed of just how much of a difference Jazz Services makes in its field, those figures speak for themselves.

The mission statement boils down a much bigger story hidden in the summaries and statistics of this document. From its tiny first-floor office in Southwark, Jazz Services' handful of regular staffers and assorted part-timers and volunteers provide a unique and ever-expanding resource for the UK's jazz community.

The vast Jazz Services database has become an essential reference for musicians, promoters, managers, educators and the general listener. The organisation promotes jazz education, offers free advice on marketing, publishing and communications. Perhaps most valuably of all, it has sustained the National Touring Support Scheme (NTSS) that has been helping British musicians to get their shows on the road - to be precise, the 5750 shows mentioned above - since July 1992.

In 2007/8, in partnership with the Arts Council of England, Jazz Services further developed its commitments as an information service to all those interested in jazz or directly involved in performing or promoting it - and as a lobbying organisation to secure appropriate funding for the music, from both public and private sources.

The year saw improvements in Jazz Services' online facilities following a challenging period of technical difficulties, eventually making the mine of information gathered over the years ever more easily accessible. Commitments to education (through conferences and training support) have advanced, as has the Jazz Services Recording Scheme. Contacts with jazz organisations abroad have been improved, with the Jazz Services' role in the UK becoming more visible on the international stage - notably at the International Association For Jazz Education (IAJE) conference in Toronto in January 2008, when a package of UK groups attracted enthusiastic attention.

The following pages also detail the structure of the organisation, in particular that of its governing Board - a group of experts from across the British jazz community, meeting regularly to advise on the operation's policies, financial management, and expansion. The objectives and outcomes for 2007/2008 are described - from improved communications and networking, through high-level jazz advocacy (Jazz Services' role in the House Of Commons Parliamentary Jazz Awards ceremony has continued to flourish), to seminars, youth music summer schools, website development, and the latest news from the National Touring Support Scheme. In 2007/8, the NTSS toured 51 bands, and in collaboration with the Performing Right Society Foundation, Jazz Services brought new funding to hardworking and often volunteer British

promoters, and showcased three new groups on high-profile UK festivals in the Promoters Choice Scheme. In 2007/8 Jazz Services also continued to sponsor the listings section of the highly-acclaimed, and freely-distributed bi-monthly magazine Jazz UK. Thirty thousand copies of that publication, packed with news, views, interviews and anecdotes, are distributed to clubs, shops, concert venues, libraries and educational institutions every two months, making it the jazz magazine with the highest print run in Europe.

An extensive report by Sue Edwards and Information and Publications Manager Joe Paice also features in these pages, absorbingly detailing the memorable experiences and lasting implications of the 2008 IAJE visit. The report includes the following assessment: 'The project was a steep learning curve for this organisation, as it had never before taken on the total management of a tour for this number of musicians, let alone internationally. It was, however, the ideal organisation to run such a project in terms of: its set-up (it already had panels, committees, contacts, connections, an office and staff in place); and its non-bias (a non-profit organisation working for the jazz community at large rather than specific artists or sectors).' That conclusion describes the uniqueness of Jazz Services in a nutshell. It also envisages an expanding 21st century role in a shrinking world for an enterprising and creative organisation on which the UK jazz scene crucially depends.

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