

British Jazz Timeline



Pre-1900 – In the beginning



The music to become known as ‘jazz’ is generally thought to have been conceived in America during the second half of the nineteenth century by African-Americans who combined their work songs, melodies, spirituals and rhythms with European music and instruments – a process that accelerated after the abolition of slavery in 1865. Black entertainment was already a reality, however, before this evolution had taken place and in 1873 the Fisk Jubilee Singers, an Afro-American a cappella ensemble, came to the UK

on a fundraising tour during which they were asked to sing for Queen Victoria. The Fisk Singers were followed into Britain by a wide variety of Afro-American presentations such as minstrel shows and full-scale revues, a pattern that continued into the early twentieth century.

[The Fisk Jubilee Singers c1890s © Fisk University]

1900s – The ragtime era



Ragtime, a new style of syncopated popular music, was published as sheet music from the late 1890s for dance and theatre orchestras in the USA, and the availability of printed music for the piano (as well as player-piano rolls) encouraged American – and later British – enthusiasts to explore the style for themselves. Early rags like Charles Johnson’s ‘Dill Pickles’ and George Botsford’s ‘Black and White Rag’ were widely performed by parlour-pianists. Ragtime became a principal musical force in American and British

popular culture (notably after the publication of Irving Berlin’s popular song ‘Alexander’s Ragtime Band’ in 1911 and the show *Hullo, Ragtime!* staged at the London Hippodrome the following year) and it was a central influence on the development of jazz. Scott Joplin, dubbed the ‘King of Ragtime’, gained fame after the 1899 publication of his ‘Maple Leaf Rag’ and wrote many of the genre’s most famous compositions.

1910s – A music called jazz



During this period, jazz (or 'jass' as it was originally called) became identified as a distinctive musical genre developed primarily by black musicians. It drew from ragtime, blues and popular songs and was based principally on improvisation – initially usually collectively performed – rather than on reading from a score. A thriving community of musicians, including cornetist Charles 'Buddy' Bolden (born in 1877 and romantically credited as 'the first jazzman') and later players such as cornetists Joe 'King'

Oliver and the young Louis Armstrong had established New Orleans as the home of jazz by 1920. The music was played for a wide variety of social functions – dances, picnics, street events and funerals. Via recordings, news of it soon spread throughout the USA.

The first jazz record is often considered to be 'Dixie Jass Band One Step/Livery Stable Blues,' recorded by the (all-white) Original Dixieland Jazz Band (ODJB) in February 1917. The arrival in London of the ODJB and the (all-black) Southern Syncopated Orchestra featuring soprano-saxophonist Sidney Bechet in 1919 were central inspirations for an aspirant community of musicians and fans in Britain and launched Britain's own 'jazz age'.

[ODJB programme from The Palladium, Argyll Street, London, 1919. Archive collection.]

1920s – Jazz takes root in Britain



By the mid-1920s jazz was a thriving preoccupation in British culture, and publication of the magazine *Melody Maker* from 1926 and the BBC's first broadcasts (principally of dance music) helped to build popularity. Records were available too, though the earliest to reach Britain from America were mainly by white artists such as cornetist 'Red' Nichols and trombonist 'Miff' Mole. But recordings by Afro-American players, including Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, quickly followed, and it was Armstrong whose

solo recordings from 1925 with his Hot Five and Hot Seven definitively established jazz as a soloist's art rather than an ensemble-based music as most of the early New Orleans jazz had been.

Aspiring British musicians learned from these records, but also from American musicians who were employed in British dance bands before government restrictions made this difficult. The best example is probably Fred Elizalde's Anglo-American band. From 1927, British bandleader Bert Ambrose was noted for incorporating jazz into his orchestrations and Billy Cotton, Roy Fox and Lew Stone followed his example. 1927 also saw the publication of the first British book on jazz, R.W.S. Mendl's *The Appeal of Jazz*.

Home-grown British stars such as bassist 'Spike' Hughes also achieved prominence at this time. Hughes' career as musician, composer, author, arranger, journalist and prolific recording artist culminated in a visit to New York City where, in 1933, he arranged three historic recording sessions for his All-American Orchestra featuring his own compositions and black American stars saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, trumpeter 'Red' Allen and trombonist Dickie Wells.

[Archive collection]

1930s – Consolidation and acceptance

The arrival in London of seminal American musicians, especially Louis Armstrong (1932) and Duke Ellington (1933), inspired the British jazz community, generating excited publicity, popular and professional interest – and occasional controversy. Visiting stars set challenging performing standards for their British colleagues. Among the visitors were pianist Garland Wilson (1933), violinist Joe Venuti, saxophonists Coleman Hawkins (1934) and Benny Carter (1936), pianists Art Tatum and 'Fats' Waller and singer Adelaide Hall (1938).

Another visitor to Britain in this decade was the Belgian gypsy guitarist – and phenomenal virtuoso – Django Reinhardt who created a style that has since become a living tradition within jazz and gypsy culture. Together with violinist Stéphane Grappelli (regularly heard in the UK thereafter), he founded the Quintette du Hot Club de France, which played in London in 1938. Its music added something utterly unique and timeless to the jazz tradition. However, in this decade restrictions were imposed on American musicians performing in Britain, which meant a greater reliance on indigenous musicians for jazz performance.

The No 1 Rhythm Club opened in London in June 1933 and over the next few years many more such rhythm clubs were formed throughout the country. They fostered interest in (and serious intellectual consideration of) jazz by holding record recitals, discussions and sometimes musical performances for their members. The BBC gradually introduced jazz into its programming, and dance music (broadcast live from London hotels and clubs) reached a national audience – though uninhibited jazz solos were often considered too hot a property for general listening. London nightclubs like the Bag o' Nails, Nuthouse and Nest provided informal outlets for British musicians to play what they understood as real jazz.



By the later 1930s, some British musicians were achieving high solo reputations. With his Georgians, trumpeter Nat Gonella toured nationally as a bill-topping attraction in music halls and visited America in 1939 to play and record with American contemporaries. The local pool of jazz musicians became more racially diverse. The dancer Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson formed his West Indian Dance Orchestra, an all-black London band consisting of recent

immigrants from the West Indies alongside British-born black musicians.

[Nat Gonella. Archive collection.]

1940s – War clouds and silver linings



During the Second World War entertainment was needed to maintain morale. The danceable, virtuoso music of the Swing Era (1935–45) was provided – for both American and British ears – by famous bandleaders such as Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Harry James, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, and Glenn Miller. Thanks to radio, records, film and vibrant publicity in the popular press, they were the equivalent of today's rock stars. Miller enlisted in the American Army in 1942, and led his American Allied Expeditionary

Forces (AEF) band in Britain in 1944 before his aircraft went missing over the English Channel. The Squadronaires, formed in 1940 as the principal dance orchestra of the RAF, starred many of Britain's best-known jazz musicians, achieving national fame and continuing playing until 1964.

During the war many musicians were drafted into the armed services, so opportunities opened up for women instrumentalists to take the places of the men in the dance bands. The band of saxophonist Ivy Benson was the most notable all-women orchestra, and some of her players went on to have enduring careers in jazz. Similar opportunities existed in the USA on a larger scale. But, with the ending of the war and the return of male instrumentalists, most of these opportunities for women in the dance orchestras rapidly disappeared.

Wartime night clubs thrived and, in 1942, Feldman's Club at 100 Oxford Street in London opened. Under various ownerships it would feature jazz for more than 60 years. Pianist George Shearing and clarinettist Harry Parry broadcast on the BBC, and Britain's jazz population was further enriched by its community of West Indian musicians. Some were survivors from 'Snakehips' Johnson's orchestra which had suffered a direct hit by a bomb while playing at London's Café de Paris in 1941. The Café specialised in Afro-Caribbean bands but was an upper class club for predominantly white audiences. However, such nighteries as Jig's Club and the Caribbean Club promoted cross-cultural interaction between Afro-Caribbean and British jazz performers and audiences.

[Programme from the Queensbury All Services Jazz Club, 1942. Archive collection.]

The big schism: Revivalism and Bebop



During the war, jazz began to split into two sharply contrasting – indeed, violently opposed – musical orientations; modern jazz (known initially as bebop) and traditional jazz 'Revivalism'. The term 'bebop' was (probably) first coined at Minton's Playhouse in New York where young innovators developed new revolutionary approaches. Bebop's most celebrated icon was alto-saxophonist Charlie Parker (1920–55). The music was characterised by complex, fast-moving melodic lines, new rhythmic

ideas, exploratory harmonic approaches to improvisation, and fierce instrumental prowess. After the war bebop developed into various (usually less frenetic) modern jazz styles. Its first musical base in Britain was the Club Eleven, a London group of musicians including saxophonists John Dankworth and Ronnie Scott. Some players gained experience in bebop by enrolling as dance band musicians on transatlantic liners and hearing its innovators first hand in the clubs of New York.

Implacably opposed to the revolutions of bebop was the Revivalist movement, which sought to re-engage jazz with its traditional New Orleans roots, thought to have been lost in the Swing Era. In America the movement was headed by New Orleans originals – clarinettist George Lewis and trumpeter ‘Bunk’ Johnson – and younger admirers. Prominent revivalists in Britain after the war included pianist George Webb’s Dixielanders and trumpeter Humphrey Lyttelton (a former Webb sideman). Amid these opposing movements pre-war musicians were largely marginalised.

Trying to map at least some of the stylistic diversity, new publications appeared (sometimes with only brief existence). Jazz Journal, Britain’s longest-running jazz periodical, began publication in 1948 and continued as a print publication until 2019.

[George Webb photograph of the Humphrey Lyttelton Band performing at a 'Riverboat Shuffle', 1948. Lyttelton features, playing the cornet in the front centre. Archive collection]

1950s – Clubs, Tours, Festivals



The 1950s was the final decade in which jazz flourished as broad youth culture. It produced many British solo stars – traditionalists on one side, modernists on the other – and bandleaders. A new term ‘mainstream’ began to emerge for music caught in the middle of the traditional/modern jazz culture wars but trying to avoid rigid allegiance to either camp. Women musicians such as saxophonists Kathleen Stobart and Betty Smith and trumpeter Gracie Cole became more established during the decade on the British scene, and English pianist Marian

McPartland, who had moved to the US as a GI bride, began building an international career there from the 1950s.

John Dankworth formed his successful touring group, the Seven, in 1950 to showcase his compositions and arrangements and from 1953 to 1964 he led his own full-time touring orchestra. His first performances in the USA in 1958 made him an early ambassador for British jazz. Other leading ensembles included Ronnie Scott’s nine-piece group (1953), the Jazz Couriers (co-led by Scott and fellow saxophonist Tubby Hayes, 1957–9), drummer Tony Kinsey’s various popular modern jazz groups, alto saxophonist Joe Harriott’s modern quintet, and Humphrey Lyttelton’s band which gradually moved from traditionalism towards the mainstream.

During the 1950s immigration into Britain brought an influx of players from the Caribbean. Amongst others, Joe Harriott, flautist/saxophonist Harold McNairn and trumpeter Dizzy Reece (all from Kingston, Jamaica) joined a West-Indian population of British jazz performers that already included trumpeter Leslie 'Jiver' Hutchinson (father of singer Elaine Delmar), pianist-singer Cab Kaye, bassist Coleridge Goode, and saxophonist Bertie King.

In 1956 Britain's first jazz festival was staged in the grounds of Lord Montagu's stately home in Beaulieu, Hampshire. This became an annual event until 1961 but in 1960, a riot between opposing modernist and traditionalist fans produced lurid headlines and when this was repeated a year later the festival series abruptly ended.

Ronnie Scott opened his own jazz club in Gerrard Street, London in 1959, moving it to Frith Street in 1967 where it continues to flourish as one of the world's greatest jazz venues. In 1956 the Ministry of Labour's ban on American musicians performing in the UK was finally lifted after 21 years by establishing an exchange system (later abandoned). Stan Kenton's orchestra opened in London in March of that year to a blaze of publicity and Ted Heath's orchestra went to America in exchange. Later in the year Louis Armstrong's All Stars were similarly 'exchanged' for cornetist Freddy Randall's British band, and other American visitors soon after were Lionel Hampton and Sidney Bechet.

During the 1950s traditionalist band leader and trombonist Chris Barber sowed seeds for what would become a musical revolution in the 1960s. He toured with American blues singers Muddy Waters and Sister Rosetta Sharpe, and from within his band (and from that of Barber's former sideman, trumpeter Ken Colyer) came the folk-based skiffle phenomenon which later became a foundation of British pop music. These blues and skiffle influences inspired a new generation of performers like the Beatles (originally The Quarrymen Skiffle Group), the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton and Van Morrison.

[Denis Williams photograph of The Tubby Hayes Sextet playing at the Co-op Civic Centre, Bristol, 1950s. Pictured are Tubby Hayes (tenor saxophone), Derek Humble (alto saxophone) and Jimmy Deuchar (trumpet).]

1960s - A change is gonna come



From 1960 to 1962 a popularity 'boom' in British traditional jazz ('trad') was headed by Barber, trumpeter Kenny Ball, and clarinettist Acker Bilk, all of them topping the record charts. But soon after, jazz began to fade from mass popularity. From 1963 the rock music revolution diminished jazz as a vibrant part of youth culture. Bands such as the Beatles and Rolling Stones became the focus of popular music as the decade progressed and many clubs transferred their focus to the new styles.

However, young British musicians began to develop new approaches to modern jazz, often now influenced by rock music and eventually also rebelling against Scott's, Hayes' and Dankworth's

reliance on American musical models. These approaches came to be called 'contemporary jazz'. Young musicians created their own styles (often looser than the conventions of modern jazz), and no longer automatically followed American trends. British-based composers and band leaders, such as Graham Collier, Mike Westbrook, Mike Gibbs and Michael Garrick, emerged. They recorded on major labels and received reasonable public exposure despite changing musical fashions.

Jazz incorporated ideas from rock music in groups such as Soft Machine (1966–81) and drummer Jon Hiseman's Colosseum (1968–71); correspondingly, rock included blues and jazz influences in groups like Cream. British contemporary jazz started to export: guitarist John McLaughlin and bassist Dave Holland were both working with Miles Davis in the USA by the decade's end. And most established performers from the post-war era continued to perform regularly and reasonably successfully.

Alongside, incorporated in, or sometimes competing with contemporary jazz was 'free jazz' or 'free improvisation' which had emerged in the US but presented a distinctly independent outlook in Europe. In 1960, Joe Harriott in Britain had already recorded music that often dispensed with previously central elements of jazz – pre-determined rhythm, melody and harmony – to allow unrestricted improvisation. His approach, using harmonically-free improvisation, as well as chord-based and modal musical forms (all sometimes in a single piece), was unique and distinct from contemporaneous American developments. Artists who developed their own 'free' forms of jazz in Britain included pianist Mike Taylor, guitarist Derek Bailey, drummer John Stevens (with his Spontaneous Music Ensemble) and saxophonist Evan Parker.

Cross-cultural elements fed into the mix. The Blue Notes, a multi-racial sextet led by pianist Chris McGregor, arrived in London in 1965 as refugees from South African apartheid. They mixed South African rhythms and harmonies with free improvisation, to create an original, unmistakable style, which had a considerable influence on British players. McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath big band, with South African, British and continental players, later became a further vehicle for this style.

In 1965 the National Youth Jazz Orchestra (NYJO) was founded by Bill Ashton, a musician and former teacher. Under his direction, NYJO provided the first official training ground in Britain for young jazz musicians and has continued to flourish. Among its hundreds of graduates many have gone on to successful musical careers. 1965 also saw the beginning of formal jazz education in Britain at the City of Leeds College of Music. From 1964 to 1966 BBC TV broadcast the important series Jazz 625, featuring both British and American musicians in concert. And in 1967 Humphrey Lyttelton first broadcast his BBC radio series The Best of Jazz which continued for four decades. American icons – including Armstrong, Ellington, the stars in Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic shows, and bandleaders such as Count Basie and Woody Herman – played in Britain to full theatres, while Ronnie Scott's club continued to present American stars, a policy maintained up to the present.

[John Surman. Brian O'Connor photograph, 1989]

1970s – On the International stage

Trumpeter Ian Carr's Nucleus, a pioneering British jazz-rock band formed in 1969, gained crossover popularity, playing and recording music based loosely on the jazz-rock innovations of Miles Davis. Carr's band played at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1970 and his important book *Music Outside*, portraying influential contemporary British musicians, was first published in 1973.

Multicultural ensembles like the Brotherhood of Breath, saxophonist Dudu Pukwana's Spear, and soloists such as trumpeter Harry Beckett brought new, vivid influences to the music. In 1970, at their Buckinghamshire home, John Dankworth and his wife, singer Cleo Laine, founded the Wavendon All Music Plan to present musical performance in all genres including jazz, and instituted educational projects such as summer music camps and courses. From 1973 as a musical duo they began to conquer the US, playing at Carnegie Hall and similar venues throughout America and Europe for the next 30 years.

World-class British soloists who had emerged in the 1960s such as baritonist John Surman, altoist Mike Osborne, tenorist Alan Skidmore, trombonists Malcolm Griffiths and Paul Rutherford, pianist John Taylor, and vocalist Norma Winstone, began to achieve lasting international recognition during the 1970s and found enthusiastic audiences throughout Europe and beyond. Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, John Stevens and others continued to explore 'free jazz', sometimes now called simply 'improv'. Pianist Keith Tippett led his 100-piece Centipede ensemble, then the small group Ovary Lodge (1973) and the 22-piece band Ark.

From the mid-1970s Peter Boizot's Pizza Express venue in Dean Street, London began presenting American artists from the classic era, complementing the modern jazz policy of Ronnie Scott's. Artists to make frequent appearances, alongside British contemporaries, included cornetist Ruby Braff, trumpeter Billy Butterfield and clarinettist 'Peanuts' Hucko, as well as new-generation mainstream performers such as tenorist Scott Hamilton and cornetist Warren Vaché Jr.



The Arts Council maintained its position as a strong supporter of jazz commissions for important artists in need of financial subsidy amid the rock revolution. Its Contemporary Music Network, which funded national tours by innovative ensembles, including contemporary jazz groups, was an important support for new developments. And the Jazz Centre Society, founded in 1969 as a national centre for jazz development, remained active as a promoting organisation until 1984. Other promotional

groups such as Scotland's Platform Jazz were formed in the 1970s to increase opportunities both to hear and play jazz.

[Poster for the Pizza Express Jazz Festival, hosted by Humphrey Lyttleton, with a salute to Count Basie. London Jazz Big Band, Al Grey, Larry Adler, Tony Coe Quartet, Harry Gold, Brian Lemon, Lennie Felix, Johnny Parker, Eddie Thompson, Martin Taylor, Digby Fairweather and Ike Isaacs feature. Archive collection]

1980s - New music, new diversity

In the 1980s a new generation of black British musicians helped to re-energise the UK jazz scene, amongst them pianist Julian Joseph and saxophonists Steve Williamson and Courtney Pine. In 1984 Pine formed Abibi Jazz Arts with the intention of interesting young black British musicians in jazz and a year later this led to formation of the Jazz Warriors which fused jazz with other musical styles. As an active musical collective the Jazz Warriors continued into the 1990s. Many new stars emerged from the organisation and its off-shoots, including vocalist Cleveland Watkiss, flautist Phillip Bent, vibraphonist Orphy Robinson, bassist Gary Crosby, saxophonists Gail Thompson, Jason Yarde and Tony Kofi, trombonist Dennis Rollins, trumpeters Claude Deppa and Byron Wallen, and guitarist Tony Remy. Many subsequently gained international reputations.

In 1984, pianist, composer and arranger Django Bates became a founder member of Loose Tubes, an ensemble that presented a challenging and original fusion of styles and was the first jazz group to play at the BBC Proms in 1987. Among its members who would have considerable influence in subsequent years were Julian and Steve Arguelles (saxophonist and drummer, respectively) and saxophonist Iain Ballamy. Other important musicians to emerge during the 1980s included saxophonists Tim Garland and Dave O'Higgins, and pianist Jason Rebello.

The 1980s were a breakthrough decade for British women musicians in jazz. Networks of female instrumentalists had existed in and around London in the 1970s but an important catalyst for new interest was the emergence of the Guest Stars group in the early 1980s, eventually comprising saxophonist Ruthie Smith, guitarist Deirdre Cartwright, pianist Laka Daisical, bassist Alison Rayner, drummer Josefina Cupido, and conga player Linda da Mango. The group was phenomenally successful through the decade, making several albums, and touring in the UK, Europe, the US, and the Middle East. Ending the myth that instrumental jazz improvisation was a male preserve, it inspired other women musicians, pioneered new ways of organising a jazz group and its musical presentation, and presented an eclectic vocal-instrumental idiom that offered something unique.



The Association of British Jazz Musicians (ABJM) was founded in 1987 and the National Jazz Archive (NJA) in November 1988. The NJA, located in Loughton, Essex was founded by trumpeter Digby Fairweather with the aim of collecting the written and printed history of jazz, blues and related music, including periodicals, photographs, letters and personal collections. Supported by Essex County Council, the Archive was re-launched in larger premises at Loughton Library in August 1993. Another organisation,

Jazzwise, was established in 1984 by guitarist-entrepreneur Charles Alexander to promote all areas of the music including educational publications. And, in the same year, Jim Godbolt published his pioneering two-volume *History of Jazz in Britain* covering the period 1919–1970.

[Photograph of Digby Fairweather with Interview by Mark 'Snowboy' Cotgrove. Archive collection.]

1990s – Standing still?



Female performers continued to grow in numbers, among them singers Tina May and Claire Martin, and pianists Nikki Yeoh and Nikki Iles. But the momentum created by the Guest Stars and other all-women jazz groups in Britain in the 1980s faltered, in part through public funding cuts, and while the music continued to diversify it also seemed to reflect a general mood of conservatism in both its presentation and its most popular styles.

As opportunities for women jazz musicians now seemed to be far fewer than had been hoped after the breakthrough of women's jazz groups in the 1980s, guitarist Deirdre Cartwright and bassist Alison Rayner (former members of the Guest Stars) took the initiative to start their Blow the Fuse organisation in 1989 to create playing opportunities for themselves and other musicians, especially women instrumentalists. The organisation played an important role throughout the 1990s (and still does today), establishing new venues, setting up events, and encouraging jazz musicians in a period marked mainly by consolidation rather than innovation in the music and its presentation.

However, one wholly new development, acid jazz, combining elements of jazz, funk and hip-hop and utilising looped beats, grew in popularity through the 1990s, pioneered by new-wave DJs and presenters including Gilles Peterson, Jez Nelson and Chris Phillips.

In 1992 Britain's first jazz radio station, Jazz FM was founded by pianist-composer Dave Lee. After early financial crises, the station was re-branded but returned to its original title in 2008 and continues to broadcast today. Among other developments, Digby Fairweather founded the Jazz Section of the British Musicians' Union in 1992. The Jazz Café in Camden, London opened in 1990 and continues to be a popular venue celebrating all music forms. Jazzwise Publications launched their award-winning Jazzwise monthly magazine in 1997. And jazz education became more firmly recognised. Leeds International Jazz Education Conference was launched in 1993, and 1999 saw the start of the ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) Jazz Examinations.

[Deirdre Cartwright. Brian O'Connor photograph, 2014]

2000s - A new century



By the Millennium, seven of Britain's music conservatoires were offering full-time degree courses in jazz: Leeds College of Music (the pioneer, starting its course in 1965), Birmingham Conservatoire, Guildhall School of Music, Royal Academy of Music, Royal Scottish Conservatoire, Royal Welsh College of Music, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, and Newcastle School of Music.

Many books on jazz in Britain and British jazz were published, reflecting burgeoning scholarly interest. They included Catherine Parsonage's *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain, 1880–1935* (2005), George McKay's *Circular Breathing* (2005) and Hilary Moore's *Inside British Jazz* (2007). In 2000, Northway Publications, a London-based publishing house directed by Ann Cotterrell and specialising in British jazz subjects, produced their first book – the autobiography of veteran saxophonist Harry Gold. Over the next decade and a half their 24 publications included autobiographies by saxophonists Peter King and Vic Ash, bassist Coleridge Goode and trumpeters John Chilton and Digby Fairweather, biographies of Joe Harriott and Nat Gonella, and revised editions of Jim Godbolt's *A History of Jazz in Britain, 1919–1950* and Ian Carr's *Music Outside*.

The Parliamentary Jazz Awards and British Jazz Awards provided welcome recognition for new and established talent, and funding for jazz projects was provided by both the Arts Council of Great Britain and Jazz Services Ltd. After pianist-singer Jamie Cullum made his first TV appearance on the Michael Parkinson show in 2003, he signed first for Candid Records and then a £1m contract for three albums with Universal. His second studio album *Twentysomething*, released in October 2003, became the No. 1 selling studio album by a jazz artist in the UK. During the decade he was joined by pianist-presenter Jools Holland as a second popular new face for jazz and blues on both radio and TV and leading his Rhythm and Blues Orchestra. Singer Clare Teal also achieved notable popular success. Her 2004 album *Don't Talk* reached No. 1 in the UK jazz chart. Even veteran mainstreamers sometimes broke through in the popular music world. In 2001 Humphrey Lyttelton's band collaborated with Radiohead on the track 'Life in a Glass House' from their *Amnesiac* album.

Classic FM's sister station, The Jazz, dedicated to jazz in most styles and broadcasting 24 hours a day, was launched in December 2006 but closed in 2008. The internet-based UK Jazz Radio station was launched in 2010.

[Juliet Kelly. Photograph by Brian O'Connor, 2005]

Towards the present – and what follows...



After a hundred years of British history, jazz in every style continues to enjoy success despite limited media recognition. New musicians continue to arrive on the British jazz scene and jazz courses in the music academies provide many more routes than in the past for young players to acquire the technical skills, versatility, and broad arranging, composing and improvising experience they will need if they are to sustain enduring careers in music. In 2014 the BBC introduced its

‘Young Jazz Musician of the Year’ competition, providing further encouragement for newcomers.

Women musicians have gained an increasingly important place in the British scene. Among numerous artists attracting new recognition are trumpeter Laura Jurd and saxophonists Allison Neale, Tori Freestone, Camilla George, Josephine Davies, Rachel Musson, Nubya Garcia, Helena Kay, Trish Clowes and Amy Roberts. Other well established figures include pianists Zoë Rahman and Kate Williams, and saxophonist Karen Sharp.

Funk, hip hop and rap continue to influence Britain’s jazz scene encouraging regular crossover between these genres. And black British jazz traditions have been strengthened by the re-assessment of Joe Harriott. Contributing to this have been the publication of Alan Robertson’s biography (2003, second edition 2011) of the once almost forgotten saxophonist, the reissue of many of his recordings and the autobiography (2002) of his collaborator, Coleridge Goode. Harriott is now viewed as a key pioneer and symbol of Black British jazz achievement and identity.

The list of British musicians who are adding their distinctive voices to jazz in the early decades of the 21st century is far too long and diverse even to begin to represent here. As British journalist Brian Case once wrote, using the old ‘hip’ jargon of past decades, ‘We don’t deserve it, but the cats, they keep coming.’ Given the timeless validity of musical improvisation it would indeed be surprising if things were any other way.

[Soweto Kinch. Photograph by Brian O’Connor, 2005]