

NeWSLETTeR



Editor: David Nathan

ISSUE 7 SUMMER 1999

DISTINGUISHED NEW PATRONS FOR NATIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION ARCHIVE

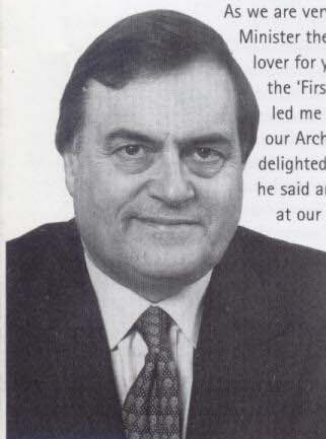
Back in June 1939 (I think that's the date but you can check with the National Jazz Foundation Archive!) Lionel Hampton recorded an optimistic three minutes for RCA Victor entitled 'Stand by for further announcements (and more good news)!'. One of the many inspiring things about the NJFA is that we're regularly in receipt of good news of all kinds - as well as what Louis Armstrong once termed the 'very good spirit' that tends to materialise whenever good jazz fellows of either gender get together within our walls.

Sixty years on - almost to the day - from Hamp's optimistic recording, I'm happy to bring you more good news of the kind which really deserves the 'stop-press' button. The National Jazz Archive has acquired two prestigious new patrons; both good friends to jazz, both in their different ways household names, and both regular front-pagers in the national press as well, of course, as this time in our newsletter! I've no idea how to organise the billing, so let's go with the old alphabetical rule.

Remind KENNY BALL that he's a household name - which I did when he came to deliver our annual Celebrity Lecture three years ago - and he's liable to cheerfully cap the compliment with a disarming 'yeah - like Harpic!' Modesty has always been one the reasons why Kenny - as well as being one of Britain's greatest-ever trumpeters - is also one of Great Britain's favourite people. His response, in accepting patronship of the NJFA was, "It's an honour but I refuse to become history until I am dead!!" It's our honour in the main, as well as - for me - a personal pleasure. Like many jazz fans of my generation I grew up with Kenny's music; his blazing unstoppable trumpet was the brass highspot of our British 'Trad boom' and his rich musical legacy in the years that followed is a triumph of international proportions for a great musician-entertainer. We're proud to have you with us Kenny, and thank you.



Kenny Ball



John Prescott

As we are very honoured indeed to welcome as patron, Britain's Deputy Prime Minister the **RIGHT HON. JOHN PRESCOTT M.P.** John has been a devoted jazz lover for years now, and his regular appearance at prestige concerts by my band the 'First Class Sounds' - sponsored by our longtime friends, the Post Office - led me to wonder whether he might consider lending his name and support to our Archive. John's response was predictably warm and immediate; "I'd be delighted - politics is the food and drink of my life but jazz is the *real pleasure*," he said and although a non-stop schedule will probably preclude his attendance at our fundraisers, open-days and other specials, be assured that he's keeping a friendly and observant eye on our activities - as well as reading this newsletter! So thank you for your gracious support, John - it's genuinely appreciated, and we'll stay in touch!

They join John Dankworth (CBE), Dame Cleo Laine (OBE) and Baron Dormand of Easington our existing patrons.

So, with such good friends on board, our story continues to roll on, a bit like the Mississippi. I hope you too are enjoying the trip with all of us here at Loughton and that as the Archive continues to grow you will continue to find our national collection of jazz books, periodicals

and memorabilia useful, inspiring or just plain fun. Whichever way, you are always welcome through the doors.

Good wishes

Digby Fairweather (Founder)
June 1999



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CELEBRITY TALK 1998

Bebop Beginnings in Britain

This took place in the Archive on the 6th November 1998 with our founder Digby Fairweather having excelled himself by obtaining three star guests this time in Tony Crombie, Jack Fallon and Stan Tracey.

Under Digby's prompting, they regaled the capacity audience with a stream of interesting anecdotes and very humorous stories for nigh on two hours on this revolutionary period and indeed on other jazz matters.

Tony commented on the technical challenges that bebop produced with Stan observing that there was little in the way of teaching facilities in those days and he would copy from 78's.

Denis Rose was regarded as a major guru in sorting out the music by interpreting chords and solos on paper and got the message across to other musicians mainly by shouting according to Tony!

Tony's first encounter with bebop was listening to records such as "Red Cross" by Charlie Parker at Carlo Krahmer's flat.

Stan was eager to learn about bebop having primarily been involved with dance music before plus a stint in a Gipsy Accordion Band wearing Gipsy costumes and a half inch of make-up!



The celebrities being "snapped" from left to right are Tony Crombie, Stan Tracey, Jack Fallon and Digby Fairweather.

Jack then gave the definition of perfect pitch as someone who can throw an accordion down the toilet without hitting the sides!

He also spoke fondly of the Accordion Club whereby Charles Chilton produced a radio show featuring the Tito Burns Band with several beboppers in its personnel including John Dankworth, Alan Dean, Cab Kaye, Ronnie Scott and Jack of course.

As mentioned earlier there were many funny anecdotes and comments including:-

- Tony stating that Jack also played Country and Western fiddle for many years and though he had known him since 1944 he had never heard him play the fiddle which shows he has got feelings!
- Jack quoting his music teacher said, "I know you have got a good ear but after you have played the note its too late!"
- Stan on Ronnie Scott - "You could not get close to Ronnie and we dealt with each other through humour and old black and white movies! Ronnie's humour was often spontaneous like the time he was announcing someone at the Club and had an unlit cigarette. There was a girl sitting in the front and Ronnie asked her for a light and the

flame shot up nearly hitting him in the eye to which Ronnie responded, "Did you ever light a cigarette for Sammy Davis Jnr?"

- Tony - "A lot of modern tunes are based on one note - I am working on a tune which has no notes!"
- Tony on working in a duo with Tommy Pollard in the Cabinet Club run by gangsters Billy Hill and Jack Spot commented:- "Jack Spot's just come in wearing a well cut suit with a face to match!"
- Stan on an exchange trip with Dave Brubeck working with Ronnie Scott's Sextet and was stuck with appearing in a Rock and Roll show. When the tour ended they had to go to an office and sign a piece of paper stating they got the same money as Dave Brubeck. As Stan wryly observed in those days Dave was working for £60 per week except he did not know it!!
- Tony on talking about Harry Morris related the story about when musicians used to gather after gigs in a flat belonging to Pete Chilver and Dave Goldberg. One night at about 1.0am, Harry turned up with Django Reinhardt neither incidentally speaking the others language. Out came the guitars and a jam session commenced going on for over an hour when a loud banging on the door interrupted proceedings. Pete Chilver opened the door to be confronted by an extremely irate neighbour demanding to know what all the noise was at 2.0am at which point Pete looking in the great man's direction said, "This is Django Reinhardt" to which the neighbour responded, "I don't bloody care if its George Formby, cut it out!"

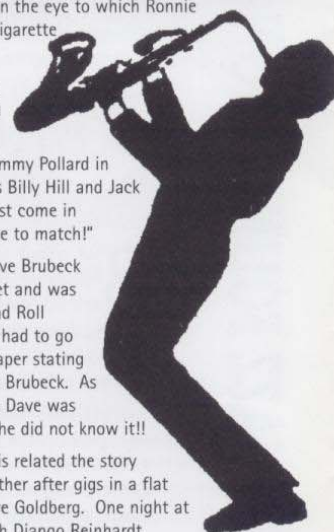
Among the many other top musicians who were mentioned during the evening were Norman Burns, Don Byas, Alan Clare, Victor Feldman, Stan Getz, Stephane Grappelli, Johnny Hawkesworth, Tubby Hayes, Ted Heath, Thelonious Monk, Tommy Pollard, Johnny Rogers, Leon Roy, Lucky Thompson and Flash Winston.

Other subjects covered included the formation of Club Eleven which was regarded as the official signpost of bebop music; Tony's very successful venture into Rock and Roll with The Rockets which started after he saw Bill Haley and the Comets in the film Blackboard Jungle; Jack's time with Duke Ellington and how easy he was to talk to - during 1948 Jack's trio (including Tony) accompanied Duke in the UK and on the continent - and also when he recorded with the Beatles playing violin and appeared with Django and Stephane in a TV show at Alexandra Palace where in a sideroom Stephane played piano and Django violin and Stan's experiences whilst working on the liner Queen Mary specifically going ashore visiting Birdland and listening to all the greats for a dollar without having to buy a drink and then returning to the ship without the fear of getting mugged!

This was a wonderful evening including some questions from the audience all superbly orchestrated by Digby and much enjoyed by all concerned.

It is a marvellous thought that the three star guests who mustered a modest 226 years between them and who were talking predominantly about events around fifty years ago, have been able to perpetuate and develop their careers to this very day.

David Nathan
NJFA





'SOUNDTRACKS' – a specially commissioned piece inspired by the National Jazz Foundation Archive

I had the idea at the back of my mind for a long time, of commissioning a fine musician and composer to research the unique collection of memorabilia at the Archive and from this research to gain inspiration to create something new.

This I wanted to do during my time working in Essex as Jazz Animateur but the insufficient funding prohibited me.

When Eastern Arts Board launched the Andrew Milne Jazz Award for new jazz commissions, I had my chance to make a dream come true!

I put an application together whilst still working for JazzEssex. The organisation ended in March 1998 during which time I discovered my proposal had been successful. In April 1998 through a successful Lottery bid we set up JazzEast, a Jazz Development Agency for Essex and Cambridgeshire, through which I continued the work.

I considered who to ask to perform this task and came up with Tim Whitehead. He is one of Britain's greatest jazz saxophonists and composers who had also put a lot of energy and enthusiasm into teaching at workshops and Jazz Co-operatives in Essex. This was an opportunity to thank him.

Tim's subsequent new composition, *Soundtracks*, was inspired by the words and lives of the greatest jazz performers. He spent last summer working in the Archive, which contains the records of the lives of jazz practitioners around the world. "I explored the words and lives of my mentors and fellow players – I followed their tracks, mostly by instinct, and discovered something of myself as a result," says Tim.

He wrote over two hours of new music which was premiered at Loughton Library in October 98. The music has continued to develop since then. It

is very accessible and he has written some really beautiful tunes. Tim's quartet includes Peter Jacobsen piano, Arnie Somogyi bass and Dave Barry drums and he extended the line up for *Soundtracks* to include Philip Sheppard on cello, giving a new dimension to the music – in fact a whole range of new and exquisite sounds.

They have gone on to perform this new work which includes narrative, in many venues including, The East Coast Jazz Festival, Norwich; Kettles Yard Gallery, Cambridge; Colchester Arts Centre; The Artesium Arts Centre, Luton; Brighton Jazz Club; Pizza Express, Dean Street, Soho; Appleby Jazz Festival, Cumbria (26th June) and with a date in Nottingham coming up. In addition, there was also an hour long BBC Radio 3 broadcast and interview on March 13th with excerpts from the Luton concert. They will be bringing it out on CD this year. For further information on this and future performances please contact Tim Whitehead on telephone no: 0181-948 0687.

This fulfils another part of my criteria. To raise the public awareness of the National Jazz Foundation Archive.

I think winning this award has been brilliant; for me to be creative, for Tim to step out into something new, for the profile of the Archive and the joy of music lovers.

Joan Morrell – Jazz East



Joan Morrell

ARCHIVAL NEWS

DONATIONS

BOOKS

Publishers/authors who have kindly submitted gifts of books include:-

- Robert G Crosby - *Kenny Baker - The Life and Times of a Jazz Musician*
- Moirra Heath - *I Haven't Said Thanks* (Donated by Derek Boulton Management Ltd)
- Ian MacDonald - *Tadd*
- Stuart Nicholson - *Jazz-Rock and A Portrait of Duke Ellington – Reminiscing in Tempo*
- Richard Palmer - *Sonny Rollins: The Cutting Edge* Donated by University of Hull Press
- Ken Vail - *Dukes Diary: Part 1.*
- John White - *Artie Shaw: Non-Stop Flight* Donated by University of Hull Press
- John Wickes - *Innovations in British Jazz*
- Eric Woodward - *The Boswell Sisters and Connee Boswell.*

MAGAZINES AND MEMORABILIA

Some lovely items have been given to the Archive this year including donations from:-

IVOR BLANKFIELD who provided material on Sid Phillips including a gold medallion presented to him by Lawrence Wright.
COLIN A. JOHNSON who submitted publications from Belgium, Russia and Sweden; correspondence with among others Stanley Dance and much information concerning jazz in the UK especially Leeds.
RAY MITCHELL who provided among much material, *The Discographer* from 1967 to 1969 and *Jazz Digest* issues from 1972 both American publications neither of which we held at all and a number of *Matrix* copies that we were missing.

To them and all other donors since the last issue, our grateful thanks.

FRIENDS OF THE ARCHIVE

The number has increased considerably during the last year which is very pleasing but if you would like to become a Friend by making a deed of covenant please contact David Nathan for details.

CELEBRITY TALK 1999

An early notification that this year the Talk will be in the Archive on Friday 12th November at 8.0pm when Digby Fairweather will be interviewing two of our finest reedmen in **Alan Barnes** and **John Barnes** - Digby's suggested title at present is **Sax Discrimination!!**

Tickets priced at £4 will be available from the Archive nearer to the date but please book early in view of the limited accommodation.

ONGAR JAZZ CLUB - BENEFIT NIGHT FOR NJFA

This took place on May 14th and produced another marvellous evening which raised £1,000 for the Archive. As ever our thanks to the musicians and all at Ongar Jazz Club especially **Jean and Stan Ball**. More details on this will appear in the next edition of the Newsletter.

THE NJFA BENEFIT The 100 Club, London

The first of the customary two annual benefit concerts in aid of The National Jazz Foundation Archive, based at Loughton Library, in Essex, took place at the 100 Club in early January 1999.

The evening was launched in fine style by the Humphrey Lyttelton rhythm section of pianist Ted Beament, bassist Paul Bridge and drummer Adrian MacIntosh, with a selection of up-tempo swingers and ballads, including a sensitive reading of *Sweet Lorraine*. With the addition of trombonist Campbell Burnap, the trio became the cohesive quartet, rather than just horn with rhythm. Alongside an evocative muted solo on *From Monday On*, Cam added a genial vocal, one of several to be heard that night, and none the worse for that. *Weaver of Dreams*, a mid-tempo swinger, highlighted the trombonist's burnished tone, while the jaunty *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter* was refurbished as a bossa nova.

The selection of such less well-worn material set the precedent for the rest of the evening, when most of the musicians eschewed the safely familiar, the tried and true, an unusual departure for the type of gig which constitutes a series of informal jam sessions. George Webb's Dixielanders included another couple of members of Humph's rhythm section, although from a slightly earlier era, in guitarist Fred Legon and the pianist/leader himself. Trumpeter Ben Cohen, reedman Charlie Connor, trombonist Mike Poynton, bassist Don Smith and drummer Laurie Chescoe comprised the rest of the line-up. Among the many highspots of this delightfully straightahead set was the languid *Sweet Substitute*, for which Charlie Connor switched to soprano saxophone to great effect. Elsewhere, his understated, Jimmie Noone-style clarinet sound was a noted attraction. Besides some incisive lead work throughout, the contrasting aspects of Ben Cohen's trumpet style were illustrated by his joyously extrovert work on *Over In The Gloryland*, while *Black And Blue* showcased his winsome muted style. George Webb took a backseat, allowing himself just one dextrous solo, heard on the rollicking *Gatemouth*. His performance and his ebullient announcements reaffirm that this venerable godfather of British Revivalist Jazz retains an unquenchable enthusiasm for the music, some 50 years after forming his original Dixielanders.

As I mentioned earlier, the informal jam session was the order of the day and perhaps none more so than the set which featured the distinguished jazz scribe, Dave Gelly, who swapped his pen for a tenor saxophone for the occasion; guitarist Dominic Ashworth; rhythm guitarist Nevil Skrimshire and Paul Bridge, on bass. This quartet had not worked together before assembling on stage that night, a perfect excuse, one might think, to have settled for the softer option, to trot through *I Got Rhythm*, *Lady Be Good*, or any other standards which are the *lingua franca* in such settings. Not a bit of it, because we were treated to *On The Alamo*,

Pennies From Heaven and *We Three*, among others. The last named was used as a theme song on a BBC Radio programme named *Happidrome* during the Second World War, then later to be recorded by Frank Sinatra. Against a solidly rhythmic backdrop, the saxophone, whose feathery light tone and debonair re-stylings evoked shades of Lester Young, Stan Getz and Zoot Sims, instantly jelled with Ashworth, whose blues-based style occasionally nodded in the direction of Charlie Christian, to create some sublimely eloquent sounds.

Digby Fairweather, whose initiative helped to establish the NJFA in 1988, and who has organised all the benefits over the years, deserves the lion's share of the credit for the success of the event. Generously devoting much of the evening to selling tickets at the club's box office, Dig then joined forces with trombonist Pete Strange and reedman John Barnes, plus the Lyttelton rhythm section, for the closing set, of which an exhilarating *As Long As I Live*, plus a tender, though unsentimental *She's Funny That Way* were outstanding.

Sally-Ann Worsfold



Editors note: Grateful thanks to the Jazz Rag and Sally-Ann Worsfold for allowing us to reproduce this review.

The evening produced a donation of £530 to the Archive and our thanks as ever to Roger Horton at The 100 Club and to all the splendid musicians who gave their time and talents so freely.

NATIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION ARCHIVE

OPEN DAY

Saturday 26th June 1999

1.30 - 4.30 pm

Loughton Library
Traps Hill, Loughton

DIGBY FAIRWEATHER
and FRIENDS LIVE!

SALE of
vintage jazz
books and
magazines

RARE RECORDINGS OF BLACK
BRITISH SWING MUSICIANS
A recital by Andrew Simons,
Jazz Curator from the British
Library National Sound Archive
at 1.45 pm

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