

NeWSLETTeR



Editor: David Nathan

ISSUE 8 SUMMER 2000

DAME CLEO LAINE OBE IN ARCHIVE MILLENNIUM VISIT

To begin with, stop press news! Our guest at the National Jazz Foundation Archive's Millennium Celebrity Interview will be DAME CLEO LAINE OBE; jazz music's greatest diva and one of our Archive's most beloved patrons.

To list Dame Cleo's achievements in full would double the size of our newsletter. After twenty years as Britain's most gifted jazz singer (as well as a highly-talented actress), she was ready to conquer America in 1972 and by 1973 was starring for the first of many times at Carnegie Hall, an on-record debut which remains breathtaking. From this point Dame Cleo turned effortlessly into an international superstar whose career successes knew - and know still - no boundaries at all.

Beyond a string of definitive and exquisite solo recordings (now spanning more than four decades), her musical partners in later years have included Ray Charles, Mel Tormé, James Galway, Dudley Moore and an encyclopedic array of great jazzmen, ranging from the likes of Clark Terry and Gerry Mulligan to our own great friend (and hers too!) John Dankworth CBE - who, of course, gave a previous Celebrity Interview.

The Dankworth's lifelong partnership has been a celebration - as well as a definition - of truly great jazz music and we are most honoured to welcome Dame Cleo Laine OBE back to the Archive to talk about her life. Make a note of the date of her visit - Friday November 10th, and do be sure to book early as seats have to be assigned on a first-come first-served basis.

Dame Cleo's return to the Archive (she and husband John cut the ribbon for our re-launch in 1992) is a joyful way to celebrate the Millennium as well as a continuing reminder of how generously the jazz community has supported the National Jazz Foundation Archive ever since its opening in 1988. It is good to look in most of the recent publications about our music and see archivists David Nathan and Ken Jones warmly acknowledged for their help and expertise in pointing researchers towards the bottomless well of information which the NJFA now provides.

As well as the on-site experts, there are so many other people to continue to thank; Essex County Council for its unfailing faithful support; all the staff at Loughton Library; the famous musicians who, year by year, raise funds by playing benefits for nothing, good friends who help to set up such concerts in the first place - in short, a great and joyful jazz community. Currently we are assembling a 'roll of honour' which one day soon will be proudly displayed in the Archive for all to read.

The Archive itself has also attracted major publicity in jazz periodicals over the last year or two. Questions are rightly asked about the Internet and the future of information science - which of course includes jazz information science too! In future we hope - and believe - that our music's researchers will have access to all the NJFA's resources on the 'net' but the material must be collected and preserved first. And meantime there are international questions of copyright to resolve before the vast majority of jazz bibliography can go 'on-line'. When this is able to happen, I believe that the NJFA will become one of the jazz world's principal resources for primary research materials. In the meantime, surfing the net for jazz information is fascinating and frequently highly valuable but in that handy phrase it is advisable to 'check your sources' along the way; anyone - expert or otherwise - can pass views or self-conducted research onto the world-wide web and not all such material is, by definition, authoritative.

One recent - and generally - kindly piece of journalism about our busy activities however chose to mention the word 'fustiness'. This is one word I would like to see deleted from the lexicon of archivism in general - and jazz archivism in particular. Few artforms have enjoyed a more condensed active and passionate lifespan than ours; full of vivid innovation, triumph, joy and tragedy. And its history reflects the fact. To dismiss the visible records of any great jazz musician's lifetime achievements (let alone the auditory ones!) as some kind of latterday "fust-gatherer" is wrong, as well as deeply belittling. "People have died for this stuff" Dizzy Gillespie once told a reporter who asked him if he thought jazz was 'serious' music. "How much more serious do you want?"

If you want to find out how our greatest practitioners lived and died - or how they live now - then the National Jazz Foundation Archive is the place to start looking but don't worry, you will need neither protective clothing nor dust jacket; just plenty of time as Dave Gelly mentions elsewhere in this issue.

Enjoy our Open Day (June 24th) and our Grand Celebrity Interview too! I look forward to seeing you there.

Digby Fairweather

Editors Note: Tickets priced at £7 can be reserved from me at the Archive but as Digby mentions please book early in view of the limited accommodation. Cheques should be payable to Essex County Council.



NJFA
Loughton Library
Traps Hill
Loughton
Essex IG10 1HD
Tel. 020 8502 0181
Fax 020 8508 5041

SUPPORTED BY ESSEX
COUNTY COUNCIL, LIBRARIES

LOST IN THE BACK-NUMBERS

By Dave Gelly

You're either susceptible to the charm of old newsprint or you're not. Personally, I am a hopeless case. I only have to open a bound volume of old papers, especially old music papers, and I'm a goner. It's a good job I live miles away from Loughton, or I'd forever be popping into the Archive and neglecting to pop out again. The same thing goes for the National Sound Archive at the British Library, not to mention the vast newspaper emporium at Colindale. Before they moved it, I used to use the BBC Reference Library in Portland Place as a kind of club, somewhere to go when I had half an hour to waste. That's where I discovered that, on the day of my birth, Buddy Featherstonehaugh presented a half-hour radio feature entitled "Listen To The Tenor Saxophone".

As a result of this strange compulsion, I have amassed a quantity of miscellaneous, and some might say useless, knowledge. Except that there is no such thing as useless knowledge, only knowledge for which you have not yet found a use. For example, I think I have discovered the first review in a British periodical of a performance by Ella Fitzgerald. It comes from *Sound Wave & Wireless Times* of 9 September 1938:

"You can tell from the title (*I'm Just A Jitterbug*) that there's plenty of slang of the Yankee variety - and it's sung by a girl. The words are almost unintelligible but the playing of the band is satisfactory and plain". The band was Chick Webb's orchestra and Ella was aged 20 at the time.

Important news goes on the front page, less important news, features, letters etc go inside and classified adverts are tucked away at the back. That's the way newspapers are arranged. Strangely enough, as the years pass and the pages slowly turn yellow, this order of importance sometimes gets reversed. The front page may be full of stuff that's of no interest at all nowadays, whereas the little adverts that people paid to have inserted tell us what was really going on.

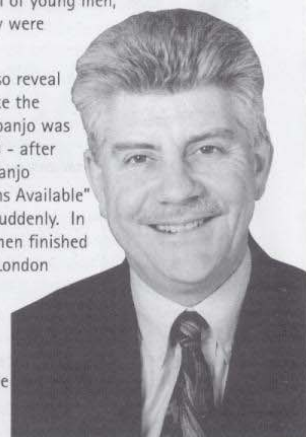
Take the "Musicians Wanted" columns. It's obvious from these that, right

up until the 1960's, there was a lot of live music about, especially at seaside resorts and so on. Very often, an advert will conclude with the mysterious message, "No characters". This meant no practical jokers, barrack-room lawyers or uncertified lunatics - all of whom seem to have been attracted to the music profession in large numbers. It's certainly true that post-war dance bands were full of young men, mostly bored witless with the music they were playing and ripe for mischief.

The "Musicians Wanted" columns can also reveal the rise and fall of musical fashions. Take the "Trad Fad". Anybody who could clunk a banjo was in luck between the late fifties and 1963 - after which there were squads of redundant banjo players looking for work in the "Musicians Available" column. The end of the Trad Fad came suddenly. In 1964, Bob Wallis and his Storyville Jazzmen finished a seven-month season in Variety at the London Palladium and found themselves totally unemployed. During their absence most of the Trad clubs had closed. "No use grumbling," a philosophical Wallis told the *Melody Maker*. "It's all down to fickle public taste".

An advert for Beatle wigs, Ken Mackintosh predicting the imminent return of the big bands (in 1963!), the great BBC bribery scandal of 1948 - there's always something else. Turn the page and you'll be lost for ages. There's no easy or elegant way to finish. Just close the volume and put it back on the shelf until next time.

Editor's Note: Grateful thanks to Dave Gelly for his splendid contribution. He is well known for his jazz writing, broadcasting and playing and was the inaugural recipient of the Jazz Writer of the Year award in the 1999 BT British Jazz Awards.



THE ARCHIVE, GEORGE SIRAVO & ME

By Alan Shaw

Who is George Siravo? This was the very question I asked myself a few years ago when some of his quality big band swing and fine backing arrangements came to my notice. So I asked all the people I thought should know the answer but was met by blank stares, sympathetic looks and comments like "who", "don't know" and "never heard of him", all of which set the scene for the great mystery.

How then does one solve the mystery? Where does one get advice? Where is there a collection of knowledge available to study? Who would be interested enough to help?

Then one day I stumbled across the answers to these questions in an upstairs room in Loughton Library, the very room that contained the National Jazz Foundation Archive.

Upon entering the room a friendly face introduced itself as Ken Jones (the then Archivist) and so fate decreed that I should ask the familiar question "do you have any information on George Siravo?" I received the usual sympathetic look but this time accompanied by "let's see what we can find out" and from this momentous statement facts began slowly to emerge and bits of the puzzle started to come together and over the following months large sections of this most prolific and versatile musician's career unfolded.

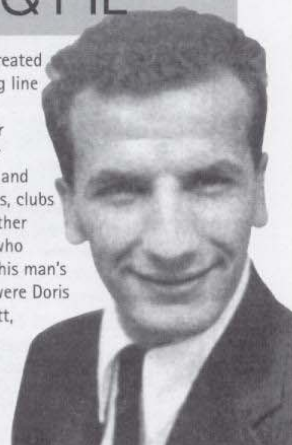
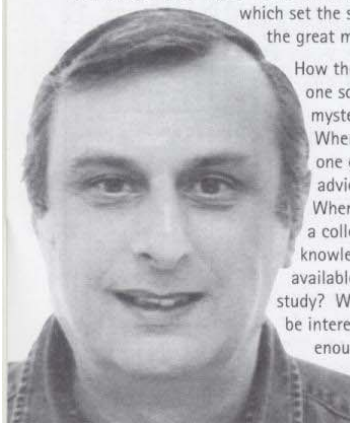
Born 1916 in Staten Island and at the age of 19 joined the Harry Reser band playing alto sax and starting to arrange. Played and arranged for the first Glenn Miller band 1937, first Gene Krupa band 1938 then Jan Savitt, Will Hudson, Lee Castle, George Paxton, Charlie Barnet, Artie Shaw, The Dorsey's and the list goes on and on.

Alongside this work Siravo started to arrange for many of the popular singers starting in

1944 when he created the first in a long line of up tempo arrangements for Frank Sinatra for records, radio/tv and live performances, clubs and concerts. Other singers of note who benefited from this man's musical genius were Doris Day, Tony Bennett, Connie Boswell, Kitty Kallen, Vic Damone, and many others (up to at least 25 vocalists discovered so far.)

Siravo also made about 20 albums under his own name including some collections of his own compositions some of which I have obtained and for others I am scouring the world with the aid of the Internet.

Continued next page ►



George Siravo - Metronome August 1939

ARCHIVAL NEWS

DONATIONS

BOOKS

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

Roy Carr (Editor) - *Jazz Singers* - Hamlyn Books
John Chilton - *Ride, Red, Ride* - Cassell
Harry Gold - *Gold, Doubloons and Pieces of Eight* - Northway Publications

Max Harrison - *Essential Jazz Records - Vol 2. Modernism to Postmodernism* - Continuum International Publishing Group
Eric Thacker and Stuart Nicholson - *The Day Before Yesterday: Rock, Rhythm & Jazz in the Bishop's Stortford Area 1957 - 1969*
Steve Ingless - *Melody Maker History of 20th Century Popular Music* - Bloomsbury Publishing

Nick Johnstone - *The Unclosed Eye* - Sanctuary Publishing
David Redfern - *A Fine Kind of Madness* - Ronnie Scott
Rebecca Scott and Mary Scott - *Remembered* - Headline Book Publishing
Geoffrey Wheeler - *Jazz by Mail* - Hillbrook Press

In addition, **Jane Hunter-Randall**, widow of the well known trumpeter **Ian Hunter-Randall** donated part of his book collection in addition to making a sizeable financial contribution in memory of Ian.

MAGAZINES AND MEMORABILIA

Among many items given to the Archive since the last issue were collections from:-

EDDIE COOK who continues to provide copies of foreign magazines including *Jazz Hot* (France) and *Musica Jazz* (Italy)
DAVE GELLY including *Jazz Music* (1943/44), *Jazz Record* (USA-1947), *Jazz Record* (UK - 1951) and *Pickup* (1947).

KENNETH PITT former press/publicity agent who brought in his client files on such well known names as Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, Ted Heath, Stan Kenton and Mel Tormé.

JOHN REAR who sent a substantial amount of interesting material representing some 30 magazine titles including copies of *Jazz Report* (USA 1961/62), *Discophile* (UK 1948/58), *Dynaflow*, magazine of the Stan Kenton Appreciation Society (UK 1953/54) and *Record Changer* (USA 1953/54) plus a number of Jazz booklets.

To them and all other donors our grateful thanks.

PUBLICITY

Features on the Archive appeared in *The Stage* (November 1999) and *Jazz Review* (December 1999) and news items on our new patrons in *Jazz Rag* and *Jazz UK* (both July / August 1999 issues).

The latest issue of *Journal Into Melody* (June 2000) gives details of the Archive.

NJFA OPEN DAY - JUNE 26TH 1999

A full house were treated to a recital by Andrew Simons the Jazz Curator of The British Library National Sound Archive on Black British Swing Musicians which was very entertaining and informative.

This was followed by a most enjoyable live session from Digby Fairweather and Friends, the Friends being Brian Dee (keyboards), Nevil Skrimshire (guitar) and Ken Shepherd (trombone) playing such favourites as "Bye Bye Blackbird", "Honeysuckle Rose" and

"Rosetta" plus a moving tribute, "Blues For Freddy Randall".

Among the audience were writers Peter Vacher and Ken Vail, Eddie and Janet Cook (*Jazz Journal*), Ben Cree (*Mole Jazz*) Michael Dynan (*The Stage*) and Denny Coffey (bassist/vocalist).



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW 12th November 1999

A splendid time was had by the capacity audience when John Barnes and Campbell Burnap were interviewed by Digby Fairweather - please see photo.

They thoroughly entertained with anecdotes from their varied and interesting careers with stories of time spent with top bandleaders much to the fore especially Acker Bilk, Mike Daniels, Alan Elsdon, Humphrey Lyttelton and Alex Welsh.



John Barnes, Digby Fairweather and Campbell Burnap at the Celebrity Interview



THE ARCHIVE, GEORGE SIRAVO & ME continued

Continued from previous page

The second stage of the search unfolded when David Nathan, the present Archivist (and the Leyton Orient supporter!!) suggested that possibly George Siravo had not yet joined the great swing band in the sky.

With this thought in mind David contacted Dan Morgenstern at the Institute of Jazz Studies in New Jersey and I contacted the Musicians Union in New York and eventually after some gentle persuasion the two addresses we received from these independent sources were identical although the telephone numbers were unobtainable but at least it proved that George Siravo my mystery man was around.

Last October I sent a birthday card and letter to George on his eighty third birthday and was surprised and delighted to receive a letter back from him giving me his telephone number and suggesting that we have a talk. We exchanged more letters and had some fascinating conversations on the telephone and I got some of my hundreds of questions answered by this man who had gone right through the greatest period of our type of music. Although George was not a well man his wonderful sense of humour and descriptive language kept me amused and just talking to this man with this great musical talent was for me a great honour.

Another subsequent gem of a find in the Archive was by a regular visitor Mike Chapman who whilst browsing through a 1939 issue of

Metronome came across a music score and wonderful photo as shown and article on the 22 year old George Siravo both of which I sent to George for his amusement.

George died on the 28th February this year so I lost my new friend but as his daughter Christine said to me at least you knew him for a short time.

That made all the effort worthwhile.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Alan Shaw for this fine contribution on one of the neglected figures of jazz and popular music. Alan is a retired Sales Training Executive in the retail sector; a lifelong lover of jazz and a regular visitor to the Archive.

BENEFIT NIGHT

Once again Ongar Jazz Club organised a tremendous evening on April 14th raising £900 for the Archive.

Digby Fairweather's band kicked off with a rousing "Some of these Days" followed by "Memories of You" and "Bourbon Street Parade" the line-up being Pete Strange (tmb), Julian Marc Stringle (clt), Adrian Macintosh (dms), Len Skeat (bass), Ted Beament (pno) plus Digby of course on trumpet.

Then came a lovely and lively set from Dave Gelly's quartet with Dave on tenor sax joined by Nevil Skrimshire and Dominic Ashworth (gtrs) and Len Skeat again on bass. Their selections were "The Best Things in Life are Free", "Someday You'll be Sorry" and "We Three" with Annie Bright providing excellent vocals on "Taking a Chance on Love", "How Long Has This Been Going On", "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" and "Orange Coloured Sky".

A sparkling duo followed when Craig Milverton (pno) joined forces with Dominic Ashworth (gtr) and they gave wonderful interpretations of "How Insensitive" and "Speak Low".

After the interval Digby's band returned but this time with a special guest appearance by George Webb replacing Ted Beament on piano and Nevil joining in on guitar with splendid versions of "Wabash Blues", "Wolverine Blues", and "Tishomingo Blues".

George like all of the musicians present is a great supporter of the Archive and it was wonderful to see and hear him in such good form.

It was then the turn of Humph's superb rhythm section of Adrian, Ted and Len (deputising for the sadly indisposed Paul Bridge) to entertain the capacity crowd with "Satin Doll" and "On Green Dolphin Street". Another super duo followed with Digby and Nevil performing "Sweet Lorraine" with Nevil's whistling skills in evidence.

The evening ended with the customary jam session involving *le tout ensemble* with "Ain't Misbehavin" and grateful thanks yet again to these splendid musicians for giving their time and talents so freely and all at Ongar Jazz Club especially Jean and Stan Ball for their help in arranging this brilliant gig.

David Nathan



HELP US TO ENSURE THE ARCHIVE CONTINUES TO GROW AND THRIVE

MAKE A DONATION

Any donation you make, whether it be of materials or money, will contribute directly to the Archive and will enable it to maintain and build the collection. Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to the National Jazz Foundation Archive.

REMEMBER THE ARCHIVE IN YOUR WILL....

If jazz is an important part of your life and has given you pleasure over the years, why not remember the Archive in your will so that future generations can enjoy looking back at the musicians, events and milestones in jazz history.

BECOME A FRIEND OF THE ARCHIVE

Make a Deed of Covenant which allows the Archive to recover income tax. The money goes straight to the Archive.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you would like to help the Archive continue its work, please tick the relevant space and return to the Archive.

I would like to donate money or materials ☐

I would like to remember the Archive in my will ☐

I would like to become a Friend of the Archive ☐

Name

Address

.....

.....

Telephone

NATIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION ARCHIVE

OPEN DAY

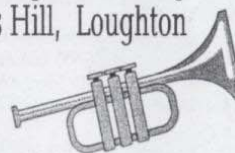


Saturday 24th June 2000

1.30 - 4.30 pm

Loughton Library
Traps Hill, Loughton

**DIGBY FAIRWEATHER
CAMPBELL BURNAP
AND FRIENDS LIVE!**



SALE of
jazz books
and
magazines

GEORGE WEBB
The founding father
of British Revivalist Jazz
talks about his life in
music at 1.45 p.m.

FREE ADMISSION
JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE ARCHIVE