

SJM

July 2020





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A man with a beard and short brown hair is shown in profile, playing a golden trumpet. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. The background is a dark, out-of-focus structure, possibly a tent or stage rig, with some lights visible. In the bottom left corner, there is a small, colorful structure that looks like a fairground ride.

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Cover: Isobella Burnham
by Pat Pascal
This Page: James Copus
by Lisa Wormsley

Pat Pascal

The Purpose of Jazz



Jazz beginnings are deeply rooted in the self-expression of inequality and discrimination of black people. From the spirituals, blues, ragtime to West Africa folk, jazz has evolved so much over the years into the musical form we know today.

For me, the authenticity of jazz lies in the idea that anyone can, in real-time, create a musical piece that represents a unique impression of personal experiences. Although we are all equal in our humanity, we all have lived very different circumstances and indeed are born with different fingerprints. At its best, jazz is a channel to express human spirituality and emotion. At its worst, is exploited for pure self-promotion and exhibitionism, creating an environment of unhealthy competition and segregation. As the biggest self-expression platform ever created, jazz has been a reflection of all the different sides of humanity throughout times. A place where all

are free and all can connect.

I passionately believe that the universality of jazz can potentially serve as a bridge to achieve unity and mutual understanding, but we can only fulfil this higher purpose in a truly balanced and inclusive scene. Just like in life, until we are all free to express ourselves, and treated equally, no togetherness or real unity will be accomplished.

All the equality and diversity policies can't save us if we as individuals aren't personally invested in creating a more diverse and fair world. Policies alone are not enough to change behaviours, prejudice and stereotypes. We need to be the example, with more action and less talk.

In some European countries finding a jazz musician of colour is still like finding a needle in a haystack. Why? Non-white musicians don't play jazz



because they don't see themselves represented. Expressing their cultural background through jazz is not always welcomed or accepted as a valid jazz form. We seem to forget the mixed origin of jazz.

This lack of diversity and unbalanced representation over the decades has been the biggest obstacle to create more diverse scenes and that is also a mirror of our society. We need all voices to be heard.

Presently, the UK seems to be living a grace period of mind openness that we haven't seen in a long time. Now, more than ever, all working in the jazz spectrum have the opportunity and the responsibility to counterbalance representation. We need to actively build more inclusive programmes and those who don't should not be working in the jazz industry, simply because they are disrespecting what jazz stands for.

There is a lot of work to be done also to balance gender equality. It is part of Jazznewblood.org's purpose

to advocate for more performing opportunities for young non-white musicians, in the early stages of their careers. Promoters need to take advantage of the UK's strong educational jazz network to increase collaborations and nurture youth jazz talent, always prioritising inclusivity. With Brexit on the way, cultural diversity may be the only hope in changing mentalities, educating people and creating opportunities for real learning and healing experiences.

Here are some fresh black voices, under 24, already performing their original music, to follow and support:

Trumpet player Ife Ogunjobi performing at Sofar London [here](#).

Guitarist Mansur Brown (above) performing live for NTS [here](#).

Singer and pianist Kianja performing at One Eyed Jack's [here](#).

Nihilism performing in this video at Jazz:Refreshed [here](#).

Pianist Roella Oloro performing live at Ghostnotes [here](#).



Saxophonist and singer, Kaidi Akinnibi featured in this song with his band Invariance [here](#).



Singer and trombone player Richie Seivwright performing at Jazz:Refreshed [here](#).



Pianist Sultan Stevenson just released his debut single [here](#).

Saxophonist Xhosa Cole performing his *Greek Suite* [here](#).

Music talent runs in this family, discover singer Akin [here](#) and brother Xvngo saxophonist [here](#).

Saxophonist Donovan Hafner and singer and bass player Isobella Burnham (below) performing as part of our #jazznewbloodALIVE2019 Compilation [here](#).



Other names to keep an eye on: Deschanel Gordon (piano), Manny Alexandra (vocals), Elias Jordan (trumpet), Cara Crosby (vocals) and Daniel Higham (trombone).

All photos by Pat Pascal.

Jazz News



Music Venue Trust's Open Letter

The Music Venue Trust, the charitable organisation that aims to help improve, maintain, and organise music venues in the UK, have sent an open letter to the UK government asking for a £50 million financial support package and a reduction on the VAT on future ticket sales. The letter has been signed by the owners and operators of the UK's grassroots music venues including The Brunswick, Latest Bar and The Verdict. Read the letter [here](#).



Jazz South Commissions

Jazz South have launched two open call initiatives, Jazz South Radar Commissions and Jazz South Breakthrough Commissions, to support 14 jazz composers "at different career stages to create new work". Online applications are now open with the deadline at 5pm on Friday 31st July 2020. More information can be found [here](#).



Jazz Education Changes

The long running Chichester jazz course is set to close this year, along with the entire music department at Chichester College. The jazz course has run for the past 39 years and in the past has been headed by Chris McDonald, Adrian Kendon, Simon de Souza and Julian Nicholas. Meanwhile, Buster Birch's Original UK Jazz Summer School is running an alternative 3-day live, online jazz course from Tuesday 4th to Thursday 6th August, 2020. More details [here](#).



New Generation Jazz TV Set To Launch

Brighton's New Generation Jazz are set to launch a TV channel. In a statement they said: "While live events remain impossible we will be moving our operations online to our New Generation Jazz TV multi-platform format to bring you a spread of high quality livestreams, educational videos, interactive events and exclusive online content from the very best emerging talent." More details will be available via their [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

Simon Spillett

Birth of a Collector

Writer and musician Simon Spillett introduces an extract from his forthcoming book



Upward, Backwards and Free: A Journey Into Jazz was written over a couple of weeks during the Covid-19 pandemic-enforced 'Lockdown'.

I lost my Dad following an eighteen month battle with cancer on April 4th and thinking back to how it was he who'd been my first real inspiration as a jazz musician (and fan), I began to wonder how I might commemorate his passing. At the same time as this, Facebook was awash with people posting their favourite albums, the protocol for which being that you could only use the cover image and not discuss the music. These two quite separate things combined to inspire me to write the new book, which outlines my journey as a new jazz listener (and wanna-be musician) in my early days, tracing the albums I was exploring, the music I was trying to make (and understand) and, throughout, the key role my Dad played in inspiring me to dig further into the history and magic of the jazz idiom.

Although it's written from an autobiographical standpoint I wanted the rather skewed way I came to the music to inspire others and to show

that when it comes to an idiom as broad and diverse as jazz there really is no 'right' way in. I also sincerely hope it inspires others to check out the music I discuss in its pages, which covers everything from swing to the avant-garde, and takes in profiles of figures as diverse as Albert Ayler and Benny Carter.

Birth of a Collector

There comes a time when even a respectful, well-behaved, historically aware, slightly nerdy teenager has to rebel against his parents. Well, if not exactly rebel then at least *deviate* somewhat. In my case this moment was all rather 'blink and you'll miss it', so mild and imperceptible as to go unnoticed by anyone but me. It happened in March 1989 and the only reason I have the month fixed in my mind is that it was sometime during the spring half-term break of my second year in secondary education. I was fourteen and growing up fast; it seemed the right time to strike a blow for my independence, even if it was one delivered in a rather unaggressive fashion.

I'd already mystified my class mates – then enraptured by Kylie Minogue, Bros and the like – through my love of jazz. To be honest it was hardly worth bringing up the subject in their company as any mention of the word jazz would prompt a slew of

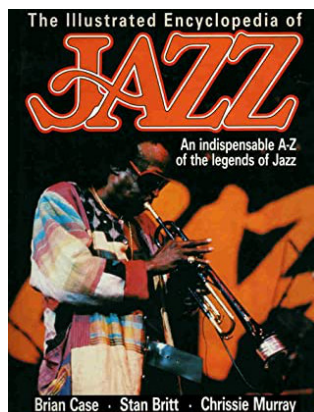


bad trombone impersonations (not that far removed from the quality of my own playing at this time, to be fair) or unwanted reminders that there was then an irritating chart act named Johnny Hates Jazz. Johnny clearly had allies among my school friends.

The staff in the school music department weren't much better, although our art teacher helped me form a school jazz band from an assorted bunch of variously talented clarinetists, trumpeters, a guitarist, a drummer and myself. Our repertoire consisted on two numbers; a theme-less slow blues in Bb and a theme-less fast blues in F. None of us could solo to any particular effect (although my efforts had considerable gusto if nothing else) and in retrospect the whole endeavour was really little more than a forum for the band's guitarist, who wanted to be Mark Knopfler when I wanted him to be Jim Hall. In such compromised circumstances it was hard to agree on anything and I

can still vividly recall the veto my mates put on my suggestion that we dress like the Lighthouse All-Stars circa. 1953. I'd already got my shirt – the loudest, proudest piece of tacky cod-Hawaiian tat you've ever seen and somewhere there exists a photo of me wearing it, stood by an exotic tree in our front garden, while holding an alto saxophone. In my mind I imagined looking like a young Bud Shank. I can't imagine what my friends thought I resembled.

By this point my love of jazz had reached near-obsessional levels of dedication. I was literally spending all my waking hours lost in its mystique, whether reading snippets about it in my Dad's copy of *Jazz Journal* which would arrive monthly at the breakfast table, listening to it as I sat warming up the engine of the family car prior to winter school runs, or scribbling cartoons of a puff-cheeked Dizzy Gillespie in the margins of my exercise books, much to the ire of my weary teachers. I was also chomping at the bit where my Dad's record collection



was concerned, certain that I'd already expended its riches. A few years later I realised the folly of my thinking, but back in 1989 I'd have given you short shrift if you'd suggested I listen to,

say, Bud Freeman or Lionel Hampton or any of the pre-boppers so generously represented on the record shelves in the loft. I wanted to be a 'modern' jazz musician; that is a modernist as defined by the jazz rules of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Swing was old hat and the avant-



garde, well, from what I'd seen of them in the *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Jazz* by Stan Britt and Brian Case (a veritable bible to me) all that involved was wearing funny hats, recording albums with incomprehensible titles and having downright weird first names like Ornette, Sun and Pharaoh. No, you could leave the avant-garde as far as I was concerned, thank you very much.

With the truncated attention span typical of a teenager, barely eighteen months into my jazz journey I'd thoroughly tired of spinning my Dad's old J&K records, or of making yet another cassette compilation from his EP's by Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan and the like. And with an appropriately teenaged lack of restraint I told him so. This moment of emotionally charged pubescent rebellion wasn't actually unique; a teenage son railing against his Dad about how un-hip he finds his music is nothing new, but given the fact that we were arguing not about current pop styles versus Dad-rock, but the aesthetics of 1950s

modern jazz, I'd imagine it was pretty much a lone example in my circles, wherein teen angst usually played out over issues like illicit smoking, staying out too late and over-heavy petting.

To his credit – and with commendable patience – Dad heard me out. And so it was that I found myself in WH Smith in Windsor High Street one Thursday morning in March 1989 clutching £10 of saved pocket money and looking quizzically at their meagre selection of jazz cassettes. Here was the denouement, the moment when, for all my noisily protested bravado, I realised that without Dad's guidance I really wasn't sure what to buy. Tactfully, he suggested a cassette each of Stan Getz and Dizzy Gillespie. 'You like them, right?' he asked, to which I sheepishly nodded. It mattered not that Dad already had plenty of records by each of these artists. These were my albums and that's all that counted.

These initial purchases were part of a series which had begun to appear



around 1987 on the German PolyGram label titled either Compact Jazz or, if you bought the first few series of releases which were simultaneously released on cassette tape, Walkman Jazz. Visually they were very eye-catching, with an individual cover design centred upon a black and white photo of the artist surrounded artfully

by some randomly selected and disconnected objects: Stan Getz's cover saw him sprayed with confetti, Gillespie's rather oddly scattered with razor blades. Others in the series were equally as strange: Gene Krupa surrounded by metal model aircraft, Astrud Gilberto by feathers, Sonny Stitt by vintage cigarette packets and so on. I've never given it any thought but maybe there was a connection between these odd covers and the music of the artist in question. Was not Getz's tone as gently engulfing as a cloud of confetti, or Gillespie's phrasing as incisive as any razor?

At the time I bought them though – thus beginning my 'own' jazz collection – these two tapes represented only one thing: jazz by players I'd come to idolise. And although I didn't realise it at the time, they made rather compatible purchases; Getz's album largely comprising excerpts from his early-1960s forays into the bossa-nova (which had been my introduction to jazz, as I'll discuss in a later chapter) and Gillespie's a compendium of exoticising work taking in Afro-Cuban rhythms, the calypso and bossa-nova. As compilations, programming was everything and with access to the tape vaults of several labels now bought under their corporate umbrella

(including Verve, MGM, Mercury, Philips, Keynote, Limelight, EmArcy and others) the compilers at PolyGram had rich pickings from which to select. The Gillespie, for example, spanned the years 1954 to 1964, taking in items from such classic albums as *Dizzy on The French Riviera* and *Afro*, lifted from various labels. Getz's was a little more narrowly focused, concentrating solely on his work for Verve between 1962 and 1967, much of it in the pure bossa vein but also including such gems as his 1964 take on *Summertime* and the gorgeous *O Grande Amor* from 1967's *Sweet Rain*, my nomination for the best all-round Getz album.

After our shopping trip to Windsor, Dad, Mum and I sat and had a picnic in Windsor Great Park on what was an unseasonably warm day, but which given the sunny nature of the music I'd just bought seemed highly apt weather. Some memories on your musical journey are indelible and ageless and this was one. Sat with the car doors open, sunshine shafting down between the still bare branches of the early spring trees around us, there came a subtle, insinuating rhythm,

outlined by an insistent yet never over-forceful double-bass line. Brushes shimmered on a snare drum and then it came; the unutterably lovely sound



of Stan Getz riding atop the Brazilian new wave for the very first time on *Desafinado*, the first real 'hit' of the bossa movement and a track that Mum and Dad had so loved during their youth. And now I was loving it too, marvelling as Getz's tenor spoke smooth stories over the loveliest of Latin grooves.

As we didn't have time to linger, Dad suggested we play a Gillespie track too. This time the Latin mood was more urgent, a rather twee-sounding flute ostinato introducing a composition I already knew from the Parker/Gillespie Massey Hall album – *A Night In Tunisia*. Only this time the arrangement was different with no 'classic' bass part underpinning the familiar theme and no stop-time bridge passage interlinking the ensembles and the improvising soloist. But that, I'd already sussed, was the magic of jazz; it was a music that consistently said 'you think you know this, but you just listen...' Gillespie, of course, was as coruscatingly brilliant as he ever was, soaring over the multi-layered rhythm section with the sure-footedness of a natural born dancer. When it was over, we played it again.

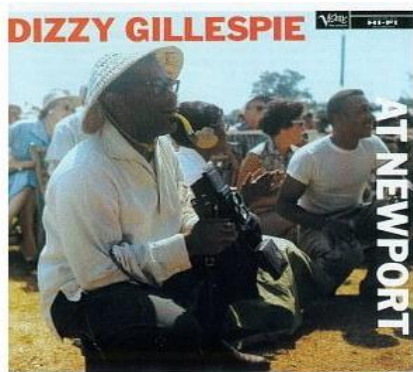
I still have both these albums (albeit updated to their CD versions) and as the earliest purchases I made in an effort to build up my own jazz library they're indispensable. I'm also happy to report that my judgement of their merits as representative compilations was spot on back in my teen years. Having played them countless times over the years – sometimes if only to confirm my long-held belief that Gillespie's 1957

Newport Jazz Festival version of *Manteca* is officially the most exciting piece of music ever – I still love their programming. And having done a fair share of compiling for various record labels myself over the last decade or so, I can't fault the track choices either. In fact, while it's difficult not to become irretrievably ensnared in the trap of subjective nostalgia when writing a book like this, wherein albums

of personal significance aren't necessarily those most representative of their creator's styles, these are two which I can quite readily say *do* stand up as cogent encapsulations (and enjoyable records to boot) of their subject's merits. If not exactly the stuff of teenaged rebellion, they're not a bad place to start a collection, I think.

Excerpted from *Upward, Backwards and Free: A Jazz Journey* by Simon Spillett.

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Jazz Essentials

Billie Holiday

The Complete Commodore Recordings (Essential Jazz Classics)

For someone whose personal life was so messy, Billie Holiday's discography is remarkably well organised. From her first recordings with Benny Goodman in November 1933 up to a jam session with, among others Art Tatum in January 1944, Billie recorded for Columbia or one of its offshoots. Between October 1944 and March 1950, she was with Decca, where she often recorded with strings. Finally, after a few Jazz at the Philharmonic gigs in 1945–47, she moved to Norman Granz's Verve Records in Spring 1952, where she remained until her death in July 1959. And that is her discography in a nutshell, ignoring a few outliers, like the unlistenable *Lady in Satin* album for Columbia in 1958.

But one glaring exception stands out. In early 1939 Billie Holiday performed at Café Society, a newly-opened radical alternative to the segregated clubs elsewhere in New York. At the end of each of her three nightly sets, the waiters would stop serving, the room would plunge into total darkness save for a single spotlight on the singer, and Billie would sing the same song, leaving the stage without an encore.

That song, of course, was *Strange Fruit*, a song about lynching that not so much stirred the blood as chilled it. Lynching was in decline in the United States when Holiday recorded the song, but it remained the most vivid symbol of American racism, a most unlikely subject for a song that was quite unlike anything else Billie sang. Her record label, Columbia, refused to record it for fear of antagonizing its southern customers, so Billie convinced Milt Grabner, owner of the small progressive Commodore record company run out of a record store on East 42nd Street, to take it on. On 20 April 1939, Billie recorded just four songs, of which *Strange Fruit* was one.



She returned in March and April 1944 to record another twelve, all with alternate takes. And that is the entire Commodore legacy, neatly compiled on one double CD.

On the song itself, Billie only makes her entrance after 70 seconds of solo piano, her voice quiet and restrained. The remaining Commodore songs are also intimate, with minimal accompaniment. The Verve recordings might be more professional but the Commodore recordings present a singer in her prime. But that song has a strange footnote: *Strange Fruit* is credited to Lewis Allan, a Jewish teacher and popular songwriter whose real name was Abel Meeropol. A member of the American Communist Party, he and his wife later adopted the two sons of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, orphaned after their parents were executed in June 1953 for passing nuclear and other secrets to the Soviets during the Cold War. Same political commitment, different issue.

Simon Adams

Gina Southgate



Photo: Lisa Wormsley

Artist Gina Southgate poses five questions to guitarist John Russell and herself. The pair have collaborated on and off over a period of 25 years. Question 3 was adapted slightly, by Gina, to suit both artforms. This is their first conversation on these subjects. All paintings by Gina Southgate.

Before working together what, if any, other cross genre collaborations have you been involved in?

John I was involved putting on shows at The Art Meeting Place in Covent Garden and there were performances by people like Genesis P Orridge and Cosey Fanny Tutti and David Medalla who I think has won the Hepworth Prize. I was working with Garry Todd (sax) and Roy Ashbury (drums) in performances with Reindeer Werk (Tom Puckey and Dirk Larsen). I also worked a bit with poets and spoken word, putting on a show with Peter Riley, and one designed around different types of voice. There were



also concerts with back projection and I had an interesting relationship with film maker Richard Welsby before he moved to the Orkneys. So I guess I have always been interested in cross discipline performance from quite early on.

Gina I Had worked with other improvisors and had been on tour with Alan Wilkinson, Sue Ferrar and Mark Sanders. This had given me a real taste for working in big venues on proper stages with lighting and tech. I loved the tour format of developing a large scale piece of audio visual work with the same group. In this instance we did 12 gigs. The set was a series of large



negatives, cast off from the advertising industry in Clerkenwell. I made them into huge acetate curtains that I took out blank. They became a sea of colour and texture, ripped and restructured by the end of the tour. At this time I was also developing my practice of making live imagery of musicians, exhibiting, and doing my first painting residency at London Musicians Collective festival in 92. Embracing improvisation, the LMC ran a brilliant series of improvising workshops led by a different musician each week, I went to all 20 of them, I think John may have been one of the tutors. At this time I joined a women's drumming group to assist my coordination for using both hands in performance situations, ha ha.

When and in what situation did you start working with each other?

John I can't remember the first occasion specifically. It must have been as a duo and I think was in Stoke Newington but may have been somewhere else in Hackney. I do

remember being drunk one night at The China Pig Club and rather boorishly asking her if she would paint me in the nude while playing the guitar. It was the first time I had

met her and it is a wonder that we ended up in a creative partnership at all. I have always admired Gina's ability to cut through the BS and see the wood from the trees. We also

ended up, at one point, as a quartet called Metafour where we had a small UK tour joined by Maggie Nicols and Mark Sanders. Quite a band!



Gina I wasn't going to mention it, but John has brought up the naked painting request, I of course was indignant. It may have been proposed at the China Pig club but it was at an after party of The London Musicians Collective festival at Community Music House that he ended up playing the



grand piano in his underpants as proof he was willing to go through with it, I believe accompanied by Paul Shearsmith on pocket trumpet. Those were the days. I never did paint him like that! And yes our duos together were a follow on from our quartet Metafour, that existed thanks to the Arts Council's improvised music touring scheme. The quartet came first, and the duo was born out of it. I was 5 months pregnant on this tour and did lots of manoeuvres up a ladder. It was a perfect quartet with John and percussionist Mark Sanders as the over-qualified serious musician straight guys keeping their heads down playing whilst vocalist Maggie and I created mayhem and chaos around them, Maggie's ability to turn on a sixpence from banshee to angel, comedian to virtuoso, while I manipulated my props and the set that I painstakingly built at every

venue. It was fun times and the legendary Hugh Metcalfe was our tour bus driver.

What would you say is different about working in a gig situation with someone whose concerns are visual as well as occasionally aural and how does this differ from solo performance?



John Firstly as an improviser the situation is intuitive and the vibe is quite different, it leads to a different focus somehow. My antennae are working in a different way and it is something that is difficult to put into

words. I don't for instance have a literal take on things - Gina is using red that suggests a G minor. Very Tony Hancock that! I do respond to the sound that comes from making the art and that is mostly matters of rhythm and tempo with aspects of



John Russell with Thurston Moore

timbre involved. The pitch part of the playing arises from the guitar in relation to those elements and also back to that indefinable thing called the vibe. At the end of a performance there is no music but the art is left in the painting. Although there might be representational elements, like a lot of what one could describe loosely as modernist work, the method is also on display, so it is possible to see the different materials and techniques having a direct influence. In the same way a musician has a dialogue with his/her instrument and that becomes part of the music. Gina's materials and brushes can be seen both in the execution of and in the finished result of the painting itself. I like that!

What would you say is different about working in a gig situation interacting with, as opposed to, painting a musician?

Gina So I've drawn and painted John in loads of different pin drop situations. His long standing club the Mopomoso really is a prime example

of a silent attentive space. When I paint in that environment any tiny noise would disrupt the focus. My performance work with John is the antithesis of that, where I can freely explore all the sonic potential of the interaction, deliberately making my canvas as loud as it can be with every scrape and scratch. It's important for John to ride the quiet bits, not be perturbed if I disappear sonically while I'm dealing with the visual. Though John now uses an amp sometimes, and occasionally even an electric guitar, back then it was appealing working with an acoustic guitarist that never looked up. John plays, to my ears, in a completely abstract way and this is thrilling because it takes me somewhere different at every turn. Unlike rhythm or melody or time-based music, the uncharted dynamics in his improvisations, in an audio visual context, create a choppy and challenging ride but that is the thrill. I have made big exciting painted works with John live, in this



Evan Parker, John Edwards and John Russell



way, using all the information I've gathered from painting him on the side-lines for years. We've also performed where I have made real time situationist sculpture and installation from bric-a-brac and objects, humour is always a part of these pieces. John has a great sense of humour in much of his playing.

with us and he got the cross genre thing very well. He was also very entertaining talking about his work, not only with Merce and John, but also with Nam June Paik. I have been very fortunate in meeting some extraordinary people. Quite a journey for someone from a small village on Romney Marsh.



Do you think that improvisation and freely improvised music lend themselves to collaborative cross genre work?

John By its very nature improvisation is about using what is available. In that sense it is far from abstract. It is a very real and very concrete thing. If the performers know this and they are working overtime i.e. a performance, then it is possible. The dangers come from not recognising that if we draw analogies between practices we also have to be aware that each discipline is different and has its own inherent rules. The work of Merce Cunningham and John Cage comes to mind here. I have been fortunate to know and play with Takehisa Kosugi a remarkably talented man who is now no longer

Gina Yes absolutely, It is for me music in its purest form. Abstract I think is the key word here. It's interesting at the moment because in lockdown I've worked with my partner Alan Wilkinson again for the first time probably in about 15 years. We've produced a couple of videos for online concerts. They are fully interactive spontaneous pieces, the difference between them and live performance to an audience is that you can zoom in on the visual without seeing the whole performer in the space. You can focus audience attention on what aspect of it you want them to see. Also, the energy is so different, I guess it's like the difference between a live recording and a studio recording. So in this instance with improvised pieces you can't go back and do it again you have to do another take and hope to

learn from the last one, what you end up with are pieces that have good bits and parts you'd like to change. You're not working to a formula so it's actually out of your control. You have your kit/instrument and you



have your chops, you have your loose ideas that just go out of the window the minute you start interacting with another person that brings all that to the play too. Pure improvisation is a real skill, people talk about musicians making it up as they go along, well yes they do, but it's about knowing when and where to put that exact sound. If a visual artist or other artform practitioner is making the same exacting decisions in real time, the dialogue is unique, unrepeatable, magical even. It is a risk, it doesn't always come off but a skilled improviser can make it happen more often than not.

In the current moment where streaming is being used as the way forward do you feel that visuals will play a larger role in the presentation of live music and improvised music in the future.

John Well at the time of taking part in this interview I am currently working on a Mopomoso digital stage with a

group of volunteers and certainly the visual aspect is important, even if it is only a way for an audience to see something other than a musician practising at home. I think it can go further than a visual backing but be a genuine collaboration. My friend Robert Appleby is working on creating a meta language of text, visuals and music which he can project in real time in a live concert. So what works live can inform the virtual world and vice versa. It is basically the old things of knowing your materials, recognising the differences in practices and knowing the context. In this I could also say my experiences with dancers have been very helpful as well. Kirsty Simpson, Eve Petermann and Min Tanaka are three that spring to mind. I would really love to extend this to a sense of space and do something site specific in Romney Marsh. Maybe one or two of the churches, and it would be great to find a way of doing this with Gina who as well as having a very musical understanding of the moment is also very attuned to landscape painting. I would like to finally add that at the heart of all this is having fun and sharing that fun. Play is something all upper primates do and it is a great world to have and share adventures in. Much better than making guns and bombs. When Picasso was told by someone that they didn't understand his paintings he said, 'Do you like ham?' The reply came back, 'Yes I like ham' to which Picasso said, 'And do you understand it?' We all make the music in our heads and free improvisation is unique in that the performers don't know what will happen and they share this journey of discovery with the other performers and the audience. It is not difficult. A truly democratic creative

experience and one I certainly enjoy sharing with Gina. As they say in parts of the jazz world, 'She's got ears!'

Gina A lot of my answer to the last question is relevant to this one, it's interesting that I've been asked to take part in three important online gigs in lockdown. We are all developing new ways of getting our work across and staying visible in a different set up. If live music from home is going to be a thing hereinafter then I think the opportunity for interactive visuals is great, whether it's made in the same space and time or it's retrospectively responsive. Often when I'm live painting I'm not lit properly or people at the back can't see or I don't want to get in the way of the audience. It's hard to organise unless you go into a big tech situation, which also tampers with the spontaneity. Cross genre work is in vogue, the internet has given people access to its history which is both ancient and current. Improvised music, particularly in the UK, has always been hampered by financial restraints; it relies on the

grass roots gigs facilitated by the love and dedication of people like John and Alan. No one is getting rich on this stuff so it will always play out on the fringes, by nature of that, it doesn't compromise. Having said that, the jazz world is more ready for it now than it's ever been. The young access the whole history of jazz in a condensed form and this includes the most avant garde material. Young women in party frocks dance at Peter Brötzmann gigs. Cross-genre work, with a visual aspect, can make the entry into improvisation more palatable to the uninitiated; it can also make projects more attractive to funding bodies. What I'd hate to lose in the live streaming and filming and documenting of everything we make, is those moments where it all gets said and then goes out into the ether.

And YES, I'd love to work on a Romney Marsh project with John, it's his roots and spiritual home, the bleak oasis that produced a gem.

Gina Southgate

www.artistginasouthgate.com



Lockdown Diaries

Tim Lea Young (M3ON)



Photo: Lisa Wormsley

When lockdown was announced, my initial concern (aside from loss of life) and the one that obviously still remains, is for the live music community and the hospitality industry in Brighton. I play relatively infrequently on the live scene but the vibe is captivating and a big part of my social enjoyment of living here. I played at the Paris House (Western Road) just a couple of days before it had to close its doors, and when it opens again I hope it can recover and pick up where it left off.

At the very beginning, and after a couple of days stuck in my flat, I went super tidy, it became spotless - I scrubbed my oven (1st time in...), cleaned windows, houseplants got a lot of care and talking to, untouched corners that I've not visited for years got the spring-clean treatment, new pictures got framed and put on walls, etc. etc.

In terms of work, my job is fairly solitary anyway so I haven't really had to worry about catching Covid at the studio. I work out of a personal studio close to the seafront which is in a building shared with other composer/musicians and we have

been cleaning doorhandles etc. regularly. I have been busy on jobs for KPM & BMG production music library catalogues throughout the last few months, and thanks to a job I did a few years ago for Scottish TV, the PRS gods have been smiling for a while, so luckily it hasn't affected me financially.

In December I was offered a part-time ongoing temporary contract demonstrating the recording studios a couple of days a week up at the University of Sussex, which I had been enjoying, but which came to an end when everything was closed up in March.

Given the way the virus has affected different parts of the world, a session that I had set up in London for recording a string quintet which was initially set for March was able to be relocated and recorded remotely



in Sydney Australia in May (with equally world class musicians), where the lockdown restrictions enabled the meeting of all musicians, engineers and producers to take place in one studio sooner.

Communication on Zoom enabled me to be live at the session (allbeit at 5am BST) and I'm amazed at the quality and simplicity with which I was able to hear and to get across my directions to the performers. We are truly blessed with seamless internet conferencing technologies!



Photo: Lisa Wormsley

It's the future. The project is not time sensitive and so was not negatively affected by the delay and the recording has come out amazingly well.

In a strange way there seems to have been less time - I've been focusing more on projects and ideas that I've had brewing for a while without so many distractions, and freeing up hard drive space by digitally releasing some old projects that I should have put out years ago (as M3ON). One thing I love about Brighton is its hedonistic lifestyle - especially when the sun is shining - it can occasionally have the debilitating affect of slowing your work rate down however! So being locked down and creatively self-employed/motivated has actually a positive impact on focus. Couple of years ago I decided to go to the University of Sussex part-time and study for a masters degree. There's a really inspiring team up there and it's proved to be really rewarding in all kinds of ways. The lockdown has helped to focus time on this and so a good chunk of my 'spare' time has

been spent with my head in books and papers. Aside from that, the gratitude I've felt for living so close to the South Downs is always present. Still being able to head up into the hills for my bit of daily exercise has maintained a sense of peace and normality for me, so this hasn't changed either. The hills actually got a lot busier as a result of lockdown, as obviously more people with free time took the opportunity to take exercise out in the beautiful countryside here in Sussex.

In the near future I have a new classical record scored with string orchestra coming out. I'm optimistic, it's going to be a huge success ;-)



Photo: Tim Lea Young

The effects of the pandemic on TV and film production has definitely negatively affected sync, and music usage however, as ads, programmes and films just aren't getting made at the moment. I'm pretty sure there will be a buzz of activity in this area when restrictions are lifted, as there are probably a lot of scripts getting written and obviously a lot of serious subjects to be explored through TV, film and media- the seemingly immediate need for big change and important messages to get out, although as we all know - the revolution will not be televised... it starts on the inside.

<http://www.m3on.com/>



James Copus

Trumpeter **James Copus** studied at London's Royal Academy of Music where he received the Derek Watkins award and regularly performs with musicians that he met there, such as in Ralph Wyld's Mosaic and the Alex Hitchcock Quartet. He spoke to Charlie Anderson ahead of the release of his debut album, *Dusk*.

How did you first get into jazz?

Music has always been a big part of my life, of my upbringing. Actually, both of my parents met at the Academy, both doing classical music. My dad's a French horn player and there was a beaten up trumpet on the bookshelf that I always wanted to try and play. That got me into being a brass player. It was all classical up until someone brought me a Wynton Marsalis CD called *Hot House Flowers* and I couldn't stop listening to it. It was on repeat. It was definitely a turning point, that one. From there I just got into so much jazz after that. My dad was a music teacher and one of his friends at a school he taught at knew Freddie Gavita. So I started having lessons with Freddie. It was him who recommended that I go to NYJO and the Junior Academy course, so I owe a lot to him. I've got a lot of respect for Freddie, he's an amazing player.

So you were at the Junior Academy?

Yeah, I ended up doing 6 years at the Academy. I did the Junior Academy for 2 years. In the first year Nick Smart was running it, then it changed over to Gareth Lockrane the year after. That was amazing. At the same time I was doing NYJO in the morning, then going to Junior

Academy. It was great. I met so many like-minded musicians that were my age. It was a complete roast! I really had to get it together.

How did the Royal Academy prepare you for the real world?

It's difficult on any music course to prepare you to be a working musician but I think the Academy was really good, in terms of preparing me creatively, and in terms of making my own music. It was really good for that, especially with lessons from Pete Churchill.

The first time I saw you play was with Alex Hitchcock.

He got that group together for his final exam at the Academy, and just continued it on. So we started playing together there. There were loads of others there too, Jacob Collier, Rob Luft, loads of great musicians.

So you're releasing your debut album. Will there be a launch?

There is one booked in for 8th September at Pizza Express but I don't know if that's going to happen. If it doesn't happen then I'm sure I'll just get another date. The whole tour was booked in for September so we might be playing. I've been asked to do a recording session in a studio at



Photo: Lisa Wormsley

the end of this month, so if that's happening now then maybe it'll be okay by then. We'll see.

How did you end up signing with Ubuntu?

Martin [Hummel] frequents the Ronnie's Late Show quite a lot and I think that's where I met him. He'd heard about me through Leo Richardson. Martin was just starting the label up and Leo was one of the first releases. Leo said something along the lines of 'James is interested in doing an album' so Martin approached me and we had a few meetings, and so it went from there. It was a long time from meeting him to actually having the album done, maybe a year and a half.

How would you describe your musical tastes?

Eclectic. In terms of jazz, my

favourite era is definitely the Blue Note era and my favourite trumpeter is Freddie Hubbard. But also one of the tracks on my album is inspired by The Eraser by Thom Yorke. It's a wide range of musical influences. Also, my parents are classical musicians so there's a bit of that as well. But I'm mostly influenced by New York jazz: Chris Potter, Seamus Blake, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Kendrick Scott. The kind of music that's coming out of there at the moment, I like that a lot.

When did you record the album?

It was 23rd to 25th June, 2019. It was three full days in Livingston Studios, the one in Wood Green. I'd only been there once before, but it was to record Alex's album. That was so great, and that's how I knew I wanted to record it in that studio.



Photo: Lisa Wormsley

How did you get New York-based drummer Jason Brown on the album?

Part of the reason it came about, was when I realised that Jason was up for doing it, and because I'd made several trips out to New York. I get a lot of my inspiration from music coming from there. On one trip he was out there at the same time, so I was just hanging out with him. I went to see him at Birdland where he was playing with Monty Alexander and we just hung out. I'd never really thought about doing an album or what could be, before that. I asked him if he'd be up for playing and recording something, and he was. That was when I knew I wanted to do it. I got it organised after that. In hindsight it all seems really quick and I've been writing these tunes for a while.

How did you find New York?

The first time I went, I was just

imagining all my heroes. It's just so cool. All that stuff happened right there, all the stuff that I'd read about and listened to. It was everything I'd imagined it to be, in terms of the jazz scene. You can feel it, as it's built into the life there. Jazz is just such a big part of it. Going to the schools and getting up and playing. I remember one time being in Smalls and standing at the bar with Ambrose Akinmusire, and Roy Hargrove got up to play. I remember playing in front of Roy, I couldn't believe it was happening at the time, as that's the kind of thing I've dreamt about for so long. It was amazing. I want to keep going back there.

James Copus' album *Dusk* is out on 17th July on Ubuntu and is available on Bandcamp [here](#).

Lockdown Diaries

Abiola Otusanya (GiwHa)



Photo: Lisa Wormsley

In short, it was a nightmare when lockdown was announced. I had so many plans for this summer (as we all did) and to watch it go down the drain was something painful to accept. I basically had more than half of my income slashed due to not doing gigs anymore and it was a really tough place to be in, both financially and mentally. At first I was really worried, I didn't know what to do, and the fact that things were so uncertain and still

are, made me question everything, and how things are going to be after the lockdown, it was a scary mind set to be in.

I was fortunate to be able to move some of my piano students online, so I could carry on teaching piano, which helped a great deal. I also received some help from Help Musicians, I don't know how I would have done it really, I also had a bit of savings which have almost ran out but I'm just thankful for life in general, for

the fact that I had more time to create more music and released a new single titled *Florasía (1618 Version)*, and took long walks, talked to my friends and family



which was really nice, and worked on my Instagram profile, then created a Facebook group to help other artists/entrepreneurs to understand the platform a bit better. I have also used this time to reflect more on myself and got more into fitness training, as I believe that the mind needs a healthy and able body to function properly.

I think this pandemic will definitely shape the way we

socialise and I am afraid that it will have a negative impact on live music and we musicians in general. It seems like the world will be a lot more anti-social, it will be very difficult to get back to what we call normal because of all the laws that will be put in place. I think artists will have more problems getting booked as most venues might cut entertainment out of their budget due to money loss during the lockdown but, on the bright side I think this might also open a new door to online music platforms, we've already been seeing online festival/gigs, and I think that might be the new way we consume live music, which is not really ideal in my opinion, as I think one of the things I love the most about performing live is connecting with my audience. I think that

might be a lot more difficult to achieve if all gigs are online.

I just wish we can find a cure for the virus so we can all go back to the way things were. I really miss that, the uncertainty is hard to bear but I'm staying positive and hoping this won't be the end for the art industry as we know it.

<https://soundcloud.com/giwha>
<https://www.instagram.com/Giwhaa/>

Big Band Scene

Patrick Billingham

Trees Maestro and bassist par excellence, Terry Pack, has been busy during lockdown. He has written a number of new big band arrangements over the last few weeks including *Giant Steps*, *Naima*, *Blue Train*, *Mr PC*, *Maiden Voyage*, *Cantaloupe Island/Afro Blue*, *Dolphin Dance*, *Milestones*, *Blue in Green*, *All Blues* and *Stolen Moments*. And is working on more. He will also be happy to write a chart as a commission. If you'd like to buy copies of these charts, or any of the Trees repertoire, for your band, please send him a private message (07801 482984) or email him at tpfeedback@hotmail.com.

At the time of writing, the COVID-19 alert has been reduced from level four to level three. Announcements are expected about further relaxation of lockdown and physical distancing. It looks as though the various moves so far have not brought about a second phase or a levelling out. Let's hope that the new measures don't upset this trend.

Already, there are some signs that the local big band scene is about to emerge from its somnolent state. Jo Wood, leader of the Some Like It Hotter big band has been given permission to use Battle



bandstand as a rehearsal space. There is no electrical supply. And you can't say you are busking or performing. Six musicians is the maximum allowed at present. So although, at the moment, a full band is out of the question, sectional rehearsals are possible. If you are interested, please contact Jo (07545 305690), or Jowood01@gmail.com.

The 2020 Sunday In The Park With Jazz at the Brighton Open Air Theatre is scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday 16th August including Terry Pack's Trees (Bonsai version). To maintain physical distancing, the audience is likely to be limited to 120. And entry, as usual for this event, is by donation. Confirmation, or otherwise, in next month's column.

Some years ago, I was depping in a big band in a hall with a capacity of 120. On a nice wide stage with curtains. After the sound check, the audience entered and the curtains were closed. Someone peered through the gap and the band leader

asked "What's the audience like?"

Back came the answer, "Nearly 80".

"That's a good turnout."

"No, that's the average age."

This is a problem facing the big band scene. Not just in Sussex but in the country as a whole. Apart from

university and school bands, it's not only the audiences that are of a certain age, but many of the band members as well.

The lockdown hasn't helped.

The 75th anniversary of VE Day would have been a golden opportunity to introduce live big band music to a wider and younger audience. And get them hooked.

Even more years ago, I was in a band assembled to support a school musical. After the first two evenings, we had a request to play during the interval for the remaining shows. Not from the students, but from their parents. For many of them, it was their first experience of live music that wasn't provided by guitars or amplified instruments. And they were blown away by it.

It has been suggested that the repertoire should modernise to increase the appeal to younger generations. Away from the standards of the 1930s and 40s. But Rock and Roll appeared on the scene more than sixty years ago. The Beatles more than half a century, and

ABBA more than forty years. So their original teenage fans are getting on a bit as well. Already many bands have arrangements of the more memorable pop tunes.

There is no doubt that performances from non-electronic ensembles do strike a chord, no pun

intended, leaving audiences wanting more. The question is, how can we get them to hear it in the first place. Dragging them off the street into the regular

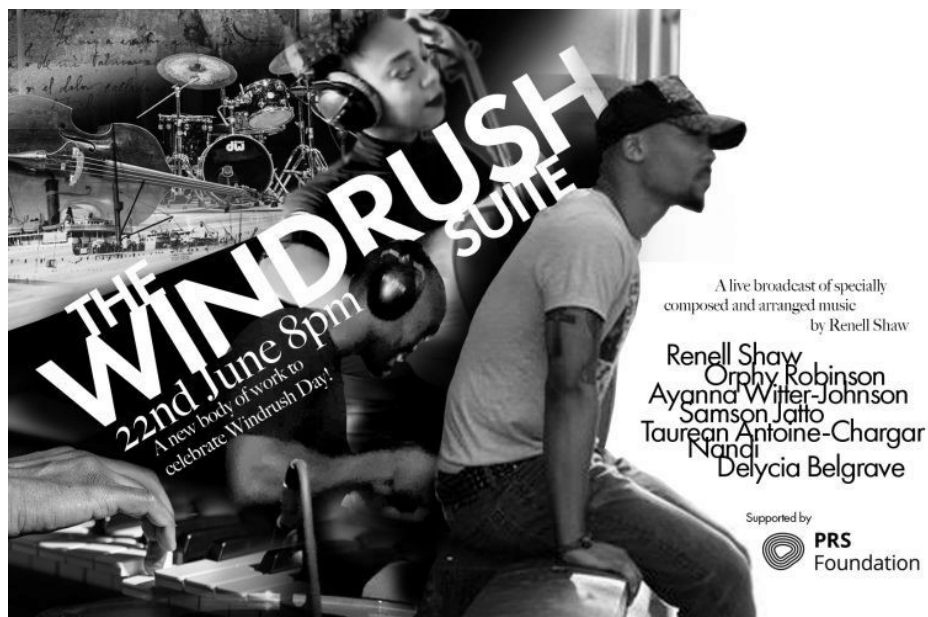


venue might result in antipathy and perhaps legal repercussions. So not really an option. The alternative, especially in the Summer, is to try to perform at some local attraction, such as an open air museum or a village fête. In short, go where the audiences are, rather than wait for them to come to us.

Next month: Possibly some news and probably some views. If there is any other information, perhaps about what various bands are doing during lockdown, or feedback on this column, that you would like me to include in August's Big Band Scene, please send it to me by Sunday 19th July. My email address is g8aac@yahoo.co.uk.

Photo of Terry Pack by Lisa Wormsley.

Live Stream Reviews



Renell Shaw's The Windrush Suite

Presented by The Vortex Online

Monday 22nd June, 2020

This project, supported by the PRS Foundation and The Shape Of Jazz To Come, would have been a significant statement under normal circumstances: had it been performed live at the Vortex it would certainly have informed and possibly elevated those lucky enough to attend in person. Against the backdrop of global Black Lives Matter protests and the re-addressing of the Windrush scandal its message resonates louder than ever; and performed under lockdown and over livestream, it encapsulates a particular moment of conjuncture so completely that it makes totally compelling viewing.

Proceedings begin with a dark screen over which the unmistakable mid-Atlantic tones of patron Dave Holland introduce the show. Then the music kicks in, and the camera introduces us to the players, one by one, each performing in isolation from their respective locations. Drummer Samson Jatto lays down a hypnotic 12/8 groove from a shadowy studio corner; Ayanna Witter-Johnson dances with her cello in front of the Egyptian statue on her mantelpiece, joining Renell Shaw's bass guitar to interweave some melodic lines and embellishments over the carefully wrought harmony, and Orphy Robinson layers some dazzling figures on marimba from his narrow sound booth with an African mask displayed on the wall behind him. The glimpses into the

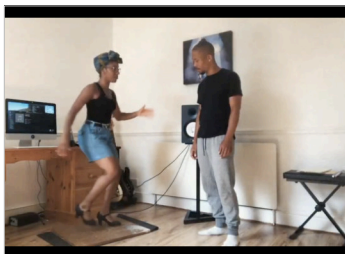
performer's personal spaces make the impact of the spoken word extracts that play across the top of the music even stronger: we are presented with a powerful image of a fractured community uniting itself around an expression of shared history and culture. Shaw's music moves over a series of differently paced, evolving sections; there's a wide ranging blend of influences, from the soca flavoured pulse of *We Don't Sleep No More*, spiced with marimba, baritone sax and some fluent bars from Shaw, to the gospel-flavoured intro to *Umoja* that develops into a slow, portentous, proggy workout that wouldn't be out of place on a Pink Floyd release. Shaw makes full use of the multitrack recording process, layering up Nandi's vocals into a psychedelic choir, building up the rhythm beds with extra percussion and keyboards, and bringing tap dancer Delycia Belgrave in to add slow, precise figures over the final movement's sombre harmony. Throughout, the recorded voices from the Windrush generation are overlaid to tell tales of aspiration and endeavour, meeting differential standards and endemic racism, additionally contextualised by Kevin Le Gendre's narrative interlude. *Out Of many Come One* features Shaw reciting Haile Selassie's famous speech, in South London accents over a pumping groove; then the pace drops, to build back up with the voice of Dr. Io Smith MBE recounting his



lived experience over a slow bass and tap duet into a dramatic finale, and we are left with the word 'Revolution' across the black screen. Tonight's show had the immediacy of a live performance with the extra depth and polish of a structured broadcast piece. While the Vortex audience would have numbered in the hundreds, the video has been watched 7,000 times to date: a lesson in how restrictions can turn into possibilities if they're embraced with resilience and collaboration.

Eddie Myer

Renell Shaw, compositions and arrangements, piano, guitar, bass,



percussion, vocals; Orphy Robinson MBE, vibes, marimba; Ayanna Witter-Johnson, cello; Samson Jatto, drums; Taurean Antoine-Chagar, saxophones; Nandi, lead vocals; Delycia Belgrave, vocals, tap dancing; Kevin Le Gendre, narration.

You can view the performance of *The Windrush Suite* on YouTube [here](#) and purchase the album on Bandcamp [here](#).

100% of the profits will go towards supporting the Vortex and helping keep jazz music alive.

Album Q&A: Omer Kringel



What inspired you to create the album?

This album/creation is all about ideals that reflect through my eyes the beauty of life: nature, which symbolises for me true freedom; ideals taken from tradition and the Bible, like “love thy neighbour as thyself,” live and be in great joy (which is a grand ‘mitzva’). The song *Blossom* for example is an interpretation of mine of some things that influenced me through the years from “song of songs” and what it means: true friendship that doesn’t depend on anything, distance etc. (like the song *Pacto de alma*), and live in the moment, ‘Shekinaha’ and so on... Maybe this sounds ‘cheesy’ a bit but those are some of the things that inspired me. The main idea was to connect between three elements these ideals: my art and music that was incubating inside for a long time,

and people: special friends, musicians and human beings.

Do you have a favourite track from the album?

Hard one... but because I just released a video clip for *Mansero* then let’s say *Mansero* :) [view here](#)

What has been the response to the album so far?

I got many responses from people all over the world that it has touched them, as well as some well-known musicians and artists. It has also got nice coverage around the globe: on blogs, magazines, a TV interview I did, here in the US and in Latin America. Although in these tough times it was a bit delayed.

Album Review

Omer Kringel
Okan Project
(Self-release)

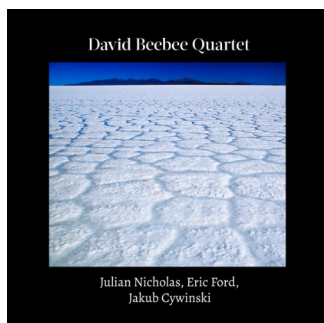
The art of the big band has long been a time-honoured tradition in the jazz world. The discipline of writing for a large ensemble is almost a rite of passage for budding arrangers and composers, rising to prominence with the likes of Ellington and Basie in the 40s, and enduring through to the modern day with the music of artists such as Snarky Puppy, Ibrahim Maalouf and Kamasi Washington. Now adding his name to the list is Israeli pianist and composer Omer Kringel who shows us he's more than up to the challenge with the release of his debut album full of energetic and diverse compositions and featuring his own big band under the name OKAN. The name which is also the album title is said to translate to 'heart' in the Yoruba language, and what a fitting title for a project whose sound reflects Omer's love and passion for people and their cultural musical identities, which is also shown in the ensemble's unique lineup consisting of the standard big band lineup of horn and rhythm sections and also joined by Middle Eastern instruments such as the oud and Kemenche and a large arsenal of various types of percussion all together bringing the music to life. Emphasising Israeli, Latino, West African and popular musical styles all brought together in the jazz big band context. The music itself is just as unique as the lineup and consists entirely of original material written by the young pianist and bandleader. Each track is a voluminous cocktail of musical sounds injected with a

healthy dose of pop energy, and bearing similar resemblance in its overall finish to the shininess of Snarky Puppy but with an air of refinement, variety and originality about the music. The piece entitled *Sembrar Amor* is a fine example with its upbeat tempo and joyous horn blasts spelling out the tune's main melodic line, complete with funky guitar and spicy percussion, the ensemble grooves on the theme for awhile before taking it down a notch to allow the vocals to jump in and put words to the melody. Chanting out an anthemic line backed by the band in full swing before changing it up by handing the mic to another vocalist who raps out a verse with great fluidity before passing it back for the main vocals to come in for another chorus. This songwriting formula of catchy melodic hooks and a repeating verse and chorus is unique in the jazz context as it is much more associated with the pop and rock world, and it appears frequently on the album. There is still the element of soloists improvising over the progressions and beautifully arranged brass and reed sections, but Omer Kringel has decided to go more towards the realms of pop within the context of a jazz big band whilst also bringing elements of other musical cultures and Eastern instruments into the mix as well. The message of unity is what we need to write now and Omer Kringel reminds us just how beautifully this can be done through the universal language of music.

George Richardson

Available on Bandcamp [here](#).

Album Reviews



David Beebee Quartet *David Beebee Quartet* (Beeboss Records)

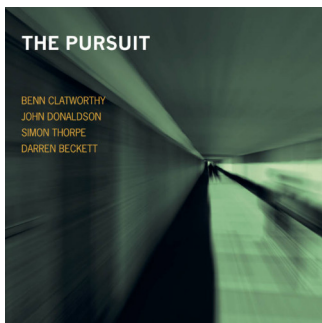
Dave Beebee is one of those infuriating individuals who seem to excel at everything they turn their hand to. Piano is only one among the several instruments he plays professionally: he also wrote all the tunes on this album, arranged them, recorded them in his own studio, and took the striking photos adorning the cover. He's assembled a blue-ribbon quartet for this release - Loose Tubes/Brotherhood Of Breath saxist Julian Nicholas will need no introduction to followers of top-flight UK jazz; after a period out of the spotlight his profile has been rising again of late, and it's a real treat to hear his slightly rough-edged, unsentimentally romantic tone, and unfailing instinct for finding the surest melodic path through the most abstruse harmony, in such sympathetic settings. He's a real original talent and this music is perfectly suited to his conception. *Strawberry Moon* sets us off, establishing the quartet's character as firmly within the European iterations of contemporary jazz, with

echoes of Jarrett's great European Quartet in its airy pastoral mood, while *Model T* shows off a darker side with a knotty melody over a moody vamp and a characteristically creative drum solo from Eric Ford. There's eleven original compositions here, which makes for a lot of music, but the quality and variety of the writing is high enough to carry it off - *Why* is a beautiful ballad, *X marks the spot* combines dark harmonies and plaintive shehnai-like reed from Nicholas to stunning effect, and *Jay* moves from an impressive extended solo from the excellent Cywinski into a dramatically impressionistic soundscape. *U-turn* unleashes the wonderfully clear-toned Nicholas soprano sax for an afro-celtic flavoured workout, and closing track *Duke* has a beautifully delivered duet between soprano sax and bass highlighting Cywinski's precise articulation and awesome accuracy. The leader's own piano delivers a wealth of ideas, intricately conceived harmony, fleet fingered soloing and lush arpeggiated textures. An ambitious project, impressively realised.

Eddie Myer

David Beebee, piano; Julian Nicholas, tenor sax; Jakub Cywinski, bass; Eric Ford, drums.

Available on Bandcamp [here](#), free to download with donations welcome.



Benn Clatworthy
The Pursuit
(BCQCD101)

Clatworthy has been a fixture on the LA club scene since he moved there in the 1980s and caught the ear of Horace Silver, one of the music's great talent spotters. His roots, however, lie in Hastings, where he was born, and this recording captures him on one of his regular trips to the UK, checking in with those roots by joining forces with some South Coast mainstays. The latest iteration of Clatworthy's UK touring band spent a day in David Beebee's Seaford recording studio; Donaldson and Thorpe are both Hastings-based and currently form the nucleus of the popular Hexagonal project, and drummer Beckett has relocated to Brighton from NYC, so it's a local affair, but the music itself is thoroughly international both in conception and in quality. Clatworthy is known for his thorough assimilation of the stylings of late 50s/early 60s Coltrane, at the period when the master was breaking out from the confines of bop and heading for the expansive freedom of modal exploration, and the title track puts us squarely in this territory with the kind of uptempo minor key piece that defined this

classic era. Clatworthy's tone has exactly the kind of keening bite required, his command of the language is as exemplary as ever, and the quartet are in perfect sympathy - Donaldson is renowned for his facility with all things pentatonic and Tyner-esque, and Thorpe and Beckett mesh perfectly to provide the requisite drive and swing to power things along. *Ugly Beauty* gets a superbly sensitive ballad reading, *Just Another Addiction* is a loping blues with a hypnotic bass groove, handing Beckett a chance to show his unimpeachably hip transatlantic chops, *This One's For Celia* is a rare outing on flute that provides an effective contrast in pace, and Donaldson's beautiful *Louisa's Song* has a similarly calming effect. It's the burners that really allow this band to shine, though - *Space 22* is a wonderfully knotty theme with an extended breakdown passage that lets the rhythm team show their creativity, with a notably virtuosic contribution from the big-toned Thorpe, and *Bolivian Odyssey* flies aloft on a magic carpet of flexible swing climaxing in another coruscating solo from Beckett. This is top quality jazz, with plenty of space for everyone to stretch out, but with the innate taste and mutual respect of the players preventing any sense of over-indulgence. The recording sounds great too, and Strayhorn's *My Little Brown Book* is a perfectly judged album closer.

Eddie Myer

[Bandcamp link here](#)

*Benn Clatworthy, tenor sax and flute;
John Donaldson, piano; Simon Thorpe,
bass; Darren Beckett, drums.*



James Copus
Dusk
 (Ubuntu UBU0058)

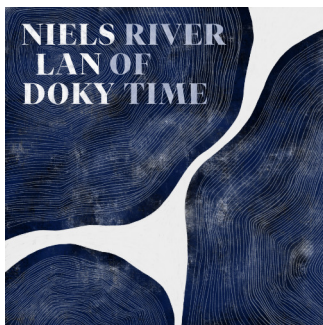
James Copus has already established quite a reputation as one of the most accomplished, forward thinking and hard working young trumpeters in the UK today, and for once it would be fair and accurate to describe this debut album as 'eagerly awaited'. He's assembled a killer band of top musicians for this programme of original compositions - Chaplin and Cawley are among the UK's finest and international standard players in their own right, but the biggest coup of all is the securing of the services of the mighty Jason Brown on drums. Brown is best known as drummer for Ambrose Akinmusire, who currently heads the list of influential contemporary trumpeters in the USA or anywhere else; employing his services is an indication of the project's ambition, and comparisons with his other celebrated employer are inevitable. Copus, however, is definitely his own man, and this is a very carefully conceived and executed affair with plenty of originality on display alongside the awesome levels of chops and energy. Opening track *Early Hours* shows the expected influence of Kenny Wheeler in its

compositional style and general atmosphere of airy melancholy, and Copus' clear, precise, pitch perfect delivery is reminiscent of Wheeler's own. Jason Brown's contribution raises the general energy level, there are some punchy fusion-style written unisons for the rhythm section, and Tom Cawley contributes some memorable solo improvisations, as he does throughout. Copus is a hell of a player but holds back on the obvious high-note-specialist fireworks in favour of a precise approach that gives every note its true value, building his melodic lines with a powerful logic. *The Line* has some dizzyingly accurate unisons, but really takes off when Cawley deploys his tastefully configured banks of synths to provide some grandiose sweeping textures. The title track has Copus's own unaffected vocals, drifting over a rock backbeat to create a poignantly proggy atmosphere that's quite different from Akinmusire's approach, or indeed anyone else's. *From The Source* continues the fusion mood with a tightly written rhythm track and big synth textures, *Straight Ahead* connects back with the swing tradition for some stimulating post-bop, and *Yearning* gives the awesome Chaplin space to shine. This is a really outstanding release of cutting-edge, international quality contemporary jazz that aims high and lands squarely on target every time.

Eddie Myer

James Copus, trumpet, flugelhorn, voice; Tom Cawley, piano; Conor Chaplin, bass; Jason Brown, drums.

Available on Bandcamp [here](#).



Niels Lan Doky
River of Time
 (Inner Adventures IA002)

Doky has a prodigious reputation, built over 40 years between the heart of the Danish jazz scene and the fiercely competitive New York jazz world, and his list of collaborators reads like a who's who of the elite players from Europe and the USA. This record is part of a strategy to 'consciously cultivate his Nordic side', which seems to mean prioritising a predilection for melody and melancholy. With its jaunty melody overdubbed with tinkling glockenspiel *Pink Buddha* actually sounds closer to the breezy jazz-lite of Pat Metheny, until Doky unleashes his fearsome chops in the brief solo section, and the uncharitable might find that ballads like *River Of Time* veer dangerously close to lounge music. The rollicking, bluesy *Greasy Sauce* has more bite, and Doky's power and precision are unmistakable and are matched by his accompanists. *Sita's Mood* shows what they can do with a ballad if there's a little more heft to the compositional content, the gospelly *Are You Coming With Me* manages to combine accessible tambo-slapping funk with a truly dazzling display of pianistic virtuosity, and *Houellebecq*

celebrates the gloomy French controversialist with some suitably robustly edgy jamming. The album also contains a selection of radio edits of many of the tracks so we can assume that Doky has his eye firmly on the commercial prize and after all, he's earned it.

Eddie Myer

Niels Lan Doky, piano, keys, glock, percussion; Tobias Dall, bass; Niclas Bardeleben, drums.



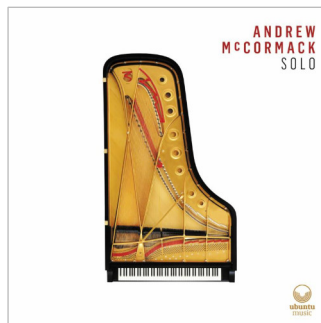
John Law Congregation
Configuration
 (Ubuntu UBU0036)

John Law has long been a maverick performer on the scene: Verdict regulars will recall him asking for the lights to be completely extinguished on one of his memorable visits to the club in order to allow him to generate the requisite vibe in total darkness. This latest offering moves away from his knotty classically influenced compositions in favour of a lighter, more accessible sound, so that the intro to *And Them*

almost sounds like lo-fi hip hop to chill/study to, though Law's virtuosity soon reasserts itself in the cascading solos. There's a commendable attempt to engage with pop sensibilities while maintaining a high level of musical integrity, and the band are certainly well selected to deliver on both fronts: Roller Trio sax man James Mainwaring delivers the kind of forcefully melodic approach and big chewy tone that attracted the interest of fans and critics alike to his outfit, bassist Ashley John Long shows his impressive high-register chops on *Configuration* and his arco skills on the impressionistic *Through A Glass Darkly*, and drummer Billy Weir gets full rein to display his versatility in adapting to the stylistic medley - the moody synth-textured Scandi-jazz of *Lullaby*, the Bach reworking of *Disfigured Bass*, the free/funk mash-up of *Complex City* and the jaunty reggae-to-swing *Processional*. This may sound like an overkill of diversity but actually it works very well and this album is a lot of fun to listen to.

Eddie Myer

John Law, piano, keyboards, samples; James Mainwaring, saxophones, guitar; Ashley John Long, double bass; Billy Weir, drums.



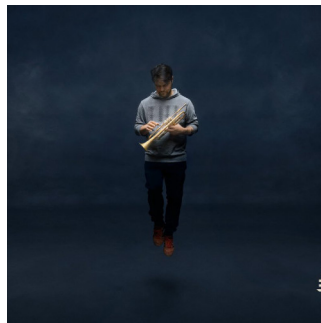
Andrew McCormack *Solo* (Ubuntu UBU0059)

Pianist McCormack has established an enviable reputation as a jazz pianist ever since the BBC recognised his originality and talent to award him the 2006 Rising Star Award, and Kyle Eastwood signed him up for his quintet. Since then there have been a string of projects, ranging from trio albums, orchestral commissions and some highly regarded duo albums with Jason Yarde, as well as numerous sideman appearances, but his recent activity with his Graviton project has moved away from more traditional forms and into what he himself describes as 'prog-rock math-jazz'. This is his album of solo performances and gives us a chance to see what the results are when there's only McCormack, his musicality and a Steinway Model D Concert Grand involved. McCormack plants a foot firmly in the jazz camp with a version of Monk's *We See* that engages thoroughly with the master's rhythmic quirks, and the standards repertoire is represented by a reading of *Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me* that owes very little to Armstrong (or Dean Martin), quite a bit to Bill Evans, something to the

20th Century classical tradition, and a substantial amount to McCormack's own restless imagination. All the other compositions are originals and have a storytelling element to them that perhaps derives from McCormack's classical influences, artfully blended with more identifiable jazz elements: *Crystal Glass* has echoes of Chick Corea's fleet right hand against dark, brooding chords, interspersed with chiming Prokofiev figures, and *Nomad* definitely suggests a journey through contrasting terrain. The mood is predominantly serious and intense but McCormack isn't averse to letting a lyrical light break through the clouds - there's a huge amount of unobtrusive craftsmanship in evidence that never obscures the emotional intent, and his sure, accurate touch and precise control of dynamics ensures that every piece is beautifully realised. An impressive achievement.

Eddie Myer

Andrew McCormack, piano.



Verneri Pohjola *The Dead Don't Dream* (Edition EDN1153)

After the exciting release of *Pekka*, an album dedicated to the compositions of his late father, Pekka Pohjola, Norwegian trumpeter and composer Verneri Pohjola is back with a new release full of dark romanticism and reflection. This time however the Scandinavian Miles Davis has decided to explore further into his output as composer and bandleader, focusing on his own original material along with his quartet. While the previous release delved more into realms of rock and electronic music, as was the domain of his composer father, Pohjola has decided to step back into the world of acoustic jazz with the classic lineup of trumpet, piano, double bass and drums. But this is in no way a step back for the prestigious trumpeter, on the contrary this album sees the exploration of new sonic soundscapes and sees the band showing exactly how far they can push them, along with an uncanny sense of musical chemistry and fantastic group improvisation. While the music does have that traditional air of spaciousness and mystery often so associated with Scandinavian jazz there are other



elements very much present. The energetic, almost aggressive, playing of the group mixed with diversity of arrangement and composition does indeed give the whole album a highly unique feel. Elements of jazz, classical, rock and even to some extent experimental music can be heard from track to track, some refined and some more free in their execution. A perfect example being the tune *Wilder Brother*, a great testament to the variety in Pohjola's writing and also featuring saxophonist Pauli Lyytinen. Starting off with a fanciful fanfare melody from trumpet and soprano sax riding over the top of elegantly broken piano chords and a wistful drum beat, really giving a sense of structure and clarity, then suddenly descending into a chaotic free for all reminiscent of Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz*; all before building back up again for the band to deliver some solos and to regroup for a reprise of the main theme. Amid the frenzied searching and mysterious soundscapes we also encounter slow ballads and beautifully constructed

themes, progressions and motifs showing just how well Verner Pohjola has styled his craft and achieved a perfect balance between structure and freedom in his compositions. The playing of the band as both soloists and rhythm section also has to be commended for their virtuosity and smooth interplay that is ever present throughout the album and a brilliant fit alongside the dark and soft tone of Pohjola's trumpet. Alongside the likes of Tord Gustavsen, Lars Danielsson and Bobo Stenson, Pohjola continues to firmly establish himself as one of the pillars of modern Scandinavian jazz.

George Richardson

Verner Pohjola, trumpet; Tuomo Prättälä, piano & electronics; Mika Kallio, drums and gongs; Antti Lötjönen, bass.

Pauli Lyytinen, soprano saxophone & tenor saxophone (on 'Wilder Brother' and 'Suspended'); Miikka Paatelainen, pedal steel (on 'Monograph', 'The Dead Don't Dream' and 'Suspended').



Photo: Emmet Cohen Trio

Live Stream Listings

Regular Live Streams

Cecile McClorin Salvant, daily on [her Facebook page](#)

Chick Corea, daily on [his Facebook page](#)

Elsa Nilsson, on [her YouTube channel](#)

Emmet Cohen Trio, daily on [Emmet's Facebook page](#)

Fred Hersch, 6pm daily on [his Facebook page](#)

Joe Stilgoe, 1pm daily on [his Facebook page](#)

Liam Noble via [his Twitch](#)

Mike Pappenheim, Saturday evenings on [his Facebook page](#)

Peter Martin, every Friday at midnight GMT, on [his YouTube channel](#)

Sam Carelse & Jason Henson, regularly on [Facebook](#)

Splash Point Jazz with Neal Richardson, check [Splash Point website](#)

Yoko Miwa, daily on [her Facebook page](#)

More details of live streams can be found on our listings page:
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Pete Recommends...

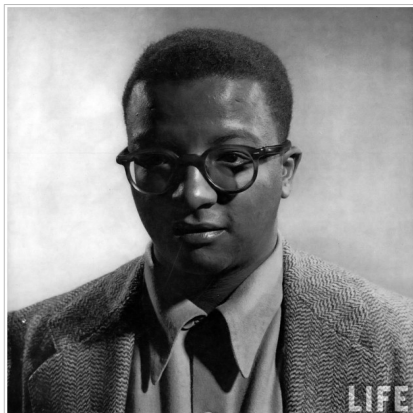


Photo: Glen Mili

Billy Strayhorn (1915-67)

During the lockdown period I have been in discussion with a number of collector and musician friends and one name frequently appearing has been Billy Strayhorn. His music attracts musicians across styles and generations.

Billy became a member of Duke Ellington's entourage in 1939. He took on the duties of arranger for non-Ellington material, collaborated on arrangements and compositions with Ellington, provided arrangements of his own, wrote several songs and sometimes played piano with the orchestra or the small groups. He remained with Ellington until his death from cancer in 1967.

My recommendations come from 2 CDs, but all can be accessed quite easily on YouTube. The first CD is on the Indigo Label, ICOCD 2138 (export) – *Ellington Plays Strayhorn*. This is a collection of Billy's work for the Duke from 1939-46. *Take The A Train* and *Chelsea Bridge* are classics which you probably know, but you

should also enjoy *Day Dream*, written for Johnny Hodges, and *Raincheck*, still in the repertoire of soloists (e.g. Tommy Flanagan).

The second CD is Victor Gold Series 74321851512, *And His Mother Called Him Bill*. This was recorded after his death in 1967. It includes new recordings of classics like *Day Dream*, powerful Big Band charts like *Smada*, and *Midriff*, and his beautiful tune, *Lotus Blossom*.

If you wish to hear some classic recordings of his work search for *Lush Life*, sung by Nat Cole, or *Lotus Blossom*, played by Stan Tracey, or *Johnny Come Lately*, by the Ellington orchestra in 1942.

Billy Strayhorn was an outstanding composer and arranger. You can still learn from his great legacy.

Peter Batten

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