

SJM

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Simon Spillett



Peter King, Rest In Peace

In honour of saxophonist Peter King, who passed away on 23rd August, we print an appreciation of him written last year.

At the risk of prompting hours of debate, for my money the man in the foreground of this photograph is undoubtedly 'The Greatest Alto Saxophonist (currently) in Jazz'. Period. You may disagree, as indeed he himself might do too. After all, his world-class musical gifts go hand-in-hand with a persona at once self-effacing and naturally modest. Don't let him tell you different though: he's the real deal and always has been. No argument.

He is, of course, Peter King, a cornerstone of the UK jazz scene for sixty years and, again in my opinion,

one of the finest musicians Great Britain has ever produced - in any idiom.

I first heard Peter play in, I guess, the very late 1980s. BBC-2 screened a concert by Stan Tracey's big band from the Bath festival. Seated in a saxophone section also including Tony Coe and Art Themen, the forty-something Peter was undemonstrative, his alto thrust squarely out front, his eyes rarely showing any sort of reaction to his fellow players. But it was his own solo feature that grabbed my teenaged ears, a brooding, sardonic yet utterly lyrical account of Duke Ellington's *In A Sentimental Mood*, which, even back then as a gawky kid, brought a lump to my throat. It wasn't just the notes though -

glorious though they were - it was something else, the magic indefinable sound of a personality come alive in musical form.

I knew nothing about Peter at all at this point but this one solo had given a little window into what made him tick: the precise mind, the ability to harness emotions and not get all 'Shirley Bassey' about it, maybe even the melancholy of what I later learned had been a horrendously tough life. The camera cut in close as he played, so close as to catch his ravaged acne-scarred skin. You could sense that beneath the surface calm, he'd been through it all.

It wasn't until the mid-1990s that I heard him live, again as one of the string of high-calibre guests who'd appear at The Cross Keys in Marlow. I remember watching him arrive, clad all in black, his voluminous overcoat almost trailing to the ground. Before the gig began he sat at a small table, alone, smoking and sipping occasionally at a black coffee. His alto laid before him, its silver neck twisted sideways to point at the ceiling.

Unlike the other gigs I'd been to at the Keys there wasn't the usual bit of casual banter between punters and performer. Peter sat on his own, looking deep in thought. Instinctively, nobody approached him. And yet, I couldn't take my eyes off him. If I'd known the word at the time I'd have called this 'gravitas'. The only thing I'd ever seen like this before - albeit removed and fictional - was Dexter Gordon in the movie *'Round Midnight*. As much mythic being as musician. The sense that here was something - someone - truly special.

And when he played! The sound - perfectly matched across the alto's entire range - the lines that curled through the chords beneath them and which would suddenly spiral away to a held, heart-wrenching choice of note, the phrasing that sat nano-second perfect at any tempo. Who could possibly better this?

After that night, I hunted down as much PK on record as I could, quickly learning that, like other British jazzmen of his generation, many of his finest moments were scattered throughout albums led by others. There was an epic 'Come Sunday' with Stan Tracey, tracks with Julian Joseph, even a tango tempo solo with Tony Crombie and, to my ears the most moving of all, an uncredited cameo on Maynard Ferguson's *The Summer Knows*. Spine-tingling, it still raises the hairs on my neck.

The first time I got to share a stage with Peter was in 2001. I'd joined the band of a vainglorious amateur drummer who thought himself the UK's equivalent to Buddy Rich. He'd got the lot: the huge white drum kit, the towel on the floor tom, the patter at the mic, everything, in short, but the genius of his inspiration. Peter was our guest and as I stood beside him in this unlikely setting his gifts were even more profoundly apparent.

To be honest, I remember very little of the music we played together that night - I was painfully raw and ill prepared - but two things stand out. One was Peter's stop-you-in-your-tracks solo version of *Lush Life*; the other is a non-musical memory. Seated in the poorly lit side room of the venue Peter was having difficulty



reading a food menu. He asked me if I could tell him what was on offer and so there I was, seated beside my idol... 'there's a blackcurrant cheesecake, a sticky toffee pudding, apple pie...'. Bizarre but all part of a memorable night.

Years later, Peter and I played together in other, far more conducive, circumstances. He guested with my quartet at venues from Gillingham to Southend, we both appeared together on the same bill at Marlow Jazz Club (how's that for full-circle?) and he was in the sax section of the big band I fronted at the Brecon Jazz Festival in 2009. Every time he delivered pure musical magic.

I can't claim to have got to know Peter well but the times we've spent together have been consistently illuminating. Performance insights and anecdotes always come hand-in-hand with ever increasing health worries. Indeed, over the past few years Peter has pulled out of a few gigs we've been booked on, beset by a catalogue of medical misfortunes. Sometimes, I've been HIS dep, something I really do have to pinch

myself about.

The last time I saw him was just such a night. It was a Friday afternoon when I got the call. Peter had a gig in South East London and wasn't feeling up to it. Would I cover? I headed down through the turgid Friday evening traffic only to find Peter had arrived after all. The rhythm section started off the evening and Peter and I sat almost silently together in the club's kitchen, our makeshift Green Room. He was in great discomfort and wasn't sure he'd be able to make the whole set. Could I come on if he wanted a breather?

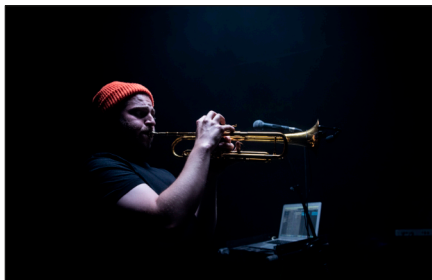
But, up on the stand, he came alive, that singing tone and those daredevil improvised lines all the more remarkable coming from a man so clearly unwell. For most of the night I sat alone in the kitchen, listening rather than watching. And when he closed with what was the fastest version I'd ever heard of *Just One Of Those Things* it was like hearing a 21 year old in the adjacent room rather than the aged, pained figure I'd been sitting next to a couple of hours earlier. But that's Peter for you.

At 21 he was already close to perfect. In his late seventies he's perfection and then some.

Like I said 'world's greatest'.

Another part of our jazz landscape has changed forever. Farewell to Peter King. Master saxophonist, world class improviser, a man for whom life was rarely easy but who enriched the lives of countless others through his musical gift. Rest in Peace.

Jazz News



New Generation Jazz Cinematic Live

New Generation Jazz launched their new series of live recordings with trumpeter Jackson Mathod (above) on Thursday 27th August.

Later streams will include Yadasofi, Sultan Stevenson, SUDO and Mark Kavuma's Banger Factory Octet. The performances will be available via their [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page.



The Brunswick

Hove pub and music venue The Brunswick have launched a Sunday lunchtime live session hosted by guitarist Paul Richards (pictured). The first pilot performance was on Sunday 30th August. Performances are outside in the garden and booking via [The Brunswick](#) is recommended.



Picnic In The Park

Jazz musicians from the Brighton area recently gathered outdoors in St. Ann's Well Gardens, with many performing for the first time since coronavirus restrictions were lifted.

Saturday 22nd August saw performers that included Sam Carelse & Jason Henson with guests, plus Don Benjamin's band Battuta's Return (pictured above).



New Generation Jazz Live Weekender

Brighton's New Generation Jazz and Jazz South have joined forces to host a live weekender with four bands from the South Coast performing a 40 minute set of original material, filmed at The Ropetackle in Shoreham. Thursday 3rd September sees Barnacles perform. Friday 4th will be vocalist Abi Flynn, Saturday 5th will be Howes3 (pictured above) with Mark Edwards' Cloggz performing on Sunday 6th.

A tribute to Gerry Higgins

Gerry (Gerard) Higgins,
born Salford, 2 January 1940,
died Hove, 10 August 2020



Gerry Higgins, who has died of cancer, worked with some of the biggest names in jazz, from Stephane Grappelli to American stars like trumpeter Henry Red Allen and homegrown talent like guitarist Diz Disley. For nearly a quarter of a century Gerry's bass playing was a mainstay of the Sussex jazz scene.

Gerry, who grew up in Salford, came to London in the early 1960s. In 1966 he joined the Alex Welsh band, replacing Ron Mathewson, who had left the band to join Tubby Hayes. With John Barnes on reeds

and Roy Williams on trombone, Alex Welsh had one of the best mainstream bands in the country and it was much in demand to accompany visiting American artists.

December that year was particularly busy. The band embarked on a nationwide tour with the American cornet player Wild Bill Davison. Wild Bill and the band made a live recording in Manchester (marred by an out of tune piano). The following week they were back in a recording studio in London to cut a second album. Shortly after that they

recorded a session for the BBC2 television show, *Jazz Goes to College*.

The stint with Alex Welsh was followed by two world cruises on the P&O liner Canberra with Dick Charlesworth's band. Gerry and Dick became lifelong friends, a friendship founded on mutual respect for each other's musicianship and their deep enjoyment of a libation. Or two.

Back in London, Gerry with his clear intonation and encyclopaedic knowledge of the repertoire, was much in demand, playing East-End pubs and West-End nightclubs. It was a busy time for musicians. Years later, recalls clarinettist Terry Ede, they were in the Strand. "When we were young," said Gerry, "in this stretch between Aldwych and Trafalgar Square there used to be 17 nightclubs, all with quartets and quintets. You could make a good living in those clubs just doing depts."

I first worked with Gerry in January 1969, at a pub called the Vulcan on the Isle of Dogs. Don Cook, the drummer on that gig, remembers: "Gerry was very good at reading a room. I learnt a lot from him." It was an important talent. Gerry kept a shrewd eye on the audience, to see what kind of numbers went down well, or if there was a punch-up brewing, which wasn't that uncommon in the East End, as well as the all-important task of clocking what the management was up to.

All musicians at the time played commercial gigs to supplement their income from jazz and with his vast experience Gerry was equally at home playing a tea dance at the Café

Royal as he was at a jazz club. One function that was etched on his memory was the Guild of Television Producers' Awards ceremony at the Dorchester Hotel on 14 February 1969. The presenter, the comedian Kenneth Horne, dropped dead on stage in front of the cameras. The event was cut from the broadcast programme.

Like many musicians, Gerry also taught music. This led to a day job in the late 1970s at a secondary school in Hounslow, teaching not just music but science as well. Gerry also ran a small extracurricular scheme for helping disadvantaged kids. A lifelong cricket fan, Gerry

and a clique of fellow musicians including John Barnes, were members of the MCC and often to be found in the Long Room at Lords.

In the late 1980s he went on a lengthy tour of Scandinavia as part of June "Pepper" Harris's international trio, culminating in a gig in Helsinki, which was broadcast by Finnish television in January 1988. Back in London Gerry joined the Hot Club of London, with guitarist Denny Wright and the violinist Johnny Van Derrick. The group was one of the headline acts at the Ealing Jazz Festival of 1990 and 1991.

Gerry was a regular at Ealing and in 1996 he was back with a group that included two old friends: Mike Piggott on violin and Nils Solberg on guitar. That year Gerry moved down to Brighton and Hove. For many years he was the bandleader at the up-market Havana restaurant in Duke Street, initially with the singer-pianist Ann Odell and later with the Websterish tenor player Norman



Evans.

Gerry was a pioneer of afternoon jazz, running a gig at the Albion in Hove. After the pub closed for refurbishment in 2016, we needed another venue. At the suggestion of a friend we dropped into the Paris House one afternoon. The pub was empty. We had a chat with the manager. Gerry's pitch was straightforward: "We can fill this pub on a Monday afternoon," said Gerry. Her glance was one of utter disbelief, but with little to lose she said, "all right, I'll give you a trial".

Come Monday the Paris House was packed, to hear a trio fronted by Nils Solberg. The single barman was overwhelmed and had to send out for reinforcements, such was the thirst of the audience. Gerry and I went back the next day to see about a regular gig. "Regular?" said the manager. "I want you here every Monday afternoon. And what's more I'll increase your money." Hearing that phrase unprompted was a first.

Over the years the Paris House went from strength to strength, with trios fronted by Mike Piggott, Nils Solberg, the lovely London tenor player Al Nicholls and cornet player Andy Woon. The audience became part of our extended family. "The Paris House is one of my least profitable gigs. But it is the most pleasurable," says Al Nicholls.

Gerry was a master of the distinctive style of defensive humour that musicians have perfected. In the autumn of 2017 he was diagnosed with bowel cancer and had the tumour cut out along with part of his colon. "Now," said Gerry, "I've got a semicolon." After the operation he was back on top form and the medics pronounced him clear. But sadly in May the cancer returned and had spread. Nothing could be done.

He rang me with the news: "The game's up," he said.

Mick Hamer

Select Discography

Wild Bill Davison with Alex Welsh and His Band

Lake Records – LACD279

Wild Bill Davison, cornet, with Alex Welsh, trumpet, John Barnes, reeds, Roy Williams, trombone, Fred Hunt, piano, Jim Douglas, guitar, Lennie Hastings, drums and Gerry Higgins.

Recorded in Manchester, 4 December 1966

Wild Bill Davison!

Fontana (E) TL5413.

Same personnel.

Recorded in London, 12 December 1966

BBC2 series Jazz Goes to College, Same personnel.

Recorded in London, December 1966, broadcast, 2 Jan 1967

June "Pepper" Harris, with Keith Hall, drums, and Gerry Higgins.

Recorded Helsinki January 1988,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW40xhA6dfk>

The Hot Club Of London
Moonshine – MSC01

Denny Wright with Johnny Van Derrick, violin, Rob Seaman, guitar and Gerry Higgins.

Cassette issued 1992

Jazz Essentials

Thelonious Monk
The London Collection
(Black Lion)

On 14 November 1971 Thelonious Monk finished up a gruelling two-month, thirty-venue world tour with George Wein's Giants of Jazz – Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Stitt, Kai Winding, Al McKibbin, Art Blakey – with a final gig at London's Victoria Theatre. The next night, Monk went into the Chappell Recording Studios at 50 New Bond Street for an impromptu session for Black Lion Records. For the first three hours he played alone, but was then joined by bassist McKibbin and drummer Blakey for a further three-hour trio set. In total, 21 different songs in various takes were recorded, all but five his own compositions, as he was fed up with playing Gillespie's music on tour. Apparently, the accompanying coterie of British jazz critics called out requests, which Monk played or ignored as he chose.

Significantly, these were to be Monk's final recordings. And this was almost his final performance, too, for by the start of 1972 his misdiagnosed mental condition – possibly bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia – rendered him virtually catatonic. He had barely spoken more than two words for the whole of the Giants of Jazz Tour. In 1973 he retreated to the care of his patron, Baroness Nica de Koenigswarter – an offspring of the immensely rich English Rothschild family – with her piano, which he never played, and her 60 or so cats in Weehawken, New Jersey, and was rarely seen or heard of again until his death in February 1982.



When picking an essential Monk, most people will choose the seminal Blue Note recordings – his first as leader – from the late 1940s, or his live recordings with John Coltrane in the late 1950s, or indeed the glorious solo sessions on Essential Jazz and Columbia between 1954–68. But to my ears, these mature pieces are the best, for here is Monk in a contemplative, reflective mood working through each piece with nevertheless a surprising ingenuity. Best of all is the nine-plus minute solo *Chordially* that opened proceedings, Monk investigating what the Chappell piano was capable of while experimenting with unknown chord densities and possible melodies.

The music of these extraordinary recordings can be found on three Black Lion CDs – hunt them out in the bargain racks – and as part of a now hard-to-find Mosaic box set including Monk's Vogue recordings. *Volume One* is all solo, *Volume Two* is the trio, *Volume Three* a mix of both. Check them out.

Simon Adams

Pianist **Sultan Stevenson** spoke to Charlie Anderson ahead of his appearance on New Generation Jazz Cinematic Live.



Photo by Lisa Wormsley

How did you first get into music?

I started playing piano about the age of 9 or so. I was already inspired to learn from my dad. He's a massive jazz fan. He would always play records of people like Wynton Marsalis, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie and people. At that time, when I was young, it never really interested me as such, but I took an interest in it once I started learning piano. So I learnt piano and I actually turned out to really, really like it, especially by the time I was in secondary school. When I was about 15 I started getting into jazz heavily, and obviously my dad loved that because that's his music. Maybe he'd always envisioned me as a jazz musician so he really helped me to find my feet and find my voice. As a jazz pianist I learnt from people like

Julian Joseph and I've been heavily involved in Tomorrow's Warriors and people like Peter Edwards, Binker Golding and Alex Davis who really helped me come up as a young musician. They've just been very, very open and very nurturing to me and my artistry. So I owe a lot, just to those people, and to my family as well.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Tottenham, North London. I've pretty much lived there my whole life. It's sometimes quite a challenging environment, because it's very urban and it's not the best of places. It has its downsides: a high crime rate, for example. It's sometimes a quite dangerous place to be honest. It feeds into my music. I feel these struggles. I really challenge

myself to include this philosophy of growing up in this environment, within my music. I think I owe where I live and where I've grown up. It's done a lot for my music.

You're currently studying at the Guildhall?

Yes. I study at the Guildhall and I've just finished my first year so I'm going on to my second year in September. The main thing there is just studying the music and practice. But right at this moment I'm working on my trio album. I'm putting together some material and writing tunes that could be on the album. What that aims to do is to set me up and establish me as an upcoming jazz pianist. It's a band that I really, really trust. The bass player and the drummer, I know what they sound like and they're really comfortable in that musical setting.

How did you find your first year at Guildhall? Was it a bit of a surprise or did it meet your expectations?

Overall I would say that it was kind of what I expected. There were a few surprises, obviously, in terms of the environment and how enriching it is to be around people that have roughly the same artistic vision as you, are very driven and really want to play this music and make something themselves, which I really like. But overall I really enjoyed it. It's kind of what I've always been looking for, since sixth form and secondary school. Other jazz institutions that I've been to, like Saturday schools and summer camps that's all really cool but to just be in that environment every single day and have really, really good teachers. I'm fortunate to have lessons off of people like Jean Toussaint (a former Jazz Messenger), Barry Green, Stuart

Hall, Scott Stroman, and all these really wonderful people. Just in the first year alone I've learned so, so much.

How have things been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic?

It's been quite challenging but I predicted that it would be quite a few months just by myself. Obviously I wasn't able to play with other musicians or work in the same manner that I would normally. I think my proudest achievement in this whole period is releasing a single. Just over a month ago I released a tune called *To Be Seen*. It's something that I wrote during the lockdown period. It was all put together independently so I wrote all the music out, and all the musical ideas, then I presented it to my players, and I got them to record their parts independently, in their homes. Then they sent it back to me and I put it all together to make the single. What I really wanted to do was simulate the band, the in-person experience of playing music and playing jazz. Obviously it's very, very hard to recreate the setting of live spontaneous improvisation when you're by yourself. But I believe I've done pretty well at trying to simulate it and I think that goes towards the success of the single. That's really my proudest achievement of this whole 'lockdown season'.

Do you have any plans for the future?

Right now, at this current moment in time I don't really have any plans to make albums after this first album, but I would be quite interested in exploring other music and if I was going to have a body of work, such as an album or an EP, it would probably be an exploration of some

other kind of music. I'm really interested in English folk music, neo-classical music, avant-garde free jazz such as Ornette Coleman, Sun Ra, Pharoah Sanders and Cecil Taylor. If I was to create another album it would probably be something extremely different to this album that I'm creating right now.

Tell us about some of the other projects that you've worked on.

That's always something that I try to do, play other people's music. Yadasofi is a really incredible band, with Middle Eastern and Israeli music fused with African American jazz. It's been quite a new experience because I've never really been exposed to Middle Eastern music so to me it's been a massive learning curve, learning how to negotiate the boundaries of these two musics.

I'm also part of several straight ahead jazz bands and I've been a part of different avant-garde/free jazz bands. That's another side of the music that I really love. It's just so rich. To go on stage and literally have no idea what you're going to do and be able to converse with other musicians on that kind of level. Playing in a musical situation where I may have little or no experience, that's something that I really like to do.

Are there any things outside of music that you're interested in?

I'm quite an avid tennis fan. I really love tennis. I like several sports. I'm into athletics and running. But being

a musician, especially a jazz musician, I think it's important that one concerns oneself with the kind of cognitive artistic vision. If something happened, say I broke my hand, then the really deep artistic vision that I have could still be explored through something other than music. This is something that I try to bring outside of music. For

example, literature and reading really good books by really good writers, reading history and being clued up on the different histories: the history of the Persian empire or the history of the African American people, the history

of Africa, the Irish people, Europe. All of this feeds into the artist and enriches the artist. It enriches my compositional process. Without my love of books and my love of history I would be a far less developed composer because all of this feeds into the artist.

At the ground level you have the jazz pianist, above that you have being a pianist, above that is being a musician. Above that you have an artist, and above that you have a human being. I think it's crucial that we really enrich ourselves as human beings and artists, in order for that to seep into those deeper levels of being a jazz musician.

<https://www.instagram.com/sultan.stevenson/>



Photo by Lisa Wormsley



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Big Band Scene

Patrick Billingham



I had hoped to report on a big band gig. Terry Pack's Bonsai Trees were scheduled to play at the Brighton Open Air Theatre last month. Sadly the weather intervened. The crowd who had stayed were entertained by Rob Leake's Fat Tuesday 2nd Line Band who played brilliantly in the rain. After their set was completed, the audience indicated that they were desperate to hear more music. So a band which could best be described as Terry Pack's Cuttings; Charlotte Glasson, Andy Pickett, Tarik Mecci and Terry himself, performed a 75 minutes improvised set including *Cantaloupe Island*, *All Blues*, *Tenor Madness*, *Palimpsest* and *Jean Pierre*, until the sun finally came out. Albeit Sunday In The Park With Jazz, but not what could, by any stretching of definitions, be considered as big band. But as a hint of what might have been, included is a picture of Trees at a previous SITPWJ occasion. When the weather was kinder.

Meanwhile, the immediate future for local big band activity looks bleak.

Many bands appear to be on permanent hold. Distancing measures mean that even rehearsals are out of the question, especially as many musicians are uneasy about getting together in confined spaces.

I fear that it might be 2022, the year after next, before there is any possibility of resuming anything like normal activity. The latest statistical dodge, at the time of writing, has cut the official death toll from Covid-19 by 5000, by introducing an arbitrary 28 day limit from a positive test. This, of course, has the effect of making it appear that the numbers are steadily declining, and that the pandemic is in retreat.

Whereas other, reliable, sources suggest the true total for the UK is around 15,000 higher than the pre-adjustment figure. In other words, the true numbers are around 50% higher than the official ones.

Going past a local pharmacy recently, I saw a notice implying that free Covid-19 tests were available. On closer inspection, it turned out that only if you were experiencing certain symptoms such as high fever,



Photo by Patrick Billingham

a persistent dry cough or loss of taste or smell, you could call a particular number to arrange a test.

In my view, the only way we can get back to a functioning big band scene is by having regular weekly tests available to all at local centres, and by this I mean really local, like no more than ten minutes walk away, not at some out of town centre accessible only by car.

There is some faintly encouraging news. A few local health authorities have taken the initiative to introduce testing and tracing by their own expert staff, rather than centrally by outsourcing companies run by friends of those in high places. Companies whose staff, recruited at short notice, had an entire afternoon's internet training to become proficient at test and trace.

More encouraging news is that many parallel strands of research into

effective vaccines are under way. But when one is eventually found, will it be available to all on request or only to those deemed of sufficient importance to receive it? Will acquisition and distribution be by medical experts, or, as the case seems to be, at present, by the finance industry?

Next month: Back to big band matters proper, with reports and suggestions about lockdown activities. If there is any other information, perhaps about what various bands are planning for the immediate future, or feedback on this column, that you would like me to include in October's Big Band Scene, please send it to me by Saturday 19th September. My email address is g8aac@yahoo.co.uk.

Live Stream Reviews



Yadasofi + The Scientists

Monday 27th July, 2020
via Jazz In The Round...at Yours

Jazz In The Round is well-known as a place to see emerging new artists alongside established ones and Dave Wybrow and the team at The Cockpit have done outstanding work in showcasing new talent with their Emergence Festival. Their streaming event Jazz In The Round at Yours featured up and coming jazz group Yadasofi. Previously based in Brighton they are now hoping to make waves on the London jazz scene.

Drummer Nadav Schneerson composes and arranges all the material himself and their opening tune, *Two Step*, illustrated what Yadasofi do best: driving bass lines and catchy melodic horn arrangements that successfully blend jazz with Middle and Near Eastern music.

The second track, *Stampede*, evoked John Coltrane and featured pianist Sultan Stevenson, someone who has clearly absorbed the legacy of McCoy Tyner and has a fluid soloing style.

Yadasofi's debut recording,

Negev, illustrated their melodic horn arrangements and their live version featured trombonist Will Helm, who utilised a variety of effects pedals to achieve dub-like echoes and chorus effects. Saxophonist Ayodeji Ijishakin, although new to the ensemble, proved to be an incredible asset performing an impassioned and searching solo. Similarly, trumpeter Tommy Peach delivered a number of rhythmically superb solos, with a keen sense of developing his melodic material throughout. The tune ended with an extended tour de force drum solo from leader Nadav Schneerson.

The penultimate tune of their set, *Sheva* (the Hebrew word for 'seven'), featured a solid bassline from bassist George Richardson and an eloquent solo from pianist Sultan Stevenson.

Yadasofi ended the set with another new piece, *House of Pillars*, named after the Tel Aviv jazz club Beit Haamudim, that featured an energetic blend of klezmer and jazz and powerful solos from Peach and Ijishakin.

By contrast The Scientists weren't entirely my thing, with ethereal vocals accompanied by retro 80s keyboard sounds with lots of

reverb. This proved to be overly soporific and the accomplished rhythm team of Kevin Glasgow and Laurie Lowe seemed under challenged by the dream-like simplicity of the music.

Charlie Anderson

Yadasofi: Tommy Peach, trumpet; Ayodeji Ijshakin, tenor saxophone; Will Helm, trombone; Sultan Stevenson, piano; George Richardson, double bass; Nadav Schneerson, drums.

The Scientists: Rouhangeze, vocals; Tomasz Bura, keyboards; Kevin Glasgow, bass guitar; Laurie Lowe, drums.



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Abi Flynn Barnacles Howes3 Cloggz

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Photo by Lisa Wormsley

Jackson Mathod

New Generation Jazz - The Cinematic
Live Sessions
Thursday 27th August, 2020
via Facebook and YouTube

Many people will remember packed houses at Brighton's Verdict Jazz Club on the last Friday of every month for the New Generation Jazz gigs, showcasing some of the very best new talent on the UK jazz scene. Unfortunately, that came to an abrupt end with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, and like nearly all other music venues The Verdict fell silent. The good news is that with help from The Arts Council and the hard work of the NGJ members, an excellent alternative has been found. During the first week of July, The Ropetackle Arts Centre in Shoreham became a temporary film studio and under the direction of Oli Corrigan and the centre's own Tom

Dalton, a number of the leading bands on the scene were able to be filmed in brilliantly arranged stage settings, the only thing missing being a live audience. These shows are now being released periodically on the organisation's YouTube channel and Facebook page.

The first stream took place on Thursday 27th August and featured a stellar quartet led by the sensational trumpet player and vocalist Jackson Mathod. Born in 1991 and with a musical education at The Guildhall School Of Music, Jackson has a clear and precise sound on the amplified horn, the lines were uncluttered throughout the band's performance of six numbers, all composed by the leader. He also proved to be a vocalist of note, delivering his carefully crafted and meaningful lyrics in an engaging and forceful manner. Overall, the band is very tight and groove-based with an



James Beckwith, photo by Lisa Wormsley

entirely optimistic sound, ideal for these times. Keyboard exponent James Beckwith, who has also played with SEED Ensemble and Nubya Garcia is an accomplished performer over a wide variety of musical genres, also leads his own band who have recently released their own debut album *Long Distance*. His performance on the night was key, both as a foil to the leader and the overall success of the set. The two front-liners were superbly backed up by the excellent pairing of Irishman Eion Walsh on electric bass and Glasgow-born drummer Harry Pope, ex of the fusion band Malika Collective.

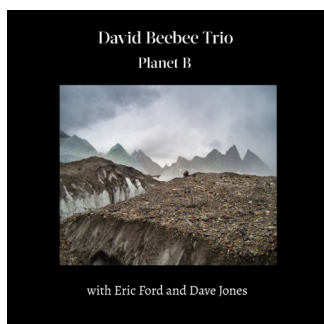
The thirty minute set was full of both contrast and excitement, opening in front of an eerie black background with atmospheric lighting. After a brief vocal based *Place Of Love* we were treated to the fluid trumpet sound and poetic lyric of *The Park* a piece right at the edge of today's culture. A tune written during lockdown, but as yet to be titled either *Hairway To Heaven* or

even *Dumb People* a reflection of the American dream or nightmare, continued to raise the spirits and contained an excellent piano solo. *The Moon* which followed was a ballad, full of emotion containing some lilting trumpet, which could easily have come from Chet Baker in the fifties. The trumpet continued to be showcased on the melodic and soul searching *Spanish Vista*, a song in tribute to the American singer/songwriter D'Angelo almost reaching majestic levels over the harmonious backdrop of the rhythm section. Melodic content, sensuality and drama were the hallmarks of the closing piece *Matador*, a favourite of the leader's mother, and formed a fitting conclusion to a performance and presentation that had succeeded on every level.

Jim Burlong

Jackson Mathod, trumpet, vocals and synth; James Beckwith, keyboard; Eion Walsh, bass; Harry Pope, drums.

Album Reviews



David Beebee *Planet B* (Beeboss bbcd 2023)

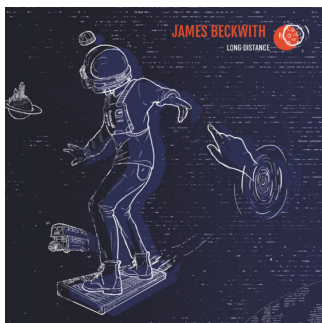
David Beebee keeps up the formidable rate of production with this set of all-original material for piano trio that showcases his original voice as a composer. The acoustic piano/bass guitar/drums trio set-up has been fruitfully explored by Michel Wollny, and this set takes a similar course around the hinterlands of jazz fusion, sophisticated funk and dark classically influenced harmony, with an extra dash of proggy rock thrown in as well. Beebee's compositions are impressive in their detail and the assurance with which he blends his ingredients - 'Dark Matter' mixes up tricky hits and unison runs over altered chords with a pulsating, ominous 16th note funk groove, *Planet B* develops a similar vocabulary of hits and runs and adds some neat metric shifts as well, while *Devil's Kitchen* boasts a lushly romantic intro that evokes Debussy by way of Bill Evans. *Dappled Light* is a pensive ballad that develops into a shimmering suspended filigree of

sound, sensitively handled by the band, but they really come into their own on the more uptempo numbers. Dave Jones is a terrific player who manages to avoid post-Pastorius clichés and establish a distinctive, quirkily offbeat voice on his instrument with an attractively growly tone, and he and Eric Ford negotiate the complex hits and breaks with aplomb - *B Is For Blues* is a great example of his groove, imagination and chops all working together in harmony. Beebee's own piano playing is assured and characterful: he loves dissonance, long fluent runs that veer in unexpected directions, chiming cross-rhythmic figures high up on the keyboard, and the occasional dash of bluesy phrasing. *What Is This Thing Called Life* finishes up with a Chick Corea-styled contemporary swing workout on the reconfigured standard. With nine densely written tracks over six minutes long, there's plenty of music to get yourself lost in. Impressive.

Eddie Myer

Available to download for free (donations welcome) via Bandcamp [here](#).

David Beebee, piano; Dave Jones, bass; Eric Ford, drums.



James Beckwith
Long Distance
 (Bandcamp)

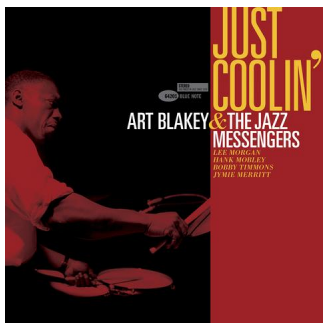
James Beckwith has cropped up repeatedly as pianist of choice for a range of intriguing projects by the likes of Nubya Garcia, Yazmin Lacey, Judi Jackson, Alex Hitchcock, SEED Ensemble, Cherise Adams-Burnett and others, as well as running his own fusion trio project - this is his debut proper, and it's a big ambitious statement of contemporary fusion, like an updated London-based descendant of Herbie Hancock's *Sunlight*. Lead track *Topimpa* has lush piano chords, hip beat-displacement stabs, vocoder vocals from Beckwith blending with Zoe Kypri's soulful stylings, all coming together in a very assured, Gilles Peterson friendly blend of contemporary fusion. *Retro Machines* has Pope pushing out some super hip metric modulations under big Weather Report style chordal textures and Alex Hitchcock brings his own distinctive voice in the Wayne Shorter role: it's a very impressive achievement that sits well alongside anything from the genre's foremost practitioners. The whole record is laced with unexpected delights: *With You* has the under-represented Chelsea Carmicheal's tenor sax over a late-night D&B

groove; *Money* is indeed a cover of the famous Pink Floyd number that delivers an afro-beat flavoured kick in the pants to the gloomy proggers to terrific effect; *Long Distance* is a string-laden downbeat exploration with a faint Radiohead echo; *SAAD* uses a tanpura drone and heavy, accelerating backbeat to create a vibe somewhere between Byrne and Eno's *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts* and something by classic era Ozric Tentacles. Submotion Orchestra's *All Yours* is a powerful closing statement with Hitchcock returning to tear it up. There's a wealth of great ideas here, confidently brought off, and delivered with skill, aplomb, and a nice touch of humour, that makes this album terrific fun to listen to. Recommended.

Eddie Myer

Available via Bandcamp [here](#).

*James Beckwith - piano/Rhodes/
 Hammond organ/percussion/
 synthesizer/synth bass/vocoder;
 Zoe Kypri, vocals; Chelsea
 Carmichael, tenor saxophone; Alex
 Hitchcock, tenor saxophone; Joe
 Downard, bass/synth bass; AJ
 Brinkman, synth bass; Harry Pope,
 drums/SPD; Will Harvey, Olivia
 Holland, Dan Oates, violin; Lizzie
 Boyce, Pippa Bint, viola; Greg
 Duggan, cello.*



Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers *Just Coolin'* (Blue Note Records)

As all jazz lovers know, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers were at the very pinnacle of the hard-bop movement for some thirty five years from 1955 to 1990, making well over seventy albums during the period and carrying all before them. The hard driving and enigmatic Pittsburgh drummer, born in 1919, became a catalyst for up and coming young talent, very many of which were to go on and become triple "A" listers like Blakey himself. Among the alumni were the likes of Horace Silver, Lee Morgan, Johnny Griffen, Kenny Dorham, Wayne Shorter, Wynton Marsalis and very many more. This album which was recorded on 8th March 1959 followed the famous *Moanin'* release which was originally titled simply *Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers*. *Just Coolin'* was not published at the time simply because the record company Blue Note, one of no less than thirty seven that Art was to appear on, preferred to issue a double live session album from Birdland entitled *Jazz Corner Of The World* recorded just a month later, with very similar content. Benny Golson had just vacated the saxophone chair in the

band and was replaced by the 29 year old Georgian Hank Mobley who had been on the earliest Messengers recordings in 1954 before leading his own bands in the interim period. Alongside the tenor man was the new trumpet sensation of the day, Lee Morgan who had already come to fame for his stunning performance, a year earlier, aged only nineteen on John Coltrane's classic *Blue Train* album. Lee himself went on to produce his own classic *The Sidewinder* in sixty three, before his tragic death aged only thirty three, some ten years later. The band was completed by the blues-drenched pianist Bobby Timmons, a prolific recording artist, who had two spells with Art, was a proffered sideman for many other bands as well as finding time to make eighteen albums of his own during a brief but eventful career. Completing the rhythm section was bassist Jymie Merritt, a stalwart of the early messengers line-ups who sadly passed away recently aged 93.

The album itself is standard Messengers fare, that's to say it is brilliant, dynamic, original hard bop with few equals. There are six tunes over forty minutes, which was quite the norm for an LP in the late fifties. The first of three numbers written by Hank Mobley, *Hipsippy Blues* gets things underway with the usual spine tingling ensemble opening statement that became a trade mark of many similar bands of the era. The composer takes the main solo, it's swinging, purposeful and relaxed, as much of the music is throughout. Lee Morgan is the key man on the only standard piece, *Close Your Eyes*, which was perhaps the most well-known song written by Bernice Petkere, a lady also known as 'The Queen Of Tin Pan Alley' and

someone who deserved far more recognition than she received. The young trumpet genius was on top form on this, basking in the stature the critics were justifiably affording him at the time. Bobby Timmons was always the most engaging of pianists, particularly on ballads and mid-tempo jaunts such as his own soulful blues *Quick Trick*, but we also find him in finger busting mood on the up tempo *Jimerick*, the only number that includes a solo from the leader; as you would expect, it is a jaw dropping polyrhythmic journey, the like of which was a cornerstone of the band's unique sound. Two further compositions from the pen of Hank Mobley close the disc, the more than usually complex *M & M* with the composer's full-on tenor competing with Bobby Timmons' off the wall reply, and finally the title cut, *Just Coolin'* at nearly nine minutes in length, giving members the ideal opportunity to stretch out. There is a strong melody line and a distinctive groove to this, perhaps heralding things to come and also the only bass solo by Jymie Merritt, whose playing on all tracks also provided a firm foundation for the soloists. In summary this is a very welcome, if unexpected addition to the Messengers' extensive discography, plus an ideal introduction for anyone who has not yet fully experienced the Blakey magic.

Jim Burlong

Lee Morgan, trumpet; Hank Mobley, tenor saxophone; Bobby Timmons, piano; Jymie Merritt, bass; Art Blakey, drums.



Kutiman *Wachaga* (Siyal Music)

The name Kuitman may already be familiar to some modern day music lovers, with a well established and thriving career as well as many albums to his name, the Israeli composer, musician, ethnomusicologist and producer seems to be a musical figure that is always changing and searching to create musical expression in new ways. *Wachaga*, the latest release from Kutiman is no exception to the artist's already varied and dense back catalogue; it is full of new ideas and concepts and shows the composer bringing the spotlight on the traditional music of the Wachaga people as well as bringing his own musical element into the mix. Staying true to the spirit of ethnomusicology, much like the folk song collecting of Bela Bartok and Hamza El Din, Kutiman made the journey to the Wachaga nation who are a people based on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. Once there he set up some handheld equipment and went about recording the music of this unique culture. In these raw recordings of everyday musical happenings and traditions of the people of Wachaga we hear

traditional singing, percussion and the rhythm of native dances. But far from just being field recordings for the keen musicologist, Kutiman goes a step further by adding his own input to the already glowing sound. Diverse in musical texture, the music set around the recordings never fails to bring a surprise to the listener, from glistening electronic sweeps to outstanding instrumental arrangements, the composer/producer really stretches his musical ambitions by taking what would have been a standard documentation of a musical culture and arranging his own music alongside them to create something truly special. The whole concept of the album, as well as the individual tracks, is carried out with an obvious mastery of his craft and special care for the music. The final result is brought forwards in such a way that the music and original recordings never clash but support and complement each other from start to finish. The music moves through many moods from contemplative moments to instances of pure joy. The composer's own musical input is rich in colour and diversity and boasts a hefty number of influences from electronic to spiritual jazz and all that lies between the two. The overall layout of the album is also a fine feature with all tracks carefully selected so that they stand together nicely and give the whole listening experience the feeling of a well planned and thought out journey from start to finish.

George Richardson



Jonny Mansfield
Portrait
 (Outside In Music)

This release truly deserves the title 'solo album' and perhaps sets the standard by which all others should be judged as not only does Mansfield supply all the compositions and play all the instruments, he also recorded, mixed and mastered it all himself. As if that wasn't enough, he did all of this in a single day, waking at 5am on August 6th and releasing it via Bandcamp at 12 on August 7th. If you think you've been productive over lockdown, perhaps you will now be thinking again. The question, of course, will be 'but is it any good?' and fortunately the answer will be a yes for anyone who has ears for melodic contemporary instrumental music: jazz in the broadest scope. Mansfield's main axe is vibes, and his four-mallet technique is formidable: he's also an excellent drummer, and there are definite sounds of jazz language in the vibes solo on *Speak*, but overall the emphasis is more on mood and texture, as on the hypnotically chiming *Guilt*. The miniature study *Choro* makes plain the connection between the Brazilian form and the clear harmonic structures of Bach before briefly developing in a fascinatingly off-kilter

direction - *Sanctuary* uses lush, moody synth textures to paint a muted sound picture, like an audio Rothko; *Little Sunshine* has an engagingly unaffected vocal, and though a fruitful career as a singer may not be indicated, the sincerity is unmistakable and the results are uplifting. *Clouds* is a suitably nebulous closing track. An intriguing experiment into musical possibilities - check it out.

Eddie Myer

Available via Bandcamp [here](#).

Jonny Mansfield, vibraphone, drum kit, percussion, pandeiro, piano, Korg Minilogue, Critter, Guitari Organelle, vocals.



Allison Neale
Quietly There
 (Ubuntu UBU0062)

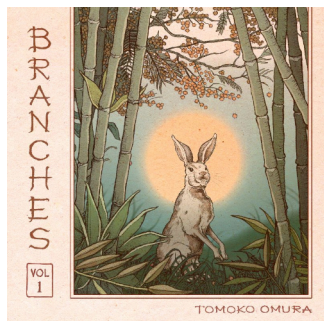
Seattle-born Allison Neale has established an enviable reputation on the UK jazz scene for her thorough assimilation of the West Coast jazz style associated with Paul Desmond and Art Pepper, though her meltingly full, sweet tone makes her presence lean more towards the former than

the more acerbic, bittersweet Pepper. This record matches her with an eminently sympathetic rhythm team: veteran UK bassist Dave Green is the ideal accompanist, sure and full-toned, always on hand with the perfect supportive note choice or subtle shift of feel, and his solos are masterpieces of understated musicality, playing their part in the ensemble so tactfully yet satisfyingly that other more prolix bassists seem obtrusively show-off by comparison. Steve Brown is a frequent partner to Green on the mainstream scene and their empathy and swing are impeccable. With their flawlessly swinging backing, Neale is free to soar above, her unfailingly melodic sense and thorough engagement with the harmony of the standard-based repertoire shining through in a deliberately understated, compellingly poised personality that never sounds trite even on such familiar material as *Darn That Dream*, delivered here in a bouncy waltz time. Completing the ensemble, New Yorker Peter Bernstein adds tasteful comping, carefully constructed solos delivered with a deliciously stringy tone, and exactly the right amount of space in all the right places: his intro to *I Should Care* is a small masterpiece in itself. Check out the solos on John Lewis' *2 Degrees East 3 Degrees West* for a lesson in how to deliver a swinging straight ahead blues without degenerating into cliché. Everyone is so in tune, so relaxed and yet so engaged with the material, and so in command of their technique in every aspect, from articulation to tone to the sure melodic development of every solo: it's rare that a jazz record so unapologetically mainstream is so satisfying to listen to, and so quietly compelling that you don't want it to

end.

Eddie Myer

Allison Neale, alto sax; Peter Bernstein, guitar; Dave Green, bass; Steve Brown, drums.



Tomoko Omura *Branches, Vol. 1* (Outside In Music)

The violin has long been an instrument that has found its way into almost every style of music owing to its adaptability as an instrument and its powerful expressive voice. However, its role in jazz is often understated. While a vital part of the gypsy swing ensemble, its appearance in mainstream and contemporary jazz (with a few exceptions) is seldom to be seen. *Branches Vol. 1*, the new release by Japanese violinist and composer Tomoko Omura takes the violin into the realms of contemporary fusion similar to the innovations of French violinist Jean-Luc Ponty but does so with an undoubtable sense of originality and a sound that is entirely her own. The album features six tracks, each inspired by Japanese folk stories and performed by an ensemble of piano,

guitar, double bass, drums and of course violin.

Immediately the sound is a fresh amalgam of various musical influences, with precise and tasteful rhythmic elements almost hinting on the unique rhythmic work found in the music of pianist Tigran Hamasyan. The overall atmosphere is at first light and bouncy, allowing the band to cook up some fluid musical chemistry whilst the violin delivers some haunting topline melodies and we are also treated to some beautiful soloing from both guitar and violin. As the music drives forwards the mood continues to change with it, going from light and airy to heavy dark fusion as the violin slams on the effects pedals and the band propels the listener into the innermost regions of space. The high energy is then taken back down to a gentler atmosphere similar to before but with a different melancholic sense of motion that slowly brings us to the final track of the album. One last time the energy is taken up a notch as the band give it their all to bring the album to a close. The music itself definitely captures the feeling and imagery of the folktales that brought about its creation and more so with the imaginative compositions and arrangements present. One is taken on a journey from the forests and landscapes of Japan to the depths of the unknown. Tomoko Omura definitely has further opened up the possibilities of the violin to a modern audience in a way that is both refreshing and exciting. As both performer and composer she is an outstanding figure in the field of modern music.

George Richardson

Tomoko Omura, violin; Jeff Miles,

guitar; Glenn Zaleski, piano; Pablo Menares, bass; Jay Sawyer, drums.



Maria Schneider Orchestra
Data Lords
 (Artist Share)

The composer-bandleader Maria Schneider follows the likes of Stan Kenton and Gil Evans in promoting big band music as art. Her new double album, *Data Lords*, featuring her 18 piece band, is inspired by perceived conflicting relationships between the digital and natural worlds. Reflecting the now and then images of children left to their own devices, these being smart phones, tablets and X-boxes today, as opposed to wandering off for unsupervised play in the past.

Disc 1, *The Digital World*, has an almost overwhelming, driving, feel as if we are controlled by our digital toys rather than the other way round. The five tracks are: *A World Lost*; *Don't Be Evil* (the early motto of Google); *CQ, CQ, Is Anyone There?*; *Sputnik*, and the title track *Data Lords*.

In contrast, Disc 2, *Our Natural World*, has a more relaxed, melodic feel. Helped, no doubt, by the presence of an accordion on some of

the tracks, and inspired by poetry in a couple. The six tracks are *Sanzenin* (inspired by Japanese Temple gardens); *Stone Song*; *Look Up*; *Braided Together*; *Bluebird* and finally *The Sun Waited for Me*.

All but one of the tracks on both discs have lengthy improvised solos over a dense harmonic background. The exception being *Stone Song*, a whimsical piece with plenty of space.

This album is best appreciated by repeated listening, preferably when relaxed with your favourite beverage.

Patrick Billingham

Purchase via ArtistShare [here](#).

Maria Schneider, composer, conductor; Steve Wilson, alto and soprano sax, clarinet, flute, alto flute; Dave Pietro, alto sax, clarinet, flute, alto flute, piccolo; Rich Perry, tenor sax; Donny McCaslin, tenor sax, flute; Scott Robinson, Bb, bass and contra-bass clarinet, baritone sax, mason; Tony Kadleck; trumpet, flugelhorn; Greg Gisbert, trumpet, flugelhorn; Nadje Noordhuis, trumpet, flugelhorn; Mike Rodriguez, trumpet, flugelhorn; Keith O'Quinn, trombone; Ryan Keberle, trombone; Marshall Gilkes, trombone; George Flynn, bass trombone; Gary Versace, accordion; Ben Monder, guitar; Frank Kimbrough, piano; Jay Anderson, bass; Johnathan Blake, drums, percussion.



Tim Thornton
Little One
 (AMP Music and Records)

Tim Thornton's big sound, sure intonation, and awesomely fleet fingered technique have become a staple foundation of London's jazz scene, and his distinctive musical personality, at once powerful and playful, has underpinned any number of projects at the straight-ahead end of things, most notably tenorist Leo Richardson's powerhouse bebop-plus outfit. This recording, his third under his own name, takes us in another direction. His last solo outing, *Back And Forth* was very much in the style of a classic ECM piano trio, with some diverse takes on classic repertoire alongside some adventurously free-wheeling originals: this time the palette is expanded, with Ant Law's clean-toned, incisive guitar and fluent, full-toned tenor sax from Riley Stone Lonergan sharing out the solo duties with Thornton's gorgeously rich bass, and vocalist Rosanna Brandi providing texture; the resulting blend, without keyboard chords to thicken the mix, sounds like a mix of interweaving voices, as on the dancing *Chilean Pavilion* where everyone trades phrases with joyous abandon. Chris Draper on drums is

sensitive in support, his contributions throughout supremely musical - the compositional style has the kind of pastoral uplift you might associate with Jarrett or Metheny, touched with elements of folk and, on *Passengers*, some gospel flavours - it's intriguing to hear the often knottily abstract Law bust out some soulful blues-inflected licks with such conviction, and repeat the trick on *Big Feet*. *Little Feet* is a solo feature for anyone who wants to bask in the warmth of the Thornton tone and marvel at the assurance with which he wields his considerable chops. Stone Lonergan is a perfect fit in terms of musicality and language, and everything he does is charged with a real palpable emotional content that delivers some of the album's most affecting moments, as in his bravura solo on the barnstorming *Omage* - a tune that simultaneously evokes the intensity of 'spiritual jazz' and a very Brit jazz-rock sensibility. The record was inspired by Thornton's experience as a new father, and judging by the joyful uplift emanating from this session it seems the sleepless nights have invigorated rather than enervated him. Good job too.

Eddie Myer

Available from AMP Music [here](#).

Tim Thornton, bass; Riley Stone Lonergan, tenor sax; Ant Law, guitar; Chris Draper, drums; Rosanna Brandi, vocals.



Weather Report
Live in London
 (Angel Air Records SJPCD622)

Alongside the Miles Davis bands of the *Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew* era, Weather Report were the kings of the highly popular fusion genre of jazz for many years, with only Chick Corea's *Return To Forever* running them close. Led by the Austrian keyboard wizard Joseph Zawinul and boasting Wayne Shorter, one of the greatest saxophonists and composers of modern times, alongside the incomparable bass master Jaco Pastorius, they were well placed to rival Miles, and so they did. With the iconic albums *Black Market* and *Heavy Weather* in the mid Seventies they were filling stadiums and festival fields across the globe on a regular basis. The band's career ran from 1971 to 1986 during which time they recorded eighteen official albums and three singles, were the subject of many 'bootleg' recordings and topped the Downbeat jazz album charts for five consecutive years.

The *Live In London* session recorded on this album is something of a mystery. Firstly, Angel Air Records, a label born in 1997 and recently purchased by The Store For Music company, is not one that many

associate with jazz at all. Secondly, the venue or date for the performance remains unknown to most, or has not been revealed for some reason or other. We are told it was in the Eighties and as bass man Victor Bailey was with the group only from 1982 to 1986 that narrows it down. My guess of venue is The Hammersmith Odeon as it was then, but that's only speculation. No doubt all truths will be revealed when people purchase the CD and are able to claim 'I was there'. As for the recording itself, the music is highly charged throughout in front of an enthusiastic crowd. There are no show stoppers like Zawinul's *Birdland* or Shorter's *A Remark You Made*, but enough excitement and stunning virtuoso playing to keep things moving along for the best part of an hour. The opener *Corner Pocket* sets the scene; don't confuse this one with the tune of the same name written by Freddie Green for the Basie band, it's a piece by the leader that also appears on the *Sportin' Life* album of similar vintage. This one opens with the percussion instruments drawing the listener in and preparing themselves for a tour de force from Wayne Shorter, lots of tension created by the constant tempo changes and almost hypnotic meanderings from the leader's keys, it's a magnificent piece. The major cut of the album follows, there's almost fifteen minutes of music here, but no title, it is in fact labelled 'Unknown' on the album sleeve. It's mostly at the slowest of tempos with Joe painting an ever changing background to showcase Wayne on absolute top form, fully reminiscent of his days with Miles, alongside the ever changing conversations between Omar Hakim, Mino Cinelu and Victor Bailey's



Weather Report

electric bass. You could say that the listening experience somewhat falls away as the disc continues, but that would only be relative as the standard of the first twenty five minutes is at such a staggering height. *Fast City* has always been a crowd pleaser for the band; on this version bass man Bailey plays out of his skin, bringing memories of the great Jaco to mind. However, the overall soundscape becomes very crowded, dominated by Rossy and Hakim with keyboards and soprano wailing away with no let up. Clearly many enjoyed it, the visual aspect would have helped, but in truth it is the only low point of the album. *Where The Moon Goes* is a lengthy and intriguing Joe Zawinul composition and here it is split into two parts that are separated by an eleven minute *Drum Solo*, given its own track listing on the sleeve note. The piece is full of nuances, contrasts and group chanting, upbeat most of the way, with Wayne superb on soprano once again. It brought

the recorded part of the gig to a rather unusual close. The album is a very worthwhile catalogue addition for Weather Report fans, particularly for the two opening tracks, and will of course be vital for all completists of the band's music.

Jim Burlong

Joe Zawinul, keys; Wayne Shorter, tenor, soprano saxophone; Victor Bailey, bass; Mino Cinelu, percussion; Jose Rossy, percussion; Omar Hakim, drums.

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Paul Richards and Guests

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11am - 1pm Free

The Verdict Jazz Bubbles with Julian Nicholas

The Verdict, Brighton (in Dorset Gardens)

1-3pm £25 with roast

Harry's Tricks

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Kate Williams & Georgia Mancio

8:30pm

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Thursday 3rd – Sunday 6th September

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Starts 6pm, one 40 minute set, followed by an artist Q&A

Thursday 3rd Sept. Barnacles

Friday 4th Sept. Abi Flynn

Sat. 5th Sept. Howes3

Sun. 6th Sept. Cloggz

Free to view, via New Generation Jazz [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube](#)

Wednesday 9th September

6pm Shabaka Hutchings

[Details here](#)

Tuesday 15th September

8:30pm Chris Ingham: Jazz In Film

Tickets £5 via [Watermill Jazz](#)



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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](#)

Pete Recommends...



Lucky Thompson 1950s Sessions in Paris Trio and Quintet 1956

As a student in the 1950s I began to explore contemporary jazz. The radio was a great resource. I heard a lot of jazz from Paris. Lucky was spending a lot of time there and his new recordings impressed me. Then a label called Ducretet-Thompson issued two excellent 10 inch LPs recorded in Paris by Zoot Sims and Lucky Thompson. The session by Lucky is the first part of my choice for this month. He is teamed with trumpeter Emmett Berry and a French rhythm section with Henri Renault at the piano. If you enjoy straight ahead mainstream jazz with power and imagination try tracks such as *When Cool Night* and Lucky's trip with bass and drums only on *Thin Ice*. There is a short sample of his fine ballad playing when he contributes *Sophisticated Lady* to the ballad medley. The whole session can easily be streamed or found on YouTube.

My interest in Lucky grew and I made a great discovery thanks to the American Forces Radio. Early in 1956, when Lucky had a brief spell with the Stan Kenton Orchestra, he

collaborated with Oscar Pettiford for a trio and quintet session in New York. The results were exceptional and I strongly recommend a listen to the trio tracks. Oscar Pettiford is on bass and he is joined by Keeter Betts on guitar. Lucky is at his very best – passionate, full of ideas and flowing with wonderful freedom. *A Lady's Vanity* on the chords of *Body and Soul*, is outstanding, but *Deep Passion* by the quintet reaches a similar standard. On some tracks Lucky is heard on soprano. He was one of the first players in the 50s to revive this instrument.

The session with Emmett Berry is available on CD in the series *Americans Swinging in Paris*. I still have my vinyl reissue of the Trio/Quintet session which is on a double album on ABC entitled *Dancing Sunbeam*. If you want to explore the many sessions which Lucky recorded in Paris they can all be found on YouTube. Good hunting,

Peter Batten

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Editor
Charlie Anderson

Sub-Editor & Photography
Lisa Wormsley

Contributors
Simon Adams
Charlie Anderson
Anya Arnold
Peter Batten
Patrick Billingham
Jim Burlong
Sam Carelse
Eddie Myer
Patricia Pascal
George Richardson
Gina Southgate
Simon Spillett
Lisa Wormsley

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