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by Patricia Pascal

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4 Pat Pascal: JAZZNEWBLOOD Alive 2020

10 Gina Southgate: Jazz in the Round

18 Josephine Davies

17 Jazz Essentials

23 Jazz News

24 Big Band Scene

26 Live Stream Reviews

29 Album Reviews

33 Listings

34 Pete Recommends...

Pat Pascal

JAZZNEWBLOOD Alive 2020



2020 has been a challenging year for all of us, but especially to all professionals in the music industry. Seeing their income reduced to 0 is frightening and stressful. One of the hardest parts is the unpredictability of it all.

Around June, when London Jazz Festival started announcing the first names in the programme, I knew those concerts could eventually be cancelled, down the road. I could only hope that gigs would go ahead from October but the second lockdown and London's Tier 3 restrictions killed all possibilities for a LIVE gig.

London Jazz Festival had a plan B in place to move all concerts online and so did we.

Nothing can substitute a LIVE performance with human interaction and a decision was made to

immediately postponed the live showcase to January 17th 2021.

To still be part of the online EFG London Jazz Festival 2020 train, we switched gears to create a special showcase online edition.

As the internet is a global platform without borders, I saw the perfect opportunity to introduce new talented young artists, under 24, from other countries in Europe.

The Composers and Improvisers Community Project seemed like the perfect partner. This community of independent musicians from different parts of the globe is resident on Patreon. Managed by guitarist Javier Subatin, more than 20 musicians are part of this platform. They present regular, exclusive, improvised solo performances and collaborations between some of the most talented musicians in Europe. (<https://>

www.patreon.com/cicomunityproject)

On November 22nd we live streamed a collection of 12 pre-recorded performance/videos presenting outstanding young Jazz talent from the UK, Portugal, Germany, Italy and Israel, under 24.

We started with an improvised performance video of German pianist Samuel Gapp on keys and Italian drummer Francesca Remigi.

Samuel Gapp is a young award-winning jazz pianist and composer from Germany, currently based in Lisbon, Portugal. In 2019 he won the Prémio Jovens Músicos and the Prémio de Composição Bernardo Sasseti, two of the most prestigious jazz awards in Portugal, and released his first album with original music called *Trio & String Quartet*, combining a jazz trio with a string quartet. Before Covid, as a sideman, he was also touring around Europe with different projects. (instagram.com/samuel.gapp.piano)

Francesca Remigi is a drummer, jazz musician, improviser and composer from Bergamo, Italy, who recently graduated from a master in jazz drums at the Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussels, under the guidance of the Belgian drummer Stéphane Galland. An important emerging name in the new



generation of Italian jazz, she has an extensive and impressive background of performances including being a finalist in the Maastricht Jazz Awards 2020. (instagram.com/fraremigi_drums)

Following that, we watched a solo video performance by Israeli guitar player Tal Arditi. Currently based in Berlin, he's been tagged as a young guitar prodigy ever since he started studying in the

prestigious Jazz Institute programme, at Rimon Music University when he was only 16. Tal is a crossover artist creating music between the worlds of jazz, rock, classical, Brazilian music, and more. In February 2018, Tal recorded his debut album *Portrait*, live at the A-Trane Jazz Club and was chosen to participate in the

prestigious jazz programme 'Betty Carter Jazz Ahead' in Washington DC.

London Jazz News, upon reviewing his debut CD, consider him "an important new voice in European guitar jazz". (instagram.com/tal_rdt)

Following that, we watched performances from 3 headliners from our original line-up.

First, Morgan Wallace on tenor saxophone presented a set of original music performed by her band featuring

Luke Bacchus on piano, a new name to me and one to follow. Cassius Cobbson on drums, an important musician in the current young

Tomorrow's Warriors ranks and Kielan Sheard on bass, a finalist in this year's BBC Young Jazz Musician of the year.

Morgan, originally from South London, grew up in Devon and took up clarinet at 8 years old, moving on to the saxophone at 14. Currently, she is studying at Trinity Laban Conservatoire and has developed her language as part of Tomorrow's Warriors programme under the mentorship of Binker Golding, Alex Davis and others.

A talented composer and instrumentalist, she draws her influences from saxophonists Ornette Coleman and Wayne Shorter but musicians like Brad Mehldau, Jeff Buckley and Miles Davis are also constant sources of inspiration. ([instagram.com/morgan_wallace_music](https://www.instagram.com/morgan_wallace_music)).

Right after, and in a different tone more towards singer-songwriter, we presented Manny performing a solo set on electric guitar.

Tipped as one of the new jazz voices to look out for, she grew up on the sounds of bebop, Ella Fitzgerald and Motown. As part of NYJO, Tomorrow's Warriors or Julian Joseph's Academy, Manny has developed her jazz language but she's not stopping there. On a mission to create a



personal style incorporating her jazz upbringing with other newer sounds, she's deeply influenced by the new alternative R&B and neo-soul represented by names like H.E.R, Raveena or Snoh Aalegra. Her stripped-down set, for us, showed us the potential of her vocals and the musicality of some of her original work.

Follow Manny on Instagram for regular original content:

[instagram.com/manny_alexandra](https://www.instagram.com/manny_alexandra)

We finish Part I with our youngest artist, pianist and composer Scottie Thompson from Portsmouth. At last year's showcase, at only 17 years old, he did an outstanding performance as a sideman with amazing saxophonist Emma Rawicz. This year he came back with his band and performed a great set of original songs with Finn Genockey on

drums and Toby Yapp on bass. After attending the Guildhall Junior Jazz programme for 2 years, he's now a first-year student at the Royal Academy of Music. ([instagram.com/scottietmusic](https://www.instagram.com/scottietmusic))

Next, we watched sets from another 3 artists in the Composers and Improvisers Community Project.

Diogo Alexandre, a Portuguese drummer, presented a short video performing a solo,



Top: Scottie Thompson
Below: Manny



Photo: Maddy Coombs by Pat Pascal

showcasing a bit of his creativity and expression on the instrument.

Diogo is an award-winning, new generation, name very much in-demand in the current Jazz music scene in Portugal. His approach to the instrument, especially in the Portuguese context, is far from conventional and his unique voice brings freshness and openness to the local scene.

([instagram.com/diogoalexandre.music](https://www.instagram.com/diogoalexandre.music))

Max Diller is a trumpeter and composer from Germany, currently based in the City of Dresden. With a unique and warm trumpet sound, he is inspired by trumpeters like Arve Henriksen or Nils Petter Molvaer. Besides his current studies at the Carl Maria von Weber College of Music, he performs with various projects and bands throughout Germany and internationally.

([instagram.com/maxdiller](https://www.instagram.com/maxdiller).)

Closing our collaboration with

Composers and Improvisers Community Project, we watched Zé Almeida, a Portuguese double bass player performing a short improvised piece. Currently developing his voice within the contemporary and Jazz communities in Lisbon, Zé Almeida tours regularly around the world with several local and international musicians.

([instagram.com/zealmeida99](https://www.instagram.com/zealmeida99))

Part II of our LIVE STREAM event featured the last 3 headliners from our original line-up.

Starting with saxophonist Maddy Coombs, she is originally from Northampton, and was accompanied by Sultan Stevenson on piano, Harry Pearce on bass and Adam Merrell on drums. Maddy is an emerging talent from the Tomorrow's Warriors programme currently studying at Trinity Laban. A regular soloist in several Tomorrow's Warriors ensembles, Maddy is another new

Photo: Sultan Stevenson by Pat Pascal



generation female name to pay attention to. Her influences include saxophonists John Coltrane, Joe Lovano and Seamus Blake as well as musicians like Ahmad Jamal, Wynton Marsalis and Thelonious Monk. ([instagram.com/maddy.coombs](https://www.instagram.com/maddy.coombs))

Next, another Tomorrow's Warriors graduate, pianist, composer and conductor in training, Sultan Stevenson is slowly but steadily building a reputation in the young UK jazz scene. In his sound, he hopes to capture his appreciation for African music and jazz, including influential elements from the music of McCoy Tyner, Kenny Kirkland, Marcus Roberts or John Coltrane. His



Photo: XVNGO

experience growing up in North London and his Caribbean roots also play an important part in the development of his unique voice.

In his set Sultan performed alongside Jacob Gryn on bass, Joel Waters on drums, Ruben Ross on tenor sax and Josh Short on trumpet.

([instagram.com/sultan.stevenson/](https://www.instagram.com/sultan.stevenson/))

To end this JazznewbloodALIVE2020 online edition for EFG London Jazz Festival, we presented XVNGO.

XVNGO is one of saxophonist Deji Ijishakan music representations. Coming from South London, at 21 years old, he must be one of the

most creative and productive jazz voices in the current young scene.

In his solo video performance, he presents original music composed under the name XVNGO pioneering a new sound labelled 'jazz drill' and 'post-trap'. This sound mixes classical, trap, jazz, drill, hip-hop and electronic forms of music.

Like Bill Evans once said: "Jazz is a feeling" and I agree.

XVNGO manages to preserve the jazz feeling while taking us into several different background landscapes.

He also plays for artists Joe Armon-Jones and Tara Lily and in bands like KOKOROKO and Levitation Orchestra.

His own band Hypernova Militia is a force of nature that must be experienced live.

Follow him for regular releases: [instagram.com/xvngo](https://www.instagram.com/xvngo)

The full ONLINE EDITION video performances can be watched on Jazznewblood youtube page: <https://www.youtube.com/jazznewblood>

Don't forget, our LIVE SHOWCASE will be happening on January 17th 2021 at Artis Blackheath / Steve Funky Feet events and tickets can be obtained at [jazznewblood.org](https://www.jazznewblood.org).

If you are in a good position, please support the music community, your local musicians of all ages, your local education charities, local venues, etc.

I read somewhere that misery makes great art so brace yourself for one of the most creative years of the decade.



A glimpse at JAZZ IN THE ROUND January 2012 to January 2021



Gina Southgate at JITR, 2012

GINA SOUTHGATE

In January 2012, tipped off by friends Kath Wilgress and Paul Bradshaw, editors of the legendary magazine *Straight No Chaser* I took some painting materials to the new night 'Jazz in the Round' at The Cockpit Theatre, Lisson Grove.

Once in the auditorium the long bench seating forms a square in tiered formation around the room. The audience look into the centre where the musicians form a circle facing each other. This creates intimate unity for the musicians, and as with ripples in a pond, push those waves of intimacy out to the room. It is a gig for listening and watching - there is nowhere for anyone to hide.

That first night I was introduced to Dave Wybrow, the larger than life captain of the Cockpit. He said that I could paint at whatever scale I wanted. I've painted this particular scene monthly, give or take a few, ever since. I've had a spot for my easel at the top tier of the seating throughout the years, till this one, where covid has placed me up

higher into the crow's nest. It's a painting challenge, some have their back to me. I think of Degas and Lautrec, I try to work with the feel of the cluster. There is a time factor too, two 20 minute, and one 40 minute sets. I don't get much time to hang out but when I go to the bar it's full of friendly familiar faces, some people I only ever see at this gig, no other.

The amount of talent to play here is phenomenal; people I paint here first reappear all over the international scene. Moses Boyd, Nérija, Sons of Kemet, Empirical. Some have played here repeatedly like the amazing Shirley Tetteh who's first time I think was with veteran educator, bass player Gary Crosby.

JITR has a policy of picking from the UK's wealth of talent; with a couple of exceptions, all the players are British based. Early days we had the amazing Matana Roberts perform solo because she was in town. Before current and long-time programmer Alex Watson, Sean Corby had the role, bringing with him



L-R Peter Ind, Phil Minton, Steve Williamson, Matana Roberts



L-R Kim Macari, Jay Phelps, Howard Riley

a wealth of talent from the north, Laura Cole, Mathew Halsall, Chris Sharkey, Nat Birchall.

There have been off-site gigs and festivals taking the model to Kings Place, RFH, St Mary in the Castle in Hastings, Love Supreme Festival and the Roundhouse. JITR secured funding to record all the concerts and give the recording to the musicians to use as they pleased. They have adopted live streamed gigs, socially distanced gigs, now filming everything as well to stay ever present in these times. Steven Cropper photographs most every set.

I've been introduced to so many

excellent musicians versed in styles and interpretations of jazz, and improvisation. Jez or Chris Philips always have a little chat with the musicians before they play, revealing lovely insights into why they are called Dinosaur or Quadraceratops; or how they got to be here, and why they play what they do. This takes place while they are tightening a drum head or adjusting a microphone, all in a pin drop atmosphere to a completely engaged and attentive audience. Looked after and ushered and positioned by Dave and his fabulous staff. It sounds serious, it is, but it's also warm and



Alex Hitchcock Quintet



Binker & Moses



Jessica Lauren



Nérjja

accessible. If you don't like the first act there will be two totally different things coming up. The formula exposes people to the unexpected, the hard-core improviser is put alongside the classical virtuoso. It works. I strive to represent to my best possible ability each and every individual and group. It's not a formula and I try to push to keep it fresh, it works sometimes. My paintings of Alex Hitchcock and Jay Phelps have been used as album covers. Howard Riley and Ed Richardson's families bought the paintings for big birthdays.

Loading my car, at my studio, on the last Monday of every month for the past 9 years I question why I'm doing it, this changes the minute I unload, walk in to the auditorium to

see all the instruments miraculously set up by Nick for three performances, polished basses laying on their sides, sparkly drum kits, often in multiple, saxophones and trumpets on stands, vibraphones and steel pans, congas and djembes, the old upright piano occasionally augmented by a hired grand. You name it, it's been played at Jazz in the Round.

Being in the room at the end of the gig there is camaraderie and banter between the bands, fresh from the excitement of stepping off stage. One particular male-heavy night, two quintets in almost call and response style carried on the performance with 'man' 'cat' 'hip' 'dig'. I stood open mouthed at this jazz pantomime.

I've seen some of the most



Nikki Yeoh

riveting solo performances at Jazz in the Round, it's my favourite part of the night to paint. For accomplished soloists and first timers it's a pure art to project the stripped bare version of yourself that is a solo. Leafcutter John did this by turning all the lights out (not great for me) he then somehow played a set from the heat energy from candlelight triggering response from some device he'd built. Eddie Parker sadly put down his flute and played the piano due to a new hand tremble that he'd developed. Peter Ind took up his bass and played a fine solo not long after a major stroke, he worked with a poet. Phil Minton stunned the room with his vocal mutations and chirruping, guttural cries and wails. We've had Kim Macari's words and plaintive trumpet, Ayanna Witter Johnson's stories of blagging entry

as a non-American to go on and win first prize at the Apollo amateur night, a title held previously by Ella Fitzgerald and Jimi Hendrix.

Nikki Yeoh performed a fabulous solo set, angelic in a beautiful dress, her small frame sat at the old upright. That night she sang publicly for the first time her own powerful arrangement of Nina Simone's *Four Women*, moving the audience to a quiet frenzy she got to the end of the number, got up, smashed down the piano lid, shouted "Fuck Brexit" and left the room to rapturous applause. It was the night of the European elections, Farage did well.

JEZ NELSON

Jazz in the Round was born out of a really nice coming together of three people who wanted to do something different and support a



Nat Birchall & Gina Southgate. Photo: Steven Cropper

wide range of jazz artists. Dave Wybrow (who runs the Cockpit) and I have a mutual friend called Richard Wyatt who's a big jazz fan. Richard had been to the live nights I ran at Ronnie Scott's when I presented Jazz On 3 for Radio 3. He knew I wanted to find a home for a monthly event that followed the format of those nights - 3 different and diverse acts playing short sets. Richard took me down to The Cockpit and I fell in love with it and Dave, who was so passionate about supporting the arts. Between us we somehow conjured up an event that we thought might last a year but is now heading for ten. The first night featured Black Top with my favourite UK saxophonist - Steve Williamson - alongside Orphy Robinson and Pat Thomas. Then we had Stuart McCallum playing solo guitar and we opened with Yazz Ahmed and her band. Right there you have the formula and the range we

have stuck to. I'm extremely proud of what we have done with JITR. My whole concept was to provide a monthly 'selection box' and to amaze people with music that they'd normally never check out. Each month people leave telling me they've had their minds and ears opened so I think it's worked.

NICK BURKINYOUNG - sound engineer

When I first started doing JITR in 2011 I wasn't a massive fan of 'jazz'. Turns out I had no idea of what jazz really meant. The following 9 years have been the making of me as an engineer and a music lover. No other gig has given me as much musical depth and colour as this. And it's not just the music. A whole family has evolved from this night. A special vibe, so inclusive and free, just full of love for good music, whatever facet



Neil Charles photographed by Gina Southgate

of the spectrum it might be.

There have been big bands, big instruments, big egos and big characters. Hey, we've even had dubstep! - and harps, but not at the same time.

We've had live expressive art, dance, spoken word... and brain surgery... Nothing could be more jazz than that!

As a sound engineer, the thing that blows me away more than anything is the musicianship, the incredible talent and dedication of these players. It's taught me so much about how to mic up and mix in a way that can begin to do them and their instruments justice. Just to complement and enhance with a feather touch. I've learnt that the mechanical slap of strings on wood, fingers on valves and shells on skin are as important as the notes... and the silences in between. Being part of this family is a blessing and a privilege. It's also downright cool ;-)

STEVEN CROPPER - photographer

I could well be JITR's biggest fan: from the first night in January 2012 to last month and the empty room, I've missed only a handful over nine years, supported and plugged this gig, and have introduced a few friends to the gig, some of whom have become regulars themselves. As the 'house photographer', the theatre has adopted me as part of the crew, which has led on to more good stuff elsewhere. Favourite gig: I often cite Jason Yarde's Trio Wah!,

but there have been so many. It's a unique format in a unique space so long may it continue.

DAVE WYBROW



My cousin Nick made me listen to Count Basie records when I was 10.

My friend Kallis who sold records in Berwick Street Market helped me dream up a night with new, noisy bands in the round at The Cockpit -

so it would be focused and intimate as well as a bit musically mixed-up and 'challenging'.

A self-made precious metal dealer who promoted jazz gigs called Reg introduced me to another self-made Eastender - Richard, who knew Jez. Richard put Jez and I together and gave us 500 quid to get the night started.

Sean, trumpet player, was our first booker, and Peggy, who worked with Jez. Chris from the radio station chipped in too. Now there is Steve, photographer, and Alex, our current booker. Gina painted every night. None of these people ever got paid.

They brought in people like Shabaka Hutchings and Kit Downes, Nubya Garcia, Ezra Collective, Yazz Ahmed, Triforce... Hundreds more have followed, the players, the curators have got younger. And from all over. And from all musical backgrounds. And now the jazz is about more than jazz. It's about crossover. And new kinds of

Painting: John Horler Quintet with Norma Winstone



community. And emancipation and politics. Our Emergence festival in Hastings in April which has grown out of Jazz In The Round will feature spoken word and grime and film, curated by Lisa Wormsley. People plus Jazz plus Art.

Nick lives in Whitstable, Reg is dead, Kallis and Richard still come to Jazz in the Round. They'll forgive me if I say those formative

enablers are/were a bit on the 'outsider' side. As Nick told me, jazz is always art as well as folk music and show business. It's outsider music too. Jazz shares an edge-space and an identity of its own that makes it home to a lot of people. And musicians and audiences are needing to reach for that, especially now, across all music and across divides. An exploratory, confident, open minded, open-heart medicine for our times. Maybe why so many top players and sound artists are reaching for jazz now - and Gilles Peterson is the new John Peel. Because in these times we need something deep and real and fearless for us to swing around to, that is also about equality, diversity and genuine inclusiveness, in the round.

www.thecockpit.org.uk/show/jazz-in-the-round



Jazz Essentials

Archie Shepp & Horace Parlan *Goin' Home/Trouble In Mind* (Steeplechase)

Archie Shepp is one of the radicals of jazz, a free jazz player of considerable force whose tenor was like a flamethrower, emitting firebursts of note-bending slurs and growls alongside some hard-bop flurries. A product of the 1960s' avant-garde, he was closely associated with John Coltrane: they even shared a live record together in 1965, *New Thing at Newport*, heading up one side apiece. By any measure, Shepp was and still is one of the great saxophonists of the modern era.

But during the 1970s, as jazz became more mainstream again, Shepp's fire music began to fall out of favour and he spent considerable time in Europe. Horace Parlan, too, was a musical refugee, a bluesy, unmannered pianist and Blue Note and Mingus stalwart who revived his career in Denmark. Parlan had an interesting musical style: he had suffered from polio as an infant, resulting in a partial crippling of his right hand. To compensate, he developed a powerful left-hand chordal approach that defines his work.

At the request of their common record label, Steeplechase, the two recorded a pair of duet albums in Copenhagen. And for such modernists, both sets are surprisingly retro. The first, *Goin' Home*, from 1977, is a set of nine spirituals, its successor, *Trouble In Mind*, from 1980, twelve early traditional blues.



Eschewing common jazz practice, Shepp does not improvise new melodic lines but plays short impromptu passages around each tune. Parlan sticks to accompaniment – he only plays two solos on the whole of *Goin' Home* – while both sets are mostly tempo-less, played in a rubato-like free rhythm. The overall tone is reverential and admiring, the traditional songs taking centre stage over the strong personalities of the two musicians.

Goin' Home references Shepp's return to his African roots, but it provided difficult for him to record. He had never played spirituals before and was often overcome with emotion at the intensity of the performances. Of the two albums, this is the better, for its raw, emotional beauty is often overwhelming.

Parlan died in Denmark aged 86 in 2017, while Shepp, now back home in the USA and still vigorous at 84, has only just stopped making music. This pair of albums is a fine tribute to them both.

Simon Adams

Josephine Davies

Saxophonist and composer Josephine Davies spoke to Charlie Anderson about her move to Hastings and her recent Jazz South commissioned piece.



You recently performed your Jazz South Radar Commission piece. How did that come about?

I saw their website not too long after moving down to Hastings and it struck me as something that would really tie in with a compositional direction that I was moving in already. So when I got down here, which was April this year, I started listening to a lot of orchestral music and learning to write for strings, and then looking further into various woodwind sections and orchestral sections, and then this Radar Scheme came up. Obviously they wanted a trio or 'a composition for up to three musicians' but I thought it would be really nice to do something with some instruments that aren't just primarily jazz instruments. So the inspiration came really from what I was already doing, which was really looking into particularly the bass clarinet. That was an automatic 'yes, I definitely want that in the mix', and then a feeling of 'what other instrument can go with bass clarinet and saxophone that has a big dynamic range and has a big range in itself and can do lots of things, like play legato and percussively? The piano immediately ticked all of those boxes, and I hadn't played with Alcyona Mick for a while and thought it would be a really great opportunity to write something for her. So that was the instrumentation influence, and then I thought it would make sense to write something about the sea and about moving back down here, possibly a sense of homecoming, a sense of being out of the city and back by the sea.

How do you know the other musicians, Tamar Osborn and Alcyona Mick?

Tamar and I go way back. We

were actually at Junior Guildhall together a long time ago, then we were at Guildhall together, and then we played together in lots of different combinations over the past 15 years. I'm in her band Collocutor, which is world music and jazz. She's just moved to St. Leonards as well.

Alcyona I know primarily from doing the London Jazz Orchestra, and then she joined my trio Orenda which is with vocalist Brigitte Beraha. We've played loads over the past five or six years. It made sense to have her because she is such an incredibly dynamic and diverse musician and comes up with these amazing spontaneous, and quite orchestral, soundscapes.

That was really wonderful to play with those two, and they are amazing musicians. It's quite an involved piece. The first rehearsal that we had, I thought it might take quite a lot of time putting it together and trying out things, but it was just immediately really solid, which is testament to their musicianship.

What else have you been doing this year?

Lots of things. My most recent project is something that I'm excited about. It's a collaboration between me and my partner Ben Somers, who is a bass player (amongst other instruments). We've written loads of stuff together during lockdown, because we'd moved in together. We're friends with the guitarist Phil Robson and his partner, vocalist Christine Tobin, so Ben and I just started thinking 'you know what, most of the pieces that we're writing would sound really good with vocals and guitar'. So we got in touch with Phil and Christine and we said 'let's all write a piece, then we can record it remotely'. We're trying to get it all

together for next week, for the first BandCamp Friday of December. So that's been really great.

[The end result was the *Two Cities* EP, released on Bandcamp on 4th December, 2020.]

I've been getting into writing for strings, so I've written a string quartet, which is hopefully going to be rehearsed soon because there's actually a string quartet that's getting together in Hastings led by Kate Robinson who is the leader of the Heritage Orchestra. She lives down here and it was her idea initially to get a bunch of jazz musicians to write something for string quartet, because that would give the quartet a slightly different, unique flavour. It hasn't really been done that much before. So I've written a string quartet and I'm hoping to write some more for that.

The Jazz South Radar Scheme has been really inspiring for me, Alcyona and Tamar, so I want to write a set's worth of music for us to perform next year to a live audience, when that becomes possible.

So you studied at The Guildhall and you started out in classical music?

Yes, I did. It wasn't so much a choice, I just ended up there on the classical saxophone course. I don't really know how I ended up there. The original plan was to be an actor, and then my best friend, who is an opera singer, went to Guildhall and I thought 'oh, I'll do that as well'.

I didn't apply for the jazz course because I hadn't ever played any jazz before, so by default I went on the classical course and then realised that I really didn't like it. It wasn't for me at all so I had to go about learning enough jazz on my own in order to ask to join the jazz course. And obviously they were quite

reluctant to do so because I was way below the skill level of the jazzers that were already on the course because they'd been learning jazz for a few years and were already technically accomplished. So that was quite a difficult time. When I got there, not only did I think 'I don't want to do classical saxophone' but I heard some jazz and thought I really want to do that. It was a kind of wilful 'this must happen' even if it takes a lot of work, which it did.

Were there any particular breakthrough moments that you remember?

Well it's funny. My first influence was quite 1960s based. At that time I heard some John Coltrane and Sonny Stitt and was trying to learn that kind of language to play jazz. I think my first breakthrough moment where I thought 'yes, I kind of understand how this is supposed to happen' was through listening to Kenny Wheeler and playing his music with some people at Guildhall, which was probably only a few months after I'd started learning jazz. It just made more sense to me than the more traditional structured standards-based pieces of music. It was very free-flowing and melodic, and that made more immediate sense to me, without having to linearly think it through. I was immediately able to do something with it, able to make my way through these pieces of music without having to worry too much about whether I was playing the right language or not. That was my first breakthrough moment and probably something that influenced my eventual movement into becoming a contemporary improvising jazz musician (or improviser). I don't quite know what to call myself but I'm definitely not a

hard bop saxophonist or something like that.

When you graduated from the Guildhall, how did you find it in terms of being out in the 'real world'?

Really difficult, actually. I was mainly teaching and doing function gigs with some not great quality function bands. I was still practicing but when I was at Guildhall I didn't really get a band of my own together and I didn't really get involved in enough other projects. So I was quite on my own in a way that lots of other musicians aren't when they leave music college. I think I really struggled for a few years to really justify why I was doing what I was doing, and how I could make it work. Actually, the first band that I really got together I was in my late twenties, which is relatively late, I think, to become a bandleader, if that's what you're ultimately going to do. So I hadn't written music before then, I hadn't really formulated what kind of jazz I wanted to play. I definitely didn't have a sense of my own sound, or even what kind of music I was interested in. I was just flailing around trying to find something, for quite some time, which is unusual but not unheard of. I think about people like Joe Lovano who was probably just a sideman until he was in his late thirties, and then found his own voice. So there are people who have done it like that. Then it became a bit clearer to me, as soon as I became a bandleader, what it was that I wanted to do and how I wanted



that to sound and it was just a really gradual, slow process of making that happen, and allowing that to happen.

In terms of playing the saxophone, and trying to improve your playing, are there specific things that you're working on?

Interestingly, I feel it's more important for me to work on my musicianship and that comes through a lot of ear training, a little bit of transcription, listening to totally different music and composition. I then trust that that process will merge into my saxophone playing.

As a saxophonist specifically, I work on being able to articulate my ideas so there is a technical process in that, and there's also something about working on my own sense of time so that the more solid I am within time itself, the more permutations of rhythmic ideas I can articulate, the freer I can become to make lots of different choices, and not play any of the things that I've worked on and be completely free within the music and be able to respond to what's happening around me. So it's a bit more of an overarching idea of being an accomplished musician rather than an accomplished saxophonist, which is perhaps different from other saxophonists. I do more practice away from the saxophone than on the saxophone.

Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about?

I'm really pleased that Whirlwind have managed to release the album



Photo: Monika S. Jakubowska

on schedule. We recorded it in January 2020 and the original date for release was October 9th and then coronavirus happened and lockdown and I thought 'we won't be able to do anything with this, it'll have to wait'. But Whirlwind have been amazing and made that release happen so it still feels like things are happening below the surface. I've been very fortunate in many ways: being a composer I'm used to working in isolation, living with my partner Ben who is a musician so we've played tons of music together, and having lots of great original projects that I'm involved with. I've been able to keep going. There hasn't, for me, been a total shutdown of creativity and I think that's really important at this time that people do find a way to maintain their sense of why they do what they do and how they do it. For jazz musicians especially, it's often that we work only in tandem with other musicians and our creativity is built around other musicians. But during this time we have to find different ways of expressing ourselves and offering that to the community that we're involved with. Otherwise it's really deadening and

numbing, and that's not a good place to be in, especially as a creative person. It's anathema to us.

Are there any other projects that you're working on?

I'm still working on my main project, Satori. We just released a new album on Whirlwind Recordings and we were supposed to be touring now and throughout the autumn. Obviously that's not happening, but we are doing our album launch in January. I'm trying to write some new music for us, and obviously rehearsals are still allowed to go ahead so we're getting together soon, which is going to be amazing.

I'm doing lots of writing, big and small. I've just applied for funding to remotely record my jazz orchestra throughout the spring. That's something that I'm trying to think about - how we will do that, who will be involved, and finalise some writing for that as well. So I'm keeping busy, in essence.

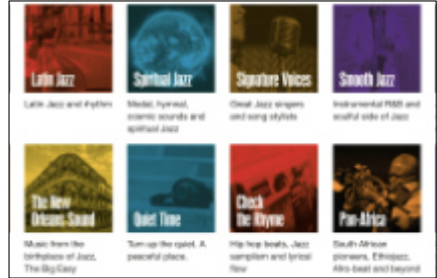
Josephine Davies launches her Satori album *How Can We Wake?* at Jazz In The Round on Monday 25th January. <https://www.josephinedavies.co.uk/>

Jazz News



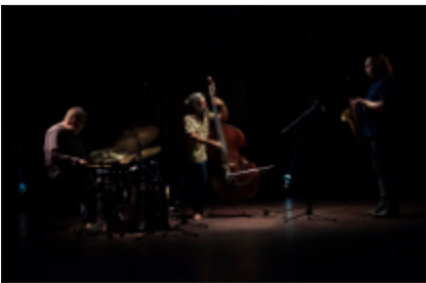
[Hexagonal on Jazz South's Podcast](#)

Hastings-based jazz ensemble Hexagonal are featured on Jazz South's Spotlight podcast hosted by broadcaster Kevin Le Gendre (pictured above with the band). The podcast features a piece commissioned by Jazz South and composed by Hexagonal saxophonist Greg Heath. The piece is entitled Temple of Juno and can be heard via the Jazz South website.



[Jazzed Partners with Unterfahrt](#)

Streaming site Jazzed has partnered with Munich jazz club Unterfahrt to offer exclusive video performances from its extensive archive. Jazzed is a streaming site that features a curated catalogue of music, with over 50 hand-curated channels, together with video content, interviews and reviews. The series began on Friday 4th December with a live stream by saxophonist David Murray.



[QOW Trio Single Released](#)

QOW Trio released their first single, *Qowfirmation*, on 14th December. The trio, featuring Riley Stone Lonergan, Eddie Myer and Spike Wells, release their debut album on Ubuntu on Friday 5th February.



[Josephine Davies Launches New Album](#)

Saxophonist Josephine Davies launches her new album at Jazz in the Round on Monday 25th January. The new Satori album is entitled *How Can We Wake?* and has been released on Whirlwind Recordings. The group includes bassist Dave Whitford and drummer James Maddren.

Big Band Scene

Patrick Billingham

Happy New Year. After the promising prospects at the start of 2020 so suddenly unrealised, I am, at best, mildly optimistic for 2021. After all what could be worse than last year. Let's hope we don't find out.

There was some activity later in the year. Saxshop managed a couple of live sessions between lockdowns, albeit limited to ten musicians, with lots of social distance and outdoor ventilation. As well as weekly one hour online sessions on Facebook to keep people playing and listening.

Remote recordings by the Brighton Big Band and the Sussex Jazz Orchestra in preparation. If any other bands would like to follow suit, but are uncertain how to start, most of the recordings I have seen have used smartphones. And while access to a studio with an editing suite is desirable, it is not essential. There is plenty of software available, up to and including Apple's Logic-Pro, which I must admit, I failed to come to grips with.

Meanwhile, here are a couple more UK big band Lockdown recordings for encouragement.

The Cardinal Vaughan School Big Band <https://vimeo.com/427104411>

The Park Lane Big Band <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koVwN-OgvCw>

Twelve months ago prospects for the Sussex big band scene in the new year were excellent. There had been a more than 10% increase in the number of active big bands in the county. This year it looks like the reverse, or worse. With a number of venues having been forced to close permanently, sadly, some bands have already decided to pack up altogether.

At the time of writing, the infection rates in Sussex, especially in East Sussex



are rising at an alarming rate. With the R-number reinfection rate ranging, by my estimate, from 1.0 to 1.8. So it seems likely that restrictions over much of the county will tighten. I do not intend to apportion blame to any particular section of society for this. On my shopping trips, I have noticed, on occasions, a total disregard for reasonable precautions across the full spectra of generations and genders.

However there is light at the end of the tunnel and it may not be an approaching train. The great British triumph trumpeted by our Government means that the vaccination programme has already started here. A great British triumph using an American developed Covid-19 vaccine invented by a Turkish/German couple and produced in Belgium. Provided, of course, that with Brexit having finally got done, it doesn't become unusable while stuck at the frontier behind a long queue of lorries with inadequate paperwork.

Following the tradition of listing the active Sussex based big bands, here are the bands based in the county that have let me know that they are ready to go as soon as we get the green light. First, the conventionally constituted bands.

Bognor Regis Big Band
Contact: Mike Bosley, 01243 821434,
mikebosley@hotmail.co.uk

Happy Days Big Band
[https://
www.happydaysbigband.co.uk/](https://www.happydaysbigband.co.uk/)
[www.facebook.com/Happy-Days-
Big-Band](https://www.facebook.com/Happy-Days-Big-Band) [https://www.facebook.com/
happydaysbigband/](https://www.facebook.com/happydaysbigband/)

Contact: Chris Merryfield-Day, 07910
127785

Phoenix Big Band
<http://www.phoenix-bigband.co.uk/>
Contact: Debby Wells,
Deborah.Wells@mercercer.com
Some Like It Hotter
[https://www.swingadillas.co.uk/some-like-
it-hotter](https://www.swingadillas.co.uk/some-like-it-hotter)

[https://www.facebook.com/
SomeLikeItHotterJazz/](https://www.facebook.com/SomeLikeItHotterJazz/)
Contact: Jo Wood, 07545 305690,
jowood01@gmail.com,

The Brighton Big Band
[https://brightonbigband.blogspot.com/
www.facebook.com/The-Brighton-Big-
Band-109421702472952/](https://brightonbigband.blogspot.com/www.facebook.com/The-Brighton-Big-Band-109421702472952/)
Contact: John Lake, 07950 317496,
johnbruce_@hotmail.com

The Fred Woods Big Band
[https://www.facebook.com/
fredwoodsbigband](https://www.facebook.com/fredwoodsbigband)
Contacts: Richard Guest,
richard.guest6@btinternet.com,
Bill Woods, 07776 200586,
billwoods245@aol.com

The Les Paul Big Band
www.lespaulbigband.co.uk
[www.facebook.com/
jazzyfunkster.jazzyfunkster](https://www.facebook.com/jazzyfunkster.jazzyfunkster)
Contact: Steve Paul, 01273 509631
steven_paul1@yahoo.co.uk com

The Ron Green Big Band
<https://rongreenbigband.wordpress.com/>
[https://www.facebook.com/
rongreenbigband/?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/rongreenbigband/?fref=ts)
Contact: rongreenband@gmail.com or
01798 813008 / 07752 405493,
rongreen980@btinternet.com

The Ronnie Smith Big Band
Contact: Rod Burrows, 01903 783053,
rod@burrowshome.co.uk

The Studio 9 Orchestra
<https://www.studio9orchestra.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/>

studio9orchestra/
Contact: s9orchestra@gmail.com

The Sussex Jazz Orchestra
a18462.wixsite.com/sussex-jazz-orch
[https://www.facebook.com/Sussex-Jazz-
Orchestra-SJO-299962200055146/](https://www.facebook.com/Sussex-Jazz-Orchestra-SJO-299962200055146/)
Contact: Patrick Billingham, 07812
418560, g8aac@yahoo.co.uk

There are also big bands with less conventional line-ups. These have at least seven horns. Some are mostly saxes, others include strings, voices, and even occasionally, an accordion. But all playing in big band style. As with the more conventional line-ups, the list includes websites, where known, Facebook pages, if any, and contact details.

Saxshop
<http://www.saxshop.org>
[https://www.facebook.com/
saxshopbrighton](https://www.facebook.com/saxshopbrighton)
Contact: Beccy Rork, 01273
412767/07979 876092
beccyrork@gmail.com or (messenger)
m.me/saxshopbrighton

The Downsbeat Swing Band
Contact: Steve Field, 07729 890174
stevefield46@hotmail.co.uk
Trees

www.treesensemble.org
<http://www.treesensemble.org/>
[https://www.facebook.com/
treesensemble/](https://www.facebook.com/treesensemble/)
Contact: Terry Pack 07801 482984
tpfeedback@hotmail.com

Hopefully, this list is not complete. There may be other bands in the county ready to go, but I have not yet heard from them.

Next month: We shall see. If there is anything such as feedback on this column, that you would like me to include in February's Big Band Scene, please send it to me by Sunday January 12th. My email address is g8aac@yahoo.co.uk.

Live Stream Reviews



Emma-Jean Thackray
EFG London Jazz Festival
13th November, 2020
Live Stream via YouTube

On the first night of the EFG London Jazz Festival, The Total Refreshment Centre in Hackney Downs opened its doors to one of the most unique artists in today's contemporary music. The venue itself, which opened in 2012 has developed into one of the most important locations for forward looking arts development in the capital. Emma -Jean Thackray spent her formative years in the Yorkshire Dales, immersed in the local brass band culture before moving to London where she has developed into one of the most influential and original musicians on the scene. A huge force in the use of electronics, she is also a composer, multi-instrumentalist, singer, producer and DJ with experience ranging from

performances with The London Symphony Orchestra to hosting programmes on Gilles Peterson's World Wide FM. These days she records on Movementt Records, her own label, under the mission statement of 'Music to Move Body Mind and Soul'.

For the London gig she featured trumpet, vocals and some electronics as part of the fifty minute set, with excellent support from her quartet of keyboards, bass guitar, drums and percussion. Their overall sound was surreal and ambient but also purposeful, drawing the listener in to their highly engaging sonic world, somewhat in the way that Miles Davis, who is one of her main influences, did on recordings such as *Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*. The leader's trumpet sound is precise, economic and somewhat spikey at times with little vibrato and proved an ideal foil for the highly rhythmic drums and percussion of the

excellent Dougal Taylor and Crispin Robinson. Matt Gedrych proved to be a bass player full of hypnotic invention on the five string electric instrument, while Lyle Barton was in commanding form on Rhodes keyboards and additional electronics. Emma-Jean also processes a low key vocal delivery, which she uses sparingly, but is ideal for this genre of music. The set itself consisted of numbers from her recent recordings which were virtually segued together throughout. We heard among others, the highly engaging Chicago house classic *Brighter Days*, with a fine melodic vocal, trumpet and bass guitar interlude, the first live performance of the record label's signature *Movementt* lifted from the recent *Rain Dance* EP and a combination of the Wayne Shorter piece *Speak No Evil*, rearranged for the recent *Blue Note Reimagined*

compilation album and proof of her accelerating profile in America.

In summary we witnessed a young artist, completely aware and respectful of the jazz tradition, but with the ability to take it well into the future with creativity and accessibility mirrored by the numerous highly deserved ecstatic comments posted on the Mixcloud website throughout the gig. (This set is now available to view on the artist's YouTube Channel.)

Emma-Jean Thackray, trumpet, vocals and electronics; Lyle Barton, keyboards and electronics; Matt Gedrych, bass guitar; Crispin Robinson, percussion; Dougal Taylor, drums.

Jim Burlong



Rosie Turton

EFG London Jazz Festival
21st November 2020
Live Stream via YouTube

It was the turn of ace trombonist Rosie Turton and her band to take to the Total Refreshment Centre stage

on the penultimate night of this year's festival. The ex-Trinity College of Music pupil's musical taste was influenced by the likes of Alice Coltrane and Pharoah Sanders and credits the musician and composer Issie Barratt, who she met at The Sound and Music Summer School in



London's Somerset House, as an important figure in her musical development. Always an explorer of new territories, and spells with Nérija, The Chaos Orchestra and Nubya Garcia, have enabled her to take the trombone to places it has seldom been before in British jazz on her way to claiming her rightful place in the top tier of improvised music. Joining her on the front line was the highly-rated German violinist Johanna Burnheart, a star in her own country's jazz and techno scenes, she has emerged through The Guildhall School Of Music and Gary Crosby's Tomorrow's Warriors to become a leading figure in today's music, confirmed by her nomination as one of 'The Sounds Of 2020' by Jazz Re:refreshed.

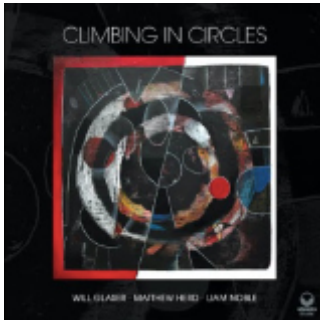
The septet was completed by keyboards, double bass, drums, percussion and electronics to provide forty three, almost unbroken, minutes of high quality twenty first century improvised music, that would have kept the virtual audience glued to their screens throughout. At times it was brooding, at others majestic with tension being built and resolved within the expanded rhythm section

providing an ideal backdrop for the two main soloists. The leader's trombone sound is full, direct and accurate at all tempos alongside an inbuilt ability to change the mood of the music at will. This is coupled with a violinist who has the technique and creative ability to play at the cutting edge of modern music. The two of them traded well off each other's ideas over the rolling, hypnotic, ever changing undercurrent of sound provided by the others, which was key to the overall success of the set, alongside the structure of the music which provided more than enough time for them to really stretch out and deliver their ideas to the full. (This set is now available to view on the artists You Tube channel).

Jim Burlong

Rosie Turton, trombone; Johanna Burnheart, violin; Maria Chiara Argio, keyboards; Twm Dylan, bass; Pilo Adami, percussion; Olly Sarkar, drums; Matt Gordon, electronics.

Album Reviews



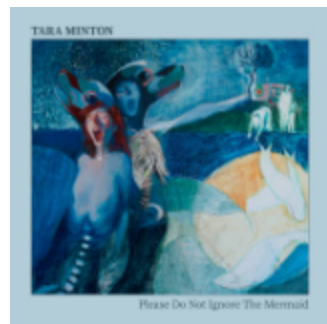
Will Glaser
Climbing In Circles
(Ubuntu UBU0075)

Will Glaser has established a reputation as one of the most compellingly musical percussionists on the busy London jazz scene, lending his quick ears, empathetic touch and impressive chops to improve any number of situations from avant-garde to swinging. This is the third instalment of his *Climbing In Circles* project: the initial offering was a series of duets with his former pianist Noble, with Glaser's old Guildhall pal Matthew Herd joining for number two. The chemistry was so evident that they've returned with another offering, mixing freeform explorations, original compositions and a satisfyingly off-kilter selection of standards. *Mood Indigo* and *I'm An Old Cowhand* are handled like much-loved favourite toys, with a mixture of boisterous familiarity and gentle reverence, even as the handling itself causes them to fray and disintegrate around the edges and assume new forms. Noble is a master at skating over the frail interface between lyricism and abrasive freedom and his unique musicality shines in this

company. *Mopti* has a minor-key afro-jazz 12/8 lope to it, with Herd soaring above and Glaser making the drum kit sing; *Fish Pillows* is all atmosphere and textures; *Mumbo Jumbo* has an Ornette-ish melody over tumbling free-time percussion, while *Lonely* is a stunningly realised ballad, with all three players combining their palette to create a swooning depth of colour and texture. The ominous *Song For The Snake Man* and the reflective *The Magician Longs To See The Master* close the set; unique, highly visually evocative music from three masters at work.

Eddie Myer

Will Glaser, drums; Matthew Herd, saxophone; Liam Noble, piano.



Tara Minton
Please Do Not Ignore the Mermaid
(Lateralize, via BandCamp)

Since the early days of human civilisation the harp, in some form or another, has always been with us an expressive and soothing instrument. However, in the modern day one rarely encounters the instrument

outside of classical music and even then the repertoire is eclipsed by that of instruments such as the piano or the violin. Its presence in jazz music is even scarcer with only two pioneers of the instrument appearing in jazz history, those two being the great harpist Dorothy Ashby, and spiritual jazz guru Alice Coltrane. With the harp being such a rarity in modern day music it is always a great joy to encounter artists bringing new depths to the instrument and further solidifying its place in jazz and modern music. This is done with finesse by London-based Australian harpist and vocalist Tara Minton and her debut release *Please Do Not Ignore the Mermaid*. When we usually think of the harp the imagery of medieval ochre art depicting white-robed winged angels delicately clutching minuscule versions of the stringed instrument is what probably springs to mind for most individuals. From start to finish this album does a fantastic job of erasing that pastiche association of the harp with the seraphim and gives it a new voice within modern jazz. The album, which takes its influence from mermaid mythology and uses that subject as a metaphor for exploration of the self, features a strong sextet of harp, soprano saxophone, piano, double bass and drums, with Minton also demonstrating some impressive lead vocal work. The music is rooted in jazz philosophy and in some places does feature some good old-fashioned swing moments but overall the music is awash with Minton's unique songwriting style which lands somewhere between the styles of modern contemporary music and jazz swing with dashes of electronica and even some elements of rock music. Most of the songs themselves

feature Minton's haunting vocals with lyrics that very much capture the essence of the album's subject matter; there are songs of lament, words of warning and some that conjure the imagery of mythical sirens releasing their song against the violent spray of the waves. The accompaniment of the band must also be given special mention, the instrumental backing on all tracks is graceful and perfectly placed and there is also an impressive array of virtuosic solo harp work from Minton. The production is another feature that deserves praise with all instruments having clarity and depth but also balanced out in a way that gives the overall sound an extremely pleasant clarity. I would suggest listeners give this album a thorough listen and take the chance to escape into the fascinating world that Minton has so masterfully conjured up.

George Richardson

Tara Minton, vocals, harp; Phil Merriman, piano; Ed Babar, double bass; David Ingamells, drums; Tommaso Starace, soprano sax; Tom Nancollas, voice.





Peirani - Parisien
Abrazo
(ACT Records ACT 9631-2)

With over eight years experience in duo mode together, the two French masters of contemporary jazz are back together again, with another fine example of their telepathic understanding of each others musical approach. This album is the long awaited follow up of their highly acclaimed tribute to Sydney Bechet, *Belle Epoque* (ACT 9625-2). Sandwiched between the opener by Jelly Roll Morton and the contrasting closing track written by Kate Bush are eight pieces from European composers including two each by the duo and all benefiting from their own unique arrangements. These musicians are able to play in perfect harmony and in the case of Morton's *Crave*, without damaging the style of the original in any way. The great man would have been well pleased, as would Xavier Cugat with the Vincent Peirani arrangement of *Temptation* which manages to successfully convert the exotic magic of the Spaniard's piece into the accordion/soprano duet form. The majority of tracks on the album are brief vignettes, with perhaps not quite enough time to develop the full thematic values of the writing or

arrangements, but on some of the longer pieces such as the Tomas Gubitsch piece *A Bebernos Los Vientos* and Peirani's own *Nouchka* this is far from the case. These are both album highlights with the full breadth of the accordion being showcased behind Parisien's delicate soprano interjections on the Spanish piece and the pair almost sounding as one on the saxophonist's sombre and melancholy, blues-fuelled composition. The Kate Bush classic *Army Dreamers* closes the disc, where the theme is beautifully re-created and the full depth and intricacies of the composition interpreted in a fashion which only these two fine musicians could have achieved. In summary the album is yet another fine example of classic European music and a worthy addition to the ACT catalogue.

Jim Burlong

Vincent Peirani, accordion; Emile Parisien, soprano saxophone.





Michael Wollny
Mondenkind
(ACT Records ACT 9765-2)

This is the first solo piano recording by Michael Wollny, after a dozen albums as a leader and very many more as one of the first call sidemen in European contemporary jazz. The forty two year old German is a truly phenomenal musician whose stunning exuberance, imagination and composing skills have elevated him to a stature as one of the piano masters of his generation. This album has allowed him to fully relax in his own company to produce a recording that transmits his personality upon the listening audience. There are fifteen tracks here over the forty six minute playing time of which eleven are written by the pianist. Some pieces are only around one minute long but each and every one of them has a strong theme and with this artist's communication skills through the instrument never fail to connect firmly with the listener. The profound title track *Mondenkind*, the longest piece just under five minutes duration may have been the standout piece on any other recording, but here it just sets a standard that remains throughout. There are four

compositions with an astronomical theme, the mysterious and edgy *Lunar Landscape*, the speedy run through the cosmos of *Spacecake*, the vivid musical pictured that is painted on *The Rain Never Stops On Venus* plus the calming ambience of *Mercury*. They are separated on the disc but would have worked equally as well in a mini suite mode. *Sagee*, a fine Wollny original allows the pianist to explore the whole keyboard in a way that only he can, while *Cyrano* is full of deep and dark meaning and *Animal* explores the writer's feline imagination. There really is not one single dull moment on this album with the *Sonatine* by Rudolf Hindemith providing a great example of how to convert a classical piece into the jazz idiom without losing any of the composer's original intentions. Overall, this is a masterful work that will make an excellent addition to anyone's collection of modern music.

Jim Burlong

Michael Wollny, piano.



Listings

The Sussex region is now in Tier 4: Stay at Home

The following performances will be rescheduled:

Jazz Breakfasts with Mike Hatchard

The Ropetackle Arts Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea

Sunday 3rd January 11am (£12)

Derek Nash & Dominic Ashworth

The Hawth, Crawley

Sunday 10th January 12 noon (£10)

Live Streams

Ronnie Scott's

<https://www.youtube.com/c/RonnieScottsClub>

606 Club

<https://www.606club.co.uk/>

New Generation Jazz

<https://newgenerationjazz.co.uk/>

Jazz South Radar Sessions

<https://jazzsouth.org.uk/current-projects/spotlight>

More details of performances and live streams
can be found on our listings page:

www.sussexjazzmag.com/listings

Details are assumed to be correct at the time of publication.
Please check with venues before setting out.
Send your listings to sjmlistings@gmail.com

Pete Recommends...

Kenny Burrell



For many years I have owned a copy of Kenny's fine album *Midnight Blue*. Although I have enjoyed every track, I have only recently begun to appreciate his true greatness. The list of his recordings is staggering. Many of them I had heard without even realising his presence. For example, my friend Mick Holbrook played me several of his favourite albums by the great organist Jimmy Smith. I enjoyed them without ever realising that the powerful, swinging guitar was contributed by Kenny. On YouTube there are some excellent videos of Kenny working with Jimmy Smith.

So how do I begin to choose from Kenny's enormous catalogue? The obvious starting place is *Midnight Blue* which captures him at his very best and has excellent solos from Stanley Turrentine. I recommend the wonderful slow blues *Mule*, but every track is worth a listen.

Then why not go back to the start of Kenny's career and the pianoless session with Dizzy, Milt Jackson and John Coltrane in 1951 which produced *Tin Tin Deo* and *Birks Works*.

At that session Kenny and John became friends. The result, in 1958, was the fine album *Freight Trane* of which I believe Kenny is very proud. It certainly has some very fine playing and I recommend it.

I have heard several fine guitarists in Brighton over the past 20 years. These recommendations may be new to them. I certainly hope they will interest any young guitarists who are still developing their technique. As a result of my awakening I have acquired several more albums by Kenny. One early one worth a listen is *Introducing Kenny Burrell* on Blue Note. Later he recorded some beautiful trio and quartet sessions for Concord. I recommend *Tin Tin Deo* and his relaxed, swinging Latin rhythms and acoustic work on *Wind and Sand*.

You can find all these items on YouTube and excellent videos, especially *Bluebird* and *Body and Soul* with his friend from Detroit, Tommy Flanagan.

Enjoy.

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

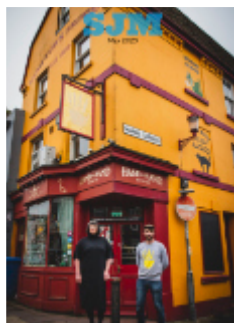
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