

SJM

February 2021



SJM

Sussex Jazz Magazine

Issue 109
February 2021

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

www.sussexjazzmagazine.com

The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent those of the editor, or of Sussex Jazz Magazine.
Advertisements do not imply an endorsement of the product or service.

Please see our privacy policy on our website for details of how we use and safeguard your data, in compliance with GDPR.

Sussex Jazz Magazine is a monthly magazine that covers jazz across the South Coast region.



Sign up to our free monthly newsletter:
<https://www.sussexjazzmag.com/signup>



To subscribe to SJM:
<https://www.sussexjazzmag.com/subscribe>



www.sussexjazzmagazine.com

4 Simon Spillett: In Praise of Spike Wells

7 Big Band Scene

10 Dave Trigwell - A Personal Reflection
by Mark Edwards

13 Jazz News



14 Interview: Spike Wells

25 Listings

18 Album Reviews

26 Pete Recommends...

24 Jazz Essentials

Cover: Spike Wells by Lisa Wormsley
This Page: QOW TRIO by Lisa Wormsley

Simon Spillett

In Praise of Spike Wells



Former child chorister, erstwhile cellist and possessor of a recently awarded Classical and Philosophy degree, the 22 year-old Michael Wells had barely been a professional musician six months, having joined the Tubby Hayes Quartet the previous autumn on the recommendation of Hayes' bassist Ron Mathewson. It had made for one hell of a debut, going from 'unknown' status to the hot seat in the leading modern jazz outfit in the country.

Later Wells would joke 'the only way was down' but in reality Tubby's endorsement gave him the kind of help up the career ladder that only the truly talented can capitalise upon.

Within *weeks* of his recruitment Wells found himself touring with the blind American reed maverick Roland Kirk.

Within *months* he was also playing in the bands of fellow Brit-jazz cornerstones Ronnie Scott and Humphrey Lyttelton. And within a *year* he was called upon by none other than Stan Getz - another tenor saxist who knew a thing or two about what makes a great jazz drummer - to tour Scandinavia.

So what was it they were all hearing, all these jazz giants?

What was the 'bang' that made everyone from play-it-in-their-sleep session-men to the world's greatest improvising voices take a step back in astonished appreciation?

The 1960s was something of a golden age for jazz drums: in fact, virtually all the instrument's innovators were still alive and kicking



Photo: Lisa Wormsley

calf skin - from Gene Krupa onwards. Bebop had ushered in the triumvirate of Kenny Clarke, Max Roach and Art Blakey, whose breakthroughs had in turn inspired the likes of Roy Haynes and Philly Joe Jones. And by the turn of the decade - as jazz progress began to further loosen the envelope of the idiom - the drums began to take on a role as independent and interactively inventive as any front-line horn.

Enter both Elvin Jones, the polyrhythmic powerhouse who weaved his patterned punctuations around the John Coltrane Quartet - perhaps the most daring band of its time - and the teenaged Tony Williams whose chattering, kaleidoscopic inventions shadowed those made by his colleagues in the similarly adventurous Miles Davis Quintet.

Between them, Jones and Williams seemed to be slamming down a gauntlet at once technical and spontaneous - here's the music, here's the drums - now *you* find out how to make them fit!

The UK also had its share of drummers with genuine inventive flare during the Sixties - from the tragic-but-brilliant Phil Seamen to the imposingly blunt Tony Oxley - but in Spike Wells it now seemed to possess a player who, without any hint of artifice, tied together all these strands in a style that - while it had more than trace elements of Elvin and Tony W. within its early make up - appeared to be uniquely home-grown.

And it was that lack of self-conscious 'design' that made Spike a player who would fit a Johnny Griffin just as

well as he'd fit an Art Farmer. Pretty soon he was everywhere, from Ronnie Scott's to international jazz festivals across Europe, swinging everyone from Dexter Gordon to Benny Waters and beyond...

Fast forward fifty-plus years.

Now in his mid-seventies, Spike Wells is himself a drum father figure, one whose combination of seniority, authority and undimmed musical curiosity - not to mention inimitable 'style' - makes him an ideal candidate for a major retrospective.

This is that tale, told not only by Spike himself, but by those who know him, his playing and his personality intimately - his family, his friends, his colleagues old and new. As such, it's a portrait as much of a man as of a musician, a study revealing Spike to have triumphed in not one but *three* separate (but intellectually connected) careers in jazz, the law and the Church, to all of which he had given a characteristic 100% commitment.

It would be folly to attempt in these few words to sum up Spike's musical gift - it's simply too shape-shifting and impromptu to ever be successfully defined as one thing - but whether as a twenty-something neophyte or a seventy-odd veteran, his is a jazz personality that contains the basic identifying facets displayed by only the finest of improvisers: the ability to keep things fresh; to constantly inspire those fortunate enough to share a bandstand with him; and to make the conjoined journey that is a collective jazz performance: a thing shot through with beauty, subtlety, enlightenment and wonder.



This, then, is Spike Wells's story; a trajectory that once upon a time seemed to be headed one way but which all of a sudden veered off into unscripted new territories.

In fact, as someone who has had the considerable pleasure (and honour) of playing alongside Spike many, many times, it strikes me that this description might well sum up his approach to jazz as well as it does his many career twists.

Maybe that's the thing with Spike? - you really don't know where he's headed next.

God bless you, Spike. I really don't know how you do it!

Simon Spillett

Big Band Scene

Patrick Billingham



Three vaccines. Covid variants even more infectious. Lockdown again. How long before big band activity resumes? Anybody's guess.

Another big band to add to last month's list of those planning to resume activity when it is permitted is:-

The Perdido Players' Swing Band

[http://
www.perdidoplayers.co.uk](http://www.perdidoplayers.co.uk)
[https://www.facebook.com/
Perdido-Players-
1514229442198744/](https://www.facebook.com/Perdido-Players-1514229442198744/)

Contact: Peter Swan,
01444 450335
peterswan43@icloud.com,
heapetsw@icloud.com

I asked Peter a few questions about himself and the band.

How did you first get into music?

My parents were Salvation Army officers and my father bought me a cornet when I was seven, with a white £5 note. I still have the cornet which shines up wonderfully.

I played in many SA bands until the age of 22 when I found a wife. In the 1980s I was persuaded to play in a church



Photo of Peter Swan by Henderson McEwan

music group on trombone.

Were you already experienced on trombone? What other instruments have you played?

Being a SA bandsman I played everything except the soprano cornet. My trombone playing was self-taught out of necessity as two trombone players walked out of the band. I got so proficient that I asked father if I could join up and get a seat in a Guards Band. His answer was “NO”, and I was put into insurance for the whole of my working life,

Can you tell me about the band?

We are a band of mature players, established in the last century. We play for our own enjoyment and to that end we rarely take a fee, unless our subs do not cover our overheads. Any fee offered will be

passed back for the charity whose event we are supporting.

Our music comprises many arrangements of Big Band and Dance Band music of the 30s and 40s. We are fortunate to have a vocalist that enhances our gigs.

We meet at Haywards Heath URC church hall, fortnightly on the second and fourth Monday evenings of each month at 7:45 till 9:30. Our website gives full details.

How did the Perdido Players' Swing Band come about?

We started off as a group of church music group players some of whom had learnt to play saxophone with Jumping Jack. We did our first gig with a band of nine players.



The church group got larger. In 1990 we decided to play something different and we purchased some Hal Leonard music and Perdido was born. Friends joined and we could muster 17 on a good day.

Why Perdido?

Perdido was the first piece of music which we really played with confidence. It featured in programmes regularly, almost a regimental quick march. We initially advertised as Lindfield Wind Ensemble. Perdido Players' Swing Band seemed more appropriate.

We have regularly performed at the Staplefield Show and Bluebell Railways War Days playing various arrangements of Big Band music. At our last event, Christmas 2019, we played tunes, ending up with Big Band Christmas 2, which ends with

Auld Lang Syne. Little did we realise that we would not do a gig in 2020.

We occasionally request help of a dep and the feedback from them is that we are a welcoming and happy band. That is our aim.

What are your plans for 2021?

I think our next gig, if we ever get clear of restrictions, will be called 'catch up' or 'the missing year'. Let's hope we get there.

Next month: Whatever news there is with, perhaps, another big band profile. If there is anything such as feedback on this column, that you would like me to include in March's Big Band Scene, please send it to me by Friday February 12th. My email address is g8aac@yahoo.co.uk.

Dave Trigwell: A Personal Reflection

by Mark Edwards



Left to right: James Osler, Dave Trigwell, Mark Edwards, Julian Nicholas, Imogen Ryall, Terry Pack. Photo: Lisa Wormsley.

“When you’re young and you play with someone new... and together, for the first time for both of you, you find yourself floating and realise that the music is not about YOU anymore, it’s about life, love, fear, a search for freedom and happiness. That was my first experience with Dave.” - Django Bates.

Exactly a week ago, I awoke to the crushing news that my friend, Dave, had passed away. A wonderful human being, masterful drummer and all round musician, an outside thinker, lurking in the hinterlands of conventionality, in his music and life.

I relate to Django’s sentiment above. I clearly remember my own first experience; a summer Sunday

evening, mid-Eighties, in the Bristol pub in Tunbridge Wells, a crowded mecca for under age lager drinkers. I went to see ‘Karma’ - the group formed by Dave and his virtuosic guitarist brother Bonx. It was one of those moments we have all had, as musicians - I stood utterly transfixed by the music, and particularly by the elegant magic of Dave’s flow and touch, creating impressionistic pictures in sound. I had never seen anything like this, especially close up. A door had been opened and life would never be quite the same.

Emboldened by several pints of Stella, I approached Dave after the gig, and after our chat he so generously gave me his number and offered to get together for a ‘blow’. Dave was already one of the leading

lights on the contemporary London jazz Scene; working with Django Bates, Tim Whitehead, Simon Purcell, Ian Carr and Iain Ballamy to name but a few, both in the UK and Europe, so I have no idea why he was so kind and encouraging to an 18 year old pianist he had never met or heard - but that was Dave, and I am so grateful for the 35 years of friendship, fun, musical adventures and hundreds of gigs which ensued from that meeting.

Dave kind of exploded into your life. It was like a penny dropping - 'So this is how seriously we are supposed to take music'. I had never encountered anyone with the dedication to, and respect for music which he embodied. It was a spiritual thing. Daytimes were for practise or rehearsal, evenings were gigs, and then you went back somewhere to listen to records, drink, and talk about it all until dawn. If you phoned Dave during the day, you would invariably hear the tick of a metronome in the background as he picked up - always practising. He told me he would walk around town with a metronome playing on headphones to improve his time. It worked! Anyone fortunate enough to hear him or even better, play with him, would attest to his incredible floating feel and luscious groove. So quiet and yet authoritative. On his signature red Gretsch kit, he would go to another place and take you with him.

Dave also had a unique and mischievous sense of humour. I have spent many tearful hours reminiscing this week, about the time we had together, and most of it was full of laughter.

All of us who knew him have our

own cherished 'Dave' stories. He told me of an impromptu raid he conducted on a packed morning rush hour train with powered water pistols, wet suits, indignant commuters, and sodden pages of the FT flying about the carriage.

Or a late night walk around his local area, completely naked; 'just to see what it felt like'.

I remember crying with laughter as he told me that after a party (at which some hallucinogenics may have been present) he had decided that his car boot would be a good place for a kip, but inadvertently locked himself in, and had to be released by a rather confused milkman who responded to the banging coming from the vehicle.

Or once after a rather boozy lunch, and to be clear, no food was consumed; he decided it would be fun to show me around the Scientology 'Castle' just outside East Grinstead (Dave had a brief encounter with the cult during the 80s). We managed a good look around and were buying a sandwich in the canteen when a couple of naval uniformed 'Sea Org' devotees curtly marched us off the premises. As fellow friend and bandmate Terry Pack said to me this week; 'Dave had a way of leading you in and out of trouble, both on and off the stand' - and it was always so much fun.

Any gig with Dave was an absolute treat you looked forward to. He had a totally original approach, and instantly recognisable sound. His impeccable groove and taste, witty and always complimentary interjections, delivered with a rare delicateness and sensitivity, which



lead to the moniker 'the Human Sparrow', made him so easy and joyous to play with.

It was an honour to play with Dave in the band 'The Cloggz' for 5 years, they were some of the most enjoyable shows I have ever done; his eclectic vocabulary and eccentricity was so perfectly suited to it. His playing was such a big part of defining the sound of the group, as it was with so many ensembles he worked with.

As well as the aforementioned musicians, Dave facilitated so much great music with the likes of Liane Carroll, Julian Nicholas, Nadia Baki, Herbie Flowers, Hazel O'Connor, Terry Callier, and countless other artists - alongside his own creative projects such as the fabled psychedelic duo 'The Wrong Knees', and writing and producing several musical plays for youth theatre. He loved working with kids, and always had time and an encouraging word

for aspiring musicians who would approach him after a gig, just like me all those years ago.

I so wish Dave could have seen some of the tributes which have appeared on social media this week. He was a deeply humble and self-questioning man, who genuinely had no idea how much he enriched the lives of so many people, and how loved he was. That makes me sad.

There is too much to say, these are just a few personal memories and reflections on the life of a true 'one off'.

For all of us who knew and worked with Dave, we already miss him greatly, and mourn the loss of more opportunities to make music and hang out together, and forward deepest condolences to Nadia, and Dave's family. I loved him dearly.

Mark Edwards

Jazz News



[Slack City Jazz Programmes](#)

Brighton radio station Slack City now has episodes of Daniel Spicer's *The Mystery Lesson* together with *The Damping Wells* which describes itself as playing 'sound art, free jazz and music's outer limits'. Also available are episodes of *Freshly Squeezed* hosted by Nick Hollywood.

You can listen to the shows on demand at their website www.slackcity.org.uk/



[My Classic Album on YouTube](#)

Recent episodes of *My Classic Album* have been hosted by Tina Edwards and have featured bassist and educator Gary Crosby OBE discussing Charles Mingus' *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady* and drummer Moses Boyd talking about Miles Davis' *Nefertiti*. Episodes are streamed live at 8pm on Sundays and available to watch on the *My Classic Album* YouTube channel.



Joe Robinson RIP

Saxophonist Joe Robinson passed away on Friday 15th January after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Joe was a former member of Terry Seabrook's *Cubana Bop* with trumpeter Byron Wallen and was a popular player on the Brighton jazz scene in the 1990s before moving to London.



Olie Brice Features On New Albums

Hastings bassist Olie Brice features on two forthcoming albums. *The Secret Handshake with Danger Vol. One* with drummer Eddie Prévost is released on 12th March by 577 Records. Before then, his live concert at Cafe Oto with Paul Dunmall, Percy Pursglove and Jeff Williams, entitled *Palindromes*, is released on his own West Hill Records label on 12th February.

Spike Wells



Spike Wells is known for his enthusiasm, particularly behind the drum kit. On the day we spoke, the day after Ron Mathewson's funeral, his sense of frustration was evident.

Last summer he was able to officiate the funeral of long-time friend Peter King, which featured fitting tributes from Julian Joseph and Henry Lowther. In this, our third lockdown, with the funeral of his old friend Ron Mathewson, Spike was only able to watch online. This, together with the lack of live music has added to Spike's frustration, saying "I'm just sitting at home trying to keep my chops together."

Spike's interest in music dates back to his time as a young chorister at Canterbury Cathedral Choir School but he soon developed an interest in jazz. "I was playing the drums at school, in my teens, having been turned on by listening to Louis Armstrong and then bebop. Somebody played me a Dizzy Gillespie EP so I got into modern jazz that way."

Spike's love of jazz continued throughout the 1960s whilst at university in Oxford. "I was just mad about jazz and that was all I wanted to think about. We had quite a good scene at university and with a local band we invited guest soloists up from London to play with us, which was a really good education. I remember being blown away by playing with people like Joe Harriot, and Bobby Wellins came up to play with us. That was the start of a lifelong association between us. I played with him on and off for the rest of his life."

After university Spike "half-heartedly" started a postgraduate degree in London and lived at the famous 80 Sinclair Road house in West Kensington. The house was full

of musicians, with pianist Mick Pyne, his trombonist brother Chris Pyne, alto sax player Ray Warleigh and bassist Ron Mathewson. "Ron was playing with Tubby Hayes, and Tubby needed a new drummer so Ron got me into the Tubby Hayes Quartet, which was like starting at the deep end as a professional musician. That was it really. I gave up everything for a while except that music."

Together with guitarist Louis Stewart, Spike and Ron Mathewson formed a formidable rhythm section, which pianist Gordon Beck described as "the single greatest rhythm section in all of British jazz". This made Spike very much in demand and as well as playing with Tubby he later joined Ronnie Scott's Sextet and performed with a number of high profile American musicians at Ronnie Scott's club, including Stan Getz and Roland Kirk. Spike also did a year touring with Humphrey Lyttelton's band which he describes as "a great experience".

After Tubby's death in 1973 Spike decided to pursue a career outside of music. Whilst *Melody Maker* ran a piece entitled 'The Musical Obituary of Spike Wells' it certainly wasn't the end of Spike's drumming career: "I trained to become a lawyer and I went on playing semi-professionally as I have done for the rest of my life. I was very lucky. Even though I was doing a day gig I still managed to work professionally with Bobby Wellins, and also in the 1980s I played for several years in Peter King's quintet."

As well as recording on numerous albums by Bobby Wellins, Spike also appears on Peter King's debut album as leader, *New Beginnings*, recorded in 1982 with pianist John Horler. Spike also features on Horler's albums *Gentle*

Piece and Not a Cloud in the Sky.

Spike's playing career continued into the 1990s and 2000s performing with musicians such as Alan Barnes. "In the late 90s Simon Spillett came along and I joined his quartet. Normally I have a regular monthly gig at the Bull's Head in Barnes with Art Themen, and gigs with Simon Spillett's quartet, whenever that can start up again."

For the past 30 years Spike has also led his own piano trio. "I've had a lot of fun with that. It started in the days of Brighton Jazz Club at the Pig in Paradise [now the Hope and Ruin]. Liam Noble used to do it, then I managed to get Gwilym Simcock for a year or so, but then he quickly moved on to his international career.

Another wonderful pianist that I love playing with is Barry Green, who lives in London; he's played with me in Brighton a few times, and Mark Edwards of course - I've used him a lot, and he's used me on things. I really love playing with him. Also there's Gareth Williams who I've been playing with more recently. He's great as well in a trio. That's something that I'm trying to keep going. Trios are not very popular with clubs these days. Promoters always say 'people want a horn', but what I've found is that lunchtime gigs, particularly in churches, they really love to have a piano trio. So we've been using that kind of venue and playing acoustically with piano, bass and drums. That's been a really nice contrast to the more full-on gigs in the evening with people like Simon Spillett and Art Themen."



Saxophonist and friend Art Themen is complimentary about Spike saying, "His enthusiasm is unparalleled and he was touched with a magic wand at birth which imparted within him an innate sense of time. How else could he have been the choice of so many top ranking players over the years? With this God-given gift, although he must have done a fair amount of

woodshedding in the past, he never had to practice assiduously, allowing him the time to balance his three careers of music, the law and religion. He is the personification of cool."

More recently Spike has been performing with bassist Eddie Myer in QOW TRIO. "I first met Eddie down at The

Verdict and he started coming round to my house for a blow and of course he introduced me to Riley Stone-Lonergan, this phenomenal tenor player that he was already friends with. We decided we would try to do this pianoless trio. It started as a homage to the Sonny Rollins trio of the late Fifties. I've already done a bit of that in a trio with Art Themen and bass player Malcolm Creese. That's how it started with Riley, but we soon decided that we needed to broaden the approach of the group so now we're playing a whole range of repertoire. One or two Rollins things but also QOW itself, which is the name of a very free piece by Dewey Redman. We're also playing a Joe Henderson tune, some Charlie Parker and some standards. Riley and I both love Lester Young. On the record there's actually a lovely track

called *Pound for Prez*, which is a kind of paraphrase of Lester Young's solo on the Count Basie tune *Pound Cake*. Riley is such a phenomenally talented player that anybody who heard the group would be knocked out with his playing."

During the pandemic, drummers Russ Gleason and Neil Wilkinson have been hosting 'Drum Zoom Hangs' which Spike has been watching. "He's had some amazing guests to come along and talk, real heroes of mine like Jack DeJohnette, Terri Lyne Carrington, Bill Stewart, Steve Gadd and Kenny Washington who used to play with Johnny Griffin. They actually featured me



one week to talk about my approach to drumming. People all over the world have been tuning in to join these little discussions, so that's been great."

Spike has also been keeping busy listening to a lot of music. Just right now, the last week or so, I've been checking out an American pianist called Lynne Arriale. She's got a lovely trio with a drummer who is right up my street: Steve Davis, not the snooker player. He's an American drummer who is very simpatico. I also like Chris Potter, Kenny Garrett, Kevin Hays, Larry Goldings, Bill Stewart, John Scofield. I also go back to the 50s and 60s and listen to a lot of post-bop like Dexter Gordon, Hank Mobley and people like that. I'm not au fait with a lot of the latest names on the scene so I tend to sit back with my old favourites and get more out of them."

"Just like everybody else, I feel incredibly frustrated by the present dearth of live music and I feel terribly

sorry for all of the younger musicians who are desperately trying to make a living and are relying on it, and are inadequately compensated by the government's furlough schemes for the self-employed."

"I just hope that we can get going again as soon as possible this year, once enough people have been vaccinated. Live music is very good for the soul, and the lack of it is very bad for the soul. I just pray that it will come back sooner rather than later."

"I spoke to Art Themen yesterday after we had just finished watching Ron Mathewson's funeral and we were commiserating each other. I said that I

didn't have any incentive to practice the drums at the moment because there's nothing to practice for and he said 'No, you must keep positive, you've got to keep playing, even if it's just at home to keep your chops in shape'. He's quite right. We do have to try and stay positive."

The album *QOW TRIO* is released on 5th February on Ubuntu.

The documentary *A Love Supreme: Spike Wells* by Gary Barber has been re-edited and updated.

Spike's website www.spikewells.co.uk contains a wealth of archive recordings and photos from Spike's playing career.

Photos: previous page, Spike Wells with Tubby Hayes; this page, Spike Wells with Stan Getz.

Album Q&A: QOW TRIO

SJM: How would you describe the music of QOW TRIO?

Eddie Myer: It's a freewheeling dive into the tenor trio tradition - we started with the Rollins trios to guide us but then went forward through Dewey Redman and Sam Rivers to Bill McHenry and Walter Smith, and back towards Bird and Ike Quebec and Lester... it's a place where we can bring together our love of the music and just play, and there's a feeling that anything can happen.

Tell us about the experience of recording the album.

We spent a beautiful day with Ben Lamdin at Antonio's Fish Market studio in Harlesden... no booths, baffles or headphones, just us and the music. Ben is a master at setting up the right vibe and capturing the sound. Spike said it was one of his favourite days ever in the studio. You can really hear how relaxed and in tune everyone was feeling that day. We ran everything through in one or two takes and had the album by the afternoon.

The album is set to be released on 5th February. What are you doing in the run up to the release?

Staying at home and exercising once a day! There's no live shows for us until it's safe. We've been spreading the word on socials and there's been interviews and radio play - thanks Helen Mayhew

and Jez Nelson at JazzFM - and we're stoked to be on the Spotify Jazz X-press playlist as well. There'll be some livestream action coming up when the time is right. Til then, practice up some new jams for the post-lockdown future.



QOW TRIO
QOW TRIO
(Ubuntu UBU0068)

As the world crisis drags forward we are left to watch the world go by from within the boundaries of our homes with no real end and return to normality in sight. But we still have music. One of the beauties of this timeless art is it will always be there and whether it is experienced live or from the comfort of your own home, has the power to inspire, heal and relate. This is something that is definitely found in the music of British superstar group QOW TRIO and the release of their

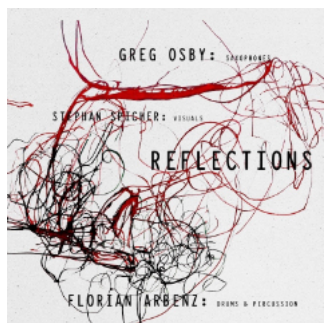
debut album bearing the same name. The album is a rich mix of raw originality coupled with the traditional sounds and technical approach so important to the jazz tradition. There is direction and structure but also a strong feeling of free playing throughout the duration of the album, a beautiful feeling of virtuosic interplay alongside a pang of joyous uncertainty in the thought that anything could happen next. The individual pieces that make up the album are mainly made up of classic jazz standards and also two originals further showing the group's philosophy for keeping the tradition alive and strong while also expanding the possibilities for solo and group improvisation. Over the duration of the album, at some point or another, the spotlight is shone on each individual member of the group as featured soloist, while also showcasing the trio's uncanny ability to expand and contract as a fluent entity. The flexible, varied and yet disciplined sound that QOW TRIO produces owes much to its unique line up consisting of rising London jazz star Riley Stone-Lonergan on tenor saxophone, Brighton-based bandleader, bassist and educator, Eddie Myer on double bass and the British jazz legend that is Spike Wells on drums. All are accomplished musicians both known and revered throughout the jazz world who have now come together to create a sound that's all their own. Now, when it

comes to the execution of the repertoire chosen for the album one might be shocked to find no harmony instrument in place, not a piano or guitar to be found. Although this is not a new phenomenon in jazz ensembles, first being pioneered by the great Sonny Rollins in his masterpiece album *Way Out West* and then later adopted by Ornette Coleman for his free jazz explorations, it is still a sight not often seen. However, the group takes full advantage of this, channelling the energies and approaches of both Rollins and Ornette into their music. The warm, soft bass tone coupled with a good sense of masterful simplicity in the accompanying lines sits nicely alongside the melodic innovations of the saxophone and is further complemented by the steady rhythmic direction of Spike Wells. The interpretations of each tune present on this album are a heartwarming experience. A good listen to the whole thing is highly recommended and hopefully when things are back to some kind of normality we will all get a chance to see QOW perform this release live to a receptive audience. Until then let us enjoy this music and congratulate the band on a great debut release.

George Richardson

*Riley Stone-Lonergan, tenor sax;
Eddie Myer, bass; Spike Wells,
drums.*

Album Reviews



Greg Osby & Florian Arbenz
Reflections Of The Eternal Line
(Inner Circle Music INCM 090CD)

To really succeed in the highly exposed duo format in jazz not only requires great musical ability, but also total empathy between the players at all times. This American / Swiss pairing have both in abundance and after playing together for over twenty years have produced an absorbing album of seven original pieces. The critically acclaimed saxophonist from St Louis, Missouri, Greg Osby attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston, featured in Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition and has appeared with such luminaries as Jim Hall and Cassandra Wilson. Now based in New York City he has also recorded almost twenty albums under his own name. Drummer, percussionist and composer Florian Arbenz, who has an equal profile in classical music as he does in jazz, is perhaps best known for his work with the highly successful Swiss trio Vein alongside his brother Michael on piano and bassist Thomas Lahns. He has also appeared with Kirk Lightsey, Bennie Maupin, the cross-genre band Convergence and many others as

well as being a recipient of the coveted European Award Of Culture.

The compositions themselves were inspired by the work of the highly regarded artist Stephan Spicher, and recorded at his workshop near Basel. It's a thrilling and intense forty five minutes of listening, dynamic in places, with a palette of ever-changing musical colours. The impact is immediate from the first piece, *Wooden Lines*, with almost hypnotic and mysterious alto overlaying a tour de force of driving drums. These musicians can move from a position of high intensity to the most delicate and lightest of tempos such as the engaging *Chant*, a piece of great calmness and depth alongside the gentle melodic excursion of *Homenaje*, both of which feature Greg on soprano, improvising over highly imaginative percussion from Florian. The music throughout offers its challenges but is never inaccessible in any way as the contrasting musical conversations between the two always carry a perfect logic and include excellent use of the important characteristics of time and space. The nine minute *Groove Conductor* is a case in point with its almost frightening level of volume and intensity at times, plus periods of abstraction that eventually settle into the groove format suggested by the title with powerful but melodic alto to the fore. The moods change constantly as the album progresses, no more so as when the delicate exotic sound of the tuned kalimbas come into play on *The Passage Of Light*, a composition of serene beauty, enhanced by the majestic sound of



Photo: Florian Arbenz and Greg Osby by Marin Wolf

the soprano that floats across the soundscape, contrasting with the closer *Please Stand By* which moves from a sombre opening passage to become a really exciting tension builder that swirls around like a crazy dance, before a brief return to calmer waters.

You cannot go wrong with this recording for its creativity, musicianship, compulsive listenability and general wizardry. It really is a work of art!

Jim Burlong

Greg Osby, soprano and alto saxophones; Florian Arbenz, drums and percussion.



Jim Rattigan

When

(Three Worlds Records TWR0005)

Jim Rattigan in one of a select group of musicians who can lay claim to the title 'pioneer of the jazz French horn', as well as being a key player with all the London symphony orchestras. He's released two highly critically acclaimed albums of Gil

Evans-ish big band jazz with his Pavilion project, and returns here with an equally ambitious but far more intimate set of recordings. Neatly bridging the worlds of jazz and classical, the album features music for two simultaneous quartets: a french-horn fronted jazz one with a superb line up of supporting players, and a string one with an unusual cello-heavy line-up. All the compositions are by Rattigan and have the flavour of classic modern/mainstream jazz repertoire pieces; Rattigan's horn is far nimbler and more expressive than the bebop experiments of his predecessor Julius Watkins, sounding a bit like a more clearly articulated trombone, and his contributions are judiciously paced to leave Iles to provide the lead voice on tracks like the bluesy, insouciantly swinging *It's Not Quite The Same* or the reflective *Patrick's Song*. Her piano playing is a lesson in poise, phrasing, and effortlessly stylish economy, and the team of Janisch and Maddren are the model of tasteful, supportive restraint. The string section are superbly well integrated throughout - Rattigan's writing for the quartet is warmly romantic with echoes of Ravel and classic Hollywood (in the best sense): tunes like *Now And Then* allow the strings to set the mood before the jazz team join them so seamlessly that the change of texture never jars. A far cry from some of the mismatched efforts of the Third Stream movement, this is a beautifully realised fusion that bridges the genres by finding common ground in mood and dynamic: resolutely determined to charm rather than challenge the listener and succeeding on all counts.

Eddie Myer

Jim Rattigan, french horn; Nikki Iles, piano; Michael Janisch, bass; James Maddren, drums. The Tear Quartet: Julian Tear, cello; Alison Gordon, violin; Nic Barr, viola; Nic Cooper, cello.



Various Artists

Blue Note Re:imagined 2020
(Blue Note Records 0710012)

Once again, the ever forward-looking Blue Note record label have come up with a great concept of covering the widest possible cross section of the contemporary global audience. This time, in a partnership with Decca Records, they have taken some great, famous and not so famous tracks from the past, and presented them through the cutting edge skills of today's modern musicians from the UK. The whole project is already an artistic and commercial success with many, and forms a reference point not only to the marked progress of the British jazz scene, but also to the longevity of the classic Blue Note recordings from the past six decades. From the opening track of disc one, a vocal cover of the unique and stunning *Rose Rouge* on St Germain's

Tourist album of 2001 by Jorja Smith to the closer of disc two, a re-interpretation of Wayne Shorter's *Speak No Evil* by the highly talented Emma-Jean Thackray, every cut is powerful in its own way and contributes to the eighty plus minutes of great music on offer.

As with most recordings of any genre there are outstanding highlights, even when the overall standard is already high, and so it proved to be with this fine package. Wayne Shorter, by common consent is one of the most important jazz composers of modern times and it was his composition *Footprints* that provided the vehicle for the exciting Ezra Collective to perform. The tune from the *Miles Smiles* album of 1966 is a powerful iconic one well updated by the band with Dylan Jones' trumpet and the piano of Joe Armon-Jones taking the solo honours. McCoy Tyner's sensual classic *Search For Peace* covered by the Bristol based Ishmael Ensemble was given a dramatic treatment with a vocal choir behind some fine tenor by Ishmael (aka Pete Cunningham) which brought the piece up to date without ever taking anything away from the composer's intentions. *Maiden Voyage* by Herbie Hancock provided the halcyon days of Blue Note with one of its most profound and memorable moments. Here we had the purveyors of funk Mr Jukes (another aka, this time Jack Steadman) a fine vocalist, guitar player, pianist and ex-leader of The Bombay Cycle Club taking the band through his own well-crafted arrangement of this classic piece, maintaining the power of the original but adding some fresh subtle directions of their own. The very top of a considerable tree for me however has to be the remarkable



Photo: Shabaka Hutchings by Lisa Wormsley (cropped)

bass clarinet performance by Shabaka Hutchings on Bobby Hutcherson's *Prince Tie* played in a spacious and semi minimalist manner, with a depth and passion, which perhaps could be rivalled only by John Surman or the late great Eric Dolphy.

Overall, this double album offers a clear window into today's music with full respect to the past, but at the same time may not sit comfortably with the complete purist or indeed the so called 'jazz police'.

Jim Burlong

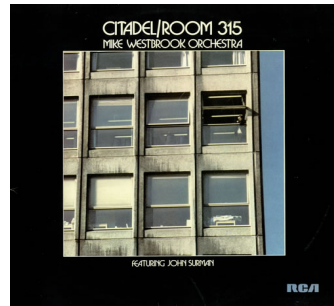
Sixteen Artists and Bands: *Jorja Smith, Ezra Collective, Poppy Ajudha, Jordan Rakei, Skinny Pelembe, Alfa Mist, Ishmael Ensemble, Nubya Garcia, Steam Down featuring Afronaut Zu, Blue Lab Beats, Yazmin Lacey, Fieh, Mr Jukes, Shabaka Hutchings, Melt Yourself Down, Emma-Jean Thackray.*

Jazz Essentials

Mike Westbrook Orchestra
Citadel/Room 315
(BGO Records)

If Mike Westbrook had been born in the United States, say, or elsewhere in Europe, he would be internationally renowned, praised for his big-band jazz compositions and arranging skills. But because he was born in Britain, he has been woefully neglected, as is usual for our most important artists. For Westbrook is one of our greatest men of jazz, coming of musical age in the 1960s alongside Neil Ardley, Graham Collier, and Mike Gibbs. His work was always adventurous and literate, as at home reworking themes from Rossini as he was from the Beatles, or drawing on the poetry of William Blake or the life of Al Capone. He's still alive today at 84, and there is no better way to praise him than to listen to *Citadel/Room 315*, originally commissioned by Swedish Radio and performed in Stockholm in 1974 and then recorded in a studio in London the following March.

The citadel of the title is the tower block housing the Leeds College of Art, where Mike's new wife Kate taught, Room 315 an empty room on the umpteenth floor with a grand piano on which Westbrook composed the piece. Written for an orchestra of 18 musicians, Kenny Wheeler, Paul Rutherford and Henry Lowther among them, the composition is essentially Ellingtonian in style, highlighting the soloists but also respecting the integrity of the work. But it also features an electric guitar, piano and bass, which makes it very much a jazz-rock workout. The



eleven pieces range through varied moods, from meditative and pastoral to streetwise and exultant, lushly scored but crackling with energy.

One musician stands out from the crowd. Playing soprano and baritone saxes and bass clarinet, often electronically enhanced and delayed, featured soloist John Surman excels. Indeed, he comprehensively steals the show with a startling baritone solo on the epic *Outgoing Song* that, as one critic remarked at the time, erupts like Krakatoa through the massed orchestral ranks. But his soprano outing on *Construction* runs it close, while Brian Godding's electric guitar is consistently spectacular. In truth, this album presents a cornucopia of luxuries, and is one of the finest British jazz albums of its time.

A recording of the original Swedish performance, entitled *Love And Understanding* after one of the tracks, has recently been released, delayed for years because a couple of the Swedes apparently did not like their solos! It is a cooler version of the British release, and a useful exercise in compare and contrast.

Simon Adams



Live Streams

606 Club

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

Ronnie Scott's

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

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.

Pete Recommends...

Gerry Mulligan meets...



During the 1950s Gerry was able to obtain contracts for recording sessions with several of his favourite musicians, using the title, "Gerry Mulligan meets...". The success of his quartet, and then the sextet, made his name a selling attraction.

You may feel rather cynical about the real musical value of such projects, but I would ask you to think again. The first album was a live session at the Haig club in 1953 with Lee Konitz. No doubts about this one. Lee is on top form.

I want to recommend four subsequent albums:

[a] *Mulligan meets Monk, 1957*

For this album Gerry used one of Monk's favourite rhythm teams, Wilbur Ware on bass and Shadow

Wilson on drums. Apart from the standard *Sweet and Lovely*, a favourite of both musicians, they recorded 4 Monk tunes and one by Gerry. The quality is high, and I would suggest you sample *Round Midnight* where they work together beautifully.

[b] *Mulligan meets Getz, 1957*

[Later released as *Stan Getz meets Gerry Mulligan in Hi Fi*]

Whose name sells best? For the original LP they swapped instruments on side one. This makes for some interesting comparisons, but the music feels rather superficial. By contrast for side two the musical quality is extremely high. One tenor player friend of mine was so taken by their version of Gerry's tune

Ballad that he returned to it again and again. See whether you agree with him. The rhythm team here is world class: Lou Levy (piano), Ray Brown (bass), and the excellent Stan Levey (drums).

[c] Gerry Mulligan meets Ben Webster, 1959

Apart from *Chelsea Bridge* and *Sunday*, Gerry wrote all the tunes. They are well-judged to bring out the best qualities of both players. For what might have been a routine commercial session the result is performances of a very high class. Just check out the final blues, *Go Home*. Gerry was in the habit of ending concerts by his groups and bands with a loosely improvised blues, starting with either himself or Bob Brookmeyer at the piano. This version starts with the rhythm section: Jimmy Rowles (piano), Leroy Vinnegar (bass) and Mel Lewis (drums). This was very important because Jimmy plays beautifully and his quirky, very imaginative choruses establish a mood that Gerry and Ben carry through into their solos – aided, of course, by his sensitive accompaniment. Do not miss this album.



[d] Gerry Mulligan meets Johnny Hodges 1959

Gerry wrote all the tunes for this album. Johnny is on his own for the beautiful ballad, *What's the Rush*, where Gerry shares the credit with his girlfriend, comedienne Judy Holiday. Also featured on this track is the excellent piano work of Claude Williamson. He was joined in the rhythm team by Buddy Clark (bass) and Mel Lewis (drums). The track which I have always remembered, and enjoyed, from this album is *Shady Side*, Gerry's new line on the harmonies of *On*

The Sunny Side of the Street.

These albums are highly recommended. I hope you will explore and enjoy them. And I have not even mentioned Gerry's albums with Paul Desmond or Art Farmer, or his many collaborations with Bob Brookmeyer.

Peter Batten

**BRIGATON
JAZZ
SAFARI**

A brand-new podcast about Brighton's vibrant jazz scene
Listen now on any podcast app or visit brightonjazzsafari.com

JazzNewBlood.org/jazznewbloodapes

JAZZNEWBLOOD APES

Nov 10 - 3pm
Nov 14 - 5am
resonance.fm

Nov 08 - 7pm
Bethlehem time
james.purepoint@icloud.com

X R AI

by Patricia Pascal

Monthly

JAZZNEWBLOOD

JAZZNEWBLOOD

JAZZNEWBLOOD

JAZZNEWBLOOD

JAZZNEWBLOOD

ALIVE 2020 #jazznewblood2020

SUN JAN 17 / 2PM-9PM
TICKETS: jazznewblood.org

Morgan Wallace

Manny

Scottie Thompson

Sultan Stevenson

Maddy Coombs

XVNGO

Arts

15min Times
100% FREE

DONATE NOW

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

DONATE NOW

GIVE YOUNG JAZZ TALENT A BRIGHT FUTURE

DONATE NOW

[GOFUNDME.COM/IAMWARRIOR2020](https://gofundme.com/IAMWARRIOR2020)

#IAMWARRIOR