

Trombone With A View



Peter Maguire

Trombone With A View

A compilation of various jottings about jazz and music related topics. No particular order. They were written over a period of several years and published in my blog:

<https://trombonewithaview.com>

Comments. Praise, Insults, Disparaging observations, will reach me at:

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Origins, Salford, United Kingdom. Varied careerer that has included: RAF. Jazz Musician. Bookseller. Publishing. Auction House describer and valuer – Chinese and Far East artefacts. Journalist. Web Project Developer. Much else in between.

Author of several books, fiction and non-fiction. BBC documentary and poetry. Exhibited at 'The Yorkshire Artists' exhibition held at Leeds City Art Gallery.

A Son, a Daughter, and two beautiful Grandchildren.

Jazz, listening, talking about, playing, has always been a major part of my life.



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JAZZ



1.

Johnny Griffin at The Club 43 Manchester, England

The Club 43 Manchester, England was extremely influential in promoting the appearance of live performances of American jazz musicians. Up until the later part of the sixties performances by American musicians were very difficult to arrange because of the Musicians Union insistence that there should be a reciprocal agreement: one or more American musician performs in the United Kingdom one or more United Kingdom musician performs in the USA.

Paradoxically, the demand for English pop groups in the USA raised the barrier and allowed some great names in American jazz to



play in jazz clubs in the United Kingdom. Ronnie Scotts grasped this hitherto unavailable opportunity. So too in Manchester did the Club 43.

Manchester at that time was the home base of many of musicians drawn in by a very vibrant local scene; a large night club scene and music consuming television studios. The 43 Club featured many of these notables particularly as backing groups to visiting international names.

Johnny Griffin appeared at the Club 43 the backing trio for the gig: Eric Ferguson (piano) Tony Crofts (bass) Ronnie Parry (drums) Listen to a steaming version of 'All The Things You Are' recorded live on tape. The track was sent to me recently by Tony Crofts.



2.

Jazz Festivals Minus The Jazz

Looking at some upcoming some major jazz festival programmes one wonders just what are the jazz credentials of many of the listed Headliners. Rock musicians yes. World Music maybe. Who knows what kind of music much of the time.

The problem is that many of the big festivals built their reputations and the ability to draw in large audiences by featuring jazz legends. However, a high percentage of these recognizable Jazz Legends are no longer with us. There are many wonderful jazz musicians and groups very much alive and playing, but without any disrespect, they do not, at least at this time, the pull that that, Miles, Gillespie, et al. had.



It's perhaps hard to recall that jazz shows such as 'Jazz At The Philharmonic' attracted capacity crowds all over the globe.

So what do the promoters do? Scale down things. No such thing. They pack the schedule with this and that non-jazz name and groups and hope the numbers and the revenue will continue to flow.

I recently saw on YouTube a Michael Jackson cover band performing at the Brussels Jazz Marathon. Once a major event on the European Jazz Calendar. I posted the following remarks: "Michael Jackson cover band. Good at what they do" - I commented - "but come on what has this to do with Jazz?" This was a good example of what once was a really great three to four days of jazz as now being hardly recognizable. You may not be surprised to hear that the video was removed within less than five minutes of my posting these comments.

3.

Four Bar Intro - The Door to Possibilities

Most jazz musicians, and maybe even non-musicians, will know just how evocative good four bar intro can be. It starts your foot tapping. It attunes your ear to what is to follow. It is the passport control to a musical journey that can lead anywhere.



You just never know in advance.

Routine licks. Something special that just appears from somewhere. "Oh dear. What the hell I am doing."

André Hodier called jazz "The Sound of Surprise". How right he was. It is this journey into the unknown that makes jazz so special for both the musician and the listener.

4.

Real Book and The Smart Phone

It has become a familiar sight. At jam sessions, forgivable, perhaps. On gigs, not so acceptable, just my opinion. What am I referring to? The array of one or more Smart Phones being used to display the Real Book. Propped up on the music stand of the piano. The bass player his eyes glued to the screen. A horn player squinting at a distance.

Why not you might say. Why not indeed. Calculators have removed the necessity to learn basic arithmetic. Chords on a Smart Phones are removing the motivation to actually learn a specific chord sequence.



One of the problems for younger musicians in particular is the decline of the commercial gig: Weddings. Birthday Parties. Events. and the like. The disco is now king, or queen, at such events. Unless the organizer is into live music the disco is a crowd pleasing and easy option.

The downside of this, apart from the possibility of earning some money, is the lack of need to acquire a basic repertoire of Standards. I can well remember experienced piano players who would in days gone by pick up the intended melody just from hearing single note. Not so common now when a suggested standard, other than a very basic list, immediately initiates a frantic thumbing of a printed 'Real Book' or now, much more often, consulting the index of the Smartphone version.

There are of course many honourable exceptions, musicians who through effort and experience have an extensive repertoire in their heads. More power to them.

Nevertheless, I think it will be some time off before we see someone performing a Mozart Piano Concerto with his Smartphone propped up on the Steinway.

5.

Willy Vande Walle - Saxophonist

I played for more than five years with Willy Vande Walle's 'Jazz Express'. Willy was a great guy but a lot of the time was overwhelmed by the complications of a life that included former wives and a partiality for 'Genevieve', a type of Gin that is a speciality of Belgium, so much so that in the small musical instrument shop he owned in the commune of 'Saint Josse', he had a small refrigerator installed to keep the bottles cool and ready.

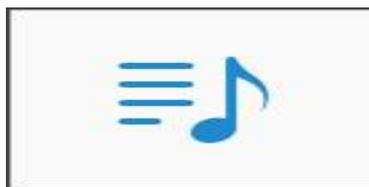
One particular Saturday afternoon We arrived at a small château somewhere near to Brussels to play at a wedding. When we got there, the wedding party had not yet appeared, so we donned our 'Smoking' (*the French word for Dinner Suit, Evening Dress*) and waited on a first-floor balcony.



The cars drew up and parking in front of the impressive portico and discharged the wedding party. Willy immediately leaned over the balcony and pointing his soprano sax at the rapidly filling reception area kicked us off in to a loud and boisterous Dixieland tune. The newly married couple looked upward with startled and puzzled expressions on their faces. Willy uncharacteristically picked up the vibe.

We watched from above whilst a somewhat heated discussion took place between Willy and the bride and groom. A few minutes later he came back up the stairs and explained. We shed our Smoking and eased our way out of the building.

The problem was we were two weeks early for this specific booking and should have in fact been playing elsewhere at another wedding.



6.

Drummer Moe Green asked why so few bands play Jelly Roll Morton compositions

The question Moe Green poses about the absence of compositions of Jelly Roll Morton in the repertoire of the performing bands is one that has interested me from time to time.

Let me say that I have a great admiration for both Jelly Roll Morton and his bands, particularly The Red Hot Peppers. Also, the musicians he employed. They were individuals at the top of their league. For example the superb George Mitchell



on cornet. This was carefully arranged music of great sophistication. Without in any way denigrating enthusiastic revivalist musicians the truth is that not many had, or maybe still do not have, the level of musical facility needed to play in a convincing manner Hot Peppers style arrangements.

Great damage was done to many aspiring musicians' development by the totally fallacious notion, much touted at one time, that the acquisition of a developed instrumental technique somehow diluted the purity of the music. Even worse that somehow by some osmotic process New Orleans musicians, and beyond, achieved their mastery without having to woodshed.

I listened recently to an interview with Charlie Parker and the interviewer, who really should have known better, touted the same myth that Parker's virtuosity somehow, just fell out of the sky. Parker soon put him right with an outline of his fifteen hour a day practice routines.

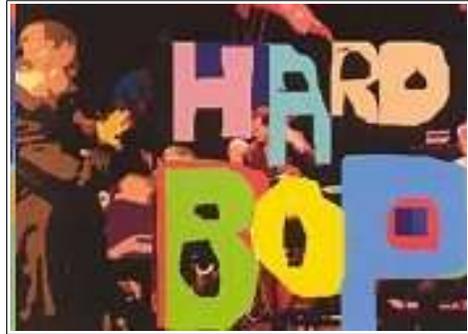
I for one would really love to hear a contemporary band playing Jelly Roll Morton arrangement and compositions.

[Fred Burnett's: [Traditional Jazz in the North West of the U.K](#)]

7.

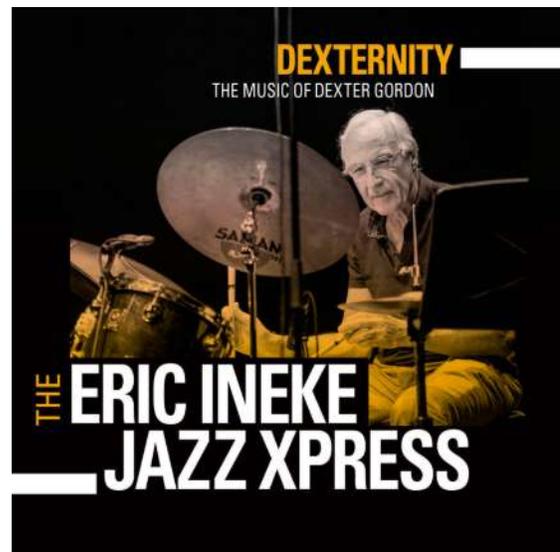
Hard Bop Is Alive And Well - No Need For An Apology

There is a tendency in some zones of the jazz world to devalue what can be loosely described as earlier styles. This particularly so by a certain species of jazz critic who want to proclaim that they are riding on and perhaps exclusively appreciating the crest of some new wave. Why should we not appreciate the musicians, bands and styles from all the periods that



constitute the relatively short history of jazz? Novelty does not by definition have an intrinsic value that in a sense annihilates what has gone before.

I am always interested, when catching a set of two at a stylistically diverse range of gigs, to watch the audience and try to gauge their reaction to what is being presented to them. I think we must accept that at most jazz venues really passionate enthusiasts are in a minority. We, “ultra hip few” (*he said jokingly*) might enjoy amusing and ingenious quotes during the course of an improvisation knowing full well that they will go unnoticed by the majority. But that does not mean that the majority are not enjoying the music. Given a really good band and what is very important a verbal, an essential feature, and musical communication with an audience, most gigs, whatever the style, can be a rewarding experience for both the musicians and the paying public.



I had such thoughts in mind when I caught the middle set at The Music Village on a Saturday night. The band, from The Netherlands, was ‘Jazz Xpress’. This great, tight, group of musicians, were mainly playing a hard bop repertoire. They were performing in

their own right but also there to back the superb Deborah Brown. Throughout there was level of energy and rapport that had the audience, metaphorically speaking, on the edge of their seats.

This is not just a matter of serving up what you think the audience will like. But there is a great difference between an audience who knowingly and willingly go to a *Peter Brötzmann* concert when compared with a more general public. Playing accessible music does not debauch the art form. Hard Bop still has much to offer. For me, assuming a high level of musicianship- it comes across as both fresh and musically stimulating. And judging from the reluctance of the audience I was observing to vacate their seats I can only assume that they had were similarly entranced.

8.

Under 35 Likes Jazz

This morning I had a sad email from California following on from my 'Jazz Clubs Worldwide September Newsletter' where I talked about the current health of the jazz scene internationally. I quote:

"Hello Peter: I wanted you to know, in case you haven't heard, that Charlie O's Jazz Club in Southern California closed down for good on August 31, 2011. You can remove our listing from your website. Your message this month strikes close to me. The economy here in California is so bad, the jazz fans are non-existent and add to that all the expenses to do business in CA and you've got another jazz club gone. All the best to you Peter and thanks for listing our club all these years, Jo-Ann"



"Charlie O's is an intimate jazz club and restaurant originally established in 1987. We have been presenting live jazz performances seven nights a week from 8 PM to Midnight since August 17, 2000".

This is The United States of America. The birthplace of jazz. A music that arguably is one of the twentieth centuries most significant contributions to world culture. So why no audience?

My own live experience of jazz clubs is limited mainly to the United Kingdom and Western Europe. In the United Kingdom in particular the thing I see almost everywhere is the lack of younger faces. Please correct me if I am wrong, but talking to people with some knowledge of the United States jazz scene, I do get a distinct impression that a similar situation exists. Surely this is a very unhealthy. Jazz is not some passing fancy.

UNDER 35 LIKES JAZZ

Why such a minority? Firstly there is a lack of exposure to jazz. The people who pull the marketing strings just do not see it as a music that produces significant revenue. "Jazz.

Who cares?" You can hear the general tenor of the participants in a goal-setting meeting sitting around the marketing company, square, conference table. It seems that gone are the days when money and the making of money was not the only yardstick, *one might with a wry smile observe just how the making money mindset has created the financial mess the world is currently suffering*, Television, radio, newspapers, magazines featured jazz with attention and respect. Road shows such as 'Jazz at The Philharmonic' could and did fill vast auditoriums. Just check out on YouTube and there you will see countless examples of jazz of all kinds being enjoyed and appreciated by large and mixed age audiences.

Also to the diminution of attention span plays a part. Jazz demands your attention. Nobody goes to listen to Beethoven and expects to be able to discuss at length during the performance the merits of the latest Smart phone. I was once in a bar near to Madison Square Gardens where a very fine group were playing. They might have well been on The Moon for all the attention that was being paid to them. Loud mouthed individuals standing within a yard of the bandstand were screaming words at their neighbours.

There is a younger audience out there, who do and would, if they had the opportunity to do so, appreciate jazz. Playing recently at a club in Manchester, England, situated in a student area of The City, it was really wonderful to see just how much the music was being appreciated.

What is the situation internationally? From my own experience I do see significant number of younger people attending gigs and concerts at venues located in Western Europe. I have been even more impressed by the scene in Eastern Europe. Perhaps within these countries meaningful, unselfconscious, inter-generational communication is a factor. As for the remainder of The Globe? I would be interested to know more.

Here is an email sent to me in the year Two Thousand by one of the true giants of jazz:

16/3/2000

Bob Brookmeyer. Just another word of encouragement from someone who has been

keeping an open ear and an equally open mouth. Sometimes not too popular, but more good reaction than not -- SOMEBODY HAS TO DISCUSS this merchandising of the music we love and worked so hard to keep alive. We need a "Molly Ivins*" of Jazz -- more, more....Brookmeyer

** Mary Tyler "Molly" Ivins (August 30, 1944 – January 31, 2007) was an American newspaper columnist, liberal, political commentator, humorist and author.*

9.

Remembering Pol (Pol Jazz) Lenders

Pol Lenders, whose real name is Leopold Lenders, known for a long time as 'Pol' from the Pol's Jazz Club, born in 1917 and died on August 2, 2001, was a Belgian and Belgian jazz personality who opened several clubs in Brussels.

'Pol Lenders was the son of a flower vendor who worked in the Place Rogier in Brussels. During his youth, already a fan of American rhythmic music, in connection with his red hair, he was nicknamed "Rosse Polle" ("*Paul le Roux*" in *Brusseleer* *). He quickly became a figure of Brussels folklore.

In the 1960s, he was a doorman in several trendy clubs in the Belgian capital, such as Les Cousins near the Grand-Place, Le Ben-Hur, rue du Marché aux Fromage, or La Frégate rue Neuve. Then, he opened several jazz clubs, the "Carton Club", the "Victory Club", the "Pol's" rue du Marché au Charbon, the "Pol's Jazz Club" rue de Stassart, and in Ixelles and the "Bierodrome" place Fernand Cocq also in Ixelles.



Pol Lenders invited the biggest names in American jazz, blues and swing, such as John Coltrane, Count Basie, Dexter Gordon and many others. In 1985, he also helped to create the "Saint-Jazz-ten-Noode" in Saint-Josse-ten-Noode, where he lived for a while in the rue de Liedekerke.

The commune where he lived, after his death in 2001, named a street after him in his honour.

(Note: I wonder when London will get around to naming a street to commemorate Ronnie Scott?)

* *A dialect used in what was primarily a working class district of Brussels: La Marolles. Brusseleer is essentially is a Dutch Brabantian dialect incorporating many words of*

French origin as well as a sprinkling of Spanish dating back to the rule of the Low Countries by the Habsburgs (1519-1713).



10.

A Joyful Sound

All too often, when attending jazz concerts, the music on offer resembles an audio chapter of some particularly obtuse Nietzschean analysis. Not that I have anything against Nietzsche. I am as interested in Zarathustra as the next man. However, what I do appreciate is leaving a jazz club on a high.

Mandy Gaines, a singer from the USA, was appearing for two nights at The Music Village in Brussels. I have had the pleasure of her acquaintance



for a considerable number of years, but I can assure you that I am not indulging in sycophancy, when I say that watching her show is an object lesson on how to present vocal jazz, without any compromises, that delights an audience and keeps them on their seats.

Mandy is the ultimate professional. A great performer, she has an inherent sense of responsibility towards the expectations of an audience. She also, quite rightly, expects reciprocity. Jazz at its best is always a two-way contract.

What I particularly love about Mandy is the humour, warmth, and the utter *joie de vivre*. A great repertoire. Balanced and thoughtful. On stage and off-stage a warm non-patronizing response to the many smiling and ebullient admirers who want to express their appreciation.

There are a great many musicians, bands, and singers, who could learn a great deal from Mandy's approach to performance. Jazz can range from the frivolous to the very serious indeed, but in the final analysis, without meaningful communication with listeners, it becomes so much navel gazing.



11.

The House of Sam Widges

One of the really interesting features about the Internet is almost stream-of-consciousness mode you can slip into as the direct consequence of a somewhat specific search.

' The House of Sam Widges ' floated into a view. It was a coffee bar with a jazz club in the basement. I became something of a *habitué* even at one point working behind the counter during the busy lunchtime rush. I discovered that the place was actually owned at some point by one Neil Oram:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Oram

When I managed at last to separate myself from the downy clutches of The RAF I headed off to London geographically and Soho specifically.



The first time I wandered wide eyed into 'The House of Sam Widges' I was amazed as the friendliness of the crowd. Up they came grasping my hand with warmth, greetings, and wide smiles. "The is for me." I thought. Silly child, I was around nineteen years old age at the time, and the social perception and naivety of a nine-year-old.

It was only later that I discovered that these practitioners of bonhomie where in fact in the pot-trade, and they shook diversionary hands with everyone. Their clients getting in addition to the friendly grasp a small neat brown paper package containing seven and sixpence worth of grass.

Somewhat later and having become both life and Soho hardened I did a regular gig every Saturday in the basement of 'The House of Sam Widges' playing with a whole host of faces. Some very august individuals would wander in from time to time to jam. More recently Peter King told me that it was there as a very young man Ronnie Scott

heard him play and immediately booked him to play at what became know as Ronnie's Old Place.

'The House of Sam Widges' long gone. it would be interesting to know just when it ceased to be. Late fifties and in the Sixties Soho was a fascinating place to be particularly so for the jazz fraternity. Happy days.

12.

Fred Burnett was well ahead of the pack

Welcome to my world of Traditional Jazz. The pages which follow are a tribute to the musicians who have dedicated themselves to playing the music of New Orleans and Dixieland in the North West of the British Isles.

Although I try very hard to ensure all the information about the bands and events are correct, please check with the venues concerned before setting out on your journey.

Fred Burnett.

Even though the content of this website is confined to a defined geographical area, the responses it invokes are worldwide. Messages and email flow in from all parts of the globe. Fred Burnett has created a truly amazing website that really does encourage interaction. I know from my own professional experience just how much time it takes to run such an on-line presence. It brings home yet again just how much jazz owes to the enthusiasm of such dedicated individuals.



<http://www.jazznorthwest.co.uk>

13.

The Stonehenge City Jazzmen

Sometimes I have a feeling that telepathy is a tangible phenomena. Ian Maud who runs the excellent website <http://www.sandybrownjazz.co.uk> asked if I would contribute an article about playing with the support band on a 'Mick Mulligan Band' gig at RAF Yatesbury in nineteen fifty nine. I have been pretty busy over the past few months and thought that I really must get something down on paper. Gerry Salisbury came to mind. He was the bass player on the gig, and great multi-instrumentalist. I had met him again couple of times in on the jazz scene in early sixties London.

And what do you know? Within a day or so of thinking about Gerry Salisbury I get an email from Gerry Salisbury. He now lives in France and we exchanged some very interesting emails. He had contacted me via jazz-clubs-worldwide.com to mention that he too had been a close friend of the trumpet player Chris Bateson, who I had written about as being an influence on my own style of playing. Then just to round off the meeting of minds via the Internet, and telepathy maybe, I get an email from my old friend Tony Pringle, the cornet player on the Mulligan gig at Yatesbury, telling me that he had a piece published on Fred Burnett's website: <http://www.jazznorthwest.co.uk> reminiscing about 'The Stonehenge City Jazzmen'.

And so: 'The Stonehenge City Jazz Band'. Well amongst other things we won the annual talent contest, fear much to the disapproval of the Lord Mayor, it was held in Calne the small town near to RAF Yatesbury. We really were quite an active outfit and had great times together and ameliorated to some extent the somewhat grim life atop the moor living in RAF Yatesbury's wooden hutted domain.



Apart from Tony Pringle the only two other musicians I saw at a later date were Pete Kedney, the pianist, who went on to study medicine at 'The Royal College of Surgeons'

in Dublin, (*he was at my wedding in Manchester*) One of the banjo players who whose family name was Tong (I cannot remember his first name) - he was around the Manchester scene for a while.

Paddy, the roadie, driver, and keeper of The Cup we won (where did that end up I wonder?) I am sure Paddy ended up in some showbiz related entrepreneurial pursuits after completing his RAF service.

I went to have a look at RAF Yatesbury during the late seventies when my Son Adam was studying at Swindon College of Art. All that remained standing was the main gate and the memories.

Note: Sad to say both Tony and Gerry had passed on.

14.

The Enthusiasm of Individuals

To paraphrase the quotation 'I have always depended on the kindness of strangers' It is in my view a truism that jazz, has to a great extent, looked for its promotion, venues, and general well-being 'on the enthusiasm of individuals.

To take the example of jazz clubs. It would be interesting to evaluate just how many were founded and run by individuals who got into it because they loved the music and the jazz life, the majority I would anticipate. Wonderful clubs such as the '606 Jazz Club' that has been active for more years than



the owner, would like to remember, or perhaps the opposite, recollection is perhaps the motivation that makes him continue promoting a style of music that rarely makes anyone rich, or even moderately affluent.

The best jazz clubs do fall into this pattern. For jazz is not the ideal vehicle for corporate ambition and objectives. Love them or hate them, many jazz clubs owners are not particularly easy individuals, the jazz loving public know who they are and quietly admire their tenacity.

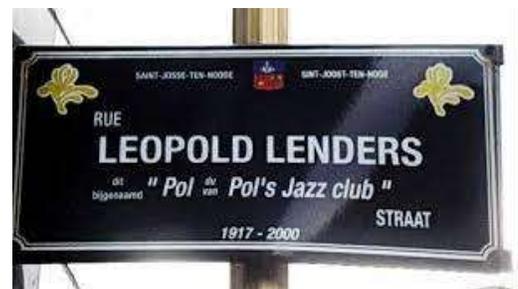
'The Bierodrome' a wonderful venue run by the late Pol Lenders only managed to survive for less than two years after his departure. Bought by the couple of individuals, who thought they were going a turn the place into some species of cash cow, they lacked even the most basic insight into what make a great jazz club function. The punters voted with their feet. The result a very sad hole in the Brussels jazz scene.

I do know that other genres also can depend on individual enthusiasm for the specific style of music: Classic. Opera. Rock. Country and Western. et al. The essential difference is that potential earnings are astronomical compared to what can be earned by jazz promoters and jazz musicians.

National attitudes also have an impact. What percentage of the American public really appreciate or care about the contribution jazz made and continues to make to their culture? In the United Kingdom where there still exists a solid public for jazz but sadly hardly ever attracts younger people to turn up for the majority of gigs. This in itself is interesting and poses a question. Most will tell you that younger people in the United Kingdom do not like and are not interested in jazz. Yet a couple of weeks ago I went, for the second time, to a very well organised jam session held in a bar in the heart of a student quarter of Manchester. The place was heaving and listening. 'Thank you for the music' said one young couple to me at the end of the gig.

So what place does jazz have in a given national consciousness ?

My very good friend the late Pol Lenders was honoured by the commune where he lived until his death by the naming of a street after him. I think we will have to wait a long time before we see a 'Ronnie Scott Street, London W1'.



However, of one thing I am sure. Jazz is truly a global music and perhaps paradoxically its fragility is the real source of its strength.

15.

Derek Wadsworth

A very great friend of more than forty years, the late Derek Wadsworth, who died on the 3 December 2008 at his home in Aynho, Northamptonshire, England.

Derek was to use the old, but apt cliché, a musicians' musician.



Derek's career started as a member of a Brass Band in Yorkshire and was to develop into an astonishing CV that included jazz, pop music, television, film, orchestral arranging and conducting, choral work and much more. Just to give you a glimpse of the range of his achievement here are some of the names and projects he worked on:

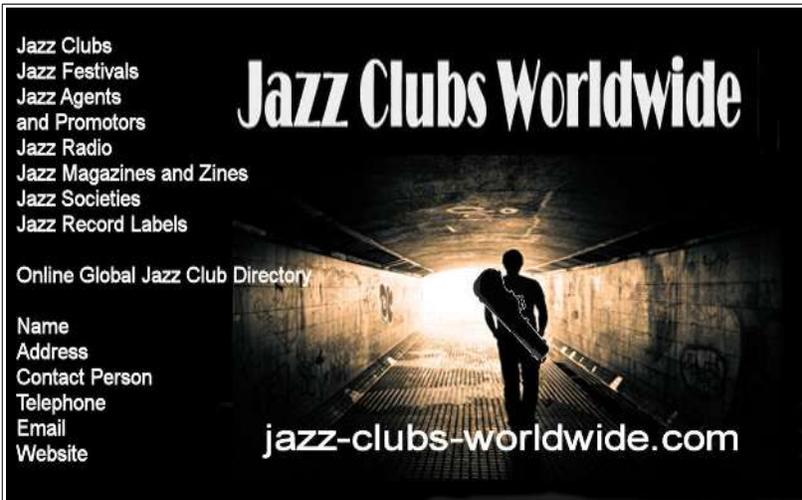
Arranger to Judy Garland, Nina Simone with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the same with The King's Singers (including vocal scores), Kate Bush, Dusty Springfield, Shirley Bassey, Alan Price, Georgie Fame, Cat Stevens, Rod Stewart, The Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Manfred Mann, The Small Faces, David Essex, Nigel Kennedy.

As musician, with George Harrison, The Rolling Stones, The Beatles (White Album), Diana Ross, Tom Jones, Charles Aznavour, Randy Crawford, Dionne Warwick, Simply Red, Tony Bennett, Maynard Ferguson, Alex Harvey, Mike Oldfield

My abiding memory of Derek during the later years of his life was his quiet concentration, sitting in an easy-chair by a window of his beautiful period house, pipe on the go, gazing out at the bird feeder on the wall outside the window.

Jazz Gigs and Where To Find Them

A couple of days ago I was sent a photograph of a pub in Yorkshire where I played with a band called 'Special Brew'. It attracted a good crowd and ran weekly and successfully for an extended period. The band brought together some excellent musicians that included the



great guitarist Mike Walker, then in his early twenties, who went on to play with, amongst others, George Russell and Steve Swallow. What occurred to me in particular was, how at that time, the relative ease with which you were able to find a friendly pub where The Landlord was happy you provide a space in which to feature jazz. Not so nowadays I would suggest.

I launched Jazz Clubs Worldwide in nineteen ninety seven and it became the premier resource for locating jazz clubs and jazz festivals worldwide. The question arrived with regularity in my email box was "How do I find clubs and festivals where I can fix a gig?" I could only in truth reply "It's difficult." It certainly not become any easier. Getting an agent is one way. But this is even more difficult.

In general sending out even the most elaborate press pack will, unless you are lucky, produce little or no results. A CD with a covering letter similar. They just get stuck on the pile in the office of the booker and in most instance that is where they remain collecting dust. To be fair to potential bookers they just get overwhelmed with audio and printed material and even if they are inclined to give such offerings a fair hearing there just isn't the number of hours in the day to do so.

Firstly, if you are looking for more national and international exposure, check out just what is happening on the specific local and national scene. There is sometimes a delusion that maybe the local talent is not all that good. Not so any more. The world is filled with highly competent players. Persistence is essential. Be prepared for much disappointment. But the real key is to establish a personal connection with the club owners, festival organizers. I do not underestimate the difficulty in establishing such contacts in the first instance. In my opinion this is the only way to proceed to get results.

It might sound abhorrent but jazz is a commodity. Assuming you have a very high quality band or you yourself are an outstanding musician, study the market, familiarize yourself with the local and national scene, with YouTube and website this is now relatively easy, and plan accordingly. A press pack, yes, email, rarely acknowledged, telephone, the sooner you can establish a dialogue with a booking decision maker the better your chances of making tangible progress.

<https://jazz-clubs-worldwide.com>

Jazz Archive



17.

The First Valamar Jazz Festival. Porec, Istria, Croatia

Festival Diary 9th. of July 2010

Porec is a town located on the west coast of Istria. Due to its extraordinary geographical position, its natural attractions and cultural monuments, Porec is today one of the most important touristic sites in Croatia. The town which was designed in its current form by Romans two thousand years ago still preserves the traces of its rich past in its Old Town, and displays numerous cultural monuments, including the early christian Euphrasius's Basilica from the sixth century, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The Valamar Jazz Festival site was situated on the island of Sveti Nikola, opposite Porec, in the grounds of a hotel, beautiful surroundings, and a the view of the sea and the Town.

The Festival Director, Tamara Obrovac, made the opening announcements, firstly in Croatian, and then in English, to a capacity audience. The press where there in force. Writers, photographers, and cameramen.



Claudia Acuña

The first artist on-stage was Claudia Acuña Claudia Acuña. Chilean singer and composer born in 1971 in Santiago. Her last album, En Este Momento, was recorded in 2009 for Marsalis

Music and produced by Brandford Marsalis. It consists of ten compositions which bring Claudia's perception of the combination of the musical heritage of her native Chile and jazz tradition. The musicians with whom she recorded En Este Momento and with whom she has been performing for years will accompanied her at Porec as well. Her performance was well received and made for an interesting and eclectic set that constituted a rewarding start to the festival programme. A break. Wine, beer, and soft drinks served with singular efficiency by a couple of hard working ladies who quickly reducing the pressing crowns of thirsty festival goers to manageable proportions.

Dave Holland & Pepe Habichuela Flamenco Quintet featuring Josemi Carmona



The blue skies began to transform from the blue of the day to the blue of the night as Dave Holland took the stand. Dave Holland (1946), bassist, composer and band leader, is a musician whose projects have been considered the best on the jazz scene in the last ten years. The two Grammy awards and numerous first places at the

Top Ten of Down Beat magazine, both for his quintet and his big band, undoubtedly confirm that. He started his career at the age of twenty at Ronnie Scott Club in London, where Miles Davis heard him for the first time and soon invited him to join his band.

Pepe Habichuela (1944) is a member of the big Habichuela family and the person who has, together with Paco de Lucia and Enrique Morente, made flamenco popular outside Spain

Dave Holland & Pepe Habichuela virtuosos par excellence were supported three other members of the Habichuela family of musicians. Their amalgam of the traditional music of Spain and jazz brought the audience to their feet at the conclusion of this first day of the festival.

After the concert invited guests were taken to the mainland on characterful seagoing vessel and soon found themselves in the wonderful garden of the recently renovated Villa Polesini. Young Croatian jazz musicians on the bandstand, visiting musicians sitting in, a splendid buffet with ham, cheese, pasta, and drinks that included champagne, white and wine, and chilled water for the abstemious.



A wonderful end to a wonderful first day. And so to bed: 3.30am.

18.

Monday Night Jazz Jam In Ljubljana

Though I have often traversed Slovenia en route to Croatia, my Son Adam and his family live and work in Zagreb, my visits have always been transitory, just stopping to fill the car with petrol, or to take money from a cash machine.

I decided to take a holiday in the Slovenian coastal resort of Isola. My daughter Laura was there for a few days during the month of May and was much impressed by the unspoiled non-touristic ambience. How right she was I thought to myself, a glass of cool Spritz to hand, sitting in the sunshine, looking out across the marina, out to the blue sea of the bay and the upland 'Karst' that embraced it.



Scenery and Spritz apart, jazz and jazz clubs are never too distant from my thoughts. I checked out the Slovenian jazz scene on Jazz Clubs Worldwide - yes I too can be a user. In fact the original impetus to start Jazz Clubs Worldwide was a personal guide to locate jazz clubs during my own travels. 'Jazz Club Gajo'. Beethovnova 8, Ljubljana. They listed a jam session on Monday evenings. However knowing something of the vagaries of Europe during the holiday season I sent an email to the organiser, bass player Nikola Matosic, no problem, came the reply. Jam sessions every Monday throughout during the summer. The venue was a garden near to the parliament building. He added that he looked forward to meeting me. So Monday found us on the autoroute leaving the coast and heading for Ljubljana.

Ljubljana is a city I had also skirted many times but never visited. How the rush from A to B results in such sad omissions. What a beautiful city centre. A calm river running

between riverside houses and shops, Ancient, Baroque and Art Nouveau styles, waterside restaurants and bars. I had read about the work of the Slovenian architect Jože Plecnik and recognize at once 'The Triple Bridge (*Tromostovje*)' and the wonderful colonnades.

Two meals later and after much sightseeing, evening came our way and it was off to find the Jazz Club Gajo. A secluded garden. A wooden bandstand. A bar. The usual offices. Tables and chairs scattered around, most under large sun-shielding umbrellas.

8.30 pm. The house band were making ready. And what a good band it was playing hard swinging modern jazz from the very first bar. After playing a very enjoyable set, the jam session started . Young local musicians, some studying at music academies both in Slovenia and Austria. High standards of musicianship, and rare in my experience of such sessions, a willingness to listen to what the other guys were doing.



We received a very open and friendly welcome from Nikola Matosic and the other musicians. I

can tell you frankly, that if I did not live more than one thousand four hundred kilometres from Ljubljana would be down there most Mondays.

So if you ever find yourself in this very beautiful and friendly country do check out the Jazz Club Gajo. Out of doors in the summer and indoors for the remainder of the year. The next time I drive to Zagreb, I know exactly where I will be taking a break in my journey.

Note: Jazz Club Gajo. Now closed down. (The same old story)

19.

Croatian jazz great Petrovic dies at 75

ZAGREB (AFP) – Croatian jazz great Bosko Petrovic, who has played and recorded with many international stars, died here Monday at the age of 75, the national musicians' association said.

Petrovic, born in 1935 in the northern town of Bjelovar, was a vibraphone player, composer, arranger, producer and pedagogue.

In 1959 he founded the Zagreb Jazz Quartet, inspired by the local musical tradition and known for its original style labelled Balkan jazz.



During an eight-year period the band performed throughout the former Yugoslavia and Europe.

Petrovic later led other jazz bands. In 1988 he founded his own jazz club -- 1B.P. Club and the Jazzette record company.

Petrovic played and recorded with international jazz stars including Clark Terry, Ernie Willkins, Art Farmer, Joe Pass, Buck Clayton, Joe Turner, Kenny Drew and Alvin Queen, his club said.

President Ivo Josipovic, in a letter of condolences to Petrovic's family, lauded him as a "jazz icon of European importance."

Peter Maguire writes:

During my last visit to Zagreb in October 2010 I visited the BP Jazz Club a couple of times. They were featuring various groups and performers during the course of the Zagreb Jazz Festival. A really well appointed club situated in the centre of town. On the

occasions I had been to the club there was always a near capacity crowd of mixed age range.

I had been introduced to Bosko Petrovic on my previous visit to Zagreb. A large man, he had his own reserved table near to the bandstand, a glass of wine near to hand. I assume that he was a pretty good businessman in addition to being a top class musician.

I do hope that the BP Jazz Club will continue to exist and thrive on into the future. One of the sad things about the jazz scene in general is that once the patron is no longer around venues tend to vanish with some rapidity. Let us hope that the BP Jazz Club is an exception to this general rule.

Note: The club closed within a month of his passing.

20.

Under Thirty Five - And Do Like Jazz

If you are in Manchester, England on a Wednesday evening check out The Indigo Bar. 460 Withington Rd. Withington, South Manchester, M20 4AN. Its a delight. You will find a weekly jam session organised and directed by saxophonist Ed Kainyek.

This dynamic individual knows just how to keep the proceedings under control in a manner that renders his underlying firmness almost imperceptible. Instances of fourteen front-men playing sixty four choruses each do not occur. There is usually a very good house rhythm section and Ed devotes time to communicating with both the musicians and the audience.

With any jam sessions there is always a disparity between the levels of musical ability and competence doing its stuff on *The Stand*. However in general everyone does get their moment and the overall level is in fact agreeably high.

But for me the real significance is the average age of the audience. Once into the session the bar is packed to minimum elbow room with individuals in their early twenties. There is a real buzz! Sure The Indigo is a place for a *great hang*, but the observable fact is that a large percentage of the people are there because of the music.

This poses a question against the assumption that younger people are not interested in jazz. Well at The Indigo you can see for yourself that this assumption is in fact incorrect. There is a lesson to be learned here for anyone interested in promoting jazz to a younger and wider potential audience.

The Indigo Bar. 460 Withington Rd. Withington, South Manchester, M20 4AN

Jam session every Wednesday. Starts around 10.00pm until 12.30am

Note: Under Thirty Five - And Do Like Jazz - But the bar new owner doesn't. A familiar story. Jazz fills the place. But he thinks he can do better with some other attraction.

21.

Good News From Perth Australia

I received this letter from Roy Burton from Perth in Australia. Though he outlines some of the problems confronting jazz in Australia, also applicable to many other parts of the world, his story in general is very heartening indeed. It does go to show, yet again, how much the jazz scene depends upon the enthusiasm of individuals.

Dear Jazz Clubs World Wide

I play trombone and saxophone in a traditional jazz band in Perth, Western Australia. I read your site and note the comments regarding the lack of work for bands and the possible demise of the music. I'd like to tell you about my experience and perhaps it might give some food for thought.

I have played in Corner House Jazz Band since 1980.

The band has been invited to Sacramento twice, to Malaysia, New Zealand and Borneo. Since 1980 the band has played at the Railway Hotel in North Fremantle, for a Saturday afternoon session every week. In the early days the pub, which had at the time a floor area of about 100 square metres in the room where the band played, would be packed with up to 300 people. There were no chairs or tables, everyone stood.

The pub was sold at the time Australia won the America's Cup, about 1987. All the Fremantle pubs suddenly became worth several times their previous

value and most of them changed hands in the lead up to the America's Cup challenge in Fremantle. America won the cup back and all the pubs went down in value.



The Railway Hotel has changed hands several times over the years. Fortunately each successive landlord has kept the band on, but the heady days pre-Americas cup haven't returned.

In the 1980s there were as many as six bands playing in various pubs in Perth and Fremantle, on Saturday afternoons. In every case the landlord paid the band and sought to recover his costs by bar sales as there was no door charge. Gradually over the years those pubs have been either knocked down or redeveloped, or they have been made into trendy theme pubs. There are also now small bars, but they are all too small to economically accommodate a band, even if the band played free.

About 20 years ago, the Railway Hotel jazz crowd had diminished and it looked to me that it would be quite likely that the gig would be terminated. I looked around for another place to play but because of the diminishing number of pubs, I couldn't find anything. I looked also for a suitable hall, so that we could run our own gig and charge on the door.

My wife and I own a commercial building which has a cellar of about 80 square metres. I decided that we would convert this into a jazz venue for the band to play in each week. We would charge on the door and allow people to bring their own drinks.

My wife and I have been avid collectors of advertising memorabilia over the years. We decorated the walls with early enamel advertising signs, bought old sewing machine bases to make into tables, and bought chairs and church pews at auctions. We decided to open one evening a week, Fridays, and charged \$5 admission and the band shared the takings at the end of the night. In the beginning our audience was pretty much jazz club members, all on the older side and many expecting to have the same seat each week. It looked like the jazz videos you see on YouTube, where the video is taken from the back of a room and you see all the grey heads in front of the band.

However, over the years our audience has gradually changed. We now have a strong following from the age of 20 upwards, and the crowd still includes many over 60s. We have many enquiries to play at weddings, 21st birthdays, 30th birthdays, you name it. We now turn down more gigs than we accept. Far from young people not liking jazz,

they love it. Quite often young people will come back and bring their parents or grandparents.

The jazz scene in Perth (and I think around Australia), is contracting and opportunities to play are diminishing. The whole pub scene has changed but musicians haven't. They still wait to be invited to play rather than creating their own opportunities. Consequently as they don't play often, their skills diminish. When they do play, it's not in a regular band, but they get a band together for the rare jobs that they do. This means that they play the same old tunes all the time and it all becomes a sort of the lowest common denominator.

Sadly, our band is now the only one in Perth that works regularly. We still have the Railway Hotel weekly Saturday gig, which has now picked up and is going along quite nicely, although we are still paid the same as we were 20 years ago. The Jazz Cellar, where we play every Friday evening has now been going for 20 years. It is this that generates our extra work. We open at 5pm every Friday afternoon for ticket sales and normally are sold out in half an hour. We now charge \$25 and have a capacity of 100, so you can see it's a well paid gig. People queue from 4pm. They bring their own drinks and food. We have an arrangement with a pizza shop nearby who takes phone orders and delivers free to the cellar.

The success of the Jazz Cellar is as much due to the ambiance, atmosphere, and mystique of the place as it is the music. The venue is tucked away down a lane-way behind a Salvation Army shop, with an old style red telephone box as the entrance. You go through the phone box and down stairs into the cellar. The light level is low, lighting is provided by old style oil lamps converted to electricity. The walls are covered in enamel signs, the old chairs are all different, which gives it a lived in, homely sort of feel. The tables are all old sewing machine bases with oak tops. The floor is bare concrete, no carpet or other covering.

Corner House Jazz Band plays each week. It is a "hot" band. Although 4 members are over 70, they are not tired old men when it comes to playing. The bass player joined us when he was 22 and has been with the band about 12 years. The latest arrival, the drummer is 23, and he has been with us for almost a year.

There are several videos on YouTube and I think Vimeo of the band and the cellar. All has not been plain sailing all the time. We had council problems early on as we didn't conform to building regulations for a Public Building. Later we had licensing problems but the government changed the licensing act to accommodate us. The Jazz Cellar is listed on the local council's heritage list, for its cultural contribution to the City of Vincent. What we have managed to achieve is a venue which is exciting in itself, and combined that with a hot band, and created a very close atmosphere. People love it and we could, with all honesty, play for private functions every Saturday evening at the Jazz Cellar. The point about all this is that any band could do the same.

Best wishes, Roy Burton

When: Friday nights, doors open 5:45pm

Where: Cnr Buxton St and Scarborough Beach Rd, Mt Hawthorn

Tel: 9447 8111

Good for: live jazz on Friday nights

Doom And Gloom - But We Still Have The Music

Reports from many parts of the globe and conversations with musicians give a definite impression that in general things are tough. Fewer gigs. Less money. A general malaise. I suppose it would be naive to expect that jazz should be excluded from the financial problems that continue to plague large numbers of people. Economic troughs, in a recognizably contemporary sense, have been a feature of life since at least the seventeenth century and so logically we can expect an upturn at some time in the future - we hope!



However, I still consider that we are a fortunate bunch of individuals, both musicians and jazz fans, we still have the music.

I caught the last set at The Music Village in Brussels on last Saturday. A very high quality rhythm section and a beautifully balanced performance from singer Sabine Kuehlich. The audience loved it. Quality music with a genuine rapport with the listeners. This is really what it is all about in the final analysis. Playing or listening to quality music and then out into the night air uplifted and with a state of mind where you can, even if only for a moment, say to yourself "stuff the bankers."

Hot Clube De Portugal - Fire Totally Destroys This Historic Club

When I put Jazz Clubs Worldwide online some thirteen years ago, the very first club to send me information was the Hot Clube de Portugal. So it is with considerable sadness, following on from a call on Skype from Claude Moreira, that I must tell you that The Club has been totally destroyed by fire. Not only The Club, but musical instruments, and an irreplaceable collection of recordings and archive material.

The Hot Clube de Portugal was founded in 1948 and is one of the oldest jazz clubs in the world. Many international names and bands have appeared there and it also provided a venue for more local talent and took a keen interest in young musicians and their jazz education.



The club was situated in the basement of building that was a part of an official a local government complex. It would seem that not much attention had been directed to the proper maintenance of the building. The rebirth of the Hot Clube de Portugal depends very much upon what input the local government administration is prepared to initiate.

Claude Moreira would be very happy to receive the support of the international jazz community, not particularly money, but both vocal and written support to ensure that the political decision makers can see that the demise of such a valuable institution should not be allowed to occur.

My View



24.

The Music Village, Brussels

This wonderful jazz club has been very important in my jazz life and for countless other individual musicians and groups since it was first opened twenty years ago by the late and much missed Paul Huygens. *l'esprit* of 'The Music Village' has been continued by Paul's widow Lucie Saeys.

The current situation in this virus inflicted world is dire. I have spent good deal of my life in and out of jazz clubs, in Europe, and worldwide. This is the chosen life style of a very significant percentage of jazz musicians. Our way of living has been put on hold. No longer the packed audience and the small bandstands. Our pleasure and theirs. Will we ever get out familiar way of life back again? At this juncture is very difficult to know. Our concerns in the face of large numbers of people dying from this foul pestilence might seem unimportant.

And this particular moment in time it is so. However, culture, high and low, is an important component in a civilized and fulfilling life style, regardless of the money obsessed might think. At some time in the future these issues will need to be addressed. Meanwhile, we must take care to stay as safe as possible. Practice hard. Listen to the music. Learn new tunes, develop more



rounded skills, and look forward to whenever brighter days begin to appear over the horizon.

<https://themusicvillage.com>

Pre-Chewed - Easy To Swallow

Easy listening. What is its function? The first food given to babies following on from an exclusive diet of milk is normally some smooth and macerated mélange that will slip down easily. Though one has to admit that these preparations do at least have the virtue of being nutritious. Easy listening, slips down easily, but in general lacks the nutritional element.



I do of course realize that music affects people in a myriad of different ways. For example if I am in a Chinese restaurant I wince when the

background music is some *Cladermanish* plonking. In an Indian restaurant I like to hear classical ragas though Bollywood film music can be engaging. Many French supermarkets are a delight not only because of their product range, but sound of good jazz emanates from the sound system.

I have recently been looking at an intensively promoted stage in the career of an individual who it is claimed embodies the - Future of Jazz. The music though competently played is without doubt aimed to be inoffensive. Videos and much media attention extol the excellence of both the said individual and the music with endorsements the kind that are used to promote some new brand of cheese or similar. The reality is this is the musical equivalent of what is spoon fed to babies out of small pots.

Does it matter? I think its does. The public are encouraged to think that this is music that is both significant and iconic. It is neither. The main reason for its intensive

promotion is that the marketing people think here is a bland and acceptable product out of which money can be made.

Simple Isn't Easy

The late Red Mitchell composed and penned the lyrics for a song entitled 'Simple Isn't Easy' the title track of an album of the same name.

Red was a man who knew a thing or two about jazz. For there exists in the mind of those aspiring, or those perhaps wanting to aspire to the delusion that: Simple = Easy.

Take yourself off to the average 'Open Mike' just about anywhere in the world and I will guarantee you will find vocalists, both male and female, suffering from the delusion that 'Summertime' is an easy song to perform. Oh dear! When in fact the opposite is the case. A song such as the much abused 'Summertime' requires real talent and experience to perform in a convincing manner.



I once wrote a piece about this beautiful melody being one of the most abused tunes in the jazz repertoire. A good friend of mine, a bass player with a real knowledge of jazz history, came up with the notion that it might make a good theme for a performed exploration: 'An Evening Of The Most Abused Tunes In Jazz'.

Another man I knew well who had an interesting and varied life started out as a figurative artist. Became a dancer on the West End Stage. Then became a very accomplished jazz drummer. Spent the later part of his life painting. I remember well him saying to me "When you start out to learn to play the drums all you want to do is just beat the hell out of them without thinking about it. You move on from this and spend years of study and practice so you can get back to your original premise to just beat the hell out of them without thinking about it.". Wise words I think and universally applicable. Arguably playing a ballad with authority is a much more difficult thing to do than this or

that at two hundred and fifty beats a minute. Red Mitchell was right simplicity is only achieved through blood, sweat, and maybe tears.



Osmosis - Or - Technique Is In The Genes

My good friend Joe Higham sent me the link to an interview with Charlie Parker that had been posted on YouTube. Most interesting because in general not having had much opportunity to listen to Bird in verbal exchanges rather than the musical variety. He comes across as being a highly intelligent and very articulate individual.

What really made me really sit up and listen was the assumption, on the part of the interviewer was, that Bird had by some form of osmosis acquired an incredible technique without having to work at it. The assumption that *some folk* just have it their in their genes. Pick up the horn and out streams *Donna Lee* - no problem.

It was a fairly common assumption at that time that some musicians, usually non-white musicians, really did not have to spend time in the woodshed. Parker was quick to disillusion him mentioning deep study and fifteen hours a day practice sessions. But from the tone of the interviewer's voice you could perceive he was most surprised and perhaps still had some doubts as to the veracity of this concept.

Today perhaps vis-à-vis jazz such attitudes are long defunct. But at the time and for some considerable time after such, may I say racist assumptions, were all to common. I will even confess to being something of a victim to such attitudes when I started to interest myself in jazz in my teens. I am sure that many aspiring jazz musicians never really developed to their full potential assuming that instrumental fluency would in some way descend from the clouds. Or even worse that striving to acquire technique somehow sullied the purity of the genre. From memory, I remember reading in Hugues Panassié's 'Dictionary of Jazz' that Parker played acceptable jazz until around nineteen thirty seven at which point displayed instrumental dexterity that was quite out of keeping with what Hugues Panassié considered to be real jazz.

I was recently reading an essay by Alan Bennett where he was discussing the fact that people like to assume, indeed such assumptions are encouraged, that many notable

artists somehow *“just had it”* and their subsequent eminence was reached, with talent perhaps, but without study or hard work. In fact academic studies have looked at this phenomena in some depth and confirmed such assumptions are widely held.

Why do people hold such cling to such opinions? It is a course the whole basis of celebrity and the promotion of spurious minute talent. *“I could do that to if I wanted to. I in front of some imperceptive and hooting audience.”* Talent who needs it? Sweat, study, and achievement? Who needs it?

I am very saddened to observe that the racist, *“in the genes”*, school of thought is still active. I have recently been watching truly wonderful young Chinese and Japanese classical musicians on YouTube. Some of the published comments are shameful: *“Asian of course that is why they are so accomplished” and so on and so on...*

To return to Charlie Parker. You can judge from the tone of his response that he was more than a little disturbed to hear the implication that some how his consummate skills had just dropped out of the sky.

Like the man said, I forget who, genius is twenty percent talent and eighty percent sweat. Blrd knew that even if the interviewer was in blissful ignorance.



Talent - Where does it come from

Chinese Opera

Looking on YouTube at Chinese Opera I came across a truly astonishing video of the seven year old Taoyang Wang. Even if you are not familiar with Chinese Opera, maybe you find it difficult to like or appreciate, you would still be impressed by the effortless virtuosity of this small boy.



How does, one might ask, a small child of seven years of age, acquire a mastery of what is an incredibly and demanding art form? Watching the video you will see mastery, poise, a seriousness of purpose that transforms this child into something quite remarkable. At the end of the video, when he is being spoken to by the presenter of the television programme, Taoyang Wang becomes once again a small boy with the voice and demeanour of a small child.

Traditional Chinese opera or Xiqu, is a form of musical theatre in China with roots going back to the early periods in China. It is an amalgamation of various art forms that existed in ancient China, and evolved gradually over more than a thousand years, reaching its mature form in the 13th century during the Song dynasty (960–1279). Early forms of Chinese theater are simple, but over time they incorporated various art forms, such as music, song and dance, martial arts, acrobatics, costume and make-up art, as well as literary art forms to become traditional Chinese opera.

There are over a hundred regional branches of traditional Chinese opera today. In the 20th century the Peking opera emerged in popularity and has come to known as the "national theatre" of China, but other genres like Yue opera, Cantonese opera, Yu opera, kunqu, qinqiang, Huangmei opera, pingju, and Sichuan opera are also performed regularly before dedicated fans. Their differences are mainly found in the

music and topolect; the stories are often shared and borrowed. With few exceptions (such as revolutionary operas and to some extent Shanghai operas) the vast majority of Chinese operas (including Taiwanese operas) are set in China before the 17th century, whether they are traditional or newly written.



Never Mind The Quality Feel The Hype

How often do we hear proclaimed loudly by the publicists, in newspapers, in magazines, on radio, on television " Behold the new Billie Holiday " or the linking of some rather average talent to artists, usually dead, who really were great.

It really is astonishing what hype can and does achieve. Constant repetition drives the message in. Large numbers of people consciously or unconsciously fall in to agreement. What a joy for the marketing men who I suspect really do not in general care less about the quality of the product just so long as the message sells tracks, album, ticket, and all the other money making adjuncts.

So what is wrong with making money? The answer is there is nothing wrong with making money. But what is really disturbing is the presentation of, and the public acceptance of, the *faux*, as opposed to the genuine.



Recently I was talking to a friend of mine who worked for Granada television during the sixties. Those were halcyon days. Great specific issues programmes such as 'World In Action' costume and contemporary drama made with intelligence and care. Does the commercial television sector now ever put money into wonderful productions such as the acclaimed ' Brideshead Revisited ' to take just one example. No way. Keep it cheap. Stuff the quality and take care of the *Bottom Line*.

A sad result of all this dumbing down, which in the final analysis is designed to sell more cheaply made products to an ever larger and compliant public, is that there is less and less appreciation of excellence. We are encouraged to think, " I could do that ", without any need for real talent and endless hard work. Stardom, so called, and celebrity has become an end in itself. To be celebrated without having any of the unique qualities once were the reason why individuals became subject to appreciation.

Minority tastes are not really worth worrying about. So say the *Bottom Line* men. Put jazz on television in a prime spot on a Saturday evening. " Don't make me laugh. Where is there money to be made from that? But here was a time when such things did happen. On both American and British television.

Feed people with pallid substitutes and inevitably they become unable to discriminate between the average and the real thing. Its what we see happening in many areas of artistic endeavour. Crap masquerading as gold.

It would be foolish to deny that there are significant numbers of people of do use judgement and discrimination. People who know the real from the *faux*. Who become irritated by being asked to believe that *Virtual Reality* should be their *Preferred Reality*. When presented with such obvious mediocrity they need to stand up and shout so that the whole world can hear it " The Emperor Has No Clothes ".

Saxophone Mouthpieces and the Quest for the Perfect Reed

A year or so in a moment of barely concealed lunacy I decided I would start to learn the Soprano Saxophone. "So What" you might say. Well I do play the Valve Trombone. But I must also add that I have always been attracted to the saxophone, but in the long ago days of my youth, saxophones were a rarity. It was a Brass World that I lived in. Brass bands were common. The North of England produced a very high percentage of brass playing musicians who had gone on to achieve national and international recognitions playing in the brass sections of great orchestras.

So I brought a reasonably good soprano saxophone on eBay. It was only then I became aware of the mysterious question of reeds and mouthpieces.

Brass players do change their mouthpieces from time to time. Some do not. I have used the same mouthpiece for more than thirty years. So it came as something of a surprise to realize that, in the world of saxophones, matters were rather more complicated. Reed brands and classification number. Mouthpieces have a bewildering array of specifications: Baffle. Body. Beak. Bore. Break Point. Chamber. Chamfer. Facing Curve Facing Curve Length. Floor. Frontal Rail. Inner Side Walls. Ramp. Shank. Side Rails. Table. Throat. Tip Opening. Tip Rail. Window.

Words from well known saxophone dealers website:

"Choosing the right mouthpiece for you can be a daunting task. You've got an almost infinite amount of choices, and from among them you are expected to find exactly what works for you without being able to try them all and many times without the most basic knowledge as to what actually makes a mouthpiece a good mouthpiece.

The main problem is not only is each mouthpiece a little different- each horn is a little different and each player is very different. The combinations are endless, and what works for one person might not work for another- and conversely, what one person thinks is the worst sounding mouthpiece they've ever played might be a very good mouthpiece for their friend."

All heavy going for the likes of a mere brass player.

So we come to Smigly. The creation of Allen Mezquida an accomplished alto saxophonist. As a regular on the New York jazz scene in the 80s and 90s, he performed and recorded with many of the greatest musicians still playing at that time, like Art Blakey and Gerry Mulligan. His 1996 solo album, *A Good Thing*, was well-received by critics. To quote:

"I was more frustrated with jazz's tiny place in the current cultural landscape than with my jazz career," So he turned to another of his artistic passions. The visual arts—cartooning, in particular— had always attracted him.

I am a great fan of Smigly. They combine wonderful animation and characterization with incisive and thought-provoking story lines. Check him out. I can assure you that you will not be not be disappointed.



So on to the world of finding the perfect reed.

All it Needs is 10.000 Hours

There has been quite a lot of comment recently concerning the notion that 10,000 of practice is the formula to a virtuosity that will transcend mere talent. Do you believe this? I do not.

You cannot doubt that such a 10.000 hour regimen will lead to a high level of competence in any field. But as a proven threshold to genius and universal acclaim - no way. This is an adjunct to the comforting notion that natural talent does not exist. Anyone who mixes with creative individuals will know that the concept that talent is an illusion will be more than aware that this is complete tosh. I am convinced to that role of talent applies elsewhere to anything from athletics to clog dancing.



You will recall in Amadeus the play written by Peter Shaffer, Antonio Salieri cannot understand why he a man of God-fearing sobriety and high musical skills, is unable to produce the totally memorable music that is composed by Amadeus Mozart. The answer is very simple, Amadeus Mozart had a natural talent that Antonio Salieri did not possess.

It is also true that even the exceptionally gifted have to sweat to achieve. But for most of us even an excess of sweat does not produce comparable creative highs.

Who has the wish to deny that natural talent does not exist? Countless individuals who can comfort themselves with a thought that "Sure I could have done that too. If I had really wanted to."

The twenty-first century music and celebrity industry elevates the mediocre with a barrage of hype. There was a time when, Fame, was dependent upon achievement. This has been replaced by the marketable commodity of, Celebrity that needs no

tangible basis, it just is. It is seductive in so far as it makes ordinary individuals feel that they too could be up there. If they really wanted to. A marketers dream scenario.

We are not all the same. Some people just have that little extra. It is perhaps combination of perception and can include physical attributes. Fingers that can span that difficult chord. Legs long enough to make a world-class sprinter. To deny the existence of inherent talent is profoundly stupid.

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