

**MUSIC FROM OUT THERE, IN HERE:
25 YEARS OF THE LONDON JAZZ FESTIVAL
Emma Webster and George McKay**

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Foreword: 25 years on...	1
Introduction	3
Chapter 1: The early years of jazz and festival in London	5
Anti-jazz	6
Early Jazz Festivals	7
Beaulieu Jazz Festival	8
The National Jazz Festival	10
Chapter 2: Towards the London Jazz Festival	15
The birth of Bracknell and Camden Festivals	15
The new jazz of the 1980s	21
Festivals in the city	27
Chapter 3: The birth of a new festival and its early years: 1993-2000	31
1993: The first London Jazz Festival	31
1994-1995: New venues, new sponsorship	41
1996-1998: The Oris years	47
1999: But is it jazz?	50
2000: The new millennium	55
Chapter 4: The BBC years: 2001-2012	57
2001: BBC Radio 3	57
2002-2003: 'The music of tomorrow'	61
2004-2007: The festival grows	69
2008-2011: Past, present, future	75
2012: From feast (Cultural Olympiad) to famine (austerity), and beyond (a new title sponsor)	83
Chapter 5: The EFG Years: 2013-Present	85
2013: 21 years' young	85
2014: Jazz education	90
2015: In the clubs and onto the streets	93
2016-2017: London	99
Conclusion: #jazzimpact	105

Bibliography/Sources	114
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Foreword: 25 years on...

John Cumming, Director, London Jazz Festival

Landmarks come and go, and the 25th year of the London Jazz Festival offers an opportunity not just to celebrate the dynamic that connects the jazz generations but also to reflect back on the festival itself.

In a year, 2017, where the centenary of the first jazz recordings marks one stage in a history that stretches further back, the London Jazz Festival – in its own quarter-century year – itself marks jazz past and present. As it has since it began. And – as festivals should – it also enters the jazz clairvoyant's tent, gazing into the crystal ball. Alongside the artists who have helped shape the music, today's movers and shakers are finding their own creative pathways that will steer us into the future, in the true spirit of a music that thrives on innovation and new energy.

Jazz occupies a special place in London. Over the decades, jazz in this city has connected with new cultures and new communities, making music that has become an essential part of London's cultural fabric. During the festival's ten days, you find it in venues large and small, in cinemas and art galleries, on the airwaves and online – and playing to all ages, from Jazz for Toddlers sessions to a dedicated audience for whom jazz has been the soundtrack of their lives.

The meticulous work that follows in this history charts the festival journey across decades, and probes the bigger picture that surrounds it. It's not just about the music, extraordinary and inspiring as that can be. It's about the way that what might be seen as a niche area of creative work can reflect and respond to external change – and, we hope, make a difference.

Not just within a city, but as part of worldwide reach that transcends barriers of race and ethnicity, and, at its best, celebrates a global mix of gender, class and generation.

For those of us involved in the festival, and even though we are committed to our aims and aspirations, both short and longer term, it's all too easy to lose sight of the wood among the trees. This new history of the festival not only reminds us of the highs and lows, evolution and the rationale, but also moments of revelation, frustration, and intense pleasure.

I'm not sure that those of us involved in the day-to-day, year-to-year business of

getting the show on the road ever really get to the bottom of how it all works. Emma and George have found their way through piles of randomly stored paperwork, sounds, strongly-held opinion, and often only half-remembered anecdote, to illuminate this process.

Perhaps more important, they have helped to remind us of our core values – some of which stretch back to the pre-history of the London Jazz Festival. Their approach has been painstaking, sympathetic, and sometimes provocative. Most important, they have immersed themselves in our world while managing to make their own judgements. The outcome is I think an immensely valuable piece of work that informs our practice as a producer of live music, and at the same time marks the essential role of academic research in evaluating the impact of the cultural sector in a wider context.

Looking back at the materials that Emma and George unearthed in their festival archaeology... well, 25 years ago, social media hadn't been invented, the internet was a nascent force, and we still lived in a world where the old school was only just beginning to be re-invigorated by a fast-changing new world of communication technology – let alone fast-shifting social, economic and cultural change.

Yet the music retains its fundamental spirit – a spirit that fires the urge of the individual artist to create, and to communicate with an audience that continues to value the simple and profound live experience of a band on a stage. And while this experience still lies at the heart and soul of our festival, the new world allows us to spread the message ever more widely through means that might allow a performance in London to be experienced simultaneously in the further reaches of the planet. The next 25 years will be an equally fascinating journey.

Festivals are a mammoth team effort, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has ever been part of making it all happen, and then making it happen again, and again – the funders, donors and sponsors, our ever-expanding audience, and of course the thousands of musicians who have provided countless hours of pleasure and stimulation, some of them just starting on their creative path, others no longer with us.

And I thank a Serious team that includes directors and staff, freelancers and volunteers, and the authors of this history. As the hashtag – something that we never dreamt of a quarter of a century ago – for the 25th festival proclaims: We are Jazz...

Introduction

The opening night

On Friday 14th May 1993, the Union Chapel in Islington hosted the opening night party of a brand new festival. Supported by the 'spine-chillingly powerful' British singer Carol Grimes and thunderous twenty-piece percussion-based London Afro Bloc, the party was headlined by New Orleans' Rebirth Brass Band, who, with their combination of roots jazz, funk, hip hop and reggae, as *The Guardian's* jazz critic John Fordham recalls, 'were the perfect harbingers of the idiomatically freewheeling and inclusive London Jazz Festival yet to come.'

"... one of the best jazz festivals in the world."

The Guardian

Grimes' folk-jazz group with its guitars, percussion and the 'graceful lyricism' of Annie Whitehead's trombone, along with Afro Bloc's more carnivalesque sound, made for a contrasting yet complementary accompaniment to the exuberant Americans, whose sousaphone-led brass bass, rough slide trombones and kicking rock solid snare drums played a euphoric version of Herbie Hancock's 1970s *Head Hunters* as well as some 'luxurious reggae'. As Fordham said at the time: 'It's showbiz all right, but as a party-band it's a hoot, literally.'

By putting on a young American band who looked to the music's roots, its 'vigorous present', and to the future of jazz, alongside young British talents from London itself, so this first gig epitomised the new London Jazz Festival's mission statement:

May 1993 heralds the start of something new and exciting for the London jazz scene. After too many years without a jazz festival of the scale provided by other European cities, London will at last reflect the important cultural contributions made by its own committed and creative musicians, in 10 days of eclectic jazz-related activity from around the world.... Involving more international jazz stars and top venues than ever before, it is seen as a prototype of a festival that will spread right across London in years to come.

“The London festival still puts an emphasis on the adventure of being human and also becoming *more* human, and jazz, to me *that* word means ‘I dare you to go beyond – like in *Star Trek*! – places where no-one goes’... And I see that in director John Cumming’s attitude... when he talks and he gets really excited about something, it’s like his life, he wants to keep *that* rich adventure, you know... The London Jazz Festival’s a great festival.”

Wayne Shorter, Saxophonist 2016

The aim was to create a London Jazz Festival that both reflected and contributed to London’s status as a world city, as well as functioning as a kind of cultural melting pot, if that’s not too utopian. At its very best the jazz festival sounds London’s effervescent creative presence as a musical city which has been at the centre of jazz in Britain for over a hundred years and which today is still a major centre for the European jazz movement that’s developed since the 1960s, as well as being an extraordinary site of transatlantic and Commonwealth musical exchanges and dialogues.

Sending a bold message to London that its new jazz festival had arrived, the 1993 event was heralded by 20-metre-high images of jazz musicians projected on to the side of St Pancras railway station, described by *The Guardian* as beginning with ‘a confident shout that has reverberated through the decades since.’ Up to that point, Glasgow had been leading the way as the only British city ‘with the nerve to stage a truly representative mixture of big-time jazz concerts, club event, commissioned pieces, and work-in-progress.’ It was time for London to join the party.

This book, published to coincide with the 25th anniversary of what is now a major fixture in national and international jazz calendars, examines how the event fits into the history of jazz in Britain and into the fabric of London, showing how the festival’s history is part of the history of London itself. It is a visual and cultural history of what *Time Out* has called ‘one of the biggest cultural events of the year’ and *The Times* names ‘one of the world’s great music festivals.’

Chapter 1: The early years of jazz and festival in London

Though far from the cradle of jazz in New Orleans, and the cradle of recorded jazz in New York, our starting observation is that the city of London has a significant history of live jazz that goes back at least a century, and a history of jazz festivals in and around the city that goes back well over half a century. There is today an entire set of works by academics and jazz journalists available on the history and pre-history of the music in Britain, going back as far as, for instance, the late Victorian period, as with Catherine Parsonage's book *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain, 1880-1935*.

The history is a turbulent and compelling one, featuring wonderful new music and sounds, sex scandals, royalty, the pleasure of dancing and the preaching of disapproval, narcotics, underground clubs, racial harmony, racism, war, the destruction and rebuilding of London, festivals, jazz riots, too many early deaths, parades and political demonstrations, media from early radio to online streaming, and more. It is also a rapidly evolving history: London in the 1920s was already becoming a jazz city, one marked by what David Gilbert has described in *The London Journal* as 'the syncopation of different social and cultural beats, by improvisation and experimentation on traditional themes, and by the cosmopolitan fusion of influences from abroad.'

In this book we tell one part of the story, which is also one of its most successful parts: the rise over 25 years of the London Jazz Festival. Of course, London is by no means the oldest still extant jazz festival in Europe – Nice, Montreux, Molde and others have all celebrated and passed their 50th anniversaries, very impressively, and we all nod in timely appreciation of their achievements. Yet London's status as a global multicultural city demands the attention of the ears and eyes of jazz musicians and fans each November. And we gently point out that, although *the* London Jazz Festival is 'only' 25, London and its environs have had a major jazz festival, and often more than one in the same year, since at least the first National Jazz Festival in Richmond in 1961. That is over half a century of festivalising in and around the city with the modern music of jazz.

A century ago, two remarkable ensembles from the United States sprung on London city in one glorious year, shaking its musicians, dancers, fans, new music critics and instant jazz historians all at once in a febrile curiosity. The year was 1919, and a first

British tour by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (ODJB), a group of white jazz musicians, was followed by live performances by the African-American Southern Syncopated Orchestra (SSO). Of course it is likely that jazz arrived in Britain *before* 1919.

The word 'jazz' was in general use at this time and some musical performances defined as jazz had taken place, and jazz sheet music had been available for a couple of years at least. Similarly, World War One soldiers on home leave could hear Dan Kildare and his Clef Club Orchestra at Ciro's Club, for example, in London's West End. Yet the ODJB and the SSO crystallised something important in London for live music making, at venues from dancehalls to Buckingham Palace.

'The creation of jazz. The sensation of America', said the London Palladium programme for the ODJB (with dancer). The ODJB recorded in London also, while members of the larger SSO played with British musicians; each of these contributed to the dissemination of jazz in London and in Britain, and each arguably helped London's burgeoning reputation as a jazz age hotspot. Shall we say that London has never been quite the same place ever again?

Jazz was transmitted not only via live music early on. From records and tapes to CDs, downloads and streaming, the development of recording technology has had a significant impact on its development, and that of popular music more broadly. The disembodiment of the voice also meant that in the early days of jazz records, white people could listen to black music and vice versa with fewer of the obvious restrictions or prejudices which might come about in the live context.

Britain's first specialist jazz record shop, Levy's in London's Whitechapel Road, opened in 1927, the same year as Ronnie Scott (originally Schatt) was born, also in the east end – the Jewish contribution to jazz in London and the UK is as noteworthy as it is in other countries and continents – while *Melody Maker* (from 1926) and *Rhythm* (from 1927) became vital sources of information for musicians and jazz enthusiasts, as well as influencing how people listened to and performed the music. The Bag O'Nails in Kingly Street, Soho, was the home of Britain's first Rhythm Club in the 1930s, which held regular jazz record recitals and lectures, and such rhythm clubs became important opportunities to listen to and talk about records, emulated by the BBC via its *Radio Rhythm Club* programme in the 1940s.

Anti-jazz

Although perhaps not quite on the level of the Anti-Jazz Movement in the Irish

Republic in the 1930s, during these decades there was still great resistance to jazz from the establishment; indeed, of anything that 'smacked of American culture' finding its way into the British way of life. To protect British values from this 'Transatlantic octopus', jazz broadcasting on the recently constituted BBC was controlled through careful selection of 'house' bands and a deliberately diluted jazz, before Lord Reith finally outright banned 'hot music' entirely in 1935.

Around the same time the Musicians' Union (MU) had secured agreement from the Ministry of Labour that it would be consulted over all applications for permits by foreign musicians, the MU's argument being that one of its duties was to protect British musicians by preventing foreign labour from replacing them. By the end of the 1940s, American musicians in particular found it very difficult to perform in Britain, and vice versa.

Although technically not a 'ban', the practicalities mean that effectively for twenty years, from around 1935 to around 1955 – from revivalism to bop, a massive period of jazz innovation – very little live American jazz was heard in the UK. This led to the situation that when Charlie Parker played his European debut at the International Festival de Jazz in Paris in May 1949, the cross-channel ferries were full of London musicians desperate to see and hear the man in person. (Conversely it has been argued that the isolationism of the early 1950s helped to create an exceptionally strong pool of British jazz musicians by protecting them and allowing them to develop at their own pace.)

Early Jazz Festivals

From the first international jazz festival in Nice in 1948 to Beaulieu, Hampshire in 1956 to Montreux in 1967, the jazz festival has long featured as a significant European contribution to the music, drawing on as well as influencing American festivals like Newport, originally established in 1954. Described as a 'decade of festival' by George McKay, the 1950s in Britain were bookended by the Festival of Britain in 1951 – for which London's Southbank Centre was built, of course – and the prototype for the Notting Hill Carnival in January 1959, a Caribbean 'fayre' in St Pancras, organised by Trinidadian communist and journalist, Claudia Jones.

Even prior to this, there are tantalising glimpses of a London-based jazz festival culture in the early postwar years of the late 1940s. For example, a very early jazz festival in Britain was the 'Festival of Jazz' which took place at London's Winter Garden Theatre, Drury Lane, on 24 April 1949 in conjunction with The London Jazz

Club. Performers included Freddy Randall and his Band, The Yorkshire Jazz Band, Mick Gill and his Imperial Jazz Band, Humphrey Lyttelton and his Band, and George Webb. It is not being unkind to point out that this bill compared poorly alongside the Paris festival just a couple of weeks after – apart from Bird, Miles Davis also played there that year, for instance.

It is vital to acknowledge that the 1950s were also an important year for jazz festivals across the Atlantic, with George Wein's inaugural Newport Jazz and Folk Festival (Miles debuted in 1955) and the first Monterey Jazz Festival held in 1958. Touring to London, Birmingham, Newcastle, Bradford and Sheffield, the first Newport Jazz Festival European Tour arrived in Britain in 1959, featuring Dave Brubeck, Dizzy Gillespie, Buck Clayton, and Jimmy Rushing.

These package tours, themselves based on a model developed by American record producer Norman Granz, were to become an important model for American jazz musicians to perform in Britain. While jazz clubs provided fairly regular opportunities to play, however, as Eric Hobsbawm writes in 1959, from the musician's point of view, festivals such as Newport, Nice, Cannes and San Remo were at that time 'spiritually rather than financially satisfactory, like the occasional recitals in the temples of official music [like the Festival Hall]... They are a sort of cultural recognition of jazz, but too infrequent to count much.'

In November 1955 at the Royal Festival Hall, the National Jazz Federation organised its second British Festival of Jazz, in the form of a multiple bill pair of concerts in the afternoon and evening. The brochure's introduction explained to festival-goers that 'during the past year we have tried to maintain a high standard of entertainment, interspersing the regular appearances of exponents of both Traditional and Modern Schools at the Recital Room, with large concerts both at the Festival Hall and in the provinces. We have also tried to give a hearing to the new groups and fresh voices in British jazz, and to welcome visiting jazz personalities to our shows.' The festival's afternoon concert featured modern and the evening's traditional jazz, with a US closing headliner in Big Bill Broonzy.

Beaulieu Jazz Festival

Arguably the most significant event in terms of the history of jazz festivals in Britain was the Beaulieu Jazz Festival on the Beaulieu estate and stately home in Hampshire, first organised by the aristocratic Lord Montagu in 1956 and ending in 1961, the final two years marred by violent clashes between trad and modern jazz

fans. The 1957 festival's slogan linked space and sound: it was to be 'A combination of blue blood and the blues.'

From its modest beginnings, the festival quickly grew into one of Europe's most interesting early jazz festivals, and, as McKay suggests, Beaulieu's form – and indeed, problems – became the prototype for many of the pop festivals and youth music gatherings in Britain over the following decades. In *Tomorrow's People*, the first book to chronicle the British pop festival movement, Jeremy Sandford wrote of the 1958 Beaulieu as 'the first British festival proper, a two-day event that attracted 4,000 people.'

Soon teenage festival-goers were camping under the stars, living free in the woods, smoking marijuana and drinking cider and having sex, against a backdrop of wild music and weird dress. They were called 'ravers'. (Singer Rod Stewart often tells the story that that his first transatlantic solo hit 'Maggie May' from 1971 was 'more or less a true story, about the first woman I had sex with, at the 1961 Beaulieu Jazz Festival.')

In scenes that would be more familiar in a few years between mods and rockers, there were jazz riots in the festival's final two years. The BBC, trying new live outside broadcasts from the jazz festival in 1960, had to cut the show short because of crowd trouble. The banjo from Acker Bilk's band was irreparably damaged – surely there was no more telling symbol of trad vs. modern jazz antagonism than a smashed-up banjo. The 'BEATNIK BEAT-UP' of the 1960 festival, as it was headlined in one newspaper, was reported in the Commonwealth and world press as an extraordinary mix of English aristocratic eccentricity and American jazz madness. Indeed, jazz festivals would quickly become so commonly associated with crowd trouble that it was in fact the *absence* of trouble at the Earlswood Jazz Festival in July 1961 that made an ironic front page headline in *Melody Maker*: 'Wot, no Riots?'

The magazine went on:

Two hundred police and a pack of tracker dogs controlled Britain's biggest jazz festival last weekend. Fifteen thousand people went to Earlswood (Birmingham) where sixteen trad bands played non-stop for 14 hours. BUT THERE WAS NO RIOT. THERE WAS NO ROWDINESS. THE CRITICS OF JAZZ FANS WERE CONFOUNDED.

According to Simon Frith et al, the Beaulieu Festival was also an important symbolic event for British jazz, the images of large crowds of jazz fans in the music as well as the national press and later on television and newsreels creating a sense of a 'jazz community' for the first time. As well as being musically and socially significant, early gatherings such as Beaulieu and the Trinidadian Carnival were also politically so, developing alongside more overtly political events such as the annual Aldermaston Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament marches or in reaction to the worsening racial tension in England.

The National Jazz Festival

Taking on the jazz festival baton from Beaulieu was the National Jazz Festival, first held on the outskirts of London at the Richmond Athletic Ground in 1961, promoted by the National Jazz Federation's Harold Pendleton. Pendleton had been involved in the later Beaulieu Festivals and, in the same summer that Beaulieu was suffering from crowd trouble for the second year running, the first festival at Richmond featured a mix of jazz styles, including the Johnny Dankworth Quartet (and Orchestra), Ken Colyer's Jazzmen, and the more contemporary Joe Harriott Quintet. Pendleton remembered them being 'very polite affairs. You see, you went home in the evening, it was just like going to a concert without a roof on it really.'

By 1963, a June edition of *Crescendo* magazine was writing of the summer 'festive season' that 'the jazz festivals are upon us. There are half a dozen major events this Summer, besides a number of smaller affairs and the usual roistering boatloads that ply our wider and less peaceful estuaries.' This last was a reference to events such as George Webb's annual Floating Festival of Jazz, which started in London in 1957, on a boat with jazz bands and fans on a Sunday afternoon down the Thames from Tower Pier to Margate and back. The Thames as Mississippi. There was also a Northern Floating Jazz Festival, on a boat trip from Liverpool to the Isle of Man which, yes, happily featured on the bill the Merseyssippi Jazz Band.

In his *Jazz News* column in July 1962, Ian McLean provided a witty description of the booming jazz festival scene across the country:

Festivals come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. There is the Mammoth one which lasts for about a week. This is suspiciously tied up with the city's Art and Culture Week and is patronised (in every sense) by civic dignitaries and has just about everything except the massed bands of

Ken Colyer, Mike Cotton, Terry Lightfoot and Acker Bilk marching and counter marching up and down the High Street during the rush hour.

On a smaller scale there is the Festival which lasts about a day or so depending on the availability of large tracts of land on which anything from a fairground to a zoo, or even a circus, can be erected as extra.

Even little villages have Jazz Festivals. Leader of the local youth club engages a couple of groups – style notwithstanding – hires a cheap (in every sense) band from a leading London agency to top the bill in the Scout hut and, all of a sudden, Middlecombe-In-The-Cart has a Jazz Festival. The local rag is impressed, the binge gets loads of publicity and a thunderstorm and the whole stupid thing is a total flop.

Then you can have the mixture as before... adding water. This is called a Floating Festival and the extra hazards include missing the boat – bandleaders do it as well – and a bar which opens as soon as the boat leaves the pier. At nine a.m.

Reflecting changing popular tastes, and as happened with other major jazz festivals like Montreux and Newport, the National Jazz Festival would begin to expand its original jazz remit to include rock and blues; the Rolling Stones were included on the bill for the first time in 1963. In 1964 it was renamed the National Jazz and Blues Festival, and by the mid-1960s, jazz groups had become outnumbered by blues and R&B bands. By 1971, the National Jazz Festival had moved to Reading, again not far from London, and changed its name to The National Jazz, Blues and Rock Festival, before changing to Reading Rock in 1976, with 'National Jazz, Blues and Rock' in smaller lettering on the poster. (Although interestingly, the posters still contain the original logo of a trumpet on a chair up to the late 1980s.)

While jazz was starting to disappear from its own national festival, other jazz festival-style events were taking place in the UK, and, as jazz became more accepted (and funded) by the establishment, so too the crowd trouble which had previously plagued jazz festivals began to dissipate. The Daily Mail International Jazz Festival in June 1963, for example, was sponsored by a newspaper that had regularly been histrionically critical about the antics of the jazz 'ravers' at Beaulieu Festivals a few years previously.

Another jazz-based festival of note was what *The Guardian* describes as the first

London Jazz Festival: 'Jazz Expo '67', which took place indoors in the Royal Festival Hall. Really an eight-part concert series, the Expo was associated with George Wein's Newport Jazz Festival and was part of a European tour sponsored jointly by Pan-American Airways and the US Travel Service as a means of promoting US tourism. By the final Expo in 1970, a classified ad in *The Guardian* boasted that the event was now 'The biggest jazz festival in the world.'

The British and UK-based jazz musicians and improvisers of the late 1960s and 1970s – the likes of Mike Westbrook, Stan Tracey, Evan Parker, Chris McGregor, Mike Gibbs, Joe Harriott, Derek Bailey – were developing new jazz idioms which, as jazz writer Roger Cotterrell has put it, 'helped to build a collective self-confidence that made European jazz eventually no longer reliant on American developments', with a distinctive flavour and clear identity of its own.

Indeed, the 1960s was to become the 'golden decade of creativity in British jazz' in the words of writer and broadcaster Alyn Shipton in *A New History of Jazz*. Such confidence was aided in part by the gradual development of jazz infrastructure in London, including the Jazz Centre Society (1968), the London Musicians' Co-operative (1970), the Musicians' Action Group (1972), the House of Commons Jazz Society (1973, now the All-Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group) and the London Musicians' Collective (1976), as well as clubs like Ronnie Scott's, the Bull's Head, Barnes (both 1959), the 606 Club (1969), and the PizzaExpress club in Soho (1969), all of which would go on to become London Jazz Festival venues.

In 1968, Graham Collier had become the first jazz composer to receive an Arts Council bursary for his piece, *Workpoints*. Yet, despite all this activity and organisation, the 1970s in Britain saw an overall decline in jazz participation and, as Stuart Nicholson puts it, 'areas of jazz had been marginalised by rock and pop to the extent that it was no exaggeration to say that jazz was at one of its lowest ebbs ever.' As a result, the 1970s now is remembered in London music festival terms predominantly as the era of free rock concerts in public parks, alongside the street-based urban event of black London, the Notting Hill Carnival, but it was in fact also an important period in London Jazz Festival history, as the seeds of the Camden Jazz Week were sown in 1974 and the first Bracknell Festival began the following year, organised by John Cumming.

Soho as barometer for jazz and for London

Soho in central London is a useful barometer for some of the bigger musical, economic and social changes in London in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. By the mid-nineteenth-century, Soho was a hub for immigrants (including Karl Marx) and instrument makers, and had already gained a reputation as a centre of gastronomy, of the sex industry, and of musical and theatrical entertainment.

The area was perfectly suited for the jazz and dance band boom of the 1920s and the 1930s saw a host of legal and semi-legal venues, including the site of Britain's first Rhythm Club, the Bag O'Nails. Soho was also the base of the London Orchestral Association and then the Musicians' Union on Archer Street, which became an unofficial social gathering and hiring place for musicians until the 1960s. Nearby Denmark Street was the place for music shops and music publishers.

The 1940s and 1950s saw a number of relatively short-lived jazz clubs and Soho became the centre of the skiffle and folk revival movements in the 1950s, while the 1955 Soho Fair would see the first outing by trumpeter Ken Colyer's New Orleans parade style Omega Brass Band. With clubs like Ronnie Scott's (opened 1959), the Old Place in Gerrard Street, the 100 Club, Studio 51, the Flamingo, the Marquee, and the Little Theatre Club, and record shops like Dobells and Collett's, Soho was a real jazz hub from the 1950s on. PizzaExpress' jazz club opened in 1969, later promoting the Soho Jazz Festival, founded and directed by Peter Boizot from 1986 to 2002.

The London Olympics in 2012 sparked a tourism boom in London and the UK, and twenty-first-century Soho appears on the surface to be thriving. A number of Soho's live music venues and associated businesses, however – night clubs, record shops, instrument shops – have closed for various reasons, including the Crossrail east-west railway line (formally called the Elizabeth line), changing consumer habits, rapidly escalating business rates and rents, and the tightening of local authority licensing regulations.

Crossrail's construction has meant the demolition of music venues such as Soho's London Astoria and there are fears that demolitions as part of the second stage of the project could 'permanently blight' Soho's historic entertainment district. As Ross Dines of Soho's PizzaExpress explains, the Crossrail project brings mixed

blessings for his venue. On the one hand, it will bring more people – no doubt welcome following the significant loss of passing trade once Dean Street was blocked by the Crossrail construction site – but at the expense of interesting small local businesses disappearing and the risk of losing what he politely terms the ‘bohemian naughtiness’ Soho once had.

Indeed, as a number of recent articles about gentrification in The Guardian and even The Daily Telegraph and New York Times suggest, rising house and rent prices could be bringing about what Pete Clark calls the ‘slow death of Soho’, an area now being shaped into ‘something resembling a homogenised shopping mall’, while ‘ultra-prime’ central London is fast becoming ‘a ghost-town where absentee investors park their wealth. Author and journalist Michael Goldfarb has speculated that ‘the delicate social ecology that made London’s transformation into a great world city over the last two decades is past the tipping point.’

Articles in The Guardian in 2017 ask whether London is no longer the place to be, citing research which seems to suggest a net loss in migration in every age group apart from people in their twenties due to London’s ‘bloated’ property prices. Interestingly, and perhaps remarkably given the dismal nature of some of the above narrative, for the London Jazz Festival at least, central London still appears to be a prime location for jazz gigs – this is where people expect jazz to be heard. From just one venue in the first Festival of 1993, to five in 2015, for now Soho still appears to be the hub for jazz in London.

Chapter 2: Towards the London Jazz Festival

“We just used to bunk in, every gig. We always found a way to get in! And even when we were caught they never threw us out! So we got to see Art Ensemble of Chicago, Abdullah Ibrahim, Ron Carter, Art Pepper. I got to see so much great stuff. Yeah, it was fun times, just waiting for the Camden Jazz Week so we could find another way to get in!”

Gary Crosby, Bassist

The birth of Bracknell and Camden Festivals

John Cumming is at the heart of the London Jazz Festival, and has been since it began. Named by the *Independent on Sunday* in 2003 as one of the top 20 ‘most influential groovers and shakers in the music industry’, and awarded an OBE for services to jazz in 2014, Cumming was described by British saxophonist Andy Sheppard in 2016 as ‘a force majeure in the world of jazz.’ Yet his early work was in theatre rather than music specifically.

Born in 1948 in Edinburgh, Cumming took a life-changing gap year rather than heading straight to university after school and went to work for Edinburgh’s Traverse Theatre Company. In those days – the 1960s – the Traverse was a hotbed of experimental theatre and brought him into contact with avant-garde theatre groups like New York’s La MaMa Troupe and with early plays by Paul Foster, Sam Shepard and Lanford Wilson – artists for whom music was an intrinsic part of their work – as well as a production of Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu Enchained*, with music by The Soft Machine and visuals by artist Mark Boyle, he who had started the trend for psychedelic liquid light shows. Cumming had been involved with the Traverse prior to this, even running jazz gigs while still at school in the Theatre Bar.

Cumming then moved to London, where, demonstrating his adaptability, he spent six months in the West End doing Victorian music hall as the Players’ Theatre’s resident electrician, and earning extra funds by moonlighting for other theatres like the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal Opera House. Ronnie Scott’s took a lot of Cumming’s income, as did Dobell’s Record Shop, and he spent much of his free time hanging out in one or the other, getting to know the musicians and the jazz scene, and seeing musicians like Charles Mingus, Sonny Rollins and Hank Mobley. Cumming later returned to university in Edinburgh and became involved with both

the student jazz society and the dramatic society, and was also offered the opportunity by the University of Edinburgh to develop an old bar into a Fringe venue during the Edinburgh Festival, as well as spending summers working back in London. His artistic directorship of the dramatic society led to an entire academic year in which he 'really didn't do any work at all' because he was also running The Pool Lunch Hour Theatre Club, a theatre for new writing in Edinburgh he had opened in January 1971.

As well as running jazz and folk sessions, the Pool began to receive Scottish Arts Council funding, working with dramatists and directors like Chris Parr, David Hare, David Edgar, Howard Brenton, and Scottish writers such as Stewart Conn, Robert Nye and Hector MacMillan. Cumming was by now part of an active network of people who were interested in combining music, visual art and theatre – he worked as lighting designer for radical carnivalists Welfare State (including their collaborations with Mike Westbrook in the Cosmic Circus), IOU Theatre Company, and Lindsay Kemp, which led to him starting to look at what he could do in music. He was one of the founders of PLATFORM in Edinburgh, Scotland's first Arts Council-funded jazz promotion organisation – taking musicians like Graham Collier, Keith Tippett, John Stevens, and the 'revitalised' Stan Tracey to Scotland.

Cumming returned south in 1973 to work as the theatre director of the new South Hill Park Arts Centre in the converted South Hill Park mansion in Bracknell, Berkshire. From October to March he ran a small repertory theatre at the centre, but in the summer, the whole venue was turned on its head and went from, as he put it to us, 'doing lots of things in small spaces to doing a few things in big open-air and tented spaces.'

With their gardens, lawns, trees and two lakes, the grounds thus became the location for large-scale music events featuring an eclectic mix of genres and styles, anything from BBC Radio 1 DJ Emperor Rosko and Miki & Griff's country and western evening, to comedian and ventriloquist Rod Hull and Emu and (as he remembers it) a hilarious rock and roll evening with Wee Willy Harris.

Later there was politically motivated work too: working as stage manager for Rock for Jobs gigs in the later 1970s, and major anti-apartheid benefits featuring international stars such as Hugh Masekela in the 1980s. These included African Sounds! at Alexandra Palace in 1983, the 65th birthday concert for the then still imprisoned

Nelson Mandela.

Displaying considerable chutzpah at this event, Cumming had to handle a council official who tried to close it down over noise levels. He pointed out that it was unlikely that the official would want to be the one to have to face Greater London Council's head of culture Tony Banks the next morning as 'the man who shut down the anti-apartheid gig', and, to make doubly sure, threatened to call Banks right there and then: 'I've got his number and will just ask him what he thinks', knowing full well that he didn't actually have the number on his person. Whereupon the official said, 'I don't think that will be necessary' and left them to it.

"In Britain jazz festivals come in three types: a series of indoor concerts, a temporary stage set up for a few days in the middle of some enormous field or stadium – and Bracknell."

Dave Gelly, The Observer, 1984

Bracknell Jazz Festival, 1975-87

Inspired both by the classic film of Newport Jazz Festival, 1960's *Jazz On A Summer's Day*, and by his teenage experiences at the National Jazz Federation's festivals at nearby Richmond and Windsor, Cumming started the Bracknell Jazz Festival in 1975, with festival-goers invited to camp in the mansion's extensive grounds. In a neat historical loop, the National Jazz Federation's Harold Pendleton and his wife Margaret started coming to Cumming's Bracknell Festival, whereupon Harold told him that, 'This is a bit like *our* old festival.' To this Cumming replied, 'That's why it's *here*; because I used to *come* to those!' Thus festival (and film of festival) leads to festival, a trajectory of the carnival.

It was not only the camping aspect of Bracknell and its greenfield proximity to London that had been inspired by the Pendletons' festivals, however, but the programming too: what had struck Cumming at Richmond and Windsor in the 1960s was the focus on British artists and the relative lack of American artists on stage. While in the very early days of Bracknell, British trad jazz did feature – musicians like Alex Welsh, George Chisholm, and Humphrey Lyttelton – the Bracknell bill would later develop into a statement of international modern jazz: a weekend festival which featured some Americans, quite a lot of Europeans and other international musicians, and also included a large number of British artists.

As the festival developed, Cumming began to think of Bracknell as a space for

looking at where the music was going, 'where we were being led.' Focusing on British composers, he also started to commission new work, an approach drawing on his experience in theatre. Commissions included Stan Tracey's *Bracknell Connection* in 1976 and the all-star performance of Graham Collier's *Hoarded Dreams* in 1983.

Early in the festival's history, Cumming started to get to know the work of the increasingly influential German label ECM (Editions of Contemporary Music), which was looking to build up the live opportunities for its musicians. And so he first booked guitarist Ralph Towner to play in 1976, thus beginning a long association with both Towner and ECM's Thomas Stöwsand, later of Austrian agency Saudades Tourneen, which represented artists like the Art Ensemble of Chicago and Carla Bley.

Although Cumming left South Hill Park in 1977, he continued to run the Bracknell Jazz Festival on a freelance basis, alongside other music and theatre projects, which included putting on the first British performance of Norwegian guitarist Terje Rypdal at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 1979. Following the discovery of oil in 1969, Norway had heavily invested in its people and its arts, including jazz, and the apparently national or regional sound of what would become known and marketed as the 'Nordic tone' was starting to spread.

Rypdal was on ECM along with fellow Norwegian, saxophonist Jan Garbarek, both of whom espoused the label's concept of minimalist and Eurocentric jazz. Garbarek himself created music described by jazz writer Stuart Nicholson in *Jazz: The Modern Resurgence* as projecting the 'stark imagery of nature near the Northern Lights' with 'an ordered calm in the often frantic world of jazz.' By now, Cumming was working freelance and tour-managing artists like American pianist Carla Bley – an artist whose work he has presented many times over the years, at the London Jazz Festival and more extensively – and Charlie Haden, which enabled him to travel around Europe and learn about the ways jazz was developing in different countries at that time. The contacts he developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s are people Cumming is still in touch with today, and he cites the generosity of exchange of information about what was going on musically as playing a key role in the development of his festivals.

Making a considered statement that jazz music was now pan-cultural, not only (African-)American, in 1981 Cumming programmed American flautist and composer

James Newton's wind quintet – featuring 'heritage' musicians like 'Red' Callender, who had taught bass to Charles Mingus – with Chico Freeman's band, and in the middle put free British saxophonist Evan Parker, thus connecting the new music of the black avant-garde to Mingus via Callender, while also bringing in the new sounds of Europe.

Dave Gelly pointed to the important developmental role of the Bracknell festival in *The Observer* in 1984, remarking that it 'provides the best possible chance for hearing just how far British jazz has come since the days when our musicians were judged by the accuracy with which they copied American originals.' As with other jazz festivals in Europe, the festival was becoming a key site for the complex negotiation in jazz between African-American origin and national – in this instance, British – musical expression. Over the years, Bracknell would feature a host of other transatlantic names and styles including Alexis Korner, Jack Bruce, Ornette Coleman, Stanley Clarke, Allan Holdsworth, Barbara Thompson, David Murray, Michael Brecker, Mike Westbrook and a young Pat Metheny, as well as introducing European musicians hitherto unheard live in the UK – Jan Garbarek a prime example. By the 1980s, then, the jazz madness of Beaulieu had become redundant for what *The Observer* described as Bracknell Jazz Festival's 'slightly folksy garden party' atmosphere, at which festival-goers were 'not the kind to cause a riot' as the music 'simply doesn't attract gangs of break-in yobboes' any longer.

Camden Jazz Week 1974-92

Around the same time as Bracknell, the Camden Jazz Week was also becoming established, both festivals later distilled into what would become the London Jazz Festival. As Helen Lawrence shows in her history of St Pancras and Camden Festivals, *Music, Art & Politics*, the borough of St Pancras was merged with Hampstead and Holborn to form Camden in 1965, meaning that what had been the St Pancras Arts Festival was renamed the Camden Festival in 1967.

The new festival's programming continued to be mostly classical music and opera, but lunchtime jazz at the Cochrane Theatre and poetry and jazz at Holborn Library Hall were also incorporated into the programme that year. By 1971, the festival had been divided into three sections: the main music festival in spring, a series of neighbourhood festivals throughout the summer, and an autumn themed festival.

A couple of years later, the festival hit a low point due to decreased funding and a feeling that its focus on high arts had what a Community Arts Working Party report

described as 'little relevance for a large proportion of the population.' With the support of councillors and local musicians, the expansion of the festival into jazz was developed by Camden's Arts Officer at the time, Christopher Gordon, along with Charles Alexander from the then-active Jazz Centre Society, who had known John Cumming in Edinburgh in the mid-1960s.

While jazz was still not a major part of the music festival proper, in 1974 it had been chosen as the theme for the autumn festival, which included, among others, Mike Westbrook's *Citadel/Room 315* for the opening gig, a revival of Stan Tracey's *Under Milk Wood*, and a sell-out concert by the South African Chris McGregor's big band, Brotherhood of Breath. The latter meant that the organisers had an instant and substantial ticket sale to the South African secret police, who all turned up at the concert looking exactly like South African secret policemen, with regulation thick Boer moustaches, heavy beige trench coats, and heavy brogue shoes. As Christopher Gordon recalls, because nobody else in the audience looked remotely like that, 'it was really funny that they were quite that obviously sinister and yet clearly incompetent at the same time.'

Secret policeman's ball aside, the success of autumn's Jazz Week and the Jazz Band Ball saw them become a permanent fixture of the main Camden Festival from 1975 onwards. Described as a 'spectacular feast' by Lawrence, Jazz Week featured leading jazz musicians, films, poetry, a series of free events, and marching bands, the latter causing the street drinkers outside Camden Town tube station to rise to their feet and dance as they heard the band.

Jazz Week was presented in collaboration with the Jazz Centre Society, as one of its key annual activities in its ultimately doomed campaign to establish a national centre for jazz in London. Unlike Bracknell's open-air tented affair, Camden was a series of concerts in existing urban venues, like the Shaw Theatre, the Camden Centre and the Roundhouse, the model that would be adopted in due course by the London Jazz Festival. Among the many jazz musicians who performed were Art Blakey, Chet Baker, Trevor Watts, Courtney Pine, John Surman's *Brass Project*, the World Saxophone Quartet, Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), and the first performance in Britain by the Art Ensemble of Chicago in March 1979.

Cumming worked for the Jazz Centre Society for a year as a concert programmer, and was brought in to produce the Camden Jazz Week in 1978, which he then ran on a freelance basis. At the same time he worked on festivals in places like Bradford

and Sheffield, and tour-managed for the Contemporary Music Network (CMN) – the Arts Council of Great Britain’s high level, highly subsidised touring circuit for avant-garde music – including the first Gil Evans UK tour in 1978. (Interestingly as a side note to this story of jazz festival development in the capital city, the CMN’s brief from the Arts Council explicitly aimed ‘to avoid the over-concentration of this type of work in London, and to spread the opportunity for it to be heard.’)

Cumming and partner John Ellson would go on to establish Serious Productions as a tour production company in 1986, and run it together for the first decade. This was the company which subsequently evolved into Serious, producer of the London Jazz Festival. As well as having the contract to run Bracknell and Camden, one of the ways in which the company developed in its early days was by taking on much of the production work for the CMN, which enabled Serious to work on large-scale international work, such as George Russell’s *Living Time Orchestra*, which then fed back into their festivals and other activity over the years.

In addition to producing concerts for external clients, Serious Productions also took on a couple of management clients including one of the ‘golden generation’ of artists who developed in the UK during the 1960s, John Surman, and Andy Sheppard – who Cumming had first come across at Bracknell in the band Sphere – and who had returned to England from Paris in the mid-1980s, having moved there initially because he ‘struggled less in France than I did in London.’

The new jazz of the 1980s

The year after Cumming’s initial involvement with the Camden Jazz Week, a significant and high-profile American-led jazz festival started in July 1979 at the Alexandra Palace in London, the Capital Radio Jazz Festival at the Ally Pally, organised by Newport Jazz Festival’s George Wein. However, the night before the second Capital Radio Jazz Festival was due to take place in 1980, the Alexandra Palace burned to the ground (taking with it the two Bösendorfer pianos Cumming had hired for Bracknell a few weeks later). In his autobiography *Myself Among Others*, Wein recalled that:

The fire had spread so fast that, had it happened the following night, many of our audience of five thousand might have perished. We were lucky, but it was the end of the Ally Pally festival. For a few years we tried to keep it alive... We achieved varying degrees of success, but never captured the spirit or momentum of what we had at Ally Pally.

Changing its name to the JVC Capital Radio Jazz Parade London in 1984, this festival was tied into the other JVC jazz festivals in both the United States and across Europe, and also linked to the Nice Jazz Festival and The Netherlands' North Sea Jazz. As Cumming remembers it, Wein's festival was mostly parachuted in with Americans, with the occasional appearance of Ronnie Scott or John Dankworth in London.

On the whole, then, the beginning of the 1980s offered relatively few work opportunities for British jazz musicians in Britain as audiences got older, money was scarce, and festivals were few and far between. As saxophonist Alan Skidmore said in 1981 in a familiar lament: 'There's no scene for me in England as a professional jazz musician... now I just work in Europe.'

In a major shift of creativity and activity, though, to its own surprise perhaps, in the early to mid-1980s British jazz began to experience a boom which led Richard Williams in *The Times* to write that 'the new generation of British musicians is responsible for the healthiest complexion the London scene has worn since the end of the sixties.' *The Wire*, an influential new jazz and improvised music magazine founded in 1982, was also energetically making and championing the new jazz zeitgeist.

Partly, the new interest in jazz in the 1980s was because jazz collectives dubbed the New Jazz had suddenly become popular and synonymous with style, with a number of young British artists playing challenging but accessible jazz getting major record label deals. There was even major chart success for some: the new smooth jazz band Sade, featuring Nigerian-born English singer Sade, had hit singles and albums on both sides of the Atlantic, and won Brit Awards and Grammys alike.

Though this was the popular end of jazz, it was a clear sign that things were changing. There was smooth jazz, acid jazz, new black jazz, white big bands – even if it sometimes felt that the senior musicians from the 1960s and 1970s, important innovators and stylists, were being left behind in the suddenly fashionable landscape.

Loose Tubes

One example of the New Jazz of course was the Loose Tubes collective, established in London in 1984 as a 21-piece co-operative ensemble by several musicians who had formerly been members of a workshop led by Graham Collier in

1983. As Jazz Centre Society director (1973-82) Charles Alexander recalls: 'Loose Tubes were the signal that the younger generation of musicians were taking responsibility for finding their own careers and creating their own situation.'

The predominantly white band's influences were eclectic – rock, varied ethnic sources, and all styles of jazz, with Django Bates particularly inspired by the music and musicians of South Africa; his 1985 composition *Sād Afrika*, for instance, featured South African sounds such as tin whistles, fanfares, flutes, and the kwela groove. (It is worth noting here that Django Bates was the keyboard player with Hugh Masekela at the afore-mentioned anti-apartheid gig at Alexandra Palace in 1983.)

Loose Tubes achieved a relatively high level of success in Britain as a result of concert performances in London and national tours, aided by widespread television and radio coverage, and became the first jazz orchestra to play a late night Prom in autumn 1987. Loose Tubes played at both Camden and at Bracknell festivals, but disbanded in 1990 following a week-long residency at Ronnie Scott's. Many of its members went on to have successful careers, with ex-members like Bates, Tim Whitehead, Iain Ballamy and Eddie Parker all performing (in other guises) at the London Jazz Festival over the years, and a triumphal reunion concert to mark the band's 30th anniversary of formation at Cheltenham Jazz Festival in 2014.

As John Cumming puts it, the black-white binary in the new British jazz in 1980s London was exacerbated by the press into an 'artificially created sort of standoff' between the young, predominantly white Loose Tubes and the young, predominantly black Jazz Warriors.

Jazz Warriors

A second remarkable big band sprung up in London during the 1980s jazz boom, of course. Jazz Warriors formed in 1985 as an offshoot of TAJA (The Abibi Jazz Arts), a collective started the previous year by Courtney Pine as a non-commercial space for black musicians to play together.

Jazz Warriors became the first black British big band since those of the 1940s and 1950s and, as such, its members were seen by many, including Val Wilmer, as the 'leaders of the country's new jazz sensibility.' Other members of Jazz Warriors

included Jason Yarde, Claude Deppa, Mark Mondesir, and Gail Thompson, and although the personnel changed over the years, the group continued until 1992, having also played at both Bracknell and Camden.

For Hilary Moore, in her book *Inside British Jazz*, the band's significance went beyond the purely musical as Jazz Warriors became a 'unique musical space' in which the members could express and reassert their identification as black Britons. However, as original member Gary Crosby recalls, 'the Warriors were never exclusively black, though there was an unfortunate air of segregation around us.'

The media framing around race might have been unhelpful in that it encouraged a level of division in the new scene, but arguably at least jazz as being written about with enthusiasm and played with a new gusto. Jazz Warriors carved out a space for young black musicians and, according to Gary Crosby, played a significant role in 'multiculturalising' British jazz because it encouraged interaction between black and white musicians and re-introduced a new generation of black musicians to jazz. Crosby has maintained a crucial element of music education and jazz development with further generations in the subsequent Tomorrow's Warriors charity.

Courtney Pine

It was Courtney Pine who became the star of the 1980s British jazz scene, however. Highlighting the international recognition of his talent, and, according to *The Guardian*, 'a recognition accorded to very few British performers', Pine was invited to tour with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers in 1986. This followed performances at Camden that year that also included other members of the Jazz Warriors and three of the dance groups that populated the UK jazz scene at the time (filmed by Dick Fontaine for Central TV).

Pine had to return home, however, because his first son had just been born and his debut album, *Journey to the Urge Within*, had just been released. This 1986 recording enjoyed 'unparalleled media hype' for a British jazz recording, and by the end of the 1980s he had appeared at several international jazz festivals.

Speaking to Sue Lawley on BBC Radio 4's *Desert Island Discs* in 2001, Pine further explained the reasons behind his decision to leave the Jazz Messengers tour:

Sue Lawley: It seems to me that you have unfinished business here.
You want to put British jazz on the map.

Courtney Pine: Yeah. And it's also the fact that the way we appreciate music is different. In America, they have their superheroes like Wynton Marsalis and Branford Marsalis. In the UK, we don't really *have* kind of superstar gig. So for me, I thought, well, there's nobody doing that here so maybe I could maybe pick up that gig.

Sue Lawley: You saw a gap in the market?

Courtney Pine: [laughs] Yes, I sure did! And I went for it!

In doing so, Pine helped to bring black music and black musicians into the mainstream. 'Without Courtney,' says Crosby, we wouldn't have broken out.' Such a view was confirmed by Tomorrow's Warriors graduate saxophonist Denys Baptiste in 1999:

Courtney brought jazz to younger people through the music he introduced: hip hop, drum 'n' bass, and earlier on with reggae. He changed jazz from being a music for people in their forties, fifties and sixties into music for a younger crowd. That is vital for the development of jazz, and that's what makes him such an important guy.

Having got to know John Cumming via the Camden Jazz Week and the Community Music organisation, and in recognition of his roots with the Jazz Warriors, Courtney Pine first played the London Jazz Festival with Gary Crosby's Tomorrow's Warriors and iconic Jamaican singer/musicologist Marjorie Whyllie in 1996. Pine progressed to playing the Hammersmith Apollo in 1999, and headlined in 2000 at the Royal Festival Hall.

The connection with Andy Sheppard is worth mentioning here – Sheppard's band of the late 80s included Orphy Robinson and Mamadi Kamara of the Jazz Warriors, and the following band included the Warriors' Claude Deppa. Sheppard has also worked extensively at the London Jazz Festival, with the likes of Nana Vasconcelos and Carla Bley, highlighting the enduring connections between musicians and the festival. In London, as elsewhere, musicians make festivals, and festivals make musicians.

In June 1987, a meeting was held in London between record labels confronted with what was called a 'marketing dilemma' of how best to present and sell a diverse range of music, variously labelled 'international', 'ethnic', 'traditional', or 'roots'. This issue was particularly pressing following the controversial success of Paul Simon's *Graceland* album the previous year, with its apartheid-era cultural boycott-busting

use of South African musicians.

Via a show of hands, 'world music' won the vote and so a new product genre was born and named. The same year promoter David Jones started the Crossing the Border Festival of World Music in Camden. The first festival featured Ali Farka Touré's only London performance at the time and a host of other names from the folk and now 'world music' fields, including Kathryn Tickell, Rory McLeod, and Lovemore Majaivana & The Zulu Band. It was around this time that Jones started to cross paths with John Cumming.

David Jones

While John Cumming and John Ellson came from the jazz world, Jones was from more of a rock and new music background, although he too had been working with Mike Westbrook – Jones' passion is for improvisation in its myriad forms. Born in 1957, the first concert he put on was Supertramp at his school in Croydon in 1973 as a teenager, and he became manager of cult figure Ivor Cutler in 1976, working with him until his death in 2006.

Before getting into music promotion, Jones worked in both theatre and television. After working at the Battersea Arts Centre – 'cleaning toilets in the morning and tearing tickets in the evening' – he moved on to be the administrator of a touring theatre company, which meant a steep learning curve on how to master touring, budgets and management.

Jones was pulled back into music after being asked to direct what became the Bloomsbury Festival at the Bloomsbury Theatre between 1984 and 1987, for which he programmed outfield rock music, soul, contemporary classical, jazz, and a good deal of improvisation. The first Bloomsbury Festival was opened and closed by the Michael Nyman Band, Nyman being an artist first promoted by Jones in 1978 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) to an audience of 60, and later to 2,500 at the Southbank in 1993.

Jones had initially been wary of a career in music as in the early days, he 'couldn't figure out how you could actually earn a living working in music.' However, musicians he had promoted at the Bloomsbury Festival asked him for more gigs, 'and I was going, "*I'm not a concert promoter; that's not what I do!*" And then I looked around two or three years later and I *was* a concert promoter.'

Soon he was running the production company Speakout. Jones was never keen on

the term 'promoter', however, as it seemed like something 'blokes in camel hair coats should be called' and so, with Cumming, together they settled on the idea of a 'producer', 'because it has more of a sense of bringing creativity and creating something special' in music.

We can see the development of the creative role of the festival producer at Camden Jazz Week. Describing Cumming in the *Evening Standard* in 1990 as 'the Jonathan Miller of this year's Camden Jazz Festival', the media were starting to notice the creative input of the producer as a significant force in the success of an event and also the shift away from simply 'promoting' a musician to, instead, 'producing' an event.

The Standard's jazz critic Jack Massarik explained to readers how the jazz festival was beginning to be actively curated:

The novelty of simply filling jazz festivals with big-name artists and their regular working groups seems to be wearing off. Instead we now find the 'festival concept' in which the producer/director aims to be as creative as the performers out front... It was [Cumming's] idea to present John Surman and Jack DeJohnette with the Balanescu string quartet and, after some painful moments, the experiment was successful.

Festivals in the city

The 1980s and early 1990s saw a marked increase in the number of annual jazz festivals in the UK overall; from ten in 1980 to around forty in 1992, including Ealing, Brecon, Birmingham and the Glasgow International Jazz Festival, as the popularity of festivals as tools for local authorities to enhance local identity and for 'destination marketing' as well as cultural regeneration gained momentum throughout this period.

In a globalised world, putting on international festivals can be a means of claiming equal status of local culture by interweaving it with those of other countries; jazz, as an inherently flexible and syncretic music, is particularly suited to this. Indeed, UNESCO's International Jazz Day (30 April) recognises or certainly claims that the cross-cultural, democratic nature of jazz lends itself to a 'diplomatic role of uniting people in all corners of the globe.' Some academic research on festival audiences (such as that by Steve Oakes at Cheltenham) has found that jazz enthusiasts are

often well-educated, middle class and upper earners, and hence useful for attracting sponsorship.

Urban theorist Richard Florida has argued that, for more than a century, the mark of a cultured city – in the United States at least – was to have a major art museum plus an ‘SOB’: ‘the high-art triumvirate’ of a symphony orchestra, an opera company and a ballet company. To that, one could nowadays add the jazz festival. By the early 1990s, however, even with its fluid portfolio of local festivals in different parts of the city and environs – Bracknell, Camden, Soho, JVC, Jazz Lunacy, Ealing, Outside In (a kind of Bracknell mark 2, 1988-1993), and others – London did not yet have the high-level jazz programming enjoyed by other capital cities in Europe at this time, a topic which was to nag away at John Cumming. When bumping into him at gigs across Europe, for freelance jazz promoter and later festival co-ordinator Debbie Dickinson, Cumming’s big question was always ‘There are these jazz festivals all over the world; how come *London* doesn’t have a jazz festival?’

Moving Forward

By the late 1980s, it was becoming apparent that London had what the Arts Council’s *Review of Jazz in England* would describe as a ‘major gap’ in the city’s jazz concert provision as the bubble of interest around Courtney Pine, the Jazz Warriors, and Loose Tubes was starting to deflate. Economically it was getting tight again with only the odd festival in the city through the year. To remedy this, between 1989 and 1991, live music in London was stimulated by funding from the Greater London Arts Association’s Major Concert Promotion scheme.

Both Cumming at Serious and Jones at Speakout had successfully applied to the new fund but decided that rather than competing, they should instead work together and make better use of the money by co-promoting. A relatively small annual subsidy enabled Serious and Speakout to start Moving Forward, which became an extensive series of international concerts covering both jazz and contemporary music. From the Arts Council’s perspective this was the first time that London audiences had had such a consistent and regular concert series of these musics.

Importantly it also enabled Serious and Speakout to start to bring over major American jazz musicians, and also gave them the confidence – financially and psychologically – to do so.

Taking a risk, they put on Sonny Rollins for the first time in 1989 –and later Keith

Jarrett. Rollins' fee alone used up all the funding for the year, but they did make a profit. Highlighting their relative naiveté, David Jones laughingly recalls asking Sonny Rollins for a medical certificate so that they could get insurance for the show:

I just sent a note to his wife saying, 'Please could you ask Sonny to go and get a medical certificate so that we can go and get insurance' and I was told very firmly that Sonny Rollins has never given out a medical insurance and never would!

As noted by the Arts Council, what Serious and Speakout had tapped into and begun further to develop was a substantial local and national audience for quality innovative contemporary music which did not fall into the traditional marketing categories of 'subsidised classical' or 'commercial rock'.

Serious and Speakout understood that the audience for jazz artists such as Keith Jarrett or Jan Garbarek had as much in common with that of Steve Reich or Michael Nyman as it did for mainstream jazz musicians such as Wynton Marsalis or Sonny Rollins, the implication being then that these artists could be included in a concert series based around a jazz theme, and that jazz musicians could form part of a wider programme.

Notwithstanding the economic and ideological shifts in terrain and cultural policy that were such a feature of the 1980s and 1990s, such programming might also have greater leverage to access public funding as and when it was available. There is a curious and interesting dynamic here: on the one hand the need for innovation in programming, making ambitious music newly available on a regular basis, while on the other, negotiating the funding landscape and its potentially negative impact on adventurous programming.

In 1992, as a result of the recession, the Arts Council had begun a period of belt-tightening. Jazz, ever the Cinderella of the musical arts, as Ian Carr had told us in his 1973 book *Music Outside*, would find itself the poor relation once more, in comparison with the public funding required to maintain orchestras and opera houses. In fact, though, the domination of public funding for classical music would have some unexpected benefits.

It led to jazz being grouped together with improvised music and 'world music' and, while it meant less money for these art forms, an unforeseen consequence was that the musical dialogue which had always been there historically between jazz and other 'outsider'

art forms became structurally closer as well. In the hustling spirit of jazz perversity, then, was born the following year the inaugural London Jazz Festival.

The economic climate and changes to local authority and arts funding structures – including the dissolution of the Greater London Council in 1986 – affected both the Bracknell and Camden jazz festivals, and within the space of five years, each came to an end. Festivals such as Bracknell and Camden, however, had played significant roles in keeping the British jazz scene vibrant.

They contributed to changing the programming of jazz festivals in Britain to reach out to the ethnically diverse communities of London as much as to import American jazz artists, towards commissioning new music and encouraging new collaborations, a gradual embrace of European jazz, and the inclusion of the newly-minted ‘world music’ genre.

As Cumming said in 2013, ‘Camden epitomised a changing jazz universe, reflecting the new energy emerging from the UK and European scene alongside the African-American tradition of the music.’ For our story, too, festivals such as Bracknell and Camden were setting the scene for a more ambitious city-wide event still. By 1993, then, the global city of London was ready, even impatient, for its own major international jazz festival, based on the central tenets of musical pluralism, a celebration of multiculturalism, and an emphasis on learning and developing audiences in an effort to ensure the future of jazz. For Cumming, as for the others involved in the London Jazz Festival’s pre-history, it would have to be a case of ‘the city leading the festival as well as the festival leading the city.’

Chapter 3: The birth of a new festival and its early years: 1993-2000

“Where else can you get 100 years of jazz in 10 days?”

John Cumming, Director, publicising the inaugural London Jazz Festival

1993: The first London Jazz Festival

1993 was the year that Britain resurfaced from recession, the year that the city's 50-year post-war population decline was starting to reverse, and the year of the first London Jazz Festival proper.

As we have seen, the impetus for a London jazz festival had been building for a number of years, but the precise origins of the London Jazz Festival can be surprisingly difficult to locate. London Jazz Festival director David Jones remembers that Serious Speakout were approached to put on a festival in the north London boroughs of Camden, Hackney and Islington, and John Cumming recalls having many conversations with the Music Officer for the new London Arts Board at the time, Andrew McKenzie, about establishing a new festival which would eventually build into a city-wide event. Cumming had thought to call the new event the North London Jazz Festival, but Jones said, ‘No, the hell with it! Let's call it the *London* Jazz Festival!’ (This was also a practical move as another North London Jazz Festival (aka Just Jazz) ran from 1989 to 1992.) In such a moment of attitude and boldness something special is made, even – especially perhaps – if a long-term plan isn't there from the start. The city pushed them along, dared them to do it, demanded it of them even. As Jones told us on looking back at the early festival and how it has grown, it just took off from that moment: ‘It hasn't been something where we've said, “Let's make a 25-year plan and let's be in this place by now.”’

The previous chapter showed how the London Jazz Festival inherited a kind of mix of Serious and Speakout's other festivals – Bracknell, Camden, Outside In, Crossing The Border – which were going through changes and which were distilled into one.

This distillation resulted in a potent combination which steered the new festival's musical direction and also meant that the borough of Camden retained an interest (because pragmatics matter, financially and organisationally). McKenzie had made it clear that he did not want the festival to become city-wide overnight, and by bringing

on the boroughs of Hackney and Islington to join Camden, allowed it to build out slowly.

Cumming recalls that one of the conditions of the funding from the London Arts Board – later to merge with the other regional arts boards to eventually become Arts Council England – was that as well as the festival becoming a focal point for bringing high-level international jazz into the city, it would also draw in the grassroots of the scene in order to celebrate and highlight the fact that London was a year-round jazz city.

Around this time, the Arts Council was reviewing its jazz provision, and some of the regional jazz organisations established in the 1980s to stimulate jazz activity across the country were now struggling financially. Cumming, recognising that his own organisation's receipt of the lion's share of the London Arts Board's jazz budget in 1993 was a 'sore point' with other potential recipients, instead sought to argue that, with its variety of programming across all jazz genres and scenes, the impact of the new festival would eventually help everyone.

One of the ways it would do this would be to attract significant media interest and, through Cumming's existing relationship with the station via Camden and Bracknell, BBC Radio 3 was a supporter from the start, while the festival guide that first year was a free supplement in *The Observer* and the magazine, *Jazz*. The grassroots social engagement element of the festival's funding showed in that in 1993 it was also supported by Hackney Drugs Prevention Team, among others.

The first programme

Illustrating both the festival's new musical mission statement and the legacy of the earlier festivals on which it was built, highlights from the 1993 brochure included American saxophonist Bob Berg; the North Indian classical music of Salamat Ali Khan; Nigerian kora player Tunde Jegede; South African drummer Louis Moholo; black British acid jazzer Ronny Jordan; veteran British pianist Stan Tracey; the idiosyncratic Ivor Cutler; the Delta Rhythm Kings; South African pianist Abdullah Ibrahim; the World Saxophone Quartet; British mainstream and trad stars Humphrey Lyttelton and Acker Bilk; Nat Adderley's classic hard bop; and John Stevens' 'rhythmelodic post-bop free jazz.' 'Where else', said Cumming to the *Guardian's* critic John Fordham at the time, 'can you get 100 years of jazz in 10 days?'

The inaugural performance of the Jools Holland Bigger Band Revue was another feature of the 1993 festival, a smart piece of programming since Holland was already a television celebrity by this point and his inclusion in the festival certainly

gained some extra column inches for the new event.

Another memorable performance, symbolising the enhanced status of British musicians previously overlooked by home audiences in favour of what critic Ronald Atkins termed the 'American mystique', was the dual billing of American guitarist Joe Pass with Britain's own Martin Taylor. Together they played to a packed and hushed audience in the church-cum-homeless-shelter-cum-music-venue, the Union Chapel – the musical pairing and the choice of venue too adding a sense of occasion.

Also playing the Union Chapel was a double bill of American guitarist Jim Hall with the Peter King Quartet. In those days, everything was cash-based – bank transfers and online ticketing a long way in the future. John Cumming therefore had £5,000 in the back of his car whilst driving home after the show. Unfortunately, he took a wrong turn and was stopped by the police and breathalysed. He had had one pint of beer much earlier in the day, but was, in his own words, 'meticulously not drinking.' The breathalyser showed up as positive, however, and Cumming was taken to the police station, where a second test proved negative.

There was a further snag, however, in that the police needed to see Cumming's ID, which he did not have. He tried to persuade the police that he was the director of the London Jazz Festival, and in doing so, let slip about the £5,000 in the back of the car. This got the police very excited, leading to a phone call to Cumming's partner in the early hours. She managed to persuade the police that Cumming was not a master (or even a minor) criminal and that he really *was* the director of the festival, after which he was finally released.

Another prominent American guitarist remains part of London Jazz Festival lore for very different reasons. At this point, said guitarist and his band appeared to have fallen out, so rather than travelling in the bus with the band from the airport, the guitarist travelled in the battered Volvo that Cumming had organised to get himself home, subjecting Cumming to a wide-ranging rant all the way to the hotel. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the guitarist left straight after the gig, and so – separately – did the band, meaning that none of the musicians touched the extensive – and expensive – post-gig spread laid on for them. 'We've got a lot of food here...' said Cumming, mindful of the extravagant rider one of his headliners had requested, apprehensively but gratefully eyeing the Norwegian prawns.

The 1993 festival line-up also included the showcase event, Reed, Rhythm and Rap at the Bloomsbury Theatre, featuring a young Nitin Sawhney, David Jean Baptiste,

and Byron Wallen. Sawhney has gone on to have a long association with the London Jazz Festival and provides a useful exemplar to illustrate the journey a young musician might take within the festival, first being paired with more experienced musicians before headlining their own shows, and (hopefully) playing in bigger and bigger venues over time. In 1994, then, Sawhney was booked as the support act for guitarists Andy Summers of The Police and John Etheridge, around which time Sawhney's career really started to accelerate.

At the 1995 London Jazz Festival, he took part in the third chapter of the *Straight No Chaser* Shape of Things to Come event at Bagleys, alongside hip hop artists like Outcaste (Asians with Attitude) and DJ Gilles Peterson. By 1997 Sawhney was supporting Asian Dub Foundation at the Royal Festival Hall, and by 1998 was himself headlining the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Exemplifying Serious' eclectic approach, in 2004 he performed with the Britten Sinfonia at the Royal Festival Hall, mixing up classical, jazz and world music in a programme of music ranging from the Bollywood sounds of A.R. Rahman through to Steve Reich's rhythmic minimalism, as well as new orchestral arrangements of some of Sawhney's best known music and the world premiere of a new work commissioned by the Britten Sinfonia. In 2015, Sawhney was back again, performing as part of the Jazz Voice opening gala at the Barbican, alongside relative newcomers like Jarrod Lawson and veteran star Elaine Delmar.

Another significant British musician in the first London Jazz Festival was John Surman, whose *Brass Project* at the Lilian Bayliss Theatre, conducted by John Warren, was reviewed in the *Financial Times* as 'a uniquely English and folky form of big band jazz', with Warren's Ellingtonian new compositions, 'rounded off with an extraordinary arrangement based on the music hall refrain "My old man said follow the van."' In ways like these a creative quirky transatlantic vibe, dialogue, sometimes even clash, became one of the hallmarks of the festival.

A London festival

Since it is situated in a global and multicultural city, from the start the festival has tried to reflect London's international nature and include its different musical cultures within it, as well as offer opportunities for those sounds to speak to and mix with each other.

In Cumming's view this is because:

The festival is about *London* as much as it is about jazz. It's about how this fantastic evolution of music in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has had a worldwide impact and has an impact on a major city like London.

However, in a city with a population approaching ten million, the question quickly becomes: how to make a major impact with what is seen as a minority genre of music? The answer the festival has come up with is via a series of evolving partnerships, developed and enhanced through Serious' year-round work across a range of musics with jazz, the spirit and practice of improvisation, at its heart.

We can see this effort at partnership from its earliest days; the 1993 festival brochure's list of partners, for example, includes Assembly Direct & Community Music, Jazz Rumours, Jazz Umbrella, ppArtnerships, Secret Spaces, and Somethin' Else, while the 1994 list includes Blow The Fuse, London Musicians' Collective, Weekend Arts College and Grand Union.

Cumming again:

For the festival, we wanted to use all that and distil it into the venues that we work with, large and small, with the other promoters in London, with the musicians in London, with communities in London that were working with music education and community education... So in a sense, the mission statement was that the festival is about London, but London is also about the festival.

Ronnie Scott's, the Jazz Café and the Vortex were just some of the clubs gathered under the 1993 umbrella. Serious Speakout's office was in Soho at that time and shared a fire escape with Ronnie's, meaning that it inevitably became a musicians' 'hang' during the day. Both Cumming and Jones remember that the new festival had to be put together early in the day before they were taken over by the socialising demands of the local musicians.

To the north east of Soho's jazz hub, The Vortex was then at its original location in Stoke Newington, its line-up in the 1993 London Jazz Festival including a Blow The Fuse collective night, Annie Whitehead, and the Vortex Superband featuring Dick Heckstall-Smith. Linking right back to the Flamingo Club and the National Jazz Festival and joining the dots between jazz, reggae, ska, and Latin jazz, Gary

Crosby's Jazz Jamaica played at the Bloomsbury Theatre, and featured 'Rico' Rodriguez, Michael 'Bammi' Rose, Eddie 'Tan Tan' Thornton, and Crosby's uncle, Ernest Ranglin – who had been resident guitarist for a while in the house band at Ronnie Scott's in the mid-1960s – all supported by saxophone star Andy Hamilton, from Jamaica via Birmingham. Coming from a very different end of the jazz spectrum, Brazilian fusionist Tania Maria was supported by DJs from the Latin and African Brixton club, Mambo Inn, making a rare appearance north of the river.

Dance music in the 1990s

The late 1980s and early 1990s were a vibrant time for club-based dance music in London, a new subcultural scene shot through with the entrepreneurialism of the times. During the 1980s, a resurgence of pirate radio stations – from tower blocks rather than from the offshore ships of the 1960s – gained large audiences. There was pressure to grant more broadcast licences, and so in July 1989, the Independent Broadcasting Authority announced that the Greater London FM licence would go to London Jazz Radio, later Jazz FM, which along with dance music station KISS FM caused a 'marketing revolution' for London's clubs, labels and magazines.

By 1991, Jazz FM's *Somethin' Else* show with Jez Nelson and Chris Phillips was on every night from 10pm to 2 or 3am, a show aimed at young, fashionable club-going jazz fans, including records, interviews and live broadcasts from London's jazz venues. Along with DJs Gilles Peterson's and Patrick Forge's acid jazz nights, the show became one of the ways in which jazz made its way back to the dancefloor and brought jazz to a younger audience.

Camden was the epicentre of the new acid jazz scene, with clubs like Dingwalls and the Electric Ballroom playing a central role, as did Soho's Wag Club and Hoxton's Blue Note (fka Bass Clef). Cumming recalls taking American pianist Cecil Taylor to successive Monday nights at the Wag Club to watch the kids dancing – and to dance themselves – to Art Blakey records, Taylor enthusing that 'There's nothing in New York like this!'

At the same time, black British music in London had evolved into a thriving jungle and drum 'n' bass scene from the lovers' rock, reggae, and sound systems of the 1970s and the soul music of the 1980s. As writer Lloyd Bradley explains, the success of bands like Soul II Soul 'expressed black Britishness in a way that contributed hugely to culture as a whole' and meant that during the 1990s, 'the

audience for a much broader spectrum of British black acts was ready and waiting.' A number of Asian bands and musicians such as Apache Indian also started to attract national attention by 1992, and by mid-1995, a number of Asian clubs had emerged in London, including Mohabhat and Outcaste.

The London Jazz Festival cleaved to dance music from the start, a legacy from the festival's roots in progressive Camden, the Arts and Leisure Department of which viewed the night-time economy as pivotal in terms of the borough's cultural provision. As well as two Friday night Drum 'n' Bass Club events at the HQ Club, that first festival in 1993 also featured events promoted by Jez Nelson's Somethin' Else production/promotions company: the London Jazz Bop at the Forum with Peterson and Nelson DJ-ing; and the first Shape of Things to Come night also at the Forum. The latter featured, among others, pianist Julian Joseph and South African-born pianist/saxophonist Bheki Mseleku, and was a co-production with British dance music magazine *Straight No Chaser*.

Dubbed 'Way Out East', the festival's 1996 opening night party a few years later headed downstream to the K-R Warehouses at the Royal Victoria Docks for a show across three warehouse spaces, featuring Groove Collective from New York, Nils Petter Molvaer from Norway, 'intelligent drum 'n' bass' producer LTJ Bukem – a classically trained pianist who had once been in a jazz-funk band – Ninja Tunes' artist Chris Bowden, and other acid jazz drum 'n' bass artists and DJs from 9pm until 3am. In doing so, Serious again set out their stall that the London Jazz Festival was as much about London as it was about jazz, and in its choice of location, also highlighted the increasing importance of East London as a cultural destination.

By the end of the decade, the festival's inclusion of dance music showed no sign of abating. Ninja Tune's Coldcut played at the Shepherd's Bush Empire on the opening night of the 1999 Festival, featuring the multi-talented, multi-deck turntablist DJ Kid Koala and Cabbage Boy. Even superclub Fabric was brought into the programme that year with an event called The Fusion Principle: It's Time, a club night which celebrated contemporary jazz fusion.

Fast forward to 2015 and the influence of dubstep, hip hop and drum 'n' bass could be heard in the music of Robert Glasper, Moon Hooch's saxophone-led dubstep and acoustic techno, and Manchester trio GoGo Penguin, the latter's yearning melodies and resonant seventh chords filtered through what *the Daily Telegraph* describes as the 'seething dance energy' of the bassist's and drummer's skittering drum 'n' bass

rhythms. In 2016, one of the giants of the electronic scene, St Germain, featured in the festival, bringing his mix of deep house, African sounds and jazz to the Royal Festival Hall.

Not just a music festival

Jazz on film – still and moving –has formed a part of the festival since the early days, forming another strand by which jazz has been mediated and re-presented to generations old and new. The first festival in 1993 used 20-metre high images of jazz musicians like Gary Crosby and Steve Williamson projected on to St Pancras Station to announce its arrival, while the following year there was an exhibition called *Shooting Stills* at The Bloomsbury Theatre, a collection of work from photographers such as Gered Mankowitz, designed to reinvent the jazz image.

Fastforward and jazz photography and film are now an established part of the festival's programme. The work of one of jazz in Britain's most celebrated photographers, David Redfern, was featured in a new exhibition at the Southbank in 2013, alongside the work of emerging photographer, Edu Hawkins. In 2015, 25 years of the dynamic black and white jazz photography of David Sinclair was celebrated in an exhibition at the Royal Albert Hall, stretching all the way round the curved inner walls of the iconic venue.

Moving pictures have also featured since the early days. (To acknowledge a more significant achievement here within film and jazz festivals in London, there is great interest to be had in watching the feature-length documentary film of the first Soho Jazz Festival from 1986: *Ten Days that Shook Soho*. Produced for Channel 4 at a time when television was very interested in jazz, it contains some great footage of live performances – from old and new generations alike – but also a sense of Soho street life is on view (in which jazz and the sex industry are firmly interwoven), and some of the backroom scenes of negotiation and organisation are priceless.)

In 1994, for example, the London Musicians' Collective presented a 'latter day Beat journey' with film, video, text and guitar from Lee Ranaldo of Sonic Youth and New York film-maker Leah Singer. In 2011, the programme included the European première of *Louis*, a silent film about the life of Louis Armstrong and the birth of jazz, with a score composed by Wynton Marsalis.

More recently, a raft of new films about jazz – whether documentary or feature – have found their place at the festival. In 2012, what became for *The Guardian* one of most uplifting and transcendent shows of that year's festival was *Bill Frisell: The Great Flood*, in which the guitarist provided a live soundtrack to Bill Morrison's

documentary about the catastrophic 1927 floods that engulfed the Mississippi Delta.

To a soundtrack which took a sonic journey from blues to bluegrass, from ragtime to Americana, gospel to R&B, the film showed that even ‘amidst the biblical horror, what shines through is mankind’s resilience.’ Other new films have included Dick Fontaine’s portrait of Sonny Rollins, *Beyond the Notes*, screened in 2012 (Fontaine also made the film about Art Blakey at the Camden Jazz Festival), and the UK premiere of the feature film about jazz drumming and teaching, *Whiplash*, in 2014.

The spoken word has also formed a part of the London Jazz Festival since its inception, from the pre-show talk series – entitled Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya, after the classic 1955 oral history of US jazz book – to the more lyrical conjoining of jazz and poetry. The 1993 Festival, for example, included Groove, the popular and long-running jamming session at the (then) WKD Café in Camden Town, hosted by Steve Swindells, and featuring poetry and prose with jazz rhythms performed by The Hipsters.

In 2002, veteran Norwegian pianist Ketil Bjornstad was at the Purcell Room playing what *The Guardian* described as ‘deliciously minimalist settings’ of John Donne poems, featuring Aneli Drecker on vocals and Punkt Festival’s Jan Bang on electronics, while in 2005, the Royal Opera House’s Floral Hall hosted a night of poetry of the thirties, performed by pianist Gareth Williams and vocalist Norma Winstone. 2014’s celebration of 75 years of Blue Note saw writer Richard Williams in conversation with the label’s biographer, Richard Havers, while the twin themes for 2016’s talks programme were jazz and the city and jazz in Europe.

The festival has included a number of theatre and dance events over the years, perhaps as a result of both Cumming’s and Jones’ backgrounds. In 1994, for example, the Bloomsbury Theatre hosted a performance of Kate Westbrook’s *Even/Uneven – Skirmish Music Hall*, a premiere performance of Westbrook’s new venture, performed by the seven-piece Skirmishers against a backdrop of large charcoal drawings, theatrical lighting and costume, in which Westbrook’s lyrics were combined with specially commissioned music by jazz, classical and pop composers including Mike Westbrook and Barbara Thompson.

In more recent times, *Lush Life: the Songs of Billy Strayhorn* was a theatrical tribute to the composer and songwriter in his centenary year, in a show at

Cadogan Hall in 2015, devised by Alex Webb with vocalists including David McAlmont's sweet falsetto. Over at the Barbican the same year, Gilles Peterson's *New Jazz, New Dance* event featured hot West Coast jazz saxophonist, Kamasi Washington as well as a brand new collaboration between Manchester piano trio GoGo Penguin and choreographer Lynne Page; the double bill for *The Guardian* 'proof that jazz is still very much a living, breathing, evolving form.'

One of the running themes of the festival programme over its 25 years has been to tell the rich history of jazz in different ways, from Troupers in Town's *History of Jazz* at the Hackney Empire in 1994 through to WordTheatre's *And All That Jazz Redux* at the St James Theatre in 2016. The latter show was led by pianist James Pearson, and illuminated the story of jazz through the words and songs of musicians like Jelly Roll Morton, Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong and Nina Simone.

1994-1995: New venues, new sponsorship

1994 saw the London Jazz Festival increase in size and scope, with venues now including the Southbank Centre, and, a couple of years later, the Barbican coming on board as a venue in 1996 and as a producing partner in 1997. These large state-funded cultural centres for London and for the UK have been absolutely key to the success of the London Jazz Festival. It needs the concert halls for the big acts but it has also taken advantage of the spaces beyond the concert halls to expand the festival to include film showings, workshops, and free stages – enhancing the vital fringe-y buzz of the event.

1995 was the first year that the festival took place in November rather than May, the decision to shift based to fit around the schedules of the funding bodies, which would announce their decisions in March/April thereby leaving little time to plan a major festival. (Of course, something is lost in this shift; the opportunity to re-sound the city in the warm early summer open air with live music in parks and parading around the streets.)

By 1995, according to the *Evening Standard*, the London Jazz Festival was a 'star-studded and truly international affair', with the *Financial Times* saying that 'this is a good time to be a jazz fan in London.' 1995's highlights included Buckshot Le Fonque featuring Branford Marsalis, Wayne Shorter, and George Russell and the Living Time

Orchestra, the latter put on by – and highlighting Serious’ continuing links with – the Contemporary Music Network.

Also playing in 1995 were the Art Ensemble of Chicago, celebrating their 30th anniversary. In the audience was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Ken Clarke MP. As director David Jones tells it, the chairman of the Board of the Southbank Centre had invited the well-known jazz enthusiast MP to the concert, and so the Southbank chairman was seated next to Ken Clarke for a concert which lasted for two hours and forty minutes, without an interval: ‘

And the chairman could not *believe* that this music was going on and on and on, barely stopping, and when it stopped, there wasn’t a nice break, there was *more* of it, and it was going *on* and on and on and on and on!’ When the concert finally finished, the chairman got up and said, “We’ve got to go now”, and Ken Clarke said, “Oh no, I want to see the band!”

So they went backstage and [Ken] was such a charmer, ‘I *love* your music!’ [From the band’s point of view] there was a major British politician in their dressing room talking to them knowledgeably about the music and they loved it! And they gave him a beer and they talked.

As well as the big American names just mentioned, the 1995 festival also featured a number of British stars. For *The Guardian*, the programming of the new festival signalled that ‘the winds of jazz tastes were changing direction’ from the start, away from earlier ‘glitzy’ UK jazz festivals which promoted ‘globetrotting American tours’ and towards a focus on British and European jazz musicians.

One such was John Surman, described by *The Independent* as ‘probably the only British jazz musician whose surname alone is capable of conjuring up the gravitas associated with the great surnames of the past, like Rollins or Coltrane.’ Other British highlights included Grand Union, Mike and Kate Westbrook, and a rare performance by Giant Steppes – Diane McLoughlin’s 17-piece orchestra – featuring trombonist Annie Whitehead, guitarist Deirdre Cartwright and singer Ian Shaw.

The 1995 festival was also the first year that the Swiss watch maker Oris was on board as a sponsor, the following year taking on title sponsorship until 1998, this marking the point at which the festival had reached parity between public funding and commercial sponsorship. The Oris partnership impacted beyond the festival,

however, as it also opened up the notion of corporate sponsorship to others in the field.

For Gary Crosby, for example, Oris' sponsorship made him realise that he couldn't just rely on the Arts Council alone but had to bring in other income as well: 'The jazz festival was one of the first companies I took notice of their sponsorship deals. It opened my and others' eyes to the possibility and need for other ways to fund our music and the arts in general, and with the increasing pressure on the Arts Council and the BBC, it's the only way we are going to survive and keep standards up.' The additional sponsorship provided by Oris allowed for the employment of a freelance festival co-ordinator for the first time: Debbie Dickinson.

Dickinson had managed the all-female Guest Stars collective in the 1980s, and ran the development agency, Jazz Moves, set up to develop venues, promoters and touring networks for jazz in the city. Jazz Moves had already been working in the boroughs of Camden, Islington and Hackney, and so Dickinson was brought in to look after the grassroots aspects of the festival, using the contacts she had already developed with clubs like the Red Rose and the Vortex, and to develop the festival's educational strands. Dickinson also ran the Women Take Centre Stage festival, which took place during International Women's Week, designed to promote and commission new work by women musicians and composers as a response to the low number of women on the jazz scene.

Women and Jazz

In its early days, despite two or three decades of second-wave feminism, jazz discourse could still reflect an overwhelmingly male perspective.

While antithetical to the festival's own viewpoint, Richard Liston's preview in the *Weekly Journal* of a 1995 all-women festival concert encapsulates the problem: Take three attractive women pianists, put them on a stage and the phwooar factor is guaranteed to rise a few notches. This clearly is a sexist observation but one which Nikki Yeoh, Jessica Lauren and Errollyn Wallen are resigned to and aware of, although all would rather it is their music that gets the adrenalin flowing.

The issue of the gender imbalance in jazz is a longstanding one, and, in all fairness, not one a solitary jazz festival can address satisfactorily.

As George McKay suggests in *Circular Breathing*:

The history of jazz in Britain is one of men supporting men, talking to and writing about men, preserving special male sociocultural spaces, men listening to each other's music and responding... men sharing instrumental secrets with each other, seeking structure or escape in a 12- or 32-bar sequence, men helping each other break out of rigid class expectations, small groups of men on stages watched, listened to and envied by larger groups of men.

Jim Smith, then of the Cheltenham International Jazz Festival, went further in a comment in a 2001 Arts Council of England report on developing jazz audiences to say that:

The jazz scene in the UK tends to exclude women. For women audiences, the sexual discrimination is mostly unintended – their needs are not considered. For women performers the discrimination is perhaps more deliberate.

The London Jazz Festival and Serious have had a female director since Claire Whitaker joined in 1996, have appointed a number of senior female staff members over the organisation's history, and have aimed to pursue a positive path in gender balance in programming for many years. Even so, the festival has been criticised for not including enough women in its line-up. Indeed, an article by Masskraabel on the ImprovisingBigMusic website in 2013 talked of the 'London (Men's) Jazz Festival.'

This prompted Serious to analyse their programming and to take a more proactive line in finding the next generation of talented female musicians, artists like Laura

Jurd, Trish Clowes and Yazz Ahmed. The commitment continues to expand – in the 2016 Festival, a celebration of the work of one of the UK's most influential singers, Norma Winstone, alongside important and established musicians from abroad (Geri Allen, Terri Lyne Carrington and Carla Bley), is balanced by the inclusion in 2016 and 2017 of emerging names such as the UK's Nerija and Camilla George, as well as, in 2017 the exuberant all female Scandinavian band led by percussionist Marilyn Mazur. If you are a major event in a scene you bear some responsibility to shaping the culture and its future, not least when there has always been an element of social engagement in your work.

A jazz festival cannot change the world but it can identify, articulate and put something in place to address critical questions of its own music. (For Cumming, however, the means of effective delivery has to be carefully nurtured: 'The aspiration is completely correct, but it's important to support the artist in a way that enables them to realise their potential'.)

Tomorrow's Warrior pianist Sarah Tandy spoke to us of some of the ways in which jazz as a creative music functions exclusively rather than inclusively: The thing about jazz is you develop your craft by going to jams and being out of your comfort zone and sitting in and playing a tune you don't really know with musicians that are a million times better than you. And it's generally a horrific experience [laughs]... I don't think there are that many teenage girls that are that comfortable in putting themselves in that [situation].

The situation becomes self-fulfilling: as McKay notes, one of the factors behind the lack of women in jazz is the lack of women to emulate. To counter this, Serious' former associate director of production Amy Pearce told us that a new behind-the-scenes strand to the 2016 London Jazz Festival called Secret Women's Business would set out to address the lack of role models and mentors by giving younger musicians the chance to speak to more established female musicians and to inspire older female musicians by seeing the legacy of their musical activity and activism.

“The jazz festival is dead: long live the ‘jazz’ festival.”

The Times, 1996

Claire Whitaker

It was also in 1995 that Serious first came into contact with the third director of the organisation, Claire Whitaker, via her work with africa95, an African arts festival timed to reflect the optimism following Nelson Mandela's release in 1990, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and Mandela's subsequent 1994 election victory in South Africa. (The closing concert of the 1994 London Jazz Festival was headlined by the Elite Swingsters, marking the first ever British concert by these township jazz legends, bringing their mix of the swing of big band with pulsating township *mbaqanga*.)

Born in 1963 in Cheshire, Whitaker initially wanted to study music at university but her father's illness prevented her from doing so, and so she went to work for NatWest in 1982. She kept up her musical activities, though, singing in a choir and playing in bands, and after seven years in the bank 'I really, really wanted to go back to music so I wrote a six-page begging letter to Decca Records', who took her on in 1989.

Whitaker then went on to become development director at the Southbank Centre in 1990 before becoming director of africa95 in 1992. She started working in South Africa two weeks after Mandela's election where she helped to set up an organisation called Business Arts South Africa (BASA), based on the UK's Arts & Business model, whose patrons included Nelson Mandela and Her Majesty the Queen.

It was via africa95's opening concert, however, produced by Serious, that Claire started working directly with David Jones. Once africa95 had finished, Jones and Cumming invited her to join Serious. Whitaker became a new director in January 1996, working to enhance the company's development and fund-raising strategies, and leading and developing a successful and consistently expanding learning and development programme, as well as special projects such as Women of Africa 1997, State of Play, and BT River of Music for the Cultural Olympiad 2012. Claire was awarded an OBE for Services to Jazz in the Queen's 2015 Birthday Honours List and a Gold Badge Award for a unique contribution to music by the British Academy of Song Writers, Composers and Authors; and has been named as one of London Mayor Sadiq Khan's Cultural Ambassadors.

1996-1998: The Oris years

The early 1990s saw the death of some of the great American jazz greats: Art Blakey in 1990, Miles Davis in 1991, and Dizzy Gillespie in 1993, and as the scarcity of the big name American headliners increased, so too, Glasgow Jazz Festival director Jill Rodger told us with a smile, did their fees.

Attempting to fill their shoes stepped in the likes of Wynton Marsalis, with his own neo-traditionalist perspective on jazz history. For a critic like Stuart Nicholson, in his book *Is Jazz Dead? (Or Has it Moved to a New Address?)*, the jazz mainstream in the United States between 1990 and 2005 saw the main area of jazz activity become both conservative and imitative, rather than experimental and innovative.

The American dominance of jazz was seemingly on the wane as young European musicians developed confidence in their own jazz idioms, although as Nicholson suggests:

There will always be a market in Europe for jazz's top headliners – a Herbie Hancock, a Wayne Shorter, a Pat Metheny, a Chick Corea, a Keith Jarrett and so on – but subsequent generations of jazz musicians, especially young musicians establishing their reputations, are finding less job opportunities in Europe as European musicians move into the space once occupied by American musicians.

For musician Alex Webb, speaking in a 2010 interview about the 21st-century jazz festival: 'It's sad in a way that there aren't any Mileses [Davis] left – Sonny Rollins is perhaps the last one – but I mean on the other hand there's a hell of a lot of other interesting things happening in areas of jazz... where it relates to other musics.'

To help promote Britain and British jazz around the world, for a long time the London Jazz Festival had a relationship with the British Council as a platform for getting British music beyond Britain. In 1996, for example, a brochure, produced by the Council, promoted the Jazz From Britain strand which highlighted the strength of the British scene by featuring generations of musicians like Stan Tracey, John Surman, Tim Garland, Tomorrow's Warriors with Courtney Pine, and Deirdre Cartwright.

Conversely, as a platform for introducing the extraordinary quality of European jazz to a British audience, the early London Jazz Festivals also featured national themes. Also in 1996, the Jazz From Norway mini festival (and accompanying Norwegian sampler CD) put a spotlight on musicians like Terje Rypdal and Arild Andersen, 1997 was the turn of Jazz From Austria featuring the Vienna Art Orchestra (VAO) in

their 20th anniversary year, and France was the featured country in 1998. As VAO's Mathias Ruegg explains, 'Some very big influences are coming from Europe, especially from those musicians who mix jazz with classical or folk music. People like Jan Garbarek or Albert Mangelsdorff have created a special kind of language for European jazz. And Django Reinhardt? He was a genius.'

Cross-cultural fusions

Thirty years after *Time* magazine's 'Swinging Sixties' headline, Newsweek in 1996 labelled London as 'The Coolest City in the World', much of the excitement coming from the city's mix of European and world cultures and its mix of the old and the new. As Jerry White explains in *London in the Twentieth Century*, 1990s London was booming 'because young people had money in their pockets and purses' given an extra flip by the election in 1997 of a New Labour government more inclined towards spending (albeit via public-private partnerships) than its Conservative predecessors.

Feasibly, such economic optimism contributed to the success and ambition of the now Oris London Jazz Festival, which by 1997 had grown to become 'one of Europe's leading new music events', according to The Guardian, with the 'most wide-ranging' programming of any UK jazz festival:

Every year the word 'jazz' comes up for renegotiation somewhere, but 1996 in Britain put it under particular scrutiny with November's Oris London Jazz Festival, which put Youssou N'Dour, Marisa Monte, John Harle and Elvis Costello under the banner alongside more orthodox candidates like Sonny Rollins, John Scofield, Mike Westbrook and Michael Brecker.

As the *Evening Standard* put it, 'Not everyone shares the Serious taste, but it's always progressive and rarely misses a contemporary beat', an obvious example being what *The Times* dubbed the 'laudably adventurous' move to programme Asian Dub Foundation – who love Sun Ra – and Nitin Sawhney at the Royal Festival Hall for the festival's opening night in 1997. According to *The Times*, the event showed off the rich seam of talent running 'from Brick Lane to Bradford via Bengal and Baluchistan' and was hosted by Outcaste Records, the label at the forefront of the British Asian music scene. It was not just the range of venues and events, then, that was attracting attention – by now, around 130-odd gigs – but also its reflection of

what John Fordham termed in 1997 the 'cultural energies aglow' in London: from India, the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe.

By now, *The Times* felt able to write of the London Jazz Festival that it had 'begun to put its own stamp on the listening habits of the contemporary audience' to the extent that its programming decisions were being heralded as the future of jazz festivals in a world in which old stylistic distinctions were disappearing: 'One type of jazz festival is dying; another is being born.' Some, however, were less fond of the London Jazz Festival's increasingly diverse programming of world music and fusion.

Another *Times* critic, for example, warned that:

The obvious danger is that the subtleties and complexities of the jazz improviser could be squeezed out by more populist and instantly commercial forms – just as they were in the heyday of fusion mark one. You do not have to be a cynic to feel that some of the enthusiasm for world music arises from the quest for an exotic, package-tour version of the lowest common denominator.

As these contrasting views from *The Times* indicate, jazz festival producers are often criticised either for being too populist or not populist enough, too focused on the new or not sufficiently innovative. In the UK, however, festival promoters can be pulled in apparently contradictory strategic directions. As academic Steve Oakes explains, on the one hand they need to impress sceptical arts funding bodies by convincing them of the artistic value and credibility of the music, whilst at the same time are also under pressure from the very same funding bodies to increase accessibility by putting on music which appeals to a wider, more populist audience. Jazz festival producers, then, walk a fine line between programming innovative music with niche appeal, and putting on big names who will guarantee ticket sales and packed halls. Ears on stalks or bums on seats.

For DJ Jez Nelson, many of the great jazz festivals have become pop festivals but they retain the word 'jazz' because 'it's got a bit of sexiness to it.' For him, the London Jazz Festival is a 'bloody good jazz festival [and] they've done that without including pop music, in the main.'

According to David Jones, the reason the festival has been able to do this is the tripartite model of box office, state funding, and commercial sponsorship developed

by Serious, meaning that the three pillars support each other without the need to over-rely on one income stream.

And now... too many jazz festivals?

When it came to jazz festivals in the capital city, by 1997, extraordinarily, Londoners had almost too much choice. For much of the year, there seemed to be one every few weeks, while July alone saw, like a trio of London buses, three coming along one after the other. With the Soho Jazz Festival, Jazz On The Streets, the JVC Jazz Festival, and the Oris London Jazz Festival as regular events, an article in *Jazz UK* magazine entitled 'Will the real London Jazz Festival stand up?' went so far as to suggest that jazz fans in the capital would be 'bemused' by the number of jazz festivals on offer. Perhaps, *Jazz UK* continued, the various events should instead pool their resources to form a 'mega-bash' the size of the Netherlands' North Sea Jazz Festival?

However, Serious had their particular vision, aligning themselves with the programming of Bath Festival, the newly-launched Cheltenham Jazz Festival and some European festivals with their 'eclectic left-field programming and outreach schemes', rather than the more 'bar-and-brasserie atmosphere of Soho' and the 'cavalcade of star names' of July's JVC event, as *Jazz UK* characterised each. JVC bore the brunt of criticism, being described in *The Times* as 'a conveyor belt of ageing soloists going through the motions as they waited for the next flight to Nice or New York.' JVC finally ended in 1997, thus marking the end of a run of imported American jazz festivals in London and leaving a space in the jazz calendar which the London Jazz Festival would later fill. (Interestingly, in 2011 a new festival was started by US promoters Live Nation, originally under the name of the London Jazz and Blues Festival, now called Bluesfest.)

1999: But is it jazz?

Although 1999's London Jazz Festival hosted star north American headliners including Branford Marsalis, Diana Krall, and Dianne Reeves, *The Times* still complained that, 'at the London Jazz Festival, now in its seventh year, the stars are smaller and the straight jazz harder to find.'

Indeed, in the late 1990s the festival producers found it difficult to programme enough major jazz artists to fill the bigger venues available, but, rather than go down the route of booking pop acts, they looked instead to other musics. In an article in *The*

Independent the following year, Cumming acknowledged that that year's festival was light on the bigger American stars, but sought to present this as a positive development: 'It's a chance for people to see how the international jazz scene fits in the context of a major European city festival. It reflects the way things are in London and how the musicians are taking the music in exciting new directions.'

His views on London would be echoed by Denys Baptiste, who a few years later described the American jazz scene as having 'got into this quagmire of tradition whereas London – England – is so cosmopolitan now [with] so much more fusing of musical ideas than there is in America. They have this fortress of the history of jazz but it rarely moves on from there...

But for the music itself, there's more happening here.' The point here is not to establish new jazz nationalisms, but to show how the festival was negotiating its own sense of place – London – and managing its relation with a changing jazz landscape, and then to think about what that would mean for programming.

In 1999, however, complaints about a watered-down programme were louder than ever. Indeed, 'thoughtful sceptics', led by Richard Cook, the editor of *Jazz Review*, even took to BBC Radio 4's *Today programme* to ask how a jazz festival could give prominence to the likes of reggae poet Linton Kwesi Johnson 'without falling foul of the Trade Descriptions Act.'

Yet the introduction to the 1999 festival programme sought to address the question head-on, and justify its definitional and programming openness:

The festival makes no definition of what is jazz – it would be out of date as soon as it was made. Rather it draws together all the strands that connect jazz to the broad spectrum of contemporary music.

It seems this didn't convince all: the following year *The Times* was still asking questions like 'Jazz? What jazz?', and the festival was receiving 'more than its fair share of critical flak' for its broad approach, leading *The Independent* to fight its corner:

The unashamedly catholic policy of Serious, the promoters, simply reflects the state of jazz itself. With limited possibilities for vertical progression since modernism reached the virtual cul-de-sac of free improvisation in the late 1960s, contemporary jazz – in parallel with most other arts – has responded by expanding horizontally, reaching out to related forms such as pop, classical, and world music, as well as

reappraising its own, already widely disparate, traditions... To therefore insist upon some idealist notion of jazz purity smacks of musical eugenics, or aesthetic cleansing.

The debate as to who sets genre boundaries is an old one. For writer and critic Simon Frith, one of the on-going debates in jazz is whether to define it canonically – by its history, its great names, its stylistic conventions – or by its processes, as music defined by improvisation and experimentation. The London Jazz Festival aims to cleave to both definitions, but as Frith says in *Performing Rites*, genres are constantly changing anyway and jazz in particular is characterised by a restless fluidity and curiosity because of its improvisatory and hybrid nature.

Director David Jones has relished the challenge:

I think what the London Jazz Festival has done is to feed out to the world at large a confidence that jazz is an important music and it has a place for engaging with any other music it chooses to work with. So I think we've managed to push over a lot of boundaries and other people have gone, 'Well, if they can do it, so can we'... I don't think there's any festival left who would go, 'You can't do that – we're a *jazz* festival!'

New audiences

While jazz was having one of its periodic identity crises, London in the 1990s was having a more profound and bloody crisis of its own. The murder of Stephen Lawrence in southeast London in a racially motivated attack in April 1993 highlighted that the city had still not yet fully come to terms with its multiracial identity, and the report into the inquiry found that institutional racism existed both in the Metropolitan Police Service and in police services and other institutions countrywide.

Following the election of New Labour in 1997, areas in which Serious had been developing expertise like community cohesion and diversity in culture were becoming important strategic government objectives. The company's emphasis on new audience development and widening access was a strand championed by director Claire Whitaker, who did not want ticket price to be a barrier to less advantaged and neglected communities.

That concept formed the heart of both Serious' and the festival's award-winning new

audience development programme, which started in 1999 in partnership with energy supplier London Electricity to provide subsidised tickets and free transport to young people from deprived communities.

For John Cumming, such schemes give access to people who would otherwise never set foot inside a place like the Royal Festival Hall, and means that those audiences 'quite often create that edge of enthusiasm that elevates a good concert to a great one.'

Performing at a memorable sell-out gig at the Royal Festival Hall as part of the scheme in 2001 were the rebranded, relaunched Jazz Jamaica All Stars, featuring Gary Crosby, Juliet Roberts, Orphy Robinson, Andy Sheppard, Ashley Slater, Annie Whitehead and Alex Wilson, and supported by Dennis Rollins' Badbone & Co.

Fusing ska, reggae, and jazz with classic jazz standards and Jamaican folksongs, according to *The Times*, this 'roof-raising' gig of 'music impossible to listen to without a smile on the lips' got several hundred people up on their feet dancing on the 'august' carpets of the Hall.

(Apart from the festival, Serious' commitment is evident elsewhere. From 2004, and for some years following, the company organised the Black Police Association's annual *Celebration of Life Concert* which celebrates the lives of young people who have died as a result of violent crime and features predominantly black British artists. One of the aims of the concerts is to build a better relationship between black communities and the Metropolitan Police, but they function also to remind all Londoners that public music venues are intended for everyone: the concerts have seen the highly unusual occurrence of 98% non-white audience in the Royal Festival Hall.)

Through new audience schemes, education work and free stages, Serious continue their effort to match the line-up on the stage and in the stalls to that of the multicultural identity of London. To truly reflect London's demography both on and off the stage, 40% of the jazz festival's audiences should be non-white, rather than the typical 20% or fewer indicated in its annual online survey. But as Gary Crosby says, on the context of race and ethnicity, 'We should all do more on diversity and audience development and London Jazz Festival's programming, both commercial and educational, has done so much for us all.' Even so, as Crosby observed of jazz generally in 2016, more could be done for both BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) and non-BAME audiences and musicians, 'because everybody's struggling

at the moment.'

However, diversity is not just about ethnicity, but also about class (and disability and sexuality and other identity markers). Indeed, as McKay's *Circular Breathing* reminds us, the media's Jazz Warriors/Loose Tubes binarism in the 1980s jazz boom was as much about each group's class status as it was about their ethnicity.

Furthermore, as Linda Wilks' recent work on audiences for black British jazz shows, a high proportion of black attendees come from the higher socio-economic classes, and her conclusion is that while audiences for black British jazz show complex diversity along the dimensions of age and ethnicity – jazz audiences are not necessarily just old and white – they are not so diverse along class and educational dimensions: her work finds that white *and* black jazz audiences are well-heeled and well-educated.

Wilks' research – some of which was undertaken at London Jazz Festival venues – suggests that black British jazz musicians may attract a slightly higher proportion of black or Asian audience members than white British jazz musicians, and that younger performers attract younger audiences, as do more relaxed, open venues. The London Jazz Festival, through its new audience development programmes and the inclusion of music outside narrow terms has in recent years deliberately shifted towards a wider variety of venues and clubs as a means of developing a younger, more diverse audience. Former associate director of production Amy Pearce says of the London Jazz Festival audience that those who prefer standing venues – XOYO, Scala, Village Underground, KOKO – to seated clubs are definitely the younger end of the jazz audience, those who want to dance rather than just sit and listen. One of the effects of the crossover popularity of artists like Jamie Cullum, Robert Glasper, and Snarky Puppy in recent years is that they help to break down further rigid genre definitions.

For Pearce, the question is whether audiences at such gigs would even describe themselves as a 'jazz audience':

How many people at a Robert Glasper gig think that they're at a jazz gig when he's doing his experimental stuff and how many of them are just at a Robert Glasper gig?... Standing in a pop gig you wouldn't necessarily say, 'I am at a pop gig,' you would say, 'I'm at an Ellie Goulding gig or I'm at a Taylor Swift gig'... It's why conversations about 'what is jazz?', for me, just lead you down a dead end because,

does it really matter or should it just be that the music is doing something interesting and related to an art form that has a history called jazz?

2000: The new millennium

As well as bringing new audiences directly into the festival, another important tool in the festival's audience development toolkit has been via outreach and education programmes. In the London Jazz Festival of 2000, for example, headliner Courtney Pine led a series of workshops with young people from Hackney, Lambeth, and Southwark under its auspices, supported by the PRS Foundation.

Just one out of dozens of letters that the saxophonist received afterwards, the following highlights how Pine was bringing the sounds of jazz to an impressionable, enthusiastic audience:

Dear Courtney, Thanks so much for coming to our school. It was amazing to see you live. You really inspired me. I'm the one who played jazz flute, and thanks to you, next week I'm getting my first sax lesson.

By this time, as John Lewis put it in a feature about Pine's musical development in *Time Out* magazine, the 'propulsive hard bop beats' of the 1980s had been replaced with 'fat drum 'n' bass loops'. By going into schools, Pine was expounding on his theory of British jazz that related to British musical movement and related directly to the young people's own musical experiences. (The significance of his early reggae playing should be remembered here, too. As even more so with Gary Crosby, British reggae was a Black Atlantic sound for some players who would then move into jazz.)

As Pine put it, thinking back to an early moment when he had turned down an invitation to play as a member of the Jazz Messengers in the United States:

I'm proud of drum 'n' bass as a British innovation, from our UK black experience.... It's something that could only have come out of a British perspective.... I could have gone to America with Art Blakey and been a millionaire. But I'm glad I stayed – I couldn't do this music anywhere else in the world.

It is therefore fitting that, in the first year of the new millennium, Pine headlined a festival which had embraced and celebrated London's black musicians from the beginning, and which by 2000, was now billing itself as 'London's biggest music

festival' – quite a bold claim when the competition includes something like the long-established eight-week Proms classical music festival in the city.

Highlighting the still strong links between the live and recording industries, Courtney Pine's first proper headline (then Racing Green) London Jazz Festival gig in 2000 marked the release of his new CD, *Back In The Day*, released on Blue Thumb, an imprint of Universal Jazz. (To accompany the brochure that year, Universal Jazz produced a sampler CD featuring some of its jazz artists, including Pine, Christian McBride, and Bugge Wesseltoft.) The gig was a storming sell-out, described by Jack Massarik in the *Evening Standard* as a 'megablast': 'a two-hour show at screaming pitch from start to finish... which left fans reeling out of the hall, their hands sore from applauding, their voices hoarse from whooping and their ears ringing from aural assault.'

The same year, the festival was asked to join the International Jazz Festival Organisation (which had changed its name, and focus, from the European Jazz Festival Organisation in 2002), to which belong some of the biggest jazz festivals in the world, including North Sea Jazz, Monterey, Montreux and Montreal's jazz festivals. For Claire Whitaker, being invited to join the organisation was an illustration of the London Jazz Festival's success and ambition, both of which were to develop even further as the new millennium got underway.

Chapter 4: The BBC years: 2001-2012

2001: BBC Radio 3

2001 was the year in which, as Claire Whitaker puts it, the London Jazz Festival ‘changed from a London festival to a national festival’ as the result of a new partnership with BBC Radio 3, which helped to further promote the festival outside of London. Radio 3’s remit is primarily classical music, but with some jazz, and of course it is a national broadcaster, not only for London.

Our profile had been going up, the reach of the festival and the profile of the festival, the strength of the British scene and all sorts of things came together, but that Radio 3 moment when they came in as partners gave a lens to look at that through and see how far we’d come.

The station had broadcast from the festival since 1993, becoming the official radio station in 1995, but in 2001, Radio 3 became the principal creative (and financial) media partner, which meant more broadcasts and a greater online presence. Roger Wright had been appointed Controller of Radio 3 in 1998 and had been looking for a way for the station to form a more concrete relationship with the festival to mirror and develop the station’s burgeoning jazz and world music content.

Jez Nelson’s independent media production company, Somethin’ Else, which had been assiduously recording and broadcasting from the festival for the BBC for years, had also been trying to find a way to link the strands together. The result was that BBC Radio 3 came on board as a partner for the 2001 Festival, which for Whitaker, ‘felt like we’d grown up and been given our key to the door.’

For classical music critic Norman Lebrecht, writing in *The Daily Telegraph*, the Radio 3 partnership was a sign of a ‘highbrow station slipping off its blue stockings and jumping into bed with a funky jazz fest that turns out to have had minor surgical alteration and gone transcultural.’ Indeed, in its treatment of jazz over the years, the BBC shows how jazz has often tended to get caught between highbrow and lowbrow, entertainment and culture, youth and older audiences.

From the gramophone recitals of the 1920s, through the St Regis Hotel relays of 1938-1939 – then the only way to hear live American musicians during the

Musicians' Union 'ban' – to the wartime *Radio Rhythm Club* (1940-1947), and to the long-running *Jazz Club* programme (1947-1974 as both a radio and TV programme, and listened to in the early 1960s by a young John Cumming), jazz has shuttled between BBC Radios 1, 2 and 3.

But jazz has never really found a secure and substantial home within the BBC's family of radio stations and the (under)representation of jazz on the BBC and in the British media is an on-going issue. (A 2009 report by Jazz Services, the then national agency for jazz in Britain, concluded starkly if unsurprisingly for many in the jazz community that the BBC was 'not, in the eyes of many engaged in the British jazz economy, supporting British jazz to the extent it could, and many feel should.')

New venues, new frontiers

The partnership with the London Jazz Festival in 2001 and the broadening of BBC Radio 3's musical vocabulary also points to a broader postmodernist trend within the arts, in which the previously deeply scored lines between genres and art worlds have become more blurred. Illustrating this trend, London's temple of classical music, the Wigmore Hall, was used for the first time in the jazz festival in 2004, as was the cathedral of the art world, the Royal Academy of Arts.

The Wigmore Hall, a 'little gem of civilisation' with a 'pin-perfect acoustic' according to *The Daily Telegraph*, was home to Brad Mehldau, playing solo for two nights, 'the quiet serious intensity of the whole proceeding... akin to classical music.' For Dan Tepfer's improvisations around J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* at the Wigmore Hall in 2014, there were a few seconds of silence after the final note before the audience suddenly rose to give a standing ovation, more akin to a classical audience's reaction than a jazz one's.

Thus the choice of venue can affect the 'feel' of a gig and indeed, the use of certain venues may also convey deeper layers of meaning. In 2010, veteran French pianist Martial Solal also played at the Wigmore Hall at the age of 82. Cumming attended the rehearsal, and, as he put it, 'wallowed' in the sounds of one of the world's great pianists in one of the world's great rooms for music. As Cumming says, Solal loved it, and this story also highlights how matching the right artist to the right venue is also satisfying for the festival producers. It also means that the London Jazz Festival has been putting on jazz at very heart of the arts establishment in London, reminding us perhaps of the late musician and radio broadcaster Humphrey Lyttelton's only slightly tongue-in-cheek observation that 'it is considered an extra feather in the cap of jazz if it can be presented in a hall normally reserved exclusively for serious music.'

Free festival

2001 was also the first year of the PizzaExpress-sponsored FreeStage, a temporary stage built on the floor of the Royal Festival Hall's Clore Ballroom, with another added in the Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer in 2004. Fully equipped with light and sound, the stage represented a further flowering of the festival's more inclusive, boundary-less events – not always an easy thing to achieve in dark, cold mid-

November. The music is not locked away behind the doors of a concert hall and the free stages allow people to sample new musicians and new sounds in a more relaxed atmosphere. Furthermore, it gives musicians the opportunity to play in front of up to a thousand people rather than the usual couple of hundred (or fewer), and so they have to learn how to make an impression.

The London Jazz Festival has included free events from the start, including free performances in unusual locations around Euston and King's Cross in the very first year. From 1995, free events in the Royal Festival Hall Foyer included Radio 3 broadcasts, interviews and live performances from festival artists such as John Surman and Carol Kidd. By 2000, the festival was able to put on much more free music, thanks to support from (one year only) title sponsors Racing Green, independent label Provocateur Records, and Arts & Business' New Partners scheme. That year, artists included a mixture of new talent and established acts, including Gary Crosby's Nu Troop II and Andy Sheppard in Jazz and Beats with DJs Rita Ray and Max Reinhardt.

While for some people, an event like the annual Jazz Voice gala *is* the London Jazz Festival, for others the free events are the main draw. As one audience member, playing up to British regional stereotypes, told us: 'I'm a northerner and so I'm going to all the free gigs!' However, for others, the evening events are 'just concerts' and it is the free stage that feels more like a festival.

While money is an issue, then, for some free festival attenders, the more relaxed open setting, plus the opportunity to discover new music, give the free events more of a 'traditional' festival vibe and a more convivial atmosphere. One of the most important findings in a large-scale study into outdoor arts by The Audience Agency is that they consistently attract an audience that is more representative of the population as a whole than other art forms.

This is partly because at most outdoor events audiences have the freedom to roam around, of course, and to join in and to leave when they want to; they are in control of what and how much art they consume and engage with. The same could be said for the London Jazz Festival, which for the free events the usual barriers such as ticket price and strict start times do not exist, though by virtue of the late autumn timing of the festival even such free events are almost always indoors.

The free stages, which in recent years have been a big draw in both the Southbank and the Barbican, have featured notable line-ups over the years, from international

artists such as Robert Glasper to young musicians such as the East London Creative Jazz Orchestra. Gilles Peterson has also played a role in helping to build the reputation of the festival's free stage, DJ-ing at a particularly crazy Future Sounds of Jazz event in 2003 which, Amy Pearce remembers, got a thousand people dancing. Indeed, the free stages work well in creating a party mood for the passing public, as trumpeter Yazz Ahmed explains: 'Just reaching out to people who wouldn't normally get a chance to listen to this kind of music. So yeah, it feels like a party.'

Other free stage highlights over the years include The Monk Liberation Front living and breathing all seventy of Thelonious Monk's compositions in a heady six-hour marathon in 2003, specially commissioned to close the festival. It featured musicians from the UK, Italy, and Finland, led by pianist Jonathan Gee, saxophonist Tony Kofi, composer Philip Clark, and Evan Parker on soprano sax.

Another highlight saw the 150 members of London-based Carnival band Kinetika blow the roof off the free stage in the Royal Festival Hall as they rekindled the spirit of Sun Ra, 'south London stylee' (as the brochure put it) in 2007. As one disgruntled audience member complained to the festival in recent years: 'You're making my festival very difficult. I only come for the free stuff but there's so *much* free stuff!'

2002-2003: 'The music of tomorrow'

Scotland

The tenth year of the London Jazz Festival in 2002 mostly saw the event in rude health. Highlighting the festival's significance not just in showcasing London-based artists but as a platform for Britain more broadly, the Scottish Arts Council supported Caber Music's showcase of Scottish musicians on the PizzaExpress FreeStage in 2002.

The line-up included Kevin Mackenzie's *Vital Signs*, and pianist Brian Kellock with the veteran saxophonist Bobby Wellins, the latter project created with the assistance of a Creative Scotland award from the (then) Scottish Arts Council.

As *The Herald* suggested,

As a promotion exercise, the Scottish Arts Council couldn't have hoped for a more positive response. Time will prove the business

benefits, but with representatives of at least two major European jazz festivals joining the hundreds of casual and specialist listeners in showing their appreciation, Scottish jazz's quality, creativity and good-time credentials surely will have been noted.

(The Herald also highlighted the potential downsides of performing on a free stage, however, suggesting that having Brian Kellock play an unticketed event rather than a proper concert 'devalued his internationally recognised status.')

The 'Norwegian Invasion'

For *The Guardian*, what made 2002's festival go 'with a bang' was the arrival of Norwegian newcomers unleashing some of the most 'exciting, focused, yet uninhibited and spontaneous music in years', including a six-hour *Adventures in Sound* gig featuring the improvised thrash metal electronica of the Scorch Trio from Finland and Norway alongside Matthew Bourne, the Matthew Shipp Trio, and Evan Parker. This gig, cooked up in collaboration with Somethin' Else, remains one of director David Jones' favourite London Jazz Festival memories, an un-rehearsed, un-shaped musical collaboration which started at 4pm and finished at 10pm.

As he recalls:

The audience really got into the drama of it; they could see musicians visibly responding to what was going on around them. It was almost like being able to take an audience into the inner workings of the idea.

By now, Norway's vibrant music scene had 'started to make a splash across London', leading *The Guardian* to later dub it the year of the 'Norwegian Invasion'.

Music from out there, in here

Writing in 2002, music industry publication *Music Week* claimed that the jazz calendar had thrived in comparison with the genre's record sales, and, by 2003, it now seemed that live music and music festivals were one of the saviours of the popular music industry more broadly. As a genre, though, jazz itself remained 'barely a blip on the global music industry's graph' with small venues threatened or closed, and record labels opting to repackage classic albums rather than release contemporary material. It is these kinds of industry shifts and crises that make the story of the survival – indeed, thriving – of festival in general so striking, and jazz festivals perhaps even more so.

Even so, the *Independent on Sunday* was less than impressed with the London Jazz Festival programme's increasing expansion into world music:

In future can we just render unto jazz what belongs to jazz, and let world music devotees bang their drums elsewhere? Jazz is underfunded and underappreciated, and the way to attract new recruits is not by getting people along under false pretences – not that 'don't worry, it's really a jazz festival' is much of a rallying cry.

(Ironically, the festival in recent years has apparently received complaints that there now is not *enough* world music in the programme.) However, the embracing of music from around the world has meant that over the years the festival has been able to include the West African kora sound of Seckou Keita, the tabla-infused Indo-jazz fusion of (Remember) Shakti, the flamenco of Paco de Lucia, and the melancholic Portuguese fado of Mariza. (Illustrating the way in which the festival can help to break an artist onto the scene, Mariza's first UK show was in the intimate 370-seater Purcell Room in the 2002 festival, while she played the Royal Albert Hall in 2006, and sold out the Barbican in 2016.)

For the *Evening Standard*, then, the London Jazz Festival's 'taking over' by world music was something to be celebrated rather than shunned:

In an age of mass travel, the songs of far countries enter our holiday ears and our unconscious. In a multicultural city, pentatonic melodies from China and microtonal Arab ballads constitute our daily aural environment. World music is, among other things, an expression of massive social transformation. More than any other sound, it is the music of tomorrow.

The festival's offering may not have been 'pure' jazz, but it was indeed the sound of London. Summing up its eclectic programme, the slogan for the 2003 festival was 'Music from out there, in here', particularly apt because it encapsulates the inclusive pan-cultural vision of the festival, one which imports music from all over the world into London, but, read another way, also reflects the way in which the festival also provides a platform for the music being made in London itself. The 2003 festival in particular featured a host of significant mostly newer British jazz artists: Courtney Pine, Gilles Peterson, Jamie Cullum, and Soweto Kinch.

"It's a real privilege to be playing here, man: the biggest jazz festival, the capital city. It's massive for me; it's probably one of the biggest gigs that I've done to date."

Soweto Kinch, Saxophonist

Opening night live

One of the ways by which the festival has introduced new performers to the wider public has been via the live late-night broadcast of the festival's opening party on *Jazz on 3*, which grew directly out of the BBC Radio 3 partnership and which began in 2003. Continuing the BBC's tradition of broadcasting live jazz, *Jazz on 3* started to broadcast a special festival opening night event live on air from Soho's PizzaExpress, featuring new acts alongside jazz stars, which was presented by Jez Nelson up to and including 2015.

In 2008, the show moved to Ronnie Scott's, and as Nelson recalls, 'We've had *incredible* legends who've played there', including saxophonist Archie Shepp, vibes player Bob Hutcherson, pianist Tord Gustavsen, trumpeter Terence Blanchard, singer Sheila Jordan, and The Bad Plus. To have London Jazz Festival live from Ronnie Scott's broadcast on BBC Radio 3 is indeed quite special.

Tickets are balloted and attendees are often industry players, including promoters, critics, and other jazz musicians. Nelson again: 'GoGo Penguin, who are now becoming really big – they *certainly* cite that as being a very important gig.' The band's manager, Kerstan Mackness, concurs, explaining that it was GoGo Penguin's first time playing in London, and as well as hitting the core jazz audience via the radio broadcast, it felt like the 'whole jazz industry' was in the room, including most of the significant critics, agents and promoters: the gig was 'a marker; it put them on the map.'

For Bex Burch, band leader of Vula Viel, who played the gig in 2015:

That gig for us was really great... Lots of people there were industry, lots of people were reviewers... And we're in talks with a couple of people who were there about festivals in the future... so possible other gigs may come out of it as well.

The opening night party moved from Ronnie Scott's and back to the PizzaExpress in 2017, BBC Radio 3's *Jazz on 3* now rebranded as *BBC Jazz Now*, with the special festival live edition of the show now presented by Soweto Kinch, hosting live music from international festival guests.

Festivals developing new artists, being developed by new artists

2003 was the first year that pianist Jamie Cullum headlined the festival's closing concert at the Royal Festival Hall, just six months after signing a million-pound record

deal with Universal, the kind of contract unheard of by many British jazz artists.

By the end of the year, Cullum's new album *Twentysomething* had become the fastest selling jazz album in UK chart history, outstripping Courtney Pine's previous record of 100,000 sales by a factor of three. He was, as the BBC put it, 'jazzing up the music scene.' His very first appearance at the festival had only been the previous year, his trio performing as part of the Southbank's free lunchtime series.

A year later he was back – headlining the main venue, promoting an album just released. Supported by American jazz label, Verve Records (owned by Universal), for 2004's festival Cullum would return to his roots to play at the PizzaExpress club and the 606 Club, the latter the venue where he had signed his record deal in the first place.

Not everyone in the jazz community was so keen on Cullum's music, however. For Phil Johnson in *The Independent*, the problem with Jamie Cullum (and even Courtney Pine) was not that they were 'insufficiently jazzy (although, of course, they are). It's simply that they're not imaginative enough.' (Perhaps they were too popular, too, which is sometimes viewed as a problem in the jazz world.)

Nevertheless, as Cumming said in 2004 of the Jamie Cullum effect, 'he's certainly doing no harm bringing attention to the scene,

and it is reflective of a much broader and bigger success story. We're beginning to see more acceptance and support from third parties – from the Arts Council and the BBC, for example – and general levels of audiences are up.' *The Independent* even went so far as to suggest that the golden age of British jazz was not in the past but was actually happening right there and then, marked by the 'steady stream of uncommonly good albums' on independent labels such as Dune, Provocateur, and Caber Music, and by British artists such as Tomorrow's Warriors, Matthew Bourne, Jason Yarde, and Soweto Kinch.

At 25, Soweto Kinch was described by the *Evening Standard* in 2003 as already having a full hand: 'imagination, big sound, impressive technique and the confident charisma of a born leader.' His debut album, *Conversations with the Unseen* combined straight-ahead jazz with hip hop, and in 2003 won him a Mercury Music

Prize nomination and the MOBO Award for Best Jazz Act.

His performance at the London Jazz Festival in 2003 led the *Independent on Sunday* to suggest that Kinch, who opened for the American star David Sanborn, 'left the million-selling alto saxophonist looking as if he needed to take a few lessons'. Following on from the success of Jamie Cullum's special concert for 5,000 young people at the Royal Albert Hall in 2005, the last Sunday of the festival became 'family day' and in 2006 featured Kinch and trumpeter Abram Wilson playing a special afternoon concert as well as their later evening show.

As noted in the press, Kinch was not the only young black artist making waves in the new millennium, however. Although Courtney Pine headlined the festival again in 2003, the higher profile of London's emerging black talent could be seen via performances by drummer Mark Mondesir, tenor saxophonist Denys Baptiste, trumpeter Byron Wallen, Tomorrow's Warriors, funky collective Jade Fox, and Priscilla Ometan's J'Noir at Dingwalls.

Festival residencies

From the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's 1919 residency at the Hammersmith Palais through Ronnie Scott at Club Eleven and beyond, jazz residencies have been a vital means of developing the genre in the UK. In 2003, the festival's DJ in residence was Gilles Peterson, described in the London Jazz Festival brochure as being at the heart of British jazz with an incalculable influence on shaping tastes, and so help festival-goers connect to the dance floor.

Combining interest in records and live performance, Peterson curated the first Future Sounds of Jazz event, featuring Matthew Herbert's Big Band, Bembe Segue and Two Banks of Four, the same year as the release of Peterson's Universal compilation, *Impressed*, featuring rare cuts of 1960s and 1970s British jazz.

In the 2003 festival brochure, Peterson was keen to point out that some of those greats were performing at the festival that year, including Michael Garrick at the Vortex, Mike Westbrook at PizzaExpress and an evening dedicated to the work of Joe Harriott at the Purcell Room. The latter featured British jazz stars such as Soweto Kinch, Byron Wallen, and Gary Crosby, a fitting way to commemorate Harriott's rich contribution to British jazz music.

Peterson's Future Sounds of Jazz would later go on to close the 2005 festival, this time introducing a notable multiple bill of pianist Robert Glasper, Heritage Orchestra and special guest Dwight Trible at the Barbican. At this time, Glasper was a relative unknown and his inclusion by Peterson as a 'tip for the future' highlights the DJ's influence both on musicians' careers and on the programming for future London Jazz Festivals.

(A journalist who had been particularly critical about the festival's all-embracing programming policy was taken out for lunch that year by Claire Whitaker and David Jones to try and patch things up. It was the journalist's opportunity to be rude about the festival to the directors' faces and tell them exactly how, in his opinion, he would run a better festival: 'The problem with you people is that you don't know about jazz', he ranted. 'There's this *amazing* pianist you should hear, absolutely amazing! His name is Robert Glasper.'

Jones recalls taking particular pleasure in telling the journalist that Glasper was in fact already playing at the Barbican that very year. A few years later, Jones recalls

another lunch with the same journalist, in which, to deliberately wind him up, Jones said, 'The problem with jazz is that there are just too many solos.' Shocked into silence and rapidly turning an apoplectic shade of purple, the journalist was mollified just in time by Jones: 'Just kidding', he said, 'just kidding.'

Gilles Peterson as DJ and resident 'curator' is one facet, but the festival has also encouraged residencies from the music's instrumental movers and shakers (indeed, this harks back to Camden Jazz days, when Ornette Coleman and Art Blakey both played in multiple settings). Following the success of 2008's Scene Norway series, the festival programme in 2009 included a special London Jazz Festival four-night residency at Kings Place, featuring 'maverick Italian piano maestro', Stefano Bollani, opening with the trio that featured on his latest ECM release, *Stone in the Water*, and finishing with his sextet, I Visionari.

Following Bollani in 2009 and The Bad Plus as musicians in residence in 2010, the 2011 series, rather than focusing on a particular artist or band, instead threw a spotlight on artists emerging as key figures on the global jazz stage and became a meeting place for artists from the USA and Europe whose music stretches and probes the boundaries of jazz. These included Swiss pianist/composer Nik Bartsch, Glasper, Norwegian trio PELbO and Scottish saxophonist and composer Tommy Smith's quartet, Karma. 2016's Kings Place resident was Bugge Wesseltoft, marking 20 years since he fused Nordic electronica with club culture in his album, *New Conception of Jazz*.

In 2014, a new type of residency was introduced at the festival, the Professor in Residence, which in its first iteration was George McKay from the University of East Anglia, succeeded the next year by Professor Tony Whyton from Birmingham City University and Birmingham Conservatoire. (Emma Webster was the researcher-in-residence for the 2016 festival.) Recognising the quirky innovativeness of the role, the Jazz Mann blog called this new residency 'a unique and brilliant appointment.' It shows the festival's intellectual curiosity, its willingness to engage with the jazz community at its widest, and its boldness of programming.

The residencies are also a reflection of the New Jazz Studies, a mushrooming of interest in jazz music and culture from academic researchers, who want to engage the public in their research, whether that is on festivals themselves (such as this book, by Webster and McKay), or musicians from John Coltrane (Whyton) to

Winnie Atwell (McKay).

The choice of the resident represents the festival-as-tastemaker as a whole; in Bollani's case, representing the 'far-sighted, boundary-shattering' nature of the London Jazz Festival itself, as the event's own brochure somewhat immodestly described it. The other meaning of resident in terms of being abiding, present, inherent, and established is also significant here, as it shows the London Jazz Festival's confidence that it will endure, that it is now *resident* in its home city.

2004-2007: The festival grows

In 2004, the festival's geographical reach across London grew further, this time expanding to the artsdepot in north Finchley, and The Wapping Project, a power station turned art gallery and performance space on the banks of the Thames in the East End; 2004's festival included artists like Ravi Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, Carla Bley, and Branford Marsalis. By 2006 the number of gigs had leapt from around 120 to around 160, with the addition of significant London venues including Cadogan Hall, KOKO, and the re-opened Roundhouse, the latter of course having been one of the original Camden Jazz Week venues.

As already noted, one of the downsides of moving from May to November as the festival did in 1995 is that it became an indoor-only event – few chances for street parties or parades with second liners or park concerts for passers-by at *this* jazz festival – but 2006 did see a rare outdoor event, and one which tied the event into the wider London jazz scene and into London's political initiatives. For Andy Sheppard's *Dalston Saxophone Massive* – a piece originally commissioned to mark the bicentenary of engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel's 200th birthday in Bristol – marked not only the opening of that year's London Jazz Festival, but also the opening of the Vortex Jazz Club mark 2, and the opening of Gillett Square, the first of what were intended to be a series of new community spaces across London, devised by then Mayor Ken Livingstone. The rain held off, but as John Cumming recalls of the location, 'I think [Gillett] was the first and only and it hadn't been finished when we opened it. The builders were still on site!'

Illustrating the wide regard in which it was now held, the festival was voted London's Best Music Festival by *Time Out* readers in 2005/06. In 2006 it featured stars like Wayne Shorter with his acclaimed acoustic quartet, Cassandra Wilson and Evan Parker, and the first performance at the festival of Herbie Hancock at the

Roundhouse in a gig also starring guitarist Lionel Loueke and attended by schoolchildren bussed in thanks to sponsorship from the Bank of America.

The festival by this time was regularly including urban and dance music under its umbrella. For instance, the 2006 festival included Live UK, the showcase for London's MCs, vocalists and poets, with four artists from the underground scene performing with a full live band at Stratford Circus. (In 2009, the same venue hosted Ms Dynamite, Katy B, Yolanda Brown and Shola Ama in a special Ladies Unplugged event.) By 2007, the festival had now grown to encompass over 240 events, including gigs by Sonny Rollins, Chick Corea and Tord Gustavsen, alongside British artists and star acts like Stan Tracey and John Surman.

“The real joy of the London Jazz Festival is the sheer extravagance of it. Every day at around noon the action begins at venues all over London, and runs continuously in a frenzy of music-making until the wee small hours. Any jazz-lover must be tempted to treat it as the musical equivalent of a ten-day pub-crawl, staggering bleary-eyed from one gig to the next.”

Ivan Hewett, *Daily Telegraph*

The politics of festivals

In 2007, the festival received support from, among others, the Hungarian Cultural Centre, the Norwegian Embassy and the French Music Bureau. Indeed, the list of international embassies and cultural organisations with which the festival has worked since its inception is notable.

In the years since, it has broadened its fundraising portfolio to include organisations ranging from Pro Helvetia (the Swiss Arts Council) to the Polish Cultural Institute, from the Canadian High Commission to Dutch Performing Arts, and from the Brazilian government to the German Foreign Office. As Amy Pearce explains, ‘London is politically an important place but musically still seen to be an important place and therefore it’s been prioritised by artists, by record companies, by the embassies who often support that work, which has made a huge difference to being able to present it.’

Indeed, a marker of the confident position the festival inhabits in London is seen in its relation with the political establishment, most specifically the All-Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group (APPJAG), which hosts an annual private

reception at Westminster Palace to launch the festival. This relationship started after Claire Whitaker and Sally Taylor from Arts & Business made a presentation to APPJAG in 2002 suggesting a live music event at the Palace itself whilst the Houses were sitting.

This became the long-running Jazz in the House, which has since been supported by both BBC Radio 3 and now EFG International. The event brings together jazz musicians, industry practitioners and sponsors with jazz-appreciating MPs and Lords to talk about the on-going state of the jazz scene, and features live music on the Terrace Pavilion of the House of Commons, overlooking the Thames.

In Whitaker's view, 'we had a greater attendance of MPs and politicians than anything else and yet it was jazz; it wasn't a string quartet. I think again that sort of thing doesn't just give us confidence as an organisation, it gives the scene confidence that it gets that kind of recognition.' A direct impact of the event was that the APPJAG Awards attracted support from the music licensing organisation Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) because, according to Whitaker, 'they saw how accepted jazz was as a tool to lobby politicians.'

Jazz Honours

It is interesting to note jazz's gradual acceptance by or into the establishment via the Honours List, with the following receiving OBEs and other honours over the years: John Dankworth (CBE 1974; knighted 2006), Cleo Laine (1979; Dame 1997), Stan Tracey (1986; CBE 2007), Chris Barber (1991), Courtney Pine (2000; CBE 2009), Acker Bilk (2001), Jools Holland (2003), Andy Hamilton (MBE 2008), Gary Crosby (2009), Claire Martin (2011), the festival's Jazz Voice musical director Guy Barker (MBE 2015) and Serious' own John Cumming and Claire Whitaker in 2014 and 2015 respectively for services to jazz.

Recognising the cultural importance of such honours, Michael Connarty MP argued for more musicians to join the 'pantheon of jazz': 'If we could recognise some of the work of individuals, we could put jazz on a respectable footing.' (Someone or perhaps many people reading this will be asking themselves, 'Yes, but does jazz want such a thing?') As Ian Inglis has noted in his research on musicians and the honours system, legitimisation works both ways, however, as acceptance of such awards gives consent to the political system that created them, and may also function to nullify criticality.

To this end, it is worth acknowledging those in the jazz and related music world who have rejected honours, such as Humphrey Lyttelton and George Melly. More recently, early festival London Jazz Festival regular Nitin Sawhney refused an OBE in 2007, explaining later that, 'I wouldn't like anything with the word "empire" after my name.' Jazz is, after all, a music founded in slavery and triangulation, and as such is a place for the reflexive consideration of, precisely, 'empire'.

Thus the London Jazz Festival is tied into 'big P Politics' via its links with Parliament and with national and international government agencies, but it is also a site for the exploration of 'small p politics'. Jazz is a music of black origin and has played a significant role in the fight for civil rights. Questions of race, therefore, and of rights more broadly, are always present somewhere. Whitaker explains that, while the London Jazz Festival is not itself a political festival, many of the artists presented are engaged in political issues because jazz has always been a profoundly political music, and at a festival there is a special intense moment or opportunity to articulate or question urgent issues of the day.

Also many of the festival's themes have been implicitly socially engaged: the place

of women in the music, the wider European embrace of international sounds and dialogue, for instance. And there are still people on stage and in the audience who cleave to the belief that the very central act of jazz, improvisation, is a revolutionary practice in itself. So: there can be a *lot* of politics at a jazz festival, and, unsurprisingly, the social question is often around race. After all, in post-imperial London, African-American music rings next to black British sounds, Caribbean and West and South African musics too.

In 2007, for example, the festival featured a number of concerts as part of the Arts Council England-funded series, *Passage of Music: Marking the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act*, including original Jazz Warrior Orphy Robinson at Millfield Theatre. Headlining the Friday night at a sold-out Royal Festival Hall was Jazz Jamaica, which featured guitarist Ernest Ranglin, eminent Jamaican pianist and educator Marjorie Whyllie, and Jamaica's first lady of jazz, Myrna Hague. As well as being a *Passage of Music* event, this gig celebrated ten years of Dune Music, the company and label set up by Jazz Warrior Gary Crosby and Janine Irons, initially set up 'to find a way to give young black jazz artists the opportunity of getting the same breaks as their white counterparts.'

Looking forward to 2015, Terence Blanchard's E-Collective played music inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement at the Barbican, while the next night rapper Ice-T was reading, over a score, from the Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes' late work *Ask Your Mama*:

12 Moods for Jazz, a show which went on to win the 2016 Jazz FM award for Live Experience of the Year.

The brochure itself that year could read like a manifesto or a history lecture as much as a concert guide. It included an article entitled *Black Identity*:

With a continuing international dialogue around race relations, the African-American origins of jazz become ever more pertinent. [Blanchard] performs music from his powerful new record *Breathless* (a reference to the last words of Eric Garner, who died in NYPD custody in 2014)... It's also important to probe deeper into history... Hughes' masterpiece... is rooted in the spirit of the civil rights movement of its time.

European expansion and the Europe Jazz Network

Broader political currents in Europe also impact on the festival, as well as feed its evolution (and its funds). The expansion of the EU in 2004 led to the new membership of a group of accession countries from central and eastern Europe, including Poland, Bulgaria, and the post-Soviet Baltic states. London's demography continued to evolve: as the 2011 Census showed, between 2001 and 2011 more than three million of the 8.2m Londoners hailed from outside the UK, a million more so than in 2001.

Of these recent arrivals, nearly 40% came from the EU's new member states. (It is worth noting too that in 2016, when the UK voted to leave the EU, the people of London, the capital city, voted to remain.) New migrants and their musical traditions from home began to be heard more widely, and what has been called the 'outernational' spirit of jazz sounded anew. It's fair to say the sounding of the spirit at an art event like the festival was considerably aided by new funding opportunities also.

For Serious the expansion of the EU opened up further opportunities for importing jazz from and exporting it to an even wider range of countries. In 2009, for example, a year in which the festival included nearly 300 events, the London Jazz Festival was part of POLSKA! YEAR, a joint initiative by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a means of presenting Polish culture to the UK audience. The festival was awarded a substantial grant to present a programme of work with Polish artists, which included veteran trumpeter Tomasz Stanko (including national tour dates), pianist Leszek Mozdzer, and the Fresh From Europe gig at the Vortex featuring musicians from France, Estonia, Sardinia, as well as Poland.

European jazz has been a feature of London's jazz festivals for decades, however, bolstered behind the scenes by organisations such as the Europe Jazz Network (EJN). With Serious as one of the founder members, EJN was set up in 1987 to connect promoters across Europe in order to share ideas about musicians and live promotion and to collaborate in organising tours and concerts.

(EJN was set up to take advantage of the new opportunities for electronic communication in the late 1980s but the phone lines from the then-Serious office in Soho were so over-subscribed in the early days that connecting was frequently only possible in the early hours of the morning, by which time communication skills might

well have been past their best.)

As Cumming recalls, Serious 'took an early decision to invest in ourselves by taking ourselves into Europe and going to jazz network conferences and going to see work in different places and meeting up, making connections with foreign colleagues.'

Projects over the years have included the Europe Jazz Odyssey, from which the Adventures in Sound gig sprang, and Take Five Europe, a development scheme which brought together ten young composers from across Europe in 2012 and 2013. A special season called Jazz in the New Europe took place in 2012 with the support of a one-year grant from the Culture Programme of the European Union.

One highlight was the pairing of two big bands on the same small stage at the Purcell Room: Manchester's Beats & Pieces with Norway's Ensemble Denada, as reviewed in *The Quietus*:

When [Beats & Pieces' Ben] Cottrell and [Ensemble Denada's] Helge Sunde swap places to conduct each other's ensemble with new compositions written by the composers, it's clear that this is one project making the most of its European cultural funding.

2008-2011: Past, present, future

Festival on the Move

2008 saw the festival expand again with the launch of Festival on the Move, a new strand of programming intended to 'take jazz to more of the city than ever before', as the brochure puts it, supported in its first year by the fitting combination of Chiltern Railways and the Mayor of London's office. (Indeed, 'boosting the London Jazz Festival so that it reaches more boroughs' was one of the claims made for Boris Johnson's '200 achievements as Mayor of London' in 2010 on the *Conservative Home* website, alongside 'brought back Christmas', and 'appeared in *EastEnders*'.)

The scheme allowed the festival to hold events in outer London boroughs for the first time, from Stratford in the east to Richmond in the southwest. In this way, the London Jazz Festival reflects the ebb and flow of the city's oscillating focus on inner city, outer city, inner city, outer city; a microcosm of the centralisation and devolution which ventilates London's political body more broadly.

In the first year of the scheme, a high-energy 15-piece Italian marching band, Funk Off, played their way around the festival to venues including the Jazz Café and the

Barbican's free stage. After a number of shows around London, they passed on the baton to one of Japan's most extraordinary groups, Tokyo-chutei-iki ('Tokyo Bass Frequency') – ten baritone saxophonists playing bass-heavy jazz with a carnivalesque dancefloor sensibility – at venues from the artsdepot to Foyles bookshop to Marylebone Station.

Via Festival on the Move, the London Jazz Festival even made it into the unusual setting of the Natural History Museum, as the final part of the 2008 series saw Neil Cowley's trio embark on a 24-hour concert marathon that began in the Southbank Centre and ended up with an intimate gig in the Vortex, passing through Ronnie Scott's en route.

Festival on the Move has echoes of the original free performances at the first London Jazz Festival, but with a broader geographical remit. What is interesting is that it highlights how the festival is not a monolithic creature at the centre of a web, sending out satellites to draw people in, but rather, like the many festivals of Edinburgh, operates horizontally and vertically through space and time, interweaving with other happenings taking place at the same time.

As Lewis Daniel, bass singer in acapella group, Vive, who played Festival on the Move in 2013, says, 'I think the idea of the festival on the Move is a really strong one because it brings jazz and different musics into different areas of London which you wouldn't expect to see it. We did the artsdepot the other day and I wouldn't expect to see jazz there. I think it's good to get the awareness of jazz and this music around.'

"I wish they wouldn't have so much great music at the same time sometimes because some of the nights you can't get to everything but it's great that they have this festival and all the venues are killing, really really killing."

Robert Glasper, Pianist

Jazz Voice

Unlike the dark velvety intimacy of the festival's opening night party in Soho, the annual Jazz Voice gala, which began in 2008, is a glitzy, sparkling affair in one of London's biggest concert halls. Jazz Voice grew out of the We All Love Ella event at the Royal Festival Hall in 2007. The show was a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald featuring UK R&B and soul singers Jamelia and Terri Walker, as well as Melody Gardot, and jazz virtuosos Lizz Wright, Claire Martin, Lea DeLaria and Ian Shaw, who *The*

Guardian described as spontaneously turning ‘what could have been a cheesily respectful tribute show into a party.’

Illustrating the close ties to the recording industry and the festival’s deference to the jazz canon, the event celebrated what would have been the 90th birthday of ‘the first lady of jazz’, as well as being timed to coincide with the release of a tribute album on Universal featuring a host of contemporary stars.

Based on the success of the Ella tribute, Jazz Voice began the following year, with a specially created London Jazz Festival Orchestra conducted and arranged by British trumpeter and composer Guy Barker. Over the years, the event has featured songs from Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Louis Jordan, Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder and Prince amongst many more obviously jazz composers – all of them somehow linked, explicitly or more obscurely, to the decades preceding the year of each festival, while showcasing singers from Jamie Cullum, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Gregory Porter, Carleen Anderson, Norma Winstone to even Boy George and Lady Leshurr. Jazz Voice is a glittering event which reaches out to a more mainstream and misty-eared audience who prefer the sound of strings and the massed brass of Barker’s big band to some of the festival’s more esoteric contemporary jazz and world music. Jazz Voice began to be broadcast live on Radio 3 from 2011 onwards, was hosted by the late comedian Victoria Wood (and again in 2013), and in 2015 featured, among others, young British singer Foxes, thereby enhancing the festival’s appeal to the more pop-based Radio 1 audience.

The recording industry in the 2000s

Jazz Voice and We All Love Ella have their roots further back in Serious' history, with an event first held in September 2001 called The Song's The Thing. Claire Whitaker developed and raised sponsorship for the event'. i.e. an event first held in September 2001 called The Song's The Thing. Claire Whitaker developed and raised sponsorship for the event, a celebration of the art and craft of song-writing featuring singers like Badly Drawn Boy and Eddi Reader.

The illegal file-sharing site Napster (est. 1999) had been closed down in July 2001 but its rapid success meant that the recording industry was starting to realise that the digitisation of music files on CDs had opened up a Pandora's box when combined with the internet's immense power to share files. The launch of iTunes and the iPod in 2001 meant that people started to buy single tracks rather than whole albums and the fortunes of the album-based recording industry started to take a downwards turn.

As well as support from the (then) Performing Right Society (PRS, the UK society which administers the performing rights of the musical works of composers, songwriters and music publishers), and BMI (the American performing right society), The Song's The Thing was also supported by British Music Rights. PRS' Respect the Value of Music campaign aimed to raise awareness of the value of music and of the 'detrimental impact' that the distribution of unlicensed music via the internet would have on the long-term prospects of the music creators (and the recording industry).

The Song's The Thing, then, which returned in 2002, was a means of reminding the public of the value of songwriters at a time where the money and power in the music industries were beginning to shift away the record labels and (slowly) towards live music and festivals. Indeed, in 2008, research by PRS for Music showed that revenue from live music overtook that of recorded music for the first time. Although this might appear to be a beneficial situation for live music and festival producers like Serious, in fact their bigger picture does – and of course should – include an effort to enhance and renew the repertoire, and the festival continues to work with labels like Blue Note and Universal, as well as PRS for Music.

Scene Norway

Following the success of the 'Norwegian Invasion' a few years earlier, Serious cemented their already strong ties with Norway and the Royal Norwegian Embassy by producing a centenary concert named Norwegian Voices in December 2005, a celebration of Norwegian music and 100 years of Norwegian independence. This sampler concert paved the way for a broader mini-festival three years later, Scene Norway, which formed a major part of the London Jazz Festival's programme in 2008.

Curated by Fiona Talkington of BBC Radio 3's *Late Junction*, the Norwegian-focused mini-festival took place in the newly opened Kings Place in King's Cross and featured music, talks and film, alongside a weekend of family-focused events. As Talkington explains:

The original Scene Norway arose because [CEO and King Place developer] Peter Millican asked if I would curate a Norwegian Festival at Kings Place when it opened [with] Serious as the producers. It was a ten-day festival for which I arranged film and literature events as well as the music. The music included a commission with the London Sinfonietta and Iain Ballamy and Arve Henriksen.

There were children's films for which some eminent musicians had written the music, and there was a packed children's afternoon where Terje Isungset and Karl Seglem brought a magical atmosphere with the percussion and goat horns. I'd wanted to include a folk version of *The Little Prince* which I'd seen in Førde with live music, and we got poet Ian McMillan in to narrate and a group of dancers who taught the children how to do the Halling dance.

Scene Norway also included the UK premiere of Terje Isungset's *Ice Music*, a piece in which the percussionist played on instruments sculpted entirely from ice. For the audience, this was no doubt a unique and evocative experience, incorporating recorded sounds of Norwegian glaciers and moving ice. For the production team, however, the piece was somewhat of a challenge in London's more temperate November climes, as they had to find means both of transporting and storing the beautiful but delicate instruments – albeit bulky, at least pianos don't tend to melt

when they're being moved.

2008 was also the year in which Norway's Punkt Festival came under the London Jazz Festival umbrella, a festival centred around the concept of live remix in back-to-back concerts with a transient audience, which in Norway programmes artists like Brian Eno and Laurie Anderson to create a hub for creativity which goes beyond purely jazz.

As Talkington says, the element of risk, danger and excitement makes it special for audiences and musicians:

I had been so struck by Punkt's flexibility and the potential for collaborations with musicians and artists in cities around the world, that it seemed obvious to me to bring it to London and have another focus within the Scene Norway festival... I think for Peter and for Kings Place it was a memorable event in the building which had been opened just a few weeks previously, and a great honour that it was opened by the Crown Prince of Norway.

Scene Norway part 2 took place as part of the 2013 London Jazz Festival, again curated by Fiona Talkington, with a residency from Norwegian trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer at Kings Place. In this way, Norway and its jazz continue to have a special role in the festival, which, like London itself, is a cultural melting pot and, as Eric Hobsbawm puts it, acts as a 'bridge between the USA and the rest of Europe'.

It is perhaps worth adding that the festival hosted the final performances of the ground-breaking collaboration between Jan Garbarek and the Hilliard Ensemble – having produced an earlier concert at the Royal Albert Hall, the festival took them to the other end of the scale, with two intimate concerts in the evocative setting of Temple Church.

Celebrating the legacy

In June 2008, pianist Esbjorn Svensson of Swedish trio EST died suddenly, aged 44. After EST's PizzaExpress residency in 1999, which, according to one commentator, 'began something of a love affair between the group, the club and the city', the group's first major London concert had been at the Queen Elizabeth Hall as part of the 2001 London Jazz Festival, supported by British pianist Matthew Bourne.

In 2003, the band opened the festival at the Royal Festival Hall, and in 2006, played the Barbican, performing on a bill with British band Polar Bear, a double bill which,

according to *The Guardian*, ‘reflected world-music, classical forms and avant-rock at least as much as jazz.’ To commemorate his life and music, the London Jazz Festival put on a memorial concert to Svensson at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in November 2008.

Videos of the band, as well as tributes by Jamie Cullum and Pat Metheny, were accompanied by Jez Nelson in conversation with the band’s manager and label manager, and the trio’s two surviving members also came on stage, both still stunned at the loss of their friend and collaborator. Five years later, the life and untimely death of London-based New Orleans jazz trumpeter and composer Abram Wilson was also commemorated in a special tribute show.

Festivals, then, can act as secular sites of public commemoration for musicians who have died and for whom we still grieve. For Ezra Collective drummer Femi Koleoso, his most poignant memory of the London Jazz Festival is of his band’s dedication of their 2014 Festival set to 19 year-old alto saxophonist David Turay, one of the original members of the band who had passed away earlier in the year:

‘That magical experience of being able to dedicate a show to one of my best friends and to be able to play in my home city in a jazz festival was a special kind of thing. I got the opportunity to speak on behalf of the band, just saying what he meant to us.’

Memorialising their friend at the festival highlights both its significance within the jazz world, but also as part of the fabric of London, as hundreds of school friends and family friends came to the gig to celebrate the young musician’s life.

A balanced programme is not just one which covers the whole gamut of jazz and jazz-related music (and film and dance and workshops and so on), but also one which is generationally balanced to reflect and revisit the music’s – and the festival’s own – heritage.

The festival has charted the evolution of a number of today’s key jazz artists. Many performers have returned to the festival throughout its history, reflecting the constant flow of creativity that inhabits the music. From already established leaders – Wayne Shorter, Abdullah Ibrahim, Carla Bley, John Surman, Norma Winstone and Louis Moholo Moholo – to artists who have grown from talented newcomers to today’s movers and shakers – Brad Mehldau, Joshua Redman, Robert Glasper, Nik Bartsch, Denys Baptiste, Soweto Kinch. All these and many more provide the

festival's heartbeat. The London Jazz Festival therefore presents jazz musicians who are still playing well into old age – Ornette Coleman performed in 2011 at the age of 81, for example – and there have been occasions over the years when gigs have had to be cancelled because of ill-health.

Sonny Rollins, a festival favourite, had played for two hours straight at the age of 80 in his 2010 London Jazz Festival performance – and again in 2012 aged 82 – and according to *The Guardian*, he 'barely slackened his intensity over a straight two-hour set' and 'stalked the stage... as if he was never going to wind down.' In 2013, however, the legendary saxophonist was forced to pull out of his show at the Royal Albert Hall because of respiratory problems.

A major Royal Festival Hall concert with Cesaria Evora, the Cape Verdean 'barefoot singer' was cancelled due to illness in November 2011; Cesaria sadly passed away the following month. More tragically, gigs may be cancelled because of the death of an artist before the show. In 2015, for example, Serious were devastated to hear that Allen Toussaint had died, five days before he was due to be welcomed at the festival.

The London Jazz Festival can be the first – and last – time a fan might see an artist live, and concerts can take on a special resonance after the event because they can never be repeated. John Cumming had first heard John Dankworth perform at the Royal Festival Hall in 1963 with the Gerry Mulligan Band, and in 2009, Dankworth and Cleo Laine's achievements were celebrated in a special gig at the Royal Festival Hall, as *The Guardian* recalled:

In the end it was Sir John himself, on a single whisper-quiet alto sax solo, who brought the packed house to its feet... [T]he ailing star's appearance was doubtful until moments before he was wheeled onstage, and he was clearly summoning up fleeting reserves to play at all... Dankworth's soft, clarinet-like sax sound told a unique story, from falling in love with American jazz in the 1940s, through a lifetime of making it his own, and finally playing a farewell to the music, and the audience he and Laine had helped build.

Dankworth died a little over two months later, on 6 February, 2010.

2012: From feast (Cultural Olympiad) to famine (austerity), and beyond (a new title sponsor)

The 2012 London Jazz Festival was, according to *The Guardian*, a ‘memorable’ festival that brought ‘musical thrills’ to packed halls, foyers and free stages at the Southbank and Barbican. It also saw the first performance at the festival of the now globe-trotting Brooklyn-based fusion band, Snarky Puppy, alongside a clutch of major jazz stars – Herbie Hancock, Melody Gardot, Jan Garbarek, Brad Mehldau, Esperanza Spalding, Sonny Rollins and Jack DeJohnette, as well as a major focus on ‘Jazz in the New Europe’.

A memorable behind-the-scenes story from the same year concerns Paco de Lucia, for whom 2012 turned out to be his final London Jazz Festival gig. The guitarist wanted actual palm trees behind him but these proved too tall and too bushy to fit on the Royal Festival Hall’s stage, leaving the production manager no option but to lower the stage, climb a ladder and trim the tops off the palms with scissors.

2012 was a memorable year for Serious for other reasons, however. Back as far as 2004, the brochure for the London Jazz Festival contained an advert encouraging festival-goers to ‘Back the Bid’ for the London 2012 Olympics. As well as sport, the event also included a national ‘Cultural Olympiad’ across the United Kingdom, which ran from June to September 2012.

As part of this, Serious produced the *BT River of Music*, a two-day festival taking place across London in July on six continent-themed stages along the Thames, including the Tower of London and the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, and featured musicians from the 205 nations taking part in the Olympics, including Hugh Masekela and Angelique Kidjo, Wynton Marsalis, the Scissor Sisters, the Kronos Quartet, and Arun Ghosh. As Bristol Music Trust CEO Louise Mitchell and academic Dimitrinka Stoyanova Russell put it: ‘Festivals are highly pressured environments: they often run on adrenaline. Those working in them have high emotional involvement and often have to go beyond the call of duty.’ Such an ambitious festival project unsurprisingly added additional pressure on the organisation – yet a few months later, what David Jones remembers being ‘a really prime festival’ jazzed the city again.

The London Olympics and the Cultural Olympiad notwithstanding, the economic crisis which began in 2008 led to a policy of austerity. Cuts to both Arts Council England and local authorities saw state funded arts organisations increasingly

encouraged to look for private sponsorship to boost their existing subsidies. (In fact there has been success here: annual business investment in the arts grew from £57m in 1991 to over £150m in 2000 to over £660m by 2012.) According to writer and public policy consultant, Adrian Harvey, London boroughs saw the largest cuts in arts and culture spending in England: by nearly a fifth between 2010 and 2015, while in 2015, it was decided that funding for Jazz Services – the national agency for jazz – would be cut completely, the decision causing considerable debate within the British jazz community.

Austerity also affected the BBC, and Radio 3's partnership with the London Jazz Festival ended amicably in 2012, the size of the festival meaning that Radio 3 still feature it within their schedules. When the Radio 3 partnership ended, however, the London Jazz Festival needed to find another partner in order to maintain the high level of the programming, and so 2013 was the year in which the Swiss private bank EFG International signed up as title sponsor for the next three years, thus securing the festival's medium-term future.

Chapter 5: The EFG Years: 2013-Present

“An amazing festival – gets better every year.”

Gilles Peterson, DJ and broadcaster

2013: 21 years’ young

Another new chapter began for the festival’s 21st year with the title sponsorship of Swiss private bank EFG International, which had been sponsoring the EFG Excellence Series since 2008. Over the years, this has featured world class performances from some of jazz’s leading lights, including Sonny Rollins in 2012, Keith Jarrett in 2015, Dee Dee Bridgewater in 2017, and the annual Jazz Voice gala.

For Serious, partnerships with the corporate sector are a valued and vital way of allowing the festival to continue to programme at the highest level. Recognising the merits of balancing public funding with commercial activity from a very early stage, Serious has a long history of association with corporate partnerships, dating back to 1995 and Oris. In Claire Whitaker’s view,

By actively embracing and welcoming a collaboration of funders, from EFG to the Arts Council, Serious can continue to grow the excellence, scope and breadth of our work.

Our vision is to increase the accessibility of jazz of the highest level, and, simply put, without such investment, we would struggle to achieve this.

By partnering with a mix of funders we can achieve our aims and so much more.

The London Jazz Festival celebrated the start of its 21st anniversary year in 2013. To mark the occasion, Serious placed commissioning at the heart of the festival, working with an impressive list of 21 national and international artists to create new music which premièred that November. A mix of original work and community projects, 21 Commissions was supported by Arts Council England and Serious Trust, the new charitable wing of Serious established the previous year. New work included Courtney Pine’s Caribbean-tinged *Coconut Water*, Carleen Anderson’s *Serious Sing*, performed by a 50-strong community choir, Carla Bley’s *Naked Bridges*, *Diving Brides* – written to celebrate long-time collaborator Andy Sheppard’s recent marriage – and Jason Yarde’s *Bold as Brass*, involving more than 100 brass

players, saxophonists and percussionists of all ages.

Another commission was Adriano Adewale's *Catapluf's Musical Journey*, a concert for children aged five to seven featuring Catapluf, a character whose imagination travels to places where everything is music, even saucepans, water, and drums. 21 Commissions was also filmed in order to create rich and accessible digital content which was then used to promote the festival.

Commissioning new work

Although the 21 Commissions project in 2013 and the 25 one-page scores commissioned for Club Inégales in 2017 were major events in the festival's history, commissioning new work has been part of its role since the early years, illustrating that, while festivals are necessarily reactive to current trends, they can also be proactive.

In 1994, for example, Serious Speakout successfully applied for funding from the Arts Council for a commission by John Harle, whose mix of medieval texts and contemporary music, *Terror and Magnificence*, appeared at the 1996 London Jazz Festival with a line-up which included Elvis Costello, Sarah Leonard and Andy Sheppard. As one reviewer asked, 'Is it jazz? Is it classical?... Theoretically, this was a fusion of jazz and the classical tradition, not Third-Stream, but Slip-Stream.'

Another early example of an artist commissioned by the festival was Graham Collier, who wrote what became *The Third Colour* for his Jazz Ensemble in 1997. In 1999 the festival co-commissioned a concert with Nottinghamshire County Council focused on Robert Wyatt, in which his songs were reworked by musicians such as trombonist Annie Whitehead and singer Julie Tippetts while Wyatt watched from the Festival Hall's Royal Box. The resulting elegant arrangements, according to *The Guardian*, meant that Wyatt's works have 'since become off-recorded fixtures of the jazz and rock canon.'

In an example of a commission leading to a significant recording, John Surman was co-commissioned with the Bath International Festival to write what became *Coruscating*, which was released by ECM in August 2000 and premièred at London's festival in November the same year.

More recently, in 2014, the festival commissioned new work from major artists like John Surman, Marcus Miller, and the Dedication Orchestra featuring Louis Moholo Moholo, but also from up-and-coming musicians like Phil Meadows, Trish Clowes and Nathaniel Facey.

The festival has also included commissions from other bodies. The 1995 festival featured Grand Union's *Dancing in the Aisles*, for example, a commission by the London Borough of Islington, while the Portico Quartet and Ruhaya Supanggah were co-commissioned with the Southbank Centre in 2008, Supanggah then a Southbank Centre Artist in Residence.

The BBC has also been a key source of commissions over the years, including Big Air in 2005 featuring Steve Buckley, Chris Batchelor, Myra Melford, Jim Black and Oren Marshall, and more recently, via Radio 3's New Generation Artists scheme, Sons of Kemet's Shabaka Hutchings with 2012's *Babylon* and saxophonist Trish Clowes in 2014. Each of these were specially written for the BBC Concert Orchestra.

An example of a more leftfield commission was the *Jazz et Cuisine* event at the Southbank in 2010. This combined British saxophonist Andy Sheppard and Italian percussionist Michele Rabbia with a Michelin-starred chef, Ivan Vautier, who cooked food on stage while the musicians played, with the mic-ed up pots and pans providing an extra level of percussive improvisation.

As Sheppard recalls, he scored it as if he were writing music for a film, and, laughing, explained that the preparation for the concert had entailed 'a lot of research' by visiting Vautier's restaurant on several occasions. The show had been devised in collaboration with the Jazz sous les Pommiers festival in France and premiered there.

The original concept was that the audience would be able to go onto the stage and sample the food. In France, *c'est ne pas un problem*, but in England, health and safety regulations would not allow it, meaning that the increasingly hungry audience could smell the delicious food but not eat it.

Specially commissioned world premières of new pieces used to be one of the means by which festivals could add a dash of sparkle to their programme, whilst also helping to develop the genre and providing composers with paid work.

In a world of decreasing state funding, however, the emphasis has shifted to co-commissioning between festivals in which, rather than hosting the first ever performance of the piece in the world, festival producers all contribute to its commission and then host the first performance in their city or their country.

There is also a broader problem with new commissions, and one also common to the classical world, which is that, as Ivan Hewett explained in the *Daily Telegraph*, 'all too often an interesting new piece disappears after its first appearance, wherever it takes place.'

Andy Sheppard is all too aware of the difficulty with the commissioning of new works, after the excitement of the première and the temporary lift to the composer's bank balance: 'I have to keep banging on doors in the hope that one day I'll get to play them again.' (To try to remedy this, Serious now pursue a policy of joint commissioning with other partners so as to further support their artists' work.)

Digital technology

In 2013, the festival also created its own EFGLJF radio channel and playlist, allowing the public to sample tracks from performers, and expanding the reach of the festival beyond its temporal and geographical reality (the festival had already released its own iPhone app in 2010).

The recent capacity to easily record and stream artists' music has been both a blessing and a curse across all live concerts, of course. On the one hand, not all artists – or audiences – appreciate their performances being recorded or filmed and then uploaded to the internet, as amateur film-makers are distracted – and distracting – from the actual concert.

Keith Jarrett, for instance, is notoriously prickly about filming inside venues. According to *The Guardian's* review of Jarrett's sell-out 2015 festival concert, he spotted a camera in the crowd before the encores, left the stage, came back, shouted 'go away and take as many pictures as necessary to kill that fucking camera' and then, 'as if stung, roared off into a maelstrom of thundering counterpoint.'

Yet, recent technology has offered new tools for self-promotion for musicians, which may be particularly relevant to jazz. As Somethin' Else's Jez Nelson argues: 'the internet, digital, has always been disproportionately important to jazz in some ways, because it's such an under-promoted' form. Claire Whitaker has another positive view, on the accessibility that digital technology offers: 'the internet has been really beneficial to our types of music because people can find and discover them, and not only [be] waiting for radio stations to feed them.'

"I love it here. I love playing the London Jazz Festival. It's one of my favourite festivals in the world so to get a chance to come back is always great... I like the

fact that every time I'm here it's a different venue... You go from the Royal Albert Hall to Rich Mix. It's cool, you know?"

Christian Scott, Trumpet Player

2014: Jazz education

A long way away from some of the grumblings in the festival's early years about its lack of big name headliners, *The Guardian* enthused that the 2014 EFG London Jazz Festival launched 'with the kind of all-star firework show that has become the norm.' The Friday night alone saw performances by the UK's 'folk-steeped maestro' John Surman, singers Kurt Elling and Dee Dee Bridgewater, the 'coolly sophisticated' sax-playing Branford Marsalis, and Jan Garbarek with the Hilliard Ensemble. The latter performed together for the final time before the retirement of the early music vocal quartet, their remarkable combined sound tingling spines in the extraordinary acoustic of the tiny Temple Church behind Fleet Street in two sell-out farewell shows as part of the EFG Excellence Series.

Reflecting both the background of its directors and London jazz's special relationship with the country, the 2014 festival celebrated twenty years of democracy in South Africa in a partnership between the Department of Arts & Culture, South Africa and the British Council, featuring major concerts from established stars such as Abdullah Ibrahim and also introducing new talents such as Bokani Dyer.

As Cumming explains, the programme looked back at the history of jazz in South Africa and how musicians had emigrated to Europe and found a home in London in the 1960s and 1970s, becoming an influential presence within both the British and European jazz scenes, hugely enlivening what were already dynamic periods of experimentation and innovation.

Around Ibrahim and Dyer, Serious also brought younger musicians from South Africa together with young British players capable of responding to that heritage: Cumming remembers that programme being 'interesting because we were then able to construct a programme that explains that *background* but also explains what was going on in the new South Africa.'

The Abdullah Ibrahim concert also formed part of the EFG Excellence Series but another of the uses to which corporate money is put is the festival's learning and

participation programme, which by 2014 included Jazz for Toddlers, singing workshops, and instrumental and composition workshops for young musicians.

Two particular highlights were Serious Sing's pop-up community choir première of a piece by John Surman as part of the Surman at Seventy residency, and the performance of *Bird on a Wing* by 200 seven- and eight-year-olds from Islington, a project devised with pianist Alexander Hawkins and Australian recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey. (Her performance with Surman of his new commission at Kings Place was a revelation for most of the audience, for whom jazz recorder was a new experience.)

The festival's artists and audiences have benefitted from its Camden and Bracknell origins in many ways, not least because of the legacy of their education and community programmes, and the wider links between jazz and the world of community music.

The first London Jazz Festival in 1993, for example, contained a number of workshops and initiatives, including music played and made in special schools, community centres, prisons, hospitals, and care homes. Public-facing workshops included Technojazz and three free jazz workshops at the Weekend Arts College, including an improvisation session with Nitin Sawhney and Pritim Singh, an all-day voice workshop with Carol Grimes and Brenda Rattray, and a percussion and horn workshop with Byron Wallen and Richard Ajileye. The presence in the festival of such community, learning and development activity would be further enhanced with the arrival

of Claire Whitaker at Serious in 1996; for Whitaker, community is core work.

Educational routes into jazz are many and varied, from the formal education of colleges and conservatoires, to more informal routes like private lessons and development schemes like Tomorrow's Warriors. Post-study, however, musicians can find themselves in a landscape with very little traditional music industry support and it is in response to this that Serious developed the Take Five initiative.

Take Five is a professional development programme for UK-based creative jazz musicians under the age of 35, set up in 2004/5. In 2009 a version – Airtime – was launched for musicians living and working in Scotland (supported by the Scottish Arts Council, now Creative Scotland), and from 2011, Take Five Europe expanded across Europe, illustrating the appetite for professional development beyond Britain alone.

Since its inception, Take Five has contributed to the development of over 150 musicians, many of whom have gone on to have high-profile success. Alumni include Grammy award-winning conductor, arranger and composer Jules Buckley, Mercury nominees Eska Mtungwazi, Sebastian Rochford, Shabaka Hutchings, and Gwilym Silcock, and also the CEO of Edition Records, Dave Stapleton (the label also has a number of Take Five alumni in its stable).

As Martel Ollerenshaw, former associate director of talent development (now under the nicely-titled banner of Seriously Talented) explained to us, the programmes provide time out and access to the industry so that the musicians can be better informed and can focus on their career; they include music-making but also concentrate on artists' overall professional development. Participation in a Seriously Talented programme can also mean that the artists get the opportunity to play across Serious' many platforms, including the London Jazz Festival. The Take Five Takes Over showcases, for example, included performances on the Queen Elizabeth Hall FreeStage from 2010, and in 2015, Take Five musicians took over the Royal Festival Hall's Clore Ballroom free stage to celebrate ten years of Serious' talent development schemes.

In doing so, this takes the behind-the-scenes development work on to the stage and up front as a Serious *and* a London Jazz Festival activity. (While Take Five focuses on jazz, another Serious scheme, Move On Up, is for creative artists working in African and Caribbean music who live in England, including alumni Adriano Adewale, Zara McFarlane, Ayanna Witter-Johnson, and Mim Suleiman.)

Illustrating how the festival can provide work for those musicians already within its milieu, Arun Ghosh ran the Jazz for Toddlers gigs in the 2015 Festival, leading babies and toddlers and their parents and carers in an hour of music, stories and movement. To the accompaniment of taiko drums, Ghosh's clarinet took the children from a highly-excited romp around the room into a sleepy lullaby, before recalibrating them ready to go back out into the city.

One of the most ambitious and complex educational events in 2016 was guitarist Chris Sharkey's Make it/Break it, a mass participation commission for over one hundred musicians and vocalists of all abilities and all kinds of instruments to make music and play together in a piece that was workshopped in the morning and performed in the evening.

As well as these more structured artist and audience development schemes and

educational activities, Serious also distribute complimentary tickets to young musicians from, for example, the Tomorrow's Warriors project, and young musicians also get the chance to attend masterclasses.

One such was part of a celebration of 75 years of the Blue Note label in 2014, which featured stellar names from the label's roster including pianists Jason Moran and Robert Glasper. Furthermore, besides developing young musicians, Serious run their own internship and training and mentoring scheme, Young & Serious, and The Write Stuff scheme for developing young jazz and music critics and photographers, in association with the magazine *Jazzwise*.

“[Ronnie Scott’s] is my favourite place... It’s just a wonderful venue. The thing at Ronnie’s is that [the audience] come expecting to hear music that *moves* them. They’re not bothered whether or not you have a pedigree or you’ve had hit records or anything; none of that matters to them. It’s just on the night you have to deliver and if you deliver they’ll let you know; if you don’t they’ll let you know that too. But that’s what’s great about it; you can feel and vibe off them.”

Carleen Anderson, Singer

2015: In the clubs and onto the streets

Jazz clubs like the 606 Club, PizzaExpress, Ronnie’s, the Vortex, Café OTO, and the Bull’s Head sit alongside live music venues and nightclubs like KOKO and XOYO in the London Jazz Festival programme. Partnering with club promoters and venues over the years has been a shrewd move as it has kept the festival’s programming fresh and continues jazz’s long heritage as a music which connects the concert hall to the club to the dancefloor, stretching back to the dance clubs of 1930s London.

It means that the festival shares out the economic risk but, just as importantly, is able to capitalise on other promoters’ knowledge and networks, as well as enabling access to younger and more diverse audiences. In this way, the festival can include leading edge music as well as genres outside their own direct spheres of knowledge and so presents and celebrates London’s jazz (and music) scene more broadly.

At the same time, though, the changing face of London’s boroughs has an impact on the jazz scene. For instance, as regeneration and gentrification have spread, so too property prices in London have been increasing well above inflation for many years,

accompanied by an increase in luxury accommodation and a decrease in the availability of affordable housing.

For Steve Rubie of Chelsea's 606 Club, the high cost of living in Chelsea has had a direct impact on the club: 'Chelsea was a great place to be in 1988; for the *jazz* thing it's not so great any more; it's a struggle.' His customers used to live nearby but fewer can afford to anymore and so have to travel, which, with drinks and food costs also, becomes an expensive proposition on, say, a weekday night. Rubie sees the London Jazz Festival acting as a powerful 'shop window' for the 606 Club, which has brought new customers to the venue over the years.

Under the jazz umbrella

The London Jazz Festival is often described as an umbrella festival in that it gathers together a huge number of events into one (physical) programme. It could also be called an 'amplifier' in that it amplifies London's existing jazz scene, or even what writer Jonathan Wynn in his typology of festivals might call a 'core' festival, as it uses a variety of locations in and around London whilst also having major spectacles – both free and ticketed – at its core(s) at the Southbank and Barbican.

Way back in 2003, *The Independent* suggested that perhaps the festival should model itself on the Netherlands' North Sea Jazz Festival, which was then sited in a large congress centre in The Hague, containing a number of different sized venues, noting that 'it would be sad for clubs, but more people would get to hear more jazz. That has to be what it's all about.'

Amy Pearce explains, however, that, while Serious have in fact discussed moving the festival (back) to the summer and have talked about having it in one location such as

the Southbank Centre, they have always returned to its now well-established formula:

That's been a conscious choice because we live in London and it is a big, sprawling city and we want the festival to reflect the city.... The commitment to the scene is a big part of why we stay as we are because although you could do a Ronnie Scott's stage and you could do a Vortex stage, it's not the same as being at the Vortex or being at Ronnie Scott's and that's how it is.

The festival, therefore, uses a wholly different model to the North Sea Jazz Festival as it encompasses venues across the capital. Indeed, by 2015, the London Jazz Festival had spread even further into Greater London, with a set of music events called The Streets extending the sounds of festival east to Redbridge in Essex and west to Kingston-upon-Thames, funded from the Mayor of London's High Street Fund for accessible culture, and taking music into cafes, libraries, civic halls, and the high street itself.

David Jones uses the metaphor of an onion to explain how the London Jazz Festival works: there is an inner ring of activity created by Serious, followed by a further ring of activity they are responsible for stimulating – a South African artist flown to London, for example, who then also gets club gigs elsewhere – and then there's an outer layer of what he terms 'confident creators', who could be clubs, promoters, or musicians themselves, for instance.

Not everyone is entirely convinced about this approach, however – or of the umbrella festival model in general – as it can mean that musicians and venues feel under pressure to pull out all the stops for the festival to put on a more special – and expensive – programme. The 'confident creators' may be musicians rather than promoters who, as Debbie Dickinson sees it, may end up hiring venues themselves in order to be included under the festival's umbrella, with no support from record labels, and may end up out of pocket.

According to Claire Whitaker, London today has the equivalent of a music festival happening every week. As the British festival market boomed in the first decade of the new millennium, competition from other festivals and other leisure activities has meant that events like the London Jazz Festival have expanded and diversified into talks, films, and other 'fringe' activities in what is a very crowded marketplace.

There is therefore some pressure for the festival's overall programme to be more than the sum of its parts, and more special than what London can provide in its year-round activity. Looked at in one way, umbrella festivals essentially operate a free market model in which events compete against each other to try and attract an audience, pitting headline events at the centre against those on the fringes.

"To have a jazz festival is special to me anyway, and to have a jazz festival in London – one of the major cities in the world – is even more special because I live here, I grew up here, and I love this place. I look at the jazz festival like a magnifying glass. The organisers bring in all the big guns, all the people they

really want – whether it's Herbie Hancock or Chick Corea, John McLaughlin – and the spotlight's put on *them* and the magnifying glass is put on them. But it's all the other stuff that gets encapsulated into the jazz festival that really bolsters the event and makes it look amazing.

Julian Joseph, Pianist

Programming creativity

Where does one begin to programme a festival which includes dozens of venues and thousands of artists? Former associate director of production Amy Pearce tells us that Serious start with two grids: one that focuses on the concert hall programme, one that focuses on the club programme. The bigger names tend to be booked first, because their timelines in terms of planning tend to work further ahead, sometimes as much as 18 months.

There is a series of international jazz festivals taking place each autumn, of which the London Jazz Festival forms a key part. November is therefore a touring period where those bigger names will be on the road, and so the festival will be looking to get in early on those and secure them, particularly those from America.

While the festival is at the heart of everything they do on the jazz side, Serious also have many other activities which spin out from it, including the Barbican Jazz Series as well as music consultancy and programming work with other British festivals, and a year-round national touring programme. And so there are conversations right through the year between the Serious team, and with artists and agencies, and with other venues and promoters via networks like EJM and the IJFO.

For Pearce, 'the idea's always that the programme is like a statement. What is jazz in London in November 2016? And therefore you're trying to look at celebrating the big names, spotting the emerging talent, presenting the new collaborations and you're looking for where the gaps are.' And as new artists inevitably reach a tipping point of success, festivals then need to include them in the programme, rather than the other way round.

The music industries rely on tastemakers such as festivals and record labels finding the next big thing. New artists cause buzz within the industries, and it can be

surprising, even in the digital age, how long these artists take to come into the public eye.

Pearce again:

You suddenly find that there's an artist who's been booked for Love Supreme [jazz festival], who's been booked for London Jazz Festival, who Gilles Peterson or Jamie Cullum are talking about and there's a real sense of the industry buzzing about it. How long it takes for that buzz to translate to an audience is probably two, three years.

One example of this slow-burning buzz effect was Robert Glasper, who was tipped off to Serious by Gilles Peterson in 2005 but still took four or five years to sell out the Royal Festival Hall and the Roundhouse.

Sometimes the new stars are still students, shining through in Serious' learning and participation work, which opens up the organisation to the music colleges and allows Serious to see who is creating the exciting new music. Highlighting the broader changes afoot in terms of tastemaking and gatekeepers, it used to be that the press drove everything in the 1990s and early 2000s, but by the 2010s, the critics' dominance had waned in the face of falling sales and the increased significance of social media and citizen journalism.

At the same time, there has been an explosion in music available online in the 21st century, and trusted tastemakers such as DJs and festival producers have therefore become increasingly important for helping to steer listeners towards new music.

Broadcasting is still crucial, however, and by 2015, the London Jazz Festival had partnered with BBC Music, BBC Radio Scotland, and BBC Radios 1, 2, 3 and 6 Music, which meant that, alongside a dedicated temporary 'pop up station' – a collaboration with the commercial station, Jazz FM – the event could be 'cross-trailed' across radio and website platforms, leading one festival-goer to remark that 'it just did feel like it was everywhere this year.'

Creative curation

As well as commissioning, another tool in the festival producer's toolkit is creative curation of an evening's programme, by pairing musicians on double bills in order to introduce both artists to new audiences, as well as to hopefully set off some kind of musical or critical dialogue. Often but not always this is done by putting together a more well-known act with an up-and-coming act as support.

In 2015, the senior African-American trumpeter Terence Blanchard's powerful electric band was paired with the young (boy-ish, even) local one-man-band YouTube star Jacob Collier, the idea being that both acts were exploring technology from a new perspective. The gig introduced Blanchard's music to Collier's younger audience and vice versa, the aim being to challenge and stimulate both.

The projector above the stage in the first half of the show was filled with multiple and ever-changing layers of computer-enhanced psychedelic images of Collier's face, linked to the instrument(s) he was playing at the time. The second half, however, showed a single still image, the cover artwork for Blanchard's new album *Breathless*, a reference to the last words of Eric Garner ('I can't breathe').

The album cover features the image of a white peace dove on a black power fist, a visual reference to the continuing civil rights movement in the US, and Blanchard's stark angry sound was intended to present and reflect on the Black Lives Matter movement. While the technological approaches to the music may have linked the two acts, arguably the shift during the interval from Collier's fresh-faced pop vocals to Blanchard's brooding presence across the stage was one awkward step too far.

Such adventures in 'cultural dating' – bringing together disparate artists and audiences and even genres – had also been in evidence the previous year, when Scottish folk electronica band Lau were programmed on the same bill together with three European artists from jazz and DJ backgrounds: Henrik Schwarz, Bugge Wesseltoft and Dan Berglund, the bassist with EST. As John Cumming explains, the process behind the idea was collaborative, not 'top down'.

Serious had had a long relationship with most of these musicians and from a list of artists devised by Lau with whom they were interested in working; Serious threw back the names of Wesseltoft and Schwarz to Lau, and then threw Lau to Schwarz. As Cumming continues, where festival collaborations come from is 'more to do with creating a dialogue with musicians' than a diktat from Serious. The result in this instance was 'a collaboration between two areas of music which don't necessarily seem to work but actually did.' The bands joined each other for an encore, 'sort of in D', as Lau shouted out to the jazz musicians as they stood listening and smiling in the wings. Cumming again: 'Is it jazz? I don't care. Is it improvisation? Yes it is.'

Another example of creative curation in 2015 paired GoGo Penguin in the first half of the concert with the hotly-tipped Kamasi Washington in the second half. The pairing probably worked out better for the latter than the former in terms of media

attention, although for GoGo Penguin gave them the opportunity to do something very creative and brokered a new partnership between the band and the choreographer Lynne Page, who had been commissioned to devise a new dance piece to the accompaniment of the Manchester band's music.

The gig was memorable for another reason, however. The terrorist attacks in Paris the previous night (Friday 13th November) meant that Washington's Sunday night gig in Paris was cancelled and so the band had a spare night in London. Could the London Jazz Festival producers set up a brand new show with 24 hours' notice before the end of Washington's set? A frantic couple of hours ensued, not helped by the fact that the Barbican's backstage and production area is an underground concrete bunker, meaning multiple trips up and down in the lift by the festival's production team and Washington's crew to get mobile phone signal.

Eventually, the Scala in Kings Cross confirmed, so long as the festival could guarantee a minimum bar spend. 'No problem', thought the production team. After a storming set, the London crowd were hungry for more, and Washington's announcement from the Barbican stage about the new gig meant that it sold out easily. There was only one fly in the ointment: the guaranteed bar spend. At the Scala, Washington played an entirely different set, straight through with no interval, meaning that nobody left the room to go to the bar.

2016-2017: London

I think that the emphasis on improvisation and on new things can still go beyond borders, and will not be hampered stopped or stifled by decisions that are made on a nationalistic level... When we play there, I'm thinking of all the adventurous music and films and everything without borders... artists without borders, and the London [Jazz] Festival might be one of the main conduits which carries and transports this art. So the [festival's] anniversary is about keeping this pathway of art open to expression for humanity."

Wayne Shorter, Saxophonist

From 'swinging' in the 1960s to 'cool' in the 1990s, by 2016, *Forbes* had rebranded London as the 'most influential city in the world', underpinned by its status as a global financial capital. In the same year, official government population projections predicted that by 2024, London's population will have grown to nearly ten million,

with particular growth in the East End, that international immigration into London will increase by 10%, and that the fastest-growing section of the population will be the over-65s.

However, these forecasts were made before Britain narrowly voted to leave the European Union in June 2016 in a 'Brexit' which appeared to surprise even those who campaigned for it. The referendum result exposed deep geographical and demographic divisions, a resurfacing of racial tension, political and economic uncertainty at home and further uncertainty about Britain's place in the world.

What could all this mean for an outward-looking, international cultural form like jazz, and its celebratory festival in the nation's capital and global city? By 2016, performers representing around 30 countries took part in the festival, including at least Angola, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Iran, Italy, Korea, Mauritius, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and the United States (compare this to 2002's programme which featured performers from only 14 countries).

For the London Jazz Festival, then, as Martel Ollerenshaw explains:

We move people from around the world, so if there's any impediment or curtailing of the free movement of people, that will have an impact.

Other issues include possible extra workload and costs for visas, possible restrictions on Serious' ability to access European funding, and potential impacts from a destabilised economy on existing and future sponsors.

Overall, of course, the people of the city of London voted strongly to remain in the EU, with only five outlying boroughs voting to leave. (Indeed, at the traditionally patriotic Last Night of the Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in both 2016 and 2017, it was notable that the flags being waved by the BBC Proms classical music festival-goers were *not* only Union Jacks, but included a number of EU flags also.)

The anti-apartheid exile South African pianist Chris McGregor once said that the big band Brotherhood of Breath benefitted from being in London, 'a London that has become the crossroads of the Caribbean, India and Jamaica', and a city to which, if McGregor were speaking today, could have been added Europe, Africa and South America as well. Surely the music of jazz can only and always speak outernationally.

“The London scene is so vibrant. You can’t do without it... For a fresh take on jazz, London is way ahead of New York.”

André Ménard, Artistic Director, Montreal Jazz Festival

The London jazz scene

Some (other) things never seem to change. Writing in 1973, Ian Carr had described Britain as a ‘one-city country’ so far as the arts were concerned, whereby musicians ‘deeply committed to jazz’ usually tried to get to London; while speaking in 2016, pianist Sarah Tandy told us that ‘if you are serious about it, there’s no other place to be other than London.’

The 606 Club’s Steve Rubie (who of course as a London jazz club owner since the 1970s has both a wide and informed perspective and perhaps also something of a vested interest) concurs, claiming that outside of New York, London has the greatest strength and depth of any city in the world in terms of world-class musicians.

For him, there can never be a surfeit of outstanding musicians in one city:

The reason there are so many great players in New York is because there are so many great players in New York. So they create a bar and everybody else tries to reach that bar, jump over that bar, and that’s the same in London.

Tandy again:

I guess technically on paper you’re all fighting for the same gig, but then having said that, what you get out of having so many great musicians here is greater than the obstacles it presents to you.

Charles Alexander has noticed that, as well as the excellent quality of the musicianship, London’s jazz musicians today have a remarkable level of entrepreneurialism and facilitation – they are always ‘doing things, organising things, getting it together, using social media to advance their careers and their bands.’

While hustling for gigs, creating their own opportunities, and self-and collective organisation are longstanding hallmarks of the jazz career – seen today in Britain in groups like the Loop Collective, Way Out West and the F-IRE Collective – according to Jez Nelson there might be less today of musicians sitting around asking, ‘Why don’t I get any gigs?’ Instead, these guys – and girls very much – make stuff

happen.

They're industry savvy, they're kind of 'start up'; they've got a punk ethos, for want of a better phrase. They make stuff happen. They're not just musicians, they're promoters, and they help each other out.

The London Jazz Festival in 2016 and 2017

By 2016 the London Jazz Festival was London's biggest pan-city music festival and Britain's largest jazz festival, featuring more than 2,000 artists and over 300 gigs in over 50 venues to an aggregate audience of over 100,000 people. Special events included the second performances of new work from Wayne Shorter and Jason Moran, as part of a continuing association with the Jazztopad Festival in Wroclaw, Poland, and a 75th birthday celebration for revered vocalist Norma Winstone (including a commissioned piece from Vince Mendoza).

Return visits by keyboardists as diverse as Robert Glasper, Brad Mehldau, Geri Allen (in what, sadly proved to be her final London concert), Carla Bley (with a reformed version of Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra) and Tord Gustavsen, were another feature, alongside a residency from Bugge Wesseltuft celebrating 20 years of his *New Conception of Jazz* message.

The new generations included a double bill of Dhafer Youssef and Ambrose Akinmusire selling out the Barbican; a BBC Concert Orchestra programme featuring new commissions from Laura Jurd and Daniel Herskedal; and Miguel Atwood-Ferguson's instrumental re-working of the music of J Dilla.

An especially strong club programme included the UK debut of the New York band featuring Donny McCaslin that played a key role in David Bowie's final recording, *Blackstar*, trumpeter Christian Scott and the Bad Plus, whilst UK artists of all generations invigorated the festival throughout the city, and in sometimes unusual places – from Evan Parker at the Royal Academy of Arts, to Chris Sharkey's mass participation piece *Make It/Break It*.

Surprisingly perhaps, it has not been part of the Serious strategy consciously to grow the festival. Rather, because they always want to reflect what is happening in London – a city the population of which is increasing in size and cultural diversity – this has inevitably led to the festival growing too.

As Amy Pearce told us, ‘I think now the desire is probably to stop it getting too big because it becomes too much, it just becomes impenetrable.... I spend my life saying “no” to artists and venues’, she continued. Another telling comment from the Serious team is from Ope Igbinoyemi, who expressed his amazement at how the jazz festival just seemed to grow and grow and grow: ‘and now I don’t know whether we’re in control of it or it’s in control of us!’

In its 25th year, 2017, the festival continued to explore an active commissioning programme, with new music from Terence Blanchard (with the BBC Concert Orchestra), Yazz Ahmed and Dave Maric/Phronesis/Engines Orchestra (a joint commission with some of the other leading UK jazz festivals, Cheltenham and Manchester Jazz Festivals); the commissioning of a series of 25 one-page scores specially created for a festival collaboration with Club Inégales, and Blacktop’s response to New York artist Jean-Michel Basquiat’s jazz imagery, alongside the Barbican’s major retrospective of Basquiat’s work.

Keith Tippett and Matthew Bourne created a new piano duo; Robert Glasper brought a new project in celebration of the 25th year, reflecting his long association with – and enthusiasm for – the festival. The legacy of jazz was drawn on to inspire new ideas – events evoking the spirits of Thelonious Monk, John and Alice Coltrane and Miles Davis sat alongside a study day led by Professor Catherine Tackley around the impact of jazz in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s. Artists from the festival toured into the regions – guitarist Pat Metheny and the great French bassist Henri Texier – and a Serious collaboration with Hull Jazz Festival, as part of Hull’s year as UK City of Culture in 2017, included Chris Montague’s participation project *History of the Coolest Instrument in the World* (the electric guitar, in case you were wondering), and a new piece from an emerging Hull musician, Revenu.

New venues for the 2017 festival included London’s newest theatre, the Bridge – only opened a few weeks before the festival – and the Electric Ballroom. Artists from Scandinavia filled a day of performances at the Royal Festival Hall, as part on the year’s programme Nordic Matters, whilst artists from Turkey, Estonia, France and Switzerland also had a significant presence.

And in a neat piece of symmetry, John Warren’s *Traveller Tales*, which was commissioned for Warren’s and John Surman’s the Brass Project at the very first festival in 1993, made a welcome return – this time in league with the Royal Academy of Music, following the release earlier in the year of a long-forgotten

recording of the original 1993 performances. In terms of media presence, the festival's relationship with both BBC Radio 3 – live broadcasts of the tenth edition of the opening night Jazz Voice concert and the Jazz Now show from the PizzaExpress club, as well as recordings of a number of festival shows for later broadcast – and Jazz FM broadcasting live from the Barbican – continued to build the festival's reach still further.

Of course, this book too was part of the 25th anniversary celebrations – with researcher in residence Dr Emma Webster having worked with Serious and in their archives through 2015 and 2016, and her and Professor George McKay writing the text. The year-long project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, through its innovative collaborative research programme Connected Communities.

So what does the future hold for the London Jazz Festival? As Igbinyemi explained to us, perhaps it is a case of trying to expand audiences without expanding the festival further: 'as big as the festival is, I'm sure we could reach even more people.' He continued with a plea for the festival itself to continue: 'Long live the London Jazz Festival!'

Conclusion: #jazzimpact

From the beginning, experimental work, commissions, workshops and educational events all played a part in setting the agenda for a festival that would develop over the next ten years to have an impact across the whole city. It was to be a jazz festival that didn't just have jazz in it but looked at jazz's antecedents and connections with Caribbean, Latin, African, Indian and European music. Jazz was to be a touchstone, with musical ideas moving between, or colliding with, other genres. What has set the festival apart has been its constant attempts to mix the familiar with new, tradition with experiment, one culture with another.

2002 festival brochure

The London Jazz Festival launched in 1993 with the twin aims of celebrating London as a jazz city and bringing high-level international jazz into the capital. The introduction to the 2002 brochure, left, marking its 10th year, returned to that original mission statement, in a justifiably proud moment of self-celebration. For, yes, sometimes you *are* allowed to blow your own trumpet. Through presenting a pan-cultural programme that has looked to the past, present and future of jazz, a programme that through the combination of artists and venues is distinctly and uniquely *of London*, there is no doubt that the London Jazz Festival has impacted on the city, economically, culturally and socially, and the city has, of course, impacted on the festival.

Of course, an outdoor camping festival such as Glastonbury is more immersive for its participants than the London Jazz Festival because you are *in* the festival, a constituent part of its temporary infrastructure and community. It surrounds you in a very literal sense in the form of a large security fence. Once you are on site, you are inside and there is a very clear sense of who is in and who is out. This differs from an urban, multi-venue event like the London Jazz Festival, where the sense of a jazz community only becomes obvious at the events themselves. Instead, part of the experience of being at the London Jazz Festival is being in London.

From the spectacular view of the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben and the London Eye at night from the fifth floor of the Southbank Centre, to the sudden (sub)cultural shift of walking from the shiny, glassy high skyscrapers of Liverpool Street to the graffiti-ed exposed brick of hipster Shoreditch, London as a festival setting is a different kind of immersive experience. The city itself becomes the festival site, or

rather, the city hosts the festival, which switches on and off depending on time and location. Travelling from the Barbican to the Southbank on the bus takes you past St Paul's Cathedral, the Old Bailey and Somerset House, crossing the Thames to Waterloo, as the Eye and Parliament appear. While the London Jazz Festival does not have the city-wide impact of, say, the London Olympics in 2012, the city *does* impact on the festival, both positively and negatively. It does so positively from all the benefits of being in a global city – the sights, the food, the shopping, the urban buzz – and not so positively because London is vast and getting around takes a long (sometimes tiring) time.

One festival-goer told us that when thinking about festivals, or talking about them with friends:

Greenfield events like Glastonbury Festival do tend to come to mind. But, I'm, like, no, actually, I think the London Jazz Festival's] in square brackets, i.e. actually, I think [the London Jazz Festival's] kind of better than that, in a way, in the sense that you can go to so many different things, go to different venues, different zones. I mean, last year we saw Snarky Puppy at the Roundhouse [with 3,300 people], which is massive. And then we went to see a tiny quintet in Camden in a tiny little jazz club. So you get such a vast majority of things. And you don't have to camp. And that's always a plus.

Whether it's to travelling to Chelsea, then, to see The Impossible Gentlemen or Peter King's Saxophone Summit at the 606 Club in the west or encouraging the next generation of jazz fans at Jazz for Toddlers in Barnet's artsdepot in the north, the festival can take people to parts of the city which are new to them, connecting the previously disparate islands of the underground stations, encouraging exploration and creating conjunctions of sonic surprise.

It might be ten Japanese baritone saxophonists taking their bass-heavy sound into the bustle of Marylebone Station's Dutch gables, or Moon Hooch transforming the polished civic environs of Leyton's town hall into a multi-generational rave cave, or Smitty's Big Parade taking the sound of New Orleans into TK Maxx, dancing round the aisles while bemused shoppers shop for shirts – at its best the festival can transform everyday spaces into places for music, and draw in an accidental second line.

London and its jazz scene are 'on' all the time, but for just ten days in November,

the London Jazz Festival amplifies the city's all-year-round jazz scene and shouts from the rooftops that London is a jazz city: it pumps oxygen into the scene, in the words of David Jones, and it is 'when London is shining its brightest for jazz', as PizzaExpress' Ross Dines nicely puts it.

Indeed, the festival has had a significant economic impact on its venues. For the PizzaExpress club, for example, as Dines explained to us, the Monday to Sunday of the 2015 Festival were its 'biggest food and drinks sales ever, and 'the ten days as a total was probably the best ten days we've ever done.' For Steve Rubie of the 606 Club, as well as being a 'shop window', the London Jazz Festival has enabled the club to take more economic risks, in their case to charge £20 tickets, double what they usually charge, in order to bring in bigger names: 'It opened up the possibility of us being able to do that, without being such a risk as we thought it might have been.' For musicians, particularly those within the Serious camp, as well as getting paid for gigs, the educational activities and new commissions also offer other lines of potential work.

Festivals are inherently expensive propositions, however, and there is the argument that events like the London Jazz Festival suck in much of the available state funding and corporate sponsorship which could be used to fund more regular grassroots projects. The argument ought to be that this is a symptom of the lack of jazz funding overall, but such a point can be lost in the attitudinal swirl of creativity, entrepreneurial hustling and marginalisation that can be life of a British jazz musician or worker, something Serious and the London Jazz Festival themselves recognise.

David Jones explains:

We tend to regard ourselves still as minnows, but every so often you see a look in someone's eye and you realise that to them, you're the monster that blocks out the sun, you know, that their feeling is, 'Well, however much I might enjoy having a drink with David or John or somebody else, ultimately if Serious wasn't there, I could get a share of what they've got.'

Minnow or monster? – you decide. However, as Oliver Carruthers, Head of Programming at East End venue Rich Mix told us, 'Some folk have a perception that it is a festival that has a lot of money to spend, which, in my experience, isn't necessarily the case.'

There has also been criticism by some in the jazz community that the small amount of funding for jazz goes into the hands of the few, what journalist Dan Spicer described as ‘a bit of a jazz mafia thing going on’, in which ‘if you’re not part of that circle then you don’t get the gigs. You just have to look at the London Jazz Festival to see what I’m talking about. Certain people get to play it over and over again.’

In our research and discussions around the scene, more than one citizen of the jazz republic has called Serious director John Cumming ‘King John’, with usually at most a half-smile, in recognition of his perceived power in making careers. Mafia or monarchy? – again, you decide. (By the way, Spicer has had a terrifically creative response, of which any jazz festival organiser would only approve: he established the Alternative Jazz Festival, in Brighton, taking inspiration from long running avant-garde jazz festivals such as New York’s Vision Festival and Germany’s Moers Festival.)

For Charles Alexander, there can be too much repetition in the London Jazz Festival programme, with the Jazz Voice concert on the same night each year, and Sonny Rollins seemingly ‘always there’ (The Serious response to Rollins’ appearances three years running? But ‘it’s *Sonny Rollins!*’) Yet Alexander then qualifies this: ‘But then I look at the rest of the events and I think, “Wow, this is really interesting!”

For Rubie, however, the major achievement of the London Jazz Festival has been to *stop jazz being a dirty word*, because the festival gets into the general media and breaks down people’s preconceptions about being intimidated by jazz. ‘It gives the sense that this is a London-wide thing,’ he says, ‘and loads of people are going to it and it’s the sort of thing you should check out.’

However, some argue that the marketing of an umbrella or ‘core’ festival is inherently imbalanced. As Debbie Dickinson suggests, the idea is that everybody’s profile benefits, but the media and audience attention will tend to be focused on the headline acts: ‘So if you’re a lowly artist playing in the Bull’s Head or whatever are you really benefiting from that marketing?’ As she acknowledges, however, the London Jazz Festival publicity operation is a ‘phenomenal machine’, particularly for an organisation that doesn’t own its own venue or ticketing agency, and, as John Etheridge puts it, ‘It does help [your] profile, because you get in the brochure and that brochure gets everywhere.’

For emerging artists, performing in the London Jazz Festival offers a concrete means of signalling their status and experience to other venue and festival bookers.

In saxophonist Camilla George's view, it adds to the creative and reputational portfolio of the artist, who is able to say: "I've done the London Jazz Festival with my own project", yes, I think it *is* a big thing.'

Performing in the festival also puts musicians on Serious' radar, which can have positive impacts both for musicians as well as for Serious which, as a live music promoter, is regularly scouting for new talent to work with, develop and produce. It can also be a means for young musicians in particular to become part of the worldwide 'jazz family', as Andy Sheppard put it to us, in order to survive and grow. The London Jazz Festival, then, as a hub for national and international festival promoters, agents, and other industry people, can provide a platform, both on and off stage, for musicians to network and to display their musical wares.

Furthermore, festivals act as catalysts for musicians to travel between cities and countries. If a band is not yet well known enough to sell many tickets abroad, a festival can give the opportunity both to get abroad in the first place and to be introduced to a new audience via the festival's promotional channels. Through 'cultural dating' and new commissions, the London Jazz Festival has also acted as a catalyst for new compositions, new collaborations, and new pairings, helping to broaden and develop the jazz genre.

As John Etheridge says of his 1994 gig with Andy Summers and Nitin Sawhney:

Twenty years ago when it started, that was probably quite radical... People might go, 'Ooh, that's not jazz', but of course, now the definition has become so broad. Well, there is no definition – it's just what anybody wants to call jazz, you know. So [Serious are] able to put on all sorts of areas of music that they represent, which can loosely be called jazz, whatever that is. So it's the London *Music* Festival and it's jazz orientated.

For artists and audiences alike, the opportunity to see and hear some of the world's most accomplished musicians is a learning activity in itself and one which can lead to further exploration. Tommy Remon, guitarist with Tomorrow's Warriors, says that 'it gets more exciting living in London during the London Jazz Festival.

All of a sudden you get all of these cats from the States coming in, all these amazing gigs going on.' For drummer Femi Koleoso:

You see some of the best music you hear all year in that period of time. Like, the jam session at Ronnie's can be really special during the jazz festival. There's something quite special about seeing Christian Scott play a jazz standard that you're working on; it's really quite inspiring to get them in that context.

The audience enjoys the opportunity to see and hear the classics, but also the new music that the festival can offer, as one festival-goer told us:

In the early years of the festival, you could hear these greats who you'd heard on record but you'd never seen live. People you've grown up with, and that you've listened to, who have influenced [you]. And also to listen to new stuff. Then you'd see new developments, see where new musicians are taking their work, and you just learn all the time.

As this account has shown, however, the London Jazz Festival is more than just about jazz, or even simply about music. Because of their cyclical nature, jazz festivals can become a pivot around which the rest of the year is planned. One attendee said that the festival was 'like an extended family' of musicians and fans, and so jazz festivals are sites for renewing old acquaintances and making new ones.

For Snarky Puppy's bassist and founder Michael League:

Every time we come into town we end up looking at the calendar and seeing a bunch of our friends from all over the world playing at different venues. That's the beautiful thing about festivals: it becomes like a hang for musicians that don't get to see each other all the time. Yeah, [London Jazz Festival's] programming's amazing, the venues are amazing. Serious is wonderful; you know; they're kind of like our UK family, so it's great, man, we love it.

And as bassist Marcus Miller puts it:

I love coming to play the Jazz Festival [because] they invite really cool people. So when you're hanging out in the lobby before the show, you run into Robert Glasper. Lionel Loueke, I saw all sorts of guys. And we were joking and we were saying, 'Man, I never see you in America! I see you in *England*, at the *Jazz Festival!*'

Festivals can also be opportunities for being with like-minded listeners (but not always, as with the Cassandra Wilson Royal Festival Hall gig in 2015 for which the singer's late arrival on stage exposed divisions in the audience between those sympathetic to the singer and those less so).

For Miller, the London audience is a 'very cool audience, very knowledgeable about music, and very passionate. And the knowledge and the passion together is very powerful. It makes for a great audience, you know what I mean? You feel like they're part of the music.' Indeed, as the research of Shana Walton and Helen Regis shows, jazz festivals have even been sites for transformative –even spiritual – experiences for their participants. The words of one final London Jazz Festival-goer capture the significance of the upbeat festival spirit:

It's good that people can get together and it's positive and there ain't much at the moment that's positive! I can remember being here, not long after 9/11. And just feeling somehow that we have to have these positive things. we really *need* them. I think they're *crucial*.

Jazz is for everyone

Remember, jazz was described as the 'Cinderella of the arts in Britain' by Ian Carr, writing in *Music Outside* in 1973, a music caught between the art and commercial worlds. However, with some very canny artistic and financial management by Serious and the London Jazz Festival, and the support of the BBC, EFG and other significant sponsors, it may be that for ten days a year in London, jazz has finally progressed from the rags of indifference to the riches of sponsorship and exposure.

Rather than being *caught* between the art and commercial worlds, Serious have instead managed to create a model that is able to glide *between* worlds with confidence. We might argue that there is also via the London Jazz Festival a shift evident in some ways in this 'Cinderella of the arts' status. We can sense this in the warm words articulated by Althea Efunshile, Deputy Chief Executive of Arts Council England, in her speech at the launch party for the 2016 festival.

For Efunshile, at this moment especially, London needed jazz as an inherently 'outernational' cultural expression and world-view:

I love jazz because it's inclusive and democratic, and a profoundly expressive art form that reaches across audiences, and across the barriers of class, race and language. And now as never before, we must be committed to ensuring we find ways to communicate and understand each other... Music goes beyond words, and jazz, which is the least prescriptive and the most flexible of forms, takes music to new horizons, to a space where we can all share and enjoy art, no matter who we are, or where we come from. Jazz is for everyone... I thank Serious for their role as ambassadors for UK jazz, reflecting the diversity of our scene here in their programming, and communicating this to international producers, many of whom visit the festival. Thanks to Serious and other organisations, the United Kingdom is a strong international voice in jazz. It's a voice with which we talk to the world and invite the world into conversation. It's a powerful voice, saying that London is open – and that we as a nation are open.

Indeed, as Stuart Nicholson said, writing in 2014:

Today there is a buzz about the British jazz scene that has not been felt since the popularity of Courtney Pine, the Jazz Warriors and Loose Tubes in the 1980s. While few would claim working in the UK jazz economy was easy, there is currently an optimism and feel-good factor in British jazz that has not been felt in decades.

Critic Norman Lebrecht, writing in the *Daily Telegraph* in 2001 about the partnership between Radio 3 and the London Jazz Festival as a 'signpost' of cultural change, argued that it was time for 'a new breed of curator, one that will challenge, rather than conserve.' With Serious and the London Jazz Festival, it appears that Lebrecht has got his wish.

In their establishment, development and on-going curation of the festival, Serious have provided a platform for British jazz and have played a significant creative and practical role in the development of jazz in Europe and beyond, providing funding and space for dialogue between the musicians who ultimately create the new sounds of European jazz.

In doing so, they have both reflected and possibly even contributed to London's evolution into a dynamic and multicultural global city through mixing, blending and

'Londonising' music from out there, in here, making it also music from in here, out there.

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Interviews

Interview material is used throughout the book.

- Ahmed, Yazz. 2015. Telephone interview, 14 December. Yazz Ahmed is a British-Bahraini trumpet player who first performed at the London Jazz Festival in 2012.
- Alexander, Charles. 2016. Telephone interview, 31 March. Charles Alexander ran the Jazz Centre Society from 1973-1982, produced shows for Camden Jazz Week, and founded Jazzwise Publications in 1984.
- Andrews, Kerry. 2016. Email correspondence, 17 June. Kerry Andrews is the Artistic Director for artsdepot.
- Burch, Bex. 2016. Telephone interview, 11 January. Bex Burch is band leader and percussionist of Vula Viel.
- Carruthers, Oliver. 2016. Email correspondence, 24 June. Oliver Carruthers is Head of Programming at Rich Mix.

- Crosby, Gary. 2016. Personal interview, London, 27 May. Gary Crosby was the bass player in Jazz Warriors and now in Jazz Jamaica, as well as setting up jazz education charity Tomorrow's Warriors and Dune Music; he was awarded an OBE in 2009.
- Cumming, John. 2001. Interview with Andrew Simons, British Library, London, 7 September. John Cumming is a Director of Serious, producers of the London Jazz Festival. Prior to this, he worked in theatre before producing both the Bracknell Jazz Festival from 1975-1987 and Camden Jazz Week from 1978-1992; he was awarded an OBE in 2014.
- Cumming, John. 2016. Personal interviews, London, 11 February, 3 May. See above.
- Dickinson, Debbie. 2016. Personal interview, London, 24 March. Debbie Dickinson is Programme Director of the Creative Industries course at City University, London; she was the London Jazz Festival co-ordinator from 1995 to 2000.
- Dines, Ross. 2016. Personal interview, London, 6 May. Ross Dines is the Music Manager for PizzaExpress.
- Etheridge, John. 2016. Telephone interview, 25 April. John Etheridge is a guitarist who first performed at the London Jazz Festival in 1993 with the Vortex Superband.
- George, Camilla. 2016. Personal interview, London, 27 May. Camilla is a saxophonist with the Camilla George Quartet and with Tomorrow's Warriors.
- Gordon, Christopher. 2016. Email correspondence, 8 July. Christopher Gordon was the Arts Officer for Camden from 1973-77; he is now an independent consultant and university lecturer in international cultural policy in the UK and in continental Europe.
- Igbinyemi, Ope. 2016. Personal interview, London, 19 May. Ope Igbinyemi is Serious' Associate Director of Finance who joined Serious in 2000.
- Jones, David. 2016. Personal interview, London, 11 February. David Jones is a Director of Serious, producers of the London Jazz Festival. Prior to this, David ran the Crossing the Border Festival and music promotion company Speakout before it merged with Serious, and was manager of Ivor Cutler from 1976-2006.
- Koleoso, Femi. 2016. Personal interview, London, 27 May. Femi Koleoso is a drummer with the Ezra Collective and Tomorrow's Warriors who first performed at the London Jazz Festival in 2013.
- Mackness, Kerstan. 2016. Telephone interview, 20 September. Kerstan Mackness is the manager

of GoGo Pengion.

Mead, Steve. 2016. Telephone interview, 6 January. Steve Mead is the Artistic Director of Manchester Jazz Festival.

Nelson, Jez. 2016. Telephone interview, 12 May. Jez Nelson is a DJ and broadcaster and the CEO of content production company, Somethin' Else; Jez presented the London Jazz Festival's live opening night broadcast from 2003 to 2015.

Ollerenshaw, Martel. 2016. Personal interview, London, 29 September. Martel Ollerenshaw joined Serious in 2002 and, when she left the company in 2017, was Serious' Associate Director of Talent Development.

Pearce, Amy. 2016. Personal interview, London, 19 May. Amy Pearce joined Serious in 2000 and, when she left the company in 2017, was Associate Director of Production.

Remon, Tommy. 2016. Personal interview, London, 27 May. Tommy Remon is a guitarist with Tomorrow's Warriors.

Rodger, Jill. 2009. Personal interview, Glasgow, 30 October. Jill Rodger is Director of Glasgow Jazz Festival; her interview forms part of Emma Webster's doctoral research.

Rubie, Steve. 2016. Personal interview, London, 16 May. Steve Rubie is a flautist and saxophonist and has been the owner and manager of Chelsea's 606 Club since 1976.

Sheppard, Andy. 2016. Telephone interview, 18 May. Andy Sheppard is a British jazz saxophonist and saxophonist who first played the London Jazz Festival in 1993 and has performed with artists including Carla Bley and Jazz Jamaica over the years as well as with his Saxophone Massive.

Shorter, Wayne. 2016. Telephone interview, 23 September. Wayne Shorter is an American saxophonist who first played at the London Jazz Festival in 1995.

Talkington, Fiona. 2016. Email correspondence, 19 October. Fiona Talkington is a music journalist and BBC Radio 3 presenter, who has also curated festivals and events including notably partnering of UK and Norwegian musicians.

Tandy, Sarah. 2016. Personal interview, London, 27 May. Sarah Tandy is a pianist with

Tomorrow's Warriors and the Camilla George Quartet.

Whitaker, Claire. 2016. Personal interview, London, 21 April. Claire Whitaker is a Director of Serious, producers of the London Jazz Festival. Prior to this, Claire worked for Natwest and Decca and was Director of the African arts festival, africa95, from 1991-1995; she was awarded an OBE on 2015.

Wiegold, Peter. 2016. Telephone interview, 13 May. Peter Wiegold is Professor of Music Brunel University, Director of Club Inegales, Director of the Institute of Composing, and the Scottish National Orchestra's Alchemy ensemble.

On Wednesday 14th September 2016, a 'wine and memories' event was held at the Serious HQ in Clerkenwell, which included current and old staff members – thanks to all those who took part: Amy Coombe, John Cumming, Rachel Daniel, Louise Dennison, Sophie Hewlett, Ope Igbinyemi, Isabelle Knight, Jess Knights, David Jones, Tom McNeill, Rachel Millar, Cameron Reynolds, Debbie Sargent, and Mick Shenton.