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News, reviews, features and comment from the London jazz scene plus our writers' list of recommended gigs

Nominated for Publication of the Year 2010 and 2011 Parliamentary Jazz Awards

"The influential LondonJazz" Sunday Times, June 2011

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Review: New York Standards Quartet at Oxford Jazz Festival



Michael Janisch (with new bass-bridge) and Gene Jackson at Oxford Playhouse

Photo credit: Nick Atkins/ Oxford Jazz Festival 2012

Michael Janisch and the New York Standards Quartet
(Oxford Playhouse, part of Oxford Jazz Festival, 7th April 2012. Review by Alison Bentley)

The iconic Oxford Playhouse was home to several Jazz Festivals in the early 90s. This time the Jazz Festival (which receives no subsidy) co-hosted this extraordinary band with the theatre itself.

Charlie Parker and the be-boppers wrote new tunes to the chord sequences of well-known popular songs. The New York Standards Quartet put new chord sequences behind the melodies of well-known jazz standards. Part of the pleasure was hearing fragments of the melodies emerging: the chords made perfect sense but took the melodies to unexpected places. Instead of using more conventional cadences, the music moved between tense modes and bright reassuring ones.

From the start we were swept up by the breathtaking virtuosity of these musicians. *How High the Moon* was unusually in a minor mode, and *I Love You* moved from a funky 7/4 riff into David Berkman's beautiful piano solo, cushioned on effortless swing. The patterns of his solos were not just abstract but emotional too.

In *Blue in Green*'s dreamy mood and in **Tim Armacost**'s sweet soprano solo, Herbie Hancock's album *River* came to mind. Ornette Coleman's *Turnaround* began with everyone playing the last 4 bars of the melody, overlapping and riffing freely in Prime Time-style, moving into a slowish blues that Tim Armacost later called an 'adult tempo'. Tim Armacost's warm tenor tone here reminded me of Joe Henderson (and a

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hint of Phil Woods' throatiness?) His solos were modal and chromatic, but with something of Sonny Rollins in the rhythm.

Giant Steps shifted between 4/4 and 7/4, showing the amazing rapport between all the musicians. In *Secret Love*, the interplay between **Michael Janisch's** strong bass and **Gene Jackson's** drums was magical- when the shifting freeform grooves settled into swing, it was mesmerising. The bass solo was like a dramatic, rhythmic partita. Desafinado's changing keys and Tim Armacost's exquisite flute recalled Toninho Horta's music. *All the Things You Are* and *Summer Night* had exciting polyrhythms from Gene Jackson's drumming, erupting into driving drum rolls- we were in the presence of a master.

The evening ended with a groovy gospel rock version of *Old Folks* recalling Keith Jarrett, with Tim Armacost playing bluesy growls. The band had charmed and engaged us all with their total focus on their art- and their sense of humour! It was a wonderful start to their major UK tour.

New York Standards Quartet Tour Dates and David Berkman's preview

On Monday, April 09, 2012

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Links We Like

 **Mike Collins' Bristol Jazz blog**
 New York Standards Quartet, Colston Hall 2, Wednesday 11th April

 **thejazzbreakfast**
 Cowley leads the week ahead's Midland gigs


 **Music and More**
 Kenny Garrett - Seeds From the Underground (Mack Avenue, 2012)


 **bebop spoken here**
 Blaydon Bulletin


 **Peter Hum's Ottawa blog**
 2012 TD Ottawa International Jazz Festival lineup revealed

 **Birmingham Jazz**
 The Jazzlines Programme

 **Josh from Leeds' British Jazz Blog**
 The Most Exciting Festival Of The Year...Is Free

 **Babel blog**
 New reviews from Downbeat - Dosados, Alexander Hawkins


 **John Armwood from Atlanta**
 FREE DOWNLOAD: Jasiri X - Etta (prod Agent of Change) by Agent Of Change on SoundCloud - Create, record and share your sounds for free


 **Byas'd Opinion**
 Glasgow Jazz Festival 2012: more performers announced

 **Ronan Guilfoyle's Mostly Music blog**
 A Week in India with George and Carlos

 **Jon's Bristol jazz log**
 Coming up - New York Standards Quartet, Wednesday, Colston Hall.

 **JJA News**
 JJA Member Updates: April 2012

 **Casa Valdez Studios**
 Freddy's Guide to Creative Improvisation

 **Sean Corby's Prodigal Jazz Talk**
 A conversation with Leon Forrest.

 **Ça va jazzer (for French readers-Bruno Pfeiffer's Libe Blog)**
 AVORIAZ équipé pour l'avalanche de jazz

 **Andy Robson's Jazz in Wales**
 Seven bidders for Brecon Jazz

 **Edward Randell**
 Zounds! My Shakespeare feature for the Eurostar magazine

 **Kit Downes blog**


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Upcoming Gigs

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Sift and sort and mould

Barry Dallman's PlayJazz
Four reasons why you don't
enjoy making music as much as
you used to

Tessa Souter
I have moved back to
tessasouter.blogspot.com

 **Social Jazz - Sandra from
Greater Manchester getting
the word out**
How online retailer amazon.com
can get you more fans

 **100 Greatest Jazz
Albums-Ken Watkins**
Jazz Albums of the Year 2012

 **Simon Purcell's Jazz
Education blog**
Elvin, Lieb and Grossman – a
Christmas treasure


 **Deborah Winter's UK Jazz
Vocalists**
Alison J'ear 'A Swingin'

 **Dutch Jazz Times (in
English)**
Kevin Mingus about "Mingus on
Mingus"


**Bruce Lindsay's Delicious
Hot Disgusting Cold - fom
Norfolk**
Its #Jazz Journal - my photo of
Dan Block on the cover, my...


 **Jazz Beyond Jazz**
House Appropriations
Committee to NEA: Keep Jazz
Masters

Yamaha Music Education
Yamaha Class Band
partnerships

 **Twenty Dollars-Purveyors of
the Pointless**
We are looking at the same
thing from two sides.

Frederick Bernas
Al-Jazeera, WikiLeaks and the
War on Terror

 **Master of a Small House**
Jim Rotondi - 1000 Rainbows
(Positone)

 **1workingmusician- Jason
from Seattle**
No More, No Less - Kitchen Sink
Package

 **Tommy Pearson's One More
Take**
Chuck and the Apes

Jazzorg site

 **Alex Dutilh's France-
Musique blog (for French
speakers)**

 **The BBC's Jazz & Blues
page**

 **New Jersey Jazz Society
(plus 60 page mag)**

**Jazz Standards, Jazz
History, Musicology,
Biographies and Books**

Sandy Brown Jazz

Campaign for Live Music-
Bulletins from Hamish
Birchall

Listings and Venues (alphabetical)

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Time Out Jazz Listings
Barbican Centre
Boisdale (Belgravia and
Bishopsgate)
Bexley Jazz Club
The Bull's Head
Cadogan Hall
Cafe Oto
Camberwell Crypt
Charlie Wright's
Dover Street Restaurant
East Side Jazz
e17 Jazz
Forge Venue
Green Man, GreatPortland Street
Harri's Jazz
Hideaway
Hugo's, Queen's Park
Jazz After Dark
Jazz at the Duchess
Jazz at the Manor
Loop Collective, Kentish Town
Kings Place
(Lost venues...)
Lower Ground Bar NW6
Map Music, Kentish Town
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National Theatre Foyer
The Octave Bar
Pizza Express, Dean St
Richmond and Twickenham Jazz
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South Bank Centre
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Vortex, Dalston
Way out West at the Orange Tree
Richmond
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