

WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA

THE MAGAZINE

MOLLY
JOHNSON



International
Women's Day
MARCH 2022

Elina Duni
Jeanne Lee
Ali Affleck
Fiona Mactaggart
Helena Summerfield
A G Parker
Lindsey Webster
Ella Fitzgerald
Tina May
Lara Eidi
Jiaowei Hu
Diana Torti
Fausta Joly
Paulette Jackson
Camilla George

Maxine Gordon
Barbara Thompson
Jordannah Elizabeth
Zoe Rahman
The Woodshed Network
Jean Carne
Carol Leeming MBE
Monika S Jakubowska
Tatiana Gorilovsky
Barka Fabianova
Women in Live Music
Wendy Kirkland
Kim Cypher
Tulani Bridgewater

AND SO MUCH MORE...

A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
8TH MARCH 2022

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our special International Women's Day edition!

Today is the day the world officially celebrates women across the world. Of course, our work here at Women in Jazz Media celebrates women every day and while days like this can feel tokenistic in some ways, it is vital to remember why this day exists.

I have spoken to many people recently who seem to be under the impression that 'it's better for women now, since the whole #metoo thing'. I am not exaggerating when I say that I am contacted by women almost every day who tell me that they feel unsupported and alone; undervalued, too old, disrespected...asking why there is yet another festival line up without women or very few. In a meeting with a known publication a few months ago, I was told that the reason they do not include more women is because their paying subscribers 'don't want us to include more women'. Only last month yet another article was published highlighting the 'best drummers' with no women included. A similar list came out for pianists, with no women.

In our recent London Jazz Festival event, an audience member commented on our female sound engineers saying, 'I didn't realise women did that'. When I interviewed Migdalia Van Der Hoven last year, she told me, as a female drummer, she was trying to break down barriers so that her daughters will not have to do the same thing. I imagine if I had interviewed Viola Smith in the 40s, Dottie Dodgion in the 60s or 70s and Cindy Blackman in the 80s/90s that they all would have said the same thing and here we are in 2022, still trying to break down barriers. These are just a few tiny examples in the jazz world and yes, we are moving forward, without a doubt, but there is much work still to be done.

The theme for this year's International Women's day is
#BreakTheBias

Imagine a gender equal world.

A world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination.

A world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

A world where difference is valued and celebrated.

Together we can forge women's equality.

Collectively we can all **#BreakTheBias**.

So, let's do exactly that.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this magazine and for all the incredible support of our work.

FIONA ROSS

FOUNDER, WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA

CONTENTS

INTERVIEWS

Barbara Thompson: Everlasting Fire by Kim Cypher
Molly Johnson by Fiona Ross
Zoe Rahman by Wendy Kirkland
Women in Live Music by Fiona Ross
Women Who Inspire: Elina Duni by Nick Lea
The Woodshed Network by Fiona Ross
On the Bookcase with Jordannah Elizabeth
Ali Affleck: A Musical Storyteller by Fiona Mactaggart

FEATURES

Jeanne Lee by Diana Torti
Lindsey Webster by Paulette Jackson
When Ella Split The Screen by Carol Leeming MBE
Words in Celebration with Fausta Joly
Women in Jazz by Helena Summerfield
Stormy Weather by A G Parker
A Lady of Musical Class: Jean Carne by Paulette Jackson
We Welcome The Men: Ron Milsom, Nigel J and Marc Jordan

A SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH

Women in Jazz: The State of Being in 2022 by Jordannah Elizabeth
History = Herstory = Ourstory? By Lara Eidi
Jazz HER's in China: Part of HER's, Part of the Global Community by Jiaowei Hu

ON THE PLAYLIST

Germana Stella La Sorza
Tara Minton
Ilaria Capalbo
Patricia Lopez
Cecilia Sanchietti
Shannon Barnett

ON THE BOOKCASE

She Raised Her Voice! 50 Black Women who sang their way into Music History
by Jordannah Elizabeth

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MAXINE GORDON

WOMEN IN JAZZ MEDIA PATRON

I first met Maxine Gordon in a beautiful café in Paris ready to interview her about her incredible book 'Sophisticated Giant: The Life of Legacy of Dexter Gordon'. On arrival I found that she was only accepting interviews from women and African Americans and all the book launch events were being held at independent bookstores. That moment, for me was life changing. Maxine is quite simply magnificent. Historian, researcher, author, producer, scholar, consultant. President of the Dexter Gordon Society and President of Dex Music LLC (which controls the copyright to Dexter Gordon's compositions and licenses his name and image). She was also married to Dexter Gordon. Woody Shaw's 'Theme for Maxine' was written for her. She is unrelenting with her support for the jazz industry. Her support, care and knowledge has given me strength, passion and belief in the purpose of the work I do and in turn for Women in Jazz Media.

There are a few definitions of what a patron is, and I am honoured and humbled that Maxine has agreed to be our Women in Jazz Media patron.

Our special guardian, our supporter and someone who will always be ingrained in the work we do.

Fiona Ross





WOMEN IN JAZZ: THE STATE OF BEING IN 2022



BY JORDANNAH ELIZABETH

I have been a feminist since I was about 11 years old. I had such pride in womanhood through the punk aesthetic, but as I grew older, I realized that jazz ran through my veins. My uncles on both sides of my family were jazz musicians, my grandparents played Dizzy Gillespie and Lena Horne. As a teen, I always looked for people who “looked like me” in every genre. I yearn for knowledge of trailblazing Black women who sang or played music in all genres, but particularly ones that lived on the frayed edges of traditional R&B and pop. I wanted to see what made these women stand out, but more importantly, rise to incredible heights despite trials and tribulation.

I began excavating the work of women in jazz starting with Alice Coltrane when Red Bull Music Academy asked me to write a series of pieces about Alice in light of the release of her album, *World Spirituality Classics 1: The Ecstatic Music of Alice Coltrane Turiyasangitananda* released by David Byrne’s label, Luaka Bop. Until then, not much was known about Alice. It was an honor to learn more about her, and speak to her protegee Surya Botofasina and daughter, Michelle among others. I feel spiritually connected to her. I feel the same way about Betty Carter, Abbey Lincoln and Nina Simone. I also feel called to write about contemporary and active instrumentalists, composers, singers and arrangers like Amina Claudine Myers, Roxy Cross, Jazzmeia Horn, Camille Thurman and work to support emerging women musicians away in the cabinets of nothingness. Of course, it is not just the record industry that enabled the loss of so many voices of ingenious women.

I never tire of writing about women in jazz. They are so fascinating and have deep, rich stories. They are wise, flawed, beautiful, forces of nature. When I use the word “flawed”, I mean, more accurately, the word “human”. I think my deep desire as a writer was to not “humanize” but reveal how human and complex these women truly were and are.

Everyone wants and hopes to be seen, but women jazz musicians truly deserve to be seen. They deserve to be recognized as the true forces of nature they are. They have overcome the discrimination of the world and stepped on stage front and center in the face of the aggressions of sexism and racism. Women in jazz did not choose to be silenced. The male-dominated record industry decided that marketing would be squelched and suppressed, reissues would be slowed or halted, liner notes and histories would go into files tucked

Getting to the root of how we’ve gotten to the point of engaging jazz through the lens of feminism and jazz and gender justice can be approached by understanding that there are no more excuses. In 2022, we are too informed and technologically advanced -- we are too experienced and have heard too many stories following #metoo to deny and hide that jazz has a gender problem. We know this to be true and the next steps are to have conversations and challenge men in the community to make an effort to include women. It’s not going to feel comfortable. It’s not going to feel natural, it may, in fact, feel counterintuitive to men and jazz gatekeepers because we have been in one mode of operation for so long. There’s no such thing as “special treatment”, there is only a need for correction. Wrongs must be righted, and the effort is not to favor women but to augment the reality that if we continue to discourage and oppress women, the new generation will consider our music community outdated and therefore, obsolete, and they would be right.

The new generation does not want to see a world where people of all backgrounds are not being amplified. As our elders begin to hand the baton, there must be give-and-take in that our elders look at the world through a new lens by listening and engaging in what young people truly want from jazz and that young musicians renew tradition in a way that does not erase the music of the past but celebrates it through influence and study.

We can come together and create a new landscape. But let us never go back to the way women have been treated for the last nearly 100 years. **We are in the future. Women in jazz are the future.**









MINAYESHU PHOTOGRAPHY BY BARKA FABIANOVA







SOUADMASI PHOTOGRAPHY BY BARKA FABIANOVA





BARBARA
THOMPSON MBE

AN EVERLASTING
FLAME

INTERVIEW BY KIM CYPHER



If you ask me to name a woman who has inspired me, there will be many incredible women who have positively influenced my life, including my Mum, family, friends, fellow musicians...I could go on. But, top of my list musically has to be a lady who sparked excitement in me back in the 80's, igniting a passion and realisation that I could follow and achieve my musical dreams, ultimately shaping the way I lived my life. I am referring to the legendary multi-instrumentalist, composer and band leader Barbara Thompson MBE.

Barbara led the way for female musicians in a male-dominated industry, gaining huge respect with a lifetime of musical projects and achievements. There are far too many to mention here but include performing with the London Symphony Orchestra from age 12, the all-female Ivy Benson Band and the New Jazz Orchestra where she met her husband, drummer Jon Hiseman.

The couple became highly respected musicians with their own bands, Barbara Thompson's 'Paraphernalia' and 'Colosseum' I and II and Tempest which were Jon's bands. It was a long and varied career. Barbara's fascinating and inspiring story continues despite Jon passing away in 2018 and Barbara's 25-year battle with Parkinson's Disease.

I remember the first time I saw Barbara performing live with Paraphernalia featuring Jon Hiseman on drums. Aged just 15, together with my future husband (drummer Mike Cypher), I remember being absolutely captivated by the amazing female saxophonist on stage, leading her band and performing with such skill and passion that I had not seen the likes of before. Back in the 80's, female instrumentalists, band leaders and composers were few and far between. It was like a flame lit up inside me, seeing a husband-and-wife team working together, a saxophonist and drummer performing music for a living. "Music is a gateway to the world. There is no limit to where it can lead, and the challenges never stop."



It is no coincidence that this bears an uncanny resemblance to the life I am now leading. I was truly inspired...not only by Barbara's musicianship and musical achievements, but also by the couple's close relationship, described by Barbara as being "two halves of the same person." Together they achieved so much – a lifetime of musical performances, recordings and touring whilst bringing up a family and dealing with the challenges life threw at them. In Barbara's own words:

**"MUSIC IS A
GATEWAY TO THE
WORLD. THERE IS NO
LIMIT TO WHERE IT
CAN LEAD, AND THE
CHALLENGES NEVER
STOP."**

Reading Barbara's fascinating autobiography 'Journey to a Destination Unknown', I found myself learning about a young girl with a passion for music, playing the recorder in school assemblies, learning the clarinet, achieving Grade 8 and 'A' level music. I found the similarities to my own story really compelling and, as it became clear Barbara was at her happiest when juggling many demands in life, running several projects side by side, I felt huge empathy. Barbara's statement: "I knew I would never make much money as a jazz musician but simply carried on without giving it too much thought," highlights the thinking and mind-set of those driven by a passion and love for music and this is undoubtedly why she went on to lead the most inspiring, incredible life as a musician...a true everlasting flame.

So, to be invited to the couples' Surrey home / recording studio to peruse music memorabilia and chat with Barbara about her life was a real honour and privilege.



I arrived at Temple Music Studio and was immediately overwhelmed by a sense of wonder and awe. Stepping through the doorway into a home full of memories and love, clearly devoted to celebrating the musical achievements of this special couple. Every room was full of photos and posters, each telling a story. Just wow! Daughter Ana Gracey (a singer/songwriter) welcomed me in, clearly very proud of her parents' achievements. Barbara was sat in a chair overlooking the garden. Having suffered from Parkinson's Disease for 25 years, her energy levels and capabilities can vary from day to day.

Ana and I proceeded to open a set of large portfolio files which had been put aside in readiness for a forthcoming exhibition project with Mark Kass and The Jazz Centre UK. As we opened the files, a fascinating array of posters and memorabilia was on show.

Aware that we wanted Barbara to be part of this, Ana asked her mum what she would like to do. Barbara's confident response made us all chuckle:

"I'd like to re-score 'Le Grand Voyage'"

'Le Grand Voyage' is a composition featured on Paraphernalia's 1986 album 'Heavenly Bodies'. Such a wonderful response and one which reflects Barbara's continued passion for her music and an incredible determination to keep doing what she loves. At this point her eyes came to life and we started perusing all the memorabilia whilst chatting about her memories.

One poster after another featuring gigs with the most impressive line-up of musicians on each bill. It highlighted the sheer class of musicians and high level of musicianship. Barbara told me that Paraphernalia was one of the most well-rehearsed bands of the time. Each piece of music was scored out in its entirety, including solos. So, it was no mean feat for the band members to learn their parts in preparation for tours. Ana remembers the band members congregating at the house/studio the week before a tour to rehearse. That week-long rehearsal marked the start of each tour. It struck me at this point that I was in the home where these great musicians had rehearsed and recorded.

Clearly, this disciplined way of playing stood Barbara in good stead for learning new music. Ana mentioned a recording of hers called 'Fairweather' which features Barbara. It was recorded in 2008 as a demo. Ana said her mum learnt and recorded it so quickly. She had asked her mum to double the vocal line on saxophone. Barbara only needed to hear the track once before she was able to perform it, such was her ability to learn new music very quickly. The track has been recently re-mixed so it may well end up being released at some point in the future. I hope so as it sounds amazing.

We then came across an orange poster that certainly sparked a memory.





the
brass

ZELT FESTIVAL
BARBARA THOMAS
KUZ
FARM MEN
LIZZ WRIGHT
MARK BARKEN
DAN
FIELD
HIGH
DEN
...
17 dicembre ore 18.00
19 dicembre ore 18.00
Al SOCI



Barbara: "That was in Palermo."

Kim: "Do you remember that gig?"

Barbara: "Yes, that was Ronnie Scott's gig but he wasn't well. Ronnie Scott always used to book me, put me in as his deputy. I could never understand why."

Kim: "Wow, what an amazing achievement, deputizing for Ronnie Scott. So, that was Ronnie Scott's gig in Palermo and you played it instead of him?"

Barbara: "Yes."

Kim: "And how did you do? Give yourself a mark out of 10."

Barbara: "I got re-booked."

Kim: "Well, that's 10 out of 10 then and getting re-booked is the most important thing. So, do you think Ronnie Scott would have been re-booked?"

Barbara: "No."

This made us all laugh. Such a cheeky response, but most definitely with tongue in cheek as Barbara and Ronnie had an obvious close relationship of mutual respect. After all, Barbara seemed

to be able to get a residency at Ronnie Scott's world-renowned Jazz Club as often as she liked, certainly testament to her world-class ability and the respect she had.

Barbara went on to explain how complimentary Ronnie Scott had been about her.

Barbara: "He said to myself and Pete King, "you're the only group that got out of England."

This is so true as Barbara and husband Jon were often on tours of Europe and further afield. Barbara also explained how the staff at Ronnie Scott's were lovely to her.

Barbara: "They loved the music and they wanted to buy our albums. They even whistled our tunes."

Barbara: "If I wanted a gig at Ronnie Scott's, I only had to phone him up. Just one phone call and we were in."

That achievement in itself cannot not be underestimated. It is a clear indicator of the huge respect Barbara had and the loyalty of her fans who would come out to support her.

I asked Barbara about the importance of her fans and recalled a story from her autobiography which states that a group of her supporters sitting in the front row held up a banner reading 'We love you Barbara'. It was at this point that Barbara became noticeably moved and her tears expressed the continued love she has for her supporters. Ana went on to say that she remembered a gig when her mum was performing with Colosseum and the crowd held up a banner reading "Welcome Barbara Thompson and Colosseum." She was clearly much-loved. This story evoked an emotional outpouring from Barbara as she repeated:

**"We welcome
Barbara Thompson,
we welcome
Barbara Thompson."**



How privileged I was to be having this intimate conversation with such an incredible lady. I found myself reaching out to hold her hand and telling her that we all love her. This was a very special moment. It reminded me that last year I had the privilege of performing at Crazy Coqs in London with Barbara in the audience. To perform for her was an honour and a chance to give something back. When I mentioned on stage that she was in the audience, the room filled with applause and cheering, the love still clearly there.

The conversation continued as we turned over pages of fascinating memorabilia. Barbara's great sense of humour kept reappearing. We chatted about the band name 'Paraphernalia', how it had been named after a Wayne Shorter track. I told Barbara it's a great name, to which she replied:

"Lots of people said it wouldn't work because it's too long to fit on the posters."

Of course, it wasn't too long, although it's full title was 'Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia'. Judging by the amount of posters printed, the venues and promoters didn't mind one bit.

I asked Barbara if all the boys in the band had behaved under her band leadership, to which she replied:

"No, they didn't," with a little chuckle.

Kim: "But, you were the boss?"

Barbara: *"I think I was."*

Kim: "So, they were naughty?"

Barbara: *"Yes, they were."*

We did laugh!

Kim: "You were very busy throughout your career."

Barbara: “Yes, always lots of albums and projects.”

Kim: “Do you have a favourite project?”

Barbara: “I liked Thompson’s Tangos.”

This was an album from 2013. Ana went on to explain that her mum decided to try to get the album cover for ‘Thompson’s Tangos’ done without the usual input from Jon. She had a dress made which was rather sassy, flamboyant and very ‘Tango’. Apparently, this was quickly vetoed by Jon who stated that it was not the right look for Barbara. A story which brought a smile to Barbara’s face. The album cover ended up with Barbara looking rather cool and sophisticated in a suit and beret.

Kim: “So, ‘Thompson’s Tangos’ was your favourite project?”

Barbara: “It was ONE of my favourites.”

The emphasis on ‘one’ communicated clearly that Barbara was not going to commit to just one project being her favourite, and quite right too.

Of course, any conversation with Barbara would not be complete without asking her about the recognition she received when she was awarded an MBE in 1996 for her services to music.

Kim: “What was it like meeting the Queen when you got your MBE. How amazing was that?”

Barbara: “She smiled at me and said how glad she was that I had played for her.”

Barbara had performed for the Queen and Royal Family back in 1986 at Windsor Castle with Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice.

To conclude the chat, I asked Barbara about an Indian restaurant I had heard Barbara and the band used to frequent sometimes after gigs. I asked her if the food was good, to which she replied, “it was average.”





An incredible life and a truly inspirational story of love, determination, passion, creativity with the focus always on music. A true pioneer for women. Yet, Barbara regards herself as a woman just drawn to jazz and the saxophone, explaining that:

“Sometimes you see something new and it’s like a curtain is lifted, a whole world is revealed.”

This will no doubt resonate with all musicians who find their way to an instrument and style of music that opens up endless possibilities. Barbara has demonstrated remarkable drive and resilience throughout her life and career together with a great sense of humour. **Even now she loves nothing more than sharing her knowledge, stories and passion, yet she remains incredibly humble.** I, for one, want to express my sincere thanks to Barbara for her music and leading the way for others to fulfil their own dreams.

**“Without music, there is a chance I might give up.
Music is my passion and my motivation.”**

Barbara’s passion for music is still shining as brightly as ever and there is nothing more inspiring than that. She is a true everlasting flame.

My thanks to Barbara’s daughter Ana Gracey for this incredible opportunity (and for providing me with a lovely lunch and a huge goodie bag of CD’s and DVD’s!)

Links:

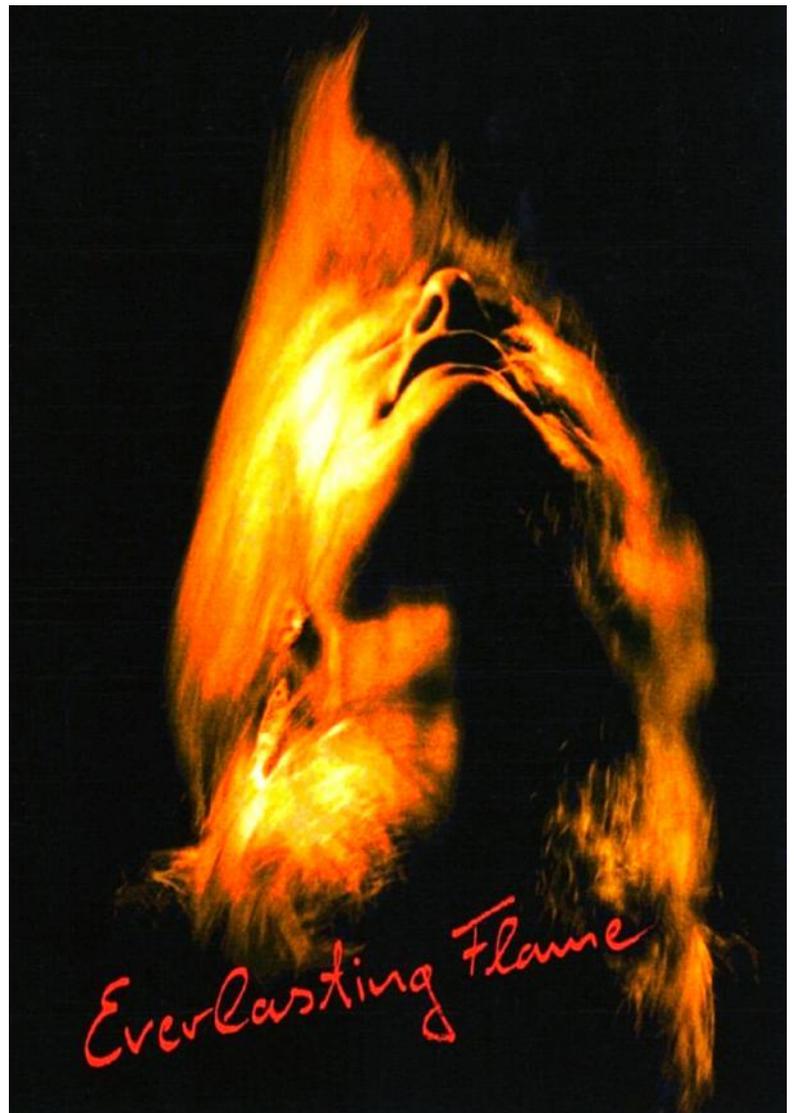
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Temple Music Studio

Autobiography ‘Journey to a Destination Unknown’

‘Bulletproof’ album – Paraphernalia and NYJO

Photos courtesy of Barabara Thompson and Ron Milsom





THE LET'S SITT-DWEGELLY QUINTET

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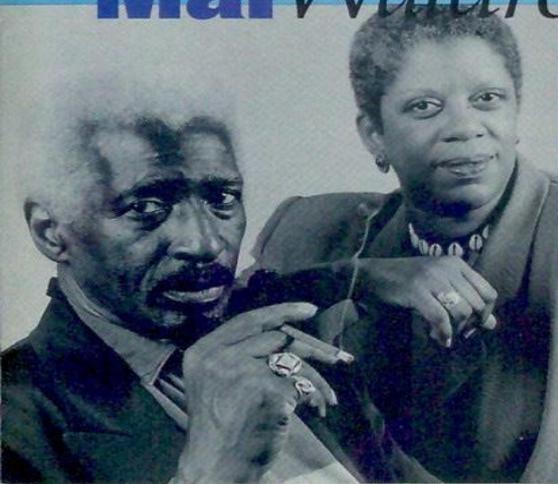
LAURA MULVA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA





Jeanne
Lee
Mal Waldron

AFTER HOURS



OWL



RAN BLAKE & JEANNE LEE
FREE STANDARDS
STOCKHOLM 1966

FRESH
SOUND
RECORDS

WOMEN
WHO INSPIRE

JEANNE LEE

BY

DIANA TORTI



DIANA TORTI

PHOTO BY

MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA



International
Women's Day

CONSPIRACY
JEANNE LEE



take a breath (chabak)
let it go (chabak)
take a breath (chabak)
let it go (chabak)
don't get scared (chabak)
that sound you heard (chabak)
and neither (chabak)
but someone (chabak)
and her children (chabak)
breakfast (chabak)
no coffee (chabak)
comparisons (chabak)
practice too (chabak)



Jeanne Lee & Ran Blake



OUR SEASON IN THE SUN

Among the many ways in which an artist can live and express their art, there is one that can be total, embracing and of great human and social involvement. If I think of an artist who embodied this vision of art and life, Jeanne Lee is among the most representative.

She was an African-American singer from New York, and a prestigious exponent of avant-garde jazz. Her singing career began in the early sixties, with an extraordinary youth collaboration with pianist Ran Blake, which led them to record their first duo album *The Newest Sound Around* in 1961. A CD that immediately represents a new way of understanding and interpret the repertoire of jazz standards and with pieces revisited in an original and unconventional way. A musical research in which they used a different language from the common way of improvising, creating suggestive intertwining of sounds and of melodic lines. They continuously recreated new relationships between text and music, between jazz language and 20th Century contemporary classical sounds, and between a strong Afro-American connotation and Western culture.

A European tour in 1963 introduced them to the old continent. Following this, she collaborated with several free jazz musicians including Archie Shepp, Mal Waldron, Marion Brown, Bob Moses, Anthony Braxton, Carla Bley, Andrew Cyrille, John Cage, Bobby McFerrin, Ursula Dudziak and Jay Clayton, to name a few. Although she was one of the most representative avant-garde jazz artists, her story has been enriched with new details and information only in recent years. Readers can now deepen their knowledge about her thanks to these resources,

also available online, which include videos, recordings, interviews and articles. All this material shows the artistic path of this extraordinary artist, who unfortunately passed away prematurely in 2000. Lee's artistic training is extensive. During the mid-1960s, she collaborated with several representatives of other art movements, developing a multidisciplinary approach to vocal improvisation that included jazz, poetry and dance.

Thanks to the relationship with her first husband the poet David Hazelton and with many sound-poetry artists, Lee experimented and confronted herself with poetry, lyrics and words. She herself affirmed that poetry was her starting point for improvisation. The world of sound-poetry became a fundamental stage in her path, because it allowed her to deepen the close connection between words and sounds. Her second husband was Gunter Hampel, a German multi-instrumentalist with whom she began a musical partnership, always marked by a strong stylistic and timbre innovation in their music.

One of the most interesting traits of Lee's career is the strong connection that she has maintained with the African-American tradition as her culture of origin. In the 1960s, the singer was totally immersed in the struggle for the Afro-Americans' civil rights movements. Unlike many other musicians involved in this struggle, the novelty she contributed is that she was: woman, black, mother and improviser. With her history and her practice, Lee proposed a series of peculiar characteristics on the scene that saw her as a leading figure in this scenario. Jazz, as we know, is a music that



Photo by Enrico Romero

was born in the male background, with a strong muscular connotation and of purely male relevance. Until then, most of the women who had carved out a space in the environment were mainly singers, who had to fit into a series of clichés linked to the image of a seductive woman and to a limited, well-defined role in the jazz world (image that nowadays has slightly improved but still struggles to break free from this stereotypical cultural cage). What this singer managed to do in an extremely natural but profound way was to recreate the image of the black jazz singer.

The first way she approached this, was her way of singing the standards, songs which in most cases were composed by white men, and which were mostly sung by black women:

“Jazz standards with lyrics, written overwhelmingly by men, often reveal male constructions of female identity, even if sometimes seemingly from the narrative position of a woman. They therefore form a culturally important and influential way in which women have been defined by others, usually by men.”

This is what Eric Lewis, professor of philosophy at the University of Santa Cruz, wrote in his splendid essay entitled: *This Ain't a Hate Thing: Jeanne Lee and the Subversion of the Jazz Standard* (Jazz & Culture Volume 1, 2018, the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois).

Through her artistry she started a change:

“While such songs often impose upon black women singers identities that they may find inappropriate, foreign, or worse still demeaning, racist, and misogynist, performance of standards also opens a possibility of subverting these externally imposed identities in subtle or overt ways.”

Now the perspective changes and black women become the subjects. This was a first fundamental step in the claim of women's own identity, not only in interpreting a standard, but also in proposing a new image of a woman. She changed also the way women started to represent their way to love, their emotional sphere and their own needs. Until now, the cultural context was predominantly dominated by men and represented by the satisfaction of their needs. This was a huge change since as Angela Y. Davis writes:

“In the context of the consolidation of industrial capitalism, the sphere of personal love and domestic life in mainstream American culture came to be increasingly idealized as the arena in which happiness was to be sought. This held a special significance for women, since love and domesticity were supposed to constitute the outermost limits of their lives. Full membership in the public community was the exclusive domain of men. Therefore, European-American popular songs have to be interpreted within this context and as contributing to patriarchal hegemony.” (Blues Legacies and Black Feminism, New York: Pantheon Books, 1998).

Starting from the duo with Blake, this transformative way of revisiting jazz standards emerges with the complicity of the pianist and a whole series of rhythmic, linguistic, dynamic tricks, deafening silences and extreme colours with which they interpret the songs, always renewed in their meaning. Her unconventional and unorthodox way of using the voice and improvising, led her to carve out a role that was not due to black women. She proposed a way of performing that was not competitive nor above the others nor against them, but of great exchange and dialogue with the other artists with whom she related. A redefinition of the image of women, therefore, but also of women in the collective.

Jeanne Lee also expresses a great sense of positivity and humanity. This can be found in the image of many of the songs she has interpreted. In most of love stories represented by some standards, Lee referred to a transformative power of love that until then was instead drawn with stories of struggle, suffering, violence and abandonment in many texts of the jazz tradition. A series of topics that now changes perspectives: women begin to talk about satisfying the needs in love stories and not about being subjected to stories. A new way of affirming that women can choose and must demand relationships in which their identity is recognized and not denied: they have the right and not only the possibility to refuse. Women active and non-passive subjects of their history and life. It was a destabilizing new image, already supported by the extraordinary Abbey Lincoln and that Lee (who saw Lincoln as a source of inspiration) continued to promote with perseverance and determination. The singer believed in a



“Lee is clothed and fed by her voice. We got a woman among us who isn’t afraid of the sound of her own voice”.

Jeanne Lee and Gunter Hampel, public domain, no credit listed.

possibility of total love among human beings and also in its transformative power. For this, she imposed it in her way of re-imagining and re-designing standards, removing and changing what this vision of her did not represent.

Another aspect that impressed me about her, was her not being afraid to be, to express and self-determine. Poet and playwright Ntozake Shange wrote a review of her performance at Soundscape in New York in 1981, stating: The artist maintained her social vision of art and her constant activism, also in her commitment as an educator and trainer, at all levels of teaching to which she has dedicated herself (in 1999 she will also publish a book on the history of jazz for children, entitled Jam! The story of jazz music. The library of African American arts and culture, Rosen Publishing Group). History Professor Eric Porter, in his splendid essay Jeanne Lee’s Voice for Critical Studies in Improvisation / Études critiques en improvisation, Vol 2, No 1 (2006), argues that Lee

“Lee conceived of a new social imaginary that was attuned to human liberation. Her vision exceeded the limitations of nation and race (and I would add gender, Ed.). It maintained an ethical and political commitment stemming from her immersion in her artistic communities, foregrounding the role that improvisation could play in building new social groups. She has maintained an ethical and political commitment deriving from her immersion in her artistic communities, highlighting the role that improvisation could play in the construction of new social groups”.

Her attitude for *“a commitment to human interactivity during the creative process that creates non-hierarchical relationships between artists and audience members and invites the audience to participate in the creation of meaning around the performance”*, would always be desirable in any creative performance. Just as should remain constant the commitment to guarantee everyone the right to be and to express themselves freely through art, without distances or differences of gender or other. Although progress has been made, the present reminds us that there is still a lot to do in this direction and that we must keep alive the attention towards this healthy, universal, and free way of meaning and living both art and the creative process.

Not only on the 8th March of each year, but today and always.



Jeanne Lee 1984 in Hamburg, Anthony Braxton





Tosie
NY

WHEN ELLA SPLIT THE SCREEN

BY CAROL LEEMING MBE

Poet, Playwright, Jazz Singer-Songwriter



Carol Leeming by Andy M Lee

Dizzy Gillespie blew his brass lily
be bop to start hip conversation
he ballooned out the bluest notes
Thelonious Monk's finger's beat
ivory hammers til it was Midnight
Both made a mood insistent as a hook

Ella shyly snapped her fingers
Dizzy jazzily crooned low
To Ella, do you do be doo
Doo you remember when...
You first swung Appollo's stage
Harlem's folks hollerin at you?

Ella laughed swung her head oh boy!
A crazy clown ready to drag me off
he about to break into crazy dancing
he had wings on broken down boots
like that stage felt hot like an iron

Fear in me squeezed my throat tight
But a jazz spirit in me spoke loud
Said be sure to touch ancient tree
make your secret prayer a song
A beloved ancestor says you've won

Ella wiped off her wig head sweat
Her white hanky flicked off drops
Heavy like forlorn blues quavers
Thelonius paused to sip on bourbon
Ella sighed a memory Mama's loss
Her stare glassy with snared tears
They fell falling sharp as cymbal splashes

Ben Webster nodded licked his lips
Hugged on his sax its slurred notes
soared into sinous black mellow lines
Ella raised her head scating higher
than Skyscrapers mocking birdsong
swooping jumping down up scales
Growls mouth twisting syllables in turns

Ella's song poured a voice of tupelo
Honey full of the coolest starlight
dulcet girly tones moving in spirals
peppered with hot husky sibliances
Ella's voice could cut like fresh limes
Bend thrill excite anyone like a twister
Her timbres thrummed like wild buffalos
till the earth began to move from its axis
Ella hollered rapturously til it thundered
Everywhere the smell of ozone bluegrass
Ben stopped Thelonious left. Dizzy sat.
Ella with no legs or feet had flown away.

We first heard Carol Leeming perform
this poem in London on our Black Lives
in Music night, as part of the London
Jazz Festivla 2021. It was an inspiration-
al performance.

A huge thank you to Carol for allowing us
to publish her poem in this magazine and
for her continued inspiration and sup-
port.

The photos of Ella Fitzgerald on the next
pages were sent to us by Yvonne Serne
who simply said 'I used to take photo's of
jazz musicians in London in the '60s'.

SAFETY FILM

KODAK









MOLLY JOHNSON:

**KICKING DOWN
THE DOOR**

**INTERVIEW BY
FIONA ROSS**







Molly Johnson...I have long been a huge admirer of this incredible artist and when preparing to interview her, I was in an impossible situation. Where do I start? This is an artist that has been achieving great things since she was a small child. At fifteen, she led a disco band called 'A Chocolate Affair', followed by a 'funky art rock' band Alta Moda, which then became the famous 'Infidels' and at the same time developing her career as a jazz singer and then some. Fast forward a few years, Molly Johnson is a Juno award winning artist with nine albums who was also awarded the Officer of The Order of Canada in 2008 for her inspirational philanthropic work. She launched the Kensington Market Jazz Festival in 2016, which brings life and opportunities to over 400 local Canadian musicians every year. She is considered a Canadian national treasure and understandably so.

When Ashaine White spoke to Celine Peterson about inspirational black women, Celine said this of Molly Johnson:

'she doesn't just talk about knocking down the door - she kicks it in'

Further research through past interviews of Molly, show that she is described as **'the fiery local treasure'** and is quoted as saying this to a group of young male musicians **'I'm just always going to be way fucking meaner and harder ass than you. And a little bit smarter.'** I love this woman.

Reading through her website, what struck me immediately was the description - award-winning jazz vocalist Molly Johnson is a mother, singer-songwriter, artist and philanthropist. What stood out? Mother. Mother is first. Of all the descriptions I have read - all genders - I have never seen mother and certainly not as the first point. Molly has been described as **'a Mom with a mission'**, so I thought this might be a good place to start our interview. I asked her if placing Mother at the start of her description was deliberate.

MJ: *Pretty much everything I do is deliberate.*

Motherhood was, is still, though they're lovely big boys now, but you know the biggest job, it's the biggest show. I definitely showed up with you know, leaky breasts and children that wouldn't take a bottle and I'm a mother who was such a feminist.

I did, you know like the notion of, I've waited this long to have kids, I should try and stay home and raise them, so I said no a lot. A lot. I did not drag my kids around and I kept them pretty sheltered from a lot of that, though they learned pretty quickly who was a fan and who was a friend right on the street. I would take them to enough shows that they would understand what these people were babbling at me about in supermarkets and on street corners and of course I introduced them to a lot of art in many forms and my musician friends the creating part of my music friends and family lives of my musician friends. It was that culture they grew up in. Both of them play the piano and read music and sing beautifully, of course every mother says that...

You have two boys?

Yes, and challenging to raise feminists, that was the goal and that took a lot of work and still on-going but a real joy and an honour privilege to be able to raise young men. It's an interesting thing that I'm seeing, a lot of young women, single, don't want to do that and it's not a horrible thing anymore, it's not a conversation stopper, it's just that persons wishes. It's an exciting time to see young women in a position where they can make those choices and for me that's what pro-choice was always about! Your privilege to choose what's right for you and you're in control of your stuff.

So, you didn't stop completely when you first had your boys?

I had a band and that's with the same guys for 20 odd years now, and you know we always worked around the kids. We'd literally leave for France on that 7:00 PM flights, arriving in Paris at 7:00 AM and hit the ground running. I would do press all day and then we do a show and then Saturday we travelled somewhere else and do a show and then Sunday we get back to the airport and be home kind of Monday evening...so actually only missing one day of school, so ok but exhausting....

This is one of the many things I hugely admire about you. Your energy and determination. You're clearly an energetic person but still... how did you do it?

Yes, it was insane. We didn't make any money because who had time to write a grant application?!! We just made it work over a good solid twelve years with that kind of rigour. I managed to, you know, keep my foot in the door in France and I don't know if you've heard but the French are many, many, different things with many, many layers and they do love their artists. They don't discredit you as you age, in fact, like their wine, it's better! It's ingrained into their culture it's very different from us here in Canada.

Age is a topic that has been coming up a lot lately...a lot. Women let's say, over the age of 40, are feeling that they're not young enough, they're not pretty enough and you don't see them on front covers. I've never really thought about that globally so it's interesting that you mention France and having experienced that positivity there.

*Yes, France is a bit of an exception in terms of ageing. I'm 62 in April and you know I've been in the business since I was, well, I don't know how far back... I did my first job when I was in diapers, so you know it's a solid 40 years of transitioning and pivoting and growing and ageing and consistently making records. Well, consistently with the exception of the Billie Holiday record which I really made as a **** you alright, here's the ****ing thing.*

Ok, I digress, but I'm sensing there's a story there...

*Well, such a racist world we live in... we're getting so much better at it but it's still a thing you know? When I was brown skin girl in a rock band and a brown skin girl in a punk band it was like, but I never fit in and annoyingly it wasn't until I started singing what people expect black girls to sing that I got some attention. 'Oh, you look just like Billie, you sound just like Billie, you're just like Billie'.... will actually **** ***, I'm nothing like Billie. I know exactly who my father was, I lived an insanely privileged life and this is because of Billie Holiday. I am nothing like that girl and for people to say that shows real ignorance.*

It was my hope that journalists would ask me why I needed that album and then I could say that because Billie Holiday was in the midst of her civil rights, it was before Dr King, my parents marched with Dr King, they went to the United States of America and marched but I am a very privileged Canadian and my parents were deeply involved so I could have these privileges. I'm not a heroin addict or an alcoholic... I hold honour to my path and not only did I hope that people would ask me that question, which by the way they didn't and that record kind of went unnoticed, but I went on a very deep dive to find out where Billie Holiday's copyrights lived.

It cost me some money and a long time...she had no family, she had nobody. She didn't write a lot, but it turns out it was at Casablanca Records. What I tried to do was turn that record - and everybody that year who was performing Billy live or radio stations - all the royalties on those particular copyrights, on her birthday anniversary, would go to the Boys and Girls clubs of North America. It was insanely difficult. But



here's the thing why did I choose that charity? I looked very deeply into all the different things that I could attach this to and what I liked about boys and girls clubs is, it's an after-school programme for kids after school. As parents, we know after school hours are the most dangerous hours so for kids to have a place to go, where they can work and play, do their homework, all kinds of good things... there's no religious affiliation and it's a child charity and Billie Holiday had no childhood.

Where would she have had any? It was important for me to find the right charity and I mean that's still ongoing so if anybody buys that Billie Holiday record of mine, that automatically happens.

I'm really not a famous person you know, and I could have been a lot more famous but it's really a poisonous world and I'd seen it up close as a kid and I understood where fame comes into the whole shenanigans you know? How much of it you need to keep doing what you love - which is song writing - and what can you do with all the extra golden light around you, that keeps getting put on you.

Well, talking about things that are golden...Celine Peterson. I am very grateful for all of her support and inspiration and in fact, she is the one that helped organise this interview. I know you have both been working together for quite some time, but can you tell me how that relationship developed?

Well I've known Celine from a distance since she was a toddler, which is 30 years because she's the daughter of the late great Oscar Peterson. Oscar had an insane sense of humour; a real practical joker and you know you can't play like that and not have a sense of humour! You know the very first time I opened for Oscar Peterson I literally called Roy Thompson Hall and asked if he had an opening act... they said no, and I said do you think he wants one? I said can you call him



CELINE PETERSON BY TRACEY NOLAN

and ask him? So, they gave me 10 minutes or something awful like that and I left at the chance because Ray Brown was the bass player. Ray was late, didn't come to sound check and I was standing at the side of the stage and I hear a voice behind me go you little idioms Plymouth tonight, what song you gonna do? Mean to Me. What key? I don't know, C? He says 'the last time I played that song it was with Ella Fitzgerald'. Then I heard them announce 'ladies and gentlemen, Molly Johnson' and I have to walk out there... nothing of any worth came out of my mouth... and I think Oscar had a real kick out of watching me.

Celine is everything you think she is. It's not easy being the child of a famous person and I know a couple of kids who are children of famous people and sharing your parent with the world, especially when they die, it's hard, it's really hard.

Molly was the driving force behind the creation of the Kensington Market Jazz Festival in 2016. An incredible event that showcases hundreds of musicians from the Toronto jazz scene, in over twenty-five venues. Molly has always been driven to support the community and with an incredible team, including producer Celine Peterson, it is no wonder it is such a huge success.



Celine wandered in, thank God, maybe the end of year one and boy did we need her! but I was doing this insane thing, completely under prepared, man it was like New Orleans without the guns... Celine came in and we didn't let her leave. She works on my social media for me because I really hate all that stuff, I don't like listening to people's opinions, I just don't care. I am a news junkie - I watch PBS, BBC, I love BBC, I love the European newscasts, love the different sides and I like to hear the arguments spun a bunch of different ways. I have even been known to listen to Fox and well, it's important to know your enemies... but I don't dig into the crazy.

I know this seems like an obvious question but I genuinely want to know what you will say... This article will go out on international Women's Day and I'd like to ask you what is your message to the women out there who are reading this article?

Well, equal pay. We all need to fight, stand together, back each other up wherever you work. Equal pay for equal work. This will be a game changer.

Molly Johnson Website

Celine Peterson Website

Kensington Market Jazz Festival website

'Because of Billie' Album





AUBREY LOGAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LILLY LILOVA







JAZZ HER'S IN CHINA:
PART OF HER'S,
PART OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

BY
JIAOWEI HU

The jazz feminism is a part of feminism. So is it in China.

Black Feminism and White Feminism have long formed the main two theoretical perspectives of feminism. The former is often associated with a racism background, and the latter never walks away from anti-objectification. On the other side of the cultural fault line, the Asian Feminism has been studied in a rather finite approach, mostly conducted by Asian-American scholars who had more or less been through cultural conflicts given their ethnic and immigrant backgrounds on a foreign land. So, why isn't the Asian Feminism equally radical in theory or practice?

The Chinese have long been family-oriented based on group goals since time immemorial. Therefore, the influence of family is also recognizable in the performance of Chinese women in the jazz industry.

It's undeniable that jazz in China is also overall male dominated. The good news is that a growing number of young women musicians and practitioners are in recent years stepping forth from a considerably small population group. There may be several reasons for the current imbalance.

First, the domestic jazz industry is still at its primary stage of development, with a late start, a weak basis and a narrow coverage, which has resulted in a quite small group of participants including performers, managers and supporters. Incomplete figures suggest that less than 50 jazz musicians have released albums in their own names in the last decade, only one fifth of them are women. However, the contemporary domestic jazz scene is more of a recent development aged two decades from scratch, and the relatively small sample size may not meet the requirement of formal studies. Somehow, a more gender-diverse group of jazz musicians in China is to be expected.

Second, the parental will supported by the Confucian culture. Chinese parents usually adhere to a more conservative and strict manner with daughters, with a palpable desire for protection. Stability is a primary factor in consideration when parents intend to exert their influence on the next generations' career choices, especially the girls'.

Jazz performance is a risky career to pursue, given its high social exposure and difficult career planning. To be exact, the later even calls for early and long-term investments often since childhood, elder parents' lack of knowledge of the music genre, the weak occupational stability and so forth. Therefore, jazz performance has become more of an inviting hobby option over a potential serious career choice.

Under a social atmosphere that folks value classic music, respect Chinese folk music and despise popular music, jazz is no more than a part of the "entertaining music". The public awareness of jazz and modern music education has long been absent, leading to the status quo that even fewer female musicians are engaged.

Third, the perplexing stereotype of "instrumental gender". At present, most Chinese female jazz musicians are concentrated in vocal and keyboard-type instruments performances. The essential idea of the "instrumental gender" is that men are capable of almost all instruments (including vocal performance), especially for guitar, bass, horns, percussion and other instruments that are believed to be "masculine", while women are more suitable for vocal, piano, violin, cello, flute, etc.. In addition, several music conservatories' jazz department enrollment statistics have also proved how deeply ingrained "instrumental gender" is.

On the other hand, the "instrumental gender" also deepened due to the genre-to-genre diversion and genre-d instrumental-relevant stereotype. As a matter of fact, most Chinese jazz musicians followed a pretty late amateur or professional jazz training in their late teens. While many male performers' interest in jazz moved from some more traditionally powerful styles of music such as rock and metal, the female tend to pursue their jazz profession with a classical music background and many of them learned piano since childhood. Consequently, guitar, drums and bass have gained a wide audience in the male group, while female seem to be more attached to piano which requires a higher financial investment and time cost parentally and personally. Some male musicians explained that about a decade ago they had to apply for the jazz major with very little knowledge of the genre for there isn't a "rock major", before they accidentally fell in love with jazz.

Musicians' stochastic "first genres" have a distinct impact on the instruments they chose to professionalize, as well as how they approach the jazz music. The domino effect has further contributed to the gender division in the domestic jazz scene.

However, my survey has revealed that female jazz musicians generally hold the opinion that the Chinese jazz community provides a fair playing field for the competitive. They denied any experiences of sexual harassment or gender discrimination in education or job employment within the jazz industry, such as unequal pay for equal work, disrespect and objectification.

Somehow appearance anxiety and pregnancy shame have been reported out of the jazz community. Some female musician has reflected rejections and even a concert contract termination case with some symphony orchestra while she was at the early stage of pregnancy.

The recent Chinese female jazz musicians' archetype narrates their advanced education, cross-cultural and overseas education, professional qualities, social competence and a well-off family background. Most of them reside and pursue their career dreams in China's first and second-tier cities. Yet, confronted with the demanding public expectations of "perfect ladies", their elite attributes have only further hindered and confused their self-identification.

Exceptional Chinese women have also been spotted backstage. Actually, the female talents have shown a higher labour force participation rate in the project personnel of jazz clubs, affiliated cultural organizations and other relevant institutes. Most of them are highly trusted and recognized with years of expertise and experiences. Over the years, an all-female marketing & PR team has made great contributions to Blue Note Beijing and Blue Note Shanghai's operation, especially to the two clubs' survival through the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In the post-epidemic era, they continue to ensure a smooth transition of the venues.

In fact, feminism in China has long been involved with the collective confusions and conflicts which are triggered by the accelerating social mobility and integration over rights recognition.

After all, reflections on the escalating situation can barely get away from the collisions of old and new eras, modern and traditional concepts, as well as urban civilization and rural culture in the process of China's rapid urbanization. As the feminist issue has snowballed into a conundrum growing from the chaos of culture, politics, economy, ethics (continuity of species in particular) and so on, the jazz feminist issue is but a microcosm of the whole, especially in the incessantly expanding urban society.

Likewise, to China or the rest of the world, the Jazz "HER" can never be disassociated from the "HER's". Nor can China's "HER" be researched as an exception from the whole world's "HER's".

(This article is excerpted, translated and re-edited from a column article titled "Jazz HER's in China: Same with the West?", previously published by Blue Note China's WeChat Journal on March 8th, 2021.)



DANA GILLESPIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY









I'M HEADED TO

Y3-2022

Est. 2019

THE WOODSHED NETWORK

Connecting Women in Jazz

February 21 - March 4, 2022

RECORD CAN
BE PLAYED ON
ALL
STEREO
PLAYERS

PROMOTION COPY
NOT
FOR
SALE

The Woodshed Network is a truly ground-breaking organisation providing invaluable support for women in jazz and something we have been wanting and needing since jazz began. With Dee Dee Bridgewater and Tulani Bridgewater Kowalski at the helm it is everything and more than you would expect it to be. The programme has been created and designed to specifically support women in jazz with a truly holistic approach, providing much needed support in areas where there has quite simply been none. Women have needed this for a long time. Their goal is:

‘to shift the culture and environment towards one that embraces, celebrates and supports women, who have and continue to contribute so much to this unique art form’

This year’s programme is something dreams are made of with sessions including:

A Round Table Discussion about being true to your artistry, even when it means breaking the mould: Q&A with Dee Dee Bridgewater, Regina Carter and Jazzmeia Horn

She Raised Her Voice! 50 Black Women Who Sang Their Way Into Music History: A presentation and conversation with author/music journalist Jordan-nah Elizabeth with Lara Pelligrini

The Importance of Grants, Community Support, and Philanthropy

Women’s Health: Mind Who Am I? Conversation about mental health, wellness and creating pathways to success, while maintaining sanity

The Business of Music

Public Relations & Publicity

The Recording Process from Start to Finish

and more.

I often mention how honoured and privileged I am to speak to so many inspirational women and I do wonder if I use the word inspirational too much. I always reflect on this, my use of words and trying my hardest to ensure I use the right ones. I get excited when I speak to inspirational people – but then, don't we all? How can you not get excited when you see and hear people trying to make the world a better place? The answer to myself for this article is that inspirational is absolutely the right word and for the purpose of this article and speaking to Tulani Bridgewater, I am going to add in magnificent. What an absolute honour and thrill to speak to this incredible woman. We will hear more from Tulani in our next magazine, but for now our focus is The WoodShed Network.

FR: It's only been a few years but what you have achieved in such a short amount of time is just amazing! I imagine discussions about the need for something like this have been a topic for many years for you. But could you talk me through how it went from ideas, to yes, ok, we are actually going to do this?

TBK: *Absolutely! Dee Dee and I have worked together since 99 and I had worked in management previously - in film and television - but you know over the course of her career, she kept being asked to do all these master classes as part of her performances. Then she started participating in the Kennedy Centre's Jazz Ahead programme and most times she would find she was the only woman and whenever I was doing anything, I was the only woman, or one of very few. So, we had experienced that a lot and also a lot of women in entertainment, music and jazz in particular, have had the same. During the Jazz Ahead programme, I think it was in 2017 or 2016 she was, again, the only woman and what she was noticing is that a lot of the questions she was getting asked were related to the business and also the challenges that the participants were facing and you know, no discredit to the Kennedy centre because they have wonderful leadership, but they couldn't really respond, the programme wasn't set up for that, so she was having to do it on her own time.*

I've had a variety of clients over the years and I kept finding that a lot of the labels would send me people and they would be deemed 'difficult'. Well, it wasn't that they were 'difficult', and all the 'difficult' clients were always female clients... but they weren't supported, and they didn't have a way to communicate or get things done. Dee Dee was given the Doris Duke Artist Award and we were in New York and there was a lot of paperwork...a lot...and it was funny as we were in the conference room and it was us and there were two of the other recipients. As they were explaining the paperwork that you have to fill in, the woman who was sitting next to us didn't know how to do some of these things and so I'm like, okay, well, these are the things you need to know about, getting insurance and these are kinds of documents and you're going to probably need to find this etc... and what we didn't realise, is that the ladies, the administrators, on the other side of the table were watching us.... so, we're talking her through it all and you know people have this misconception that you have to have like, a big brain for the business aspect, you just have to have information and the resources. So, later we were asked to go to lunch and the Doris Duke Rep said what would you guys think about doing an educational programme?

That sings to my heart! Over the course of my career, I've been an intern and I've had many interns and it made all the difference for me but it doesn't really exist on the performance side, it's very, very rare and I'm convinced that's part of why managers exist.

FR: I can't begin to explain how much this is needed. Women talk about it all the time, the support that is needed in so many areas, it's just not there. Marketing and promotion, copyright, artistry right through to wellbeing, it can be such a struggle for artists. To find partners that were not only willing to discuss it but to actually put money to it, is incredible.



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ARRANG

TBK: Yes, I'm like, oh you're serious? They said they are really serious about this; we really want you to do this and we are willing to put money behind it and we believe we have found a great partner for you (651 Arts). That was serendipitous and beautiful. Betty Carter and the New York connection...that's wonderful and obviously I'm glossing over a lot of steps that happened and a lot of people contributed a lot of labour to make all of that happen.



FR: And oh, my goodness, the women you have involved?! Inspirational doesn't even begin to cover it. I digress slightly, but I have this all the time with the work that we do, people sounding surprised that we have 'found' all these women but I always say, they have always been there, you just haven't been looking or you haven't noticed. I mean it's not hard.

TBK: Oh yes, they are treated like unicorns... unicorns! I've got herds and herds and herds of unicorns!

FR: How did you go about getting these unicorns on board?

TBK: I think it's very funny because Dee Dee's stage persona is very flamboyant, and you know - she's very big - but we are actually pretty cautious people and we want to make sure that we do things correctly. So, we wanted to do a pilot because we didn't know if there's was really a need and if we're equipped to do this properly. Dee Dee and I talked and she's knows a lot of young female musicians so we thought we just do it by invitation because she trusts them and knew they'd be honest, they'll say if it's not working or if it's not right. The first year was magical. We had Sheila Jordan came in, Terri Lyne, Maxine Gordon, Alisse Kingsley who works with Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter and of course Dee Dee... I mean **we had a delicious buffet of women who just came.**



The other thing is that part of the mission is that we believe that all women's labour should be compensated, and we believe that everything should be transparent, so right in the invitation letter, everyone gets an honorarium, everyone knows, and we all get the same.

We had this wonderful cohort of women mentees and mentors and an incredible experience and at the end of it now, I will say, it's exhausting! I'm forcing them to drink from a fire hose... but I feel that it's my obligation to give them every tool possible so that they at least know the questions to ask you know? That they will know what to ask or they'll know who to ask and the other thing that's really instrumental is all of the mentors have made themselves available to the mentees. They've all stayed in touch - they pick up the phone, they send a text message or an email to someone who mentored them. I think it shows that people want to give, they want to be generous and if given the opportunity, they will.

We all love jazz. We want jazz to be healthy. We want the business to be healthy and hasn't been for so long. We are in a symbiotic relationship and if one part of it is sick, we're all sick so that's that comes down to equity, comes down the horrible buzz words that people are so sick of hearing like inclusion and diversity and intersectionality. And I'm so sorry but, yes, we actually really do have to make that important so that it's not even about it being second nature, it's just our nature.

I think that one of the one of the unfortunate things is that we have this incredible music and we always talk about the democracy of the music, once you're on the stage but if you can't get on the stage...

FR: This is something that I find all the time, the irony of jazz or what jazz represents, what it means to us all, looking at how it's actually the opposite behind the scenes ... that beautiful diversity and we can do what we want, be who you want, say you we want but actually that's not the case at all.

TBK: *I throw myself into this because none of us are completely absolved of participation of this. We are used to it, it's what we know, we're comfortable with, it's just what is and so if you don't start questioning that, you can't change it.*

FR: One of the most powerful things I have found since starting Women in Jazz Media, is **the power of a female collective.**

The inspiration and we all feed off each other, it's an incredible thing, so it doesn't surprise when you're saying your mentors and mentees are together being part of that community, beyond the workshops. Women need this, this type of support. All those things include is exactly what women need and I hear this all the time you and in fact I'd say every couple of days, someone will contact me and I would say 100% of the time when I speak to women the first thing they say is I feel unsupported, I'm my own...I've been out here doing my thing and I've worked really hard but I'm not getting gigs or I can't get any press and the business side of things. Where do you go? Where is that community? Honestly, the work you do is incredible and so needed.

TBK: *It is such both a relief and so gratifying to hear because, and I think that you can probably relate to this, I'm just doing it and I think that my mindset is, here's a problem, how do I solve it? Ok, let me solve it and I'm so engaged with that that I don't really have a bigger sense of the impact that it has, I mean I'm starting to understand a little bit better now that we have two years behind us.*

We had a mentee from last year and now she's phenomenal, a phenomenal musician. She came and did a presentation and wanted to show exactly what she lifted from the programme and how she implemented it. She was incredible, I mean it was like a deck that someone would put together to try and get investors for a business, amazing. She was like here's where I succeeded, here's where I stumbled, this is why I stumbled and so now I know. It's that kind of cautionary tale of I focused too much on this at the detriment of this but it's okay because I see that so now it's a lesson. I guess what I'm saying is, it's shifted the way that we are allowing them to think about themselves differently.

FR: As women, we don't allow ourselves enough space for that reflective practise, to actually say, you know what sometimes we're going to get it wrong.



DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER
PHOTO BY HERNAN RODRIGUEZ



©HERNANRODRIGUEZ

FR: Sometimes we're going to try this and it's not going to work out but recognising that is a strength, recognising that journey. It's so amazing that you promote this – and it is rare.

TBK: We have a kind of radical honesty and transparency policy throughout and so part of what I tell the mentees is that you don't have to show up here any other way than how you are. I don't care if you're eating on the screen. I don't care if your hair looks crazy. I don't care, it's fine, that's not what's important. What is important is that you're actually here. That's already a commitment.

Why does someone have to overachieve in order to be able to be seen? I just don't want to exist in that world anymore. I have two kids, a son and a daughter and I can see what's happening to my teenage daughter, just barely a teenager, the pressure that she's putting on herself and my son, who's older, is he doesn't have those concerns -it's not his fault. It's the conditions that exist that perpetuate this insanity and it's not sustainable because look, we are all breaking. It doesn't work for anybody. So, I think we try to come from a place of incredible respect and also acknowledgement of the fact that we're all individual people and we're all equally valid and valuable and that we don't have to exist in one particular way in order to be successful or to feel fulfilled and also redefining what is success.

I am really happy that the mentees have come back and they understand that success is not a destination, it's just not, it can't be. I tried this, I did horribly at it, but I tried this and that's

amazing, that's an achievement. I tried this and I succeeded, that's a bonus! So, we're just trying to change how we think about ourselves and our effort because we have this one very short period of time on this planet and to be steeped in misery, it's not a great foundation for creation. What is success without joy? It's nothing and you know bankruptcy exists in all forms not just monetary so I want them to avoid as much as possible so that they can make new mistakes, they can have new adventures and new experiences and not have to have the ones that I had in my mother. Let's go someplace else. The music is better for it. The music business is better for it.

I am so very grateful for Tulani's time and it was beyond a pleasure for me to speak to a real-life unicorn.

On a serious note, we all of course, know of the inspirational work of Dee Dee Bridgewater, who has been leading the way for many of us for years. It is of no surprise that her two daughters China Moses and Tulani Bridgewater Kowalski are also inspirational, fabulously fierce women, leading their own way while also paving the way for others. In our next magazine, we will be talking to Tulani about her incredible career in music management, rebuilding the talent department of Nickelodeon, running daily operations at DDB productions, DDB Records and her management firm Bridgewater Artist Management. We may also mention onesies...



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February 21 - March 4, 2022

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MICA PARIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TATIANA GORILOVSKY









Fausta Joly a.k.a. Joly Licks is a poet, writer, performer, curator - spreading the word that "Creativity is a Guarantee of Sanity!" Since October 2018, she has been developing events to showcase multi-discipline artists and to ignite joy amongst audiences; from Canada to Sweden, Hong Kong to Berlin.

Joly Licks partnered with us this year to put your voices to the test. We created a poetry competition - Words of Celebration to bring you poetry celebrating female leaders of jazz - on and off the stage. Thank you so much to all that responded!

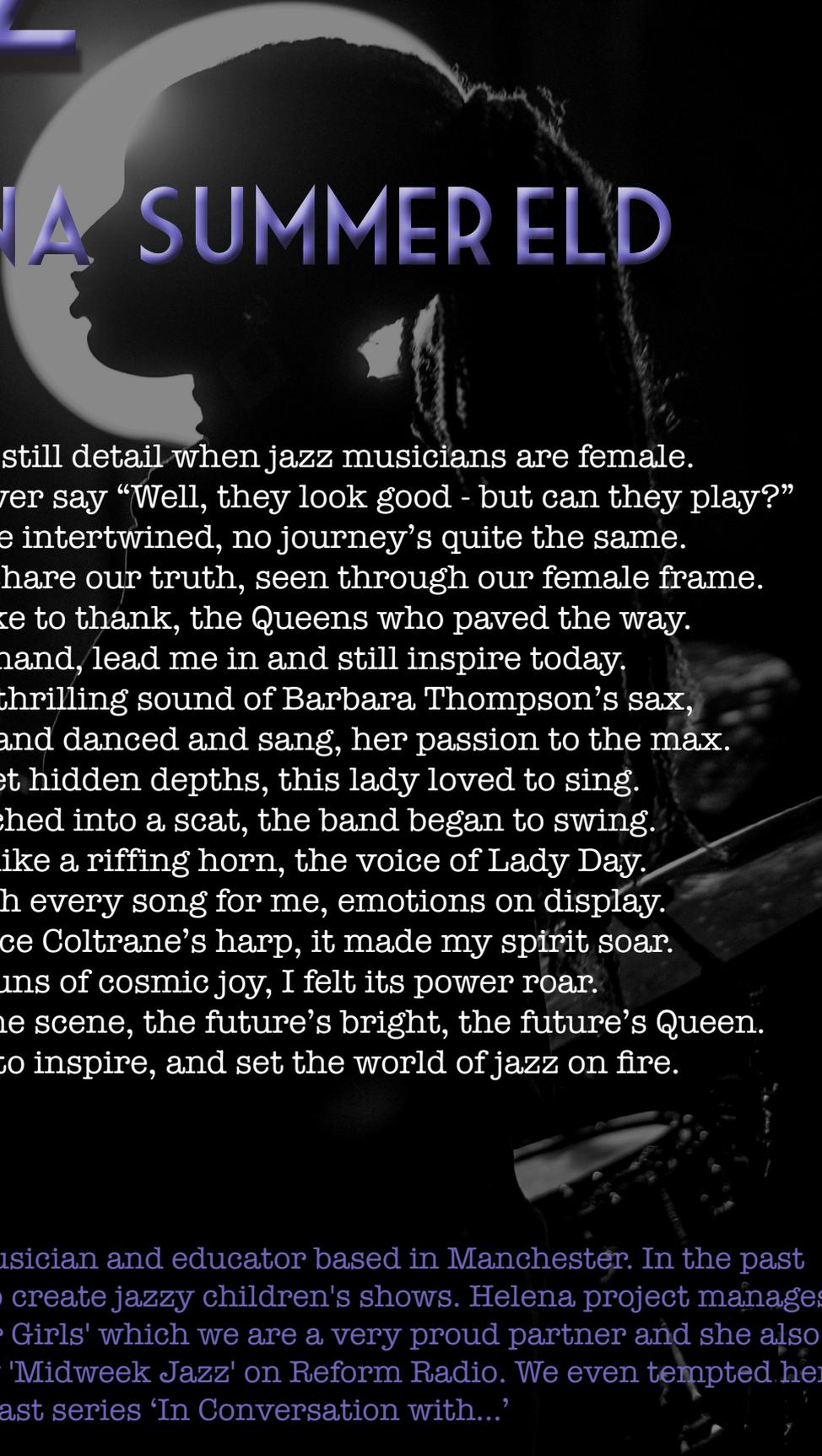
We went with two poems, that I hope you will agree, rouse the true spirit of Women in Jazz and hope you enjoy on International Women's Day, March 8th





WOMEN IN JAZZ

BY HELENA SUMMERELD



It irks me that we still detail when jazz musicians are female.
An all-male band, we never say “Well, they look good - but can they play?”
Yet life and art are intertwined, no journey’s quite the same.
When we perform we share our truth, seen through our female frame.
So as I write I’d like to thank, the Queens who paved the way.
Who took my hand, lead me in and still inspire today.
At first it was the thrilling sound of Barbara Thompson’s sax,
The way it swooped and danced and sang, her passion to the max.
A girlish lilt, yet hidden depths, this lady loved to sing.
When Ella launched into a scat, the band began to swing.
With phrasing like a riffing horn, the voice of Lady Day.
She lived through every song for me, emotions on display.
When I heard Alice Coltrane’s harp, it made my spirit soar.
Cascading runs of cosmic joy, I felt its power roar.
And now as I survey the scene, the future’s bright, the future’s Queen.
So many women to inspire, and set the world of jazz on fire.

Helena Summerfield is a musician and educator based in Manchester. In the past her poetry has been used to create jazzy children's shows. Helena project manages Jazz North's 'Jazz Camp for Girls' which we are a very proud partner and she also hosts a monthly radio show 'Midweek Jazz' on Reform Radio. We even tempted her as a guest host for our podcast series 'In Conversation with...'

STORMY WEATHER

BY A.G.PARKER

It's a Janis Joplin kind of sundown;
hot red
slammed and dragged
through the deepest blues and
Her voice streaks the sky -
a universal note of harmony
and discord all at once. Never diminished. Someone
untethered the vocal cords of God when they let her sing. Now

God's voice is passed around like a blunt backstage,
Joplin to Franklin,
Etta, Simone. They're so high it's a wonder anyone remembers
their own legs, but
eventually, Amanda Fucking Palmer swaggers up to the bar,
orders a bottle of sang de règles
to bring them back to earth. Instead,

waylaid, a piano lures her fingers in. She
takes a swig. Crimson dribbling down her chin,
her mouth spills,
You worship the sun...
aching for change...
Enraged, a smoke-plumed Mitchell spits, Darn right!
In flames our prophet witches / Be polite.
She flicks the ash, a pyre
ignites.

They're
exchanging visions,
laying arms to waste in the dust for justice,
and just as the desert submits, I
slip
through the universe, fall
at their feet.

I'm in deep with the goddess!

I boldly proclaim,
Turned Her eye onto me hoping in vain
for peace and a respite from all of this pain. I tried
sleeping with a sword in between us,
She rolled right over, said forget Jesus, and rode that gilded hilt
til it fused with Her body, became
a holy slayer of men,
declared that I embody love, kissed me, then,
like a tsunami hurling jetsam against the sand, left me.

She is
waves seducing land
into entropy, mountains shuddering
with tremblings of ecstasy, and Her blood
is filled with more hope and power
than the mere breath of a church-bound god who cowers at
empowered women. It

must have been moonglow,
that led me to you, and with love in view, if
dreams come true, I'll keep on listening to
lady as she
sings the blues.

The women grinned.
We're creatures of the wind, Nina sings,
and wild is the wind,
so wild is the wind!
Their manmade heavens are cracking! It's time
to send their false gods packing. Let the lies
and those who loudly idolise that plastic prize rot
in church. Step
outside. Make the world your shrine.



George Parker (A. G. Parker) is a queer, disabled London-based author, editor, and Best of the Net nominated poet. They host A. G. Parker's Cabinet of Curiosities, an inclusive podcast focused on queer, disabled, and marginalised stories, poetry, and art. They co-host Rebel Riot Poetry (alongside Charlotte Lunn), ensuring there's an inclusive, online poetry night with featured acts and an open mic for those who would otherwise be unable to attend.

ZOE RAHMAN





PHOTOGRAPHY BY ILZE KITSHOFF

ZOE RAHMAN:

WHERE WORLDS MEET

BY WENDY KIRKLAND

Congratulations on winning the Ivor's Academy Impact awards! How have things changed for you since then?

It was amazing to be given that honour which came completely unexpectedly; this year is twenty years since my first album, although I had been writing before that. It was nice to get that recognition. Especially after the last 2 years we've had - it's just been hard for everybody. Before the pandemic hit, I had written a whole album's worth of music. The Ivors said several lovely things that I can't say about myself; that I am a world class composer, that my music has value and has had an impact on a new generation of musicians, so I've been able to approach promoters in new ways as a result and a wider audience have discovered my music.

What are your plans for the near future?

Last week I had a rehearsal and then a concert in Liverpool with my brother Idris on clarinet and a singer Sohini Alam, a British Bangladeshi singer who I have known for 14 years but never done a gig with. I've been learning a lot of Bengali music recently - a lot of work but hopefully that will develop as a touring project. Also, there's a sitar player and vocalist called Debipriya Sircar who I'm playing with in Birmingham on 25th June as part of a celebration of 50 years of Bangladesh Independence. My brother and I made an album in 2008 called 'Where Rivers Meet' - it was all Bengali music so I think maybe we'll make a Part 2 - I feel we really need to revisit that.

I've got arrangements of my compositions for ten-piece ensemble and seven-piece band, and I have music for my trio as well so I have all these different projects to choose from!

I'm playing at Cheltenham Jazz Festival with a quintet featuring Byron Wallen on trumpet, Rowland Sutherland on flute, Cheryl Alleyne on drums and Flo Moore on bass - they're all amazing musicians. Yesterday I rehearsed with the rhythm section - my music's not that straightforward but Cheryl and Flo completely understand all the rhythmic twists and turns. I seem to be doing a lot of work for individual gigs, hopefully next year I can revisit all of this music and turn the one-offs into tours!

Juggling work and children is always a challenge for women musicians who are mothers. How do you manage your workload?

It's challenging! The day I was in Liverpool for a lunchtime gig, my partner, who is a musician, was also playing in Liverpool that evening - we always have to negotiate who's looking after the kids while we're both away. It's quite stressful! Often, my music is last on the list of things I think about; the main thing is who is doing the babysitting or how are my kids going to get to school that day; doing everything that needs to be done for the children is a priority.

Being able to practise the piano and write music is extremely hard when my children want attention and they want to get involved, or they want something to eat (which is always!); both my children are musical which is great, my son plays drums, so we play together. If he's involved, I am allowed to play the piano! My daughter will come and sit on my lap when I am practising - the other day I was practising for Courtney Pine's latest album, so I had to practise Courtney's music up an octave in the right hand, down an octave in the left, with my daughter playing Old McDonald in the middle!



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ILZE KITSHOFF



I remember writing music for a theatre show called *Charlie and Stan*, (with Told By An Idiot Theatre Company) about Stan Laurel and Charlie Chaplin and I was playing and writing some ragtime and blues and recording myself to get some ideas over to the director. As well as my playing, the director could hear my kids screaming and CBeebies blaring out in the background! So yes, that's how it is really.

Are you doing anything special for International Women's Day, 8th March?

Yes - I'm rehearsing with the amazing piano player Nikki Yeoh for our concert at the Steinway Two Piano Festival at Pizza Express, Soho on 18th March. We were set to play this concert two years ago to the day. We rehearsed a couple of days before and then the gig was cancelled because of lockdown. It means so much to me to say we are finally going to be doing that concert. I've always loved Nikki's playing and her music. She's a big inspiration.

I also just did a gig at the wonderful National Jazz Archive in the City of Southend-on-Sea as part of their International Women's Day celebrations.

Do you think the music press have any preferences to the type of musician they choose to promote over others?

Yes! I've talked about it recently in a chapter entitled 'The Outsider' in David Burke's book *Giant Steps*. I do go into detail about my life as a jazz musician and just the whole setup of the music industry.

It has not been an easy path for me in the past 20 years, particularly as a female jazz composer and instrumentalist, I'm just sorry this is part of the discussion we're having today. I think that having younger women coming through, having a support network around them that embraces everybody is fantastic. However, it's 2022 and we are still forced to have these kinds of conversations. I just want to focus on what I do and what I love which is performing and writing music.

I had an interview with a journalist from BBC music magazine who told me he had interviewed me years ago when I was on the front cover of *Jazz UK* - remember that magazine? I think that's the only time I've ever been on the front cover of a music magazine in my own right.

When we talk about jazz magazines around the world there has been a distinct lack of female instrumentalists on front covers. My male counterparts who do broadly what I do are seen in a different light and are often depicted on the front of these magazines. There's no real reason for that.

I love engaging with the audience and playing with musicians and somehow, I am not allowed to just do that. I am somehow prevented from doing my job which is to make music, to be creative, to dream a little. I was talking about this with my brother; being a musician is a real job and a vital part of life. It's important to give audiences an escape from the realities of everyday life. I love the hope and joy music can bring. Historically, jazz comes from struggle because of real hardship which of course feeds into the music so there is an element of that, but it doesn't have to be a continual struggle - I shouldn't always have to be justifying my existence!

You have mostly represented yourself and promoted yourself in your career. Is this tricky?

Yes, I have, and I absolutely hate it! It's hard to talk about myself. I just want to play the music. The amount of admin seems to have increased over the years as everything is done online now, apparently because it's easy for everybody - it might be easy for the people on the other side but not necessarily for the musicians. The emphasis is on the artist to do a lot of the admin and promotion. We need time to be creative - there's a misunderstanding that jazz is something that just 'happens'. It actually takes a lot of work - you dedicate your life to it.

In terms of promotion, there seems to be a lot of emphasis on social media - it can be a fantastic tool to connect with people and to promote your music but not all musicians have the time or headspace to spend hours using it and not all audiences coming to gigs read those platforms anyway. I've built my audience up over the years in a different way - radio, press, television, word of mouth. If, for instance, I'm posting online about gig in Derby (which I have coming up by the way on 12th March!), I wouldn't expect someone from Milwaukee to be there. Promoters building local audiences is also really important.

People do travel to see me play but there is a limit!

WIJM was founded to support women in jazz, is there anything that we can do to help you?

Just in terms of reaching out to the people that read this interview - people out there who are interested in supporting me as an artist like we talked about on the admin side or management side particularly as well as distribution. I am at a point where I physically can't do all of that, I can't do all the non-music work plus be a pianist and be a mum as well as trying to write music; I don't want to do that, I'd like to find someone who is interested in putting my music out and supporting me.

Is there something we have not talked about yet that you would like to mention?

I was playing at MIDEM, a music conference in the South of France, around the time when everyone was talking about a new thing called Spotify and how it was going to revolutionise music, it was going to be amazing. I just remember saying it's not going to be good for independent artists like me - we're not going to make any money from streaming. I'd like the general public to know that when it comes down to supporting artists like myself who run their own record labels and who make the music - we all have to eat, so just think about that a little bit when you're streaming albums instead of buying them. The best way to support independent artists, so they can continue to make music, is to buy their music or buy tickets to their gigs.

Recently I found a recording studio with a beautiful Steinway which I would really love to record in, but that costs money. I am not someone who can make an album in my bedroom; the recording process costs money. Music seems to have been devalued, if you want to hear music then you have to recognise that it costs money to produce it. As a composer, I don't get paid to actually sit and write music, but it takes hours of my time.

How can people further support your work?

By buying my albums, joining my mailing list (on my website), coming to my gigs, spreading the word!

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY ILZE KITSHOFF





ON THE BOOKCASE IN CONVERSATION WITH

JORDANNAH ELIZABETH



Our podcast series 'On The Bookcase' was created to platform female authors from across the world. To hear their journeys, process and to platform the, often unheard voices of female authors working in jazz. We recently invited journalist and author Jordannah Elizabeth to talk to us about her career and her brilliant new book '[She raised Her Voice: 50 Black Women Who Sang Their Way Into History](#)'.

You can listen to the full conversation above, but we wanted to share some excerpts of this wonderful conversation with you here.

I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A CHAT WITH YOU ABOUT HOW YOU STARTED WRITING. DID YOU TRAIN AS A WRITER, OR DID IT JUST OPEN TO YOU? PEOPLE COME INTO WRITING FROM DIFFERENT WAYS - WHAT WAS YOUR JOURNEY TO BECOMING AN AUTHOR?

JE: Great question! I was interested in writing ever since I was a child, probably about 6 years old. As I became older, I would scribble stories down into notebooks and stories about you know, vampires and then stories and all types of little things...poetry. I was just always scribbling in a notebook, so I've always been attracted to the written word and the spoken word, in literature and in expressing myself in that manner, so it's all been pretty natural to have a career in writing. But I also worked in many different facets of the music industry in regard to my career and I was promoting and booking a lot of shows in New York City and it was getting a little overwhelming, so I decided to start a blog and things snowballed from there. I became the associate editor of The Deli Magazine San Francisco and then I became a very widely published journalists in my own right.

I've been writing blogs since I was 13,14 years old and I taught myself web design and I studied mass communications so I learned about web design, video production, writing scripts and journalism and k I did have some training early on but I'll tell you most of my training really did come from those early seeds. It was all pretty natural with my blog and I got some interviews with members of the Dandy Warhol's and the Black Angels, you know some rock and roll bands and then I had samples to be able to move on to other places.

FR: Did you find there was support for you as a young girl who loved writing? Did you find support, whether that was from your school, family or friends or an outside group, the community?

JE: We essentially do our jobs alone and we tend to be kind of introverted so, my friends and family would follow my blogs and all that stuff, but it was really a very personal process. But I do have mentors like Isabela Raygoza who got me writing at Remezcla, which is the Latin American music side and then picked me up for MTV Iggy which was kind of a world music - I don't know what music the proper way to say it is anymore but international music. Kristin Fayne-Mulroy my hero at New York Amsterdam news so as I grew in my career, there were women editors who were really, really great and supportive and a shout out to my male editors, but yes, I had good mentors for sure.

FR: As you say writing is quite insular and I quite often hear that writers don't have the support or that they feel very much on their own, don't know who to reach out to and don't have mentors so it's amazing to hear that you've had positive surroundings and support.

So what led you to this fantastic book that we are going to chat about?

JE: Sitting at my dining room table during COVID working with some house mates in March 2020, completely minding my own business and an email enters my inbox...I wasn't looking for a book deal, I wasn't putting out queries, it just kind of came out of nowhere it was a super blessing - amazing thing come out of nowhere.

FR: My first question about the book and I'm sure you get asked this loads, but for me it's just mind blowing to think about how you would select those women, of all the incredible women out there. It's obviously a focus on vocalists, so that's slightly helps I guess, but can you talk me through how did you started?



JE: Yes and by the way, I wish I had one hundred women! You know every few days I think of somebody... somebody will email me and say 'oh you didn't put Carmen McRae or Whitney Houston in there' and I'm like you're right... My publisher had a preliminary list and they asked me to curate it and I pretty much worked on the list from top to bottom, with some suggestions but all of these women in the books are people that I've personally written about or people that I have knowledge and a connection to. This definitely was about the reader more than about me but, the list just kind of glided because I've been doing this work in my journalism for close to a decade now.

FR: What a project to work on! I should also add, because we haven't mentioned, this is a children's book and what is the age range aims for this book?

JE: It's a middle grade book, so the age is between 8 to 12.

FR: A crucial age and we will chat about curriculum and the role of education, but I think another thing that blows my mind is how you condense the lives and careers of these incredible women. I have the book and it's stunning and it's a page and a half on each woman, roughly. These women have had phenomenal careers and it's amazing how you managed to put everything in a concise fashion for that age group. That must have been really hard when you look at the vast careers of these women. What was your process for working out what to include?

JE: Well, first of all the publisher asked for three hundred words per woman and I extended it to about five/six hundred words, so I made more work for myself, but I needed to. I wanted to stay truthful as much as possible and there's no way you could put a ninety-year-old person's life into three hundred words! The libraries were closed and all I had were online archives, obituaries and things like that and I had to do some digging for some women but how did I condense it? You know it really is just having the training of being a journalist. When you do interviews for so many years, being able to edit and condense things and to pick out pieces of information to tell a cohesive and interesting story.

So, I really had to tribute it to that, my number of years as a journalist. It all felt really natural and I didn't get stumped.

It was just the right book at the right time for the right person.

FR: This was the first time you'd written for children so was there a different approach, thinking about it from a child's mindset?

JE: Yes, I did think from a child perspective when I was writing. I had children's faces in my mind, and I was talking to them and not only talking to them but thinking in their voices. I guess it would be hard to say how you get in touch with an eight-year-old and it's all a different world, but you can do it. You can tap into your child life sensibilities, deep down we as adults know what children are receptive to and what they want to hear and what will help them learn, but again, it felt really natural and the whole time I was writing, I was thinking as a child.

FR: We are both members of the Jazz Journalists Association and many of us have spoken about the lack of representation in the curriculum across the world and you know the importance of a children's book that's highlighting inequalities. Was that part of why you were interested in this project, the education of young people?

JE: Yes, since the beginning of my career I have been writing from a feminist lens and I have been interested in including black women in the music western music canon, that's been my goal my whole life, my whole career, so for this opportunity to be able to touch a new generation has just been amazing. With some of my articles, I have college kids come up to me and say you know I read your articles on cool black women, classical musicians, once a month! I did a lot of work before these conversations were being had. I did it pre George Floyd and as we begin to wake up as a culture, in regard to the horrors and mistreatment of black women and black people and I say this with respect in that, areas for my work become more and more relevant.

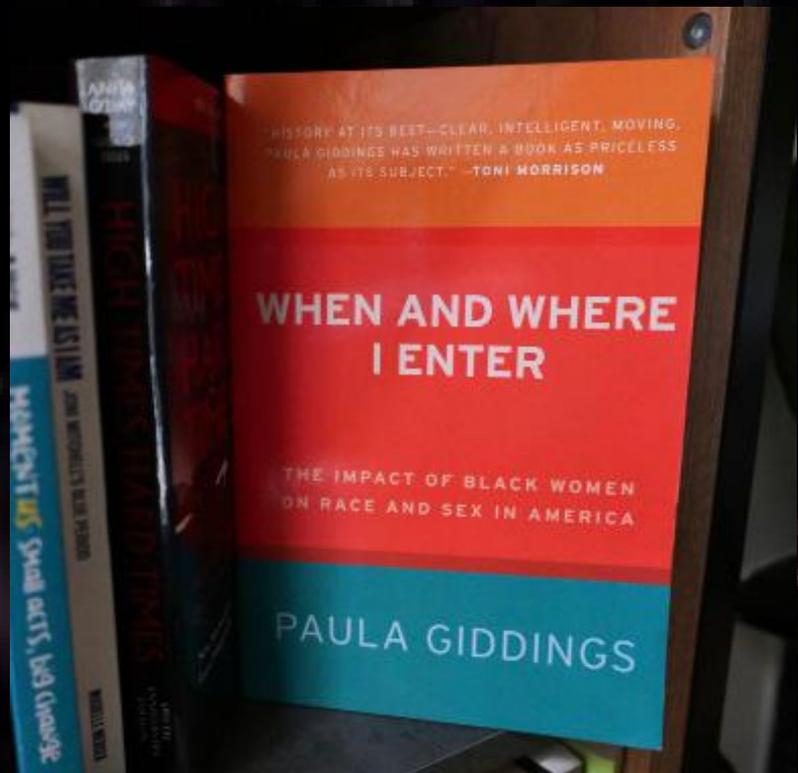


FR: It's a standard question but what do you feel is really important for someone just starting out, who wants to get into writing?

JE: *There are times where it's going to be painful and it's going to be lonely and it's important to put yourself out there and to connect with editors. I think all writers should have their own website, should have their own blog, creating samples for when they're ready to move forward into the professional realm. When you're writing I think it's a very personal journey and I think it's important to make a choice on who you want to be and what stories you want to tell.*

Some people move forward and say well maybe I'm environmental rights or maybe I'm into crime reporting etc. but I just knew early on that I wanted to write about kind of punk and hip hop. Certain things in the textbooks I learned when I was about sixteen years old by taking a music history class, so I was kind of poised to create. I am deeply in the entertainment industry, entertainment journalism but I've tried to have the depth and conversation on things that we can learn from me and from one another. I guess, have a goal and stick to it! It's not going to happen overnight. My first book was published in 2015 and I made \$0.00. But six years later, the next book came, and I didn't have to push it. I just continued to be myself, continued to be consistent, continued to say yes to opportunities. Try to be very enthusiastic and be helpful and give back and at all it all comes back around. That would be my advice, know what you want to write and stick with it and explore, explore, explore! Read and study. Study yourself and get to know your style.

FR: Tell me about the last book that you read that inspired you?



JE: *It gives the history of black women from before slaves before industrialised slavery, through the 1980s and you get to follow their lives and realise that women, black women had more rights before slavery. I just learned so much and it is so well written. So easy to follow and such a great journey of black women's realities. I think that's what I've always tried to come across in my writing, a very reality based existential, empathetic tone so when you're reading, you're feeling it, you can see them go through it, you can even, no matter what colour or gender or whatever you are, you can sit in, sit with... so that's why I really love that book!*

FR: I'm going to ask you one final question, if I may which is what are you doing next? This amazing book only came out in December, so that's it's still hot off the press but do you have more books in the pipeline?

JE: *Yes! I'm in different stages of two other books. We have an astrology for black girls book coming out - a lot of people don't know that I've grown up with the big interest in astrology - so we wrote a specific guidebook to young black girls. It's another middle grade book and then I have a child's introduction to hip hop coming after that. I love jazz and I am so happy that things are growing and changing in that black men and women in jazz are getting there but there's just so much work to do across the board and so many western canons and experiences that I'm trying to keep up with in the world.*

FR: That sounds amazing - do you ever stop?

JE: *I try... I'm going to take it a break and I'm not really booking much February March so I can really focus on the books, but I hope to see myself in this spring taking a good few weeks off to do to do whatever I want to do!*

Jordannah Elizabeth Website

'She Raised Her Voice!' link

'When and Where I Enter' link

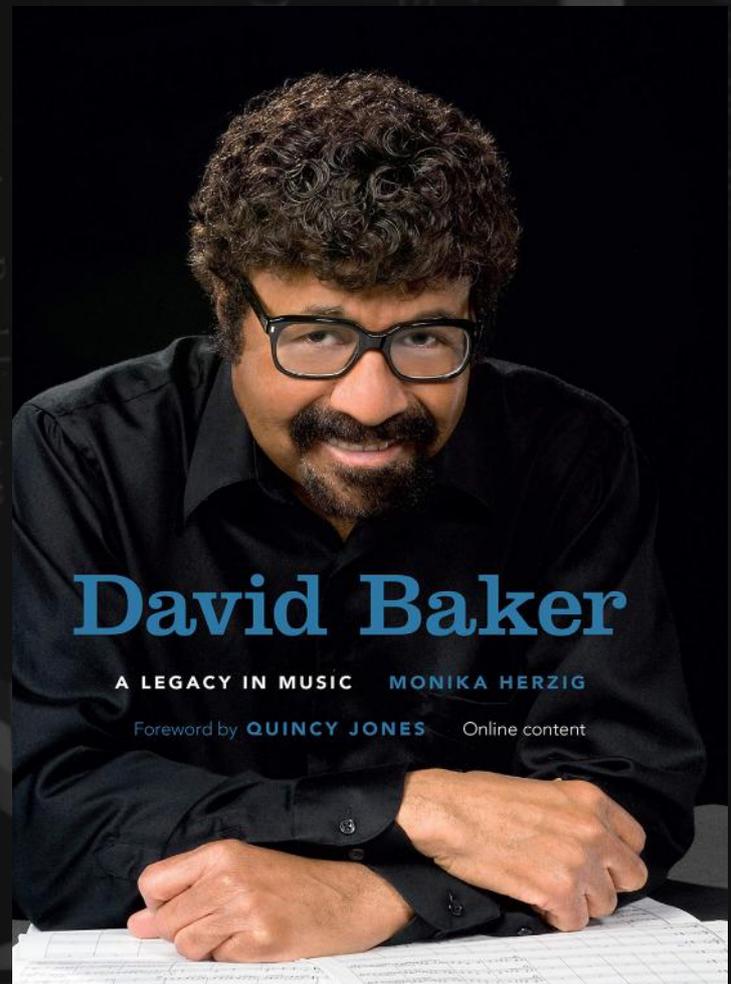
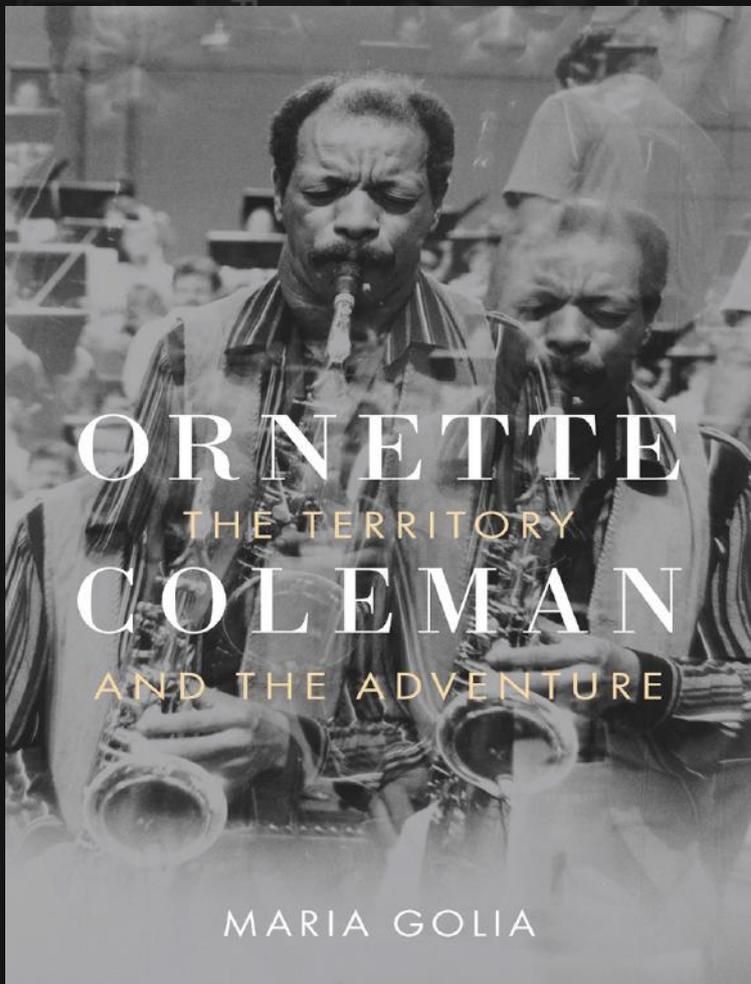
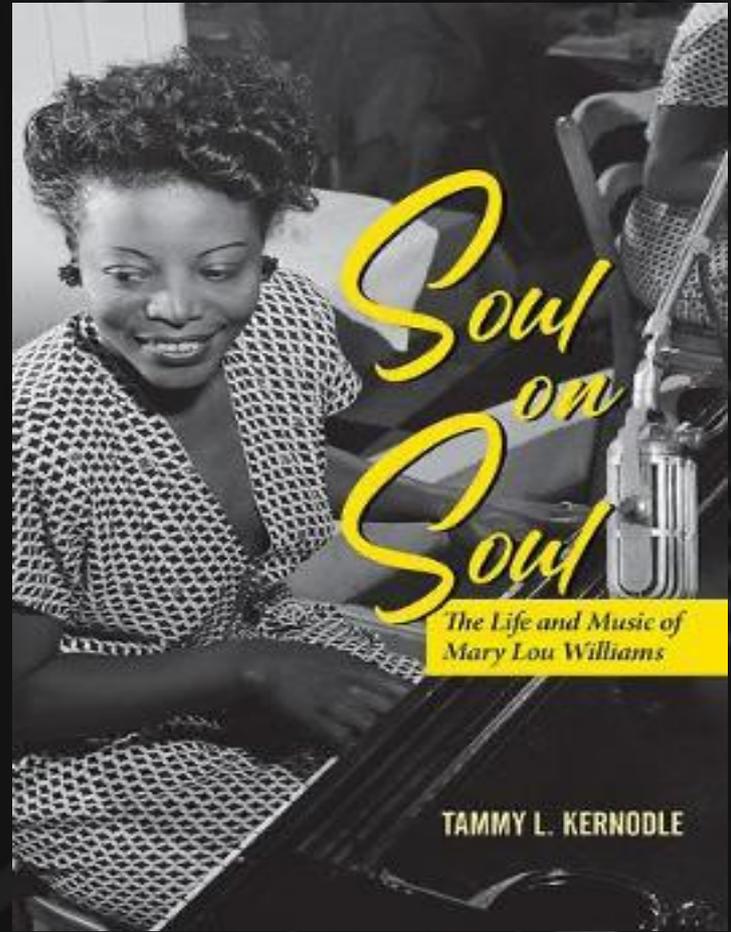
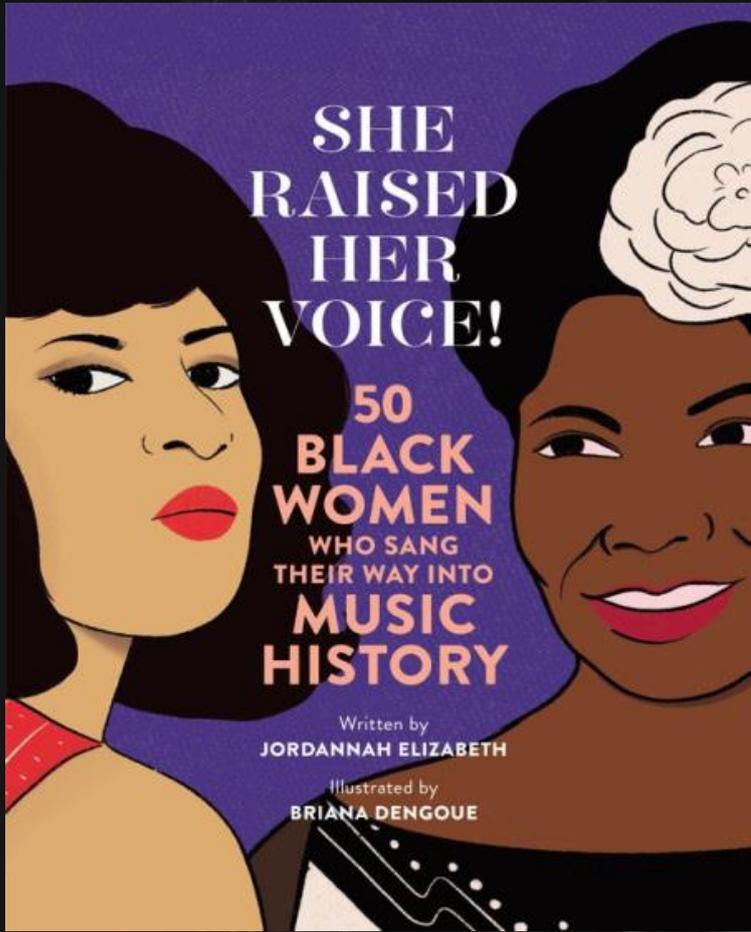
'On The Bookcase' podcast series link



ON THE BOOKCASE

Click on the images to listen to our 'On The Bookcase' podcast episodes, in conversation with female authors.





HASNA EL BECHARIA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BARKA FABIANOVA





HISTORY = HERSTORY = OURSTORY? BY LARA EIDI

I thought long and hard about what I was going to write about the month of March that's become synonymous with female empowerment. Covid Pandemic and a luring World War Conflict aside, I really had to ask myself: has anything changed? And if it has, why does it feel like we're back at the starting line? Allow me to explain, and before I do, I'll say this: I completely acknowledge the changes we've made, and the men that have supported the change.

When I refer to women's rights, for the purposes of this short and concise feature, I have to insist that I am in fact referring to are really about gender equality. As a female artist living in one of the most confusing centuries, I come to the same conclusion: equality means equality for all, so why are still divided by the strangeness of geo-politics?

Make no mistake, we've come a long way as female pioneers in music. From Bessie Smith to Alice Coltrane, Dorothy Ashbey to Ella Fitzgerald; Nina Simone to Aretha Franklin; Joni Mitchell to Patti Smith; Aziz Mustafa to Lala Hathway 'Becca Stevens to well, practically all the songwriters who were joyfully heralding the return of the singer-songwriter into the somewhat stagnant jazz world. I'm only naming a few of the more recognizable musicians. Let us celebrate the poets who inspired the music. The Sylvia Plaths, Virginia Wolfs, and Maya Angelous. The sound engineers, producers, radio hosts and journalists. Women who changed music beyond music itself in the face of adversity. That's what jazz developed into, and let's be honest, it's what African - Americans built and founded as their own, incredible tradition. I'm still discovering their heritage, and still in awe. Every time I put on a Nina Simone track, I'm reminded of that fearlessness, that determination to change not only the minds of men but the minds of her and her people's oppressors.

Jump into the 21st century, (bear with me here) we are blessed with women like harpist Alina Bzhezhska who uses her voice to spread a message of peace. Yet, we only hear of those incredible stories when we remain privy to the Anglo-American world view of female rights.

Allow me to explain: we have learned so much about what it means to be a female artist, and often our historical reference draws from a long line of American suffragettes and political activists. These stories have shaped the music we have grown to love.

But doesn't music belong to the rest of the world too? And in that respect - why are we still unaware of the many female musicians, artists and activists (and I use that word with the best of intentions) that are occupying the rest of the world map? Yes, we are all influenced by American- English pop culture. It was only until my 20's that I paid attention to my Lebanese roots. What a world there for discovering! Little had I known the likes of world- celebrated singer Fairuz had influenced the beginnings of what the West has called 'Hijazz'. Growing up in Athens,

I started to listen to the very few recordings of female 'Rebetika' players. Rebetika is one of Greece's longest standing folkloric music. When you listen to it, you start to understand how the harmony, rhythm's and patters trace all the way back to Syria and Turkey. Incredible female Qanun players have paved the way for leading Anglo-American instrumentalists to re-interpret their definition of what has become termed as 'world jazz'. Aziza Mustafa from Azerbaijan is quite literally a master of classical, jazz and folkloric Azerbajanian music. Her concert with Bobby McFerrin made her shine: modesty itself, as she made her virtuosic singing look like child's play.

Her concert with Bobby McFerrin made her shine: modesty itself, as she made her virtuosic singing look like child's play.

Yet, we don't know enough about these women. In fact, a lot of us have never even heard of these musical traditions. We neglect to acknowledge the spread of music across the African, Middle Eastern and Asian continents as anything other than 'traditional music', when in fact they have shaped jazz music.

If I may indulge the reader: I'm grateful for my Western education, but I'm even more grateful for my cultural roots. So, I'm taking an opportunity, to say this:
we need to talk about ALL women in music.



PHOTO BY NATALIE MANOURAS

We need to start learning listening to the origins of Jazz, both in Africa and the Middle East. We need to embrace every female voice as part of a whole HER-story. Let me remind the reader: women from these parts of the world have done so much for the world of music, and unfortunately, have also not had our privileged opportunities. They face inequality of unspeakable natures, yet they pursue the arts. Let me also say, this is why I yearn for embracing quality even more in the arts.

How can we do this? Women, we need to come together. Yes, even more.

When we organise networking luncheons, let us ask those who still don't have a voice. Let's ask the Amanda Gormans of the world for inspiration for change. Let's look to the Aretha's for resilience. Let's ask the Malalas who they think is important in music. Let's ask the young female Palestinian violinist who managed to get a scholarship at Berklee (name not mentioned for protection). Let's add 'Herstory' to the university music curriculum.

Let's not stop the race. Let's change its course.
Let's all run its course, together, as HER voice.

Thank you for listening.



HasnaElBecharia.



SING THE TRUTH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BARKA FABIANOVA



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE GRAYSON

A LADY OF MUSICAL CLASS: JEAN CARNE

BY
PAULETTE JACKSON

When I think of female jazz singers, so many greats come to mind; Ella, Billie, Lean, Sarah, etc. but there is one that I have a personal connection with and not because of this that she is also one of my absolute favorite jazz, soul vocalist. I am speaking of none other than Ms. Jean Carne.

Ms. Carne was born, Sarah Jean Perkins. In mid-career she added 'e' to her last name (Carn to Carne). Whether with an e or not, one thing is unmistakable and that is her amazing, five octave vocal range. Ms. Carne sings with grace and style and carries herself in the same manner on stage.

Now, I could sit here and write her bio or I could write what I feel from my heart about the first time I heard her voice on my radio or on a record (yes I said record), I choose to express my admiration and respect for a lady I grew up listening to and singing along with her many songs and with each note, knew that one day I wanted to have a career in music.

Let me go back a little and explain the personal connection I have with Ms. Carne. My late brother, Mike Jackson, was a composer and musician, working at Philadelphia International Records, a label Ms. Carne was once signed to, co-wrote one of my favorite tunes (I would say that even if my brother hadn't co-written it), "My Love Don't Come Easy" (1979), I absolutely love that song and the fact that my late brother had a creative hand in it, makes it even more special to me.

I was blessed to meet Ms. Carne in my hometown of Cleveland, OH, through my brother Mike. He did not tell me he was taking me to meet her only that he was going back to rehearsal for a show and wanted me to come along. We arrive and go down to the basement of the house the band was rehearsing and who do I see sitting on a stool with a mic in her hand? Yes, you guessed it, Ms. Jean Carne! I was speechless. I looked at my brother and he just gave me a smile. He knew Jean Carne was one of my all-time favorite female vocalists. My brother told Ms. Carne I was a singer and told me she was looking for someone to sing back-up for her. Well. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to sing with her, but I will never forget that moment as long as I live.

Let us get back to Ms. Carne. Jean's voice to me is pure silk and she has been a force in this business for many years, still going strong today. Being associated with labels like Philadelphia International Records (as mentioned

Ms. Carne had planned to further her music studies at Juilliard School of Music in New York City when she met and married jazz pianist Doug Carn and became a featured vocalist in his jazz fusion band. Later, Ms. Carne went on to record several albums with her then husband, on Black Jazz/Ovation label.

In 1977, Jean released her debut album, "Jean Carn" for Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff's Philadelphia International label.

Ms. Carne's hits include a rendition of The Spinners "Love Don't Love Nobody" and Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes "If You Don't Know Me by Now," as well as, "Was That All It Was" (another favorite), "Valentine Love" (with Norman Connors & Michael Henderson), "Don't Let It Go to Your Head" (from her second album, 1978, for Philly International, ("Happy to Be With You"), just to name a few.

There is nothing this lady cannot sing, she has the kind of voice that can grace any genre of music, I love to hear her sing jazz and soul. Sadly, there are not that many great vocalists around anymore, a few, but not many that have the elegance that Ms. Carne has.

If you do not have Jean Carne as part of your music collection, I urge you to rectify that as of today. Listen to all of it and I promise you will thank me later.

Note to Ms. Carne: I hope you do not mind me honoring you in this way, but I could not let another day go by and not sit down to tell the world of your wonderful music and what it and you have meant to my life. Your music helped me get through a lot.

Jean Carne links



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GILLES PETARD

EMMA RAWICZ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MONIKA S JAKUBOWSKA





A Woman Like Me

LINDSEY WEBSTER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANCO VOGT

A SONG BIRD: LINDSEY WEBSTER

BY
PAULETTE JACKSON

As I sit here collecting my thoughts about where I want to start with this piece, I find myself pulling up music and just getting lost in its rich melodic tones and respecting the real instrumentation used throughout this song. It does not overpower you; it takes over your senses and surroundings in an amazing way. You may be saying right about now, "Is she going to share with us who she is speaking of," ha-ha.

Yes, let me say this first, there comes a time for me personally, when there is that one vocalist that completely takes you to another dimension, that can make you forget where you are at the moment, before you know it, you get lost in the amazement and wonder of this musical moment, who am I speaking of? Ms. Lindsey Webster (Jazz, R&B and Pop singer)! I first learned of Lindsey on social media a few years back. Someone had posted a video of her performing live and I was hooked and knew I had to do more research on this phenomenal artist. Needless to say, I became an instant and ongoing fan of Ms. Webster's music.

I think the one song that really made me just in awe of her rich, soulful, jazzy, elegant vocals was a song by Mr. Rick Braun from his 2017 release "Around the Horn", the track was "Love Take Me" that Ms. Webster was a feature on. I was completely taken away by her voice on this song, I played it ten times in a row and brought to tears when I first heard it and immediately added it to my personal playlist (later added it to my jazz station). FABULOUS!

Lindsey has so much great music out there including her 2020 release "A Woman Like Me". I had the opportunity recently to really sit down and listen to each track on this CD and each one, I must say blew me away, Lindsey, once again brought her A game on this one! There was one tune, however, that really got my attention and that is "Feels Like Forever," Wow! Again, I confess, I played this one about fifteen times, completely mesmerized by the whole production (using real instruments, thank you). "A Woman Like Me" is one I have added to my collection (you should too).

There are quite a few Smooth Jazz female Jazz/Soul artists out here and each bring a unique quality to the industry that was once considered a male dominant world but, make no mistake, those fantastic artists like Ms. Lindsey Webster, are bringing the musical heat with them. My respect and honor to Lindsey Webster for the spirit and soul she puts in everything she produces and shares with each of us, whether it is live on stage or when she hits the recording studio, the passion she exuberates through her gifts, shines through!

P.S. Just when I thought I was finished writing about this wonderful artist, Ms. Webster drops a brand new single! "I Didn't Mean It" featuring none other than Brian Culbertson (Trombone and horn arrangement) It sounds fantastic from the pre-view I just listened to (12-20-2021). Available soon on all music outlets.

For more information on Lindsey Webster, please visit her website: www.lindseywebster-music.com









WOMEN IN LIVE MUSIC

Women in Live Music is a brilliant organisation that supports a huge diverse range of women who work in the live music industry from sound engineers to truck drivers. This area is rarely highlighted and we are very excited to partner with this fantastic organisation and support their incredible work.

Malle Kaas the CEO of Women in live Music is truly inspirational and created WILM only four years ago and the achievements so far have been incredible. Women still only make up a minor percentage of the work force in the music industry and change needs to happen in many ways and WILM are showing us the way. The community they have built is amazing. Their website and social media pages connect and encourage people – regardless of gender – to share their experiences, photos and tips for members. They organise insightful workshops and meetings throughout Europe where members can learn and forge essential relationships with like minded individuals. They have truly created a supportive and inspiring community.

MK: I know we have really come a long way, which is great, and we know that we have big impact on the industry, but I have to say, unfortunately we are still only one of our kind. We cover everyone from catering, truck drivers, concert photographers to the whole production and it's a lot! If you take an arena show for example, it will have up to 400 people that have work on that show, so there is a lot of people backstage and in general backstage is an area that is very overlooked. People just take it for granted that we're there, I don't really pay attention to it but as we are say - no crew, no magic! It's very essential and we need to highlight this area. But there is an issue with it as we tend to like to not be seen or heard so it's always been a tradition to hide us away and also when it comes to be a woman... I mean it's really, really hard to find us and that's one of the tasks that is high profile priority to WILM is to get the few women out there, in the spotlight!

FR: One of the reasons I started initially women jazz media was about supporting and platforming female journalists and writers because they were – and are – in the minority. I very quickly realised it was the same for photographers, sound engineers etc the whole 'behind the scenes' roles for women and as you say, we like to stay hidden and that is our comfort zone. We work behind the stage for a reason.



MK: It makes them shy away even more away because there isn't a tradition for the backstage crew to make themselves aware, then you really don't want to do when you are woman because you already have enough attention as a woman. You look different to everybody else. You know? I'm standing there among my colleagues everybody would know who I am because I stick out and that kind of attention can be very intimidating. They already feel there is enough attention on them and they don't feel comfortable with it, nobody really does and that's also because being a crew member it can be very stressful and there is often huge pressure on you and so you don't want to stick out.

FR: So what was it that that made you decide to form Women in Live Music? These issues have always been there but was there a catalyst or something that prompted you to do something?

MK: we were organising events for Sound Girls and at one of the events, we had the manager engineer from Tori Amos come in and was talking to us about what obstacles men are facing in the industry, because of course, men have issues too, it's not just the women. There was a woman in the audience, she was a tour manager and she told us about a situation where she was on tour in France and the local crew wouldn't talk to her because she was a woman. They just completely ignored her, did not respect her. All communication had to go through the sound engineer (male) and that is not an isolated case. So, it occurred to us that it's not just the sound engineers who feel lonely out there it's everyone who belongs to a minority. So that's why we decided to call it a Women in Live music because we wanted to attract other women and connect with them. We realised that we needed to create a platform that includes everyone in the backstage area but it's an immense amount.



FR: That connectedness is rare although essential and that is part of the work we try to do here at Women in Jazz Media and it's amazing the work you do for women in the live music industry. We recently held a 10 day event in London and worked with female sound engineers, which was wonderful. One of the members of the audience actually came up to me at the end of the vent and commented on the female sound engineer, explaining that he 'didn't realise women did that'. I was happy to point out to him that now he knows. Are you seeing the gender balance improve?

MK: *Well I started out more than two decades ago and it hasn't changed much. Just like you said even last year you experienced somebody coming up and say, wow there actually women doing sound. That's something that hasn't really changed much. I was thinking recently as I was flying - I was think I was flying home -and I was thinking that I have flown more than 400 times in the past ten years gosh and how many female pilots have I come across in those ten years?*

is the same picture. So there hasn't really been a big improvement and then you ask yourself but why not? Because women are not interested? Women are interested, but firstly, they're not getting introduced to the different job opportunities backstage, that's one thing and secondly, they do feel intimidated by all the men. We also see, unfortunately, a very big tendency of women who enter the industry but quickly disappear and actually one thing, through our community, is to hold onto the women so they stay longer in the industry.

FR: That actually leads me to ask about your safe environment programme. Do you know why women don't stay in the industry? Is it the isolation?

MK: *we don't know for sure, but we think that for many, it's because they don't feel that they fit in for two reasons. It's very natural for human beings that if you are not in an environment where you can't identify with your surrounding - and I never really have the feeling of fitting - that gives you like a constant feeling of being isolated and out of place. This is really hard, tough working*

environment anyway, so you have that extra feeling of isolation.

I think another reason, and this is something that we're trying to highlight, is that you motherhood combined with a career and life in music, is not really ideal. This industry wasn't made for having kids and this is something that we have tried for the last couple of years to highlight and address this issue. We need to talk about it, we need to improve the conditions for working moms or working parents in general and that's a whole other topic but we published a report about it because we realised that women who were pregnant would hide their pregnancy. Firstly, they were afraid of losing out on jobs and secondly, they were afraid of being seen as the weak link, like they needed special care and nobody wants anybody in the industry who needs special care.

We discovered that there is a group of women out there who postponed having kids because they want to achieve, the peak of their career so it's difficult for them to have kids. These different scenarios are really fatal and could also be a reason why women drop out sooner than men. In this industry, you really don't see many women who spend more than five years, rarely more than ten years in the industry. I think we should put some numbers on it and it's less than 2% that are professional women working backstage.

The funny thing is that if you ask why there so few women working backstage, there are some myths about it and one is that people say that they don't work in the industry because it's long hours, it's hard physical work. There is also the myth that women are just not interested, but again, if you don't get introduced to the job, if you don't see any role models, how do you know that you'll be able to do this job or that you actually have the chance of doing this?

FR: I was going to ask about education and visibility of role models. You have some brilliant resources and initiatives on your site, what do you feel the role of education has - for example in the curriculum- if we are trying to attract more women?

MK: Well, generally, it is so hidden away and it's even more difficult if you are a minority, to see other minorities out there, so again, we need to highlight the role models. The backstage area really needs to push harder to show off the minorities, but I also think, and this goes for both on stage and off stage, that the schools need to do more to wipe out these traditional gender roles. It starts in school but if you put boys and girls into a room with instruments, the guys will run off and pick the drums and start bashing.... and the young girls shy away. We need to start changing the mindset. This is another reason why we created the safe learning environment, because if you take out the boys and just leave the girls alone, free, they will go nuts with those instruments! But I think this is really important and we can we talk a lot about diversity, but we need to do something. We are all doing these initiatives but from what I've seen over the years, is that over the past 40/50/60 years the social DNA hasn't changed, and we need to do something about traditional gender roles.

FR: What would you say to people who say that some men are a barrier?

MK: My journey and experience of men out there is they are welcoming and that they would love to see some more women, so it's a myth saying that men are keeping women away from the industry because yet again it's the lack of introductions to the industry. It's also within women's self because they have too high expectations on themselves and we all know if we have too high expectations on ourselves, then we have a tendency to fail. But somebody needs to show them the way and highlight their work. That's why we created the Wilma award to get their names out there, their faces out there and actually be highlighted!

FR: And finally, what can someone in the general public do to help changed mindset?

MK: We should stop being so fast at judging. We need to have the courage and the patience to give minorities a chance to prove themselves.

WILMA AWARDS 20

ADVANCE / LIAISON MANAGER
BACKLINE TECH
BOOKER / AGENT
CATERER
CREW BOSS
DRIVER
EVENT MANAGER
LIGHTING DESIGNER
LIGHTING TECHNICIAN
MERCHANDISER
PHOTOGRAPHER
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
PRODUCTION MANAGER
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
PERSONAL ASSISTANT
PROMOTER
PYRO TECHNICIAN
RIGGER
SET - AUTOMATION
SET - CARPENTER
SOUND - F.O.H. ENGINEER
SOUND - MONITOR ENGINEER
STAGE TECHNICIAN
STAGE MANAGER
STAGEHAND
SYSTEM ENGINEER
TOUR MANAGER
TOUR MANAGER ASSISTANT
VIDEO CREW MEMBER
VENUE MANAGER
WARDROBE
UPCOMING

AIOFE AHERN (IRL)
SHARON "BAMO" BAMPTON (UK)
HAZEY LAKE (IRL)
GABRIELA CAMPOS (FIN)
ELINA TAMMINEN (FIN)
JESSICA BENGIS (SWE)
ANU HAAPAMÄKI (FIN)
MARGARIDA MOREIRA (PRT)
BIANCA EWERT (DE)
EMILIE TONDEUR (BEL)
KAROLINE SCHAEFER (DE)
OLGA KENIG (DE)
ERIN LYNCH (SWE/ICE)
LIZZIE GRAHAM (UK)
BRIGITTE FUSS (DE)
NATALIE RYAN-WILLIAMS (SWE)
UTE HOECKER (DE)
IDA MARIA BORGSTRÖM (UK/SWE)
MIMI STAL (NL)
PIRITA KERVINE (FIN)
LISA AFFENZELLER (DE)
SAMANTHA WHITE (UK)
MARIANA SOTO (IRL)
ODET ROSENKRANTZ (NL)
SANDRA KAARSGAARD (DK)
VALERIE GARD (RUS)
LOTJE HORVERS (NL)
RIA SIOUX BYERS (UK)
ANNALISA TERRANOVA (ITA)
ALICE JAMES (UK)
MIRA PENTTILÄ (FIN)
SUSSE MÄKINEN (FIN)

WILMA AWARDS ²¹

ADVANCE / LIAISON MANAGER	JULIE COTTON (UK)
BACKLINE TECH	SHARON "BAMO" BAMPTON (UK)
BOOKER / AGENT	LAURA FARROW (UK)
CATERER	LAURA QUIST (DK)
DRIVER	JESSICA BENGIS (SWE)
EVENT MANAGER	CATHRINE MCGILL (UK)
FESTIVAL MANAGER	REBECCA STEWART (UK)
LIGHTING DESIGNER	KATIE DAVIES (UK)
LIGHTING TECHNICIAN	CHLOE BOUCHER (UK)
MERCHANDISER	EMILIE TONDEUR (BEL/UK)
PHOTOGRAPHER	KATIE FROST (UK)
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR	HELENA KING (UK)
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR	JOANNE CROXFORD (UK)
PRODUCTION MANAGER	ALICE JAMES (UK)
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT	ABI BAKER (UK)
PERSONAL ASSISTANT	BRIGITTE FUSS (DE)
PROMOTER	SIGRID BRYN (DE)
PYRO TECHNICIAN	CONTIE RIDLEY (UK)
RIGGER	IDA MARIA BORGSTRÖM (UK/SWE)
RF TECHNICIAN	SAPNA PATEL (UK/SWE)
SET - AUTOMATION	MIMI STAL (NL)
SET - CARPENTER	PIRITA KERVINE (FIN)
SOUND - F.O.H. ENGINEER	OLIVE OLIN (UK)
SOUND - MONITOR ENGINEER	NAOMI NASH (UK)
STAGEHAND	LAURA ROSIERSE (NL)
STAGE MANAGER	GER FITZSIMMONS (IRL/UK)
STAGE TECHNICIAN	EMMA NOLAN (IRL)
SYSTEM ENGINEER	VALERIE GARD (RUS)
TOUR MANAGER	SUZI GREEN (UK)
VIDEO CREW MEMBER	ANNALISA TERRANOVA (ITA)
VENUE MANAGER	JANNIE OVERGARD (DK)
WARDROBE	LAURA SPRATT (UK)
UPCOMING CREW MEMBER	LOR NOV (UK/CH)
OUTSTANDING CREW MEMBER	CARINE TREGOLD (SW)









WHO WHO



**WOMEN
INSPIRE**



ALI AFFLECK: A MUSICAL STORYTELLER

BY FIONA MACTAGGART

Scotland is fortunate to have, for its size, a considerable number of extremely talented women jazz musicians. One of our best loved – and most effervescently entertaining and talented – is singer and early jazz historian Ali Affleck. Recently I had the pleasure of chatting with her about her background and career.

‘Well, I’ve done several things in my life journey so far, including teaching English in Egypt, and living in Grenada in the Caribbean. Studying Veterinary medicine at that time. But what I’ve been doing for the past 15 years, the last 10 here in Scotland, is performing early Jazz and Blues, which includes subgenres that I would call Roots Jazz and Swing.

They say that I’m a storyteller, a musical storyteller. There is definitely a theatrical element to my personality. My mother and my great grandmother were both amateur actresses and my great grandmother was called ‘The Duchess’, because she threw the best parties in town! She had the most incredible clothes, of which, some, I have. But going further back, Dame Nellie Melba is a relative.

What many of Ali’s fans may not be aware of however, is that she pursues her successful career while living with several debilitating physical and mental health conditions, such as Fibromyalgia and Thyroiditis, and Attention Deficit Disorder and Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Ali advises...

For people who are juggling various health issues, and you’re on a merry-go-round like me, I think it’s important to try and be kind to yourself.

Ali’s level of resilience is awe-inspiring, and with the aim of combatting stigma around such conditions, she has agreed that a future article for WIJM, will look in some detail at how these conditions impact her daily working life and how she manages them.

Ali is a regular on the Scottish jazz circuit, and today, International Women’s Day will be MC-ing a Scottish “Krewe of Muses” at The Jazz Bar, Edinburgh. Her next London appearance will be on 16th March at The Pheasantry.

[Ali Affleck website](#)

[The Scottish Jazz Space website](#)

WE WELCOME THE MEN!

All of our work here at Women in Jazz Media is striving towards an equal and diverse jazz world. To achieve this, it takes collective support, work and a community that works as one.

We invited men to contribute to our International Women Days magazine and asked them simply this:

Tell us about a woman that inspires you

NIGEL J

I'm known to many in the music world as 'Nigel J.' It's my pleasure to bring you MusicTribesUnite.News. My passion is the true and ever-expanding world of music, from the past, present & future. Music connects communities so...Feel the Beat...

As a retired editor-in-chief of a top-5 Jazz magazine, seeking out insightful, quality content is a monumental challenge - Time is required...I Seek, You Enjoy!

Nigel J.
Editor and Founder of MusicTribesUnite.News



MARC JORDAN

Women have been the difference makers in my emotional life. In fact, I didn't realize I had an emotional life until I met my wife, Amy Sky. She's the most incredibly articulate songwriter I have ever heard when it comes to expressing the emotional landscape of the human heart. Even when I think back to when I was in my early 20s and beginning to write songs and sing, I remember my dad saying some words that changed my professional life. After hearing me sing in a club one night he said "Marc, if you want to learn to sing and really communicate with the audience you have to listen to how women approach the art of connecting to an audience and reaching an audience through song. That is what great singers do, and that is something women generally do better than men." I studied Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Ella and many others and found the connection to the lyrics seemed to be, in general, more profound in female singers, and Amy is no exception. She values the language of love, of heartbreak, of joy and of loneliness and regret in a deeper way than most. I've tried to up the emotional temperature when I sang in a concert hall or a club, and always look at Amy for how it should really be done.

Amy Sky website

WOMEN WHO INSPIRE ME

BY RON MILSOM

I'm very proud to have been asked by Fiona Ross to participate in this year's International Women's Day project, asking for men to talk about the women that have inspired them. It was a most enjoyable task revisiting memories of people and places. Some of these women I know well, others not so, but they all possess one thing in common - that special innate quality that inspires. It is difficult to put them in order of importance, but there are a few remarkable women who have been influential in changing my life or changing the way I live it and these I've listed first.

LIANE CARROLL

Award winning Liane is an accomplished musician, both vocally and on piano. Whether it's jazz or blues, she performs with immense power and deep emotion. One minute you'll be laughing and next you'll find yourself in tears. She's warm and kind and always has time to chat. Liane is a wonderful human being who never fails to inspire.

SHEILA HARROD

Sheila teaches voice production, composition, piano, the theory of music and stage technique. She founded the Kentwood Show Choir in 1964 and it's still going strong today. Sheila has a way of encouraging people to perform to the best of their ability. Her annual shows are a musical spectacle of sound and colour, all to the sheer delight of her large audiences. Sheila's dedication and commitment is an example to us all. I'd love to know where she gets her energy from!

TINA MAY

The first time I saw Tina in concert, she sang every song in French and I assumed, (wrongly of course), that she was French. How wrong could I be? The next time I managed to chat to her briefly and discovered that she's as English as me. In fact, when she was young she lived just 20 miles down the road from where I live. I love her concerts, as not only is she technically gifted, she is amazingly expressive. She sings not only with her voice, but with her face and hands too. Tina is a lovely lady with a beautiful voice and inspiration by the bucket loads.

TOYAH

I don't think there's anyone on the planet who hasn't heard of Toyah Willcox! I'm eight years older than Toyah and have been following her career since the 1970s. Whether it's as a singer, songwriter, actress or producer she never fails to impress. Watching her stage performances it appears that music never stops being fun. On stage she's like a human dynamo. And she never stops working! Even a pandemic didn't slow her down! With her husband Robert Fripp, they produced videos from their home, which over the course of time became the thing to watch on social media. If inspiration is the key word in this article, then Toyah is a prime example!

















KAREN JACKSON

During the course of my work Kim introduced me to a very special lady indeed, Karen Jackson. Sadly, Karen died recently after a long battle with cancer. I didn't know her for very long or very well, but for that short time she had an enormous effect on me. After meeting her that first time I came home knowing that something important had happened, but didn't quite know what.

I'd met ill health in my own family, but I'd never met anyone who had endured it for so long and with such determination to not be beaten by it. Her bravery in fighting that illness was unbelievable. Her optimism was unbounded and her confidence supreme. Although Karen was in constant pain, she never showed it. Her smile was a sign of her love for life. And she lived it to the full in every way possible. At gigs and with every opportunity, Karen would be up on her feet and leading the dancing.

To say that Karen was an inspiration is an understatement. She was more than that. She was courageous, she was strong-willed, she was purposeful, she was beautiful and she was one of a kind. I miss her enormously. But when life gets tough I think of Karen and raise a smile to a truly remarkable lady.

KIM CYPHER

A few years back while developing a renewed interest in photography, I'd heard good things about a talented jazz musician, Kim Cypher. I went along to a gig and very nervously asked her if I could take some photos of her. Happily she agreed and that gig became the first of many that I attended as her photographer. I discovered early on the reason for Kim's popularity. Not only is she a talented singer and saxophonist, but she has a natural charisma, a sparkling personality and she takes a genuine interest in other people. You can't help but like her! I've lost count of the number of gigs we've worked together, but each time is like something new and refreshing. You can be sure that wherever Kim is, the sunshine is not too far behind!

Kim has been kind enough to allow me to participate in a few of her projects. I think they start off as an emotive idea that comes with possibilities and with much determination on Kim's part, they mature into something powerful and meaningful. In reflection, I'm of the opinion that Kim is a maker of dreams!



'Bring Your Own Sunshine' - A Song For Maggie's in honour of Karen Jackson who fought a long, brave battle with cancer. Maggie's is a charity entirely funded by the kindness of donors and gifts in wills so, whilst the payment to download this charity single is £1.99, PLEASE PAY WHAT-EVER YOU CAN AFFORD and let's share some HOPE, POSITIVITY and SUNSHINE. All the money received from Bandcamp for downloads will be donated to Maggie's, so let's raise as much money as we can for our beautiful Karen!







DOROTHY FRANCES

Dorothy was a classically trained opera singer and spent many years on stage professionally in Covent Garden. Later in life she became a singing teacher and voice coach to many people. I still wonder to this day why, but Dorothy invited me to join the chorus of the Caamora Theatre Company. She was chorus mistress at the time and needed extra voices. Although I was a musician and used to being on stage, this was my very scary introduction to musical theatre. After the first show and over the course of time it changed my life!

With her methods, Dorothy quietly encouraged, cheerfully motivated, steadied nerves and slowly improved our voices. She gave me the confidence to perform on stage in a way that I would have found impossible to do previously. Dorothy was a total source of inspiration to us all. With a shining personality and a constant smile she was loved by everyone who knew her. Although no longer with us Dorothy is a constant reminder to me that without her, my life would be very different now.

FIONA ROSS

Again thanks to Kim I was introduced to another extraordinary musician. I say musician, but I mean award winning jazz artist, vocalist, pianist, composer, producer, writer and founder of the Women in Jazz Media organisation. I've quoted from her website as she has so many incredible talents. She's also the loveliest person you'll ever meet.

In a matter of weeks I went from never heard of Fiona to buying all of her albums. Her contemporary jazz has a unique sound which I must admit has cast an everlasting spell over me. Fiona writes with an intense honesty which reaches the depth of one's soul. Her powerful words reflect every human emotion you've ever encountered. The sensational songs are both extraordinarily beautiful and unbelievably sad. If you let them, they'll hit you where it hurts. How she does it, I just don't know!

She's enormously kind and generous and is the best supporter and promoter of other people's talents that I've ever seen. On a personal note, I'm eternally grateful to Fiona for using my photos and publicising my work.

I've never known anyone like her who has such passion for everything she does. I hope she doesn't mind if I describe her as music personified. I am in awe at the amount of work she achieves, whether it's composing, recording or writing. Does she ever sleep? And of course that passion and energy is contagious if you're lucky enough to get to work with her.

Fiona, never stop doing your thing, as no-one does it quite like you. Your inspiration is infinite! Thank you for all the help, support and motivation that you've given me.



Thank you Ron!



WOMEN WHO INSPIRE



ELINA
DUNI

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ENRICO CASONE

ELINA DUNI: AT ONE WITH THE SONG

BY NICK LEA

Vocalist, song stylist, storyteller, call her what you will, nothing quite describes Elina Duni. Over the course of more than a decade she has recorded a series of albums that have been breath-taking in their breadth of subject matter, musical context, and emotional content. Not content to remain still, she has forged relationships with musicians from across Europe to bring forth her musical vision.

If indeed, her vision seems to be fully formed and uniquely her own, it is one that has been hard won. Over the course of eight albums she has continued to develop as an artist looking to push herself, but more than that the albums also say much about her own life, loves and losses, and how she has emerged from each to become stronger as a person and musician.

Elina Dina was born in 1981 in Tirana, Albania although raised in Switzerland where she settled in Geneva with her mother in 1992 after the fall of the communist regime. Music was an important part of Elina's life from an early age prior to her relocation to Switzerland where she would take up classical piano lessons and go on to study singing and composition in the jazz department at the Hochschule der Künste Bern. As she recalls

“Well, as long as I can remember I was always interested in music. I always used to dance and sing whenever music was on. One of my first memories ever in my life, I was two, is hearing all of the Hungarian Valses by Brahms, for example. And when I was five, I asked my family if I could have some piano lessons. In Albania, at the time, it was not easy to have piano lessons. And it was very hard to find a piano. The only thing I could I could work on, and I could practice on, was a piece of wood with a keyboard drawn on it.

My uncle had made this for me. And then I entered the school at six years old, and it was a musical school as well, so I took an exam, and then they find out that I had very good ears and they gave me a violin. So, you couldn't choose an instrument because they would choose for you. That was that was very unfortunate, and that so at the same time I started playing the violin and also started singing for radio and television, and also in the circus. So, this let's say I was at a very very young age and I was already on stage at five singing. I was also starting already to study music with my violin and as long as I as I remember I always I always wanted to play music.”

While Elina has perhaps come to prominence through her recordings for ECM Records, she had also formed her own quartet and recorded for an independent label to gain exposure for her music. By the time Elina released her first album, Baresha, the musical rapport between the musicians was clearly evident, and Elina's distinctive style already in place. The album has special place in Elina's affections as she explains,

“Yes, my first quartet album. So, the band was formed in 2005. It was first a duo with pianist Colin Vallon, and then Bänz Oester (bass) and Norbert Pfammatter (drums) joined us to become a quartet. We started playing in Switzerland, and it was really lucky for me to play with such great musicians. I was just at the beginning of my studies; I was in my first year and I was already playing with really amazing musicians. I was already starting to be recognised on the jazz scene here in Switzerland, and Baresha is the first album with a quartet for me. It's also a kind of a puzzle of everything that I liked, everything that is all the music that touched me all the time, and it has lots of variation. It has jazz standards, French chanson Greek songs, Albanian songs, Bulgarian



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICHOLAS MASSON



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICHOLAS MASSON

songs so it has also this Balkan flavour with this French flavour with this jazz standard flavour. I think I've always I've always liked this kind of mix, to be able to do this this kind of different choices and styles because I always felt my desires in music were always very wide. I never wanted to confine myself into one style. The album was recorded with the help of Swiss radio, and it had a very, very warm welcome in in Switzerland and it was also well received in Germany, and it was on a small German label. And that was the beginning of my adventure with the quartet."

The quartet was obviously a place where Elina felt comfortable and able to develop her singing. Her relationship with pianist Colin Vallon that began in a duo format really flourished in the quartet. With a stable personnel Elina was keen to explore the possibilities available within the band and a further recording was to follow. "The second album, *Luma Luma* was recorded three years after *Baresha* which was recorded in 2006" Elina says. "*Luma Luma* was recorded in 2009 and released in 2010 and has the same musicians playing on that album too. And it was the same idea as on *Baresha*, it was the same kind of eclectic musical choices,

but maybe already a bit more tuned into to the Balkan region, except for cover of 'Riverman' by Nick Drake at the end.

So, the direction was already more going towards the Balkans and more languages were added to it, and I was singing in Romanian, Turkish, and also in the Roma language among others. So I was I was trying to, to make peace in the Balkans with this new album, and my idea was that I wanted to always build bridges through the music, and I thought the best way is to take all these different languages, different songs and to sing them and to try to make them mine. So, it was very important for me to be singing in, in all these languages and to do it to show the variety and the richness of this region, and also try to give the message that what unites us is much, much bigger and much important than what divides us. So, I was lucky to play with these crazy amazing musicians, Colin Vallon, Bänz Oester and Norbert Pfammatter and again the album was also recorded with the help of Swiss radio and was also released

on Meta Records, a very small and very, very nice German label. And this is the album that Manfred Eicher heard and then decided after this album to produce this quartet for ECM Records.”

This desire to sing in many different languages is an important and integral part of Elina’s music, and conveys and solidifies the notion that music is, and should be, a universal language with the message conveyed in the feeling imparted in the music, irrespective of the language. A gifted multi-linguist Elina continues

“I speak five different languages. So, I speak Albanian, French, German, Italian and English. And I also sing in many other languages like Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Bulgarian, Romanian, Yiddish and Armenian. I have probably forgotten some too (laughs). Some of the languages I can relate to like Portuguese, or Spanish. I mean speaking French and Italian are easy to relate to, I just can trust the sounds like Arabic.

“It’s a very interesting experience, to be in a country and to sing something in their language, so when I can I do it. And when I sang one Arabic song in Egypt last year, people were really moved and I was so moved that they could relate to it, you know, that I, I sang it in a way that they could relate to it and be touched by it. So, I was very, very happy about that. I love languages, and I also think that every language has its own rhythm, its own music. Language is a whole culture, it’s a whole different way how you look at the world. And also, the sounds, that every language has an identity and sound. So when I sing in a language that I don’t know, or cannot relate to, or any language that I don’t speak, I always ask someone for who that is their mother tongue is I always ask this person to read the text for me and then I try to imitate as best as I can. “

The music on both Baresha and Lume Lume is often very powerful. Elina brings to her vocal delivery a quiet assurance that conveys the meaning of the song deeply and profoundly even if the lyrics are sung in a language unfamiliar to the listener, and this combined with the arrangements and playing of quartet move effortlessly from strength to vulnerability and fragility at will. With performances such as ‘Lule’ with its lovely opening piano introduction from Colin Vallon, the dynamic energy of ‘Osso Varum’, and

sheer perfection on ‘Avec Le Temps’ on Baresha; followed by the driving ‘Kur më del n’sokak’, the delicate and percussive ‘Dhen mboro Manoula’ and a cappella ‘Kënga E Qamiles’ heard on Lume Lume it is hardly surprising that Manfred Eicher would come knocking at the door.

The Quartet’s debut album for ECM was recorded at Studios La Buissonne, near Avignon in February 2012, and released later that year. Matanë Malit, meaning ‘beyond the mountain’ finds Elina once again turning to her Albanian heritage and with producer Manfred Eicher’s uncanny ear and attention to detail the music and quartet are lifted to a higher plane. The quartet are now at a point in their time together that the empathy and understanding towards each other, the music and the text are inseparable. Elina allows plenty of space within the framework of the compositions for improvisation. Of the recording, at the time, the vocalist said that *“It’s about serving the song, and about reclaiming and reinventing it”*, and this trait is prevalent throughout this exquisite recording.

How the four musicians interact and interpret the material jumps out immediately on the album’s opening track, ‘Ka Një Mot’ (translating as for a year) from Elina’s solo vocal introduction and the delicate percussion from Norbert Pfammatter, to be followed by the quietly dramatic entry of arco bass and piano. Elina also sings wordlessly on this piece and the emotional depth of her voice is truly exceptional and incredibly moving. Always looking to move forward, impetus is maintained by continuous exploration of sound, dynamics and texture. Use of ostinato from bass and piano can create a delicious tension, combined by pianist Vallon also playing inside the piano brings unexpected aspects to the music that enhance both the song and context in which it is heard. Again, the emotional impact of compositions such as ‘Vajzë E Valëve’ meaning ‘Girl of the Wave’, which Elina recalls her paternal grandparents would sing at family gatherings, is very powerful.

While much of her time and effort was committed to the quartet, Elina was also keen to pursue other projects and even found time to record a solo album, Muza e Zeze, (The Black Muse) that was recorded in 2013 and released the following year.

“This was a very special project for me because it was just songs that I wrote, I wrote the music and the texts, and it was all in Albanian. It was a self-release and not on a label, but it was me who just decided to do it and it was especially for the Albanian audience because it was mostly Albanian songs. So, I started to explore something very different from what I was doing with the Quartet.”

Very different from the quartet it is indeed. With an instrumentation that features accordion, guitar tenor saxophone and clarinet, there is a lightness and more carefree air to the music that I had not heard from Elina before.

“While I was going on to play with a quartet and recording for ECM, I just I just did this this special album to me” explains Elina. “The people I played with on the album are jazz musicians from Albania and Kosovo who I know already for a long time, and it has a much more poppy flavour, singer/songwriter flavour. It was also a way for me to, to explore other horizons, and really based on songs. I really enjoyed it, and it was a very, very important moment for me also because I could be creative in different ways. I mean I felt very free to write everything that would come up, so I didn’t censor myself. I didn’t think ‘oh, this is too easy’ or ‘oh, this sounds too much like this or like that’, I just let it all come and just accepted it all. And it is also a project galactic album, in the sense that it has different roles and different sounds. It has more rocky songs as well, but also jazzy songs so I really enjoyed this this process.”

After the release of *Matanë Malit* there followed an intense period of travel and performing for the quartet which further consolidated the core strengths of the group. In July 2014 they were back at Studios La Buissonne to record their second album for ECM and fourth quartet album, *Dallëndyshe* (The Swallow). Quite different from the debut recording for the imprint, Elina told me in an interview at the time of the album’s release,

*“First I wanted *Dallëndyshe* to have a dramatic, a concept somehow. The themes of love and exile are very frequent in the Albanian folklore, and actually in all folklores. I also wanted this album to be a kind of a mirror of what is happening today in Europe with mi*

gration. Some songs were suggested by friends of mine, others were found by me searching on the Internet.”

Continuing she adds, *“Matanë Malit is more of a journey through the Albanian language and the Albanian history. It’s like a path that can go anywhere that has no direction, and the mood is often melancholic and contemplative. *Dallëndyshe* is lighter, the tone is brighter, and the rhythm is very present; sometimes like in the way of a mantra: repeated, emphasized but always kept in the distance, never exploding, mostly imploding.”*

Released in 2015 on ECM Records, *Dallëndyshe* perhaps found the quartet at the pinnacle of their creativity and would prove to be the final album from this particular line up. This was indicated at the time with Elina saying *“As for the quartet, we have some cool concerts planned for 2015 and 2016 as well as a tour in Russia.... after four albums in ten years we need some time now to think about what is coming next, to reinvent ourselves.”*

The circumstances and what was to come next, however, were somewhat different with Elina’s career path taking a new, and ultimately fulfilling new direction. Finding herself at something of a crossroads with not only the disbanding of the quartet but also the ending of a long-term relationship, Elina found herself without a regular group and seeking time to consolidate and seek a new direction for her music. Reflecting on this uncertain time, Elina says

“I was at this point of my life where the Quartet I played with for 11 years, had stopped, it finished in 2016, and I was left alone, actually. Also, I broke up from a long love story, as my relationship with Colin Vallon ended. So, I had to start to start all over again, and I was of course afraid of this loneliness. I think I thought at the time that the best thing to do was to embrace the loneliness and why not do a solo project that is about departure, that is about the pain that that we have every time something is torn away from us. Every time we go away from a love story or from family or from a friendship or from a certain state, we are always brought up to go away in different times of our lives; to depart and to go towards the unknown, so, this is this was my position”



Pausing to gather her thoughts, Elina continues, *“At the time I didn’t know what was coming up next, and I had to heal myself from the pain of being torn away, of things that that that were there for a long time for me. And the idea was how do we find the joy finally, even though we have to go through this desert of loneliness? And how do we find the joy to trust the unknown again? I thought that the best way to do this was exactly alone. It was nearly a kind of monastic process. I felt like a monk and just working with myself finding the songs and writing texts. First of all, it was a solo show, with texts and songs in different languages. Texts that I’ve been working on. So, I had to find the songs, I had work with the instruments, find the right voicings to add an accompaniment to myself as good as I could. I had to record myself to listen to what I like and what I didn’t like. It was a whole year of preparation to get to something that I was happy with, and then Manfred Eicher was keen to record it for his label.*

So, we recorded it, and it was it was a recording that I was very afraid of because I was totally alone. I mean, I was playing all the instruments, just trying to play under my voice as well as I could, and also try to, to be sincere and not just to do what I could but to embrace finally, the silence of that, and to embrace the minimalism of it. The recording went very well. It was magical, and I was very, very happy and also relieved that I could do it.”

The origins of the solo work can be seen to go back as far as 2008 and a bringing together of the work with her mother, the novelist, poet and essayist Besa Myftiu. Elina had been involved in recitals of her mother’s where the readings were interspersed with musical interludes on guitar and percussion, and this would gradually evolve into a full performance with Elina adding her own texts to the songs. *“I’ve been touring this; this show now since 2016. So, for five years now,”* says Elina *“and it’s still a show that touches people. And the songs, they’re really special and it’s really lovely to play it from time to time and perform the songs in different languages. The texts that I originally wrote in French for the show, I also translated them into German, English and Italian, so I can perform the show in four languages. And it has something a bit theatrical about it, it is like going into a journey with songs and*

different languages and different instruments and all these texts. So, it is something that I am somehow proud of that I could do it and after doing this solo project, I also I think I started to play differently with other musicians. I listened differently and maybe even appreciated things differently. What I was doing I loved even more playing with other people, I think.”

Ultimately, as with any project, the resulting music must stand or fall on its own merits. In my review of Partir I wrote at the time that... there is never any possibility of a solo recording containing any hint of self-indulgence or excess, as Duni plays to her strengths. Her accompaniment serves as no more than that, to support the song and to allow the meaning to come through. Not obscured by virtuosity, or the need to add overdubs or multi-tracking, Elina’s arrangements are pared tastefully to the bare minimum, whether accompanying herself on guitar, piano or the daf (the frame drum of the Middle East), the listener is always in the moment of the story told by Duni’s compelling and expressive voice. This is no more powerfully in evidence than on the a capella rendition of the traditional song from Kosovo, ‘Kanga E Kurbetit’ which translated means ‘The Exile Song’.

Partir maybe be a departure for Elina Duni in terms of working in a different musical environment, and working away from the quartet sound that she had inhabited for a decade, but finds the singer furthering her highly personal and emotive way of delivering a song that carries a strong message without becoming lost in pathos but delivers hope and optimism in the way she can she can reach out with her ability to communicate directly and intimately with her audience.

With the power of music and performing seemingly exerting a healing influence in Elina’s life, and this new way of listening to, and interacting with other musicians has ultimately yielded a new musical collaboration, and a new love in her life.

“In 2017, I also met the guitarist Rob Luft and it was the very right moment to meet him, and this is how we started playing together. Initially with songs from the Baresha album repertoire, and also some songs from my old quartet repertoire, Albanian songs.

This is how we how we started our collaboration, and then we went of course further with writing songs together and creating a new sound for our music. And meeting Rob was a very, very important moment for me.”

As if in recollection of this meeting at this important time in her life Elisa seems to light up adding,

“I had the feeling that two worlds, two different worlds, were meeting because he has something very similar, very sunny and bright and I was coming more from this minor lament thing you know, I had the feeling that our combination would be would be very interesting. I also had the feeling that when I was playing old songs with Rob that they kind of became new and also went further with him in this Albanian exploration, and Albanian folk songs.

Then we chose to play some very different songs and the arrangements were also very different from what I would have with a quartet and it also became more rhythmic. He also was like a second voice to me, and I think the music became very groovy. I mean, the Albanian parts the Albanian folk music part became very groovy. I also integrated the English language more into my music because we started composing songs together and I started writing texts in English, but also in French. We then also started singing standards together as well, so I had the feeling I somehow with the Lost Ships recording I came back to this to that same colour of Berisha many years ago that includes the folk influence, the jazz influence, the French influence, and also original compositions.

So more than ever I am, I am convinced that I don't want to stick into one style, and I feel I feel very open and to try to try out different things because so many different styles and languages touch me. And Rob is the same. Rob is also a very eclectic musician, who, who loves and plays all kinds of music. And I really appreciate this, this openness that that he has, and the way he sees it.”

Lost Ships by Elina and Rob Luft was recorded in February 2020 and released later that year and brings together a wider and far-reaching repertoire than Elina had previously tackled. In a set that of course embraces the traditional songs from her homeland of love and loss, also brings together jazz ballads, French chanson, American folk song with repertoire that includes 'I'm A Fool To Want You' made famous by Frank Sinatra, and with her stunningly beautiful reading Elina looks set to steal the song away from Old Blue Eyes, making the song wholly her own.

However, central to the success of the album is the contributions of Rob Luft. His guitar playing is immediately appealing and completely in tune with Elina. There is a new joy heard in her voice, that was perhaps missing from Partir, and the interaction with Luft and Fred Thomas (piano, drums) and the flugelhorn of Matthieu Michel brings a new and fresh ensemble sound. Quite rightly proud of the recording, Elina says

“It's the beginning of a musical journey, of a new musical journey, and the journey is still going on as we are preparing a new album together., and which will bring us somewhere else? I guess it's really, really thrilling to have found such a great, such a great partner.”

We would like to thank Nick Lea of Jazz Views for his continued support of our work and for contributing this article.







PHOTOGRAPHY BY ENRICO CASCONI

ON THE Women in Jazz Media PLAYLIST

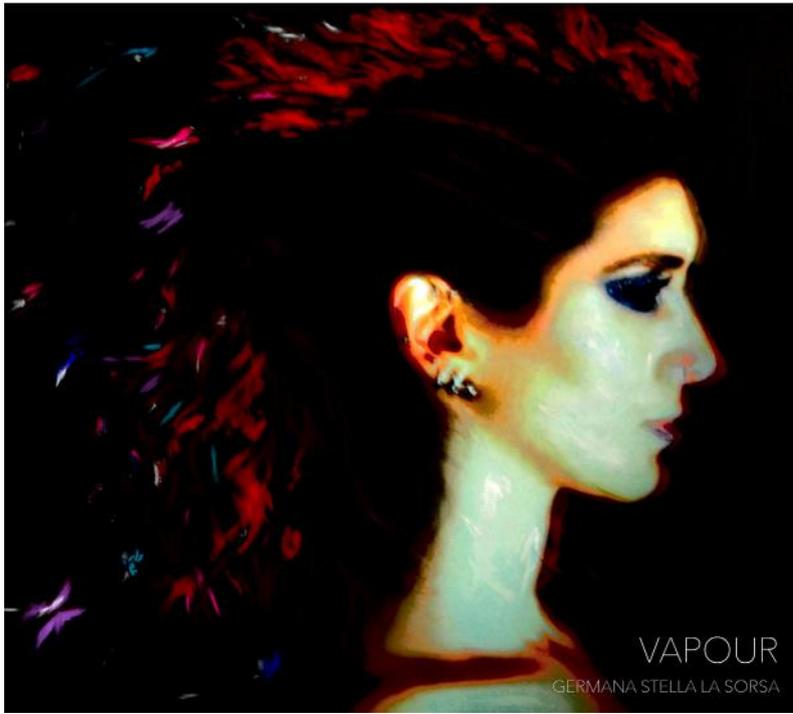






GERMANA
STELLA LA
SORZAA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARL HYDE



'Vapour'

Germana Stella La Sorsa - Voice
Nick Costley-White - Guitar
Sam Leak - Hammond Organ
Jay Davis - Drums
Recording Engineer: George Hider
Producer by Germana Stella La Sorsa
Mixing Engineer: Joe Boyle
Mastered by: Mark Wingfield

Released December 2021

Recorded in November 2019, 'Vapour' is the debut album from Italian London-based Jazz singer Germana Stella La Sorsa.

The album contains both original compositions and her unique take on two compositions by Frank Zappa and Hermeto Pascoal, two artists that have been vital to forming her compositional approach. Also appearing on this set is La Sorsa's reimagining of the Victor Young and Edward. Heyman song, "When I fall in Love".

In its style and conception, the music contained on Vapour is very eclectic, steeped in modern and contemporary sounds with a nod to the avant-garde.

ETHEREAL VOCALS AND CAPTIVATING COMPOSITIONS COMPLEMENTED BY A GREAT BAND." - JOY ELLIS



TARA

MINTON

HARPO



LES HARPES CAMAC
FRANCE



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDY PORTER

TARA MINTON & ED BABAR



TWO FOR THE ROAD

'Two For The Road'

Tara Minton - harp/vocals
Ed Babar - double bass
Stan Sulzmann - tenor saxophone
Lilia Iontcheva - percussion

Produced by Geoff Gascoyne
Arranged by Tara Minton
and Geoff Gascoyne
Engineered by David Holmes

Released jan 2022

Tara Minton is utterly subtle, and not just because of her musical gift. She's quite literally dedicated her life to her art- when I listen to her, I'm hearing Tara, not another musician whose virtuosity is solely interpretive. Her latest album 'Two For The Road' is a stunning collaboration with the excellent and versatile Ed Babar and certainly certifies the type of musical integrity that comes in a kind of sweet package deal with Tara's music. It's a reimagining of standards yes, but it's as if you're hearing them for the very first time. Complete with a line up of jazz greats, the backstory is equally organic and refreshing which I find imperative to share as a pre-set to the album's sound.

You can hear each of the artist's unique voices and talents on the album. The album opens up with Tara's velvet vocals over a string and guitar arrangement made in heaven, I think. "Life in A bubble" is written by producer and instrumentalist Geoff Gascoyne. Although you can hear a nod to Norma Winstone, Tara once again has a depth to her voice which lures the interest of the listener. It's a fantastic opening number (or dare I say prelude) to their take on "Sunny Side Of The Street". Re-harmonizing the A section gives it life, as Minton swings into the B section, using her harp as a tool for rhythmic freedom rather than delve too much in the lyrical. Babar is outstanding in his role as bassist who converses rather than just merely accompany.

Excerpt taken from Lara Eidi's review for Jazz in Europe. Originally published Feb 2022 on our WIJM column.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDY PORTER

‘Two For The Road is already being highly recommended by jazz critics and fans across the world and understandably so.

A great album.’

Jazz Views

ILARIA

CAPALBO



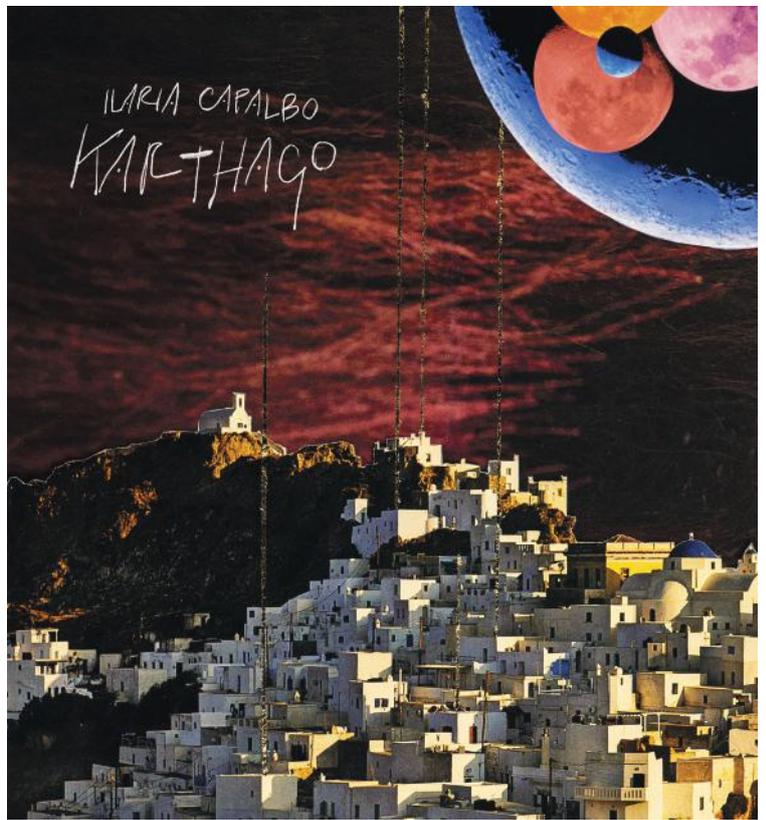




‘Karthago’

Ilaria Capalbo: bass & compositions
Thomas Backman: alto sax, clarinet
Fredrik Nordström: tenor &
baritone sax
Andreas Hourdakis: guitar
Fredrik Rundqvist: drums
Tobias Wiklund: cornet (on Belóved)
Mats Äleklint: trombone (on
Belóved)

Released on Jan 14th 2022



Ilaria Capalbo's first work as a leader is inspired by the story of Karthago, a powerful city founded on the southwest coast of the Mediterranean by a legendary queen and doomed by its closeness to the colliding empire of Rome. The lingering motives in this tale, part ancient history and part myth like many of the stories that the Mediterranean tells, are the courage, resiliency and vulnerability needed to grow in the light of uniqueness, to pursue a vision and to stand by it – regardless of odds – not to be forgotten.

The band is a quintet featuring Ilaria on bass alongside Thomas Backman and Fredrik Nordström on reeds, Andreas Hourdakis on guitar and Fredrik Rundqvist on drums. It occasionally grows into a septet with the addition of Tobias Wiklund on cornet and Mats Äleklint on trombone. Together, they give life to music with a narrative depth, as though outlining a story: ample room is given to the imaginative force of some among the most creative musicians on the Swedish scene, whose different personalities create a powerful and original balance under the steady guide of a leader from the rhythm section. The tunes are crafted at the intersection between free improvisation, rock riff-building and echoes of contemporary classical repertoire: the band delivers them through a cohesive and fearless sound.

PATRICIA

LOPEZ





PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS NICHOLLS





‘Wanderlust’

Patricia López - alto sax, tenor sax, flute and composition

Manuel Ojeda - guitar

Ian Elizondo - double bass

Damian Taveira - drums

Released January 2020

From Montevideo (Uruguay) to the world, saxophonist, flutist, and composer Patricia López, travels with a strong musical personality, developing her own sound in jazz, creative music, and Latin American rhythms.

With more than eighteen years of training, she completed the Superior Jazz Technique of the “Manuel de Falla” Conservatory (Buenos Aires), participated in many international workshops and residences in Curitiba, Florianopolis, Sao Paulo, New York and the Netherlands, and was awarded twice by FONAM and MEC scholarships to study abroad.

In August 2019th, she recorded “Wanderlust”, her first album, along with Manuel Ojeda (guitar), Damian Taveira (drums) and Ian Elizondo (double bass).

This work brings together seven compositions that are characterized by strong group communication, with influences from contemporary jazz and Latin American music. Through textures, harmonies, climates and sounds, they develop multiple aesthetics, structures of composition and improvisation.

In 2021st WANDERLUST won the “Graffiti Uruguayan Award” as the Best Uruguayan Jazz Album.

CECILIA

SANCHIETTI





PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERTO SCORTA



‘Postcard from Gamla Stan’

Cecilia Sanchietti
Anna Lundqvist
Linus Lindblom
Simon Westman
Josef Kallerdahl

Released 2021

Cecilia Sanchietti is an Italian musician, drummer and composer, experienced percussion teacher, art director of WinJazz Festival and JazzMine Network. Artist of the roster of Italian Institutes of culture abroad (CIDIM)

Cecilia has released three albums under her own name as leader drummer and composer.

The last one, “POSTCARD FROM GAMLA STAN” (Blu Jazz 2021), was launched with the Cecilia Sanchietti Swedish Quintet (Anna Lundqvist, Linus Lindblom, Simon Westman and Josef Kallerdahl), in cooperation with the Italian Institute of Culture in Stockholm and the Swedish Embassy in Rome.

“LA TERZA VIA – The third side of the coin”, was released in 2018 with BluJazz (Chicago), Ron Savage line notes, Marco Siniscalco on electric bass, Pierpaolo Principato on piano, Nicolas Kummert (BG) on tenor sax.

The first one “CIRCLE TIME” was released in 2015 with Alfa Music label (IT), David Boato trumpet feat.

She had with all CD’s international tour (Italy, Germany, Poland, Croatia, UK, Sweden, Norway, Turkey, Belgium).



SHANNON BARNETT



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KILIAN AMREHN





'Bad Lover'

Shannon Barnett (Trombone)
Stefan Karl Schmid (Tenor
sax)

Daivd Helm (Bass)

Fabian Arends (Drums)

Released February 2022

“Barnett is a trombonist who tells stories with her instrument, seemingly squeezing out words and sentences, whistling melodies and trills - completely at peace with herself and her tool’

Dylan Cem Akalin

Shannon Barnett is an Australian trombonist and composer, currently based in Cologne, Germany. She established herself as an important voice in the Australian scene by performing in ensembles including Vada, The Bamboos, The Vampires, and as a guest with the Andrea Keller Quartet, on the 2004 ABC Jazz release Angels and Rascals. Barnett has also appeared with the Australian Art Orchestra, Barney McAll’s Mother of Dreams and Secrets feat. Kurt Rosenwinkel, Charlie Haden and from 2009-2010, she worked as a multi-instrumentalist and composer with the contemporary circus group Circus Oz.

In early 2014, she moved to Cologne, Germany, to take up a position with the WDR Big Band which gave her the opportunity to perform with guests including Vince Mendoza, Ron Carter, Joshua Redman, Maria Schneider and Paquito D’Rivera. She has also become very active in the local scene. Her quartet, featuring Stefan Karl Schmid, David Helm and Fabian Arends released their debut album in 2016 on Double Moon/Challenge Records, and the band was subsequently nominated as a semi-finalist in the 2017 Neuer Deutscher Jazzpreis.

In 2018 she composed and presented the cross-disciplinary work ‘Dead Weight’ for musicians and fitness studio. In April 2019 she began as Professor for Jazz Trombone at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz in Cologne, Germany. In 2020 she received the WDR Jazz Prize for Improvisation and in 2021 she was nominated for the German Jazz Prize in the brass instrument category.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIA GOLDSBY

KNOCKING DOWN THE DOOR

We are thrilled to partner with Celine Peterson and Black Lives in Music in our podcast series 'Knocking Down The Door' platforming inspirational black women. The title was inspired by Ashaine's White interview with Angelika Beener who said:

'Do the work, rise to the occasion as much as you can and then shoot your shot! You'd be surprised who might give you a chance, especially if you are black and especially if you are woman. This is a good time for us to kick in the door'

Our latest episode features the incredible Camilla George





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