



U3A Jazz Appreciation Network

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Newsletter 1/15

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G'day all,

First - apologies. I had every intention of doing an early autumn (cue Stan Getz) newsletter, following July Study Day. But I got a virus which stayed with me from September to Christmas. I lost a holiday to it as well.

So - Let's have a quick look at Study Day 2014. I was delighted with your response, which justified my speculating money on a bigger venue. I think we had about 240 people there. I was very happy with the venue though there were three legitimate grouses from you.

1 – The lunch-time queue.

2 - The lack of a walkabout microphone for the q & a session in the afternoon.

3 – Directions map could have been better.

Just a handful (and it was only a handful) of you were unhappy with the whole thing. Fair enough – you can't win 'em all. On the other hand, I'd like to thank the dozens and dozens of you who took the trouble to write or email, expressing your enjoyment. Because of that, I've decided to do another one this year. I have booked the same venue – the Kennedy Hall at Cecil Sharp House. I've discussed our problems with them; there's not much they can do about the snack bar – what there is is what there is. I suggest more of you either bring lunches or venture out into Camden. They will provide a walkabout microphone and will see what they can do about a clearer access map.

From my point of view, the advantage of Kennedy Hall is its capacity. I didn't have to turn anyone away.

Scott and his talented musicians are happy to do another one for us. One or two of you have said that they are getting a bit 'samey'. Maybe, in that the morning will resemble one of Scott's tutorials, with plenty of explanation and demonstration and the afternoon will be a straight run-through of what we learned in the morning. It has to be that way. It's a Study Day; there must be learning involved. I can't simply put on an entertaining gig. I have talked to Scott and he will address, amongst other things, how does a section in a big band actually work (role of leaders etc), and improvisation in a big band and small group situations.

So – basic details

Study day 2015 – Sounds Like Jazz

Scott Stroman and the Guildhall School of Music Jazz Orchestra

Date – July 15th 2015

**Place – The Kennedy Hall, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, London
NW1 7AY**

Time – Start 11 am – one hour for lunch – finish by 4pm.

Cost - £20 a head.

Please send me

- A cheque for £20 a head, payable to Third Age Trust (NOT U3A)
- On the back of the cheque, put name and address, and name of U3A.
- A stamped addressed envelope, so that I can send you a receipt that acts as a ticket and a map of the venue. Last year between 30 and 40 of you forgot the same – that's why I'm asking you to put name and address on the back of the cheque as well.
- Please mark your envelope to me 'GSD'
- Address envelopes to – Mike Whitaker, 26 Parkfield Close, North Petherton, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 6QY

Despite newsletters and several mentions in T A M, a number of you still contacted me in late summer, telling me you hadn't known about the event. Can I please ask those of you who are jazz lovers but whose U3A does not have a JAG, to spread the word as best you can. I do what I can but, as I'm sure you know, all subject advisers are volunteers. There is me, and just me! I'd like to have Cameron Mackintosh's resources at my disposal but I haven't !

Residential event for players

Can I now float another idea that I've had on the back burner for a while? Is there any interest in a residential event for people who play jazz and who'd like to improve, or who would just enjoy playing with others? I can see all the difficulties – geographical spread; range of abilities; range of instruments played. But let's not dwell on the difficulties – is there any interest?

Next, and vitally, are there members out there who would act as tutors – free of charge? Remember that U3A members cannot charge U3A members for their services and U3A does not use paid tutors. The whole ethos of U3A is self-directed learning. Has anyone any experience of such an event? How long? What sort of venue? Would a weekend be long enough? Please get in touch with your views on this. We'll worry about likely cost later.

Now for some snippets:-

Hayling Island Jazz break

19th June – 3 nights.

I know that a number of you enjoyed last year's jazz break at Mill Rythe - Hayling Island, Hants. They are doing another early summer jazz break. It's strictly Trad – bands include **New Orleans Z'hulus, John Maddocks Jazzmen, Andrew Hall's Memories of New Orleans, John Shillito Band, The Jazzaholics with baby Jools** Places are selling fast.

Phone - 02392 460044 or visit their web site - <http://www.mill-rythe.com/>

Have you all discovered www.sandybrownjazz.co.uk. This is a website that ought to be in every jazz lovers' favourites. It's an on-line magazine, full of gossip, articles, snippets to amuse, a quiz, reviews of new releases and so on. It appears every month and covers all sorts and conditions of jazz. Very highly recommended.

University of Texas jazz appreciation course

Member John Green of Sheffield has undertaken the University of Texas jazz appreciation course (distance learning, of course – he hasn't been to Austin). This appears to be a comprehensive course in the history and understanding of jazz, but, John says, you need to be prepared to devote 5 hours a week whilst it lasts. John is

happy to talk to anyone who is interested in having a go. Email him – john.green@jngreen.plus.com.

U3A Jazz Band St Albans area

Ray Wilson of St Albans U3A has assembled a U3A big(ish) band. Its membership is drawn from U3As all over Hertfordshire but Ray tells me it is open to members of any U3A. The last time I heard from Ray he was looking particularly for brass players – trumpet and trombone – though any front line horns would be welcome. If you are interested, get in touch with Ray – wilsonranda@ntlworld.co.

Tim Whitehead

Mike Rance, of Fleet U3A, has contacted me. Fleet U3A have a tradition of inviting top-flight musicians to their gatherings and, recently, they enjoyed a session with Tim Whitehead. Tim is a jazz musician, composer and educator (go to www.timwhitehead.co.uk for more detail.) Tim enjoyed his meeting at Fleet and has said that he would be interested in exploring the possibility of similar sessions with other U3As. Get in touch with him – timgwhitehead@yahoo.com.

Shellac DJ

Hugh Parry of Aberystwyth U3A is a collector of 78s, cylinders and wind-up gramophones. He is interested in developing a career as a shellac dj, by taking some of his records and machines to events and playing vintage records on veteran machines. I get the impression that he doesn't want to travel too far beyond Wales but if you have any ideas for him, get in touch – woolgathererinwales@operamail.com.

Virtual J A G

Janet Webb of Lincoln Heath U3A contacted me a while ago about starting virtual groups. Her interests are in Country Music and Blues (well, Blues is in our territory, isn't it?) A virtual group would cater for those people whose interest is not catered for in an actual group and for whom there is no likelihood of an actual group being successfully formed. It's based on email. Members would circulate pieces of music of interest and comment on them. I've come across the same sort of thing in writing groups. Janet tells me that she has got the nucleus of a Country Music group off the ground but no joy yet with Blues. If you are interested, get in touch with her – janetwebbsite@hotmail.co.uk. And, for my own benefit, have any of you encountered virtual groups in other subjects of limited interest ?

Jazz holidays.

I am sometimes contacted by people wanting to go on jazz holidays, especially abroad. I usually respond by suggesting our ubiquitous friend Google. But have any of you found good, reliable providers of jazz holidays – people that you would be happy to recommend to fellow U3A members ? Let me know.

Housekeeping issues.

I try to keep the list of people interested in jazz up-to-date. The database is held by National Office (data protection etc) but I send messages adding or deleting people to National Office as I am made aware of them. But we live in an imperfect world. Sometimes I get an email address wrong and sometimes I forget to update the record. Sorry, but to err is human.... So if you get stuff from me that you no longer want, just tell me (politely, please). If you are not on my list, let me know and I'll add you. To avoid drowning, I have deleted all emails from last year and shredded all correspondence relating to last year's Study Day.

And finally....

Some of you may have been to see the film Whiplash. I am assured by my friends at Guildhall School of Music that the film is in no way a representation of life in a music school !

Please keep in touch and if you think there is anything I can (try to) do to help, get in touch. And spread the word about 15th July. I look forward to getting your bookings.

Mike Whitaker