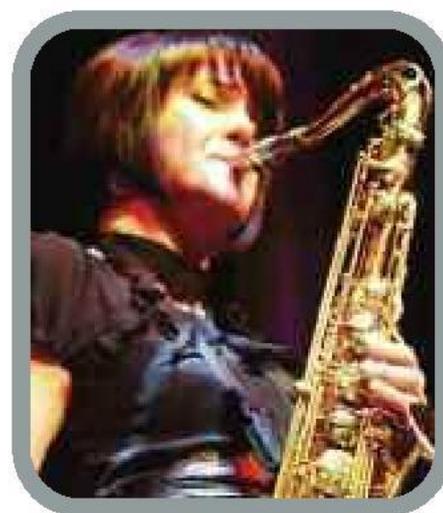
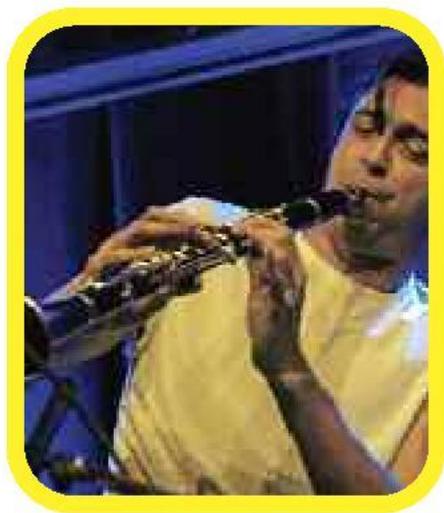


COLD COMFORT & HOME TRUTHS

Informing the review of jazz in England

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Chris Hodgkins and John Fordham



Cold Comfort and Home Truths: Informing the review of jazz in England

Cold Comfort and Home Truths: informing the review of jazz in England – introduction and summary

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1 Introduction and background

1.1 Review of jazz in England

Please note this is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this document are those of the author.

In July 2016, the All-Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group (APPJAG) wrote to Darren Henley, CEO, Arts Council England to ask if the Arts Council would be prepared to undertake a review of jazz in England. The Arts Council declined this request.

APPJAG asked Chris Hodgkins to undertake the review which he agreed to do on a pro bono basis. Funding to undertake the review in partnership with MusicTank, University of Westminster, was secured with legacy funding from JazzUK formerly known as Jazz Services. MusicTank was to be the publisher of the Review of Jazz in England but regrettably MusicTank itself closed in November 2018. Its programme director, Jonathan Robinson set up ThinkMusic, an independent music business research consultancy and project management company, which is continuing the partnership in an advisory capacity. The legacy funding from JazzUK has been re-routed with the kind assistance of Help Musicians.

The review of jazz in England concerns the operation, management and business of jazz, its purpose being twofold:

1. To help the jazz constituency in England to better understand and utilise its resources in the support of jazz most efficiently and effectively;
- 2 To make the case for improving the support, sustainability and promotion of jazz and to assist in the continued development of a healthy jazz scene in England.

The review of jazz in England is about what makes jazz tick in England in terms of the infrastructure, promotion, marketing, funding, musicians, and the economics of jazz, jazz education, the culture of jazz and organisational change. Jazz has always been the Cinderella of the arts in the UK in terms of funding and yet it has always consistently punched above its weight with a volunteer and professional promoters network that is second to none, hand-in-hand with musicians that are making waves both here in the UK and abroad.

1.2 Cold Comfort and Home Truths – informing the review of jazz in England

Cold Comfort and Home Truths – Informing the review of jazz in England sets out the hinterland of the development of jazz in England. It is not about the musicology of jazz; nor is it a history of jazz in the UK. The music always reinvents itself at regular intervals. *Cold Comfort and Home Truths – Informing the review of jazz in England* was written firstly to inform the review of jazz in England' and secondly to identify those areas and gaps that require further research, to build

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the case for more support - from funding bodies, Government and Parliament – both of whom need hard data as evidence.

Cold Comfort and Home Truths – Informing the review of jazz in England is not about the performance or development of jazz in terms of music, nor a history of jazz in the UK; the music always reinvents itself at regular intervals. Jazz in the UK has survived the vicissitudes of changing fads and fashions in music and will continue to do so.

Eric Hobsbawm in 'Uncommon People' reinforces this message:

“Jazz has shown extraordinary powers of survival and self-renewal in a society not designed for it.”

Underpinning the review is the fact that jazz in England (and indeed across the UK) is “rich beyond the dreams of avarice” in terms of human resources: jazz musicians, composers, volunteer promoters, commercial promoters, audiences, educators, youth orchestras, jazz festivals, Arts Council England funded National Jazz Portfolio Organisations a small but growing service economy and jazz archives; but there is plenty of room for improvement.

To put it simply, jazz is people rich and cash poor.

Jazz is rather like Alice in 'Through the Looking Glass and What I Found There' – *“The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today”*.

The term 'jazz' refers to jazz from early music (classic jazz) to whatever is happening on the stages of jazz clubs and concert halls today and tomorrow.

For the avoidance of doubt, the writing of *Cold Comfort And Home Truths – Informing the review of jazz in England* commenced in November 2017 and was completed bar the shouting in December 2018; events after that time, with the exception of Covid-19, whilst germane, will not appear. Whilst much of the data is historical, every attempt has been made to find up to the minute information, the absence of which points to the considerable information gaps that need to be filled.

2 Summary of Cold and Home Truths – informing the review of jazz in England by John Fordham

The American-born art of jazz has been a vivid presence in English music for over 90 years - taking root in the country's culture within a decade of the first jazz recordings being released in New York in 1917, and fascinating successive generations of players and fans ever since with variations on the original models that have told increasingly distinctive local stories.

But the focus of this report is not a comprehensive history of jazz music's evolution in England, intriguing though it has been. Our objectives are practical and contemporary - to enable the English jazz constituency to use its jazz-supporting resources as effectively as possible and to help facilitate the promotion of all forms of jazz, and further its development. This report thus surveys an English jazz community, currently in excellent creative fettle amidst severe economic hardship, from the starting point of two key questions: “Where are we now? And where do we want to be?”

The parameters of 'Cold Comfort and Home Truths' begin where the fairly healthy economics and self-sustaining fusion of jazz and pre-rock commercial and dance styles left off over 60 years ago. Jazz, which dominated the sounds of mass-entertainment in the first half of the 20th century, moved aside for Elvis Presley and The Beatles, and thus closer to art-music - with its enthusiastic but inevitably smaller audiences, and the concomitant necessity for investment and support beyond the means of box-offices or record shops alone. This report therefore examines how jazz in England has adapted to that change, and where it stands today.

Jazz in England possesses immense wealth in terms of human resources - players, composers, promoters, educators, festival-organisers, reporters and archivists, who frequently operate as

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unpaid volunteers to perform or facilitate the music they love. But this is not, nor should it be, a state of affairs that can be assumed to survive forever without proper nourishment.

We therefore focus on the contradiction between the diverse skills, backgrounds, cultural value, and internationally acclaimed creativity of English jazz musicians today, and the difficulty the majority of them experience in getting even close to the national average wage from music-making alone.

Attendance figures for 2018 show the year's audiences for classical performances at 3.4 million, those for jazz at 2.1 million, and for opera 1.7 million - yet in that period, the Arts Council's National Portfolio Organisations received the following levels of subsidy/ funding: opera was allocated £57.1 million in subsidy by Arts Council England (ACE), classical music £19 million, and jazz precisely £1,712,870.

The cultural assumptions and entrenched attitudes that have led to such an undervaluation of jazz's genre-spanning influence and contribution to the country's cultural capital are among the deep-seated problems this report addresses.

We begin with the demographics of the jazz audience and its regional variations, considerations of ethnicity, gender and disability, the practitioners in performance and education and their typical incomes, opportunities and obstacles for jazz work abroad, and the promotion of live jazz from the perspectives of the largely voluntary sector presenting the music in small clubs, and the more generously funded and sometimes commercially sponsored world of jazz festivals - which have expanded significantly in recent years.

Audience demographics currently indicate a preponderance of middle-aged and older attenders for jazz and a sharp decline in the 16-24 age range - but though the latter is noted as a development that urgently invites explanation and more inventive marketing and promotional strategies, it can be balanced against a recent upsurge of interest in jazz-related music among young city-dwellers - stimulated by new relationships between jazz and genres such as hip-hop, electronica, and grime, and in new club venues never previously considered part of the 'jazz circuit'.

Recordings - both physical and digital - are examined here - in terms of the valuable expansion of ways to disseminate niche musics like jazz, and the more problematic shift toward free mass consumption, streaming and copyright infringement, with their possible impact on consumer expectation as to whether music should be a commodity worth paying for at all. The role of social media in jazz marketing is explored, and the relative importance of the BBC, Jazz FM, TV, online radio, print media and blogs in the representation and dissemination of jazz.

Jazz education is explored in detail, in schools and in private teaching, in the development of Music Hubs after 2011, and in the rise of the formerly all-classical conservatoires in the teaching of jazz over the past three decades. Though the latter change has greatly expanded the number of accomplished jazz players in the marketplace, the report nonetheless notes that "the supply side is outstripping the demand side".

The most substantial investigation in this report, however, is reserved for the public funding of jazz - which began with an Arts Council bursary for the late composer Graham Collier in 1968 and has become a small but significant source of funds for jazz performers and promoters ever since. But though such funding has been invaluable down the years, the levels of investment for jazz as compared to other arts has remained low, and we suggest that better-quantified and more transparently explained objectives for the spending of £1.45 billion in taxpayers' money for 2018-22 are urgently needed.

In a detailed survey of Arts Council governance and successive restructurings of funding methods and various 'big-picture' visions over the period since public subsidy for jazz in England began, we draw attention to the continuing concentration of the Council's top officials into a narrow socio-cultural group, conflicts of interest where officials and Council members are also involved with clients' companies, recent preference for 'relationship managers' over specialist art-form administrators, emphasis on expensively prestigious 'cultural powerhouses'

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at the expense of grass-roots development, and a seeming lack of transparency, documentation, and accountability in decision-making.

This report suggests that the time has come for an overall evaluation of Arts Council England by the Select Committee for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

In conclusion, 'Cold Comfort and Home Truths' proposes that a transformative cultural change of attitudes to jazz in some quarters of England's most influential arts-funding and media establishments will be necessary before jazz gains its proper stature in relation to other music-based arts, and the playing field of 21st century arts sponsorship, public funding and media representation can be equitably levelled out.

We recognise that such cultural changes are not overnight achievements, but as we have attempted to show in this report, the proper recognition and appreciation of jazz in English arts-establishment thinking is decades overdue, despite many earnest - and doubtless well-intentioned - reassurances down the years.

We have perhaps drawn on an unexpected source for a way out - if jazz's famous appetite for the unconventional and improvisational is any guide - in invoking theories advanced by that august body, the Chartered Institute of Management. The Institute refreshingly sidesteps rarefied conceptions of the meanings of 'culture' in favour of the practical precis 'how we do things' - which it considers to be a confection of habits, unwritten rules, traditions, emotional reflexes, participatory and leadership behaviour, and much else.

In the terms of this analysis, 'organisational change' is about changing the way we do things to help steer jazz in England towards what we believe to be its rightful status - as a creative musical art comparable to its much better-resourced peers and as deserving of serious respect, and as an often overlooked source of the kind of inclusive ideas and inspirations that the future nourishment of all contemporary arts depends on. Thoughtful attention to this long-neglected anomaly will help to make jazz in England more effective and equal, but the long-term cultural effects may well spread far wider.

John Fordham

March 2019

3 Terms of reference for the review of jazz in England

The aims of the terms of reference will be achieved in two phases:

Phase one - Where are we now? - will look at the current state of jazz in England by examining the areas stated in the terms of reference and informed by five key surveys aimed at the jazz constituency. The findings will shape and inform the review of jazz in England.

Phase two - Where do we want to be? - entails the development of a succinct action plan for jazz in England that will be placed out for consultation to people who respond to the review of jazz in England and the jazz constituency at large.

The terms of reference are set out below:

- **The audience for jazz** - its size compared to other music forms; demographic details such as location, age, gender, diversity, socio-economic ranking; diversity, disability and access; attendance and ticket sales. The media paints a vibrant club culture for jazz in London but what of the rest of England? What does it take to build an audience for jazz especially in the younger age group?
- **Musicians** in terms of supply and demand, earnings, areas of employment in the UK and abroad, education, work opportunities, access to funding, gender, disability and diversity. The export and impact of British jazz musicians working abroad and the return

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to the UK economy. The impact on UK musicians now that the UK has left the EU and its effect on the UK jazz scene.

- The **promotion of live jazz** in respect of (a) jazz promoters and producers - voluntary, publicly funded and commercial; (b) Musicians booked concerning numbers of musicians, their gender, disability and diversity; (c) Public and private funding of promoters, festivals. Marketing and ticket sales; (d) the economics of promoting and impact analysis.
- To quantify the loss of earnings, gigs and work resulting from **COVID-19** for jazz musicians, promoters and Jazz Festivals. To ascertain the effect of COVID-19 on current and potential attenders of jazz gigs in terms of future likely demand and willingness to attend jazz gigs. The impact of the COVID-19 on individuals and organisations and jazz in England and what steps can be taken to mitigate the effects..
- **Artist management and agencies.**
- The **recording and publishing** of jazz. Physical and digital distribution; jazz record labels and distributors. Sales. Streaming and music synchronisation rights; intellectual property and publishing
- The use of **social and digital media** by the jazz constituency, audiences, musicians and promoters. The use of digital technology currently and in the future.
- **Jazz in the media.** Examine coverage in print, on air, on screen, online and social media including jazz writers and broadcasters.
- **Education and training** from schools to colleges, access routes into jazz both formal and informal: (a) Professional and continuing professional development and training; (b) The role of Music Hubs and their value to jazz and to jazz education; (c) The work and role of youth jazz orchestras in England - access to them and levels of gender and diversity; (d) The role and work of jazz educators.
- Explore **the value created by Arts Council investment in National Portfolio and jazz sector support organisations.** Look at the structure, strengths and weaknesses of these organisations and how examples of best practice can be promoted elsewhere in England.
- The **work, policies, plans and levels of public funding and promotion of jazz of key publicly funded organisations** such as Arts Council England, British Council, BBC, local authorities, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and charitable organisations such as the Performing Right Society Foundation.
- Levels of private and commercial **funding of jazz.**
- The **prevailing culture** of jazz in England and the management of change.
- **Jazz Archives** – their funding, development and exploitation.