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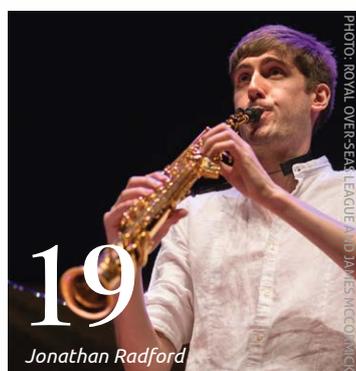
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Royal Conservatoire of Scotland launches Clarinet Festival and Conservatoire Clarinet Competition

On Sunday 14 October, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) will host a new Conservatoire Clarinet Festival, featuring masterclasses, concerts and workshops for clarinetists of all ages and abilities. Sponsored by Buffet Crampon, the day will feature Buffet artists Nicolas Baleyrou and Maximiliano Martin, as well as RCS teaching staff John Cushing, Yann Ghro, Lawrence Gill and Josef Pacewicz.

As part of the festival, the RCS has launched a new Conservatoire Clarinet Competition, sponsored by The Wind Section music shop. The competition is open to all young clarinetists of school age and pre-undergraduate study. After an initial video round, four finalists will be chosen to compete in the live final during the one-day festival. The first prize winner will be awarded a voucher from The Wind Section worth £2,000, which can be put towards the purchase of an instrument. A Most Promising Award will also be given to an applicant from the first round who shows potential for the future.

Please note that entries for this year's competition closed on 30 August. The competition was advertised in early August on CASSGB's regular email newsletter, which exists to provide members with news and information between the quarterly issues of *Clarinet & Saxophone*. Email membership@cassgb.org to be added to the email newsletter recipient list if you do not already receive it. The newsletter is free of charge and available to both members and non-members.

Tickets and more details about the festival can be found on the RCS website.

www.rcs.ac.uk

First RCM Yamaha Clarinet Prize winner announced

Lewis Graham has won the inaugural Royal College of Music (RCM) Yamaha Clarinet Prize. The prize was open to RCM students in their second year of an undergraduate music degree who had been awarded a distinction in their first-year recitals. The competition was adjudicated by Geoff Parkin, clarinetist and director of arts at the Royal Over-Seas League.



Lewis Graham (left) with adjudicator Geoff Parkin

RCM's head of woodwind, Simon Channing, said: 'We are so grateful to Yamaha for their generous sponsorship and for their support of the RCM woodwind faculty. The support comes just a month after Yamaha generously put on an absolutely fantastic class at the college demonstrating the acoustics and sound production of the clarinet.'

Yamaha's Jeremy Smith said: 'We are delighted to have partnered with the Royal College of Music for this annual Yamaha Clarinet Prize. We look forward to continuing this partnership and supporting these talented individuals.'

Testament published by Saxtet

Following March's world premiere of *Testament*, a concerto for alto saxophone and orchestra by Jeffery Wilson (see summer issue, page 36), Saxtet Publications have published the work in two formats: one with orchestral parts and the other with piano reduction.

Wilson said: 'Having played the saxophone myself for over 45 years it seemed timely to pen a concerto for this most iconic instrument and to combine elements of improvisation with more formal compositional techniques. This is a musical language that has been forming over the years and now, I feel, is coming to fruition.'

A version for wind orchestra is due to be performed by Rob Buckland and the Royal Air Force Music Service later in 2018. Buckland gave the premiere performance and is the work's dedicatee.

www.saxtetpublications.com



Rob Buckland and Jeffery Wilson

Special report

BOPFEST JAZZ FESTIVAL

19 to 25 November 2018

Toulouse Lautrec Jazz Club and Restaurant, London

by Chris Walters



Allison Neale



Grant Stewart

PHOTO: JOHN ABBOTT

BopFest is a jazz festival run by jazz musicians Nat Steele and Allison Neale. It features a week of some of the best British bebop and straight-ahead jazz, with a host of visiting US and European artists complementing the line-up. Now in its third year and supported by Arts Council England, its intimate central London venue offers cabaret style seating for 80 people. There is also a separate piano bar and restaurant for support acts. It runs at the same time as the London Jazz Festival.

Several saxophonists from the UK and further afield are appearing at this year's festival, which also includes an improvisation workshop with tenorist Grant Stewart on the afternoon of Saturday 24 November (see below).

Each evening there is a duo performing in the restaurant at 7-7.50pm, and the main act starts at 8pm in the jazz club upstairs. One ticket covers both events. On Sunday 25 November the evening timings are 6-6.50pm and 7pm. Seating is first come first served, with tickets available via the website (www.bopfest.co.uk).

Monday 19 November features the Claus Raible/Herwig Gradischnig Quintet, plus support from the Will Arnold-Forster Duo (£14). The German pianist Claus Raible opens BopFest with a pan-European quintet co-hosted by Austrian tenor saxophonist Herwig Gradischnig, exploring the music of great bop pianist/composer Elmo Hope, with UK trumpeter Steve Fishwick, drummer Matt Home and bassist Giorgos Antoniou.

On Tuesday 20 November, the Rob Barron New Quintet performs, plus the Claus Raible and Giorgos Antoniou Duo (£14). Rooted in the bebop and hardbop tradition, UK pianist Rob Barron's group focuses on fresh new arrangements of classic jazz, popular songs and original compositions, drawing influence from Cedar Walton and Wes Montgomery as well as from the current New York scene.

Wednesday 21 November sees the Osian Roberts Quartet, plus the Dave Chamberlain Duo (£14). Welsh Sonny Rollins-influenced tenor saxophonist Osian Roberts leads a quartet of UK straight-ahead and bebop musicians paying homage to his musical heroes, featuring Gabriel Latchin on piano, Jeremy Brown on bass and Matt Fishwick on drums.

Thursday 22 November features Allison Neale and the West Coast Quartet, plus the Luke Steele and Gabriel Latchin Duo (£14). Seattle-born alto saxophonist Allison Neale, influenced by Art Pepper and Paul Desmond, presents her quartet with a programme of West Coast and Cool School

jazz, with young New York pianist Alex Bryson, double bassist Dave Chamberlain and drummer Matt Fishwick.

On Friday 23 November, Artie Zaitz's Organ Combo performs, plus the Mark Crooks and Graham Harvey Duo (£14). Young guitarist Artie Zaitz leads a Hammond organ-based combo paying homage to the late 50s and early 60s Blue Note recordings of Grant Green, with organist Ross Stanley, Steve Brown on drums and Dave Pattman on congas and percussion.

On Saturday 24 November at lunchtime, the jazz club features Ofer Landsberg quartet music (1-3pm, £14). Israeli guitarist Ofer Landsberg leads his new London quartet paying homage to the greats of the music, Charlie Parker and Bud Powell, with Alex Bryson on piano, Dario di Lecce on double bass and Matt Fishwick on drums.

On Saturday 24 November in the afternoon, the jazz club hosts Grant Stewart in a saxophone and improvisation workshop (4-6pm, £20). Visiting NYC tenor saxophonist Grant Stewart leads a saxophone and jazz improvisation workshop for amateur and professional players alike, for all instruments, bringing the latest jazz improvisation techniques from New York to London. With accompaniment from pianist Rob Barron.

Saturday 24 November's evening event features the Grant Stewart Quartet, plus the Eriko Ishihara and Allison Neale Duo (£16). Visiting from NYC, tenor saxophonist Grant Stewart, influenced by Dexter Gordon and Sonny Rollins, presents a hand-picked quartet of the UK straight-ahead jazz musicians, with Rob Barron on piano, Dave Chamberlain on bass and Matt Home on drums.

Sunday lunchtime on 25 November features Nat Steele with Grant Stewart (1-3pm, £16). UK vibraphonist Nat Steele, in collaboration with visiting NYC tenor saxophonist Grant Stewart, plays his take on the classic 1950s Prestige album *Sonny Rollins with the Modern Jazz Quartet* with Gabriel Latchin, Dario di Lecce and Steve Brown.

Finally, on Sunday 25 November in the evening, Leon Greening will appear, plus support from the Dave Warren and Julian Bury Duo (note timings given above, £16). UK hard-bop pianist Leon Greening leads a sextet in a new project, celebrating the music of the great Art Blakey Sextet. Featuring Steve Fishwick, Osian Roberts, Joe Fenning, Adam King and Matt Home. ■

www.bopfest.co.uk
 Instagram: @bopfest
 facebook.com/bopfest

Into the WOODS

Kenneth Morris examines the life and work of the American saxophonist Phil Woods, who left one of the largest and most impressive recording legacies of any single-reed

'Ladies and Gentlemen – may I present a magnificent master of mellifluous musicality, an extraordinarily exciting extrapolator of the Parker idiom, and a genuine genius at galvanising pop genres!' While I am pretty confident that Phil Woods never put in an appearance at the Leeds Palace of Varieties, I'm quite sure that Leonard Sachs, the master of ceremonies, would have introduced him in a similar vein.

Philip Wells Woods was born in Springfield, Massachusetts on 2 November 1931 and died on 29 September 2015 aged 83 in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania from complications of emphysema. Without doubt one of the leading saxophonists of the generation that followed Charlie Parker, Phil combined an awesome technique with the ability to produce an endless supply of creative and accessible improvised solos, either based on standards, his own compositions

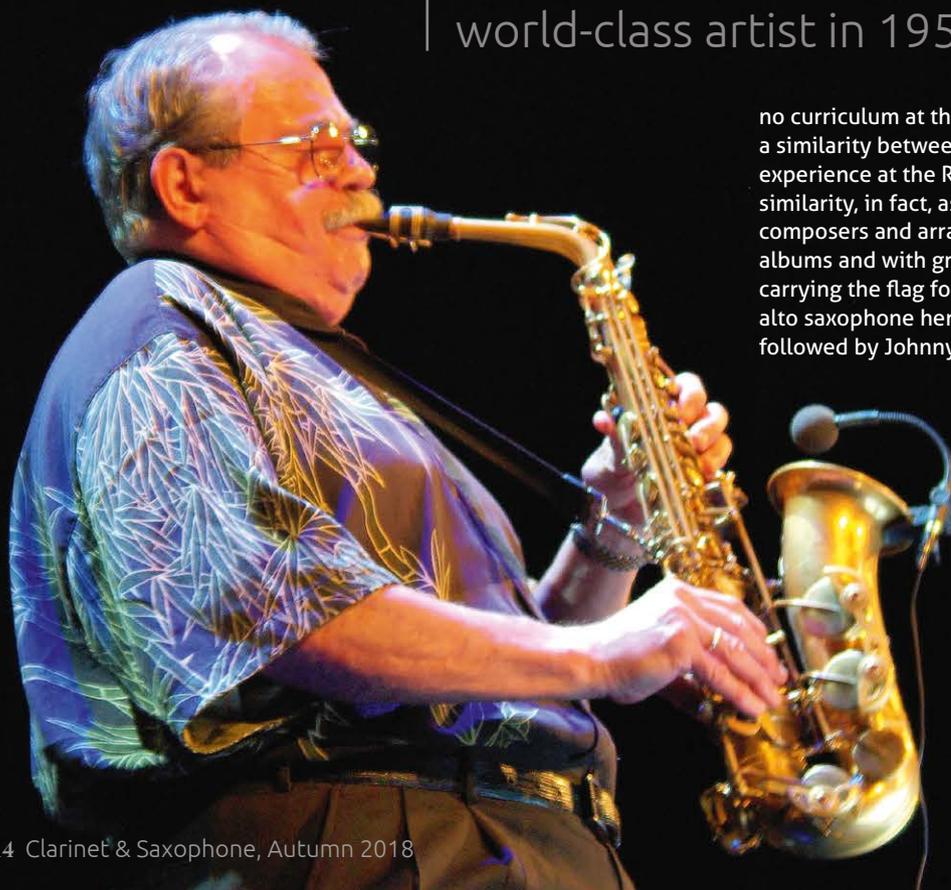
It would be no exaggeration to claim that he, almost, sprang fully formed as a world-class artist in 1954

or arrangements, or even on rather-less-than-first-class themes from others. But even these splendid attributes were supplemented by an ability to deliver an attractive, individual and consistent sound and style across literally many hundreds of appearances as a leader or sideman. Indeed, your author gave up counting the number of albums Phil has appeared on – Wikipedia lists 80, and Spotify, YouTube and www.philwoods.com between them mention over 100 more!

Aged 12, Phil took up the alto saxophone, apparently after inheriting one, receiving initial lessons at a local music shop. With a natural ear for music and the ability to quickly master sight-reading, he must also have displayed an early proficiency on single-reed instrumentation as, during his

high school years and shortly thereafter, he received early instruction from the pianist-composer Lennie Tristano at the Manhattan School of Music. Later he was accepted into the Juilliard School where, on a four-year classical music course, he was obliged to major on the clarinet, there being

no curriculum at that time for saxophone. (Here we have a similarity between Phil and our own John Dankworth's experience at the Royal Academy of Music – not the only similarity, in fact, as both men went on to work as performers, composers and arrangers in studios, on films, on pop albums and with groups of various sizes, at the same time carrying the flag for the 'new' bebop jazz style.) Phil's first alto saxophone hero was Benny Carter, shortly after to be followed by Johnny Hodges and Charlie Parker.



The channel-hopping saxophonist and reigning Royal Over-Seas League Gold Medallist tells Michael Pearce about the difference between French and British conservatoires' approach to the classical saxophone, and his plans for future projects



Jonathan RADFORD



PHOTOS: ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE AND JAMES MCCORMICK



When the first Royal Over-Seas League (ROSL) Music Competition was held in 1952, violinist Robert Cooper took home the total grand prize of £10. Since then, it has grown into one of UK classical music's most prestigious annual competitions, with a £75,000 prize fund shared among solo performers, accompanists and chamber ensembles, as well as recital opportunities for the winning musicians in major venues including London's Wigmore Hall.

Open to UK and Commonwealth citizens under the age of 30, famous names to have reached the competition's later stages include cellist Jacqueline du Pré, pianist Piers Lane, oboist Douglas Boyd and soprano Susan Bullock. Unlike many established classical music competitions, it also has a long history of showcasing the saxophone, with 10 former winners and finalists to date including John Harle (1980), Gerard McChrystal (1988), the Apollo Sax Quartet (1989), Sarah Markham (1995), Sarah Field (2000), Huw Wiggin (2014) and the Ferio Sax Quartet (2015).

Although I really admire the French way of playing, I want to find some kind of a balance between the English and French styles and not be closed to one specific way of playing

Now it is Jonathan Radford's time to shine. After first winning the wind and brass final, the 28-year-old saxophonist progressed to June's Gold Medal final at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London. The 10-strong panel of adjudicators praised his 'exceptional musicianship and emotive playing' of works by Yoshimatsu, Turnage and Khachaturian, and he was crowned 2018 ROSL Gold Medal Winner, receiving £15,000 in prize money.

Originally from Suffolk, Radford first started learning the flute aged eight. 'I was singing in a choir at school when a flautist came to play with us,' he says. 'I wasn't fascinated so much by the music itself, but how the sound was produced, how the keys moved and just how a tube of metal could make such a great sound.'

Despite initial reservations about whether their son's new interest would last, Radford's parents eventually bought him a flute and he started lessons. Aged 11, he then had to take up a second instrument in order to apply for a music scholarship at his school, Thetford Grammar, which is when the saxophone entered the fray.

CD

CD REVIEWS

Clarinet

COPLAND: SYMPHONY NO 3 AND CLARINET CONCERTO

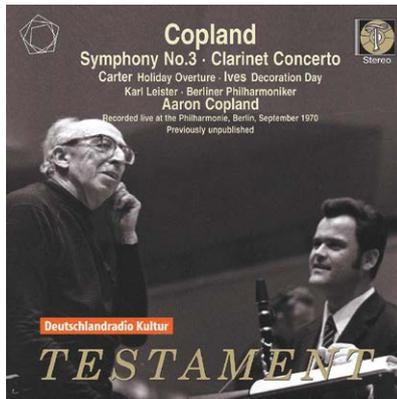
Berliner Philharmoniker, Aaron Copland
(conductor)
Testament

This CD features a concert recorded live at the Philharmonie, Berlin in September 1970 with the Berliner Philharmoniker conducted by Aaron Copland. This previously unreleased material is a valuable insight into a composer conducting his own music along with that of Elliott Carter and Charles Ives. Overall the recorded sound is very good and there is little audience noise to intrude on these performances apart from a well-deserved bravo at the end of the symphony. My one gripe is that occasionally the bass of the orchestra sounds a bit muddy, but this can happen with a live recording.

The CD opens with Carter's youthful *Holiday Overture*, a work that fizzes with excitement, with complicated fugal lines and moments of great virtuosity within the orchestral sections. For me the opening tempo is a little slow, and some of the punchy woodwind figures are not as clear as they could be. The tempo does seem to go up a notch in the central string fugue passage, and here the brass and woodwind figurations really come alive. The closing of this work is a tour de force of orchestral colour, and the cheeky ending always makes me smile.

The crowning achievement on this CD is Ives's *Decoration Day*. The multiple split string parts are as clear as a bell, and both the conductor and orchestra seem to relish every time signature, with every little complicated rhythmic passage executed precisely. The fast march section is exhilarating and played with real panache, and certainly you cannot help but get caught up in the excitement of the music.

The other two works on the CD are both by Copland: his Clarinet Concerto, featuring the soloist Karl Leister, and Symphony No 3. The



Clarinet Concerto is a great piece, comprising the first movement in a smooth cantabile style, which always reminds me of Debussy's orchestration of Erik Satie's *Gymnopédie* No 3, and a second movement that flies along with jazz-infused textures – not surprising considering that this work was originally written for Benny Goodman. These two movements are linked by a cadenza for the soloist. Leister shows a phenomenal technique throughout, managing the wide intervals with ease. His tone is clear and concise, and you have to remind yourself that this is a live performance – and what a performance it is.

There are only two things for me that detract slightly from the performance. As there is no percussion included in the orchestration, Copland asks for slap bass. Due to the muddy sound of the recording, instead of a sharp kick this is more like a soft slap. Secondly, while admiring Leister's playing and the fantastic top B flat and glissando ending to the work, I feel he could be more relaxed and laid back in the cadenza. Where he finds time to breathe during this section amazes me.

The concluding work of this CD is Symphony No 3, where the Copland world of Americana ballet music is represented in a full-blown classical symphony for large orchestra. This is no easy work, but here the orchestra does a fantastic job, making the music sound easy. They obviously love playing it and are clearly inspired to have the composer as conductor. The concluding movement begins with the famous 'Fanfare for the Common Man' which is then developed into a rousing blockbusting finale. To all composition students: listen to the earlier movements and you will find elements of this fanfare throughout the whole work. It's a great work, played by a great orchestra and conducted with real flair by Copland. The last sounds you hear on the CD are applause and a rather big bravo. Bravo indeed!

Adrian Connell