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## Alexander Bone wins 2019 Kenny Wheeler Jazz Prize

The Royal Academy of Music (RAM) and Edition Records have announced that the 2019 winner of the Kenny Wheeler Jazz Prize is the saxophonist and composer Alexander Bone. The prize is awarded each year to a young artist who demonstrates excellence in both performance and composition, selected from all graduating jazz musicians at the RAM. As part of the prize, the winner's recording is released on the Edition Records label.

The judging panel consisted of Edition Records founder and CEO Dave Stapleton, RAM head of jazz Nick Smart, and Evan Parker, saxophonist and lifelong collaborator of the late Kenny Wheeler. Parker said: 'Alexander Bone had not just assembled some like-minded and very gifted players to run through his charts; he seemed to have inspired them to share his vision for how a band can communicate.'

Alexander Bone is a 22-year old saxophonist, composer, arranger and producer based in London. He was the winner of the inaugural BBC Young Musician Jazz Award. He works as a studio and

touring musician with artists including Nile Rodgers, Rudimental, Cory Wong (Vulfpeck), Newton Faulkner and Kylie Minogue. Alongside this, he leads his own bands playing original music at venues and festivals across the UK and Europe.

[www.editionrecords.com](http://www.editionrecords.com)

[www.ram.ac.uk/jazz](http://www.ram.ac.uk/jazz)

[www.alexanderbone.com](http://www.alexanderbone.com)



## Blue Note celebrates 80th anniversary



The Blue Note label is celebrating its 80th anniversary by reissuing its 12 monthly sets of three vinyl LPs from its 1956-72 recording period. Each trio of discs belongs to one or two of the following themes: Blue Note Debuts, Blue Note Grooves, Great Cover Design (by Reid Miles), Blue Note Live and Blue Note Drummer Leaders. Of the many LPs being reissued, the following feature the saxophone

heavily and were well received critically at the time of their first release:

Dexter Gordon *Doin' Alright*, Herbie Hancock *Takin' Off* (w. Dexter), Johnny Griffin *Introducing Johnny Griffin*, Freddie Hubbard *Open Sesame* (w. Tina Brooks), Lou Donaldson *Alligator Boogaloo*, John Scofield *Hand Jive* (w. Eddie Harris), Freddie Hubbard *Hub Tones* (w. James Spaulding), Kenny Dorham *Una Mas* (w. Joe Henderson) and Art Blakey *Indestructible* (w. Wayne Shorter). These discs have already been reissued and are available now.

Also: Jutta Hipp *Jutta Hipp with Zoot Sims*, Joe Henderson *In 'n Out*, Horace Silver *Doin' the Thing* (w. Junior Cook), Lee Konitz *Alone Together*, Art Blakey *Buhaina's Delight* (w. Wayne Shorter), Pete La Roca *Basra* (w. Joe Henderson), Art Taylor *A.T.'s Delight* (w. Stanley Turrentine), Elvin Jones *Mr Jones* (w. George Coleman and Frank Foster), Dexter Gordon *A Swinging Affair*, Kenny Dorham *Trompeta Toccata* (w. Joe Henderson) and Larry Young *Into Somethin'* (w. Sam Rivers). These discs will be reissued over the coming months.

[www.bluenote.com](http://www.bluenote.com)

## Avena sax quartet at centre of EU parliament stunt

The Strasbourg-based Quatuor Avena, a saxophone quartet, unexpectedly found themselves at the centre of a media storm on 2 July when Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) turned their backs on the musicians during a performance of 'Ode to Joy', the European Union's official anthem. The MEPs were representatives of the UK's Brexit party, who made the gesture to show their dissatisfaction at the fact that the UK has not yet 'Brexit'ed'.

Reactions to the stunt were mixed, but the musicians themselves appeared to take it in their stride. Quartet member Adam Campbell spoke on BBC Radio 4's Today programme on 3 July to confirm that when the group played the same anthem at the EU parliament on a previous occasion, some anti-EU MEPs had booed loudly, so this was nothing new.

Some media outlets appeared confused by the concept of a saxophone quartet, which Channel 4 news referred to as a jazz group.





# COLLISION COURSE

*The Apollo and Artvark Saxophone Quartets have launched a landmark collaborative album of original music. Rob Buckland, soprano and alto player with Apollo, tells us more about the project*

Durban, South Africa, April 2014. It all began over dinner, as so many good things often do. Two years earlier, a South African student, Matthew Lombard – who has since gone on to great things ([matthewlombard.co.za](mailto:matthewlombard.co.za)) – came to study for a masters with me at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM). In addition to his saxophone studies, he wanted to observe the planning and running of the RNCM Saxophone Day with a view to creating a similar event for the first time in his native country. Two years later, that became a reality under the auspices of the University of South Africa (UNISA), with the support of the University's Music Director Karendra Devroop, himself a fine jazz saxophonist.

Matthew and Karendra organised a series of four saxophone days in Durban, Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town, bringing together saxophonists from across the community – students, professionals, classical and jazz players, pupils from the private schools and self-taught players from the townships. It was a really special series of events. In Cape Town we had over 100 saxophonists playing together – the first time in the country's history that this had happened – and even borrowed the South

African Army's bass saxophone, the only one in the country. It hadn't been played for 30 years!

But back to the dinner, which was particularly good – locally sourced steak if I recall, and some truly excellent wine – on the first night that we arrived in Durban, hosted

by Matthew and Karendra in an outdoor restaurant near the sea. We were introduced to the Artvark Saxophone Quartet, from Holland, who Karendra had invited to be the 'jazz' side of the saxophone days, while we as the Apollo Saxophone Quartet were there on 'classical' duties. 'Rolf, Bart, Mete and Peter – meet Rob, Carl, Andy and Jim.' We'd done our homework, read their biogs, listened to their CDs, watched their videos – these guys were seriously cool. They had checked us out too, and there was a great deal of respect at the table. Conversation flowed easily, as did the wine... ➡

There was a classical, contemporary approach to Artvark's playing and writing, and more than a hint of jazz inflection and groove to our playing, so each group felt drawn towards the other



# A marketer on musicianship

*Kenneth Morris offers some personal thoughts, born of a career in management consultancy, on the science of marketing oneself as a professional single-reed performer and entrepreneur*



A 'marketeer' I hear you say? Isn't marketing 'the dismal science'? (No, that's economics.) Marketing is the science of creating and satisfying demand, profitably. So what the Dickens is that to do with single-reed musicianship? Well I've never really thought about the connection until a recent discussion with Andy Scott, a tenor saxophonist, composer and educator who performs (and has his works performed) worldwide – a highly creative musician who undertakes a multitude of collaborations and directs his own ensembles.

Over some 70 years of demi-semi-pro gigs (my personal term for under- or unpaid work) on all four sizes of sax and at least three of clarinet, I've experienced many talented single-reed professionals in a wide variety of genres who have either consciously or unconsciously embraced a form of marketing. Bookshops are happy to vend scores of splendid textbooks on the subject, some of which now cost in excess of £50, but fear not – as far as musicianship is concerned, just six 'holy' words, which I'll come on to, convey the essence of it.

Before getting into the details it might be useful to identify some notable single-reeders with prowess in 'segmentation' and/or 'differentiation', the first two of the six 'holy' words (don't worry, examples will follow!). These marketers are none other than Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Charlie Parker and Stan Getz.

Knowing that fans would be unlikely to part with their hard-earned money for all four of these world-class single-reeders, each of them – along with their managers, publicists and recording companies – targeted different segments of the audience market. They knew how to differentiate themselves from their 'competitors': Artie from Benny (by style) and Stan from Charlie (by style and genre). Today, single-reed

segmentation is frequently by type of 'employment', including: 'sessioneering' (often multi-instrument professionals within easy reach of broadcasters, other studios, theatres or performance spaces); endorsing instrument brands; teaching (conservatoires, schools or private clients); playing with salaried orchestras or

bands; playing as support for touring artistes on land or sea; and so on. Each segment offers players a way to carve their own niche.

Differentiation has possibly even more relevance to single-reeders in the current music marketplace. In my own specialism,

I've experienced many talented single-reed professionals in a wide variety of genres who have either consciously or unconsciously embraced a form of marketing

jazz, 'genre' is the major differentiator – simplistically a choice of five: traditional, mainstream, swing, bop and avant garde, with further sub-division by fashionable or personal stylistic mannerisms. In music overall there must be many scores of genres, permitting single-reeders to specialise further (and, I hope, profit). I'm thinking particularly of my experiences listening to a) the saxophonists in Michael Flatley's hugely successful *Riverdance* national tour and b) *Light*, the superbly presented and recorded recent CD from Marici Saxes.

There are four more words from the marketing armoury to explain. They are known as the four 'P's': price, product, promotion and place, representing the four tools any supplier can manipulate in order to secure business. The first, price, needs no explanation – it's what the single-reeder charges (or what the union rate is, or what the manager has left after 'expenses', or whatever). Clearly this is a matter for musician and 'employer' to agree, and unfortunately there's no room here to discuss the techniques of negotiation. Suffice it to say that ideally your price

*As an aspiring clarinettist or saxophonist, should you choose university or conservatoire? It may depend on where you ultimately want to end up, writes Alastair Penman*



# CONSERVATOIRE OR UNIVERSITY?

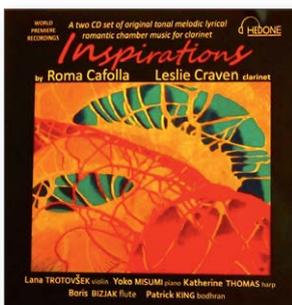


One question I am frequently asked by students leaving school and wanting to pursue a career as a saxophonist or clarinettist is where – or if – they should study next. Conservatoire or university? Or, to avoid mounting student debt, should they launch straight into a career while taking private lessons?

This article aims to discuss the most important considerations at this pivotal career stage, drawing on my own experiences of studying at both university (St Catharine's College, University of Cambridge) and conservatoire (Royal Northern College of Music). Perhaps the most important message is that although you will doubtless have many people trying to influence your decision (parents, school, partner, music teacher and so on), and their opinions may well be valuable in informing your choice, the ultimate decision is your own. It is important to take ownership of the choice you make so that you don't ever feel regret or resentment about being pushed in one direction or another by external forces.

Another point worth making – and one that is often hard to ignore – is that you should try not to be swayed by offers of scholarships or financial rewards for attending a particular institution. Many conservatoires and universities will offer scholarships or unconditional offers to the students who perform best at audition/interview in an attempt to influence their decisions. While it is flattering to be offered a scholarship you should consider whether the institution is essentially trying to bribe you into going there. A few thousand pounds might seem like a large sum of money when you're 18, but as a percentage of the total cost of a three or four year degree it is less significant. And if you view it in the context of your career earnings, which may be influenced by where you study, it becomes insignificant.

So, on to the first important question: should you consider conservatoires? A piece of pertinent advice I received was that I should only consider going to conservatoire and pursuing a career as a performer if I couldn't imagine doing anything else with my life, and if I really couldn't live without performing music. The world doesn't have a shortage of clarinet and saxophone players, and music is a very tough profession in which to earn a living. You should strongly consider whether your desire to be a performer outweighs your desire to earn money, and what your potential might be in other career paths. That's not to say it isn't possible to earn money as a musician, but orchestral and chamber musicians and even many soloists are unlikely to ever earn as much as an accountant or lawyer. In fact, many music graduates don't go on to pursue careers in music, turning to



**BRAHMS AND NINO ROTA CLARINET SONATAS;  
ROTA TRIO FOR CLARINET, CELLO AND PIANO**  
Leslie Craven (clarinet), Michael Pollock (piano),  
Stjepan Hauser (cello), Yoko Misumi (piano)  
Dinmore Records

**ROMANTIC TRIOS FOR CLARINET, CELLO AND PIANO**  
Leslie Craven (clarinet), Stjepan Hauser (cello), Yoko Misumi (piano)  
Dinmore Records

**INSPIRATIONS BY ROMA CAFOLLA**  
Leslie Craven (clarinet) plus supporting musicians  
Hedone

One of the joys of reviewing CDs is that you are not always sure what will arrive through the door. I am ashamed to say I was not familiar with the solo playing of Leslie Craven, recently retired as the principal clarinetist of the Welsh

National Opera, nor had I heard of the composer Roma Cafolla. So, even with the perennial Brahms Clarinet Sonatas, I was keen to get listening.

Having read the programme notes and noted Leslie's comment regarding the use of clarinet vibrato, I was worried. Clarinet vibrato is a controversial technique and when used badly it does remind me of the operatic soprano with the terrible wobble. However, Leslie has a warm, rounded tone, and the use of vibrato is just enough to enhance the flowing lines of both sonatas. In this performance the autumnal, romantic fabric of these two sonatas by Brahms is enhanced, especially with the added rubato. I could feel a seductive allure to these works, unlike some of the dry, academic performances I have heard in the past. This for me is my benchmark performance of these works.

However, what makes this CD more attractive is the bonus of the Rota Clarinet Sonata and his Trio for clarinet, cello and piano. Known primarily for his fabulous film music, I did not know either of these works. The Sonata is mostly calm and lyrical and far lighter musically than the Brahms Sonatas, but is a fine piece of music and deserves to be better known. The Trio is a work full of energy with great interplay between the three instruments. The playing is superb and well balanced. I can quite see why this CD achieved a four-star review in *BBC Music* magazine.

# CD CD REVIEWS

The Romantic Trios was also a lovely CD full of surprises. I knew the Brahms Trio but was less familiar with the other two works, by Beethoven and Bruch. The playing of all three works is superb and further highlights Leslie's extraordinary clarinet technique. He certainly makes these works sound effortless and the blend with the other musicians is seamless. I found that this CD had not only gained five stars in *BBC Music* but was also nominated for the magazine's chamber music award. I have to say that this CD contains my favourite performance of the Brahms Trio too.

*Inspirations* is a double CD of music by the Irish composer Roma Cafolla. It contains music which is tonal, melodic and lyrical. Most of this music has been written for or inspired by Leslie, and each piece is a valuable contribution to contemporary chamber music for clarinet. In total, 13 pieces are presented on this CD. There is a wide variety of mood and styles. I loved the *Cantilena* which is for flute, clarinet and harp; here is a gentle, contemplative melody for flute with clarinet and harp adding a graceful counterpoint. Most of the pieces require a solid playing technique; *Sonata Capriccio Lirico*, *Ebony*, *Ambidexterity*, *Moto Perpetuo*, *Tango Per Tre* and *Gig-Saw* all contain sections which can be described as virtuosic. All these pieces would require work to bring to performance, so they are not for the beginner, but would be rewarding in building a player's technique. Overall, I like Roma Cafolla's music, but what brings these works to life is the committed and flawless playing not only of Leslie but also his fellow musicians on these two CDs.

Leslie Craven, to sum up, is a fantastic performer. His performances have drama and display a technique which most of us could only envy. As I said earlier, the Brahms Sonata recordings are now my favourite performances of these works, and I am sure to reach for the other two CDs when I need to lift my spirits, especially *Inspirations*.

Adrian Connell