

# The future of JAZZ

25 October 2007

If you needed any kind of proof that the jazz scene was alive and well in the UK you could have seen it at a packed Guildhall School of Music, for our Professional Musicians' Advisory Panel debate. Chairman of the Jazz Committee, Pastmaster Nigel Tully, hosted a lively evening of discussion and music that was attended by over 120 jazz enthusiasts from all walks of life, including musicians, promoters, critics, educators and fans of the artform. Under the title of: *What is Jazz Becoming – What is Becoming of Jazz?* the evening commenced with each of four eminent speakers being given a strictly monitored ten minutes (by Nigel's egg timer!) to comment on a variety of jazz-related issues.

First up was Tony Dudley-Evans, promoter of, amongst other things, the Cheltenham Jazz Festival. Tony's piece was centered around the make-up of today's jazz audience and he questioned the stereotypical idea of the jazz audience being white, male and middle-aged. (Interestingly, as Jack Massarik, jazz reviewer for the *Evening Standard*, noted in the 'Q and A' session after the debate, the audience at this event was almost entirely white so perhaps very little has changed after all). With this point in mind, it was particularly unfortunate that Janine Irons was unable to attend, due to a family illness, because that meant the panel was significantly less diverse than planned. Janine fully deserved to

be on the panel anyway, but it was a great pity that the only non-white-middle-class-middle-aged, – male member of the panel was the one to go missing, when the deliberate intention was to have a more diverse mix.

Next, Dudley-Evans identified the growth of what he called 'intelligent clubbers', those young people in their twenties and thirties who were more interested in listening to a different kind of music at a different venue each night. As Dizzy Gillespie once said; 'there's only two kinds of music, good and bad', and jazz has a duty to reach out to this new school of music audience that appreciates good music in all its forms. Stuart Nicholson, author of six books on jazz, followed with an eloquent speech on what he called the 'Glocalisation' of jazz, where a global music takes on local shades as each culture lends its own colours to the mix. He used the example of Sweden to point out that that country's biggest selling jazz album was not *Kind of Blue* or *A Love Supreme* but rather a locally produced album of Swedish folklore-infused jazz music.



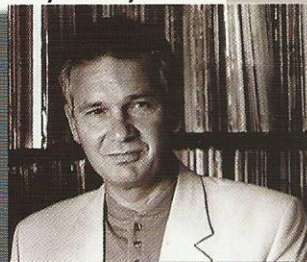
Tim Garland



Simon Purcell



Tony Dudley-Evans



Stuart Nicholson



Janine Irons



The Tom Cawley Trio