

John Dankworth

The Old Rectory Wavendon Milton Keynes MK17 8LT

Chris Hodgkins
Jazz Services
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October 19, 1993

Dear Chris,

As I promised at our last meeting, I have been able to look at the second draft of the Jazz Services' submission to the Arts Council a little more closely. I think it is an excellent document which leaves very few stones unturned, and a great credit to all those who contributed. It has in fact left me struggling for ideas on how it could be improved at all!

However, as a member of the travelling jazz profession, largely on an international basis, it occurred to me that perhaps more mention should be made of the international image of British jazz and the UK jazz artists who have helped to achieve this. I know full well that the paper is basically about jazz in Great Britain, but I feel that a lot more notice might be taken of the activities of jazz at home if the media were made more aware of the fact that British jazz musicians regularly appear all over the world, sometimes being received with greater acclaim than in their home territory. This in turn would possibly bring about a realisation amongst British jazz fans that the quality of a jazz festival need not be judged only by its overseas content.

British jazz musicians like George Shearing, Dave Holland, Dill Jones, Derek Smith, Joe Temperley, and countless others, have infiltrated into the American scene to the extent that few people know of their British origins outside this country. But many other British-based jazz artists such as Courtney Pine, Clark Tracey, Julian Joseph, Chris Barber, Barbara Thompson (and, immodestly, the present writer and spouse!) make regular tours practically all over the surface of the globe in the name of British jazz.

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These facts, were they publicised effectively and sufficiently by the British specialist and general media, would no doubt heighten the profile of British jazz artists over here in the eyes of the British jazz-loving public. But at present the attitude in Britain is in sharp contrast to the state of affairs in, say, Australia, New Zealand or Canada, where local jazz fans are very much aware of the important engagements that their own nationals perform overseas. Thus, for instance, Rod McConnell and - Morrison(*) are far better known in Canada and Australia respectively than, say, Stan Tracey and Guy Barker are over here. (The fact that Cleo Laine was the first - and only so far - British jazz singer to gain a coveted Jazz Grammy award was practically ignored by the British media, general and specialist alike.)

Small points, these, but important ones if we are to raise the profile of the British jazz world to enhance its image in the eyes of British jazz lovers - an up-grading which it doubtless deserves.

Hope some of this may be of use.

Yours ever,



dictated by
John Dankworth
and signed in his absence

(*) I couldn't quite make out John's dictation here, so hope you know who he means

