

Chris Hodgkins - biography

He was raised in Cardiff, and in 1974 co-founded the Welsh Jazz Festival with Geoff Palser. He was instrumental, four years later, in establishing the Welsh Jazz Society with David Greensmith. As a jazz trumpeter Chris joined the Icon Jazzmen when he was 18. As a professional trumpeter, Chris toured the UK and Europe with Johnny Bastable's Chosen Six, Monty Sunshine, Route 66; appearing at the Sacramento Jazz Festival in the States with the Pete Allen Band, and made tours of Germany with the Chris Haskins Band

The Chris Hodgkins Band made a name for itself supporting the likes of Buddy Tate, Humphrey Lyttelton, Kathy Stobart, Bud Freeman, Dick Carey, Joe Temperley, Howard McGhee, Peanuts Hucko, Benny Waters and Wild Bill Davison who said "It is a hell of a good band". The band made a number of television and radio appearances.

Chris relocated to London to play professionally. In 1985 he was appointed Director of Jazz Services the national organisation funded by Arts Council England to provide services in information, touring, education, communications and publishing to the UK jazz community. In 2005, Jazz Services won the Best Website category in the first Parliamentary Jazz Awards; Chris was made a Fellow of The Chartered Institute of Marketing the same year. Jazz Services received the 2008 Parliamentary Jazz Awards for Jazz UK as best jazz magazine. In January 2011 Jazz Services was awarded National Portfolio Organisation status by Arts Council England for three years from 2012 to 2015. As Chair of the National Jazz Archive, Chris led the team that secured investment of £346,300 in the National Jazz Archive by the Heritage Lottery Fund in July 2011. In May 2012 Jazz Services received the 2012 Parliamentary Jazz Awards for Jazz UK as best jazz magazine.

After 29 years at the helm of Jazz Services Chris took the decision to step down as Director of Jazz Services in May 2014. Throughout his tenure at the head of the organisation, Chris had been instrumental in the development of Jazz Services as a resource for the music, championing its cause and offering his advice to anyone who required it. Among his many successes was the National Touring Support Scheme which he helped to establish with Debbie Dickenson. This has enabled the careers of hundreds of artists over the years. There was also the organisation's Rural Touring Support Scheme (with the National Rural Touring Forum), the Jazz Promoters Award (with the PRS for Music Foundation) and the Online Music Business Resource, which offers free career advice to anyone who needs it.

Chris has been a truly wonderful person to work with. I have been helped on numerous occasions, for a variety of different projects that have toured and recorded. They simply would not have happened without the help and guidance of Chris, and his brilliant leadership of Jazz Services. It is a vital service within the UK, especially at this time. I wish him an obscenely happy and creative retirement!

Robert Mitchell, pianist and composer.

Chris also helped to set up the annual Parliamentary Jazz Awards to recognise jazz talent and ensured the Arts Council's continued support of Jazz Services. His influence and guidance have been crucial to the careers of many of the UK's top jazz artists, and his enormous contribution to the wider scene has already been recognised by the receipt of a BBC Jazz Award (2002) and a British Jazz Award (2013) - both for Services to Jazz.

As director of Jazz Services, Chris Hodgkins ran a truly neutral organisation supporting jazz musicians equally across all styles, focussing on talent and integrity. He always made himself personally available when advice was needed and I benefited from his guidance and enthusiasm through good times and tough times. He encouraged me to develop my writing and as a musician himself, was able to offer valuable insight and ideas. The Jazz Services Touring Support Scheme enabled me to grow as a performer, band leader and writer, giving me the opportunity to play gigs all over the UK. Chris is leaving a great legacy to the jazz community. We're grateful but we will miss him very much.

Christine Tobin, vocalist and composer.

As Chris himself says, "It's extremely satisfying to be able to look back on my time at Jazz Services with pride; not so much for myself, but for the work the whole organisation has done for the jazz scene and for the artists and promoters who have come through its schemes over the years. To have been so involved in the scene and in the careers of the many fantastic players and volunteer promoters who have used Jazz Services is quite humbling, and something I will always cherish. I wish to thank all the trustees at Jazz Services and everyone I've worked with over the years for their contribution."

With his days of administration behind him, Chris now takes to the road, the radio and the recording studio to focus on playing the music he loves.

Chris was awarded the Services to Jazz Award at the Parliamentary Jazz Awards in March 2015.

Chris fronts three outfits: The Chris Hodgkins Quartet, featuring Alison Rayner on double bass and Max Brittain on guitar with the addition of Diane McLoughlin on soprano/alto sax, the Chris Hodgkins Band and he works with pianist Dave Price in a trio setting with Ashley John Long or Erika Lyons.

In 2005, the Chris Hodgkins Trio, with Max Brittain and Alison Rayner released "Present Continuous" and the second Trio album "Future Continuous" followed a year later.

Chris' most ambitious project was the album "Boswell's London Journal", a suite of 15 tunes co-composed by Chris Hodgkins and Eddie Harvey, Which received the Evening Standard CD of the week in 2009.

In September 2014 with Dave Price, Erika Lyons and Ashley John Long, Chris completed the album "Back In Your Own Back Yard". Chris returned to Wales to rehearse and record the album.

In September 2014 Jazz London Radio announced that Chris Hodgkins will be joining the station with a new weekly show called "Jazz Then and Now" on [Jazz London Radio](#)

The concept of the show is as Chris puts it "what it says on the tin". Chris will be delving into the history of the music and present what is happening on the scene today with a watchful eye on British contemporary jazz. The show will run every Monday and Wednesday at 3pm and 8pm and repeated on Thursday at 8pm.

Each week the play list will be posted detailing the tunes played, the artiste, band, album and composers. Play lists of the programmes can be seen at <https://chrishodgkins3.wordpress.com>

On the 15th February 2016 Chris started presenting a programme Jazz Is..... on Pure Jazz Radio in New York. The concept of the programme is that jazz is a broad church that has developed an incredibly diverse range of musics with a global reach. When there is an altercation in the choir stalls about what jazz is, someone is reinventing jazz and building an extension to the church. The programme Jazz Is illustrates the rich history of jazz and the vibrant happening jazz of today.

The programme can be heard here: [Pure Jazz Radio](#) and the play lists can be seen here: <https://jazzis2016.wordpress.com/>

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