

The Clark Tracey Quintet



NEW CD RELEASE IN MAY 2014 - MEANTIME...

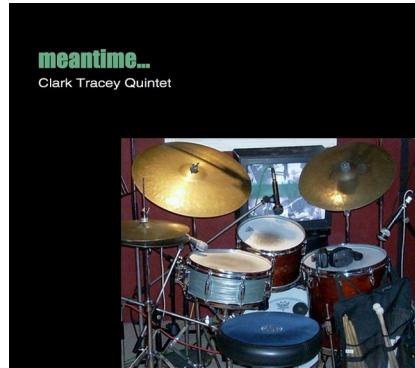
Clark Tracey has worn many musical hats over his thirty-five year career. Having long been regarded as the UK's most accomplished straight-ahead jazz drummer, alongside that considerable achievement he's also a composer, arranger, educator and talent-spotter par excellence. All of these skills come together in another of his passions: band leading. Clark's been fronting his own units since the early 1980s, in effect operating a finishing school for three generations of British jazz talent, but amazingly this is his first new recording as a leader since 2009's Current Climate. It's also the debut recording for his "new" quintet, a band uniting some of the brightest young stars currently working on the British jazz circuit.

The catalyst for the new group's formation was Clark's in-house tenure as a tutor at Birmingham Conservatoire, an establishment that boasts a formidable turn-out of notable jazz talent. Of the many students he's heard there over the past few years, three in particular piqued the drummer's interest: saxophonist Chris Maddock, pianist Harry Bolt and bassist Daniel Casimir. Around this nucleus the new Clark Tracey quintet began to take shape in 2013. Clark first encountered Henry Armburg-Jennings, the band's trumpeter, when he called him to do a gig "*and remarked that he was going to be in my next band! I couldn't turn down confidence like that!*"

"Finding young guys who can play this music is becoming much easier, but finding young guys who can understand this music in addition is always more of a challenge. I believe with this band I've found what I'm looking for."

Booking agent: Sylvia Tracey - sylvia.singz@virgin.net
01442 218338 / 07930 980898

Clark Tracey Quintet – Meantime...



(Tentoten Records)

FEATURING

Chris Maddock – Alto, Tenor
Henry Armburg Jennings – Trumpet, Flugel
Harry Bolt – Piano
Daniel Casimir – Bass
Clark Tracey – Drums

TRACKS

LAWRA (T Williams)
OJOS DE ROJO (C Walton)
A PINT OF BITTER (C Terry)
ELVIN'S HUG (C Tracey)
WHAT'S NEW? (B Haggard/J Burke)
RIM CLICKER (C Tracey)
SUDDENLY LAST TUESDAY (J Deuchar)

Recorded February 2014 at Clown's Pocket Studios by Derek Nash.
Produced by Clark Tracey

SOUND FILES

<https://soundcloud.com/clark-tracey/ojos-de-rojo>

<https://soundcloud.com/clark-tracey/suddenly-last-tuesday>

VIDEO FILES

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLbbhq7-Pt4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eamDpn0ioHw>

Clark Tracey Quintet Biography

Clark Tracey – Drums

Clark Tracey was born in London, England in 1961, the son of British jazz legend, Stan Tracey. At the age of 17 he joined his father's ensembles and remained up to 2013. Together they performed all over the world and recorded extensively.

As a freelance drummer, Clark has had the opportunity to perform with just about every major player on the UK jazz scene and supported a host of visiting artists such as Johnny Griffin, Pharaoh Sanders, Charlie Rouse, Bud Shank, Art Farmer, Lew Tabackin and Jimmy Smith.

He has led his own groups since 1980, featuring aspiring luminaries such as Guy Barker, Gerard Presencer, Django Bates, Iain Ballamy, Nigel Hitchcock, Kit Downes, Zoe Rahman and many others.

As a composer, he has written and arranged for all his groups, from trio up to big band, as well as writing string quartet arrangements for various projects.

As an educator, Clark now teaches at the Birmingham Conservatoire and has given numerous masterclasses to drummers, small ensembles and big bands at home and abroad. He has performed in over 50 countries and recorded over 100 albums, 11 as a leader.

He has appeared on stage with Dee Dee Bridgewater in the West End show "Lady Day" and with Eddie Izzard in "Lenny", featured in the motion pictures "The Talented Mr Ripley" and "Alfie", and made numerous TV and radio broadcasts.

In 2010 he revived Herts Jazz Club and now promotes touring groups weekly as well as directing an annual jazz festival. With his wife, Sylvia Rae Tracey, he owns two record companies, "Tentoten Records" and "Resteamed Records".

He has won "Best Drums" category in the British Jazz Awards three times and has endorsements from Zildjian Cymbals, Remo Heads and Vic Firth Sticks. In 2012 he released a drum tutorial for Schott Publishing entitled "Exploring Jazz Drums".

Henry Armburg Jennings – Trumpet/Flugel

First heard on the professional circuit at 14 years of age with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, Henry is now forging a reputation as a band leader in his own right with one CD already under his name. He has worked in many jazz environments, not least of which have included John Dankworth, Cleo Laine, Stan Tracey and Peter King.

Chris Maddock – Alto/Tenor

Having recently graduated from Birmingham Conservatoire, Chris began his studies at Trinity College of Music Junior Department from the age of 11. He runs his own octet and has appeared at jazz festivals in Cheltenham, Swanage and Trondheim. In 2010 he received the Mike Gibbs/BBC Big Band prize for arranging/composing.

Harry Bolt - Piano

He attended the Arts Educational school and upon leaving was awarded overall Student of the year. From the age of 13, he studied at Junior Trinity College of Music and appeared in West End musicals. He also attended Trinity College of Music, gained his ATCM with distinction and won the Hambourgh Award for Improvisation two years in a row. Currently at Birmingham Conservatoire, in the third of a four year B.Mus Jazz Performance degree. In recent years, Harry has been chosen to accompany Dave Holland, Joe Lovano and Mark Turner.

Daniel Casimir – Bass

Daniel also graduated from Birmingham Conservatoire where he received a first, studying with Arnie Somogyi. While there he was involved with The Dave Holland Project, receiving invaluable guidance, as well as study with John Taylor and Jean Toussaint. He now leads his own quartet with fellow students from Birmingham and has also performed with Dave O'Higgins/Eric Alexander's Quintet and attends Trinity Laban on a Post Grad course.

REVIEWS

Derek Ansell enjoys an evening of perfectly programmed jazz from Tracey's youthful quintet, all capped by a stamping and roaring call for an encore...

You might think that Clark Tracey had raided the school playgrounds and rest rooms in the music conservatoires, so young are the members of his current quintet. Henry Armburg-Jennings on trumpet and flugel is the oldest, both in years and experience, with his NYJO credentials and recent work in the clubs. Harry Bolt on piano is the youngest with two years in music school still to complete at this writing. Chris Maddock on alto sax is no greybeard, except in the way he plays his instrument - like a veteran! Daniel Cassimir on bass rounds out the line-up - another musician who is young in years but sounds as though he's been around forever.

At the Progress Theatre in Reading, Clark led from the front, so to speak, drumming from the back but spurring his men on at all times and driving the rhythm section to keep it thrusting forward constantly and at all different tempi. The band began with a crisp, rocking version of One For Daddy-O, which Clark said was a coincidence but most likely for Stan, whom we sadly lost a month or so ago. The piece is a basic minor blues, put together in the Van Gelder studios in 1958 by Cannonball Adderley and Miles but it carries the essence of everything good and worth listening to in modern jazz and blues. Sterling solos here from Armburg-Jennings and Maddock with Bolt contributing flowing chords and the rhythm pulsating along nicely. They followed up with an up-tempo, swinging Bolivia (by Cedar Walton) and a charge through Coltrane's Moment's Notice. Then we heard a lively and well-paced reading of Victor Feldman's Seven Steps To Heaven.

The programme included originals by the leader, notably Rim Clicker, which had Clark doing exactly what it says on the tin and a very fast piece that kept everybody on their toes for several minutes. The balance was just right and this is important. There were plenty of good jazz standards and classics to stimulate and hold the attention of an audience; too often people are subjected to a programme of originals that make little sense, are unmemorable and only serve to feed the ego of the composer. It's OK for musicians to just play for themselves if that's what they want but if they wish to communicate to the audience and help keep jazz alive and kicking, they should study Clark Tracey's selection and performance at the Progress. The audience was enjoying it so much that they stamped and roared for an encore and the band responded with another classic blues, Freddie Freeloader, which Clark said was by "Miles Davis, a trumpet player". Yeah right, like Shakespeare was a bit of a playwright?

Jazz Journal January 2014 <http://www.jazzjournal.co.uk/magazine/705/review-clark-tracey-quintet-reading>

"Phew! Just getting my breath back from a gig at the excellent Folkestone Jazz Club. The superb Clark Tracey quintet, like the famous Massey Hall concert quintet, had not performed together before. They'd travelled far and had only time for a run-through of one number. It was the best gig I'd attended for a year or so. Clark managed to hold the reins for the superb set. Justice needs to be kind to keep this group intact. Five stars for five stars."

Alan Luff, Jazz Journal, July 2013 <http://www.progresstheatre.co.uk/shows/jazz-at-progress-clark-tracey-quintet/>

I've been an admirer of Clark Tracey's playing since I first saw him perform at Brecon Jazz Festival in the late 1980s as part of his late father's sextet, Hexad. I've followed the careers of both pianist Stan (1926-2013) and drummer Clark ever since and seen the younger Tracey (born 1961) develop into an experienced and accomplished composer and band-leader with an impressive list of solo recordings to his credit.

Tracey's music is rooted in the bebop and hard bop traditions and he has led a number of groups in the classic quintet format of saxophone/trumpet/piano/bass/drums. As Tracey has graduated towards comparative "elder statesman" status he has often been found adopting an "Art Blakey" role by filling his bands with promising young players. Pianists Zoe Rahman and Kit Downes plus Empirical vibraphonist Lewis Wright are just three of the young musicians to have passed through the ranks of Tracey's UK version of the Jazz Messengers.

I've seen a number of Tracey's bands, quartets and quintets and once a sextet, over the years at both club and festival sessions and his groups always deliver, the soloists, whether young or old, consistently inspired by Tracey's crisp, propulsive, hard driving drumming. Although less prolific than his father he's also a more than useful writer and his sets typically include a couple of originals alongside the jazz standards and bop classics.

Clark has continued to be a regular member of Stan's bands throughout his career and both father and son have been cornerstones of the Titley Jazz Festival in my native Herefordshire which emerged phoenix like, albeit several hundred miles away, in 2010 from the ashes of the former Appleby Jazz Festival. But Titley has been a great success with Clark and Stan very much at the heart of it. Clark will be returning to Titley in late July to lead a quintet of more mature players but tonight at Shrewsbury he revealed a group of frighteningly talented, and frighteningly young, musicians.

Following the full house for Jean Toussaint's quartet in March The Hive was again full to capacity to see Tracey leading his latest pride of young lions. This edition of the classic quintet featured the horns of Henry Armburg-Jennings (trumpet & flugelhorn) and Chris Maddock (alto & tenor saxes) together with Harry Bolt at the piano and Daniel Casimir on double bass. Bolt replaced the advertised Reuben James, the young rising star who has featured several times on these web pages. As Tracey explained to me later "I had to let Reuben go, he's just too busy". Initially I was a little disappointed by James' absence but any doubts were quickly quashed by the playing of Bolt who acquitted himself admirably throughout, both as a soloist and as an accompanist. He was playing an electric keyboard with an acoustic piano setting which fitted in well with the overall group sound even though it couldn't quite compete in terms of quality with the sound of the acoustic pianos hired for the appearances of Liam Noble (leading his own band) and Andrew McCormack (with the Toussaint group).

The material was mainly drawn from outside sources, with just one Tracey original appearing in the second set. However the selection was well chosen with many of Tracey's favourite jazz composers being represented, none more so than the late Cedar Walton whose tunes featured twice. Tracey is a consummate professional, his group's performance started right on the scheduled time and the quintet delivered two value for money one hour sets with Tracey's succinct announcing style giving just the right amount of information about each tune without lapsing into whimsy or general "rambling on", a trait that can affect other leaders who shall remain nameless.

The first set kicked off in invigorating fashion with "A Pint Of Bitter", a piece written by Tracey's namesake the American trumpeter Clark Terry as a tribute to the late, great

British saxophonist Tubby Hayes. The unison horn lines and keyboard fills of the theme providing the jumping off point for authoritative opening solos from Maddock on tenor sax and Armburg-Jennings on trumpet, the latter impressing firstly with his purity of tone and later with his sustained single notes. This young man is already a formidable technician on his chosen instrument. Bolt quickly established himself as a more than adequate replacement for the in demand James and Tracey confirmed that it is Bolt who will feature on the quintet's imminent new album. Casimir was the last of the young musicians to take the limelight with solo that included some distinctive pizzicato work up around the bridge and a welcome sense of humour as he duetted with his leader. Finally Maddock and Armburg- Jennings re-entered from the wings to reiterate the theme and wrap up an impressive opening group statement.

Announcing Cedar Walton's "Ojos De Rojo" (translation "Red Eyes" !) Tracey recalled seeing the great pianist and composer at Ronnie Scott's in the late 70s / early 80's and becoming a long term admirer of his music. This Latin flavoured example of Walton's compositional ability was well served by Tracey's quintet and saw a change in the front line instrumentation as Maddock switched to alto and Armburg-Jennings to flugelhorn. Tracey's crisp and nimble drumming inspired sinuous solos from Armburg-Jennings and Maddock, the two horn men followed by Bolt at the piano and finally by Tracey himself, his feature beginning with the inclusion some dramatically impressive hand drumming, progressing through a dialogue with Casimir and finishing with some typically explosive stick work.

If Walton is something of a compositional hero for Tracey then Tony Williams represents his all time drum idol. Williams' "Lawra" began where Walton's piece had left off with a barrage of explosive drumming, this time over an insistent piano vamp. Remaining on alto and flugel respectively the horns of Maddock and Armburg-Jennings dovetailed effectively but it was Bolt who took the first solo, his playing an effective amalgam of inventive left hand rhythms and darting right hand runs. The opening keyboard motif returned for a typically powerful Tracey drum feature before the horns again emerged from the shadows to re-state the theme. This was a curiously structured tune but an effective and absorbing one, proof of Tracey's ability to select good and interesting material, and not always the most obvious pieces.

A quartet version of Thelonious Monk's ballad "Ask Me Now" was a feature for Maddock on alto, sympathetically supported by Bolt on piano, Casimir on bass and Tracey on delicately brushed drums, proof that the leader can also be a supremely sensitive player when required. The piece also offered evidence that there's more to Monk than the routinely churned out "quirky", "humorous" and "enigmatic" epithets. There was a genuine tenderness about this piece that helped to bring out the emotion in Maddock's playing. Casimir's solo combined lyricism, resonance and dexterity, all key attributes of the bassist's art. Casimir may have a huge tone but he is also capable of playing with great sensitivity. Bolt's solo also revealed his lyrical side before Maddock returned for a second alto solo.

A glance at Tracey's watch revealed that the quintet had played for seven minutes short of an hour. It therefore seemed appropriate that the first half should end with the quintet's version of Victor Feldman's "Seven Steps To Heaven". Tracey briefly related the tale of how Feldman, the London born multi instrumentalist, emigrated to New York where he worked with Miles Davis and other big American names, Davis famously recording this very tune. It's a piece that Tracey has also committed to disc himself on the quartet album "Given Time" (2007), his second collection celebrating the work of British born jazz composers. Tonight Feldman's tricky bebop theme proved the ideal vehicle for fluent solos from Armburg-Jennings on flugel, Maddock on alto and Bolt on piano before the horns traded choruses with Tracey to bring the first set to a rousing climax.

The lights were dimmed for the second set, adding to an already expectant atmosphere as the quintet kicked off with a second Cedar Walton tune, this time "Bolivia" another Latin flavoured piece recorded by Tracey on his 2008 album "Current Climate". Here the front line consisted of flugel and alto with Armburg-Jennings taking the first solo followed by Bolt on piano, then Maddock, and finally Casimir at the bass.

Tracey revealed that during the interval he had sold all the CD's he had brought with him ("Current Climate", "The Calling" and "Stability"), testament to the quality of the music we had heard thus far (although the knock-down price of a fiver each may have helped!). Half time also saw Shrewsbury Jazz Network's Allan Dickie reminded me that Maddock had played this venue before as part of drummer JJ Wheeler's group back in 2012, a fact that I'd contrived to forget despite having reviewed the concert! Sorry Chris. I did recall seeing Casimir play previously when he impressed as part of a student ensemble led by American sax giant Chris Potter at the 2012 Cheltenham Jazz Festival – Casimir is a graduate of the famed Birmingham Conservatoire Jazz Course. Armburg-Jennings and Bolt were definite new sightings but both represented exciting new discoveries and will be names to keep an eye on. I've read about the young trumpeter before and there seems to be something of a buzz about his playing among my fellow jazz critics. He's undoubtedly a talent we'll be hearing a lot more of.

Casimir's bass introduced Wynton Marsalis' episodic "Twilight", an atmospheric piece featuring deep grooves and long melodic lines, the overall effect often ominous and foreboding. Armburg-Jennings took the first solo on trumpet followed by Maddock on increasingly impassioned tenor. The young saxophonist obviously regards himself as primarily being an alto player but I think I actually preferred him on the larger horn. It's something of a rarity to see a musician doubling on these two members of the saxophone family, it's far more common to see players alternating one or the other with the soprano or even the baritone. A passage of almost free playing morphed into Bolt's solo before the sinister opening grooves returned. This was a complex piece that Tracey seemed pleased to have negotiated successfully, playfully chiding Maddock for not memorising his parts.

"Elvin's Hug", Tracey's tribute to another of his drum heroes, the late, great Elvin Jones was the only original tune of the evening and saw the return of the flugel/alto combination with Maddock opening the soloing followed by Armburg-Jennings, Bolt and Casimir. Appropriately Tracey's drumming was at the centre of the music, his playing so often the pulse or heartbeat of the ensemble sound.

Armburg-Jennings' precocious talents were superbly illustrated on his ballad feature, the jazz standard "It Never Entered My Mind" written by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart. Sympathetically supported by piano, bass and drums, with Tracey again on brushes, Armburg-Jennings gave a stunningly fluent and mature performance on flugel horn, exhibiting remarkable control and purity of tone in the exposed context of an extended solo passage. Thunderous applause came not only from the audience but also from the watching Maddock.

The quintet closed with "Suddenly Last Tuesday", the rousing old warhorse written by the late Scottish trumpeter Jimmy Deuchar and a piece that served as the title track of Tracey's very first album as a leader way back in 1986 and released on the late John Jack's Cadillac label. I still have a vinyl copy purchased in the wake of that Hexad gig at Brecon all those years ago. Tracey has never stopped playing Deuchar's rip-roaring tune and surmised that he must have played it when he last performed in Shrewsbury in 1989! A quick enquiry addressed to his band mates revealed that none of them had actually been born then. Your correspondent, and probably many other audience members, suddenly felt very old. However I digress, as Tracey and his young charges brought the tune bang up to date with barnstorming tenor from Maddock, blazing trumpet from Armburg-Jennings, rollicking piano from Bolt and a thrilling series of rapid fire exchanges

between the volcanic Tracey and the horns.

Not surprisingly this final salvo of energy generated tumultuous applause with SJN's Hilary Hannaford leading the shouts for an encore. Such was her enthusiasm that it drew a drily delivered quip from Tracey. "Blimey that's all a bit Delia Smith" he said, his observation as well timed as his drumming and greeted with general hilarity. Sorry Hilary, I couldn't resist mentioning this, but it is a reminder of what a wonderfully human music jazz is, and how rooted it is in spontaneity and improvisation. Can you imagine an off the cuff remark like that at your average stadium rock concert?

The deserved encore proved to be Julian "Cannonball" Adderley's blues "One For Daddy-O" with a series of short, pithy solo episodes for each member of the band. This was a great way to round off a hugely enjoyable evening of unpretentious, hard swinging and grooving jazz with some excellent playing by Tracey, the keeper of the flame, and his young protégés.

An enthusiastic and knowledgeable capacity audience helped to turn what could have been a routine "meat 'n' potatoes" gig into an EVENT and the fact that we knew we were witnessing some of the stars of the future made it all the more enjoyable. Under Tracey's assured guidance the young musicians performed brilliantly demonstrating levels of fluency, maturity and technical ability that greatly belied their tender years. Tracey revealed that the album by this quintet will be released very shortly. Anyone who was here tonight will be sure to want to hear it.

Ian Mann, The Hive Music and Media Centre, Shrewsbury, 12/04/2014

<http://www.thejazzmann.com/reviews/review/clark-tracey-quintet-the-hive-music-and-media-centre-shrewsbury-12-04-2014/>

"For a headline gig this was certainly the youngest band that Coljazz had ever presented in its 12 year old history. Apart from its now veteran status drummer leader, Clark Tracey, all of the band were under 25 years of age. Was age going to be a barrier to first class jazz of the very highest quality, no it certainly was not.

Their opening number, a difficult Wayne Shorter tune, "Ping Pong", set out their musical stall with excellent solos all round with a typical Shorter vamp to finish the tune. All hands were quite exceptional in their musical abilities belying their tender years, they really shouldn't be this assured at this stage of their careers.

The first set flew by with some stomping stuff on Dexter Gordon's "Fried Bananas", bassist Mark Lewandowski caught the ear with some wonderful bass lines behind the soloists and a great solo, Henry played some fluent flugelhorn on this one and there were some excellent four bar exchanges with drummer leader Tracey before the tune finished. Altoist Chris Maddock was featured on Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady" and did a magnificent job on this wonderful ballad, backed by pianist Reuben Jones on electric piano.

The first set ended with what Clark Tracey said was " a great a favourite jazz tune for the drummers", Vic Feldman's "Seven steps to heaven". It featured solos from everyone in the band at a very fast tempo concluding with a ferocious solo from drummer leader Clark Tracey.

The second set started with an insistent bass vamp on Cedar Walton's classic jazz standard "Bolivia" with good solos all round. Next up was a Clark Tracey original "Rim clicker" with a latinish beat with a fine piano solo from Reuben James. Henry Armburg Jennings was featured on a soulful version of "Ghost of a chance" which also had a very

interesting piano solo from Reuben James in which there was even a tiny snippet of Errol Garner influenced piano.

The gig ended with a roaring up tempo version of John Coltran's "Moment's Notice" with some outstanding ideas from altoist Maddock, some fine trumpet soloing from Jennings, James did his bit on piano, there was a brilliant bass solo and then leader Clark Tracey finished the tune off with one of his outstanding drum solos.

Clark Tracey said on mic that it was an inspiration for him to play with these outstanding young musicians. It was very clear that with youngsters like this playing with such mature jazz sensibilities, that jazz is in very good hands."

Don Emanuel

Review from Gillingham 16 August 2013 <http://coljazz.webs.com/gigreviews.htm>

"This quintet is one of the liveliest and most creative groups of young musicians that Clark Tracey has led. The album nonetheless puts the drums in the forefront, opening with a forceful account of Tony Williams' "Lawra", introduced by Clark's toms and snare, and later including Clark's own tribute to another great percussionist in his composition "Elvin's Hug". The onomatopoeic "Rim Clicker" - another Clark composition - is self-explanatory.

The personnel includes several alumni of Birmingham Conservatoire, where Clark has taught for some time, and the result is a shared sense of purpose, but also conveying the feeling that these are musicians with a point to prove. Saxophonist Maddock has, as Jazzwise readers will know, won a Yamaha Jazz Scholarship, not to mention the Mike Gibbs/BBC Big Band Award for composition and arranging. He extends his solo skills here on Clark Terry's "A Pint Of Bitter", a gentle bluesy rambling number. On piano, Harry Bolt, back from leading the band on the Queen Mary 2, also makes his mark, notably on Cedar Walton's composition "Ojos De Rojo", where he nods in the composer's direction but remains his own man. Daniel Casimir's basslines lock on to the drums, and add to the tight feel of the rhythm section.

The outstanding soloist however is Henry Armburg Jennings, who is as at home on a poised flugelhorn ballad as he is playing more fiery trumpet excursions. His playing on "What's New" is the highlight of a very accomplished disc. The record has brought off that rare double - enticing a listener to want to hear the band live, and providing a perfect memento of how it sounds to those who have experienced it in concert."

Peter Vacher August 2014, Jazzwise Magazine

"Clark Tracey, who, according to Art Themen, has developed into one of the world's greatest drummers has started behaving like one of the world's greatest drummers, Art Blakey, by bringing on young talent. Chris Maddock (saxophones), Henry Armburg Jennings (trumpet), Harry Bolt (piano) and Daniel Casimir (bass) were the Tracey Jazz Messengers who powered through pieces by Wynton Marsalis, Tony Williams and Clark Tracey. They even dressed conservatively like the Messengers with suits and formal demeanours. Impossible not to be impressed by the vivacity and the professionalism. The music frequently changed tempo mid piece and was always a listening band. At the end of the set, as we left the auditorium, someone in front of me said, 'The future of jazz is in safe hands.' Listening to Clark's men you can see what was meant."

Jack Kenny September 2014. JazzViews <http://www.jazzviews.net/herts-jazz-festival-2014.html>

"This first major gig by the Jazz Co-op was a major coup for the organisers. We've got a Jazz Club!

The lift installed and operational, the table and chairs set out and occupied, drinks served, lights lowered, and strategically draped curtains to soften the somewhat garish colour scheme, the scene was set. Not surprisingly there were several drummers in the audience and so there should be given that we were in the presence of one of the country's finest. Steve Crocker of NORVAL drove up from Leeds (and won a bottle in the raffle) begging the question as to why those members of the North East jazz hierarchy who live somewhat closer weren't!

However, that was a question for another day for now it was time for the Clark Tracey Quintet, smartly suited and neck-tied, to roll.

And roll they did in the time honoured tradition of bands such as the Jazz Messengers; Clifford Brown/Max Roach and those treasured Blue Note albums so beloved of so many (myself included).

Maddock, Casimir, Bolt emerged during Tracey's tenure as a tutor at Birmingham Conservatoire whilst Amburg Jennings has been active on the London scene practically since he was a babe in arms!

Clark Terry's A Pint of Bitter - written originally for Tubby Hayes - gave a foretaste of what was to follow. No instantly forgettable originals, but known, albeit not hackneyed, tunes from the masters. Cedar Walton's Ojos De Rojo (Red Eyes) a typical example.

Despite their youth, the soloists have a mature edge to their choruses. Not the bull in a china shop approach favoured by so many players rather a probing, tentative, feeling out of the tune, searching, absorbing, allowing the tension to build until, suddenly, the air is full of dancing arpeggios, stabbing chords, percussive punctuations, bass notes from the cellar, saxophone harmonics reaching for the moon, trumpet on fire.

This isn't The Globe on Railway Street - it's The World on 'Trane Street!

Moments Notice, by the aforementioned "Trane" had the drummers' mouths hanging open (and those of the sax, trumpet, keys and bass players too) as the leader rubber stamped his credentials as numero uno.

Time to relax with a sumptuous ballad featuring Maddock - I Thought About You.

Delicious! The set concluded with Cannonball's The Sticks.

The room was quite full and I wondered how many more could be slotted in and just how viable such a small space is.

However, tonight it's musical notes not banknotes that are uppermost in my mind!

An ethereal opener - Twilight - was followed by the only "warhorse" of the evening, Bobby Timmons' Moanin'. I'm not moaning though, I never tire of hearing it and Tracey was at his most Blakey-like which to me is tops. Trumpet evoking the spirit of Hubbard/Morgan, tenor in Mobley mode, keys like Kenny Drew (not to be confused with our KD!) bass as cool a dude as Chambers or Brown and Le Tout Ensemble magique!

Amburg Jennings slowed things down with a beautiful rendition of We'll Be Together Again and the show culminated with Jimmy Deuchar's Suddenly Last Tuesday.

It had been my intention to stay for only one set and then nip over to Pink Lane for James and Ian at the Caff but this was just impossible to leave!

Sorry guys.

Many of the pieces played were from the band's new album - Meantime - which will be reviewed here shortly, or rather in however long it takes to play it a million times"

Bebop Spoken Here November 2014

<http://lancebebopspokenhere.blogspot.co.uk/2014/11/clark-tracey-quintet-globe-newcastle.html>

"Saturday night's Jazz Co-op gig at the the Globe said it all! An absolutely brilliant gig, led by the country's top drummer pushing four great young musicians to the limit. You

enjoyed the gig? Then dig the recording!

Close your eyes and this isn't London (or Newcastle) 2014, it's a studio in Newark, New Jersey, Rudy Van Gelder has just recorded the hottest hard bop band around. Open your eyes - Jeeze these guys are Brits! and, apart from the leader, they're in their 20s! and nowhere near New Jersey!

Listen to what they do to Tony William's Lawra. This Lawra isn't "a dream" she's a brazen hussy inspiring Tracey to vent his emotions on the kit.

We loved Ojos De Rojo at the Globe and the amour didn't end there - what a band! I doubt if I've ever heard such a fine example of small group playing this side of New York City and I doubt if NYC has ever heard anything better this side of LA (Lower Ashington)! Seriously, this is as good as you're going to hear in the idiom, anywhere.

As it did at The Globe, A Pint of Bitter went down well. Back in the days when Clark Terry wrote the tune for Tubby Hayes, IPA; Red Barrel; Ben Truman and, of course, Bass and Worthington, were just some, albeit not all of the bitters a jazzer may have enjoyed whilst hanging out in and around Soho. Listening to the music I can almost taste the beer.

What's New? is balladry at its finest. The guys chill and relax - it's cool but it's not frigid. I'm sure the players, like all of us, have experienced that strange moment where you make small talk with an old flame whilst wondering if they/we could, once again, be a new flame. Johnny Mercer wrote the poignant lyrics to Bob Haggart's song but words are unnecessary here - the horn players don't need words to convey the message on this one. Suddenly Last Tuesday - is the killerest dillerest track on the CD and I don't want to listen to anything else for the rest of my life - or at least until next Tuesday.

Clark Tracey? Nah - this was Clark Kent!"

Bebop Spoken Here November 2014

<http://lance-bebopspokenhere.blogspot.co.uk/2014/11/clark-tracey-quintet-globe-newcastle.html>