



Trad Dads, Dirty Boppers and Free Fusioneers, British Jazz, 1960-1974

Duncan Heining

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In *Trad Dads, Dirty Boppers and Free Fusioneers, British Jazz 1960–1974*, Duncan Heining has made a significant contribution to the available literature on British jazz. His effort is particularly valuable for addressing a period that is largely neglected; although the same period is covered from a fusion perspective in Ian Carr's *Music Outside* (1973, rev. 2008) and Stuart Nicholson's *Jazz-Rock* (1998), to my knowledge Heining has provided the first full-length study of the period from a jazz angle. *Trad Dads* provides a wealth of information, and is packed densely with facts and anecdotes, many of which he gained through a series of original interviews with prominent musicians and organizers, including Chris Barber, Barbara Thompson, Barry Guy, Gill Alexander and Bill Ashton.

Throughout the monograph, he makes a case for the unique identity and sound of British jazz. The timeframe he has picked is appropriate for this observation, for there are several homegrown artists on the scene who have been influenced by the musicians around them, rather than just visiting US musicians (examples include Jon Hiseman and Graham Bond).

Heining divides his study thematically rather than chronologically, using race, class, gender and political stance as themes. Chapters 1 to 3 set the scene in Britain during this period, which has the dual purpose of providing useful background information and an extended introduction. In Chapter 1 ("Ancients and Moderns") Heining begins by laying out the opposition between traditional jazz fans and players and those in favour of contemporary bebop developments. In Chapter 2 ("Class Will Out!"), Heining lays down his cards as a Marxist, giving a backdrop to the class context in Britain around the time of World War II, before trying to identify the class of British jazz musicians and fans. Heining astutely connects the educational reform of the 1960s with the dissolution of class barriers, and suggests that the British jazz of the period was a meeting place for people of different classes. Chapter 3 ("Education, Education, Education") is an extended discussion of education, showing how access to education in general (not just jazz education) was a "major factor in the development of and changes that took place within British jazz in the second half of the 1960s" (60). He gives a background to the

beginnings of jazz education in Britain, but this is not new material — Heining has brought together facts and anecdotes first heard in Moore (2007), Parsonage (2005), and Nicholson (2005).

Chapters 4 to 6 are an explanation of the Soho scene in the 1960s. Chapter 4 specifically provides a few lengthy descriptions of key figures (such as saxophonists John Dankworth, Tubby Hayes, Ronnie Scott and Bobby Wellin, pianist Stan Tracey and the group the Blue Notes) and new clubs (Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, The Little Theatre Club and The Old Place), but is primarily a laundry list of events that took place. Discussion of The Little Theatre Club and The Old Place prompts evaluation of John Surman and Jon Hiseman's roles in the emerging free jazz scene. Heining's evaluation of British jazz musicians' dependence on American models is sometimes contradictory: he explains how keen they were to get away from the US precedent, but when discussing the Ministry of Labour/Musicians' Union ban of foreign musicians, he states that Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club *needed* American jazz musicians in order to become established as a weighty venue. Chapter 5 charts the influence of emerging popular music as a stylistic input and a musical competitor to jazz, while Chapter 6 illustrates Heining's conviction that the pop, rock and fusion of the 1960s featured uniquely British sounds (Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated, Soft Machine, Nucleus, Lifetime and Colosseum).

Chapters 7 to 10 depict the challenges faced by British jazz musicians in the 1960s, covering respectively substance addiction, racism, and gender imbalance. Heining suggests that the high level of heroin, LSD and speed addiction can be attributed to desires to imitate American jazz musicians (such as Charlie Parker and John Coltrane), and to dull feelings of inferiority when compared to their American counterparts. In Chapter 8, he explains that Britain was a more racially tolerant society than the parallel US communities, but that even so there was a degree of separation between venues open to black and white musicians. Chapter 9 examines immigration, and the role it played upon British music making in the 1960s. He claims that although immigrants (such as Kenny Wheeler and Mike Gibbs) brought new musical influences, that they usually fell within European frames of reference. His Marxist leaning becomes apparent again as Heining critiques the new National Health Service and prescribing practices. Many of his descriptions of jazz practices are couched in social theory, or a critical evaluation of a social practice—for example, Chapter 9 contains many facts and figures about immigration, while Chapter 10 concerns sexism and equal rights in British jazz. As can be expected, this is predominantly concerned with women—the homosexual role in jazz remains an underexplored area. Nonetheless, Heining's report of women in British jazz is a welcome addition to an underpopulated field. Figures considered include saxophonist Kathy Stobart and singers Cleo Laine, Norma Winstone, Maggie Nichols, and Julie Tippett.

Chapters 11 through 12 explain the musical conventions of jazz in Britain and its placement within the musical artworld, discussing developments in free jazz (paying particular attention to the Spontaneous Music Ensemble, Joseph Holbrooke Trio, and AMM), the genesis of many jazz ensembles in London art colleges, and jazz's situation in a cultural space shared with contemporary classical music and experimental theatre groups. The final pair of chapters position British jazz in its cultural and political context.

The author has a working knowledge of the current literature on the subject: Moore, Whyton (2010), Stanbridge (2008) and Wilmer (1991) are all cited. However, for a book that is heavily dependent on secondary sources for its content, I find Heining's continual disparaging remarks (on, for example, Moore and McKay) overzealous. A new book on British jazz can sit within the discourse, rather than pushing away existing literature.

Heining's writing style oscillates between academic survey and colloquial informality: while he provides the reader with a painstakingly researched and thorough history of the period, he punctuates this with phrases such as "It had a genuinely authentic air to it" (6), "Ken Colyer made his historic trip to Mecca" – by which he means New Orleans – (17), and "it was not a king's ransom ... who could begrudge hard-working musicians

their place in the sun?" (29). Heining's prose is frequently weak, containing several unqualified value judgments and undefined evaluative criteria.

Finally, a few minor sub-editing issues do little to counteract Heining's achievement in *Trad Dads, Dirty Boppers and Free Fusioneers*. The book is enthusiastically written, and is a welcome addition to the field.

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