[*JRJ* 7.1 (2013) 132-136]
doi:10.1558/jazz.v7i1.132

(print) ISSN 1753-8637
(online) ISSN 1753-8645

Review

Duncan Heining, *Trad Dads, Dirty Boppers and Free Fusioneers: British Jazz, 1960–1975*. Sheffield: Equinox, 2012. 495 pp. ISBN 978-1-84553-405-9 (hbk) £29.99/ $45.00.

Tom Sykes
Music Directorate, University of Salford
tomsykes29@btinternet.com

Histories of British jazz are rare enough, and those dealing with post-1960 British jazz rarer still. Books such as Hilary Moore's *Inside British Jazz* (2007) and George McKay's *Circular Breathing* (2005) do include British jazz since 1960 but do not set out to be historical accounts as such. Ian Carr's *Music Outside* (2008) is not really a history either, but it does give some historical background and provides a useful snapshot of contemporary jazz in Britain at the time of its first publication in 1973. Jim Godbolt's *A History of Jazz in Britain 1950–1970* (1989) partially covers post-1960 British jazz, but for a comprehensive history of the period there is really only John Wickes's *Innovations in British Jazz: Volume One 1960–1980* (1999). Duncan Heining's book is therefore a long-awaited addition to the literature. He covers a similar historical period to Wickes but with a wider stylistic scope, and considers social and cultural contexts rather than focusing on musical innovations as Wickes does (although these are looked at in terms of the creation of a British jazz sound).

Heining uses a range of scholarly and other sources, such as his own articles in various jazz magazines. He has had the benefit of access to many interviews with musicians (conducted himself or via secondary sources) and this substantial book contains a wealth of historical and biographical information, as well as discussing social and political contexts for jazz in the UK during the period covered. Heining also discusses certain topics that have tended to be neglected by other general histories of jazz in Britain (such as Godbolt's), including cultures of racism, gender inequality, and drug and alcohol use experienced by jazz musicians.

As might be expected, social class is a significant element, along with education, and not just jazz education. Heining devotes a chapter to each of these subjects, though in the case of audience and class he admits

that there is little empirical data to draw upon. After describing British jazz as 'classless' (in the sense that the jazz scene was a space in which the classes mixed), he then argues that the 1960 Beaulieu Jazz Festival riot was actually more to do with differences of class than a clash between rival fans, as had been suggested by other writers. This is because the riot was apparently initiated by the (working-class) Teddy Boys who were there only to see Acker Bilk, who had a record in the charts and was therefore the nearest thing to a pop star at the festival. This interpretation of events, to whatever extent it is the truth, does not problematize Heining's previous statement about a 'classless' jazz scene (if that was his intention) because the Teddy Boys were not really jazz fans anyway.

In his chapter on education, Heining begins by outlining the political and social changes in Britain in the period before discussing the music, a pattern repeated in several other chapters and useful in providing a contextual background. His argument in this chapter is that musicians who left school at an early age (such as Ronnie Scott and Tubby Hayes) were musically self-educated, which gave them an imitative approach to jazz, whereas those who had benefited from a university education (Michael Garrick and Ian Carr, for instance) brought 'new ideas and perspectives that would help to change British jazz' (76). However, even though his informant John Surman denies consciously trying to create a British jazz sound, Heining refers on several occasions to a 'desire to forge a new British jazz' (74) among musicians like Surman. There is a distinctiveness to much British jazz of this period, but is it not just as much a result of creative musicians with diverse backgrounds and influences working together (which, to be fair, Heining talks about) as a presumed yearning for a *British* sound?

Heining discusses the development of the jazz scene around central London in the early 1960s, which is arguably where much of the evolution of jazz in Britain was happening. As for outside this small area, Heining quotes from an interview in which drummer Jon Hiseman recalls being surprised when he first heard Ornette Coleman's music, since he lived in the suburbs without easy access to central London record shops. Hiseman implies that he was playing progressive music with pianist Mike Taylor in the wider British jazz scene in 1965 without knowledge of Coleman's work, but Heining says little about this wider scene other than the unavailability of American records outside large British cities. In this chapter Heining includes the reception of London-based musicians such as Ronnie Scott and Stan Tracey in the USA (often lukewarm), as well as that of the Blue Notes from South Africa by London audiences (mostly enthusiastic). On this

latter point he argues that other authors' depictions of British jazz before the Blue Notes arrived in 1964 as being conservative are unfair. While generalizations should not be made, I suspect a lot of British jazz at the time must have seemed, compared with the music of the Blue Notes (and of the Joe Harriott Quintet), rather 'safe'; indeed, Heining goes on to explain why in relation to the recording industry.

In the following chapter, 'Can't Stop the Rock', Heining does discuss the general music scene outside central London, particularly as it was affected by the rise of rock and R&B. He also writes about the development of jazz in Europe, the influence of the recording industry and broadcast media on popular music and the work of musicians such as Georgie Fame across jazz and other genres. It is an interesting read but, as elsewhere in this book, would benefit from the use of subheadings to guide the reader. Like several other chapters in this part of the book it is mostly descriptive, though Heining has made fairly extensive use of his source materials. It is pleasing to see that, in this and the following chapter, Heining goes some way to addressing the neglect of historical writing on jazz-rock in Britain (John Wickes's book being a notable exception). He concludes that the divergence of jazz and pop to the detriment of jazz during the early 1970s was at least partly due to jazz musicians' reluctance to embrace technology, along with the artistic nature of jazz not suiting the ephemeral nature of pop. However, as Heining himself notes, jazz had been losing popularity to pop in Britain since the early 1960s, and perhaps we have to accept that it has been a minority interest ever since.

Heining considers several extra-musical influences on the lives of jazz musicians in Britain: drug and alcohol use, racism, gender inequality and sexuality. Previous historians of jazz in Britain have tended to avoid these issues, and their inclusion in this book is welcome, particularly in relation to the social and political contexts of the period. On the whole, Heining's writing on these topics is critical and well balanced, but the chapter on gender and sexuality has very little to say about the situation of homosexual jazz musicians (other than a very short section towards the end based on an interview with Graham Collier), although the social and legal situation in Britain is explained in some detail at the beginning of the chapter.

The chapter on free music introduces more philosophical thought than previous chapters, using Frankfurt School theorists as an initial point of reference, but it does not always make a very convincing connection with the music. There is mention of the wider British scene with the Sheffield-based trio of Derek Bailey, Tony Oxley and Gavin Bryars, as well as the London free

scene, with a good deal of interview material to give the reader an insight into the personal 'search for freedom' of musicians such as Evan Parker, Eddie Prévost, Maggie Nicols and Howard Riley. This includes political, ideological and philosophical approaches, but the analysis is not developed quite as much as might be expected from the chapter's introduction.

There is an informative, if largely descriptive, chapter on state funding of British jazz as an art form, followed by two chapters in which Heining aims to 'examine the connections between British jazz in the sixties and wider political events and concerns' (397). These 'wider events and concerns' are, in turn, 'issue-based politics' such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and the nature of jazz 'and its position within the context of a capitalist market economy' (397). It is in these chapters that Heining interrogates the writings of (among others) George McKay, specifically in reference to *Circular Breathing* (precisely because it is about jazz and cultural politics). While Heining agrees with some of McKay's broader points, most of his comments about *Circular Breathing*—which occur in various chapters—are attacks on McKay's work and sometimes seem unnecessarily nit-picking. For example, he accuses McKay of unfairly arguing 'that the contribution of black musicians to British jazz have [*sic*] been ignored' (413), proceeding to list various publications McKay had supposedly overlooked in which black British musicians are written about, except that several of them were published after McKay's book!

There is another example that illustrates a contradiction in Heining's argument, in this case about elitism. One of Heining's (mis)interpretations of some carefully selected quoted passages about Eddie Prévost's audience is 'the implicit suggestion of elitism that pervades both McKay's and Stanbridge's analysis [*sic*]' (430). In the wider context of McKay's chapter from which Heining quotes there is no suggestion that improvised music is elitist—quite the opposite, in fact—and Heining only confuses matters further by defining 'elitism' and stating that the term does not apply to Prévost, thereby actually concurring with McKay.

Heining has attempted to provide a well-researched history of a particular period of jazz in Britain that takes account of the wider political, social and cultural context, and in this he largely succeeds. The book will be of interest to both jazz enthusiasts and students of jazz history. However, despite being published by Equinox it is difficult to tell whether it is aimed at the general reader or the academic market—perhaps it is both, but in a scholarly sense it is less successful. The writing style leans towards the journalistic at times and there is something of an imbalance in some

of the discussions in this book. Homophobia is not covered nearly as extensively as anti-female sexism, and the chapter on drug and alcohol abuse—notwithstanding its prevalence in, and negative effects on, jazz in Britain—possibly overstates its significance. The chapters range from descriptive historical accounts (with plenty of detail and quotations from interviews) to theoretical arguments that are developed in what sometimes seem strange and contradictory ways.

This book is certainly one that fills a gap in the historical literature on jazz in Britain, by focusing on British jazz (that is, jazz played by native British or immigrant musicians) during a time of substantial political, socio-economic and cultural change. It draws on a wide range of sources, but where Heining engages with scholarly texts the reader may wish to have those texts to hand, particularly those of which he is most dismissive.

Bibliography

Carr, Ian (2008) *Music Outside: Contemporary Jazz in Britain*, 2nd edn. London: Northway.

Godbolt, Jim (1989) *A History of Jazz in Britain 1950–1970*. London: Quartet Books.

McKay, George (2005) *Circular Breathing: The Cultural Politics of Jazz in Britain*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822387282

Moore, Hilary (2007) *Inside British Jazz: Crossing Borders of Race, Nation and Class*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Wickes, John (1999) *Innovations in British Jazz: Volume One 1960–1980*. Chelmsford: Soundworld.