

## Latest Jazz Cruise News

### Jazz on the Great Ouse – 2019 Programme

The John Bunyan Boat Team are pleased to announce the Jazz Cruise programme for 2019.

The cruises are run in association with Olney Jazz Club, Conscia Jazz and The Barns Hotel and feature top national and local jazz musicians.

#### The programme is:

**Thursday April 18th – Rachel and Friends** featuring Rachel Hickey (vocals) Bill Meredith (piano) Nigel Emerton (double bass)



#### Biographies:

**Rachel Hickey** has been singing since childhood and is classically trained. After playing her part in many musicals she began to sing with a local big band directed by Nigel Carter, lead trumpeter with the BBC Big Band, and developed her jazz skills over the coming years. Rachel is a favourite performer on the John Bunyan Boat. She now stars regularly with Rachel and friends, which performs everything from jazz standards to more modern items,

**Bill Meredith** started playing with his first jazz group aged 17. After university he worked professionally in Germany and back in Liverpool and has continued to do so ever since in Cumbria and London, where he was lucky to play with many professional musicians and in some important venues from local clubs to the foyer of the National Theatre. Since moving to Bedford in 1990, he has continued to play with local big bands, jazz combos, rock bands and more. Bill writes most of the arrangements for Rachel & Friends. He also plays with the Luton Symphony Orchestra and is in regular demand for local musical productions.

**Nigel Emerton** has over the past 25 years earned his position as one of the premier double bass players in the area. As a teenager, Nigel played for both the Luton Youth Jazz Orchestra and the County Youth Jazz Orchestra, playing at the Royal Albert Hall on many occasions. Between 1982-92 Nigel was part of the Big Band 'Page 3', named this way as the band rehearsed in the Sun Hotel, Hitchin. The band



The two-hour cruises leave from the moorings at The Barns Hotel, Cardington Road, Bedford boarding at 7.15pm. A 3 course Pre-cruise dinner can be booked in advance from The Barns Hotel (01234 270044) Drinks are available from the Riverside Tavern Bar.

Drinks and snacks are available on board the John Bunyan Boat and a Fish & Chip Supper price £9 or a picnic box priced £9 can be booked in advance..

Tickets priced £20.00 can be booked via the website: [www.johnbunyanboat.org](http://www.johnbunyanboat.org) or by phone on: 01946 690 301

toured the UK and Europe playing the great music of Count Basie and Duke Ellington that Nigel loves. During the 80's Nigel toured extensively with Chico Arnez providing him further valuable experience.

In recent times Nigel has played with '5 Star Swing' as well as with Rachel and friends.

**Thursday May 16th –The Gary Wood Swing Trio** featuring Gary Wood with Roger Evan (Keyboard) Chris Green (bass)

**Biographies:**

**Gary Wood – Vocals/Trumpet** – Gary started playing the cornet at the age of 8 with his local brass band, however it wasn't until he left school that he took a real interest in music. He quickly developed a taste for jazz and swing music, joining his first band in 1986. Gary has now built a solid reputation as a trumpeter and vocalist and now works as a busy, freelance musician appearing with bands in a variety of jazz & swing styles. Gary has performed at festivals in the UK and Europe and has played with many top musicians such as Alan Barnes, Simon Spillett, Julian Mark Stringle, Tad Newton's Jazz Friends, Pete Allen and Roy Williams. Gary has recently released his debut CD 'Evening Standards'.

**Roger Evan – Keyboard** - Roger has been playing jazz, pop and classical piano for many years both as a solo artist, in small jazz ensembles and larger function bands. A graduate of the Surrey University Tonmeister course, and co-author of PC Music Handbook, he continues to teach both the technical and artistic components of music composition, improvisation and recording.

**Chris Green – Bass** – Chris originally developed his music interest as a classical guitarist, but began playing the double bass at the age of fourteen. He did his first 'gig' just a few months later, and hasn't stopped since. Chris has worked in numerous bands throughout the country, including the Memphis Belle Swing Orchestra.

**Thursday June 20th – Susan Valiant Speer Trio** featuring Susan Valiant Speer (vocals) Alan Houghton (piano) and Tomas Pedersen (bass)

**Biographies:**

**Susan Valiant Speer (Vocals)** - Born in San Francisco, USA, Susan has been singing jazz since her graduation from the University of Oregon. She began her career with the Uptown Lowdown Jazz Band in Seattle, Washington where she and the band appeared frequently throughout the Pacific Northwest as well as at jazz festivals throughout the USA and Canada. One of her greatest honours came when she was invited to sing in the White House for President Bill Clinton. She has also performed for President Jimmy Carter.

Since moving to the UK, she has appeared at many jazz festivals and has performed in popular venues such as the 100 Club, The Queen Elizabeth Hall, The Banqueting House of St. James Palace, and she is a favourite at the Olney Jazz Club! Susan's passion is her trio featuring pianist Alan Haughton and the American Songbook repertoire.

**Alan Haughton** studied piano at the Royal Academy of Music in London, he performed both solo and concerto concerts in the Dukes Hall. He has held



Gary Wood



Susan Valiant Speer

various teaching posts and was Deputy Head at Hazeldene School, Bedford for many years. He also taught jazz and classical piano at Bedford High School. He now just concentrates on performing and runs the Olney Jazz Club. Alan is an established composer/performer and has had over sixty albums of music published by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, Kevin Mayhew Publishers and Oxford University Press. In addition to his classical work he has been musical director for Annie Get Your Gun, Cabaret, No, No, Nanette and Blood Brothers. He is an established jazz pianist having worked with John Dankworth, the Terry Lightfoot Band, The Pasadena Roof Orchestra, The Krupa Connection, Tad Newton's Jazz Friends, Richard Exall, Amy Roberts, Roy Williams, Alan Barnes, Denise Gordon, Simon Spillett, Greg Abate, Tina May to name but a few, as well as running his own band.

**Tomas Pedersen** started playing double-bass in 1971 when he studied classical bass in Denmark. In 1977 he went to sea playing on board cruise ships – travelling all over the world, playing shows, jazz and light classical music. At this time Tomas also had the opportunity to accompany several great American Jazz artists such as Mel Thorne, Joe Williams, Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, Harry “Sweets” Edison, Red Rodney and Ira Sullivan. Tomas moved to England in 1991 and soon got busy playing a great variety of music from Big Band, Swing, Mainstream, Traditional Jazz and also some Pop, Rock, Blues and Soul.

**Thursday July 18th – The Richard Exall Trio** featuring Richard Exall (sax/clarinet) Alan Haughton (piano) Tomas Pedersen (bass)

#### **Biographies:**

**Richard Exall** has worked with most of the established big bands and has become a regular name in the vintage jazz fraternity playing regularly with the Pasadena Roof Orchestra, Harry Strutters Hot Rhythm Orchestra and the Charleston Chasers. Richard became a regular member of the Big Chris Barber Band in 2004, leaving at the end of 2014 to focus on his own career. More recently, Richard has worked with Kenny Ball and toured with American pianist Johnny Varro’s Swing Seven throughout Germany and Switzerland, and runs his own band “Richard Exall’s Shooting Stars” which is a favourite at jazz clubs and festivals. Other recent projects include “The Krupa Connection”; a trio dedicated to the music of Gene Krupa and Benny Goodman. “The Magnificent Seven”; a hard-core swing/latin, traditional/mainstream band formed from the top players on the jazz scene today. “Sugar Ray’s Lucky Strikes”, Jackson Sloan and The Rhythm Tones, and the award-winning Amy Roberts/Richard Exall Quintet.

**Thursday August 15<sup>th</sup> - The Ben Holder Trio** featuring Ben Holder (violin) with Jez Cook (guitar) and Paul Jefferies (bass)

#### **Biographies:**

**Ben Holder** is one of the most gifted and exciting young jazz violinists in the UK. Taught classically from the age of six, he studied at the Birmingham Conservatoire. During his classical studies, Ben began listening to Jazz - classic masters such as Benny Goodman and Oscar Peterson and of course



Alan Haughton



Tomas Pedersen



Richard Exall

the great jazz violinists including Grappelli, Joe Venuti and the awe-inspiring Stuff Smith. Alongside his early studies and later at college he embarked on a detailed analysis of these musician's techniques and the way in which they merged this most classical of instruments into the jazz idiom. Ben's innate sense of swing rhythm (something which often eludes classical players) stems from those early listening sessions - and his various awards bear testimony to his abilities. A first call jazz violinist for many of the North's top bands and studios."

**Thursday September 19<sup>th</sup> – The Cool Jazz Collective** featuring: Elaine Hatton (vocals) Neil Riches (piano) Chris Green (bass)

#### **Biographies:**

The Cool Jazz Collective have been described as Northampton's best kept secret. Cool Jazz Collective features the smooth, mellow vocals of Elaine Hatton and Neil's delicate touch on the keys. Elaine combines her love of songs from the musicals, pop classics and, of course, Jazz with Neil's sublime rendering of obscure Jazz standards with Latin and modern jazz, to create the perfect combination. At the core Neil's airtight arrangements celebrates the original with a sprinkle of the contemporary.

**Thursday October 18<sup>th</sup> – Tom Syson Trio** featuring Tom Syson of Conscia Jazz on trumpet.

#### **Biographies:**

After growing up in Bedfordshire, Tom moved to Birmingham to attend the Birmingham Conservatoire in September 2011, after being granted a place on their prestigious jazz course. After graduating from his BMus degree in Jazz from Birmingham Conservatoire with First Class Honours in 2015, he has released his debut album and completed 3 UK tours as a bandleader. His debut album 'Green' was recorded at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios, featured JazzFM Vocalist of the Year 2016 Lauren Kinsella on a track, and was produced by long term mentor Percy Pursglove. 'Green' received a large amount of press coverage, which included a feature on BBC Radio 3's Jazz Now and substantial radio play on JazzFM. It also included some great reviews from leading jazz publications in the UK, including Jazzwise and London Jazz News.

In 2018 he was handed the prestigious lead trumpet chair at the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, after holding a chair in the ensemble for a few years. He also holds the lead trumpet chair with the Birmingham Jazz Orchestra, and has performed with the Syd Lawrence Orchestra. To date, he has played with musicians such as Jacqui Dankworth, Alex Garnett and Leon Greening, and has played at venues/events such as Ronnie Scots, Cheltenham Jazz Festival, The Barbican and The Royal Albert Hall.



Ben Holder



Elaine Hatton & Chris Green



Neil Riches



Tom Syson