

The Test: Tim Garland

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Yeah, but Tony's all over that. I know what you mean though, so I try and avoid the definitions. The only thing I can think of – which is a real generalisation – is that jazz always seems to celebrate something to do with individual freedom. Because even in a group situation when you're hearing Duke's band really go for it and everyone is reading in a very regimented way and sometimes say with Benny Goodman's band as well, you know that what's shot all the way through is this feeling of individual freedom of choice as well as a close connection with something physical. You can even hear this in ballads. It might not be dance music but there's almost a sacredness about the placement of the notes. That's not a very concise way of talking about it, but having to do lectures at Newcastle University I have to try and put things into words. It's really good for me – exercises a different part of my brain.

I think that's a very eloquent explanation! Vis-à-vis European concert music – which you're interested in – I think for a lot of people jazz has been an escape from its regimented rigour and rhythmic abstraction. In that way there seems to be more of a dichotomy between jazz and European concert music than between jazz and anything else.

I really understand this. There's been a lot of reaction against the stuffiness that can and does still exist. People have heard me play with more straightforward bands and then they've come to something of mine which is more of a hybrid and they can't understand why I would also want to do that. I imagine that their entry into jazz – their reference point – was much more the urban, anti-authoritarian type of jazz. You can especially link that to a lot of the stuff going on in the 1960s when there was a lot of political awareness – the Black Power movement and so on – a huge wave of influence which still exists to this day. And if that was your way in then the last thing you're going to want to see is jazz married again with the thing you wanted to escape from. I understand that, but I think that was a cultural phenomenon which was of its time. I notice some of the more senior reviewers may have that feeling. They would much rather put on someone like Dexter Gordon who's really screaming in a late night club. There's room for it all, of course. You got me there... I never would have guessed in a million years you were going to play anything classical.

JIMMY GIUFFRÉ

Piece For Clarinet And String Orchestra – 2nd Movement, from Lee Konitz Meets Jimmy Giuffrè (1959)

Giuffrè (cl) with Südwestfunk Orchestra

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of Baden-Baden, Wolfram Röhrig (cond). (Verve 527 780-2)

I'm trying to work out the strings – whether they're synthetic or not. The lower part of strings sounds quite realistic but it sounds sort of sampled at the top which sort of dates it a little. That's an interesting clarinet sound. There's a guy who's worked quite a lot with Henri Texier, French, he does a lot of bass clarinet. It sounds like some of the things he might do. He also plays with people like Aldo Romano.

Louis Sclavis?

Yes. He did a really interesting album, quite a free player though, called "Les Violences De Rameau". Presumably it's not him otherwise you would have told me.

This is actually 1959.

Wow! That sort of explains the recording then. I'm coming across something new here. I know guys like Bartok and Stravinsky were commissioned to write things for Benny Goodman and two or three other clarinet players. But this doesn't sound like them; you'd be able to tell.

These are actually the clarinettist's pieces. He wrote them for clarinet and string orchestra.

The only other person I know from that time who was doing stuff like this was Gunther Schuller, whose music I love.

It's sort of related. I think this fellow probably had some involvement with Schuller and Third Stream.

I suppose he does sound a bit like the composer because he sounds like he's reacting to music he knows he's written. You'll have to tell me who this is.

It's Jimmy Giuffrè.

Really? Oh wow! OK. I'm going to check him out.

He's known well enough as a saxophone player but he had a particular affinity with the clarinet. So there, in 1959, is an example of a jazz player who's deep into the idea of putting together jazz and classical.

People have said recently – I suppose with "Libra" coming out – that my music feels kind of pioneering, so I often have to say "Well, actually, there's a very rich history of this". Quite often it isn't headline stuff, but for many people it can represent some of the most exciting music that we can offer, especially in the 21st century where there seems to be no end of possibilities in the iPod generation. But you have to point out that in the 50s and 60s John Dankworth, Bob Brookmeyer, Kenny

Wheeler, Gunther Schuller and a host of others were working on the same idea.

BLUE MITCHELL

Chick's Tune, from The Thing To Do (1964)

Blue Mitchell (t); Junior Cook (ts); Chick Corea (p); Gene Taylor (b); Al Foster (d). (Blue Note 94319)

I've heard this tune.

A classic. It's on standard chord changes – You Stepped Out Of A Dream.

I'm struggling to think of the players though. That hard bop way of playing. Do you remember a guy – well, he's still contemporary – Ralph Moore? There were a whole load of hard bop players from that time.

From the 80s generation?

Yeah. That sounds like when it was recorded.

This is earlier than that. This was 1964.

Oh. That's a good recording isn't it? That sounds really full.

But the pianist is the point. You might recognise him. Or you might not. His style changed somewhat over the years.

I'm not going to be able to get this one either. Although I listened to so much music like this in the past.

You've played with this person.

Oh have I? There's no way this is Chick. It is Chick! That's amazing. Great. Well this isn't Blue Mitchell, is it?

Yeah, "The Thing To Do".

OK. Some of those piano clusters maybe. Only now, though. Yeah, all right, OK. If you'd given me long enough ... no, I probably still wouldn't have got it! Well, that's amazing because I've been listening quite a lot to "Now He Sings, Now He Sobs". Do you remember that band called Out Of The Blue? That was a real 80s phenomenon – kind of hard bop revival. That was my entry point into that sound. So I immediately thought this was one of those. How interesting to think I was 20 years out.

Shows how accurate those imitations were. Do you think the 80s revival of that sort of music was a useful thing in jazz?

Yeah. It was a reaction amongst other things against the synth bands and digital. There were a few seminal people of course, the Marsalis brothers in particular, who were really behind that. I think what it did was just remind people of how great swing could feel. People would rate themselves very much on how they could play