



Registered Charity 1068022

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## Jazz Heritage Wales Review 2015

Jazz Heritage Wales is a registered charity 1068022 founded by Jen Wilson in 1986 and run by a Board of Trustees under the auspices of **UWTSD Archives & Records Office**. We are not just about jazz, but also the social history and politics of a music that has evolved over 200 years. Wales has played its part in that story. We are the UK's only mixed media jazz heritage resource centre with 30 years experience working with community groups and cultural industries in Wales. We became a registered charity in 1998 as Women in Jazz, now recognized under the umbrella of Jazz Heritage Wales. We've won many awards.

### A NEW AWARD FOR 2015

2015 began with The Point of Light award from **PM David Cameron** for Jen Wilson's volunteering services to Jazz Heritage Wales. This is the second acknowledgement from **10 Downing Street**. The first was a personal thanks from **PM Tony Blair** at a reception at No.10 to commemorate our work, principally the schools touring project **BEFORE FREEDOM**, for the Bi-centenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 2007. Ergo, Jazz Heritage Wales continues to impress and intrigue the powers that be across the political spectrum.

**No. 23. Many Thousand Gone.**  
*Plaintively.* (No More Auction Block For Me)

1. No more auc-tion block for me, No more, no more;  
 No more auc-tion block for me, Ma-ny thousand gone.

2. No more peck o' corn for me, &c.  
 3. No more driver's lash for me, &c.  
 4. No more pint o' salt for me, &c.  
 5. No more hundred lash for me, &c.  
 6. No more mistress' call for me, &c.

The Fisk Jubilee Singers, freed slaves from Fisk University, Nashville, sang this 'slave song' in Swansea in 1874. It also featured in **BEFORE FREEDOM** our schools touring show. Our Deputy Chair of Trustees **Margot Morgan** also featured it this year in her Brynmill Community Choir repertoire for the Black History Month Event at Cardiff's Millennium Centre. **Many Thousand Gone** from the Jubilee Songbook which were sold at their concerts, a copy is in our jazz library.

## BOOK CONTRACT

A history of jazz in Wales is being written by Jen Wilson, taking the story as far back as the 1820s when Welsh women abolitionists emigrated to Cincinnati and ran safe houses for slaves fleeing Kentucky plantations across the Ohio River. Slave songs and abolition campaign songs featured on music hall platforms, the first stirrings of the music that would evolve into jazz.

The book will also examine the café culture which flourished during WW1. The cafés were run by women entrepreneurs, heralding in the first jazz age of the 1920s, with twice daily floorshows for up to a thousand at a sitting. African American musicians were given the opportunity of a quick afternoon gig prior to their evening performances on the main theatre touring circuit. The cafes were a significant support network for women during WW1.



Photos: © South Wales Evening Post / Jazz Heritage Wales

Book title:

**JAZZ The Devil's Music in Wales: feminists, fascists, fashion and some o' that Old Time Religion** will be published by the **University of Wales Press** in 2017.

## BBC RADIO 3 LIVE JAZZ RECORDS REQUESTS



Margot Morgan © Jazz Heritage Wales

**Margot Morgan** (left) and Jen Wilson were interviewed by **Alyn Shipton** live on stage from the RWCMD (Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff) for BBC Radio 3 Jazz Record Requests. Alyn then played a track from their CD **The Dylan Thomas Jazz Suite 'Twelve Poems'** on which Margot displays her prestigious talent for vocalizing the poems of Dylan Thomas making them fizz and sparkle like fireworks. **Cris Haines**, trumpet/flugelhorn and composer in his own right, arranged the Suite sneaking in quotes from Bach and Mozart along the way..

Margot Morgan can be seen on YouTube Jazz Heritage Wales, performing with the **Women in Jazz Allstars Swing Band**, led by **Deborah Glenister** on tenor sax. The Allstars workshops were funded by **Arts Council of Wales** giving women the opportunity to try their hand at playing or singing jazz. Seasoned vocalists also singing with the Allstars are **Megan Thomas, Amy Sinha and Elissa Evans**. Margot and Elissa also run Voice Workshops for us.

## BBC RADIO 4 PROGRAMME RECEIVES ACCOLADES ACROSS EUROPE

In 2014 Jazz Heritage Wales was visited by BBC Radio 4 for their programme **The Lost Women of British Jazz**. In 2015 it was selected as one of 16 programmes from the UK to be entered for the **PRIX EUROPA Festival**. Our programme came **FIFTH out of Europe** causing much pride and excitement for the BBC producers Janine Jones and Hannah Loy... and us too. Further programme possibilities are under discussion, including a celebration of Jazz Heritage Wales 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2016... subject to budgets. PRIX EUROPA is an annual forum reliably highlighting the latest trends in the media and taking a stand on broadcasting quality for all Europeans. Since its founding in 1987, PRIX EUROPA has grown into Europe's largest festival for Television, Radio and the Online Media, due to the strong partners who have supported the competition since its inception. The European Broadcasting Festival awards the best European Television, Radio and Online productions each year with the aim of publicising them throughout Europe and supporting their continental distribution and use. Jazz Heritage Wales are delighted to have been in such august company.

## IVY BENSON (1913-1993) A MAJOR DONATION for 2015

We were delighted to receive a call from **Diana Lusher**, wife of the late world renowned trombonist Don Lusher. Diana said that she had tracked down the missing **Ivy Benson** boxes of papers and photographs, and would like them to be housed at Jazz Heritage Wales. A deputation from the Trustees made post haste to Caerphilly in atrocious weather to collect the boxes from Diana in person.



L-R Jen Wilson, Diana Lusher, Deb Checkland Chair of Trustees, discovering the delights of Ivy's personal scrapbooks © Jazz Heritage Wales/Silva Huws.

Ivy Benson ran her All Woman Orchestra throughout the Second World War.



© Ivy Benson in ENSA uniform WW2 / Jazz Heritage Wales/Richard Arnatt

The **Ivy Benson All Woman Orchestra** became the BBC's resident dance band during 1943 and topped the bill at the London Palladium for 6 months in 1944. Ivy ran a tight ship and the band members referred to their time with her as 'Ivy's University.' She expected 100% from 'her girls' in both musicianship and presentation on the bandstand. They also had to be superb readers to take on the difficult band charts Ivy expected them to be able to play. Her Orchestra toured the American bases in the UK during the war keeping up morale for the military as well as the general public.

Also in Ivy's Orchestra was **Sheila Tracy**, lead trombonist who went on to work for the BBC presenting **Big Band Special**, combining interviews with performance. Sheila wrote books on jazz and big bands (in our library) and was an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music. We are indebted to her for keeping Ivy's papers safe.



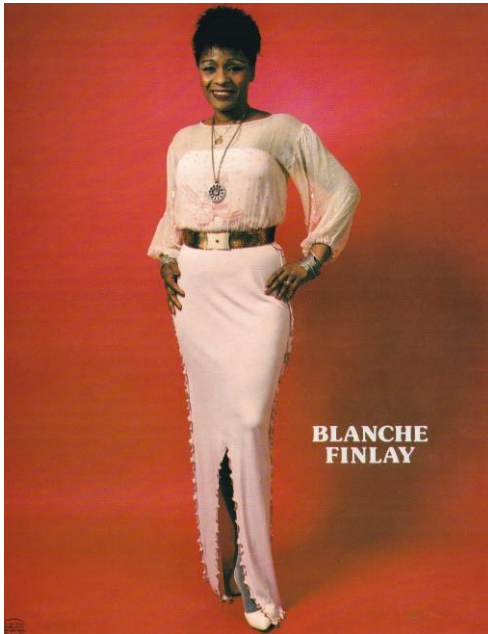
©The Ivy Benson Orchestra, Blackpool 1947 / Jazz Heritage Wales/Richard Arnatt

Sheila Tracey died in 2014 aged 80. Her son **Richard Arnatt**, living in America, arranged for Diana Lusher to pass on to us not only Ivy's heritage but also his mother's, Sheila Tracy for which he retains copyright. We have also received all Sheila's broadcasts from her 25 years with the BBC via **Chris Vezey** the multi award winning professional in creative radio management and programme production. Shortly after these important donations arrived, we received another large box of papers and photographs concerning Ivy Benson from **Bill Geldard**; Diana's busy networking behind the scenes was paying off big time! All these donations are of huge historical significance, as it is a treasure trove for future generations to understand how music is linked with feminist history, gender and cultural studies, politics, and social history. **Ivy Benson** has left a significant legacy which Jazz Heritage Wales will ensure is curated and conserved to the highest possible standard, and is accessible for future generations of researchers to discover, understand and enjoy. Ivy's drummer **Crissy Lee** (who toured with the Beatles in an earlier age) continues to fly the flag for Ivy Benson and has included Welsh musicians such as our Patron double bass player **Paula Gardiner**, among her band members. An important book, a biography of Ivy Benson, is currently being written by **Dr. Jenna Bailey** who visited us for her research work. Jenna is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Life History and Life Writing in the School of Media, Film and Music at Sussex University. Jenna is also an Executive Member of the Centre for Oral history and Tradition at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada.

**Dr. Catriona Ryan** UWTSD Senior Research Fellow is working with relevant departments within UWTSD to identify and secure appropriate funding for staffing, conservation and education-active projects for our jazz collections. Jazz Heritage Wales is now part of the Interdisciplinary Research Forum.

**JAZZ HERITAGE WALES 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY 2016**

Preparations are underway for a major exhibition to be held during the summer of 2016 at **Swansea Museum**. A deputation led by the museum curator **Gareth el-Tawab** visited us to discuss content, display and activities. Ideas discussed were possibilities for sound installations illustrated by our variety of music players e.g. our **1905 Edison Phonograph Cylinder player**, our **WW2 GEC radio**, our **1950s Bush record player** and other musical delights. The sound of music and how jazz developed will be traced through these unique items. It is also envisaged that some of our stage gowns will be given pride of place at the museum. Our most spectacular gown was donated by **Dame Cleo Laine**, a beaded, shimmering floor-length gown Dame Cleo wore at Carnegie Hall.



©Jazz Heritage Wales/ Blanche Finlay

Other gowns were donated by **Blanche Finlay** (left) including the gown Blanche is wearing. Blanche has not only donated 17 of her stage gowns some dating back to the 1950s, but also her Oral History. Blanche is one of those singers who leaves a trail of stardust in her wake. She was also an educator and politician in Manchester. Blanche opened the first integrated nightclub in Manchester in 1967, the **Ebony Club**. She described it as 'the first really posh nightclub that black people could attend on an equal level with white people.' It wasn't just a nightclub, during the day it was a meeting place for Equity the Trade Union, and also the Manchester Council for Community Relations.

Seminars, courses and Asian evenings were also held at the **Ebony Club**. Then in the night Blanche would return looking like a million dollars and perform with her band. Blanche went on to win a scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, and campaigned for married women to be allowed into the halls of residence, previously only allocated to male students. Blanche attended Ruskin with her twin babies, making a rather large statement about Ruskin's inequality of access for female students. Ruskin eventually revoked the male only halls of residence. The twins were the last of Blanche's 8 children. The whole family recently came together in Manchester to celebrate Blanche's life and times in music. Blanche continues to sing with her church gospel choir.

## PRESENTATIONS AND PERFORMANCES DURING 2015

Three Illustrated Talks were given by Jen during the year; one for **Blackpill Historical Society** and two for **Sketty Park U3A** (University of the Third Age). These were The Story of Swansea's Tower Ballroom 1937-1993; Wales and Negro Minstrelsy, and Swansea's Café Culture Between the Wars; the last being a dip into one of the draft chapters in Jen's book. All talks were enthusiastically received. Jen has already been booked for a presentation by the **Royal Institution of South Wales** for their 1916-1917 season of lectures at Swansea Museum.

The Three Divas (**Margot Morgan, Elissa Evans** and Jen) performed at Swansea International Jazz Festival and Fishguard Aberjazz Festival. They also sang a set at

Cardiff's Millennium Centre for **Black History Month**, performing songs by black composers. The BHM event was organized by **Uzo Iwobi**, Chair of Swansea's African Community Centre Wales Board, who also represents ethnic minority communities on the Welsh Government Independent Advisory Group. A splendid programme of bands and gospel groups was enjoyed by the general public.

Various members of Jazz Heritage Wales attended the **Archif Menywod Cymru/Women's Archive of Wales** Conference at Swansea's Tapestri. Vocalist **Elissa Evans** ran the bookstall for the famous Mumbles bookshop **Cover to Cover**, and Jen screened a video (now a DVD) she made in 1989 called **Portrait of the Artist as an Older Woman** featuring the poems of Penny Windsor and the live street music of Swansea. Jazz Heritage Wales also holds the VHS video documentaries (now on DVD) of **Swansea Women's History Group** made during the 1980s.

Our multi-media resources are unique to Wales and the UK. There are many opportunities for BA, MSc and PhD students to undertake research in our archives. Throughout the year we have consistently given a high profile to **Swansea Metropolitan UWTSD** and have publicly thanked them for their support and encouragement for providing a safe home for our Collections, especially the **Records and Archive Office and the Library Services:**

- **Library**
- **Photographs**
- **Recordings**
- **Films/Videos/DVDs**
- **Touring Exhibitions**
- **Stage Gowns**
- **Donated Personal Papers and Collections**
- **Memorabilia**
- **Ephemera**

**The Board of Trustees Annual Review  
November 2015**