

Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival 2017: Take Five...



This year Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival is celebrating the Centenary of Jazz – and the history of the Blues.

Jazz 100 offers historic concerts, *New Orleans comes to Edinburgh* in the shape of a host of musicians from the birthplace of jazz, *Cross the Tracks* blurs the boundaries between jazz and contemporary music, and *Scottish Jazz Expo* celebrates Scottish jazz musicians.

There's something for everyone here, but we all have our favourites – here (in no particular order) are The Edinburgh Reporter's top five sessions.

The Bad Plus



Bassist **Reid Anderson**, pianist **Ethan Iverson**, and drummer  **David King** came together at the end of the 20th century and have won critical hosannas and a legion of fans worldwide with their creativity, unique sound and flair for live performance. From Minneapolis, now based in New York City, the intensely collaborative trio has constantly searched for rules to break and boundaries to cross, bridging genres and techniques while exploring the infinite possibilities of three exceptional musicians working in perfect sync. After four albums focusing  almost exclusively on original compositions ***It's Hard*** (released August 2016) marked a return to an aspect of their roots, the very thing that first made The Bad Plus famous: the deconstruction of songs from the Pop/Rock and R&B worlds. You may also know them from their memorable *Gaston* on *Disney Jazz Volume I: Everybody Wants To Be A Cat*.

After 20 years this will be one of their last concerts with

the original line up; as of January 2018, The Bad Plus will consist of founding members Reid Anderson, Dave King and new member **Orrin Evans** (*piano*). The end of one extraordinary era; the beginning of another.

5pm Sunday 23 July, Rose Theatre (formerly Charlotte Baptist Chapel), Rose Street. Tickets £25.

Ryan Quigley Quintet plays Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker



Trumpet virtuoso Ryan Quigley's band recreates the musical fireworks of the early days of bebop in Gillespie's centenary year. High energy trumpet swagger and serpentine alto sax brilliance were Diz and Bird's trademarks -and always with bands packed with great players. For this concert Ryan is joined by **Soweto Kinch** (*saxophone*) and **Emmet Cohen** (*piano*).

Derry born and Glasgow raised, Quigley has performed and recorded with big names such as Quincy Jones, Aretha Franklin, George Michael, Michael Buble, Tom Jones, Robbie Williams, Bob Geldof, Randy Brecker, Till Bronner, Michel Le Grand and Kurt Elling. In 2016 he released ***What Doesn't Kill You*** (recorded as a quintet with Paul Booth (*tenor sax, flutes*), Steve Hamilton (*piano, Fender Rhodes*), Michael Janisch (*double bass*) and Clarence Penn (*drums*)).



Quigley's also the jazz trumpet tutor and one of the directors of the Big Band at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. His live shows are absolutely brilliant – read about his session at the 2016 Islay Jazz Festival in our review of the festival [here](#) – so get your tickets now!


2pm, Sunday 23 July, Rose Theatre (formerly Charlotte Baptist Chapel), Rose Street. Tickets £13.50.

Blind Boys of Alabama/The Como Mamas

‘The secret to our longevity is, we love what we do. And when you love what you do, that keeps you motivated. That keeps you alive.’ (Jimmy Carter, current leader.)

The Blind Boys of Alabama have the rare distinction of being recognised around the world as both living legends and modern-day innovators. Since the original members first sang together as kids at the Alabama Institute for the Negro Blind in the late 1930s, the band has persevered through seven decades to become one of the most recognized and decorated roots music groups in the world, almost single-handedly creating a new gospel sound for the 21st century.

In the early 1960s the band sang at benefits for Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, and were part of the soundtrack to the Civil Rights movement. They’ve worked with Peter Gabriel, Ben Harper, Aaron Neville, Mavis Staples, The Preservation Hall Jazz Band and Willie Nelson.

A group of blind, African-American singers, who started out  touring during a time of whites-only bathrooms, restaurants and hotels, went on to win five Grammy Awards, a Lifetime Achievement Grammy, be inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, and to perform at the White House for three different presidents. There’s nothing quite like the uplifting power they produce – a unique musical experience.

Opening the show, **The Como Mamas** are three lifelong Gospel singers from the small town of Como, Mississippi. As on their new, critically acclaimed, Daptone album *Get an Understanding* there are only three instruments – the voices of **Ester Mae Smith, Angela Taylor, and Della Daniels** – and they’re so powerful you don’t need anything else. (Image: Zack Smith)

8pm, Friday 21 July, Festival Theatre, Nicolson Street.
Tickets £25-£35.

Colin Steele Quartet plays The Pearlfishers



‘Colin Steele has been described as the Sibelius of Scotland. His music is a joyous celebration of Scottish melody and rhythm, liberated and enhanced by the spirit, sophistication and technique of jazz.’

Fronted by singer/songwriter David Scott, Glasgow-based band The Pearlfishers has a back catalogue of smooth seductive melodies. Now Scottish trumpeter Colin Steele, a collaborator on some of the band’s albums (*Sky Meadows*, *Across the Milky Way*) gives this distinctive music a jazz twist. With his new Quartet (**Dave Milligan** [*piano*], **Calum Gourlay** [*bass*] and **Alyn Cosker** [*drums*]) Steele makes warming, heartening music played with love, affection, and huge imagination.


Since the release of his debut album *Twilight Dreams* in 2002, Steele’s highly original and melodic Scottish folk-influenced jazz has won just about every UK jazz plaudit there is, from BBC Jazz CD of the Year and *Jazz Review* international CD of the Year (for his album *The Journey Home*) to CD of the year accolades in *The Guardian*, *Observer*, *Independent* and *The New Statesman*. Steele’s compositions are inspired by Scottish and Irish folk music, but are firmly rooted in the jazz tradition.


8pm, Monday 17 July, Rose Theatre (formerly Charlotte Baptist Chapel), Rose Street. Tickets £15.

Tommy Smith Plays Coltrane



Edinburgh-born Smith took up the tenor saxophone at the age of twelve. Two years later he won Edinburgh International Jazz Festival Best Soloist and (with Vincenzo Crucioli and John Rae) Best Group award; his first CD was recorded in 1983. A leading light in European jazz, first and foremost as one of the finest saxophonists of his generation, and latterly as the founder and current director of **The Scottish National Jazz**

 **Orchestra**, Smith is held in the highest esteem by the best in the world, a musician whose career-defining achievements are framed by his status as an international recording artist, a composer and arranger of extraordinary ambition, and not least, as a jazz educator.

Smith has a new Quartet and celebrates turning 50 with a  homage to John Coltrane, 50 years after the revolutionary's death. The John Coltrane Quartet created some of the most innovative and expressive music in jazz history, including the hit albums *My Favorite Things*, *Africa Brass*, *Impressions*, *Giant Steps* and Coltrane's monumental work *A Love Supreme*, often viewed as one of the greatest albums of all time. Smith's astonishing technique, power, passion and purpose make him the perfect player of Coltrane's music, and his band is full of equally passionate musicians: **Pete Johnstone** (*piano*), **Calum Gourlay** (*bass*) and **Sebastian de Krom** (*drums*). They'll play Coltrane classics and new music by Smith inspired by the great man.

8pm, Tuesday 18 July, Rose Theatre (formerly Charlotte Baptist Chapel), Rose Street. Tickets £15.50.

The [Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival](#) begins on 14 July. Ticketing information [here](#).



