

Jazz Bar-bound band has Quincy Jones' seal of approval

Music business endorsements don't come much bigger than having Quincy Jones hire your band to open his new club.

Jones, the Grammy Legend Award winner and mastermind behind Michael Jackson's multi-million selling Thriller album, was "floored" when he heard Ollie Howell play drums in a student concert at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff.



Oxfordshire-born Howell and Jones became friends and Jones has since given the drummer advice on his career, going on to book Howell's group for a three month residency as the opening attraction at Q's Bar and Lounge, the jazz club Jones opened in Dubai last November.

"Quincy is one-quarter Welsh and he was being presented with an honorary doctorate at the RWCMD when I met him," says Howell, who brings his group to the [Jazz Bar in Chambers Street on Wednesday 11 October 2017.](#)

"I was a big fan of his work on Frank Sinatra's Sinatra at the Sands album and when he invited me to New York to play with some of his friends after that concert in Cardiff, I had to pinch myself. He later invited me to Montreux Jazz Festival and Los Angeles and has generally been incredibly supportive."

Howell has also gained the admiration of jazz drummer Jimmy Cobb, who featured on trumpeter Miles Davis's classic Kind of Blue (the best-selling jazz album of all time), and was the first musical recipient of a Sky award, having

previously won a Sky Academy Arts Scholarship. Sky Television viewers may have seen his regular appearances in Sky Arts commercials, as the drummer who realised his dream, as a result.

In between these and other career highlights, Howell has had to deal with being diagnosed with a brain malfunction, which required urgent surgery and which, if it hadn't been discovered in time, could have left him paralysed. Fortunately he recovered fully and he named his first album, 2013's *Sutures and Stitches*, after the experience of undergoing repeated visits to the operating theatre.

"I really was lucky," says Howell who has composed music for film and TV and written arrangements for singer-songwriters Jack Savoretti and George Ezra recently as well as writing a second album, *Self-Identity*, which was released earlier this year.

"I knew at the time that I should have been going to see about the headaches I was having. But I suppose when we're young we can be reckless with things that we might take more care with later in life. Being ill spurred me into making music but I've learned not to put music before my health."