

Playtime announces new live-stream jazz series

Edinburgh's Playtime collective this Thursday begins a new programme of live-streamed jazz concerts which will run throughout September and into October.

Following an experimental series of streams that included various members of the core Playtime quartet working in their respective homes, the collective, which is comprised of Scottish National Jazz Orchestra saxophonist Martin Kershaw, guitarist Graeme Stephen, bassist Mario Caribe and drummer Tom Bancroft, moved to Pathhead Village Hall in June.

There, with social distancing and recording and filming operatives, they were able to establish a good internet connection. They have since been staging regular concerts, often playing to audiences well in excess of the numbers attracted to their home venue, The Outhouse in Broughton Street Lane.

"We took a while to get to grips with the whole live-streaming thing," says Bancroft, who lives in Pathhead and who negotiated with the village hall committee for the safe use of the venue.

"There were some hairy moments to begin with when we were working from our homes," Bancroft continues. "We'd lose connections intermittently or the service would go down completely and it wasn't ideal in terms of charging people to listen to the music. But when it became obvious that playing

music together to an audience in the same room might be months away – or more – we decided that we had to persevere. It's been the same for musicians and venues all over but when you see reports of musicians having to give up and find other work, you can see how serious the situation has become."

The Playtime sessions began in 2014 as a way for Kershaw, Stephen Caribe and Bancroft to try out new ideas and play new compositions in a relaxed, informal situation. The Outhouse's loft proved an ideal venue and the quartet has built a loyal following. As well as playing their own material, they have paid tributes to Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Keith Jarrett and Pat Metheny, to name just a few of the heroes whose music has featured, and invited a large number of guests to join them.

Guest bands and musicians will be invited to take over for an evening in the new series, called Playtime Presents. Beginning on Thursday 3 September 2020 with guitarist Kevin Mackenzie's trio, the programme includes pianist Dave Milligan joining Kershaw, Caribe and Bancroft on 10th September.

Pianist Fergus McCreadie's trio appears on Thursday 17th and the Playtime quartet presents an evening of new compositions on Thursday 24th.

Singer Fionna Duncan and Brian Kellock open October's programme on Thursday 1st and further concerts are being added. The concerts begin at 8:15pm and can be viewed at www.facebook.com/playtimemusic1/live or YouTube (search for Playtime Live) and Twitch.tv/playtimemusic1