

Playtime jazz hosts transatlantic sessions from Friday

Musicians from as far away as New York and Massachusetts are taking part in the latest series of online concerts staged by Edinburgh jazz collective Playtime.

With Covid-19 restrictions putting a halt to streaming from their temporary home in Pathhead Village Hall, the core Playtime quartet of saxophonist Martin Kershaw, guitarist Graeme Stephen, bassist Mario Caribe and drummer Tom Bancroft have reverted to streaming from their own homes – with special guests joining in from further afield.



David Berkman

The new Playtime programme moves the sessions to a new Friday evening slot from 29 January 2021, with American pianist David Berkman joining the Playtime group from New York. Boston-based Dutch

saxophonist Jorrit Dijkstra, trumpeter Laura Jurd, from the Mercury Music Prize-nominated band Dinosaur, saxophonists Iain Ballamy and Raymond MacDonald and vibraphonist Corey Mwamba follow in the weeks to come.

“We’re determined to keep the music flowing and to keep bringing in new ideas,” says Bancroft. “We were able to promote a Playtime Presents series in the run up to Christmas,

where we gave other bands and musicians the night to themselves. But we wanted to try something different again to keep giving our audience – and us! – new experience. Collaborating with musicians who are hundreds – in some cases thousands – of miles away is certainly a different experience.”

The six musicians in the latest series all have links with Scotland, David Berkman having worked extensively with players including Bancroft over the past twenty years and continuing an occasional concert and recording partnership with saxophonist Laura Macdonald when time and travel restrictions allow.

“Jorrit has played with my orchestra in Edinburgh and Iain, who’s half-Scottish, is a friend from back in the Wavendon Summer School days of the early 1980s,” says Bancroft. “Laura Jurd has worked very successfully with the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra and with Fergus McCreadie’s trio. Raymond is Scottish, of course, and Corey has worked a lot with Raymond through the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra. We didn’t just choose them because we knew them, though. We chose them because they’re all great players and we thought they might be amenable to trying the journey into the unknown, for us, that is long-distance streaming.”

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