

100 Years Of Jazz Press Release

The only history of jazz from its birth to the present day - in 99 hilarious, musically brilliant, historically fascinating minutes.

The six multi-instrumental jazz virtuosi create a highly entertaining journey through the decades taking in everything from New Orleans to Be Bop, Swing to Latin, Hot to Cool, and from Chicago to New York to around the world. It's an A to Z of jazz's biggest names from Louis Armstrong to Joe Zawinul interspersed with fascinating facts and stories from the music's amazing history.

Richard Pite, drummer, bandleader and director of The Jazz Repertory Company devised the show back in 2010. "I had been part of a show called Jazz Classics Revisited that went from ragtime to 1940 and I thought if I could find the right players I could extend the concept up to the present day"

Finding musicians who could be as convincing in the style of the 1920s as well as the 1970s was not going to be easy but Pite has put together a formidable team who are not just widely diverse stylists but also multi – instrumentalists. Pite says "the show features around a couple of dozen musical instruments and Dave Chamberlain our bass player wins the prize for playing more than anyone else in the band – piano, drums, banjo, various guitars, electric bass and double bass"

Pite has put together a programme featuring landmark musical moments in jazz history such as the first ever jazz record – Livery Stable Blues (The Original Dixieland Jazz band in 1917) and at other times the show has to represent a whole style in just one piece of music – in the case of the Swing Era, Sing Sing Sing from 1937 does the job perfectly.

The show never goes too far out musically "there's nothing to frighten the horses!" but the band does do a brief foray into the Free Jazz of the 60s (clearly with their tongues firmly in their cheeks). "The humour in the show has helped to make it massively popular" says Pite "we want to reach out to a new audience as well as satisfying the older, knowledgeable jazz fans – we're delighted to see young children and teenagers in our audience, often listening to this amazing and extraordinary music for the first time" The Jazz Repertory Company is currently working on putting the show into schools and making the show even more family friendly.

The show has been such a resounding success that this year the Jazz Repertory Company has launched its follow up show "Another 100 Years of Jazz". The new show features a 13 minute version of St Louis Blues which starts off in 1914 (the year the song was written) and brings it bang up to date via Glenn Miller, Stevie Wonder, Kenny Ball and many others – it's a real tour-de-force.

As the magazine Jazz UK said in its review of the original 100 Years of Jazz in 99 minutes show "Genuinely needs to be seen to be believed. Don't miss out!" This show will run and run, maybe for the next 100 years? Maybe.