

Cornwall Youth Jazz Festival 2017



Day 1

Recipe ingredients:

- 2 x Leeds College of Music tutors, Jamil Sheriff and Dave Walsh
- 2 x LCoM students, Bess (ts) and Jack (bass).
- 20 x jazz students from Humphry Davy School, Penzance
- 12 x jazz band members from Truro School
- 5 x jazz students from as far away as St. Ives and Clovelly in Devon!
- 5 x jazz improvisation students from Cornwall

Method:

- Place in a well-equipped room at Truro College.
- Mix all the ingredients well, and gently increase the heat.
- Ensure the rhythm section is cooking well.
- Teach the ensemble a tune by ear.
- Introduce new sections of the piece until an arrangement forms.
- Gently coax the more reluctant players to explore improvisation adding one note at a time.
- Encourage those not playing to listen carefully, responding when required.
- Using the more experienced players, slowly stretch them until new mental and aural pathways are discovered and amplified.

Result - after 6 hours of vigorous and humorous encouragement, turn out some inspired and enthused young jazz players.





Day 2

After a morning of auditions, which took the form of an extended lesson with the auditionee and the visiting LCoM rhythm section, two students from Cornwall, Adam Wilkin and Josh Williams, were offered conditional places at Leeds College of Music. Both students were over the moon with this result, and the resulting emotions and enthusiasm exuded by both these students were tangible.

In the afternoon, Jamil and colleagues worked with CYJO (Cornwall Youth Jazz Orchestra) to create a piece using a Diminished Scale, again all learnt by ear and committed to memory. The piece, named by committee as "Diminished Responsibility", was then performed at the evening concert.

The evening concert featured Jamil, Dave, Bess and Jack performing some jazz standards, and then invited the advanced group to the stage, recreating the 'Autumn Leaves' variant tune which was worked on at their session together the previous day. The creativity and improvement by all the young Cornish players was evident right from the off, and even during the performance, encouragement was offered by Jamil, giving the piece a great sense of cooperation and sensitivity.

After a short break for resetting the stage, Truro School Jazz Ensemble was welcomed and performed a super selection of jazz tunes. The band played with great enthusiasm and precision, helped by a couple of CYJO 'deps' drafted in at the last minute. CYJO then took to the stand to round off the concert, which was warmly received by an audience of parents and friends.

Our grateful thanks must go to Bill Walker and all the staff at Truro College for making us so welcome, and nothing was too much trouble. Arthur, Chris and Bill went out of their way to ensure everything worked smoothly on both days, and the stage set and lighting in the Helford Theatre was a real treat for all the players.

Lastly, massive thanks to Jamil, Dave, Bess and Jack for their contributions to a wonderful two days of jazz in Cornwall. I have no doubt that this will not be the last Jazz Festival - Jami wants to come back next year!

