

EGSM – Jazz

Content Warnings

- Brief explicit language
- Discussions of: slavery & oppression, anxiety

HELEN

What does a plastic trumpet sound like? Does it sound different?

SAM

Not as good as a metal one.

(laughter)

[Show Theme - Intro]

HELEN

Rusty Quill presents, Enthusiasm. Hello friends and fans and welcome to Enthusiasm. I am your host, Helen Gould, one of the best Rusty Quillers and today we're talking about Jazz and I am very, very, very pleased to be joined by Beth, Callum, Cathy and Sam. So, I am going to handover and let them introduce themselves, Beth what are your pronouns and what do you do?

BETH

Hey yeah, I am Beth, I am she/her, and I am a vocal coach and a YouTuber.

HELEN

What's your YouTube channel about? Is it all about singing tips?

BETH

It's singing!

HELEN

(gasps!)

BETH

Not all jazz, but a mix.

HELEN

Do you want to plug your YouTube channel name?

BETH

It's Beth Ruett, it's my name, well it's kind of not my name, it's my fake name.

(laughter)

HELEN

Excellent. Callum, you're up next, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

CALLUM

So, I am Callum, he/him. I am the Chief Marketing Officer for Rusty Quill though I also do other random music. I have done musicals that have won the Offies awards...

HELEN

Oooh.

SAM

Cripes.

CALLUM

...and in particular that was a funk, soul, jazz, rock musical kind of thing going on there...

(gasps!)

...so, there is a little bit of that in there, and then multi-instrumentalist and so on.

HELEN

Really, you play multiple instruments?

CALLUM

Uh, yeah, I mean drums, guitar, flute and you'll find today during the conversation that flute jazz in particular is my acute point of interest, but I kind of also play like synthesizer and like midi stuff on there so, arguably every other instrument via the method of cheating to just press two simple keys...

(laughter)

HELEN

I had no idea that you played all those instruments! Oh, this is so exciting!
Oh right, Cathy, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

CATHY

Hi, I'm Cathy. I am she/her and I am an Audio Master for Rusty Quill and honestly, I don't have any particular expertise in jazz but I enjoy the art form and I have an interest in jazz history to do some theatre stuff I did recently and just want to kind of represent...

(laughter)

...the people who like jazz but don't know enough about it.

(laughter)

HELEN

You are extremely welcome, you are on this podcast because you like a thing, and we are always in favour of people liking things so do not worry; and Sam, please do give us your pronouns and tell us who you are and what you do.

SAM

Yeah, hi all I am Sam, I am resident composer at Rusty Quill so, I take notes stick them together and hope they work. Yeah, I guess I've been exposed to a lot of jazz. I am not an expert at all. I did a history of jazz module...

HELEN

Ooooh.

SAM

...so we can talk about some facts that may or may not be correct, but I am so glad that Callum's the funk and soul guy because...

(laughter)

...that's really where my interest is, I think. I love fusion jazz that's maybe what I can talk about a bit more but yeah, excited to be here.

HELEN

Very, very exciting. Oh, I should mention you did the theme tune for this show as well.

SAM

I did, yes.

(laughter)

Yeah, I did.

HELEN

After we just said YouTube videos “I like this one, can you make something that sounds a bit like that”.

SAM

Yeah, that’s me doing weird mouth pops in the thing that you latched onto immediately.

HELEN

Yeah.

(laughter)

...you did the pops...

(laughter)

I was like yes, I like the pops!

(laughter)

Excellent, okay, alright, so, how did you get into jazz, what was your gateway into the... I was going to say jazz universe, the uni-jazz? The no, no there's no clever way to do it, would anyone like to go first?

BETH

Well, I used to play saxophone...

(gasps!)

...I haven't played it in years, but I think when I was a kid, I wanted to be Lisa Simpson...

(laughter)

...and that's where it started! And I was like mum, I am going to learn the saxophone and then I had to kind of learn jazz so, and then I was like this is great I love this.

HELEN

The saxophone is such a lovely instrument. It's got such a... I want to describe it as like a round sound...

What's that?!

CATHY

Ooo, yes!

HELEN

Audience, Sam just picked up a saxophone and showed it off.

(laughter)

SAM

You were just starting describing so I thought you know visual aid.

(laughter)

HELEN

Well, I mean if I was to... it's more of a squiggly sound going off the instrument itself, but yeah, I love listening to saxophones because like I am into jazz because my dad was super into jazz and he had this old record player that he bought when he was a student and he would just like blast it through the house, like he was downstairs and my bedroom was upstairs and I would hear whatever he was playing like he would wake me up on the weekend sometimes.

(laughter)

Anyone else want to talk about your intro to jazz?

SAM

Yeah, I had a very similar one to Beth. I actually started on clarinet it was my first instrument and then wanted to be cooler...

(laughter)

...so, around the age of 12 I did a very slow transition to saxophone by buying a straight black saxophone, soprano saxophone which is very much like a clarinet but sounds totally different, and then so I started playing in sax quartets and then eventually big bands and stuff at school, so that was my beginnings, an attempt to be cool because let's be honest, it is cool.

BETH

Mm hmm.

HELEN

It is. Also, I forgot to mention I used to play trombone, but I was never very good at it so um...

(laughter)

CATHY

Yes!

Yay trombone!

(laughter)

HELEN

Did you use to play trombone?

(laughter)

Well, Cathy you are just overjoyed so I am going to come to you to ask you about your intro into jazz.

CATHY

(laughter)

Well, mine is very much the same as Sam mentioned. I was in bands since third grade and I started out on tuba and I got the chance to listen to the jazz band play over the years and I really, really, really wanted to play with the jazz band because they sounded cool...

HELEN

Yeah.

CATHY

...but there wasn't a lot for the tuba to do other than follow the string bassline, so eventually I started learning to play bass trombone as well just so I had something to actually do in the jazz band...

(laughter)

...and just kind of you know, enjoyed my time there while they let me. That was nice.

HELEN

Ah. And Callum, how about you?

CALLUM

So, I'm not actually sure if I remember, but I know how I got into some of the jazz genres that particularly peaked my interest, and that was through picking up some new instruments and kind of wanting to see what was played with those instruments, so like, in particular I assume because it was cheap and seemed interesting, I got a tin whistle; and it turns out tin whistle is a very iconic jazz instrument.

HELEN

Ah.

CALLUM

Quite an influential jazz instrument, so that was kind of one, and I was also, like I decided to get a ukulele because I guess it was cool to get ukuleles at that time, when I was about 13.

HELEN

Yeah, I remember the ukulele craze.

CALLUM

Ukulele jazz is a thing and has a very unique and interesting sound and plucking ukulele is great to...

HELEN

(laughter)

Beth pointing to her ukulele there.

CALLUM

It's very... not to go on too much of a tangent but to me I was always drawn with the ukulele to actually to not strum and to sort of like pluck at it and maybe it is just because with hands the size of my hands you can kind of just you have the whole neck of ukulele pretty much covered, it doesn't take the stretching of the hand out skill when I have quite stubby fingers for a remote instrumentalist to be fair than a guitar, and it was kind of an excuse to do more of that, but I guess when you kind of play something you try to then understand it a bit more and I guess you sort of... I don't know, I feel like that was my journey into it was being like looking for pieces of music to play and then inevitably you hear them because you are trying to play them and understand them, and you cannot help but become interested through the osmosis I guess.

HELEN

so what I am hearing is that all of us in some way, have played a jazz instrument or can sing in a jazzy style because that's why I'm...

BETH

Yeah.

HELEN

...a much better singer than I was a trombonist...

(laughter)

BETH

I am the same, I am a singer more than anything else so...

(laughter)

HELEN

We could start a jazz band.

BETH

Yeah!

CATHY

We should.

(laughter)

HELEN

We actually could.

(laughter)

Oh, I'll file that away for later consideration.

CALLUM

I feel like we should on this call.

SAM

I was going to say Callum there's some instruments lying around I mean why wait...

(laughter)

CATHY

Yeah.

SAM

Let's just get on with it...

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM013 – Jazz

(laughter)

CALLUM

We actually need to rewind back this has already come up and it's clearly fate that we should get onto it.

(laughter)

Let's do a very experimental Enthusiasm, we don't talk...

(laughter)

...we just riff off each other for an hour and then that's it.

(laughter)

CATHY

Talk with our instruments, yeah.

SAM

I mean Enthusiasm is an excellent name for a jazz band as well.

CALLUM

It is brilliant.

HELEN

True.

(laughter)

Oh my gosh, I never noticed that.

(laughter)

Yeah, it is a good band name, aren't I smart. Excellent.

(laughter)

CALLUM

I hope the marketing department did the due diligence and got that one like trademarked down.

(laughter)

I wonder whose responsibility that kind of thing that might have been...

(laughter)

HELEN

I mean I don't think I've said it on a podcast yet but Enthusiasm is actually a joke title. I was like we can call it this, this and this, or we can always call it Enthusiasm, and Alex was like "Yes!"

(laughter)

CATHY

Oh.

HELEN

I am going to segway into the question I wrote down later which is like, what is your favourite instrument to hear in like jazz, or do you think that it's all about like the whole, because there's always a section in most jazz songs where each player gets to do their own little thing for a while, gets a little solo in which they can just go you know "ba da, dap a, du, du, ba, ba" or whatever you know? Do we have any opinions on this?

SAM

Yeah, I kind of do, but it's not, not a satisfactory one I think...

(laughter)

...it's that it depends on the player. I think it really depends on the player and kind of in context as well I think the best players make the best solos, and so in that sense I don't really have a favourite instrument. I mean I was just, again I

am going back to my fusiony year thing here, okay I was listening to a bit of Snarky Puppy earlier and like there's this Cory Henry solo on synths and it's just mind blowing and yet another more trad-jazz kind of thing on trumpet is also amazing, so yeah I don't know I don't really have... although when you said trombone, something happened in my heart, I was like ah there's nothing better than a trombone solo, but you know...

(laughter)

HELEN

Really?

CATHY

Yes.

SAM

Trombone solos are awesome, they are so good.

(laughter)

HELEN

Why is that, why do you think a trombone is great?

SAM

For me it's like the idea of this agile virtuosic solo being on a trombone...

(laughter)

...as an orchestrator you know that's just something that doesn't happen, and yet it happens all the time in jazz and it's always great. I think it's got a particular sound because it's so difficult to do as well. It's not like everything's at your fingertips as it were, you've really got to, yeah make something of the mechanics of the instrument to make it work...

HELEN

Yeah.

SAM

...and I think that really lends itself something interesting you know worth listening to, that's my opinion on that.

CATHY

Well, that's what makes it brilliant though too, is the fact that the trombone you are not, you are not tied into valves, you are not tied into keys, you've got a slide, and all you are doing is you're just moving that slide back and forth, you've got all the notes basically to choose from which like really opens it up expressively, in an expressive way which is a the core part of jazz, I don't know just jumping off what you said there yeah, it's fun having trombone in jazz all the time.

SAM

Yeah.

BETH

You know I really love clarinet though Sam, even though you said it wasn't cool. I love clarinet.

HELEN

What?!

(laughter)

SAM

Well, see it's interesting, before I started saxophone, I wasn't even really aware of clarinet in jazz. I mean I was quite young...

BETH

As a jazz, yeah.

(laughter)

SAM

...and I guess I'd played some sort of Dixieland style things without really being aware that that's also jazz, and also cool...

BETH

Yeah.

SAM

Yeah, no I kind of I just wanted to... I think it was honestly the image you know.

BETH AND HELEN

Yeah.

SAM

The image of holding a saxophone is just so much cooler, but I know exactly what you mean, clarinets are awesome. I am not dissing clarinets at all. My first love.

BETH

Yeah, I think I realised because you know in jazz there is so many kind of metally sounding instruments, not as in metal rock hands...

SAM

Yeah.

BETH

(laughter)

...I know you can't hear that, but you know I think it's got such a... it's just softer isn't it, warmer than a lot of the other instruments, it's sometimes it's nice to have that different edge.

SAM

It's also again getting sort of boring orchestration on it, but there's a lot more variation in the sound of a clarinet from bottom to top than a saxophone. Saxophones are fairly homogeneous in their timbre...

HELEN

Oh.

BETH

Mm.

SAM

...there you go, but yeah the clarinet has a lot more variation, it can be really, really cool.

HELEN

Callum, what are your opinions on best instrument to listen to?

CALLUM

That is a good question, so, I have already mentioned the tin whistle...

(laughter)

...now I find that an extremely interesting instrument. I've also already mentioned flute so, I like jazz flute and I guess tin whistle jazz kind of like leans a little bit into what flutes do. However, with a very unique sound characteristic that at times can be, to be honest completely obnoxious...

(laughter)

...and really quite rough particularly since a lot of recordings that were done with tin whistle in the genre of Kwela jazz were very like rough shown stuff in people's homes and things like that so, there's like some imperfections to it that kind of like endear you to do it and kind of can be challenging on the ear, which makes it almost all the more rewarding a genre to get into; but then on the other side of things, I think that one of the things that sort of makes jazz, jazz is the fact that you are not necessarily bound to an individual instrument...

HELEN

Yeah.

CALLUM

...and doing lots of different stuff with lots of different instruments and a genre that I am really into Exotica, is actually almost like the genre of just recycling other people's compositions on other instruments. I think that yes there is one bit of instrument that I like but jazz is kind of defined by people trying to play different types of songs or like existing methods or sounds on new instruments

and just taking it and transposing it for like their band and what instruments they use.

HELEN

Yeah, see I am almost completely the opposite opinion in that my favourite instrument to hear when I am listening to jazz is the trumpet which for me I think is just the classic jazz instrument. I cannot think of trumpets without thinking of jazz and vice versa and that's probably really influenced from my dad's taste, he was very into the very brassy sounding artists, very much Count Basie kind of dude. I wanted to go back briefly, Sam you mentioned Dixieland...

SAM

Mm.

HELEN

...shall we just clarify what that is for the audience.

SAM

Oh cripes.

(laughter)

On the spot Helen, thank you.

HELEN

It's okay if anyone else wants to define it we can share the burden.

SAM

The earlier sort of parts of jazz come from a combination of early blues and marching music, and Dixieland was a tangent, a sort of offset off that which ended up kind of... this is we are talking sort of the deep south of the States here where it became a bit more of a thing you sat and listened to, rather than you know it started to become its own thing, that's when jazz started to form and Dixieland is pretty much one of the earliest forms of jazz as we might understand it now. When it's not like marching bands combined with that kind of blues culture, that's my understanding of what Dixieland is; and so I think that's probably the reason why it's a clarinet not a saxophone because clarinet has been around much longer, because a saxophone is only you know I think early 19th century/mid-19th century invention, but yeah that's my understanding of it anyone else know better?

(laughter)

CATHY

It's a very tangential and a very complex music history, not just for Dixie but for all of like jazz really, I mean we're talking, we've got the brass bands like Sam said. We've got blues, Ragtime, syncopated dance bands all happening in the same era of like pre-World War I. All just started happening all at the same time so it's really hard to pinpoint all of the different characteristics, but to what Sam was saying with Dixie these brass bands were especially popular

down in New Orleans, New Orleans, New Orleans? (tries different pronunciations) however the listener wants to interpret it, and they started doing competitions back and forth in the streets, they were so popular and so good they started playing at each other and it kind of led into the style of music competition of ripping off each other, or trying to one up each other and now if you go down to listen to like Dixie in New Orleans you can kind of see where that has evolved into like again the bands playing in the street or at Mardi Gras doing music back and forth.

Sorry I ran off of your topic there, but it's just so cool how music like actively evolves all the time I can't stop talking about it.

(laughing)

SAM

Well you're right I'd agree, because in sort of modern history of music jazz has been something of like a core of that and you can see that thread through almost all music we listen to now, and that is the thing that is so interesting to me about jazz is that it really has fed into everything in the last 100-150 years...

HELEN

Yeah.

SAM

...and yeah, that you know just being an early example, but these styles were so kind of incestuous around that time, around the turn of the century...

(laughter)

...but yeah absolutely, that is really interesting.

CALLUM

There's also like a lot of parallel development and then like I guess cross pollination going on with jazz as well between what was happening in New Orleans and in like Johannesburg in South Africa, and what was really interesting, or at least to me personally, is they both developed scenes of playing very early kind of proto jazz music in and around the late 1910s and 1920s and in both cases, it was influenced by marching bands.

In particular in Johannesburg they had the Scottishes that was the very Scottish regiment and then in New Orleans they had marching bands as well, and what seemed to happen is that artists would like travel across the world and play in other cities and records would be traded often improvise records and stuff would be traded and they would kind of cross pollinate with each other or, arguably, something in the DNA of that marching band music took just a natural progression that sort of like developed over time in similar ways, so either it was cross pollination which is assumed, but then there's also the potential that the jazz almost like took the same path in two different parts of the world at the same time and I kind of find that quite fascinating in the way that jazz is built and the way it has crossed into so many things and when it exploded in global popularity it just sort of went, "oh what's happening musically in this country, we are going to have some of that and we are going to create a hybrid genre over here".

Rusty Quill Enthusiasgasm – EGSM013 – Jazz

I feel like it's almost like present on this call because we probably all have very different tastes and interests in jazz too...

(laughter)

...which is like it is a super topic which is big as like "oh let's just talk about books"

(laughter)

BETH

Yeah!

CATHY

Yeah.

HELEN

Yes, yes I am very aware how many different genres and sub-genres of jazz are because I really like a really good vocalist in general in my taste in music. I like a vocalist who when I hear them I'm like, "ah, yes that is so and so" it could not be anyone else. So, when I hear Billie Holiday...

BETH

She's my favourite.

HELEN

...or Louie Armstrong...

BETH

And that's my second favourite.

(laughter)

HELEN

I am sensing Beth that you and I have similar taste.

BETH

Yeah.

HELEN

Like when I hear them I am like YES! That is yes, that is them, and I like to be able to recognise people straight away in that way.

BETH

Yes, and I think jazz allows for that...

HELEN

Yeah.

BETH

...in instruments and vocals in that...

HELEN

Yes.

BETH

...it allows so much freedom compared to many and before that, I mean no not really before that because then people were improvising, but when everything started to become written down more so, it felt like there wasn't as much improvisation and jazz allows us freedom to just do what you like. To sound like you like. To make crazy noises and it be absolutely fine, it's just part of it...

(laughter)

...and just express yourself in the way is most authentic to you and it doesn't matter if you're playing bass or you're singing, but that's what's lovely about it...

HELEN

Yeah.

BETH

...and there's not... I mean I don't feel like there's genres for me that really embodies it that feeling of freedom in the same way. Or certainly if there is, a lot of it has been influenced by jazz.

HELEN

Yeah.

I really wish that I knew a lot more about jazz history now because I am thinking very much about how it's rooted in black history particularly...

CATHY

Yes.

BETH

Mm hm, and gospel music.

HELEN

...and about the freedom of like the way that jazz sounds, and the way that you are allowed to be, how that is potentially linked to the oppressions that black people at the time who were inventing all of this stuff to that coming out, because I know that when I am feeling really shit, I tend to get more creative...

(laughter)

...and so I can only imagine, and it also makes me think of how like you were mentioning how different jazz bands would be competing and my mind immediately went to, oh so like rap battles that people would be doing you know 60/70 years later. The constant invention I think is some things that is often very much rooted in black culture.

BETH

Mm hm.

SAM

Oh, for sure, I mean I was just going to say, we mentioned, I think I mentioned earlier sort of blues culture which obviously stems from slavery and there's singing in the fields, and that influencing, I think that's kind of the crux of it because every culture in the world has what's called a pentatonic scale. I don't know if you will hear this – is it worth me playing on the piano?

HELEN

Yes, please do, please do.

CATHY

Yay.

BETH

Yeah

SAM

Only just the scale [Sam plays a scale on the piano] okay, but what blues brought is this... there's this anguish in the sound which created the blues note [Sam plays a blues tune on the piano] you know and that fed into everything and I think that, just that spirit of freedom right, there is no other word for it

really in just like bringing some freedom into the music. That's really kind of fed into all of jazz I think, even just something as simple as that.

Take any other culture, pentatonic scales are everywhere but no one's kind of done that and it's something so simple but you can kind of hear that pain in that what you were Helen and absolutely I think that's really just seeped into all types of jazz. That's how it all kind started from my point of view is just that change...

BETH AND HELEN

Yeah.

SAM

...is that it needed that extra something when they are all singing together, yeah.

BETH

That little clash it's the clash against the rest of the chords that just makes it feel kind of... I don't want to say uneasy, it's like defiance in its own way...

SAM

Yeah.

BETH

...like it's defiantly like I am going to sit just off the rest of this chord...

HELEN

Yeah.

BETH

...and then it actually just sounds, wicked.

SAM

Absolutely.

CATHY

And that's very much the spirit of slave songs being sung and being played out on plantation and off plantation the work songs the spiritual songs all of those. I mean it was all about something, a form of expression that couldn't be controlled...

HELEN AND BETH

Mm.

HELEN

The way that I put it is that like the mere fact of finding creative joy, that is in itself, the defiance it's the "I am going to find my joy, and find happiness in this thing that you cannot take away from me" and that to me is very powerful. On that I think we are going to take a little break, and then we will come back and we'll talk a bit more about jazz.

[BREAK]

And welcome back! So, let's get into some specifics, does anyone have like a favourite jazz musician or singer, because Beth you mentioned Billie Holiday earlier, do you want to talk a bit more about her?

BETH

I just feel like she is someone who isn't perfect in many ways but is very creative and she takes a lot of the imperfections especially within her voice as she got older, she takes them and makes it into something that is really emotional. It really makes the audience feel something...

HELEN

Yeah.

BETH

...so, whether it's the cracks or the breaks in her voice or the way that her... I mean she definitely had vocal damage by the end of her life, but rather than kind of shying away from anything she fully embodied that and I mean, I don't know if anyone has seen, again that recent movie, there's "Lady Sings the Blues", but there's the new one that has just come out with Andrew Day so, it has a bit more about the history about her whole life is incredible, about civil rights and of course "Strange Fruit" and that is a really important song, and there is a really like visceral song. I feel, like it's horrible to even think about the words of those songs but the bravery that she has is fantastic. I just, I love her.

HELEN

Yeah, that thing you said about imperfections in someone's voice, that's one of the things that I love in a vocalist. I would much rather listen to someone distinguishable but not always perfect, than someone who was completely note perfect but could be anybody...

BETH

Mm hm, yeah.

HELEN

...yeah, and the same with Nina Simone because, no she's not the best singer in the world, but I love the passion. I love like the... just the sound of her voice, like she's got a very specific power, she has massive power in her voice I guess that's what I am trying to say.

BETH

Yeah.

HELEN

I saw her do a cover of a song called Feelings I try and remember the guy who wrote it first, I think it was like Morris something...? Anyway, I highly recommend that if you look up Nina Simone, Feelings that's an excellent demonstration of what I mean.

Any other favourites from anyone else?

CALLUM

So, I really like Kwela jazz music and in particular, I really like Spokes Mashiyane.

HELEN

Very quickly Callum, what's Kwela jazz music?

CALLUM

So, Kwela jazz music is a very particular type of jazz from South Africa. I guess it specifically is a genre that's often played on tin whistle/penny whistle or occasionally through solo on the saxophone, it's really about repetition of two to four bar patterns throughout...

HELEN

Yeah.

CALLUM

It was one of the first musical progressions in jazz in South Africa to sort of move more towards a swingish type of drumbeat. Whereas before that it had often been quite sort of straight and driving, really sort of drawing on those, erm, on the influence of marching bands, and at the point of kwela it sort of like spun off a little bit more in the swing direction, but it's basically just a particular of sub-genre of South African jazz music.

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM013 – Jazz

Spokes Mashiyane in particular, is an artist who was quite influential within that space and actually managed to get some sort of global acknowledgement for the music that they were playing on the penny whistle and then as someone who took this genre and then began to introduce the saxophone as well. It's influenced actually on other jazz progression and stuff that can kind of be overlooked, especially Spokes Mashiyane.

I think also like the best sort of root into listening to the genre would be to listen to Spokes Mashiyane.

HELEN

Cathy, any favourites from you?

CATHY

Oh gosh, as the person who can't really keep a catalogue of famous artists in her head...NO I LIKE IT ALL! It's great!

(laughter)

It really is.

HELEN

That's fine.

CATHY

The funny thing about jazz is I mean it's all about expression right, so you are just hearing everybody's different types of expressions and it's just all about kind of what resonates with you in the moment.

There would be some days where like Louie Armstrong...

HELEN

Yes.

CATHY

...is you know a big popular one. I love Louie as well.

There's some days I love to listen to him belting out a tune or like singing Mack the Knife or something like that, and then other days where I just can't get into it because my mental or emotional state isn't there, but I mean that's cause that's what it's like with a lot of other music too I suppose. It's just so... it resonates with you emotionally and because there's so much expression and meaning behind it as a music form it can be all over the place.

HELEN

Yeah.

CATHY

One artist that recently came back into my sphere is Sam Pilafian, he's is a jazz tuba player and starting to listen to some of his stuff the amount of technicality and flexibility he does on the tuba, going into all these different

classic jazz songs is just beautiful. I mean after a while you forget you are listening to a tuba, and it's just you are listening to someone's deep soul just kind of coming out through the instrument. It's great.

HELEN

I love that. You mentioned Louie Armstrong which reminded me, has anyone heard of Louie Jordan?

SAM

No.

HELEN

Gosh, I think Louie Jordan and his Tympany Five so, they did so many songs that I know really well now, like he did this song called, "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby" and there's this one song called, "Fives Guys Named Moe", does anyone know that song?

CATHY

It sounds familiar, I wish I remembered the tune.

HELEN

It goes like [Helen sings] "there's big Moe oolly ahh dah, iddy biddy Moe, oolly ahh dah, four eyed Moe, oolly ahh dah, no Moe, oolly ahh dah, look then brothers" like that.

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM013 – Jazz

(laughter)

HELEN

I love it though.

SAM

It sounds great.

(laughter)

HELEN

Does anyone recog- Oh! I am the only person who knows about Louie Jordan.

(laughter)

BETH

I wish I knew that song.

(laughter)

HELEN

He's got so many. A lot of them are really funny there's one song I think it's called "Chartreuse" and it's just like "you've dyed your hair chartreuse, I'm going to go and tell your mum"

(laughter)

There's one called "Saturday Night Fish Fry" which is just about the fish bar down the road, and there's so much fun in his songs and in his music, and then he's got a couple of, but they're funny, they're really funny lyrics a lot of the time and then some of them are kind of bluesy and romantic like the one I mentioned [Helen sings] "Is you is or is you ain't my baby" and then there's like this piano goes [Helen sings] "bella baba, du bella baba ba" anyway! That's a recommendation for you.

(laughter)

Just wanted to mention the other Louis, that's in my mind.

(laughter)

Sam, give us your favourites.

SAM

I just have to pouring out the amazing hand that you were just doing there Helen.

(laughter)

HELEN

This is how you play the piano right?

(laughter)

SAM

Superb.

(laughter)

It was great.

Yeah, I mean kind of like Cathy, I'm a bit of a fickle listener to be honest, it's kind of mood dependent, and you know the purists are going to roll their eyes and cross their arms but I definitely, the stuff I listen to the most tends to branch from funk. I just love funk music and I know we've talked a lot about the kind of the freedom of jazz and it's sort of an important factor and I think a lot of purists are like well funk kind of takes a bit of that away, but yeah I do listen to a lot of Snarky Puppy and Wolfpack and things like that. I just find that super cool and they are always so like tight as an ensemble, there's something really satisfying about that. As well, again it's kind of very sort of different to trad-jazz but I do have a lot of appreciation for Jacob Collier...

BETH

Yes.

SAM

...for those who know him, he's a lot of people don't like him...

(laughter)

...because he overcomplicates something that's not quite jazz a lot of the time but the guy's a genius. He's a genuine prodigy. The thing that he does I think that's really nice is that he makes a lot of the ideas of like jazz harmony, and the complexities therein that, you know, is also about not just sticking to a lot of pop sensibilities it's like he's really freeing in the way he uses harmony and yet it's somewhat accessible as well so, yeah I do really appreciate what he does for the music community.

But yeah, in terms of like classics let's say I love Coltrane as a saxophonist, yeah, he's up there. I would say that's the standout for me probably.

Although, I never listen to it I remember because I remember having to write an essay on it of Ornette Coleman...

HELEN

Oh.

SAM

...and just finding the fact that he made this free jazz album on like a plastic trumpet and...

(laughter)

...just kind of hilarious and awesome, yeah and they were about the same time it all happened, is it 59 where a load of jazz albums came out and it's kind of like Miles Davis and Kind of Blue, all those kinds of albums all happened

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM013 – Jazz

around late 50s I think, and he was one of them that things started to branch off and weird things happened, yeah, it's all very interesting.

HELEN

What does a plastic trumpet sound like? Does it sound different?

SAM

Not as good as a metal one.

(laughter)

CATHY

Yes.

SAM

I think he was entirely self-taught as well he had yeah, same with saxophone, but yeah he kind of... he was a multi-instrumentalist kind of did everything, but yeah it sounds like a plastic trumpet.

(laughter)

HELEN

That also reminds me of an anecdote my dad once told me, I don't know if any of you know this one about there was one jazz musician who... something

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM013 – Jazz

happened to his trumpet and like he dropped it or something and it had like a massive like dent in it...

SAM

It's Dizzy Gillespie.

CATHY

Mm hmm.

HELEN

Yes, that's the one.

SAM

Yeah, it was like that and he carried on playing with it, yeah.

HELEN

Yes, and it gave him like a really unique sound.

SAM

Yeah, he also he's the guy that played with really puffed out cheeks as well, he looked really funny...

(laughter)

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM013 – Jazz

...when he was playing, but he was awesome too. That's ah, Dizzy Gillespie, yeah that's on there, that's on the list.

(laughter)

HELEN

Yeah, let me... I'm looking him up now... Ooooooh! Yeah, I know him.

(laughter)

Okay, we're going to move onto our last question which is, where would you recommend people new to the genre to start, like what do you think is a good introductory artist to listen to?

BETH

If you want something that's like crossover, this is... everyone's going to be like [blows air] because it's not really jazz, because it's... but if you want something, I was going to say Postmodern Jukebox or something like that if you are not into jazz at all something that takes any other genre and adds a jazz twist. It's kind of a good gateway, a gateway jazz thing.

HELEN

Yeah.

BETH

Or even like the Lady Gaga, Tony Bennett thing...

(laughter)

So, Tony Bennett does a whole series of... I love them! Of like jazz songs with like Lady Gaga, Amy Winehouse there's like a whole bunch on there, they're really great.

HELEN

I've never heard of this, what is this?

BETH

It's just on his YouTube channel.

HELEN

Oh.

BETH

He's got like um, well I guess he yeah, he just released them on YouTube and maybe released it as an album as well I am not sure, but yeah the Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett Lady of the Tramp is really beautiful and really yeah, they're great together.

HELEN

Ah.

BETH

And she has really cool blue hair.

(laughter)

HELEN

Any other recommendations?

SAM

Uh, I mean not to sound like a one-track record here but, I mean funk is a pretty good way to get into jazz.

(laughter)

I think yeah, that might be a good start. Or like, just kind of looking into Quincy Jones stuff like really good arranges I find pretty appealing. There's another guy whose name's gone out of my head completely but he used to do all of the sort of bigger band arrangements in like that 40s/50s. Those kinds of things.

There's stuff that Frank Sinatra would sing over, that stuff, they're really good ways to get in, I think.

CATHY

I mean you can't go wrong with the Wynton Marsalis...

SAM

Yeah.

CATHY

...if you like a trumpet. It's always there and there's a big catalogue to pull from as far as like listening.

I am going to say something again, that probably gets poo poed on by purists, but some anime jazz, is actually really freakin' awesome.

(laughter)

I mean I'm thinking like Cowboy Bebop, if you listen to that intro track just like the bass line that gets laid down...

(laughter)

...over the main theme is just, beautiful and there's a surprising amount of jazz musicality in some animes and you know if that's your thing, go find out where those instrumentalists and those musicians and composers are and start listening to those work, and figure out where they got their inspiration from and then go listen to that I mean, yeah it's really all finding something that resonates with you and then go backwards from there.

(laughter)

HELEN

And what about you Callum?

CALLUM

So, I just basically talked about how great Exotica was I feel like because that is literally an easy listening genre, it's like its declassification thing that people like to give. I would say anything by Les Baxter, really extensive back catalogue. You can just put it on in the background it's not going to like overcomplicate things, but it's going to be quite relaxing, good to listen to. When I was talking about favourite musicians before I totally left off Herbie Mann, really, really extensive back catalogue of music played, a lot of very interesting flute, like one of the great jazz flute players. Very known for popularising bossa nova music as well as I guess a lot of like the afro Cuban sound and stuff, he did a lot with that and sort of popularising that as well. So, I would definitely start with Herbie Mann and Les Baxter, and I mentioned Spokes Mashiyane before and I feel like...

HELEN

Yeah.

CALLUM

...if you want to know a little bit about the less discussed roots of jazz music, I think I would look at the Kwela jazz of Spokes Mashiyane.

HELEN

Cool. I think what I would recommend is probably I would... I think technically it's a swing song I guess since it's in the title, but "It Don't Mean A Thing, If You Ain't Got That Swing", just because that has both Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington in it, and it's so good. I love that song. I love that song. Also, it sticks with you, like it's now in my head for the rest of the day.

(laughter)

BETH

Yeah, I'm literally swaying to it in my head right now.

HELEN

[Helen sings] "du a, du a, du a, du a, du a"

(laughter)

CALLUM

I have one more controversial pick and I would say...

HELEN

Oooh.

CALLUM

...maybe like, I feel like a lot of people would not have trouble leaping from an interest in rock or indie music into GoGo Penguin.

HELEN

Oh, I don't know them.

CALLUM

I feel like they have some sort of jazz elements that I think that, if you already like those things you are not going to have a problem with GoGo Penguin and then you can be like okay, so I have sort of conquered the genre and then you could move onto something that's a little bit more traditionally jazz.

BETH

Although, I feel like we are making it sound like jazz is a genre that you like you have to go soft, but actually there's a lot of... you can just listen to jazz...

(laughter)

...we're trying to scoot around it there is lots of you know, just go listen to like Ella Fitzgerald or like any of the classics and they're there.

HELEN

Yeah. Good old, chuck some Miles Davis in there, it would be great.

BETH

Yeah.

HELEN

Okay, so with all of those recommendations that I hope you listeners have taken note of, I think we're going to close this episode out. Thank you very much for listening. I hope you've had fun, just like we have. Especially since jazz is all about having fun, but for now, it's goodbye from me, goodbye; and it's goodbye from everyone else, do you want to say goodbye everybody?

EVERYONE

Goodbye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

HELEN

Enthusigasm is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill and licensed under a creative commons attribution, non-commercial share alike 4.0 international license. It is directed by Helen Gould, produced by Lowri Ann Davis with executive producers Alexander J Newall and April Sumner and edited by Marisa Ewing, Tessa Vroom, Jeffrey Nils Gardner and Catherine Rinella. Thanks for listening.

(Show Theme – Outro Ends)

Hosted and Directed by Helen Gould

Produced by Lowri Ann Davies

Rusty Quill Enthusiasm – EGSM013 – Jazz

Executive Producers: Alexander J. Newall and April Sumner

Editing by Tessa Vroom and Cathy Rinella

Music by Samuel D.F. Jones

Art by Anika Khan