

FOR PETE'S SAKE VOL 1



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Peter Jacobsen FOR PETE'S SAKE

Born in 1950 in Newcastle on Tyne Pete got into jazz in his teens first at Worcester College for the blind where he played in several bands with other students. At 15 years old his father introduced him at a local Jazz Club in Newcastle and asked if he might have a play. After some initial caution on the part of the band Pete took his seat at the piano and brought the house down. Over the next few years his reputation as a teenage prodigy quickly spread around the North East. In 1969 he headed South to continue his classical music studies in London at the Royal Academy of Music where he met fellow student and drummer Dave Barry subsequently to be a close collaborator in many musical ventures down the years.

It was clear to all those that heard him in those early days that here was a quite extraordinary musician. A prodigious technique, perfect pitch, a formidable musical memory and an encyclopaedic knowledge of a vast area of music set him apart from his contemporaries. He was completely eclectic and could play authoritatively in almost any style. But for all his talent Pete was no Prima Donna. He gave himself generously to every band he played with. He was a uniquely sensitive accompanist and a strong group player. No matter what the musical context Pete would commit himself wholeheartedly to the enterprise.

Pete and Don Weller first met in the early 70s when Don frequently appeared as a visiting guest with Pete's house trio. His own band, Major Surgery started operations in the early 70s with Don writing all the music. Pete had often guested and even depped but eventually joined the band as a 5th member around 1997. This recording was made soon after.

The next 2 tracks feature Pete's trademark acoustic piano with the Chris Biscoe quartet. South Ghost is one of Chris' tunes. They often used to do it together as a duet. Track 3, 1817 is one of Pete's ingenious compositions. The title is drawn from the structure which has an 18-bar section followed by a 17-bar section.

In 1982 Pete toured with the Bobby Wellins quartet playing a suite of Bobby's compositions collectively entitled Endangered Species. Pete had recently been making a bit of a name for himself on the festival circuit as a solo pianist and each night of the tour now included a solo feature for Pete. On this one, track 4, Spike is moved to join in on drums.

During most of the 80s Pete could be found in the local band Torus at the Towngate Theatre in Basildon on Sunday afternoons - he had been living in Essex since the mid-70s. Once a month the regular quartet was augmented by a "star" soloist. Track 5 records the occasion when Pete King was the "star" while Gary sat out. Soon after this the two Petes worked extensively together and recorded the CD Hi-Fly in France.

Tracks 7&8 feature a later version of the Bobby Wellins Quartet playing Bobby's own compositions. This is Pete in his sensitive accompanist role on Fender Rhodes and regular piano

Track 9 was recorded in 1998 with the Tim Whitehead quartet on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Jazz North-East at the Caedmon Hall, Gateshead next to Pete's native Newcastle. This was his first time home for many years and the first time as an established musician. Pete had the opportunity to meet up with old friends and found the whole experience very moving. This is a duet (without the rest of the quartet between Tim Whitehead's sax and Pete's synthesiser which they devised together in a workshop session and premiered on the gig the following day.

Track 10 is the title track from the Peter Jacobsen Trio CD recorded 6 months before he died at the Peterborough Jazz Club and due for release and launch tour in the following Summer. This was Pete's regular band at the end.

The final track represents a lesser known part of Pete's CV namely his work with the Celtic, jazz- inspired folk group, Carmina. This spanned the 10 years from 1992. Originally a duo, Pippa and Rob approached Pete to fill out the sound a bit on bigger gigs. Pete did this brilliantly with a combination of Joni Mitchell style piano, synthesised orchestrations and occasional impersonations of other stringed and wind instruments. They had just returned from a tour of Australia and this selection was recorded during a 2-week tour of Ireland in The Meeting Place, a folk club in Middleton, Co. Cork on 3rd April 2002 just 4 weeks before Pete died. Rob and Pippa have dedicated the whole CD On a Quiet Street to Pete's memory.

The collection of music assembled here has been contributed by friends and collaborators over that last 30 years up to his death and within that constraint I have tried to pick a broad range of music representative of his extensive activities over those years. Most of it has not been publicly released before and the recording quality is not as good as it could be on all tracks. It is far from comprehensive. There is none of the Jazz funk of the Morissey-Mullen period with whom Pete achieved some much appreciated public exposure, the avant-garde/free-improv experiments with Trevor Taylor and others or the seriously heavy rock with Steve Clark, Martin Holder and co. I hope this can be rectified in a Volume 2 on a future occasion.

Mick Sexton