Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
The Improvisation of Tubby Hayes in ‘The New York Sessions’

Exegesis submitted in partial fulfilment of a Masters in Musicology

Amity Rose Alton-Lee
20 February 2010

New Zealand School of Music
“Imagine for a moment that it is 1959 and that you are a young jazz fan visiting the new Ronnie Scott’s club in London; you descend the rickety staircase to the basement venue and are greeted by the overwhelming torrent of musical energy emanating from a small but rotund, sharply suited, incredibly confident looking young tenor saxophonist half crouched before a microphone.”

Introduction

Tubby (Edward Brian) Hayes; prodigious self taught multi-instrumentalist and virtuoso tenor saxophone player has been proclaimed by some to be the best saxophonist that Britain has ever produced: “Indisputably the most accomplished and characterful British jazzman of his generation.” His career, although cut short (he died undergoing treatment for a heart condition in June 1973, aged 38) was perpetually intense, incredibly prolific, and non-stop from his debut at the age of fifteen until his premature death.

Hayes was proficient on many instruments; all saxophones, clarinet, flute, violin and vibraphone as well as being an accomplished bandleader and arranger. However it was his virtuoso tenor saxophone playing that found him acclaim.

Although well known in his time and widely renowned for his ability, Hayes until recently has been little studied. It is only in the last few years that many critics and students of jazz have attempted to gain an understanding of Hayes’ improvisational concept, which has been both praised as genius and criticised as directionless:

“Tubby Hayes has often been lionized as the greatest saxophonist Britain ever produced. He is a fascinating but problematical player. Having put together a big, rumbustious tone and a delivery that features sixteenth notes spilling impetuously out of the horn, Hayes often left a solo full of brilliant loose ends and ingenious runs that led nowhere in particular...”

However, Hayes, his legacy, and his inimitable style of tenor saxophone playing would truly leave their mark on the British Jazz community for generations to come. Dave Gelly summed up Hayes by saying that Tubby "played Cockney tenor – garrulous, pugnacious, never at a loss for a word and completely unstoppable."

---

1 Simon Spillett ‘The long shadow of the little Giant’ November 2004 available from www.jazzscript.co.uk/extra/art.hayes.htm accessed 12 January 2009
2 Simon Spillett, 2004
4 Gelly, quoted in Spillett, 2004
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ....................................................................................................................... 2

**Section 1: Background** ...................................................................................................... 4
- Part 1: Jazz in Britain in the 1950s ................................................................. 4
- Part 2: Tubby Hayes’ Biography and Career ............................................ 6
- Part 3: Tubby in New York ............................................................................. 8
- Part 4: The New York Sessions ................................................................. 10

**Section 2: Improvisation and Formula in Jazz ............................................................ 14**
- Formulaic Improvisation: Towards a Definition ........................................ 14
- Formulaic Improvisation in Jazz and the Bebop Idiom .......................... 14
- Charlie Parker as a Pioneer of Formulaic Improvisation: .................... 16
- The Roles of Creativity and Tradition in Jazz Improvisation ............... 16
- Licks and Patterns: A Personal Tradition Versus Spontaneous Creation ... 19
- Hayes and Formulaic Improvisation ....................................................... 20

**Section 3: Analysis** .......................................................................................................... 22
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘You for Me’ ........................................ 22
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘Pint of Bitter’ ..................................... 28
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘Airegin’ ............................................. 31
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘Opus Ocean’ by Clarke Terry .......... 38
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘Soon’ ................................................. 41
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘Doxy’ ................................................ 48
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘Soho Soul’ ....................................... 50
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘The Simple Waltz’ ......................... 54
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘Half a Sawbuck’ ............................ 58
- Analysis of Tubby Hayes’ Solo on ‘You Are My Everything’ ............... 62

**Section 4: Hayes’ Improvisational Style: Summary and Overview** .................... 65

**Conclusions** ...................................................................................................................... 77

**Bibliography** ..................................................................................................................... 79