

## SWINGING SCOT

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main types of Scottish music in the first half of the 20th Century were the traditional pipe bands, with bagpipes and drums, Scottish country dance bands, with accordion, fiddle, and rhythm and, to a lesser extent in the urban areas, brass bands. Instrumentalists came from all of those sources: drums from the pipe bands, pianists from Scottish country and brass men from the colliery and town bands. And all, I'd like to think, had a particular feeling in their music drawn from their Scottish background: the skirl of the pipes, the swinging drive of the country dance music and, perhaps, the art of playing to keep warm!

The wartime period was of high importance to young Scots musicians. Those born in the early 1920s were called up and would serve in regimental pipe and brass bands. There were also service dance bands, such as the Squadronaires already mentioned. This band had so many Scots in it that it was practically a Scottish band! The wartime experience also brought the youngsters into touch with continental and American musicians.

One of the major figures in Scottish jazz who came to the fore during and after the war, was Tommy Sampson. Born in 1919, he joined the Army on the outbreak of war where he put his trumpet playing and arranging skills to good use before being captured in North Africa. As a prisoner of war, he organised and led a prison camp band. On release, Sampson formed and led a band of young Scottish instrumentalists that was to supply many of the British big bands of the 1950s (particularly Ted Heath) with key personnel. Ill health forced Sampson to disband his orchestra in 1949 before it had had a chance to record commercially, but a taped radio broadcast from around 1947 discloses a shouting Kentonesque band which must have raised a few eyebrows in the local Palais de Danse! From the ranks of the Sampson orchestra sprang several prominent British jazzmen, notably Tommy Whittle (tenor with Ted Heath), Duncan Campbell (trumpet with Ted Heath), and Joe Temperley, all of whom went on to play with top English bands.

**S** The immediate post-war years — the late 1940s, early 1950s — were good times for British musicians. There were several jazz orientated big bands: Ted Heath, Vic Lewis, Jack Parnell, Ken Mackintosh, Tommy Watt (a Scot) and, latterly, Johnny Dankworth. The BBC featured show bands like that of Cyril Stapleton. And, in Scotland, there were still many dancehalls whose medium-sized bands were good training grounds for young musicians. Virtually every British big band of note had key Scottish players.

Johnny Keating, the well-known trombonist and arranger for Ted Heath and others, was born in Edinburgh in 1927. He started on piano before taking up trombone and went on to join (yes) Tommy Sampson and Vic Lewis before going onto the Ted Heath band. In 1957, he was commissioned to feature many of his fellow Scots big band players in a collection of his arrangements called *Swinging Scots*. Many of the names mentioned above were given solo space. And many were also featured in the companion album *British Jazz of 1956*. (Ironically, this was originally issued as *English Jazz*. Presumably, Johnny and most of his sidemen objected!)

Notable among the younger Scottish exports were Jimmy Deuchar (trumpet) and Joe Temperley (tenor and baritone saxophone). Jimmy came from Dundee, although the family moved south when he was 15. Deuchar was to become a lynchpin in the fledging British be-bop movement and was heavily featured in the early 1950s with the Johnny Dankworth Seven. Joe Temperley, another Tommy Sampson graduate, came to prominence on baritone sax with the Humphrey Lyttleton eight



Edinburgh Jazz Festival.  
Forty years on, still going strong.

piece band in the late 1950s, although he had had a long professional career before then. He was to go on to an even more distinguished career in the United States with Woody Herman and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra amongst many others.

One of the most atmospheric British jazz records of the 1960s was pianist Stan Tracey's *Jazz Suite Inspired by Dylan Thomas' "Under Milk Wood"*. The featured tenor saxist was Scot, Bobby Wellins, whose

keening solo on "Moonless and Bible Black," did much to ensure the success of the album and the future of Tracey's quartet. Despite health difficulties, Wellins has continued to perform and recently (2012) featured the very Scottish sound of his tenor with the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra in the "Culloden Moor" suite.

On the traditional/revivalist side too, Scots were prominent. The two names that immediately spring to mind are those of Alex Welsh and Sandy Brown. I have already dealt in detail with the career of Alex Welsh and his super little band in the "Legacy of Alex Welsh" (*IAJRC Journal*, September 2010). Many of his recordings are available on the Lake label. Suffice perhaps to add that the early bands featured the talented clarinet of fellow Scot, Archie Semple and the strong bass of Musselburgh's Ronnie Rae.

Sandy Brown, together with his trumpet playing partner, Al Fairweather, has become the stuff of legend. The two, along with several others (Stan Grieg, Jack Duff and Dizzy Jackson) were part of the Edinburgh Royal High School "Gang." The Brown band made a great hit in the middle-1950s with a unique blend of blues and African rhythms. Their record of "Everybody Loves Saturday Night" still has the power to raise the spirits. Brown also had a