Dame Cleo Laine announces £346,300 for National Jazz Archive

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The National Jazz Archive tells the story of Jazz and Blues in the UK through photographs, printed articles, memorabilia, artworks and personal papers donated by leading musicians including Mike Westbrook and Ian Carr. The collection is based at Loughton Library in Essex, housing more than 3,000 books, periodicals and bulletins covering over 600 titles.

The Archive was founded in 1988 by Digby Fairweather.

The HLF award will mean that this varied and wide-ranging collection can be fully conserved and catalogued for the first time. Many of the photographs and documents will be made available on a new “Story of British Jazz” website. This will host sound files of not only music but recordings of some of the iconic figures from British Jazz sharing their memories.

Some of the biggest winners from today’s announcement will be the next generation of British Jazz musicians, who will be given new opportunities to enjoy this fascinating collection through the Story of British Jazz website and through new exhibitions to be held at Jazz venues and festivals around the country.

These young musicians will also contribute their own memories and experiences to the Story of British Jazz. The National Jazz Archive will be partnering with jazz radio stations to create a series of podcasts exploring the collection.

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said: “This archive is a fantastic record of the development of British Jazz and the impact it has had on our country’s cultural life. Thanks to HLF support, many more people will have the chance to explore this rich and varied collection, and through the creation of the Story of British Jazz website there is a wonderful opportunity to inspire a new generation of young and up-and-coming musicians.”

Patron Dame Cleo Laine, said: "My late husband Sir John and I have been supporters of the Archive since it opened, so it gives me pleasure to be able to celebrate the Archive's success in getting this project off the ground. Jazz music has a rich and varied heritage which has inspired many of us. We owe it to future generations in particular to ensure that they too can have access to, and be inspired by, the story of British jazz."

National Jazz Archive Chairman, Chris Hodgkins, is also Director of Jazz Services, the infrastructure organisation for the jazz sector. "This is a great result for a magnificent team effort. HLF's award is a tremendous endorsement of the project, as our application has been through the most rigorous scrutiny; now we can really take the work of the Archive to young people. Our sincere thanks go to HLF and I would like to appeal to the jazz community to get behind us and help us raise the final amount of funding to enable us to start the project and maximise its value. You can donate now on our website."

National Jazz Archive founder, jazz cornettist and broadcaster Digby Fairweather said: "This is the most exciting moment in the Archive's history since we received our first book donation back in 1988! I'd like to thank Essex County Council Library Service whose continued long term support has been so essential for the Archive's success."

Notes to editors

As pictured, Inga Grimsey, Chair of HLF Committee for the East of England (2nd from right), with Gary Crosby, patron of the National Jazz Archive (2nd from left), and members of Tomorrow's warriors.

Further information

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