

50 PLUCKING YEARS!

By David Price A.L.C.M.

Humble Beginnings

There was no music in my family home above *Freeman Hardy and Willis* in Barkingside High Street where bad tempered father was manager and mother, cashier. There was no encouragement from any of my seven piece family. When noises of a semi musical nature began to exude from young DP, they were not met with enthusiasm. On the contrary, strumming and blowing was vigorously discouraged. *Six-Five Special* was on the T.V., the young *Tommy Steele* and *Cliff Richard* were just starting out.



Mouth-Organ

A School friend bought a mouth-organ and a tutor book, *The First Steps* to blowing and sucking. I was amazed that he could play *The Blue Bells Of Scotland* after only a week or two's assiduous study so resolved to do likewise. Amazingly, *Swanee River* and *Michael Row The Boat* soon protruded and together we duetted in a frenzy of puff and slurp in the playground.

Banjo

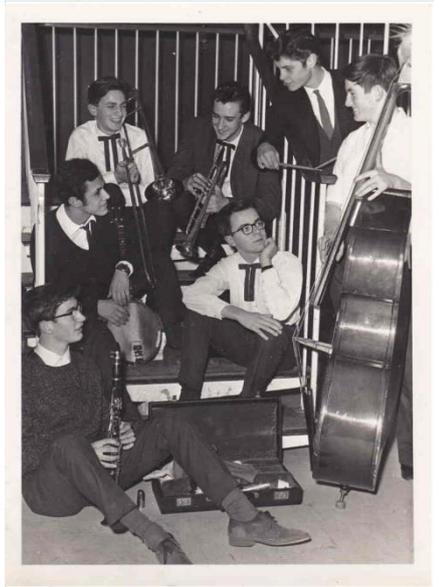
It wasn't long before we wanted 'real' instruments and as Acker, Kenny and Chris were quite popular at the time and even in the Top 20 (Can this really be true – Traditional Jazz in the Pop charts?), I felt a desire for a banjo. At 13, I mentioned this to a chap at Sunday school (I've been an atheist since) and he said he had one in his attic I could have for nothing! Joy of joys! The following Sunday it duly arrived – a fine old 5 string zither banjo c1890, in a leather case which I attempted to tune to tenor banjo – 'cos that's what *First Steps On The Tenor Banjo* said. It was some time before I realised that I needed *First Steps On The Plectrum Banjo*. When the day dawned, the instrument could at long last be tuned and a real chord immersed. Knowing nothing about music and even less about harmony and chords, the going was at first frustratingly slow as there was no one around to show the way. Painstakingly, I stuck with it and became not just a banjo owner but eventually, a banjo player. That was over fifty years ago. Now I own premium quality, 'Rolls Royce' instruments mostly hand made to my own specifications. I have two very fine OME gold banjos – the *Juggernaut* and the *Mega Vox* which virtually play themselves.

Stranger On The Shoe Shop

For Christmas, after much pleading and begging, Mummy and Daddy bought me a deposit on a Selmer clarinet for a present. The weekly instalments for the next two years were made from the profits of paper rounds and helping the milkman, £16 guineas in total. I remember that *Stranger On The Shore* was learnt the first day.

School Days

Whilst at school, I not only joined the school band, the school clarinet group, the choir and the drama group but the Boys' Brigade Brass Band where I played Euphonium and Trombone. Also at school I became House Music Captain and one year we won the House music competition playing *Home In Pasadena* with a motley crew of players from my House. I was the only improviser (on clarinet) so I had to write all the parts in order to perform anything resembling jazz. My best subjects were Commerce and Music (top of the class in both). This stood me in good stead for what was to follow. In those days it was necessary to stay at school until one had five G.C.E.s under one's belt. This was when G.C.E.s were real exams and not something that every child is given willie- nillie as now!



It was during my schooldays that I formed my first jazz band playing clarinet. (Dave Price and His Improviser Jazz Band – billed as Britain's Youngest Jazz Band.) A 45rpm record of us still exists and I have a scratchy copy of it which featured pianist Barry Spong 14, and John Sirett 15, bass. John Sirett began on banjo – I showed him few chords but everyone complained about his playing so much that he took up bass and never looked back.

Hugh Rainey



In 1968 Father shifted to F.H.W. Southend and we moved to a proper house in nearby Rochford. I continued my G.C.E. course travelling back to Ilford daily by train. The great *Melody Maker* pole winner of 1960, used the same train it seemed. Hugh Rainey was voted best jazz banjoist in the M.M. in 1960. As a young boy, I found myself sitting opposite him one day on the train and ventured to ask him for his autograph which he gladly gave. I had seen Hugh Rainey, sometimes known as Hugh Rinal, on T.V. and at a concert at the Westcliff Palais where he played his famous solo, *Chinatown* with the *Bob Wallis Storyville Jazz Band*, and was enamoured by his dexterity on the banjo. There they were, fully dressed in Mississippi gamblers outfits – a gimmick expected of all top line Trad bands of the time. Remember Acker and his Edwardian bowlers and waistcoats, *Dick Charlesworth's City Gents* in slick suits, brollys and bowlers? It didn't seem long after meeting Mr Rainey that I was fortunate enough to do his holiday duty playing all his banjo gigs for a couple of weeks.

The other great banjo player of whom I was in ore, was Arie Lighart who appeared with the *Dutch Swing College Band* at that same Westcliff venue soon after. He played a wonderful tenor banjo solo – *St Louis Blues* entirely alone and followed it with a remarkable *Take Your Pick* – just as its composer *Pete Mandel* had played it nightly at the London's Savoy Hotel with the *Savoy Orphans* in the 1920s.

Goodbye School

Having passed the required number of G.C.E.s, I left school at 17 and decided to place an advertisement in the well-known but now defunct *Melody Maker* under "*Engagements Wanted*" (remember this?) I joined the Frog Island Jazz Band after they replied to the ad. This led to playing in most of London's jazz bands and playing in almost all of the capital's

jazz clubs - a tremendous treat at the time for a teenager. It was the duffle coat and a time of much beer drinking. I could not understand the amount of beer consumed by jazzers in these pre 'drink/drive' times – often 12 pints a night. One night, on stage at Botley Jazz Club where the band wives, continually conveyed trays of seven pints of beer to a thirsty band. In the interval, I remember standing but unable to walk off the stage due to it being completely festooned with empty pint mugs. How could we have been that thirsty?

Seven pints for £1.00



My first salary working for a Lloyd's Insurance broker in the City was £8 per week. Incidentally, at the Edward V11 pub in Stratford East where the Frogs rehearsed, seven pints of *Charrington's Crown Bitter* cost less than £1.00. To be playing banjo regularly in so many bands at 18 seemed like a fairy tale especially as jazz clubs at the time c1967 were full of lively 20-30 year olds and floor loads of jiving ravers stomping four-to-the-bar (none of that half tempo jiving.)

Around that time the Frogs started their own jazz club at the Cellar Bar, Ware – a tiny, below ground venue with great atmosphere where seven musicians regularly graced the tiny stage no bigger than 6' x 4'.

Not wanting to stagnate like some banjoists, I started to develop solo banjoing. The Frogs had a Friday residency at Brentwood Jazz Club and expected a banjo spot each week. Very often I learnt a solo on the train travelling to the gig and planted it on the unsuspecting rhythm section (Chris Marchant drums, Rob Fullalove tuba, Keith Durston piano. Incidentally, the band still has the same rhythm section today now nearly 50 years on). I left the Frogs at 23 after a six year stint but re-joined for 3 years 39 years later when banjoist Owen Diplock became ill and died. Some folks never realised I'd been absent!

Classical Guitar

Having heard Andes Segovia play *Recuedos de la Alhambra*, I spent 6 months studying classical guitar at the Spanish Guitar Centre, Leicester Square. The Italian tutor gave the class a new piece each week which I was so anxious to begin learning that I'd start work on it on the train returning home to Rochford. Times were so good, I was 21 and banjoing gigs so plentiful that it became necessary to give up classical guitar for a number of years.

At 23, having completed six years of day job working in the City with the Insurance Brokers insuring Greek cargo ships that sank, I felt the urge to do something more uplifting, and obtained an Entertainment Agency Licence from the local council (John Major later banished these licences.) The business of booking all manner of bands and entertainers from a at first from a bedsit, kept me busy for the next 32 years – but musical activities continued.

Celestial Banjo Band



I cannot remember why I formed this unusual outfit even though 1920s comedy bands were in vogue - unusual in that there was no front line. I played lead banjo, John Baron, 2nd banjo (where is he now?), Barrington Barry Tyler More Or Less was the traps player and Graham Read was on sousaphone. We were, all in our early 20s, just mad and would do anything for a laugh. We would adlib all over the place and if it worked it was kept in the script. Although we topped the bill at venues like Lewisham Concert Hall and Ryde Pavilion, I can only remember

one rehearsal ever. To the audience it was completely rehearsed. Sometimes we were announced, the curtains opened – and we weren't there. The bemused audience didn't know what was happening until confusion erupted at the rear and we came running down the gangway moaning in public school voices, complete with brollys and overcoats, at how you can't rely on public transport and anything else we could think of at the time to gain a laugh. We lined up on stage in tails and wing collars, played *See them Shuffling* at break neck speed and let off a very loud gun to end the first number, shocking the audience into giving us their fullest attention. We played any jazz tune where we could extract a laugh somehow and Barry would take to the central isle mit fez galloping along on one leg playing spoons on his knee.

"And now our sousaphone player is going to play *Rubinstien's Melody in F.*"

"Yes I will but I'm going to play it in G"

"You can't play *Rubinstein's Melody In F* in G" (F ing G)

Such was the patter but when you're twenty-something, you have all the energy in the world for fast and furious and funny. Some venues we literally tore apart with the antics. We played everything from Tom Jones' *Delila* to Mozart's 40th or anything we could on banjo including the biggest singalong in town. Unbelievably, we started to get bigger and bigger bookings, took on two flapper dancers and one night shared a dressing room with the Temptations.

Diamond Lil's, Skyline Hotel – Heathrow 6 nights a week.

I had a call from an agent to book the Celestial boys for a residency at this beautiful Five Star venue. I refused the offer as it would stifle all our other stuff. Weeks later after the agent had extensively advertised for a banjo band and then individual players to form one, he rang to say he had been unsuccessful and to name my price. Well I named a price shockingly outrageous and after a paid audition, signed the contract which was for six nights a week, four sets per night between 9.00pm to 1.00am to include accompanying the vivacious vocaliste, Diamond Lil. We augmented the band with ragtime pianist Hugh 'Pud' Crozier who left his day job as a banker to take up the position. We played American music to Americans, Japanese, and folks of just about every nationality. After eight months we had had enough, went our separate ways. I have since learnt that Hugh has received many qualifications including PHD in business studies and has become a very successful lecturer. He still plays great ragtime though.

Josephine's Gaslight Smoothies

Another mad jazz aggregation I joined was *Josephine's Gaslight Smoothies* – about a ten



piece plus dancers, 1920s unit that not only played the music but produced sketches in front of the bandstand. These were rehearsed in the week and performed on Wednesday at the sizable Cauliflower pub in Ilford. I was employed as crazy M.C. occasional vocalist, and banjo soloist as well as member of the sketch team. I remember doing a dance in washer-woman's outfit, broom and bucket, a baby in nappies, but dressed as a ballerina in dozens of petticoats was perhaps the most outrageous.

The mere site of this raised a good laugh but when I produced a large almost toothless comb, broken mirror and gigantic powder puff before sitting on an unsuspecting bald man in the audience and finishing the act by placing the puff on his bald head covering him with talcum powder, the room erupted. I doubt if you'd get away with it today!

Solo Entertainer

It was now about 1974 and with all that experience and the Celestial Banjo Band gone,



producing a self-contained solo act was inevitable. With guitar, banjo, vocals and a drum machine and a good P.A system, I hit the road again playing Buddy Holly, current pop songs (some were playable in those days), singsongs and banjo solos at all manner of venues like British Legions, Working Men's Clubs, Sports Clubs and restaurants for some years on the strength of which I secured my first mortgage on a two bed maisonette in Chigwell and a few years later, a broken down cottage in Epping Green which I renovated and extended with a music room where I ran seminars. There are many stories of this time with

stage name Dave St John dressed in three-piece white suit or gold two-piece. I remember arriving one Saturday at a large venue in Surrey and noticing the signs; Grand Dance with Cabaret. Hundreds of evening dressed couples filed in and I realised that the only entertainment from 8.00pm to Midnight – was me. I got away with it somehow. At the opposite end of the scale, I remember a solo gig at a posh restaurant which on that evening, sported just one customer – and he was out of site in a cubicle. I played the show as if it were a full house – what else could I do?

Creole Orchestra

Another fine outfit in which I was involved was a large 1920s jazz band of some dozen players, some were jazzers, some were dance band men run by Chris Macdonald (reeds/clarinet/piano/arrangements). John Arthy played bass, and there was a fine New Orleans drummer whose name has gone



although I remember a tale about him. He used to travel to gigs by bus – the type where one could put larger objects behind the conductor on the platform. He told the tale of how he alighted the bus one time, forgetting to take his drums. Worse still, he had to climb over his bass drum to get off! Mick Hicky was on

trombone as was vocalist John Parry. There were two banjoists Ian Grant, tenor and DP plectrum. Mini-skirted Jo Gurr played sax, 78 rpm record collector Roy Rhodes, clarinet, tenor sax was Clive Payne, trumpets Tony Cook and Ted Fullick. This was a real big, hot sound reminiscent of *King Oliver's stomping Dixie Syncopators*.

London Music Agency

At 24 I rented offices and a full time secretary in Gants Hill and concentrated on the business for a few years before deciding that it would be a good idea to have some proper credentials and letters after my name. I resumed study of the classical guitar – weekly lessons – 3 hours a day practice (up early), I went to college on Wednesday to study music (harmony, history, music analysis, ear training, etc.) which expected another three hours' a week harmony homework. I visited a local Viennese doctor of music twice weekly for more music training. He was a lovely man with such a soft accent. "Mr Price, how is the music world with you", he would say. At the end of each allotted time he would slam down the lid of the grand piano often mid-sentence if time was up. As his house was large and spacious, one might imagine it to be the residence of a classical composer. He helped enormously with ear training and even listened to my exam pieces on classical guitar.

I passed grade 5 with distinction and not long after grade 6 and eight (there was no grade 7!) I spent another year studying for my A.L.C.M and passed in 1988 afterwards appending those letters to my name and stationery. The Agency lasted 32 years after which I semi-retired having paid off the mortgage at 42. At the time I was editing *Banjo Times*, selling Tutor Tapes, CDs, LPs and a couple of books I had produced, playing gigs, teaching banjo and running workshops so there wasn't a need to run the Agency which by that time was beginning to feel the competition of the Internet. Brides could hire a string quartet or jazz trio for their wedding from searching *google* and could do without me – although I knew which steel band would turn up on time and which jazz band would not consume all the vitals and liquor.

David Price Ragtime Ensemble



For a while we were fortunate to have a contact at the *Royal Festival Hall* on London's Southbank. All we had to do was telephone monthly for bookings on the foyer, the Jazz Café and all the other venues run by the R.F.H. With Bill Boston reeds, Graham Read tuba, Graham Collicote traps and Keith Durston piano, we played lots of rags by Joplin and other composers and included a variety of what we called interesting jazz plus of course,

a bit of humour. We were there so regularly that I remember over a thousand viewers on one of those lunchtime sessions. As usual, when management changed, we didn't get a look in.

Aston Banjo Orchestra

In order to improve my sight reading on banjo I joined the famous *Aston Banjo Club* whose orchestra rehearsed weekly in Wimbledon. Playing and reading the orchestral arrangements was difficult at first but I worked hard at it and was soon promoted from 2nd banjo to 1st. As I remember, the lead players on plectrum banjo played the complete solo



version of each tune on repertoire like *Dambusters' March* and their theme tune, *Blaze Away*. The Astons were forty strong when I joined but it had been in action since 1896 with rehearsals suspended only during WW2 due to 'enemy action'. Apart from plectrum banjos the orchestra sported banjolins (tuned to violin), finger-style banjos, tenor banjos, bass banjos and an enormous contra-bass banjo. Some of the arrangements

of light orchestral and ex brass band music and especially composed music, were beautiful. When they were all playing tremolando, it sounded like a woodwind ensemble. I still have their 'latest record', a 1935 78rpm of *In A Monastery Garden* – marvellous! When their conductor (Ron Oram) became ill and died I eventually became musical director and conductor. I'm proud to say that I conducted their 100th year concert in 1986. As band members were sadly slipping away and the best players were no more, I took on the job of rearranging the band's repertoire and writing new, simpler arrangements. I took the opportunity to include some jazz and swing repertoire

Ken Simms Dixie Kings



During the 1980s I played with *Ken Simms Dixie Kings* which had a fortnightly residence at London's 100 Club. This must have been the loudest jazz unit on earth probably because of the presence of 'Ace Drumming Man', *John Petters* and wild pianist *Ron Wetherburn*. As Ken regularly double-booked the reed man, it eventually became an 8 piece with a four man front line including Len Baldwin on trombone.

Such was the ferocity that some nights my banjo playing seemed completely superfluous as I doubt if you could hear it over all that sound. One night, being a little p'd off at having done all that study and not be heard, I fell asleep in one number and woke in the next. The double-bass player was the last bassist on earth to amp-up and regularly broke strings trying to keep up. He used to tie the broken stings together with a reef knot! As I say, we played there every other week alternating with a guest band. On the occasion when the Kenny Ball Jazzmen shared the bill, there was immediate competition between horn players Ball and Simms. To this day I am prepared to swear that as we both had to use the Ball band's P.A., the Ball engineer ransacked the Simms band. I know that I was given the bass player's mic which made the banjo sound awful. Of all the jazz bands we partnered at the 100 Club during those two or three years, the very best was the *Hot Antic Band* from France. Ken Simms was a great trumpet man in his youth with Acker and since his retirement from his engineering day job, he has improved vastly.

Banjo Recitals.

In 1983 I put together a banjo recital which included some classical material, Rags, music written especially for the banjo, a specially commissioned piece, and some jazz stuff. Together with Keith Durston on piano we presented the *First Southbank Banjo Recital* at the Purcell Room. We had plenty of publicity, radio interviews and were on Breakfast T.V. It

was a sell-out. When we repeated the concert in 1984 my name became synonymous with the banjo for a short while. Mellanie Hollinshead became my manager during this period, arranging several television and radio appearances. I even did *Women's Hour for Radio 4*. The recitals really were a test of one's stamina as I remember practising the entire programme every day for a year.

Digswell Banjo Band

Some thirty-five years ago, The London Borough Of Waltham Forest hired me to organise a banjo class. This attracted a varied selection of sundry players. One chap arrived with the head of his banjolele torn right across its hoop. Another arrived with an instrument with the tuning pegs soldered fast, the owner suggesting, "Well it was in tune so I soldered the pegs". When the classmates were able to play a few tunes I arranged for them to play in the college's refectory and the new musicians were delighted and surprised to receive a little



encouraging applause. When London Boroughs ceased classes without bone fide certificates available, we ran the class ourselves from other premises. The class – now an amateur band, and some thirty odd years later, continues but rehearses Mondays at my studio in Blackmore, Essex from 2.00-4.pm. The ensemble also sports a tuba, percussionist and vocalist. Banjoists are welcome to pay us a visit for a listen, a cuppa and even a play. We always need more players.

Wavendon All Music award

In 1988 I entered the *Wavendon All Music Awards* – just for fun! I remember playing a ten-minute version of Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue* for the initial heats. (This had taken many months to learn.) The final was held at the famous Wavendon Staples, home of *Sir John Dankworth* and *Dame Cleo Lane*. Each entrant had to perform a fifteen minute concert featuring both classical and jazz. I could not go wrong with the fabulous backing trio of Geof Clyne - bass, Trevor Tomkins - drums and Nick Weldon – piano. Digby Fairweather was M.C. and he introduced me as ... "with his million pound banjo". An all celebrity winners' presentation night followed at the *Barbican Centre*, London with the *Dankworth Band* and *Swingle Singers* entertaining. As I was a winner, *Princess Margaret* presented me with a trophy plus a £400 cheque plus a week at the *Wavendon Jazz School* before we all enjoyed a Champagne dinner at the Barbican. At the Jazz School I was the only early jazz player and as usual, the only banjoist but I made my presence felt and joined in everything – just to show them that I could!

Private & Corporate Jazz

During the 1990s most of my jazzing was on the private and corporate scene. I would put together three or four-piece units of professional, reliable jazzers – usually clarinet/banjo/bass/trumpet. We played for royalty at Venues like Windsor Great Park where HRH Charles played polo, for every big London Hotel including Café Royal, Dorchester, Piccadilly, you name it – for races at Ascot, Kempton Park, Epsom Derby, Sandown Park In fact, taking a peak at old diaries of the time, 150 professional engagements per year. In summertime, we often played at several weddings per week and sometimes two a day. Of course, we did the usual supermarket jobs and played in stores like John Lewis and

everybody's barbeque, christening, funeral or scattering. Today, this market has sadly declined.

Teaching Banjo & Jazz Appreciation

Since a teenager, I have always attempted to spread the word and teach the banjo, Dixieland ensembles and Jazz Appreciation. If it's banjo, students learn not only the good performing techniques and all about rhythm, but how to play jazz and even build a solo and then improvise on it in their own style all from just the melody line and chord symbol. The right-hand studies of rhythm playing, duo-style, and Latin are all learnt so the banjoist can implant them into his jazz solo or feature. How many banjo players do you know whose knowledge of the instrument barely ventures from the basic chords in a few inversions? How many have really learnt their instrument or could even read off a melody line or sit in an orchestral pit and play written parts to *Rhapsody In Blue* or *Boyfriend*? I read in a past *Just Jazz* that their own *Jim Mcintosh* confesses to a minimum knowledge music and banjo. Bix, when he went for lessons with a classical trumpeter, was told, "Don't bother – don't spoil what you already have naturally." Well, we're not all Bixs and I maintain that the more you learn about music and your instrument, the better, more confident a player you will be.

After enjoying my first residential weekend course teaching the banjo at Benslow Music Trust some twenty years ago, I put together another dozen or so weekend courses which through lecture, films, photographs and the recorded music, managed to sell all over the country. The subjects begin at the beginning with brass bands in New Orleans, Blues, Ragtime and then onto all the greats; Oliver, Morton, Armstrong and onto Fletcher Henderson, Duke, through the thirties with Benny and Fats, the pianists, the singers. My latest features the likes of Chet Baker, Joe Pass, Miles and Hawkins. I seek out all the main ingredients of the jazzers' lives and play their most relevant recordings spicing it up with juicy anecdotes to lighten the occasion. (e.g. When Sidney Bechet and Charlie Parker were on a Norman Grantz tour together, Bechet said to Parker, "My music's for dancing. What's yours for?"). Sometimes I demonstrate technical stuff, what a chord sequence is, explain blue notes and generally how jazz is put together. I set the room like a jazz club; low lights a multitude of big pictures of jazz greats around the walls, etc.

David Price Hot Jazz Quartet



For a few years during the 1990s, I accepted engagements as a jazz string quartet along the lines of Django's Hot Club of Paris. I played the Grappelli role on banjo which worked surprisingly well. For a change it felt good to play/share a role as lead instrument rather than accompaniment. Ron Wilson was the very fine Django and his brother John played Joseph Rhinehardt. The young bass player was deep into his bass studies working on

Charlie Parker solos on the bass – great practice! Alas, he emigrated to America and now teaches bass at Berklee College, Boston, USA.

Working In The Pit

Pit Jobs sometimes appear in the professional banjoist's diary. I think I have probably played the scores of most of the popular shows that have my instrument in the orchestration including – *Boyfriend, Seven Brides, Oklahoma, Chicago, Rhapsody In Blue, Porgy & Bess, Anything Goes, Showboat* to name a few. Although the cast has probably been rehearsing the show for many weeks or even months, the band gets one three-hour rehearsal, usually Sunday afternoon plus a dress rehearsal. Each musician must mark his parts so that he knows exactly what to play and when – then be able to come up with the goods precisely at the behest of the conductor. My experience is that the banjo parts are never written by a banjo playing scorer so a little nip and tuck here, a flourish there, and even a little improvising is often appreciated by all. Most times you are squashed below with just a music-stand lamp to read the sometimes complicated scores and all this without being able to see the action on stage.

Telephone Exchange

In 2009 I bought Blackmore Telephone Exchange (now converted to a residence) which has a 39 foot living room over which I built a studio which occasionally converts to a fifty seater concert room complete with spotlights stage and P.A. system. My partner and I have put on several jazz and classical concerts and may continue with the programme. In the meantime it acts as a lovely practise room with superb acoustics - where I spend several hours daily.

During the last several years I continued playing self-contained guitar/banjo/vocal solo gigs and have made myself some very authentic piano/bass/drums backing tracks. Maralyn started singing the odd tune with me but now she's a permanent fixture. An ex dancer and a natural jazz singer with instinctive feel for rhythm, she looks good and by golly, she sounds good!

Now. Swing Duo With Maralyn

I'm still playing with the odd jazz unit or sundry jazz aggregations but my current favourite thing and probably the best thing I've ever done – me at my best – is a duo with vocaliste Maralyn. I have, over the last several years, become a swing jazz guitarist and perform with specially recorded piano/bass/drums. I love this duo-sounding-like-a-quartet format which



can be a very economic unit for jazz festivals and smaller rooms. Maralyn and I rehearse (yes, rehearse!) 2 or 3 times each week leaving us tightly organised and always ready for whatever is thrown at us. When we practise together, we go over the pre organised programme for the next engagement leaving plenty of alternatives and spares for those unpredictable moments. The banjo is featured on our sessions but to a lesser extent. The beauty of playing swing music is that we can feature anything from Billie Holliday (Maralyn's speciality) though all the Broadway composers like George Gershwin, Irvin Berlin, Cole Porter, Richard Rogers in addition to the compositions of Duke Ellington and Miles Davis, Vernon Duke, etc. When appropriate, I like to tell the audience something about the composer; an anecdote or two, or who made its first recording e.g. *The Hawk Talks* by Louis Belson – *Belson (two bass drums man) had the distinction of*

obtaining the second most appearances at the White House. Comedian Bob Hope had the most.

Recent Developments

Now that I have retired from business, fees are less of a consideration although it's nice to earn something for our jazzing efforts. Far more important is to keep playing. In recent years, jazz band work has tailed off. I began to look for reasons why bandleaders weren't ringing me so often. OK, jazz bands do not get so much work as in previous decades, they may have regular banjo men, and jazz aficionados are becoming less. However, I recently learnt that bandleaders were afraid to dial my number thinking I was seeking the big money. Not true – I just like to play and enjoy the camaraderie and am very willing to accept similar fees to everyone else. Try me – I can only say, "No". But I'll try my best to say, "Yes!" If I'm available, I'll be there! There is a lot more to tell and many more stories but all jazzers have an endless supply of tales to tell. I'm no exception so I'm looking forward to my **sixty plucking** years! Good luck. David Price

01277 824616. dvprice@live.com www.jazzbanduk.com CD of the Duo £6.00. – hope to see y'all sometime.

Photos

1. David Price – now
2. Dave Price Improviser Jazz Band. 1963. L to R. DP - clt, Paddy Lazare - bjo, ? - trombone, Kevin Frost tpt, Barry Spong – pn, John Watson – Dms, John Sirett – bs.
3. Hugh Rainey with Bob Wallis Band
4. Frog Island Jazz Band 1966. Rob Fullalove tuba, Ray Johnin tbn, Chris Marchant dms, Bernard Stutt clt, DP bnj, John Whitehead tpt.
5. Celestial Banjo Band. John Baron – bjo, Barry Tyler – dms, DP – bjo, Graham Read – sousaphone.
6. Josephine's Gaslight Smoothies c1969. L to R. DP - megaphone, Graham Collicott dms, Graham Read – sous, Barbra White – tpt, Jo Gurr – sax, Helen Goldsworthy and Pat – dancers. Other members unidentified.
7. Dave St John alias David Price c 1974.
8. Creole Orchestra. L to R. Mick Hicky tbn, Ted Fullick tpt, John Farell pn, Tony Cook tpt, DP bnj, ? dms, Chris Mcdonald baton, Jo Gurr reeds, Roy Rhodes reeds, John Arthy Sous, Clive Payne reeds. Not in picture Ian Grant bnj, John Parry voc/tbn.
9. David Price Ragtime Ensemble, Royal Festival Hall c 1985. Bill Boston reeds, Graham Collicott dms, DP bnj/voc, Graham Reed sous. Out of shot Keith Durston pn.
10. Aston Banjo Orchestra, Wimbledon Town Hall c1980. DP is 3rd from left.
11. Ken Simms Jazz Kings, 100 Club, 1980s. unidentified reed players, DP bnj, Ken Simms tpt, Len Baldwin tbn, John Petters dms, ? bass, Ron Wetherburn pn (masked).
12. Digswell Banjo Band 2014. Rob Fullalove sous, Roy bnj, Roy bnj, Rick Martin bnj, DP bnj, Maralyn voc/dms.
13. David Price Hot Jazz Quartet. 1990s John Wilson gui, Ron Wilson gui, DP bnj, ? bass.
14. David Price and Maralyn today (Swing Duo)