



Title: It Won't Sound the Same Again ...

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Chapter I

A Scot's Enlightenment

My moment of 'enlightenment' happened quite suddenly at a school Christmas class party way back in 1956. I was 15 years old. Stuart Miller, son of Bruce Miller, proprietor of Aberdeen's premier music and record shop, then located in one of the city's main thoroughfares, George Street and later, Union Street, was also at the party. He had with him the first 3-speed record player that anyone had seen and a handful of beautifully packaged 33 ¹/₃ long playing discs. We all clustered around while this wondrous device was demonstrated. What a great sound we thought!

We had been encouraged to bring along our own 78s so that they could be tried out. Willie Gauld thrust forward a Brunswick black label 78. From the speaker burst the high-octane energy of Louis Armstrong's All Stars and 'Basin Street Blues': Side 1 - the theme played with a subtle interplay from the front line ... then Side 2. Well, from the high tempo drum intro the band just let go! 'What is that I enquired?' 'That', said Willie, 'is **Jazz!**' I was hooked.

The rest of the class moved into the next room for the obligatory film show leaving me to the music. The following morning, I announced to my dad, 'I want a clarinet'. This was well received and by 30th January, my birthday, I was the proud owner of a Boosey & Hawkes 'liquorice' stick. Cinema showings of 'The Benny Goodman Story' and a re-run of 'The Glenn Miller Story' only served to fuel the fire.

I obtained a sheet music copy of 'Memories of You', the Benny Goodman film theme tune and set about mastering the demands of the 'break' - the first major clarinet hurdle. By Easter I felt proficient enough to visit neighbourhood brothers Norman and Neil Simpson who played piano and drums. Placing the music on the piano we struck out into the unknown and the inevitable clash of keys. That night I discovered transposition and painstakingly rewrote the notes and staggered through a faltering performance. The Jimmy Philip Trio was born!

Up to that point my schooling had followed a traditional path. At Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen I had enjoyed achievement in athletics. I was the Lower School Champion of the Coronation year 1953, winning all the sprints up to 440 yards and high and long jumps. I carried this on to the trouncing of the Aberdeen Grammar School's team in all these events in our fiercely contested annual athletics competition, a feat that had not been seen in living memory. The papers were full of it. The *Aberdeen Evening Express* even published a picture of my 4ft. 3in. high jump along with all the competition results:



Philip Stars for Gordon's

An outstanding performance by Robert Gordon's schoolboy James Philip was a feature of the athletic meeting between the lower school, junior and colt teams of Aberdeen Grammar School and Robert Gordon's College at Rubishaw last night.

Competing in the lower school section, he gained first place in all the individual events except throwing the cricket ball.

Robert Gordon's won in the junior and colts contest by 75 points to 55, while the Lower Schools were level with 30 points each.

The Lower School results are shown below:

80 Yards - 1. J. Philip (RGC), 2. F. Smith (AGS), 3. R. Watt (AGS)
440 Yards - 1. J. Philip (RGC), 2. F. Smith (AGS), 3. M. Taggart (RGC)
Relay - 1. Grammar School, 2. Gordon's College
High Jump - 1. J. Philip (RGC), 2. G. Dunbar (AGS), 3. R. Smith (AGS) - **4ft. 3in.**
Broad Jump - 1. J. Philip (RGC), 2. N. Ferguson (AGS), 3. R. Watt (AGS) - **13ft. 7in.**
Cricket Ball - 1. M. Dunn (RGC), 2. N. Ducat (AGS), 3. N. Dyer (RGC) - **161ft. 5½ in.**

Upon moving up to the seniors, I was immediately bettered by an import from Sweden - John Sjoberg (later to play professional football for Leicester City). I was severely chastened by this experience and my interest in training quickly waned.

Robert Gordon's, being a private school, majored in rugby. I possessed the natural ball skills to captain the Minors at stand-off but, as my physique failed to keep up with most around me, I found myself slipping down the ranks. By the fifth form I was resigned to being captain of the school seconds - ***nae a place to be!***



Centre stage as Captain of RGS the 2nd XV

Mind you, only the best beat me. My position in the first XV was occupied by Ian (Spivvy) McRae. Ian went on to play for Scotland and indeed was selected as a reserve for a British Lions tour. Once, when asked by a fellow London Scot what I had achieved, I found myself saying that I was a 'reserve to the reserve' for a British Lions tour!

Upon entering the 6th form I approached my games master Ian Hastie to announce that Saturday games clashed with my new found aspirations in music. I shall never forget his dumbfounded expression at the news that I was off in another direction. 'Jim had obviously lost the plot. There was no hope!'

My clarinet teacher was the wonderfully named Bill Spittle. Bill, a Kneller Hall trained band master, had just arrived in Aberdeen and been appointed by the Education Authority as its first woodwind and brass peripatetic teacher. Bill recognised my wish for fast track progress and my ambition to eventually own a tenor saxophone. With great energy he formed the Aberdeen Schools Military Band (what would now be known as a concert wind band) and soon followed up with a big band. I joined the wind band and progressed to become leader of the clarinet grouping. Not having a sax at this time, my participation in the big band was limited to helping out by putting up the music stands and handing out and collecting in the music.

Bill had run a Station band in World War II. He described to me warming up the audience before the legendary Glenn Miller American AEF Band made its broadcasts from the UK. His description of gleaming Conn saxes and the skill of the US bandmen had me drooling. I then acquired a rather leaky Buescher tenor

My dad's shop fitter and joiner, Jim Moir, ran a dance band – three saxes, trumpet, trombone and rhythm. This played the Friday and Saturday University hops – no Beat Groups in those days. The bars in Scotland at that time closed at 9.30pm so, although dances nominally started at 8pm, no one appeared from the Student Bar much before 10pm. Dad, being a typical dad, proudly announced that his son James played a tenor sax and before you could say 'Ted Heath' I was invited to sit in with the band.

Each week the latest dance arrangements arrived from the Bron Agency, London. I was given a 2nd tenor pad to sort out and joined in the evaluation of the arrangements from 8pm to 9pm. In those days, apart from waltzes and the mandatory Scottish dances, each arrangement had to be performed either as a quickstep or a foxtrot. The concept of people dancing to the natural tempo of the music fell on deaf ears. I always left at the break and went to the Aberdeen Schools Dance Club run by the indefatigable Madame Murray. Here, I immediately disappeared into the band room, unpacked my clarinet and joined in the obligatory rabble rouser – the 'Woodchopper's Ball'



In action on 1st tenor (2nd from right) in the Jim Moir Band c.1960-62

My tenor playing and reading improved and before long Jim Moir invited me to stay on and play for the dance itself. This entitled me to wear 'the Maroon Jacket'. Mine had

previously been fitted to a 'Gorilla' so my mother got to work with her needle and thread to turn the styling into something more akin to a double-breasted number. But oh boy, was I proud to wear it!

I was by this time finishing my schooling and had achieved an above-average university entrance qualification. In those days we were all expected to end up as aircraft designers or work for Shell Mex/ BP, a joint company at that time. I observed however, that, as I was not in the 'top ten' in my 6th form, I might just be struggling to get my BSc 2:1. I therefore opted for accountancy and spent the next five years indentured to an office to obtain my professional qualification. What a grind – 5½ days for £2.00 a week!

All this meant that I was exempt from call-up for National Service, which had thankfully ended by the time my studies were over. I viewed this as a mixed blessing, for I once had a crazy notion that I could sign up for a term in the military and get into a band. This delusion quickly passed.

My teacher, Bill Spittle, continued to be a source of encouragement. He played lead alto sax in the pit band (*nae* orchestra) at Aberdeen's Her Majesty's Theatre and got me in on tenor and clarinet (also a little flute – that does not mean piccolo). I played for the Christmas and Summer shows – a complete change of programme each week! It was great fun and sharpened my reactions. Although Andy Stewart, Kenneth McKellar and Moira Anderson may not sound much, the programme always contained some challenging arrangements for the dance routines. I shall never forget the sheer guts of the chorus line as it mustered the energy for one last high kick at a New Year's Day matinee, with the boilermakers' children throwing ice cream cartons down from the 'Gods'.

Traditional Jazz ('Trad') was then on the up and up. I wore out my copies of Chris Barber's 'High Society' and 'Whistlin' Rufus' with Monty Sunshine on clarinet. There was no formal jazz training in those days. It was a question of turning up the record player and blasting along with it. Pity the poor neighbours, but at least we had a granite house in Aberdeen which constrained some of my excesses. Other clarinet players who drew my attention included the idiosyncratic Archie Semple with the Alex Welsh Band and of course the wonderful Sandy Brown – catch his 'African Queen'. Earning £2.00 a week supplemented by 30 shillings for the occasional gig, I spent it all on records. My collection of Benny Goodman Trio and Quartet titles grew, but then my friends introduced me to the world of big band jazz.

Ellington, Basie and Kenton all had their place, but I was drawn to Maynard Ferguson's 'Message from Newport' and 'Newport Suite' albums. Arrangers Slide Hampton and Don Sebesky seemed to catch the right blend of rich orchestration and exciting settings for the soloists. It was fashionable for the critics of the day to pan Maynard's screaming horn, but to do so overlooked the rest.

The film 'Jazz on a Summers Day' brought the West Coast movement to my notice and the music of Gerry Mulligan, Shorty Rogers and Art Pepper, soon swelled my collection. The band and work of Quincy Jones led me to the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, but it was the expansive palette of Gil Evans who, for me, opened out the orchestral context for the soloist to fully express himself. Albums like 'Miles Ahead', 'Porgy and Bess' and later 'The Individualism of Gil Evans' illustrate my point. In turn Gil led me to the genius of Miles Davis.

Miles was not an instant thing for me; I had to work hard at it. In common with many of his fan base, he left me cold with his electric thing, but from his formative days, culminating in the seminal 'Kind of Blue' and followed by his quintets with the Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams' rhythm section, what is there left to say?

A highlight of the year for the Jim Moir Band was to dep for the resident band at the Aberdeen Palais Ballroom whilst the band took its week's holiday. Yes - a whole week, six evenings of continuous playing! After one such interlude, I was offered a position in the resident band; a chance to turn full-time and get my act together. However, my father prevailed upon me to turn this down as it did not appear to offer a stable lifestyle. A deal was struck between father and son. Once I had qualified, I could do what I liked.

The Scottish Chartered Accountant course was quite enlightened for its day. The Institute had introduced the Academic Year, whereby in the 3rd year all articled clerks studied aspects of law, economics and accounting theory full-time at Aberdeen University. What an opportunity! Still playing at the hops with Jim Moir, I also joined a six-piece led by an active student, Ian Stephen, with a trumpet trombone and sax/clarinet front line. We played everything from trad tunes to sketchy arrangements of originals by people such as Dizzy Gillespie, Cannonball Adderley and Gerry Mulligan, not to mention the underrated Benny Golson. I found myself contributing to the University RAG WEEK magazine as we had Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen appearing in the Marshall Hall. Needless to say, he was well backed by the Ian Stephen Sextet on the night. Great fun!

At that time Aberdeen was well into jazz. Gordon Hardie had opened up a Wednesday night club at the Abergeldie Hall and we flocked to see what was going on. Sandy West's trad band led the way but there was always room for the saxophone and more modern performers. This led to 'end of the line' visits from the south. I remember the Don Rendell Quintet with Graham Bond on alto. Then Tubby Hayes mesmerised us with his technique. The Dankworth Orchestra with Dudley Moore on keys and Bobby Breen's vocal on 'Route 66' came to the Beach Ballroom, with the famous 'bounce' of its sprung dance floor, and even Ken Mackintosh brought his band up north.



The Amazing Alex Sutherland (2nd left) with vocalist Marisha Addison, Bill Kemp, Johnny Hartley and Laurie Hamilton at a Grampian TV session. Laurie was the guitarist I accompanied to the session in Perth

More surprisingly, Alex Sutherland (trombone, vibes and accordion) brought his amazing aggregation down from the Two Red Shoes Ballroom in Elgin. I remember standing agog as his lady vocalist, one Jeannie Lambe, (un)dressed to kill, performed her Peggy Lee numbers.



Miss Jeannie Lambe, the 'Highland Peggy Lee'

Not to be out-done, local pianist Munce Angus formed his big band; Cliff Hardie (still active in the south) led the trombone section. This was the first time I was introduced to 'inked' arrangements resulting in the sound of a proper 'big band'.



***The Munce Angus Big Band (c.1962).
The back row includes Johnny Hartley (bass), and Munce at the piano.
'Big' and 'Young' Ronnie are on trumpets in the middle row,
along with Cliff Hardie and Alan Gall on trombones.
The front row includes me on 2nd alto and Dave Milne on 1st tenor***

A Sunday evening Jazz Club opened in a local school hall which became *the* place to go. In preparation for this, we became *bona fide* 'travellers' – exploiting a loophole in the then Scottish Sunday drinking ban. Piling into a car, complete with portable battery-operated record player and the latest jazz releases, we made our way up Royal Deeside. Stopping off at the Banchory Lodge Hotel, we would set up the player by the river to enjoy the sounds. On the stroke of 4pm we would repair to the hotel lounge where we ordered and consumed afternoon tea. Thus, qualified as *bona fide* 'travellers', the bar was opened, and we drank enough to set ourselves up for the evening jazz session - not *too* much of course.

We even entered the sextet in the Elgin Jazz Festival where I suffered the ignominy of not being rated at all in the tenor sax category: my early inspirational, but uncontrolled Coltrane-like noises finding no favour with any of the judges. No change there! Worst of all I had persuaded the lovely Patricia Thompson to join me for the day. Her sympathetic cooing only served to increase my angst. My manhood had been severely undermined.

Becoming more ambitious I formed an eight-piece band, the 'Big 8', featuring original works by James Grant Kellas, a lecturer in history at Aberdeen University. James had recently returned to Scotland from a spell at London University where he had led a

unique band comprising five saxophones and three rhythm. He had even played at Ronnie Scott's club in its earliest days in a set of gigs organised by pianist and fellow student, Michael Garrick, under the title 'Jazz Goes to Kollidge'. Six tracks by the band recorded at the University of London Students Union in 1960 appear on the Garrick 'Kronos' album issued by Hep. I also penned a number of West Coast style charts. The band debuted at the Aberdeen Beach Ballroom on Friday 22nd November 1963, a date indelibly ingrained in the mind as the day of President John F. Kennedy's assassination in Dallas, Texas!

By this time, I was well aware of most, if not all, of the musicians plying their trade in and around Aberdeen. We had the beautiful *art deco* Beach Ballroom, the Palais de Dance and most recently the Palace Ballroom, just off Bridge Street. All had dance bands and from time to time I would be called in for a dep. When we got to hear of 'ad hoc' weekend sessions centred on the County Hotel at Perth, guitarist Laurie Hamilton, from the Beach Ballroom, and myself decided to give it a go. A drummer from Glasgow, Bill Kemp, would ensure a rhythm section. That Sunday night we had Jim Mullen on bass, yes, *that* Jim Mullen, up from Glasgow. From Dundee we had sax players Malcolm Duncan and Roger Ball, soon to emerge as 'The Average White Band'. The session went far into the night - a foretaste of what it would be like 'down south'.



The Jim Philip Big Eight: Neil Simpson) on drums



Alan Gall (trombone), me (tenor), 'Swanee' Mackenzie (trumpet), Johnny Brechin (guitar) and Johnny Hartley (bass)

With my 5-year apprenticeship as a Chartered Accountant of Scotland complete it was time to turn my thoughts to the future. How would I continue to develop my playing? The answer lay in an advert which appeared in the local paper inviting suitably qualified people to apply to Brighton College of Technology for something then titled as 'Numerical Methods', which subsequently morphed into the more recognisable 'Computer Science'.

Having spent a holiday with my parents in London, I knew that there was a fast-non-stop train between London and Brighton, 'The Brighton Belle'. Here was a way to get to the London Jazz Scene. Dad was pretty forward thinking and agreed that computing might be a particularly useful addition to my accounting qualification. He saw that I was itchy and would not settle for a 'brass plate' on a wall in Queens Road – Aberdeen's professional row. Following an interview, I was offered a place on the College's first intake.

In September 1964 it was off to Aberdeen's Joint Station for the journey south. Clutching my beloved Selmer MKVI tenor sax, record player, my 'Desert Island Discs' collection of vinyl - mainly the latest Miles, not to mention some clothes and my father's emergency supply of blankets, I got on the train. It was quite the longest I had ever seen. My father looked up and down the platform at what he considered to be the 'Flower of Scotland' leaving the 'Homeland'. There was a slight moistening of eyes, appropriate to the occasion. The whistle blew and the steam train shuddered into motion. I was off and would never return permanently. The cliché is ... 'and the rest is history'. My father, God bless him, voted Scottish Nationalist from that day on. Who can blame him?

This chapter is an extract from the book It Won't Sound the Same Again by Jim Philip and Trevor Bannister.

The book is available directly from: tabannister@hotmail.co.uk at a cost of £10.00 plus p & p