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**Stan Tracey  
Big Band  
and Octet  
+  
T' n 'T –  
Keith Tippett  
& Stan Tracey**

Wed 30 Jan 7.30pm

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Free programme

# Stan Tracey Big Band and Octet + T' n 'T – Keith Tippett & Stan Tracey

## Stan Tracey Big Band

**Stan Tracey** piano  
**Andy Cleynert** bass  
**Clark Tracey** drums  
**Guy Barker, Nathan Bray, Mark Armstrong, Henry Lowther** trumpets  
**Andy Wood, Mark Nightingale, Andy White** trombones  
**Sammy Main, Simon Allen, Mornington Lockett, Dave O'Higgins, Alan Barnes** saxophones

## Stan Tracey Octet

**Stan Tracey** piano  
**Andy Cleynert** bass  
**Clark Tracey** drums  
**Guy Barker** trumpet  
**Mark Nightingale** trombone  
**Sammy Main, Simon Allen, Mornington Lockett** saxophones

## T'n'T

**Stan Tracey** piano  
**Keith Tippett** piano

We live in image-conscious times, but Stan Tracey – the epitome of the phlegmatic, worldlywise jazz musician - has never been much good at following musical fashion. *'His conception of jazz has never been in the 'current trend', and because of this he has never enjoyed the popularity many of his contemporaries have done.'* So wrote saxophonist Kenny Graham almost fifty years ago, in the liner notes to one of Tracey's earliest albums, *Little Klunk*.

In commercial terms, perhaps, not much has changed since then. Jazz still exists on the



Keith Tippett

margins. But Tracey's status is undisputed. While he can be forgiven for being tired of described as a grand old man of British music, the strength of character he has shown in surviving the vicissitudes of an often ruthless business has been an inspiration to successive generations of players.

In his 81st year, he might be expected to be easing himself into the slow lane. Yet the intensity of his soloing has hardly diminished, as he has proved on recent outings with such long-time collaborators as trumpeter Guy Barker or saxophonist Bobby Wellins. This concert offers a celebration of Tracey's vitality and versatility, ranging from the lyrical swing of his *Genesis* suite to the austere harmonies of his work with avant-garde pianist Keith Tippett. With soloists

including Barker, trombonist Mark Nightingale and that saxophonist for all seasons Alan Barnes (another no-nonsense performer whose talents have been taken for granted in the past) the evening presents a rounded portrait of an artist whose career parallels the evolution of jazz in this country over the course of half a century.

Born in Denmark Hill, London, in 1926, Tracey was raised in Tooting, where part of his early musical education took the form of listening to his neighbours' radio from the bottom of the stairs. It was the accordion which first captured his imagination and, after winning local talent competitions, he made his debut in the Forces' troupe, ENSA, when he was 16. Soon afterwards, he took up the piano, inspired by the boogie-woogie masters.

By the early Fifties, with the encouragement of another young hopeful, Ronnie Scott, Tracey had established himself on the London jazz scene, and at the end of the decade, when Scott embarked on his quixotic dream of creating a world-class jazz club, Tracey was his choice as house pianist. The years Tracey spent on the club's stage have become part of jazz folklore. Tales of inspired duets into the night with transatlantic heroes - Sonny Rollins, Ben Webster, Roland Kirk, and many, many more all visiting the club and finding that Tracey's unmistakably individual style fired many more creative sparks than the expected local accompanist.

Tracey's Dylan Thomas-inspired suite *Under Milk Wood* became a Sixties landmark. But in financial terms, the Seventies were unrewarding, as they were for so many of his peers. The unflagging support he received from his wife, Jackie, played a crucial role in sustaining his self-confidence.

But with the advent of the Eighties jazz revival, Tracey found himself acknowledged as a pioneer. In the years that followed, journalists grew accustomed to hailing him as 'the godfather of British jazz'. If Tracey was seduced by all the attention, he kept his emotions well hidden from journalists. When *Independent* writer Sholto Byrnes paid a visit to his home in St Albans in 2006, he discovered that the pianist kept his many awards and honours in a drawer under the bed rather than on his walls.

Thelonious Monk and Duke Ellington remain the two prime influences on his work. Twenty years ago, when the jazz revival was at its height, Tracey had an opportunity to underline the Monk connection when he went into the studio with that under-rated saxophonist, the peerless Charlie Rouse. The result, *Playin' In The Yard* was a delight. The *Genesis* suite dates from the same period. Just as Ellington had channelled his energies into a succession of large-scale pieces, so Tracey composed sequences full of Ducal flourishes. The movements' titles - *The Beginning, The Light, The Firmament* and so forth - were self-explanatory, but Tracey allowed room for the soloists to add their own imprint. Today, of course, Wynton Marsalis has made a speciality of celebrating Ellington's compositional style in epic settings. It's gratifying to note that Tracey had explored the same path many years earlier.

Although he instinctively thinks of himself as a 'time and changes' man, as he puts it, he has not been afraid to hurl himself into the avant-garde maelstrom. During the 1970s, he regularly mingled with the experimental players, among them Trevor Watts and John Stevens - and this questing spirit remains today, with recent duets with Evan Parker and Louis Moholo.



Stan Tracey

This evening's concert finds Tracey returning to the uncompromising ethos of *T'n'T*, the two-piano duet he formed in the 1970s with the mercurial improvising pianist Keith Tippett. Tippett is one of this country's most individual voices, and much travelled on the international stage - a pianist whose sonic attack can create a huge sound of orchestral dimensions, full of complex tonality and harmonics - but at the same time capable of delicate, impressionistic gesture; he is also a composer of tremendous range, creating innovative soundscapes with big bands, chamber ensembles and voices.

Together, Tippett and Tracey build an extraordinary and hypnotic atmosphere 'intuition, respect, energy and romanticism are just some of the qualities to be found.' A very rare occasion, this - tonight's concert, is the first time they have performed live together since 1980, and marks the release on *Resteamed* of a recently discovered recording from a concert back in 1977, *Supernova*.

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Clive Davis is a music reviewer for *The Times* and *Sunday Times*, and writes a culture and politics blog for *The Spectator*.

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### Part of Barbican Jazz

Stan Tracey's *Genesis* is published by Faber Music. A full score, CD recording and instrumental parts are available from [www.fabermusic.com](http://www.fabermusic.com)

Stan Tracey and Keith Tippett will be signing copies of *Supernova* in the foyer after the concert.

There will be one interval in tonight's concert. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the Barbican premises. No cameras, tape recorders or any other recording equipment may be taken into the hall.



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**African Soul Rebels:  
Salif Keita, Tony  
Allen + Awadi**



Sun 9 Mar 7.30pm

**Linton Kwesi  
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Dub Band with special  
guests Winston Francis,  
Jean 'Binta' Breeze and  
Zena Edwards**



Sun 16 Mar 7.30pm

**Mayra Andrade +  
Son de la Frontera**



Fri 28 Mar 8pm

**Dee Dee  
Bridgewater:  
Red Earth – A Malian  
Journey**



Mon 31 Mar 7.30pm

**Gilberto Gil**



Wed 9 Apr 7.30pm

**Dianne Reeves  
+ Lionel Loueke**



Thu 10 Apr 7.30pm

**Lalo Schifrin & LSO**



Tues 15 Apr 7.30pm

**Mavis Staples +  
Jhelisa:  
Down in Mississippi**



Fri 25 Apr 7.30pm

**Wayne Shorter  
+ Tom Cawley's Curios**



Mon 28 Apr 8pm

**The Blues: Back to  
the Source  
Otis Taylor's  
Recapturing the  
Banjo & Bassekou  
Kouyate**



Sat 3 May 7.30pm

**Café Tacuba  
+ support**



Sat 17 May 7.30pm

**Abdullah Ibrahim**



Tue 27 May 7.30pm

**Roberto Fonseca  
with special guest  
Omara Portuondo  
+ support**



Thu 29 May & Wed 4 Jun 7.30pm

**Ravi Shankar -  
Farewell to Europe  
Tour**



Sat 31 May 7.30pm

**John McLaughlin**



Thu 12 Jun 7.30pm

**Philip Glass -  
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# jazz

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Feb 8 David Torn's Prezems live at the Vortex

Feb 15 Vision Festival '07 Highlights: Spiritual Unity & Fieldwork

Feb 22 Dave Liebman & Evan Parker live at the Vortex

Feb 29 Myra Melford at the Vision Festival '07

Mar 7 The Gonnets in session

Mar 14 Jazz On 3: 'The Missing Bits'

Mar 21 Mark Helias' Open Loose

Mar 28 Dutch Special: Trio Broom/DeJoodie/Vatcher



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