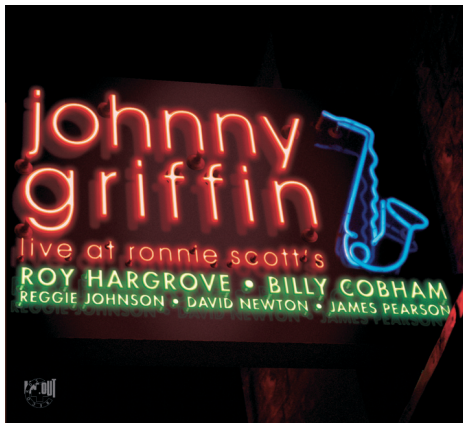




PRESS RELEASE



1. Lester Leaps In***
2. When We Where One *
3. The Blues Walk *
4. Mentor *
5. How Deep Is The Ocean**
6. The JAMFs Are Coming *
7. Hot Sake*

Johnny Griffin – sax
Roy Hargrove – tr /flh
Billy Cobham – dr
Reggie Johnson – b
James Pearson *** – p
David Newton * – p
Paul Kuhn ** – p

JOHNNY GRIFFIN LIVE AT RONNIE SCOTT'S CLUB (In+Out Records /in-akustik)

It was in February 1963 that Johnny Griffin made his first UK appearance – at Ronnie Scott's Club in London's Gerrard Street, where he played a four-week engagement, accompanied by Stan Tracey on piano, Malcolm Cecil on bass and Jackie Dougan on drums.

Introducing the band, Ronnie Scott said of Johnny: "He is one of the greatest-ever jazz tenor saxophonists." A sentiment emphatically endorsed by thousands of jazz lovers around the world,

On May 26th and 27th this year, the Little Giant was back in Ronnie Scott's to play a couple of evening sessions in a belated celebration of his 80th birthday. He was accompanied by Roy Hargrove (t, flh), James Pearson or David Newton (p), Reggie Johnson (b) and Billy Cobham (d), plus special guest Paul Kuhn, the celebrated German pianist, composer, arranger and singer.

Sadly, that engagement proved to be Johnny Griffin's last UK appearance. He died just two months later – on July 25th – at his home in Availles Limouzine, France.

IN + OUT Records had the great good fortune to record those sessions and the resulting album – Johnny Griffin Live at Ronnie Scott's Club – is shortly due for release.

The notes for the album have been written by the distinguished producer, Orrin Keepnews, who was a close friend of Johnny Griffin for many years and who produced of many of his memorable albums.

For special guest Paul Kuhn, the Ronnie Scott sessions represented a happy reunion with the Little Giant, because they played together at the 2001 Burghausen Jazz festival with singer Silvia Droste. Paul had also worked previously with Roy Hargrove when Roy sat in with the Paul Kuhn & The Best group at the Rottweil Jazz Festival. In a note about Johnny Griffin's performances, the UK magazine, Time Out, wrote: "Once dubbed the fastest saxophonist in the world, age has softened his technique, yet his natural charisma remains. Bringing a simply jaw-dropping line-up to town this time, he's joined by phenomenal, fiery US trumpeter, Roy Hargrove and

iconic powerhouse drummer, Billy Cobham. Pianists James Pearson and Dave Newton and bassist Reggie Johnson complete this unmissable band."

And the Financial Times' Mike Hobart observed, "Griffin, noted for his razor-sharp mind, quick-fire finger work and physical endurance, presented an energy-sapping, loose-themed set of jam-session favourites. The rapid flow of ideas and the raucous edge of rhythm & blues were ever-present, though diminished in power, and Griffin still lards his solos with perfectly placed quotes.

"But what made the evening such an affectionate tribute was the multi-generational band, providing a safe pair of hands when accompanying, but taking no prisoners when unleashed.

"Drummer Billy Cobham and bassist Reggie Johnson were models of restraint, enhancing the veteran's every move, but once trumpeter Roy Hargrove or pianist James Pearson took over, they really upped the ante. ...Hargrove was on fire, a seemingly endless store of crisply articulated phrases tumbling out of his horn, and Pearson was not far behind, sailing over the time-honoured sequences as to the manner born."

And in Jazzwise, Brian Priestley reported:

"Little Johnny proceeded to cover the phases of his musical history without making it obvious. The opening The Blues Walk was followed by his own, more funky The JAMFs Are Coming, the original ballad, When We Were One and a bristling bebop workout on the changes of What Is This Thing Called Love...

"The drive produced by fellow expatriates, Reggie Johnson on bass and a very retro-sounding Billy Cobham, gave the horns all the stimulus they could want.

"Roy Hargrove...did a good job of challenging the leader to step up. But so also did David Newton, whose sometimes-unconventional solos were visibly appreciated by the tenor man: As a result, by the time of the last tune, his scurrying lines were sounding like the Griffin of old."

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